



The Mosslands School
A TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

THE
SIXTH FORM
GUIDE
FOR
APPLICATIONS
TO
HIGHER EDUCATION



for
2013
entry



THE MOSSLANDS GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to give you information that may assist you in gaining a better understanding of the UCAS application system. The Application process starts in earnest in September and it is essential that, during the final few weeks of this summer term, you familiarise yourself with procedures and investigate courses and universities which will meet your needs.

Whatever you want to do in life, it is highly likely that getting a degree or diploma from a university or college will enhance your career opportunities. Indeed, many professions, (for example, law and medicine), have a specific requirement that all entrants must hold a relevant degree. Although a degree or equivalent qualification does not automatically guarantee landing the job of your choice, statistics show that graduates have a fifty per cent better chance of avoiding unemployment.

Most people who have been to university regard the time as being one of the most exciting and happiest times of their lives. It is a time when you learn how to become independent, especially if you elect to live away from home. New friendships are made in an environment where the social atmosphere is fundamental to university life. It is also a time when you discover what sort of person you really are, how to develop the self-discipline that serious study requires and how to stretch your intellect to the limits your course requires of you. It is also a time when decisions are made regarding a career, which ultimately will shape your future.

It is, therefore, vital that the right decisions are made regarding both course and institution. This requires you to take responsibility for researching the information necessary to enable you to make informed choices. Choosing what to study and where to study is a project in itself.

In a thriving sixth form like Mosslands, many students go on to degree courses but, initially, the process of applying can appear quite daunting. This process begins in the latter stages of the lower sixth. There is much information to absorb in such a short space of time. Hopefully, this handbook will help you to understand more clearly the application process, but remember, it only gives you a basic outline and you must look at other sources of help and information such as:-

- ✓ The UCAS web-site (www.ucas.com)
- ✓ University prospectuses (physical & electronic)
- ✓ Other publications found in the Sixth Form Centre and the Library
- ✓ Information found on the Internet.
- ✓ Familiarisation sessions arranged in school as part of your General Studies and PSHE programme.

The teaching staff can also be a good source of information. Do not be shy in seeking advice either from the Sixth Form staff or your specialist subject teachers, all of whom have had to go through the application process themselves.



You should plan to visit the universities you have identified as possible choices. Most universities and colleges organise special open days. Details of some of these are displayed on the notice boards in the Sixth Form Centre and on the internet. Some visits may be organised through school but the responsibility for attending these days rests with you. You will be given permission to attend a limited number of open days during school time. It is worth considering buying a student railcard that will reduce your travel costs considerably and is valid for one year.

Good luck with your application.

Your Sixth Form Tutors

Mr Davies

Mrs Jones





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PART ONE: TIMETABLE 2012-2013

June 14th – 15th	Mosslands Post-18 Opportunities programme & Higher Education Convention, Liverpool University
Summer Term - Lower Sixth	Research into courses / suitable universities; accessing prospectuses; open day visits; preparation of personal statements etc.
September	UCAS open for applications.
September - October	Interviews with Sixth Form tutors to discuss references.
September 30th	Applications for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary Science must be completed.
October 15th	UCAS deadline for above applications.
November 23rd	Internal deadline for all other UCAS applications.
December 14th	School closing date.
May – June	'A' Level examinations & completion of coursework elements
August 15th (To be confirmed)	'A' Level results Clearing
Late September/early October	University/College courses begin.



PART TWO - YOUR APPLICATION

In almost all most cases, you will apply through UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. UCAS handles admissions on behalf of the colleges and universities themselves. Once you've decided what you want to study, you need to apply for a place.

If you intend to study full-time, you will apply through UCAS. This means completing the on-line application and writing a personal statement. Your Mossland's Sixth Form tutors will help you complete your application as well as writing your reference. UCAS also provides plenty of advice on how to tackle the application form. You can apply for up to five courses, or just the one if you are sure of where you want to study.

Normally, applications need to be sent to UCAS between mid September and 15 January of the year before you want to start your course. However, the Mosslands deadline is by the end of the Autumn Term. There are different deadlines for a few universities and for some courses (such as medicine), so double-check.



Entry Requirements

Firstly, there is a general requirement, which sets out the minimum qualifications expected of a candidate seeking admission. These are normally passes in five subjects including at least two at 'A2' level and GCSE English and Maths.

Secondly, there is often a course requirement, which requires evidence of achievement in subjects relevant to the course applied for. E.g. for Biochemistry, usually 'A2' passes in Chemistry and Biology would be required.

Note: in GCSE, grades A, B, and C are considered 'passes' and 'A' level, grades A to E inclusive, are regarded as 'pass' standard. Many universities and departments will accept a pass in 'A' level General Studies as an entry subject but not all!

Some universities will offer conditional places based on the number of UCAS points they will expect you to achieve, (based on the grades you need to obtain). Make sure you become familiar with the points system. (See page 20). Others, however, may state specific minimum grades for the subjects you are taking.

Obtaining a place at university will depend upon the number of places available and upon the number and quality of the applicants. There is no simple formula to be offered as a reliable guide. Examination grades are not the only criteria of acceptance but the better your grades the more likely you will be accepted.

Note: Universities make an assessment of your potential and suitability based on a combination of your GCSEs, the 'AS' grades you have achieved, your *predicted grades* for 'A2' and 'AS' re-takes, your *personal statement* and your *reference* provided by the school.



Choice of Institution and Course.

Which do you choose first? The course or the institution? It is logical to choose *what* you want to do before you decide *where* you want to do it. Some courses are only available at a small number of places so it is no good setting your heart on a particular university and then discovering it does not offer what you want. Do your research on the courses you are interested in and which best suit your interests, needs and abilities. Remember to check the entry qualifications for each in order to decide which will be realistic choices.

Course

Before you apply to a university or college, you need to decide which subject or subjects you would like to study. It is important, first of all, to choose a subject that interests you. You are largely responsible for your own study on courses, so you need to make sure you are excited by what you're learning so that you will stay focussed and motivated.

Take into consideration your long-term career aspirations and make sure that your subject will allow you to follow your chosen route. If you are hoping to become an engineer, for example, then an engineering degree may be for you, but it is not always that straightforward. For instance, a media studies degree may not necessarily be an advantage if you want to work in television. If you are unsure, seek advice from one of the sixth form tutors or Mr Taylor.

The number of courses available can be bewildering. There are currently 60,000 courses to choose from at around 700 colleges and universities so you can be confident that somewhere out there is just the course for you. If you're interested in subjects related to medicine, for example, there is a range of courses to choose from, including dentistry, osteopathy, acupuncture, and veterinary surgery. Look at your options and consider what each course of study actually entails. University or college websites will give you lots of information.

However, every course is different. Your work may be assessed differently and the particular areas of study will differ from one institution to the next. Read prospectuses to find out as many details as you can about all the courses you are interested in. There are copies of prospectuses located in the Library. You can also view them *on-line* via university websites which can be accessed through the UCAS website. In addition, some universities produce *unofficial* prospectuses on the web so you can get an alternative view usually from the eyes of the students themselves. It is important that you visit more than one on the official open days as part of your research.

Institution

Deciding where you're going to study can be as important as choosing the right subject. The range of institutions offering HE is huge, so you will need to think about which ones will suit you best, in terms of type, size and location. There are specialist colleges focusing on the arts, agriculture or education. Smaller colleges of further or higher education have a few thousand full-time students, while the biggest universities are ten times that size. Some have city-centre locations, while others are on out of town campus sites, and some have a number of different sites.

You can apply to five institutions from the shortlist of favourites you will have created. A

variety of factors can assist your selection such as :-

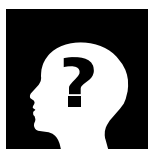
- **Geographical location.** (Do you wish to live at home or away from home? Small town or big city? Cost of living? North or South?)
- **Type and size of university.**
- **The facilities,** (working, social, accommodation).
- **Nature of course**
- **Type of assessment**
- **Status of department**
- **The student mix**



There are the old, **traditional universities** such as Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and Bristol. There are the **old** but **usually less traditional** ones such as Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham, Nottingham and several London colleges. There are the newer '**Campus**' **universities** such as Keele, Lancaster, York and East Anglia. In the latter category, the social, teaching and residential facilities tend to be on one discrete site. Some universities operate on a network of separate, individual colleges, (collegiate system), and applicants have to apply to a specific college and not the university itself. Examples of collegiate universities are Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and London.

There are also the universities which once were called *polytechnics* such as Liverpool John Moores, Manchester Metropolitan, and Central Lancashire and these tend to specialise in more vocational orientated courses. In addition, there are a group of new universities that were previously known as **university colleges / institutes of higher education**, (eg. Chester, Edgehill and Liverpool Hope). In most cases, they used to be specialist teacher training colleges but, with university status, have diversified to offer much wider ranges of courses. There are **degree courses** available in a range of subjects mainly in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Also on offer are **Higher National Diploma, (HND)** courses and, more recently, **Foundation degree courses** many of which can lead to full degrees with 'add on' years of study.

There are still **teacher training degree courses, (Bachelor of Education – BEd.)**, with the minimum entry qualifications being two 'A' levels and English Language and Maths at GCSE. Alternatively, on completing your university degree, you can opt to study for a one year **Post-Graduate Certificate in Education, (PGCE)** to qualify you for teaching.



Home or Away??

For most students going to university or college in the UK used to mean leaving home. Thousands of people do still move away to study but, with so many places to study and so many courses on offer, many people now opt to stay at home and study close to where they live. The choice is yours!

Why live at home?

Living at home while studying in HE has been the norm in countries such as France and Australia for a long time. By staying put, you can often save money on rent and keep in touch with home life – while still making new friends and having new experiences. For some

people it offers 'the best of both worlds', and it is becoming more popular as more institutions, such as further education colleges, like Wirral Met, offer HE qualifications. Expansion in HE means that it is more likely that the right course for you could be close to home. If it's within commuting distance, then staying put is worth some serious thought.

Staying at home

The Pros:

- Is often cheaper than renting student accommodation
- Avoids the hassle of moving and travelling to get home
- Makes it easier to keep close to family and friends
- Provides home comforts and stability
- Offers the 'best of both worlds'

The Cons:

- It can restrict your choice of course
- You may have less independence
- Other friends may move away to study

Why move away?

For some, getting away from home is reason enough to go to university – sometimes the further away the better! In the UK it used to be the norm that most students went to live on or near campus, and there is still a strong tradition of moving away to study for a degree. In some cases, the preferred course may be at a specific university or college, in which case it may make good sense to move. Some students also value the experience of living in student halls of residence, or in shared accommodation, as an important part of university life. Others want the opportunity to experience living in a different part of the country.

Moving away

The Pros:

- Gives you more independence
- Allows you to discover a different part of the country
- Brings you close to campus
- Gives you greater choice of courses
- Gives you the chance to live with other students

The Cons:

- You will be further away from home and family
- It may be more expensive
- You may have to live with other students!

'Should I stay or should I go?' is a decision that very much depends on your financial situation, personality and the kind of experience you want from HE. Detailed information on

all universities and colleges can be found in the prospectuses and on the web sites of each university. However, a prospectus, although useful, can never replicate the experience of physically visiting and seeing for yourself how the land lies.



Visits and Interviews

It is advisable to visit some, or all, of the institutions you have chosen if you can. Most universities and colleges organise special open days, details of some are displayed on the notice boards in the Sixth Form Centre and up-to-date details are available on the internet. These are an excellent way of finding out whether you like the feel of the place and the course. It would also be a good idea to explore the area around the university. What is the nearest town like in terms of shops, nightlife etc.? Some visits may be organised through school but the responsibility for attending these days rests with you. You will be given permission to attend a limited number of open days during school time. It is worth considering buying a student railcard that will reduce your travel costs considerably and is valid for one year. Many universities also run summer schools that you can attend.

Although the national trend is now for fewer candidates to have formal admission interviews, you may still be required to attend one. The format of the interview varies from one university to another. Some are conducted in a formal manner while others are more relaxed. Therefore, since the conduct of the interviews is a matter of departmental policy in most universities, we can only generalise about the interview. Some departments do not necessarily interview all applicants. Some do not even call them interviews but are considered personal invitations to visit the department. This is seen as a valuable opportunity to get a personal impression of candidates and allow them to take a close look at the university and to find out more about the courses, facilities, tutors and surroundings.

Interviews at universities such as Oxford and Cambridge can be spread over more than one day, which would obviously require the candidate to stay over night. Food and accommodation are usually provided.

It is normal for many interviews to be relatively short and often candidates are not even asked questions about their academic knowledge. However, it will still have given the interviewer a broad idea of what a candidate is like as a person and this impression, along with the information in the UCAS application, will help to assess the candidate's suitability to the course and to university in general. However, you should always take the precaution of rehearsing for an interview and preparing yourself for common predictable questions.

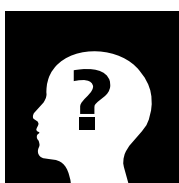
The interviewer expects candidates to be nervous and, in an attempt to create a relaxed atmosphere, you may be asked to elaborate on the interests, (sporting, intellectual and cultural), you have listed on the personal statement in your application. You must make sure, therefore, that what you have written is genuine so you can talk from an informed position with conviction and enthusiasm. An important question usually asked is, "*Why have you chosen this university and this particular course?*" You must, therefore, ensure that you have thoroughly read their prospectus and are clear about the subject you have chosen. Motivation and enthusiasm are the features most looked for in a candidate. So make yourself sound convincing and interested in what you are hoping to do.

Before the interview ends, you will be given an opportunity to ask questions. Do not hesitate

to use this opportunity and have several questions prepared. Good, intelligent, well thought out questions will help them to conclude that you are well organised, capable of self expression, and are basing important decisions on thorough research. You can ask questions on the academic structure of the course, its organisation in terms of lectures, tutorials, seminars, laboratory programmes, frequency of examinations, degree of continuous assessment, rates of academic success and employment success at the end of it. You may ask about type of accommodation available, student welfare or careers advice and support. You can ask anything you genuinely need to know that may not have been clear in your preparatory research or information you need expanding. However, avoid obvious questions, which can easily be answered by reading the prospectus.

Remember that universities are keen to admit students of quality who will prove worthy and achieve a high level of success. Your task is to persuade them that you are a better investment than either the candidate that preceded you and the one who will follow!

Mock interviews and further advice on interview technique will be offered in school to every sixth former before his or her first genuine interview. It is essential you inform Mr Davies in plenty of time when you have been called for interview.



The Application Process

All applications to British universities are made through the **Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, (UCAS)**. You should become familiar with this site very early in the process. Information is available on the UCAS web-site which is constantly being updated. This information should be studied carefully before you complete your application. You will apply through the **UCAS Apply** method via the internet. It enables applications to be processed much more quickly than paper applications and helps avoid many mistakes through the use of a series of 'prompts'. Applications should be submitted between the start of the Autumn Term and the end of November. Offers are likely to be made once applications are received rather than after the final closing date.

The number of university applications on the UCAS form is restricted to **five**. UCAS will then send copies to the universities selected who will consider the application. A university will either reject you, make you a conditional offer, or invite you for an interview and/or open day before making a decision. These offers are represented as actual 'A' level grades which you are expected to achieve to secure your place. The offer may specify the need for a certain grade in a certain subject and it may include, or exclude, General Studies. Alternatively, you may be asked to obtain a certain total number of points, based on the UCAS points scale. (See P20).

After you have received offers or replies from all your universities, (usually around February/March, but sometimes earlier), you inform UCAS, via **UCAS Track**, of the university you are firmly accepting and the one you intend to hold provisionally as insurance in case your results fail to meet the conditions of your first choice. You must, therefore, choose an insurance place with **lower** conditional grades than your firm choice!!



Invitations for interview are posted on **UCAS Track** and you are expected to reply to them online. It will be essential that, once you have submitted your application, you check UCAS track **at least** once a week.

Oxford & Cambridge Application

Both Oxford and Cambridge operate within the UCAS framework but require a supplementary application and have different methods of selection. Candidates need to make an application in September, which involves completion of the University's own application form as well as through UCAS. Interviews for *Oxbridge* applicants are the norm and are usually held in December. If this stage is passed successfully, candidates may then receive a conditional offer to be based on their performance at 'A' level. It may also be necessary to achieve a specified level of performance in GCE Special papers or in examinations known as STEP or BMAT.

Oxbridge candidates are required to submit UCAS forms by 30th September so the application should be well thought out as early as the Lower Sixth stage. Intending candidates are also advised to visit the university and college of their choice at some point in the Lower Sixth. Most of the *Oxbridge* colleges hold open days and visits can be arranged by school.

Medicine, Dentistry & Veterinary Science Applications

These courses also have an earlier closing date and completed UCAS forms must be ready to send by 30th September.

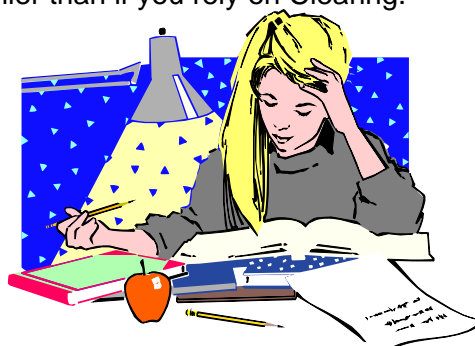
UCAS Extra

For those who do not receive any offers there is a further chance of gaining a place at a college or university with vacancies through a new system known as the '*UCAS Extra*' system. This operates from mid-March until the end of June and links applicants to the institutions with vacancies.

Clearing

If you do not attain the grades required for either your first or second choice universities, you will be able to enter **Clearing**. This process does not begin until August, after the results, and its purpose is to place in universities, where there are still vacancies, those candidates with suitable qualifications whose original applications had been unsuccessful. This is done through **UCAS Track**.

Alternatively, there is an unofficial process where candidates *short cut* Clearing and, on the basis of their results, try to *sell* themselves through direct contact with universities with vacancies. If favourably impressed, a university may ask UCAS for the candidate's clearing application to be referred to it. The advantage of this approach is that it offers the best chance of being considered by a university you prefer and you also know that you have secured a place much earlier than if you rely on Clearing.



The Application Form

You must apply for higher education direct to UCAS via the official on-line application form. This will be done using the **Apply** method. You will receive detailed guidance from the Sixth Form tutors on how to complete your application form. However it is worth focusing on two aspects of the application form: the **Personal Statement** and the **Reference**.

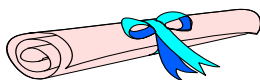
The Personal Statement

You, as the applicant, have responsibility for completing your personal statement. This is your chance to tell the universities and colleges why you are applying and why they should want you as a student. Admissions officers will want to know why you are interested in your chosen subjects but they will also want to see that you are ready for university life. **A good personal statement is important** - it could help to persuade an admission officer to offer you a place.

You do not have to use all the space allocated on the application form but the system will not allow you to go beyond the allocated space. There is no set way of writing a statement but the following points are worth including:-

- ✓ Reasons why you have chosen the courses you have listed.
- ✓ Reasons why you are interested in the subject and particular interests you have in your current studies.
- ✓ Comments about your AS results.
- ✓ Details of any job, work experience or voluntary/community work you have done, particularly if it is relevant to your subject.
- ✓ Details of any skills or additional qualifications you have achieved such as *Key Skills*, (with levels).
- ✓ Details of any achievements, (in and out of school), such as prefect, school colours, regular representative of school team(s), orchestra, 6th Form Council, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Millennium Volunteer scheme, Nuffield Bursary Award, Community Sports Leaders Award, coaching awards, first aid qualification, etc.
- ✓ Information about any subjects you are studying that do not have an exam.
- ✓ Details of your social, leisure and sports interests, hobbies and pastimes.
- ✓ If you are planning to take a year out, your reasons why and your plans for the year.
- ✓ Details of any sponsorship or placements you have applied for.
- ✓ What you consider to be your personal, and inter-personal, qualities and strengths
- ✓ Your future plans, including career aspirations.

If you want to send more information, perhaps a CV, send it directly to your chosen universities or colleges after UCAS has sent you your acknowledgement letter and application number. **Do not** send it to UCAS.



The Reference

The writing of references is the responsibility of the Sixth Form tutors. You will be allocated a tutor but if you wish your reference to be written by another tutor who knows you particularly well, this can be arranged. The tutor will arrange an interview with you to discuss the

construction of your reference and this will be the ideal opportunity to highlight points you would like to see included.

When you have completed your part of the application form, your referee will then add the reference. Your reference may include the following information:-

- ❑ Your academic achievement and potential, including AS results and predicted final grades. You need to find these out from your subject tutors.
- ❑ Whether you are suitable for the courses or subjects you have applied for. (You should be if you have previously discussed your choices with your sixth form tutor).
- ❑ Any factors that could influence, or could have influenced, your performance.
- ❑ Your personal qualities and skills such as motivation, powers of analysis, communication skills, independence of thought, reliability.
- ❑ Your career plans.
- ❑ Any personal health or personal circumstances that may affect your application.
- ❑ Your achievements, interests and hobbies both in, and out, of school.
- ❑ Any commitments, (eg. exams), that could prevent you from attending an interview at a certain time.



Completed Applications

After the reference has been completed, your form is forwarded to UCAS, along with your application fee. Once the form has been checked, it is sent to each of the universities or colleges you have chosen. UCAS will then write to you with your application number, a list of your choices and '**Advice for Applicants**', which tells you what to do next. Check this information carefully and use the following contacts if you find any mistakes or require further help:

UCAS Enquiries

Tel: 0871 468 0 468

Email: enquiries@ucas.ac.uk

The letter also contains details of **UCAS Track** which you use to make your final decisions and track your application online right up to results day in August. On results day, you can find out if you have been successful in obtaining your university place.

Remember to make a note of your application number and *UCAS Track* password and keep them safe, as you will need to quote it anytime you contact UCAS. If the letter asks you to correct a mistake on your application form, or to give more information, please do this as soon as possible so that your application is not held up.

Each university or college you have chosen will decide whether to make you an offer. They may ask you to achieve certain exam results. When they have all made a decision UCAS will ask you to decide your first choice and a second choice, known as your *insurance* place. It is important that your insurance choice is asking for lower grades than your first choice.

If you meet the conditions of your offer, the university will confirm your place. However, it may also confirm your place if you do not quite obtain the grades required if your results are acceptable and there are places available. If you fail to meet the requirements of either of your two places, you will be eligible for **Clearing**. (See page 11). Details of Clearing are in the **Advice for Applicants** information. Once you have applied you will receive a letter giving your application number, your details, and the list of courses for which you have applied. **Note:** you will be able to track the progress of your application on-line by setting up a password with UCAS.



Further Considerations

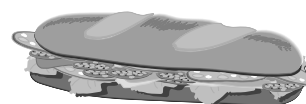
Scholarships, Sponsorships and Industrial Awards for A-Level Students.

Many industrial and professional organisations and Government departments administer schemes to assist young people financially, subject to necessary 'A' level qualifications for university / college entrance, to take higher education courses. Many also give awards of money to assist with living expenses. Others offer full scholarships, (i.e. full examination fees, all tuition fees and a sum of money ranging from £500 to £1500). For instance, engineering students can apply for a National Engineering Scholarship. **Scholarship Search UK** has a database of all undergraduate scholarships on www.scholarship-search.org.uk

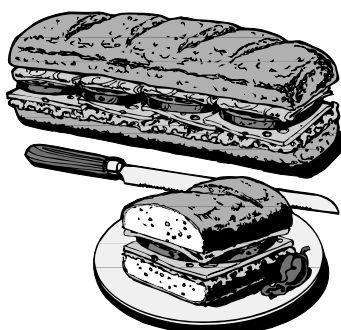
The most widely known form of **sponsorship** is that of **Industrial Apprenticeship** on courses known as **thick sandwich pre-entry** courses.

Thick Sandwich/Pre-Entry

One year industrial experience	(Company salary)
Three year university/college course	
One year industrial experience	(Company salary)
Student works for company during vacations.	



There are also **thin sandwich** courses, whereby alternating periods of six months are spent at university and six months with the company over a period of four years, or alternatively, one year is spent in industry during the three-year course. Although there are obviously conditions attached, it is not necessarily the case that a company requires a student to stay on after completion of his/her university course.



See Mr Davies for further information and details of how to apply.

PART THREE - STUDENT FINANCES

You can see the current information on student finance (2012 figures are not yet available) at:

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Directgov Public services all in one place

Monday, 18 June 2012

Education and learning

Student finance

Apply for student finance
Missed the 31 May deadline for student finance applications? New full-time students need to apply now to prevent any delay to their funding. The deadline for continuing students is 29 June 2012. New part-time students can apply from early August 2012. Find out what help is available

- Full-time students apply now for 2012/13
- Part-time students - how and when to apply for 2012/13

Student finance for 2012/13
Money you can apply for if your course starts after 1 September 2012

Applying for student finance
What you need to do to apply if your course starts after 1 September 2012

Student finance for 2011/12
Money you can apply for if your course starts before 1 September 2012

Part-time student finance 2012/13
Money you can apply for if your course starts after 1 September 2012

Student finance 2013/14
Starting university in 2013 - Find out what student finance you can apply for

Forms and guides
Forms and guidance

FAQs and updates
Student finance FAQs

Select **Student Finance 2013/2014**

Directgov Public services all in one place

Monday, 18 June 2012

Education and learning

Student finance 2013/14

If you're going to university in 2013/14, find out what financial help you can get to cover your tuition fees and living costs while you study.

Tuition Fee Loans 2013/14
For courses starting after 1 September 2013 universities and colleges can charge:

- up to £9,000 in tuition fees for full-time students
- up to £6,750 in tuition fees for part-time students

Full-time students from England who are studying for their first degree or other higher education course can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan for the full amount.

Part-time students studying for their first degree or other higher education course can also get a Tuition Fee Loan. Your course needs to be at least 25 per cent of an equivalent full-time course each year (eg four years instead of one year full time).

Students starting courses at private colleges and universities will be able to get:

- up to £6,000 for full-time courses
- up to £4,500 for part-time courses

Download [Paying for university in 2013/14: financial support for full-time students \(PDF, 1245K\)](#)

Living costs
To cover your living costs, full-time students from England can apply for a:

- Maintenance Loan of up to £5,500

Forms and guides
Forms and guidance

FAQs and updates
Student finance FAQs
Service updates

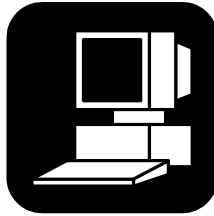
Information continues down the webpage

Finance is a matter of great concern to both students and parents. It is also one of confusion and misunderstanding. However, the system is designed so that anyone, whatever their income or background, should be able to access HE and enjoy the benefits of better skills and earning potential.

The two most important financial aspects are the cost of tuition and the cost of living. These are usually met through a combination of several sources, including Government funding, student loans and parental contribution.

PART FOUR - EVEN MORE USEFUL INFORMATION

UCAS Website:- www.ucas.com

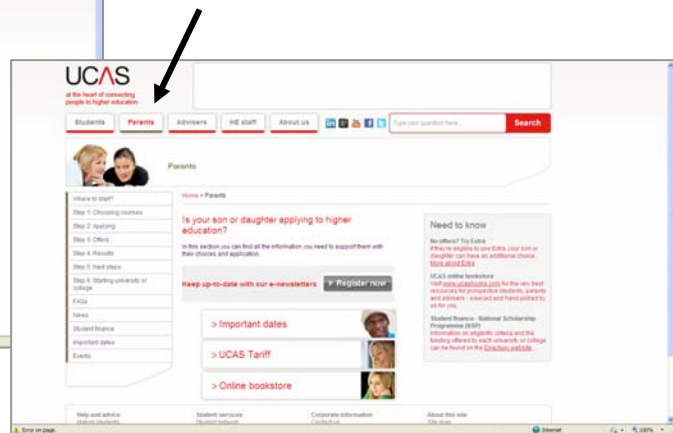
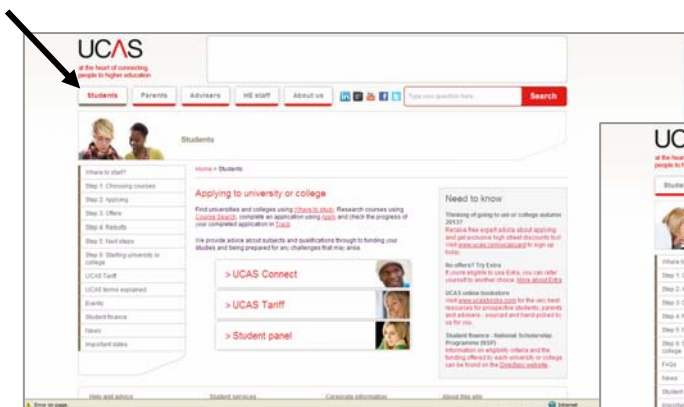


Most university websites can be accessed via the UCAS website as well as general information for prospective students, advice for parents and financial advice.

General information regarding universities and courses can be found under the various sections:-

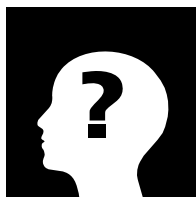


There is also advice for students and parents



It is strongly recommended that you access this site as part of your initial research and preparation.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED



Question. What exactly is HE?

Answer. HE includes far more than just universities. It includes colleges of HE, art and agriculture and over 80 further education colleges.

Question. Is HE just for the well-off elite?

Answer. Definitely not. Around 2 million people in the 18-21 age group are currently engaged in HE and the Government is committed to raising this figure even higher. This is the age of mass participation, and colleges and universities are full of students from a wide range of backgrounds, age ranges and ethnic origins.

Question. Will I have to pay large amounts in tuition fees?

Answer. Tuition fees are payable and, from 2012, these may vary for different institutions, but will be somewhere in the region of £9 000 per year. They are covered by a student loan which you pay back later when you are working and earning more than £21 000 per year. The fees are paid direct to the university.

Question. Why bother with HE at all?

Answer. Whatever you want to do in life, it is highly likely that getting a degree or diploma from a university or college will enhance your career opportunities. Indeed, some professions (for example, law and medicine) have a specific requirement that all entrants must hold a relevant degree. Although a degree or equivalent qualification does not automatically guarantee landing the job of your choice, statistics show that graduates have a fifty per cent better chance of avoiding unemployment.

Question. How can I prepare for HE?

Answer. It is certainly never too soon to be thinking about your future. An experienced careers officer, who regularly talks to 14 -18 year-olds, says:

'As a youngster, it is perfectly natural to watch a TV series on a vet's practice, a celebrity chef or life in the armed forces and, for weeks afterwards, imagine yourself in that line of work. What's important, of course, is to see beyond the media hype and get a real feel for what a particular career is about: in short, what skills are needed, how does the working week pan out, and, more immediately, will you be able to bring 100 per cent commitment to the HE studies that precede it?'

Whatever your intended direction, you need to choose your school studies very carefully. Some HE courses may require you to have passes in particular pre-16 qualifications, for example in mathematics and English GCSE.

Question. How long will I need to study?

Answer. Usually between two and four years, depending on the qualification required, but it is increasingly possible to take HE on a part-time basis over a longer period.

Question. What sort of qualifications is HE looking for?

Answer. A wide range of qualifications is acceptable for entry. This includes Edexcel/BTEC Diplomas or Access Certificates and OCR Nationals as well as GCE Advanced (A level).

Question. What kinds of HE courses are available?

Answer. Britain has the biggest choice of courses in Europe with, at the last count, over 50,000 courses available through UCAS. For some popular subjects, such as business or computing, there are literally hundreds of study options.

Question. What kind of qualifications can I gain?

Answer. In terms of qualifications, the main categories are as follows:

- Three-year degree courses - leading to awards such as Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc)
- Four-year degree courses - including many degree courses in Scotland, sandwich courses involving one year in industry, courses with a year abroad, etc.
- Two-year Higher National Diploma or Diploma of Higher Education courses - these are both popular qualifications in their own right; however, some students choose to 'top up' these qualifications into a degree.
- Foundation degree courses. Many universities now run foundation courses, commonly known as Year 0 or Zero programmes, targeted at students who wish to enter specific subject areas (eg science and engineering) but do not possess the relevant entry qualifications. These courses are eligible for student loans in the usual way. In art and design, 'foundation studies' refers to a one-year pre-HE course.

Question. How should I rate different colleges and universities?

Answer. This is a far from straightforward question as priorities will vary enormously. As a prospective applicant, you may be particularly interested in whether an institution is in a big city or rural location, whereas another student may be more concerned about the availability of modular degrees or the number of beds in the halls of residence. In all cases, be wary of newspaper rankings of institutions. Their use of information is usually very selective and, as a result, only tells part of the story. Remember, there can never be a definitive 'best of' list, whether of music CD's, cars or universities, but it is certainly true that some UK institutions are better known than others, both in the UK and overseas. What is important is what is best for you.

See: www.unistats.com

UCAS POINTS TARIFF

GRADE	A/AS LEVEL	
	AS LEVEL	A LEVEL AS+A2
A*		140
A	60	120
B	50	100
C	40	80
D	30	60
E	20	40

For more detailed information go to http://www.ucas.com/students/ucas_tariff/tariff tables/

NOW GET TO IT - APPLICANTS ACTION PLAN

Now get busy!!!!

Here's how to get your HE plans forward, so that you don't end up running into problems later.

- **Start early** – avoid the last minute rush. Make a career action folder in which you can keep newspaper and put magazine cuttings, or anything that will be helpful to your decision-making.
- **Be selective** – learn how to extract what you need from the internet, reference books prospectuses. In the case of the latter, be aware of possible marketing gloss. Think it out for yourself, only you know what you really want and this is one occasion where it is definitely not selfish to put your needs first. and
- **Use the Careers Service** and the expertise within **Mosslands School**. Your sixth form tutors and careers teachers have a vast amount of experience regarding HE and applications.
- **Do your research** – Do not skimp on research. A half-hearted approach could mean you pay a high price by ending up on an unsuitable course.
- **Become web-footed** – You will find other really useful information on a variety of web sites, many of which are listed in this booklet. Remember, every university has its own site all of which can be accessed through the UCAS site.
- **Personal visits** – Always look before you leap. In doing so, whether at an official open day or on another open day or on another occasion, you will be able to assess whether a course or the university feels right for you.
- **Careers / Higher Education Conventions** – A golden opportunity to chat with representatives from colleges and universities and the world of work.

CHECKLIST

	Tick
Have you completed all sections of the ' <i>Apply</i> ' application form?	
Have you had your Personal Statement checked over by your Form Tutor and your 6 th Form Tutor who is writing your reference?	
Have you double-checked that the course codes for your choices are correct?	
Have you answered the question about criminal convictions?	
Have you paid the application fee (£23)? (Cheques to be made payable to 'The Mosslands School')	
Have you informed your Sixth Form Tutor that your application is now ready for your reference to be added?	

USEFUL WEB-SITES

(There are links to these sites on the Mosslands School web-site: www.mosslands.co.uk)

General information

Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS) www.ucas.com – has links to all university websites

Higher Education and Research Opportunities in the UK www.hero.ac.uk

Find out about university and meet other people before you go on www.yougoofurther.co.uk

www.unofficial-guides.com

Student finance

For applicants who live in England and Wales, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) website is www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Student Support Online

www.studentsupportonline.co.uk

www.direct.gov.uk

<http://bursarymap.direct.gov.uk>

Teaching, learning and research quality assessments

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) www.qaa.ac.uk

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) www.hefce.ac.uk

Compare subjects on www.unistats.com

www.thegooduniversityguide.org.uk

For Applicants with disabilities

Skill, National Bureau for Students with Disabilities www.skill.org.uk
Royal National Institute for the Blind www.rnib.org.uk
Royal National Institute for the Deaf www.rnid.org.uk

Course information

www.bestcourse4me.com
www.foundationdegree.co.uk
www.ukcoursefinder.com
www.hotcourses.com

For information about university open days

www.opendays.com

..and, of course, the individual university web-sites (accessible through links on the UCAS site).

There is also regularly updated UCAS information in the Sixth Form section of the school web-site:
www.mosslands.co.uk

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR APPLICATION!!

