

## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS ON UCAS PROCEDURE

UCAS = (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). - It is a post box which administers the process. It is responsible for

- (i) Acknowledging receipt of applications.
- (ii) Passing on applications to the appropriate colleges/universities
- (iii) Advising students about the outcome of their applications
- (iv) Informing universities when final decisions are made.

**You will be the 2016 cycle or cohort (when you apply, the 2015 cycle will still be open, but this is for the current Y13 who completed A2 exams in the summer, so don't use it)**

UCAS handbooks can be found in the Careers Room .

### COURSES APPLIED FOR THROUGH UCAS

- Degree courses
- HND
- Diploma of Higher Education
- Some Art courses

### ART COURSES

Most students wishing to undertake Art courses are required to undertake a **Foundation Course** (The University College for the Creative Arts offers this in Maidstone, Canterbury and Rochester). Applications are made separately for this purpose and the Head of Careers (Mr Gareth Price) and the Head of Art (Mrs Brown / Mrs Heron) can advise students on how to proceed.

### DATES FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

1st September 2015 to 15th January 2016 for most courses.

1st September to 15th October 2015 for Oxford and Cambridge and for Medical, Dental & Veterinary courses. (By 1st September for music/choral scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge).

### DEADLINES FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IN SCHOOL

- (i) 1 December 2015 for - most applications
- (ii) Friday 11th September 2015 – Oxford, Cambridge dental and medical applications.

It is essential that these internal deadlines are met as it takes time for administration and to complete the processing to meet final UCAS deadlines.

### OUR ADVICE

- Make your application as soon as you have made your decisions about your course/universities.
- Early applications are dealt with more quickly by UCAS and the Universities and result in a greater chance of success.
- Early applications are strongly advised for English, History, Law, Media Studies and Physiotherapy in particular.
- Make sure you are certain about your courses before submitting the applications as changes cannot easily be made later.

## **LATE APPLICATIONS**

Although it is possible to apply after 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016, these applications are treated as “late” and forwarded to institutions only if they have suitable vacancies remaining.

## **DEFERRED ENTRY**

If a student wishes to defer until September 2017, it is possible to apply in the 2016 application cycle. In most cases this is advisable (e.g. for students who will not be available for applications or interview in the 2016 cycle).

## **SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION**

The UCAS form is in 4 parts:

- Personal details and courses applied for;
- Academic achievements and examinations to be taken;
- A personal statement by the student;
- A confidential reference which includes predicted A2 Level grades and comments by the staff who teach the student. It is prepared by the form tutor in consultation with other members of staff.

*Post-18 Applications Days* are on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June and are where Y12 students are advised on the UCAS and job application processes. During this time, the students will be able to view the electronic application system and will receive advice on writing personal statements and making choices about universities and courses. There will also be opportunities to talk to former students currently at university or on a gap year and to listen to university admissions’ tutors and employers. Also, every student will have a mock university or job interview to help him/her prepare for life post-school.

## **PROCESS IN SCHOOL**

**All applications are made electronically.**

Students will complete the first 3 sections directly onto the form, on screen, which has a number of built in checks for common mistakes.

- When the first three pages of the form are completed the student should give a hard (paper) copy to his/her tutor for checking. Payment is made by the student online - £23 (in rare cases, some students only apply to one institution when the cost then reduces to £11);
- To trigger the reference writing process, students should take their “checked” hard copy of the application form to the Main School Office. Office staff will log the application and this will trigger a memo to the student’s form tutor requesting that s/he constructs that student’s UCAS reference;
- Mrs Horstrup or Mr O’Neill (Mr O’Neill for Oxbridge applications and those from medics, dentists and vets) completes the final reference page of the electronic form and it is then forwarded directly to UCAS.

## **APPLICATIONS FOR MEDICINE, VETERINARY MEDICINE, LAW AND HISTORY**

Some universities including Oxford and Cambridge require students to sit a pre-interview test in school. BMAT, UKAT, LNAT, HAT, some of these may be taken in school, others at registered centres. Students need to ensure they research these and arrange to sit them.

**OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE APPLICATIONS – Mr O’Neill coordinates these.**

- An additional application form must be completed for Oxford, Cambridge have abandoned theirs. Neither charges a fee;
- Students are frequently asked to submit written work, usually by mid November;
- Help is given both with the completion of the form and the selection of the written work;
- Practice interviews are arranged;
- Students who plan to study medicine, veterinary medicine, Law and History will be required to sit a test.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH UCAS/UNIVERSITIES**

- Receipt of the application is acknowledged quickly;
- UCAS sends a letter detailing all the courses applied for which must be checked carefully;
- Each applicant is given a unique reference number. It should be given to the form tutor and noted in any subsequent correspondence;
- A reduced copy of the form is sent by UCAS to all the Institutions applied to and they consider each application. Applications are "blind" in that institutions cannot see which other courses you have applied for;
- Responses come from UCAS and/or the Institutions and individual progress can be checked on the UCAS website.

## **MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT COURSES**

- After careful consideration students can apply for up to FIVE courses;
- Those students applying for medicine or dentistry are required to use no more than four choices for these courses They may add another course if they wish;
- Students applying for physiotherapy are advised to use no fewer than four choices for this subject.

### **Applications should be made bearing in mind:-**

- a) The subject to be studied
- b) The institutions preferred
- c) The grade requirements for the course, and the 'A' Level grades predicted by the teaching staff and grades/marks achieved in AS levels. Staff will let students know these in September.

The grade requirements may be found from University web sites and in "University and College Entrance" and Brian Heap's "Degree Course Offers". Both books are available in the Careers Library or they can be ordered and purchased from book shops.

We are frequently asked what is the **best** university for a particular subject. Undoubtedly some institutions have reputations for excellence in particular areas, but these can vary greatly within a small space of time e.g. due to change of senior staff etc. We recommend thorough research by the individual student to find the best course and institution for him or her.

Grade requirements reflect the competition to get into a course **not** necessarily the quality or difficulty of the course.

### **Research should include:-**

- Consulting prospectuses - at least one copy is kept for each institution in school and universities and colleges will send them on application;
- Visiting institutions on Open Days. Dates may be found from posters and on university websites. However, since attendance at Open Days does have considerable impact on work missed in AS and A2 courses, we would recommend a total of **no more than 3 Open Days during school time** in Year 12/13. Term 6 of Y12 is a good time to go. Visits **are** possible at other times by arrangement. We recommend that students use the mid-term break, weekends and the summer holiday;
- UCAS Web site [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and individual university web sites;
- Discussion with staff, friends, students already in Higher Education;
- Consulting the UCAS handbook.

**N.B. Once the application has been submitted, it is not easy to alter the course applications that have been made.**

## THE OUTCOME OF THE APPLICATION

- These are made from each institution in their own time and this can vary enormously (e.g. an application in early September 2015 may not receive a final offer until May 2016);
- Students may be called for an interview and practice interviews are available on request;
- Conditional offers dependent on certain 'A' Level grade requirements are sent via UCAS and sometimes also directly from the institution. Each student may keep **one firm** and **one insurance** offer. The firm offer should always be for the course the student really prefers - providing the requirements are realistic. The insurance offer is usually for lower grade requirements. (Please refer to notes 1 & 2 in the results section);
- If students have any doubts about which offers to accept or reject they are strongly advised to consult, Mrs Horstrup, Mr O'Neill or Mr Price;
- Students are given the date by which decisions must be made when they receive their final statement from UCAS.

## RESULTS TIME

**The AS & A2 Level results this year are expected on 13 August and it is highly likely that they will be expected around the same time in 2016. It is strongly recommended that students take holidays before the results are expected so that they are available to deal personally with "clearing" if necessary.**

1. If a student achieves the requirements of his/her first firm offer then he/she **must** take up that offer (sometimes the offer still stands even if the requirements are not quite achieved);
2. If the requirements for the first firm offer are not fulfilled but those for the insurance are achieved, then the student **must** accept that offer. If the student does not wish to accept either offer he/she must withdraw from UCAS and may re-apply the following year. It is not deemed possible to then enter clearing at this stage;

CLEARING is the procedure that takes place mainly in August and September to make available lists of vacancies for any student without a place at this time. Students will be given more information about this later.

## GRANTS & AWARDS

- Information booklets advising parents on entitlements to financial assistance will be in schools by February/March 2016 and passed onto the students. It is then up to students and parents/guardians to apply online at [www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login) in February/March 2016;
- It is the student's responsibility to complete the online form and send relevant information;
- Birth Certificate, or passport, (divorce papers etc. where relevant) must be sent with the application;
- It is the student's responsibility to return the completed form to Medway LA;

All further correspondence will be between Medway LA and the student and his/her parents.

We hope you find this information helpful and will be able to follow the applications procedure with your daughter or son. Students will be supported by tutors as well as the Head of Careers and the Sixth Form Management Team. If you need further advice please do not hesitate to contact the school on 01634 364 151 or email me at [EHorstrup@rmqs.org.uk](mailto:EHorstrup@rmqs.org.uk)

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