



March 2026
Post 18 Options
Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to the 2026 handbook to post 18 options

I should imagine that you feel as though you have only just arrived in sixth form and now you are starting to think about what you are going to do when you leave BGS!

It can be an exciting but also daunting time; it will be a time when you are all making decisions and plans for the future that are personal to you based on your interests, strengths and wishes. In School we will do our best to give you advice and guidance; however, the key to the process is your resolve to research your options. Staff here will help you as much as possible but take the opportunity to research, research and more research. You will also need to be proactive and organised. Ask lots of questions!

You may end up considering more than one pathway and then deciding when you leave which route to take. Different options suit different people and you need to work out what is best for you.

In this booklet we have attempted to include all the information you need to make informed decisions about your next steps. The basics are outlined and then there are lots of links to additional resources that will help you.

So good luck and remember to ask for help when you need it.

Mrs Elliot

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What are your options?

You are most likely to end up on one of three pathways after 6th form:

- University
- Apprenticeship
- Work

You might also like to look at different education options at an FE college.

Many students also choose to take a gap year - these can be valuable, but should be planned and support your next steps.

You can find out more about each of these options over the next few pages. Take some time to explore them - even if you think you already know what you want to do, it can be fun, interesting, and also reassuring, to find some alternative options.

There is lots of evidence that the people who are happiest and most successful are those who work doing something they love. You also need to consider the pace of technological change - you might well end up being an expert in a job that doesn't currently exist! Considering your skills and preferences is a good place to start when exploring potential careers.

Unifrog tools:

[Personality Profile](#) uses the personality types from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, which was developed by Katherine Cook Briggs and Isobel Briggs Myers in the 1940s by expanding on Carl Jung's theory. They've also matched the types to the profiles in our Careers library.

[Interests Profile](#) based on John Holland's theory of personality and job choices. Holland identified six categories of personality, and the careers associated with them. No person's personality fits neatly into just one category; your interests profile shows which of the six categories you are closest to, and you can explore the corresponding careers and subjects.

[Careers Library](#) here you can search using a wide range of criteria - by school subjects, themes, competencies, or the information from the profiling quizzes.

<https://www.ucas.com/careers-quiz>



[My Skills My Life](#) This personality quiz focuses on suggesting STEM careers that may be suitable for you (free signup required)

[Prospects Career Planner](#) The prospects website has loads of useful careers advice. This quiz can help point you in the right direction. You could also try their 'job match' tool (free signup required)

Year 12 Task checklist

TASK	UNIVERSITY APPRENTICESHIP or FE College WORK UNSURE				DEADLINE	COMPLETED?
UNIFROG - update competencies and activities	E	E	E	E	ongoing	
UNIFROG - add any relevant notes for reference writers	E	E	E	E	ASAP	
UNIFROG - create CV	R	E	E	E	Ongoing	
UNIFROG - write 1st draft of personal statement and share with tutor	E	R	R	R	End of summer term	
UCAS - set up your account	E	E	-	E	04/04/26	
APPRENTICESHIPS – research companies, application processes and deadlines	-	E	R	R	Ongoing	
UCAS - complete all sections apart from choices and personal statement	E	R	-	R	17/06/2026	
Sort out your social media	R	R	R	R	01/09/26	

R= recommended E = essential

Applying to university

Which Course? Which University?

When you're starting to think about your university career the first thing you need to think about is the course. There are thousands of different courses some of which relate directly to a subject that you may be studying at A level but also many new ones.

When you look at university websites look at the area of the website where they sort courses by subject area or faculty. You can also use <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/> website below which gives ideas of courses related to your current A level subjects. Remember also that many courses eg politics, sociology, business studies don't require you to have studied specific A level subjects.



The following pages also give you some ideas about courses.

In then choosing a university you need to ask yourself some basic questions first: Town or city, rural or urban, campus or city-centre. You also need to consider the grades that you are hoping to get.

Going to a university with a 'good name' is no guarantee of post-uni employment. This will depend on you and not where you went. Some employers *may* be impressed if you have been to a 'good' university as you will have had to have achieved 'good' A Levels to get in, but all *will* look at many other factors when deciding whether to offer you a job.

Don't rely on league tables. Although they can give a broad ranking of a university based on areas such as entry requirements, student satisfaction and research don't choose your university solely using these. Perceptions of '**best**' universities are often based on '**most popular**'. This can become self-perpetuating, so do your own research. Some reasons why students and parents often consider a university to be good are:

- * It's old and established
- * It's located in/near an attractive town or city
- * Your teacher went there and recommends it (they probably went a long time ago and things change!)
- * Students already there recommend it (remember they don't have anything to compare it to!)
- * Because a lot of your friends are applying. Learn to make your own decisions!

You need to look at how your subject is presented in each different university as they can be presented in a variety of ways:

- * Single Honours degree courses — you will graduate in one subject
- * Joint Honours degree — involve the study of 2 different subjects
- * Major/Minor courses — students choose 2 subjects, one is studied in more depth usually 75%/25%
- * Course with a placement year (sometimes called Sandwich courses) — alternating periods of study and paid work-related experience (up to a year). These are very, very popular at the moment as large graduate recruiters are using them to recruit students to their graduate schemes. Check how much help the university gives you in sourcing placements and your applications.

You can use [Home - Discover Uni](#) to compare courses – it includes data on student satisfaction, graduate employment.

The screenshot shows the Discover Uni website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Thinking about uni', 'Starting uni', 'Further information', and 'Cymraeg'. A search bar on the right contains 'Search', 'Compare', and 'Saved' options. The main heading is 'Thinking about your uni choices?' followed by 'Search and compare undergraduate courses in the UK'. Below this is a search form with two input fields: 'Course name' and 'Institution name', and a yellow 'Search' button. To the right of the search form is a section titled 'How to use Discover Uni' with a 'Find out more' button.

When doing your research these are some questions that you can ask admissions tutors, university teaching staff and existing students:

Open day question checklist

- What are the facilities like—are they up to date? Do you have to pay for materials? Are the libraries well-stocked? Are they open all hours? Are there plenty of areas for silent study? Are facilities over-crowded?

- What is the quality of the teaching? Are the staff enthusiastic? Are they approachable? Do they mark the work and how often?
- What is the course structure? What are the compulsory and optional modules? How many hours a week contact time is there?
- Teaching style—lots of lectures/tutorial and how often. How much independent work is expected? Will you have to attend field courses and do you have to pay for them?
- How much of the course is delivered online and how much face to face?
- How will the course be assessed?
- Is the course accredited? Eg if it's a psychology course is it accredited by the British Psychological Society?
- How many students will be on the course?
- Does the university permit students to work part-time? What opportunities are there locally for part-time work? Does the university offer scholarships/bursaries? Do any firms sponsor students on your course?
- What careers have recent graduates gone on to? What's on offer here that will provide opportunities for you to develop your employability skills? Are there any connections with employers? What services does the careers service offer?
- Is there an opportunity to take a placement? If so, will the university organise this? Are placements or study abroad options on offer? Where are they? How are they organised? Are they paid? How do they affect tuition fees?
- What sort of student support provision is in place?
- What sports and societies are available at the university? What facilities do they use?
- What grades do you need – and can you still get a place if you don't quite get them?
- Is it worth applying for more than one course?
- What do they look for in your application and personal statement?
- How do they feel about gap years and deferred entry applications?
- What are the pros and cons of taking a joint or combined course?
- What proportion of students go on to postgraduate study? Do you need a postgraduate course to get a job?
- Accommodation—what types are on offer? Is there a first year guarantee of hall-based accommodation?

- Do most students stay on campus at weekends?
- What happens in years two and three?
- How far do you have to travel to get into university and around town?
- Can you bring a car? Is there parking available near to the university accommodation?

To research what your degree course could lead to the following websites are really useful:

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree/>

A careers website aimed at undergraduate students but really useful also for students applying to university,

[What do graduates do? | Luminate \(prospects.ac.uk\)](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do/) An annual report showing employment for graduates by subject.

Remember a significant number of graduate level jobs do not want a specific subject; they are looking for bright, articulate, motivated students and are less bothered by what subject you have done.

Other useful resources

Don't underestimate how useful the UCAS Hub is:

Apprenticeship, industry guides and city guides.

Springpod subject spotlights and on-demand virtual work experience



Cancer, Brain Tumours & Rogue Cells: The Science Behind The Killer Disease
with Dr Shafiq Ahmed from University of Sunderland



Computer Science: Is Generative AI The Problem Or The Solution?
with Dr Annu Usman from the University of Sunderland



Computer Science: Space Exploration And Beyond
with Dr Paul Sant from The University of Law



Covid: The Law And You
with Mike Meehan from University of Law



Cyberpsychology: Online Behaviour And Technology In The Modern World
with Dr Julie Prescott from University of Law



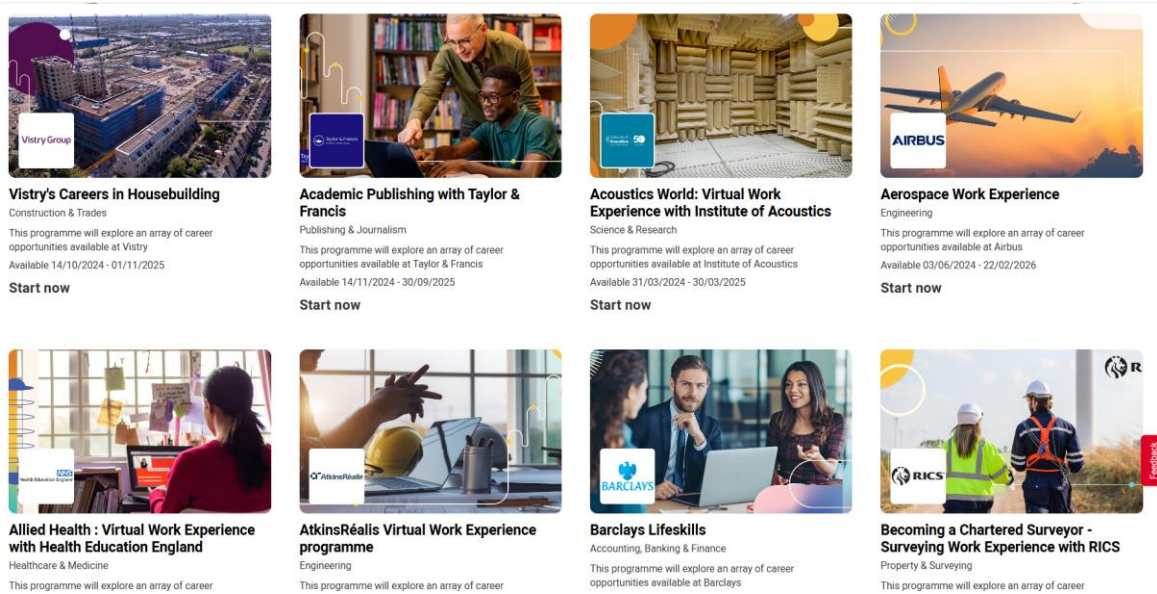
Data Science: The Power Of AI
with Dr Annabel Latham from Manchester Metropolitan University



Empowering Tomorrow: A Journey Into AI And Machine Learning
with Dr Alessandro Di Stefano from Teesside University



Euthanasia: Should It Be Legalised In The UK?
with Dr Kieran Doran from University of Sunderland



Choosing a course... What are my options?

There are 8 general faculty areas for you to decide between when choosing a degree subject. Whilst I cannot list all of the components here, I hope that this will give you an idea of what is available.

Business Courses

These courses provide essential and looked-for skills in verbal, written and time management skills, IT know-how and the ability to work in a team.

Courses include: Business Studies, Business Administration, Hospitality Management, Environmental Management, Marketing, Property Development, International Business, Human Resources Management, Public Relations, Advertising, Sport Management, Tourism, Fashion Buying, Logistics, Transport Management, Finance, Accountancy, Banking, Actuarial Studies, Financial Services etc, etc.

Also worth remembering that a very large proportion of students from other subjects—History, Geography, Law, Languages etc—still go into business, being trained by firms to fit their own style of management operations.

It is important to note that Social Sciences are not only appropriate if you are intending to become a social worker, but will help you if you are.

Social Studies and Law

Courses include: Social Work, Community Development, Youth Studies, Social Policy, Social Administration, Community Art, Education, Psychology, Neuroscience, Cognitive Science, Developmental Psychology, Sociology, Criminology, Anthropology, Politics and Government, International Relations, Peace and War Studies, Economics, Religious Studies, Ethics, the Law, etc, etc.

It is not necessary to hold a degree in Law to become a solicitor or a barrister, providing you have a good class of degree.

Medicine and Health

45 GCSEs all at the same time—that's how 1 medical school admissions tutor described a course in Medicine. Although that might be an exaggeration, the work load involved should never be underestimated, which is often why med schools are looking for a good spread of grade As at GCSE, AS and A Level. In addition to straight Medicine, there are many other areas of study.

Courses include: Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry, Pharmacy, Pharmacology, Toxicology, Nursing, Midwifery, Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy, Audiology, Nutrition, Radiography, Occupational Therapy, Orthoptics, Podiatry, Prosthetics and Orthotics, Osteopathy, Paramedic Science, Biological Sciences, Anatomy, Genetics, etc, etc.

There has also been an increase in recent years in courses dealing with Herbal Medicine, Health and Safety and Health Promotion.

Engineering, Maths and Computing

Wanting to know how things work, wanting to make things work, or wanting to invent new ways to make things work would seem to be a fairly good indication of a technically-minded student. If this sounds like you then

Engineering courses will be of particular relevance to you. There are a vast array of courses in this area, including: General or Integrated Engineering, Electrical or Electronic Engineering, Software Engineering, Audio Engineering, Computer and Control Engineering, Mechanical, Automobile, Acoustical, Marine, Manufacturing, Agricultural, Civil, Structural, Transport, Mining and Water Engineering, etc, etc.

With Mathematics you can look at courses in Mathematics; Pure and Applied, Statistics and Operational Mathematics.

With Computing you can look at Computer Science, Information Systems, Information Management, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, Cybernetics and Multimedia.

The Sciences

This group of courses covers a huge field—many of which you will be familiar with if you are studying Sciences

Courses include: Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Biology, Chemistry and Physics (all broad sweep courses with can lead to specialisation because they form the foundation of science careers). Students taking Biological Science can usually specialise in their chosen field in the 2nd or 3rd year of the course in such areas as:

Biomedical Science, Microbiology, Physiology, Immunology, Genetics or Botany. Other specialism courses include Medical Engineering, Biotechnology, Bioarchaeology. Sciences also include: Agriculture, Forestry,

Animal and Equine Science, Aquaculture, Crop Science, Plant Science, Geology, Earth Sciences, Marine Biology, Zoology, etc, etc.

Look out for universities offering **Modular Courses**, which allow for specialisation. Admissions tutors will be looking for experience of and understanding of your area of interest outside of your A Level syllabus.

Learning a Language

Many language students go on to study a language that they have learned at school, which is fine, but if you have a gift for languages then why not look at learning a new language. You can do this by taking a dual-honours degree.

There is a wide spectrum of languages that can be started from scratch at university, including: Chinese, Czech, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek, Portuguese, Russian, Urdu, Iranian, Tamil, Thai, Welsh and Scandinavian Studies. You can also combine languages with other areas, such as European Studies, Business Studies, Political Studies, Translating and Interpreting, Linguistics, Modern Languages, International Relations, European Union Studies, etc, etc.

Make sure that you understand if the course you are applying for is literature based, or will focus on the written and spoken word, as many courses will vary widely in this.

Creative Subjects

Creative people tend to be known as 'gifted' although achievement in this area certainly doesn't come without a lot of effort! Some Creative course can lead to specific careers, such as Art and Design, Music and Drama, although Fine Art courses can lead to areas in which it is difficult to get established.

Courses available include: Fashion and Textile Design, Graphic Design, Industrial Design, Three Dimensional Design. Architecture and Landscape Architecture also fall within this area. History of Art is also a popular choice.

Music courses tend to be very broad in their approach, but some are performance based, others include Aural Training, Analysis, Historical Studies, Music Technology, Electronics, and Music and Sound Recording.

Drama or Dance students can specialise in Performing Arts, Musical Theatre, Radio and TV Production, Film and Video, PR, Publishing, Creative Writing etc, etc.

Arts degrees cover a wide field and apart from subjects chosen as a preparation to enter the teaching profession they are non-vocational, and generally studied for pleasure and scholarship. One of the most popular of these is English, both Literature and Language.

Other Subjects

Other courses include: Creative Writing, American Studies, History, History of Art, Classical Studies, Classics, Philosophy, Theology, Religious Studies, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Sport Studies, Coaching, Sport Therapy, Fitness Management, Town and Country Planning, Geography, Transport Planning, Advertising, Journalism, Land Management, etc, etc.

Those students interested in a teaching career but who do not want to follow a teacher training course can study for a degree course, for example in English, History, Geography or Languages, and then take an extra year, leading to a Post-graduate Certificate in Education.

Unitaster Days has a really good section on subject guides to university with on demand recordings of webinars on a wide range of university degree subjects.

UnitasterDays

Support for Schools Support for Students Support for Parents University Pages

Subject Guide Videos

An impartial guide to university courses - featuring expert speakers

Home > On Demand Webinars

These impartial videos have one key aim. To support students who are considering university to make informed future subject decisions. They feature guest speakers from a range of different universities, who are always experts in the subject being explored.

Including the UK's first video subject guide!

Different subjects, but the same four themes explored in every single one:

- Why students may wish to consider the subject
- What to expect if they study it
- An overview of the careers it may lead to
- Application tips if they go on to apply

From Accounting to Zoology - and 100's of subjects in between. You can browse the videos below, search by keyword, or filter by subject.

Search Webinars

Filter by subject
All university guidance webinars

On Demand Webinar Library

A guide to studying Psychology

A guide to studying...

A guide to studying Pharmaceutical and...

Applying through UCAS

What is UCAS? - Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. A one-stop website for everything to do with applying to university or college, including a centralised application processing service using an online application form and a complete course search with course details and entry requirements.

Key dates:

early September - first applications may be sent to UCAS

15 October – UCAS deadline for medicine/vet med/dentistry/Oxbridge

13 January – UCAS deadline for all applications (except Art & Design courses with a 24 March deadline)

Apply:

On the UCAS website: ucas.com your application is accessible from any internet linked computer. There are 13 key sections of the application for you to complete online. You can complete them in any order and make changes at any time before the application is sent to UCAS. **For the Education section you will need all your exam boards and achieved grades from your GCSE certificates.** Mrs Elliot and your form tutor will review your Personal Statement with you. You have 5 course choices, but you can apply for more than one course at the same university (with the exception of Oxford and Cambridge).

*You do **NOT** need to have all 5 choices on your application in order to submit it. You just need one and can then add other choices as and when you are ready to do so.*

When your application is completed and you are happy that it is ready to be sent off, you must make an appointment to see Mrs Elliot who will finalise the reference section and send off your application to UCAS. You must make sure that you have submitted your application to the school by using pay and submit by 1pm the day before that appointment to allow for it to be reviewed and your references added.

Your username, password and UCAS ID No. will be used throughout the coming year – write them down here

USERNAME PASSWORD UCAS ID No.

UCAS use email and text messages to contact you about the progress of your application so keep your personal details up to date with UCAS if they change. *Make sure that you verify your e mail address when asked to do so.*

How to see the outcomes of your applications

After your application is sent to UCAS you will receive a UCAS ID number – you will need this in any contact/correspondence with UCAS and with your universities. In your application you will be able to see the current status of your application at each university. Universities may also use UCAS to invite you for interview and will expect you to reply to them by email. ***If you don't respond you are unlikely to get an offer.***

Decisions and Offers:

Universities also use UCAS to inform you of their decisions. The decision will be one of the following three possibilities:

Conditional offer The University is prepared to offer you a place on the course, subject to your getting the required grades and meeting any additional requirements

Unconditional offer You have already met the all the entry requirements of the course, and are offered a place without the need for further examination results etc. (This is usually if you apply after A level results)

Unsuccessful No offer is made, either because you do not meet the requirements of the course or there are sufficient other better qualified applicants

Occasionally a university will make you an offer of an alternative course. Be aware of this and decide whether it is really what you want to do.

Offers will be made in terms of grades (egBBB) or points (eg120 points)

UCAS points system	Grade	A2	EPQ
	A*	56	28
	A	48	24
	B	40	20
	C	32	16
	D	24	12
	E	16	8

Acceptance:

Once you have received all your offers you have until Spring to reply. The exact date will be dependent on when you received your offers and it may be different from your friends. You must choose 'firm' (1st choice) and 'insurance' (2nd choice) offers. Your FIRM choice should always be your FIRST choice. If you don't reply by the deadline your offers are automatically withdrawn.

Extra:

If you have used all 5 choices and have been unsuccessful you can enter another application using Extra. See Mrs Elliot for help with this. You can also use EXTRA if you have changed your mind about your course, although you will have to turn down any offers you have already received in order to do so.

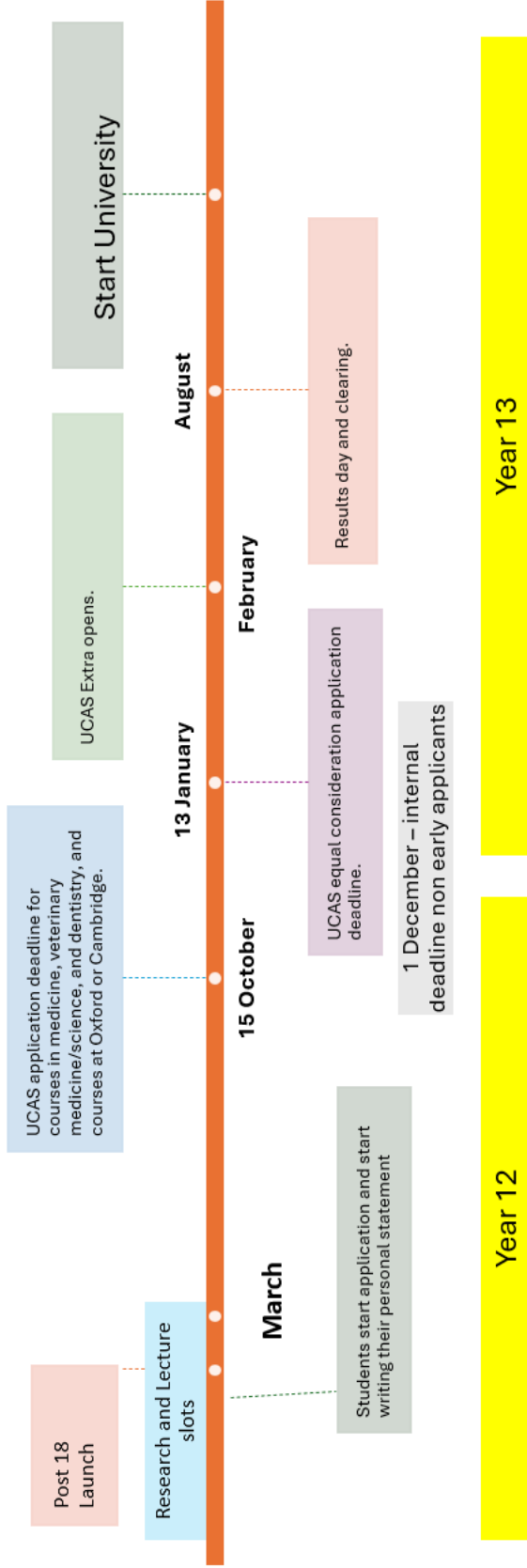
Clearing:

On results day, the first thing to do is check on UCAS whether you have a place at your firm or insurance choice. Even if you do not get the grades they have asked for they may still accept you. If you have not met the terms of your firm or insurance offers, and they haven't given you the place, then you will go into Clearing. This is the matching process between students and available courses and operates on a first-come, first-served basis. You will need to find a course – all clearing places are shown on UCAS.com) and then **telephone** (NOT email) the university. Be prepared to persevere as it may take some time to get through!

Cost

For 2027 entry, the application fee is £28.95 for up to 5 choices.(no charge for students eligible for free school meals or for care leavers)

Applying to UK universities – 2027 entry



Timeline 2027 entry

Personal statement

What is it for?

To demonstrate to the university that you have thoroughly researched the course, you have a passionate interest in the subject and really want to study it.


- Carries a lot of weight with universities
- Demonstrates your reasons for applying
- Is the first and often only chance to 'sell yourself' to your university choices
- An opportunity to create a good impression to Admissions Tutors

They want you to answer the following three questions:




Start by brainstorming all your achievements/strengths that you want to include, then

- Write a draft version and condense it afterwards
- Construct it through key paragraphs
- Keep sentences short and to the point
- Avoid clichés
- **Be Original – don't make them yawn**

What do they want to know? They want you to answer three questions:



What are the questions?

-  Why do you want to study this course or subject?
-  How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
-  What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

What you should think about including:

UCAS

Q1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?

Students will want to show **evidence** of passion, curiosity and interest, this could include:

Motivations for studying this course(s):	Knowledge of this subject area and interests:	Future plans; demonstrate why this course/subject is a good fit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you been inspired by a key role model or moment in your life?• Is it a subject you love and want to pursue further?• What is your drive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a particular subject area you've researched?• Something you can't wait to learn more about?• What about a book or subject expert doing great things that's sparked your interest?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you already have a particular profession in mind?• How might you use your studies to launch your career?• What's important to you and your future, and how might the knowledge gained from your chosen course(s) help you to achieve this?

Q2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

UCAS

Focus on what's most **recent** and **relevant** to the subject or course(s), examples could include:

How your studies or training relate to chosen course(s) or subject area:	What relevant or transferable skills you have that make you a great candidate:	Any relevant educational achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This could be current or previous studies.• From any form of formal education – think school, college, training provider, or short online university course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there a couple of subjects that helped develop a core set of relevant skills required for your chosen course(s).• Maybe a particular module or project helped you understand where your interests and strengths lie.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universities and colleges will see grades on your application - don't waste space talking about these.• Focus on accomplishments like a competition, holding a position of responsibility or representing the school/college.

Q3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

UCAS

Examples should be **reflective** and **demonstrate** further **suitability** for the subject or course(s), this could include:

Work experience, employment, or volunteering	Personal life experiences or responsibilities:	Hobbies and any extracurricular or outreach activities:	Achievements outside of school or college
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-person or virtual work experience.• Paid for work or volunteering.• The key thing is reflection on the experiences and the skills gained relevant to your chosen course(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a situation you've personally overcome that has influenced your decision?• Are there personal experiences that have helped you develop essential qualities for the course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think sports, reading, community work, summer schools.• Any activities outside of core studies that help further showcase <u>why</u> you'd make a great student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This could be a position of responsibility for local clubs or groups, competitions, or qualifications you've attained outside of the classroom.

How do I make a good impression?

- Show motivation - what extra-curricular reading/activities have you done?
- **Be enthusiastic** about your chosen course
- Show your enthusiasm for academia and learning generally
- Show what kind of person you are outside academia
- Show your personality, interests, achievement and relevant work experience
- Show that you are a well-rounded individual
- Be careful not to make it specific to one university

Transferable skills

Wider life experiences are important. Display transferable skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication, enterprising and organisational skills as well as maturity and dependability. Think about your part-time work, taking part in sports, being a prefect etc - how have these helped you to be more organised, communicate effectively and prioritise your time? How will these skills help in your chosen course?

Don't state, evaluate!

What effect has your experience had on you? What did you learn from a particular experience and how will that benefit you in your chosen course? Don't say *'I was captain of the rugby team'* say *'My experience as captain of the rugby team has taught me the importance of teamwork as well as leadership, both important skills I will bring to University life'*.

Be Specific

Don't say you'll make a good doctor if you can't say why. Don't say you 'enjoy history' – give examples of your knowledge of history and what, in particular, fascinates you - if this is outside the curriculum, then so much the better. Research the modules taught on the course (look at the course information page and most especially the **entry profiles** on the UCAS website) and refer to them in your personal statement.

Keep it short and to the point

Remember that by the time it gets to the admissions tutor it is reduced and difficult to read, so don't feel you have to use up all your word count.

Getting started

The Unifrog personal statement tool is an excellent way of starting your personal statement.

Using Unifrog to complete your personal statement.

Unifrog is an excellent help to creating your personal statement. Why?

- It provides a structure and prompts to help you devise content.
- You can ask your tutor for feedback and they can give comments or add notes.
- You can then track your various drafts.

To use Unifrog personal statement tool go to the drafting application materials section of your home page.

Drafting application materials

UK Personal Statement

✘ Marked as finished

Go to tool >

Academics

✘ No Classes selected

Go to tool >

Subject References

✘ 1 References, [1 missing](#)

Locked 🔒

How to use the Personal Statement tool

The tool splits your Personal Statement into the three questions. You can complete these in any order and come back to each section as many times as you like. Each section must have a minimum of 350 characters. The personal statement in total has a maximum of 4000 characters.

The screenshot shows the 'Write' interface of the Personal Statement tool. It is divided into three sections, each with a 'Start' button and a character count. Section 1 is titled 'Section 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?' and has a character count of 0 (Min 350, Our recommendation is about 1200). Section 2 is titled 'Section 2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?' and has a character count of 0 (Min 350, Our recommendation is about 1400). Section 3 is titled 'Section 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?' and has a character count of 0 (Min 350, Our recommendation is about 1400). The interface also includes a 'Preview' tab and a 'Write' tab with the subtext 'Add, edit and delete text'.

At the top of each [question](#) you will see some prompts in green text. Each one expands to show an example.

Remember that your Personal Statement needs to be personal to you so do not use these templates word for word; use them as guidance and inspiration!

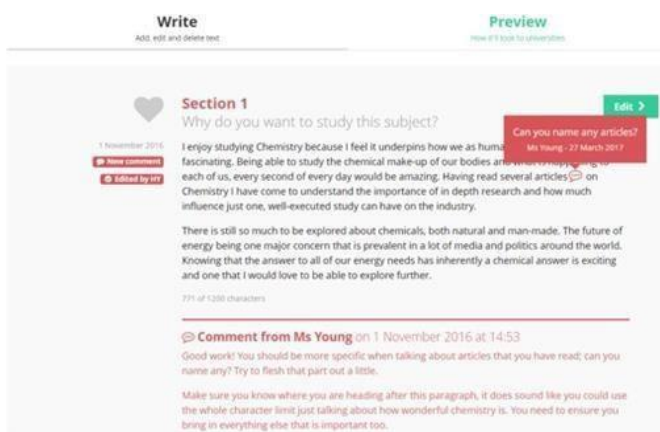
The screenshot shows the 'Section 1' prompt: 'Section 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?'. It includes a 'Back' button and a recommendation that this part make up around 30% of the total statement. Below the prompt, there are examples of what to write about, such as '1. What sparked your interest in the subject area?'. The interface also includes a 'Law example' section with a text box containing a sample response: 'My interest in studying law was originally sparked by the significant moments in legal history that I've lived through, for example the reversal of Roe v Wade in the US, and the passing of the The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act in the UK. After exploring these in my citizenship lessons, I began to read up on how laws come into effect in different countries, and how laws can be changed. Reading into laws around the world on crime, safety, and families allowed me to see the impact of the legal system in different countries and begin to question how we can make global, positive changes. Studying law will help me develop my research and analysis skills, and improve my ability to construct meaningful, well-thought-out arguments to support my ideas.'

When you feel as though you would like some feedback you can do so as below.

The screenshot shows the 'Ask a teacher for feedback' form. It includes a dropdown menu for the teacher's name (Mrs Elliot), an 'add a note' button, a 'Send' button, and an 'Email my Personal Statement' button. Below the form, there is a section for 'Or email my whole statement to:' with an input field for an email address, an 'add a note' button, and an 'Email my Personal Statement' button.

On the Personal Statement homepage you can see if a teacher has written any comments within your text or left feedback at the bottom.

Hover over the speech bubble in the text to see the comment.



These comments and notes stay with that particular version of your personal statement.

Top tips:

Examples of evidence

UCAS

In person work experience	Blogs & vlogs	Positions of responsibility	Projects or essays	Mentoring
Virtual work experience	Documentaries	Awards	Books	Tutoring
Work shadowing	Podcasts	Challenges	Influencers	Online subject courses
Paid employment	TED Talks	Personal life experiences	Hobbies	Trips or visits
Volunteering	Articles	Work based learning / training	Clubs	Competitions

- **Selective academic courses will expect your personal statement to be at least 80% academic focused with a maximum of 20% content about your extracurriculars.**
- Be meticulous
- Type and proofread your statement very carefully.
- Accuracy – spelling and grammar, correct use of language, capitalisation – very important to admissions tutors
- Be clear and concise – pay attention to detail
- Ensure that it is all your own work, UCAS have sophisticated software and check for plagiarism AND similarity
- Use entry profiles (EPs) if you are unsure what to include
- Don't repeat yourself
- Use positive and enthusiastic language
- Give examples

- Ask for help - form tutors/Mrs Elliot with editing/redrafting

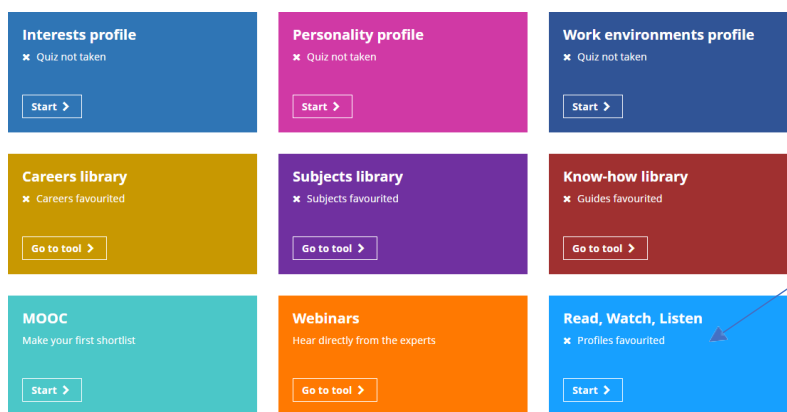
Remember you may be called for interview and they will use your personal statement as a basis for the discussion. SO BE TRUTHFUL.

Super-curriculars

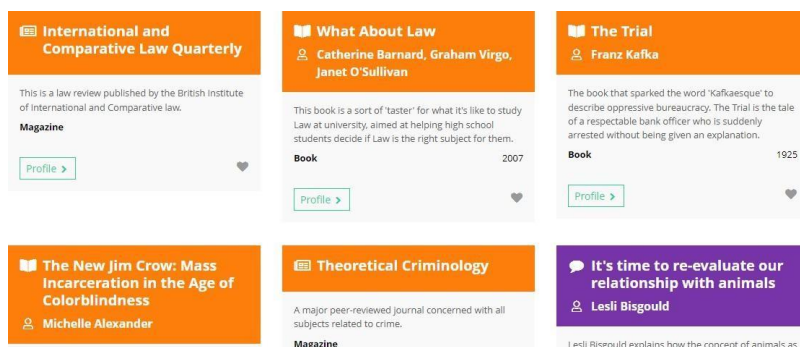
Super-curricular activities are activities that you do outside your exam courses but that relate to your subject. Selective universities will expect to see evidence of this.

The following are really good sources of super-curricular activities:

Unifrog – Read, Watch, Listen



You can then input a key word eg law and it will give you a huge range of resources -book, magazines, podcasts, TED talks



The following are also really useful.

University of Cambridge super-curriculars:

https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/files/publications/super-curricular_suggestions.pdf

Worcester College, University of Oxford: watch the video for lots of ideas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EIoNex5qY>

Sample course specific advice. Please see Mrs Elliot if your course is not here and you need some help.

ACCOUNTING

Attend insight days at accountancy firms e.g. PWC

Be able to show awareness of why accounting is so crucial to business and economics

Useful resource: www.accountancylive.com

ARCHITECTURE

Visit inspiring buildings and make notes on why you find them interesting

Keep up-to-date with new architectural methods and building techniques

Study the work of one or two famous architects in great detail

Useful resource: The Architect's Journal, Architecture review and the RIBA journal.

ART & DESIGN

Visit art exhibitions and design shows frequently

Choose a few favourite artists and designers (past and present) and familiarise yourself with their work

Learn how to use programmes such as InDesign and Photoshop

Useful resource: www.creativereview.co.uk

BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT

Read The Economist and the FT regularly and follow 2 or 3 stories in detail

Participate in business challenges such as the McKinsey Leadership Programme

Apply for placements at small companies and get experience in a range of fields within a business

Useful resource: uk.reuters.com/business

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Set up an IT club at school

Get work experience in local organisations, or at school

Create your own website/programme

Keep up-to-date with developments in technology

Useful resource: <https://www.bcs.org/>

DENTISTRY

Try to get work experience at a dental surgery

Volunteer to teach younger children about dental hygiene

Read journals such as the Dental Update

DRAMA AND PERFORMING ARTS

Try to get a prominent role in the next school play (on or off stage) Visit the theatre as often as you can

Read a play a week and make notes on how you would direct key scenes

Ensure you have knowledge of all genres and styles of theatre

Read reviews and understand how to critique them

Useful resource: <https://www.thestage.co.uk/home>

ECONOMICS

Follow news stories about the economy —national and global, that interest you

Ensure that you fully understand the UK's current financial position

Try to get work experience or attend an insight day at a leading financial firm

Read The FT and The Economist regularly

Useful resource: <https://www.discovereconomics.co.uk/>

ENGINEERING

Study five structures that you admire in great detail and understand how and why they work

Think about your favourite gadgets — what problem do they solve?

Try and invent something that solves a problem

Understand the different areas of engineering

Useful resource: <https://i-want-to-study-engineering.org/>

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Read, read, read! Novels, plays and poetry too

Watch adaptations of the books and plays you have read

Undertake some creative writing

Start a book Club at school

Useful resource: www.literaryreview.co.uk

GEOGRAPHY

Research current global issues such as the environment and population

Become a member of the Royal Geographical Society

Useful resources: National Geographic, Geographic Review

HISTORY

Visit historical sites, museums and exhibitions. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of biased and flawed evidence. Research courses carefully.

Useful resource: <https://royalhistsoc.org/>

LAW

Attend insight days run by top law firms

Try to secure work experience with a local firm of solicitors

Follow high-profile cases in the news

Visit the Magistrates Court in Peterborough and The Old Bailey, if possible.

Useful resources: The Lawyer, Lawyer 2b and The Law Journal UK.

<https://www.lawcareers.net/>

MATHEMATICS

Research mathematical theory that is outside the A Level curriculum eg Fermat's Last Theorem, Euclid's Proof of the Infinitude of Primes and Pythagorean Triplets

Enter UKMT Maths Challenges

Make notes on the ways in which mathematics can be applied in society

Useful resources: www.ukmt.org.uk

MEDICINE

Attend a summer school for budding medics

Secure work experience/volunteering at a hospital, GP, home for the elderly or a hospice

Read the British Medical Journal

Follow interesting cases in the news and keep on top of the latest breakthroughs in medical care

Useful resources: The Medical Portal, www.bma.org.uk, www.bmj.com

POLITICS

Read articles from Politics Review and Talking Politics

Show an interest in politics by joining your local Youth Parliament

Start a debating society at school, or join online debating forums

Keep up-to-date with global current affairs

Useful resource: www.theweek.co.uk

PRIMARY EDUCATION

In addition to work experience, a good understanding and knowledge of factors affecting education and children's learning and development is important.

Useful resource: getintoteaching.education.gov.uk

PSYCHOLOGY

Read articles from the British Journal of Social Psychology and The Psychologist

Join the British Psychological Society's student member group

Attend lectures such as Psychology 4 Students, or a summer school at a leading university

Useful resources: www.bps.org.uk

SOCIAL WORK

Get work experience in a school for children with special needs

Volunteer at your local community care centre or residential home for the elderly

Follow interesting cases in the news

Useful resource: British Journal of Social Work.

SOCIOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY

MOOCs on Sociology, Cultural Studies, or Anthropology are available and will develop wider knowledge.

There are plenty of Sociologically relevant books - Humankind by Rutger Bregman,

Watching the English by Kate Fox, and Natives by Akala are particularly good.

The podcast "Thinking Allowed" (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qy05>) has plenty of interesting debates and perspectives.

Woman's Hour (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007qlvb>) explores current affairs, particularly relating to gender.

MediaMag Podcast (<https://mediamag.podbean.com/>) is useful for both exploring the role of the Media and developing deeper theoretical knowledge.

Keeping up with current issues and reading around the news is also good to do!

THE SCIENCES

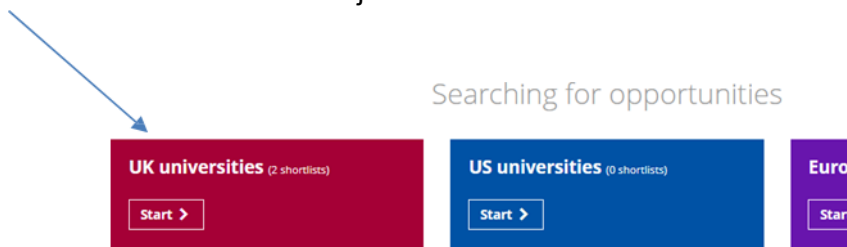
Formal work experience will not be required but there is still a lot you can do. You can read the New Scientist, attend lectures at universities that are easy to reach. Taster days are very useful as well. Wider reading is important—mainly as a prompt for you to go and undertake more independent research into the subject.

You can also read The Week’s science section and the science section of the BBC News website.

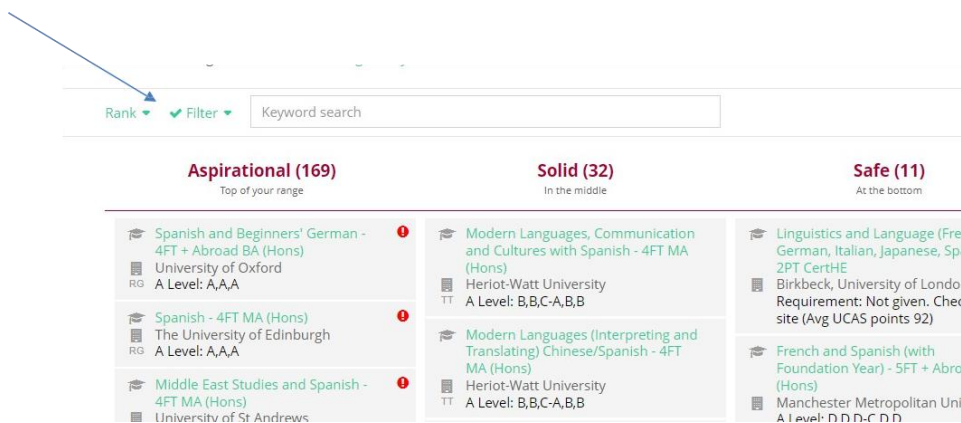
Using the Unifrog UK university search tool

You can use the Unifrog UK university search tool to:

- Get a list of courses in a subject, related subject or courses where that subject is studied in combination with other subjects



- Rank and filter the list by for example entry requirements, graduate prospects, distance from home



About Apprenticeships

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a genuine job where you gain experience in the transferable skills that come from being in the workplace alongside learning and achieving a valuable qualification. You will also be earning a wage. You are treated the same as any other employee but are given the time to concentrate on your studies. You will get the chance to learn from the people that you work alongside and will have a mentor for support. Most of the training will take place within the workplace and then providing which qualification you are on, you will spend time in college, with a training provider or university. This off the job training will equate to at least 20% of your working week. It will vary from one day a week to blocks of days per month depending on the qualification. The time to complete the qualification will also vary, dependent on the level that you are doing. For example, on a level 2 Intermediate apprenticeship you will be on programme from anywhere from 12 – 15 months whereas a Degree level 6 or 7 you could be anywhere between 3 – 6 years.

What levels are there?

Intermediate - Level 2 – Equivalent to 5 GCSE passes at grade A*-C or 9-4.

Advanced - Level 3 – Equivalent to 2 A Level passes/Level 3 Diploma/International Baccalaureate.

Higher – Equivalent to Level 4, 5, 6 and 7 Foundation Degree and above.

Degree – Equivalent to Level 6 and 7. Bachelor's or Master's Degree.

What can I do an Apprenticeship in?

There are over 1,500 job roles over the 4 different levels and over 70 universities and 200 colleges are approved to deliver the higher and degree apprenticeships. There are over 400 different industries offering apprenticeships and it is increasing all the time.

Some companies offering apprenticeships.....



Some of the universities you could study at



How and when do I apply for an apprenticeship?

There is not a specific time to apply for an apprenticeship as they appear all year round. This is known as 'roll on roll off'. However, some of the larger companies have an intake at the same time every year for example September or January. If you are thinking of doing an apprenticeship it is a good idea, to start looking throughout Year 12 so that you can see what sort of vacancies exist but also you can see companies you may be interested in and when they start to advertise. It is good to do your research so that you are prepared but remember applying for an apprenticeship is like applying for a job it may not be there when you are ready to apply. Thinking about what you want to do and where you would like to work, will help you narrow down and make your search more refined.

At the back of the booklet, there is a list of websites where you can look for an apprenticeship. They do not just appear on one site and some companies only advertise on their website.

Each company will have its own way to apply there is not a set application form for you to fill in. Be prepared by having your CV up-dated as you may have to attach it to your application form when you apply.

Entry Requirements

Intermediate (Level 2)

Applicants need to be over 16 years old. Some companies require Maths and English minimum grade 4. Some however, allow as part of the apprenticeship, for you to re- take if you do not have but you will need to pass to complete the qualification.

Advanced (Level 3)

As above

Higher (Level 4 and above)

Entry requirements can include at least five GCSEs grades A-C 9-4), and Level 3 qualifications, including A levels, NVQ/SVQ Level 3, or a BTEC National. Some will expect or require applicants to have subjects related to the particular apprenticeship.

Degree Level 5 to 7

Enable apprentices to achieve a full bachelor's or master's Degree as part of their apprenticeship. As above, some employers have specific entry requirements. For example some IT apprenticeships have required an A level (or equivalent) grade range of ABB to CCC. Many employers will expect or require applicants to have qualifications in subjects related to the particular apprenticeship

What do Apprentices get paid?

As an apprentice, like with all job roles you have to receive at least the minimum wage. You will be paid, for all of the hours that you work including the time spent at university/college. Here are the current minimum rates for National Minimum wage and National Living Wage that change every April:

	Apprentice
April 2025	£7.55

Every apprenticeship is tailored to the person doing it. Not only that, but pay varies dramatically based on the sector you are in, your employer, and your level of study. You will also find that apprenticeships around London and the South East tend to pay a bit more, too as the cost of living is higher.

Statistics

In a 2018 survey, after finishing their scheme, as many as 85% of apprentices will stay in employment, with two-thirds (64%) remaining with the same employer.

In the same survey, which questioned over 5,000 apprentices, it was found that one in three (32%) of all former apprentices received a promotion within a year of completing their apprenticeship, whilst three-quarters (75%) stated that they were given more responsibility in their role. It also reported that half (51%) of companies stated that it takes an apprentice approximately five years to reach management level. 92% of apprentices report of being 'satisfied' with their apprenticeship.

Pros and cons of doing an apprenticeship

Pros

- 1) You work in a real job for a real employer
- 2) You gain valuable work place skills and experience
- 3) You are paid a salary and get paid holiday
- 4) You achieve a qualification
- 5) You get support from colleagues and a training organisation
- 6) You become more employable
- 7) You have no university debt.

Cons

- 1) Will not experience university life
- 2) Shorter holidays
- 3) Greater responsibility earlier
- 4) Apprenticeships are more competitive
- 5) Harder to change careers at a later date
- 6) Starting salary may be lower

An Apprenticeship is not a soft option because...

- 1) You will have to apply for multiple vacancies to be with a chance of success. This means that you may have to fill in company application forms that do take time.
- 2) You may have to attend assessment days as part of the application process, and this may require preparation.
- 3) It is good practice to apply for university as well as applying for apprenticeships, which means filling in the UCAS form as well as the apprenticeship job application forms.
- 4) You have to be prepared to go straight into the work environment and must study along with working full time.
- 5) Whilst the experience will be worthwhile, you are not guaranteed a position at the end of the apprenticeship.

Where to look for an apprenticeship

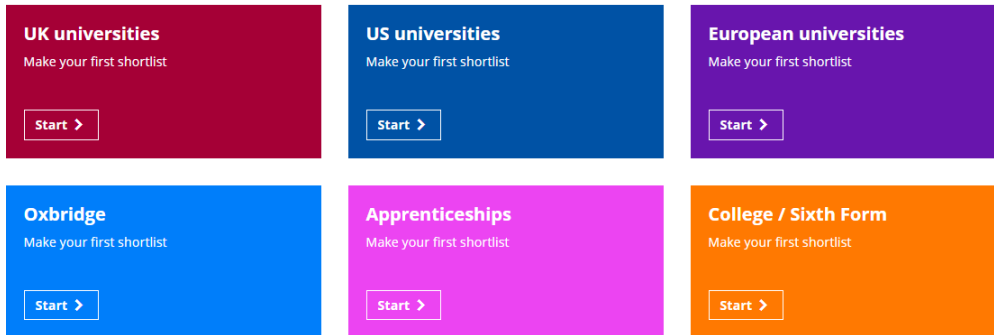
If you are considering doing an apprenticeship, please do come and talk to me in the Careers Office on the ground floor of the Turing Centre, as we are able to give you some guidance on where you can look and talk through all your options. It can be quite daunting to know where to look or even which one would suit you best. It does take a while to find the right one so be prepared to put the research in. Here are some suggestions on where you can start to research and look for vacancies:

UCAS have a very comprehensive section now on apprenticeships.



You can use the apprenticeship search tool in Unifrog:

Searching for opportunities



- www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
- <https://www.ucas.com/apprenticeships-in-the-uk>
- www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk
- <https://notgoingtouni.co.uk/>
- <https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk/>
- <https://www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk/jobs>
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/apprenticeships>
- <https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/apprenticeships>
- www.instituteforapprenticeships.org
- <https://www.milkround.com/jobs/apprenticeships?s=recentsearch>
- <https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/vacancies>
- <https://www.bestapprenticeships.com/>
- <https://opportunities.springpod.com/opportunity-type/degree-apprenticeships>

Job sites like **Indeed** or **TotalJobs** carry Apprenticeship roles.

Creative:

<https://www.screenskills.com/education-training/apprenticeships/>

Law

<https://www.lawcareers.net/Starting-Out/Law-Apprenticeships-Guide>

NHS:

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/study-and-training/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes>

<https://www.topapprenticeshipemployers.co.uk/Top100AE22.pdf>

Tips on applying for jobs and apprenticeships

- You can use the CV tool in Unifrog to put together an initial CV.
- When applying make sure you look at the job description in detail. What key skills are they looking for? Make sure you mention these in your CV and say how you have demonstrated them – give examples. You will probably have to tailor your CV to each application. Use the exact words that they are looking for – they may use automated systems to scan CVs/applications.
- Check your emails regularly. You may get invited to take online tests and there is usually a short deadline to complete these – you don't want to miss the deadline!
- You may have to do online interviews – these can be unnerving the first time particularly if it is an automated interview and you can only see yourself when you look at your screen. You will get used to it.
- Make sure you research the particular role and company. Look at the company website and their social media. What are their values? What do they do and who are their major competitors? Are there any major developments or issues in that industry? This is your chance to find out more about the company, the people who work there, and the job itself.
- When answering questions particularly if it's not one you have prepared for use the STAR technique

STAR

SITUATION: What was the situation that you faced? When did it happen?

TASK: What was the task you had to take part in? What was the objective of the task?

ACTION: What action did you take to achieve your objective? How did you tackle the problem you faced?

RESULTS: What was the result of your actions? How did you measure your success? What did you learn from the situation (evaluation)? What skills did you learn?

There are useful tips here:

[Application support \(apprenticeships.gov.uk\)](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk)

[Apprenticeship Interview Questions | RateMyApprenticeship](#)

Think of some questions to ask at the end of the interview.

You may also have to do an assessment centre. There is lots of good advice and information here- [Assessment centres | Prospects.ac.uk](#)

Finding a Job

Get out there into the big, wide world and see what it's all about!

- You could get an entry level job in the industry you want to be in, or just any job to pass some time while you think about your next move
- Lots of employers offer education that doesn't fall into the category of 'university' or 'apprenticeship', for example professional qualifications

Pros

Work experience to put on your CV

Learn and develop new skills

Earn a wage

Take advantage of training

Cons

Starting work is very different to being at school or university

Your wage in an entry level job may not be very high to begin with

Without further education, you may feel limited in where you can progress to

Identifying options

Youth Employment UK

Find A Job

Career Profiles

iCould

Job Listings

Indeed

Reed

Glassdoor

Entrepreneurship

Start Ups

Princes Trust-Start something

Gap Year

- Go travelling, work or volunteer for a year – the choice is yours!
- Two things often happen after a gap year - you return to education as planned, with a year's life experience under your belt; or you decide not to return to the originally planned route, and find a new pathway!

Pros

Broaden your mind by travelling and meeting new people

Get work experience before doing some more learning

Take a break from education and take stock of what you want from your career or university course

Grasp opportunities as they arise

Cons

Unless you have savings you'll have to work for at least some of it

It's easy to drift away from education or a clear pathway once your year comes to an end

You won't have the same level of application support from school during this year out

Year Out Group is an association of approved gap year providing organisations, most of which are registered in the UK. At least one of the principal activities of each of these organisations is the provision of well-structured gap year programmes in the UK or overseas.

EDT Year in Industry helps place students in Year 13 in top UK companies and organisations, including Rolls-Royce, EDF, Network Rail, Scottish Power and P&G. Typically, the programme lasts between 10-12 months and is a paid placement.

Your Digital Footprint

According to a Jobsite Social Recruiting Survey, 93% of recruiters check a candidate's social profiles before making a hiring decision.

If a prospective employer or course leader searched for your name, what might they find? And is there anything on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or TikTok you wouldn't want your future boss to see?

You should make sure that your profiles are private and that you check you know all your friends. You could create a public profile that you curate differently from your private one.

Get connected

Increasingly, employers use social media to advertise roles and to recruit candidates. Make sure you follow and like the businesses and organisations you're interested in.



Instagram: Very visual. Follow lifestyle industries such as travel, fashion, beauty/makeup, food, home & interior design, and cult trends. Good for brands, publishers and influencers who fall into the above categories.



Facebook: Personal branding; less formal than LinkedIn. Follow pages and accounts you're interested in for a mixture of articles, blogs, photos and videos. Good for a business selling products, in lifestyle industries similar to Instagram, that require more information in each post.

Snapchat: Covers almost any industry. Follow businesses/people you're interested in and see a very informal and less edited look at what they do day-to-day.

LinkedIn: Personal branding/networking. Follow influential businesses and leaders in more formal industries, and people who are part of your targeted industry to see industry news and articles. Good for STEM and business.



Jargon Buster

Not sure what a word means? Check the unitaster day jargon buster

[Jargon Buster | UniTasterDays](#)



For teachers & careers advisers

University jargon buster

A guide to the key terms you may run into when exploring university