



RIDGEWOOD SIXTH FORM

**PREPARING YOU**

**FOR A LIFE BEYOND**

**SIXTH FORM**

# A Student Guide

All students are expected to write an application for their Post18 progression. This is often referred to as a personal statement.

Your subject staff and tutors will also be contributing to write references for each of you. This is to support with any applications you make as all jobs, apprenticeships and universities, will all require a reference from your school.

In this guide you will find videos and prompts to use when writing your application, along with timelines/deadlines, tips, tricks and jargon busters around the language commonly used for Post 18 study.



Prepare for  
the road  
ahead

## Key Dates For 2025/26

### 29th April 2025

UCAS search displays courses.  
Start your searches

### 16th June 2025

Y13 Progression Exams begin

### 19th June 2025

UCAS Event at Leeds Beckett University,  
all Y12 students to attend

### 30th June 2025

Personal Statement Launch,  
delivered by University of Lincoln

### 3rd/4th July 2025

1st drafts of personal statements  
to be completed on Unifrog

### 14th July 2025

All subject references to be completed  
(FAO staff only)

### 2nd September 2025

UCAS applications open

### 3rd October 2025

All form tutor references to be finalised  
(FAO staff only)

### 15th October 2025

UCAS deadline for applications of medicine,  
veterinary, dentistry, Oxford and Cambridge

### November 2025

Y13 Progression Exams begin

### 12th December 2025

All other UCAS applications to be submitted

### January 2026

The Higher & Degree Apprenticeships  
Vacancy Listings are released (remember to  
search locally, on government websites and  
individual companies)

### 14th January 2026

UCAS equal considerations deadline for all  
university courses

### March 2026

Student finance applications open

### May 2026

UCAS offer deadline date – you must  
choose your firm and insurance offers  
by this date

### May 2026

Official Exam season begins

### 13th August 2026

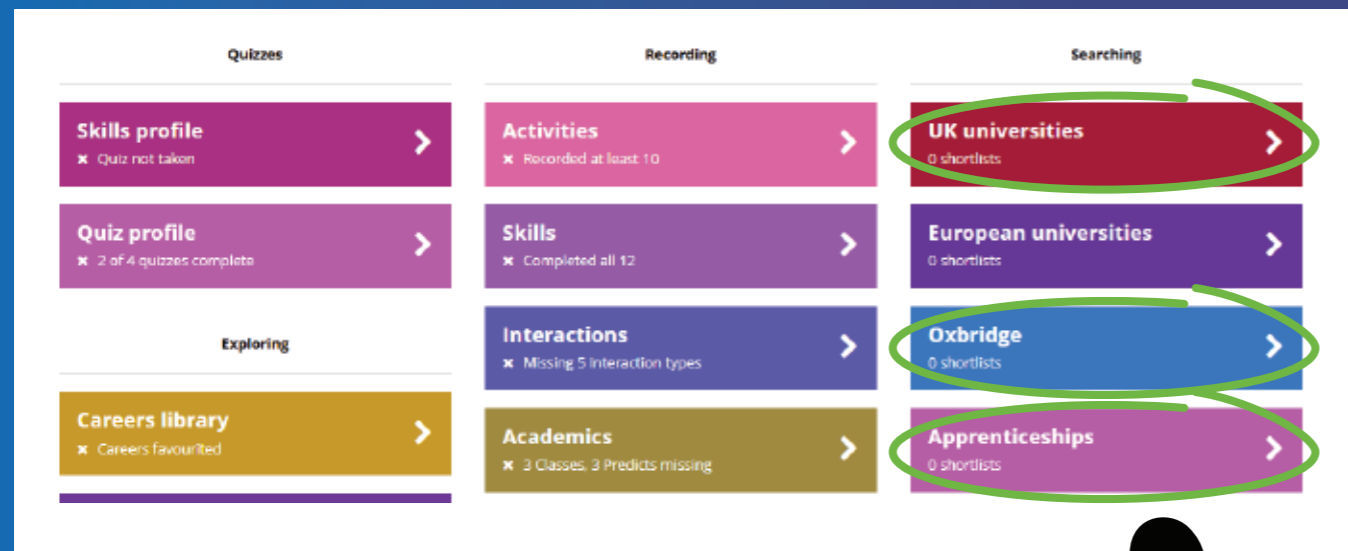
A'Level Results Day

**\*red = set externally and not controlled  
by school**

# Course/industry

## selection

ou can begin your course and industry searches on UCAS, government websites, company websites or on Unifrog. To find the right section log into Unifrog, scroll down on your home page to the UK Personal statement and/or CV boxes highlighted below.



Once you have an idea on the career/subject/industry you would like to enter into, you can begin exploring your options. E.g. the different kinds of courses or routes into the field. E.g. If your interest is in Sociology you may be interested in social policy, international relations, social work etc. If your interest is in engineering is this mechanical, electrical, chemical, civil etc. If your interest is in computing is this cyber security, gaming, computer systems engineering etc. Add your searches and their details to the tables on the next 2 pages so that you can compare your options easily.



My ranking 1-5	
Open days/visits to companies research	
Societies that interest me	
Distance from home	
Options of year abroad/ placement year	
How will I be assessed?	
Type of learning. E.g. on the job, online, lectures, seminars.	
Entry requirements. E.g. grades/UCAS points	
Course details. E.g. name, duration, modules, university, company, apprenticeship/ qualification type	

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# UCAS Personal statement

Your personal statement is a chance to get noticed for the unique talents and experiences you have. It's an important part of the application process as it's an opportunity to talk about yourself and your passions, outside of your grades.

You will be guided to answer 3 questions (see below). Each answer will have a minimum character count of 350 characters, which is clearly labelled on the question boxes, along with an overall character counter, so you can keep track. There is a 4000 overall character limit (including spaces).

It's important to make the most of the 4000 characters and write a personal statement that stands out. Use the QR Codes below for UCAS tips on your personal statement



UCAS website



UCAS supporting Video



UCAS Guides per subject

## The three questions/sections you will be expected to answer are:

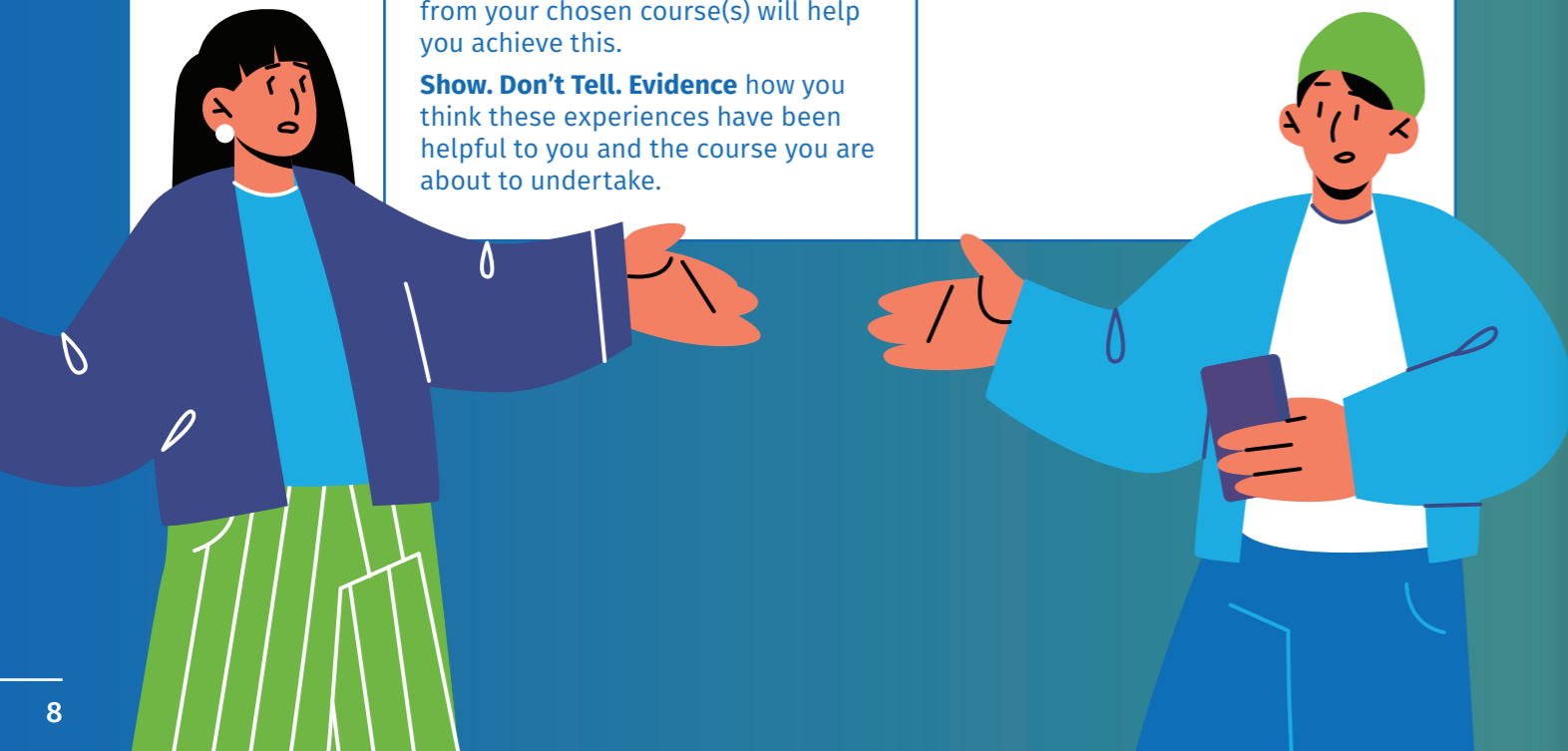
1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?
2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

The next few pages help you to consider how best to answer these questions.



Here are the questions and suggestions to help you form your personal statement. Use the space on the right to record your initial ideas.

Question	Suggestions	Your initial ideas – bullet points, brain dumps, key words, achievements, things to remember etc
<p><b>Question 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?</b></p> <p>Showcase your passion and knowledge.</p> <p>Demonstrate why the course is a good fit for you and your future ambitions.</p>	<p><b>Your motivations for studying this course(s)</b></p> <p>Have you been inspired by a key role model or moment in your life? What is driving you now and how has this led you to this course/industry?</p> <p><b>Your knowledge of this subject area and interests</b></p> <p>Is there a particular subject area you've researched and can't wait to learn more about. A book or subject expert doing great things that have sparked your interest? Universities and colleges want to see you have done your research so they can be confident this is something you will enjoy and excel in. Could be the place to highlight super-curricular activities as evidence of curiosity and interest in the subject outside of the classroom.</p> <p><b>Your future plans and why this is a good fit for you</b></p> <p>If you already have a particular profession in mind you could talk about how you'll use this to launch your career. If you don't, think about what's important to you and your future, and how the knowledge gained from your chosen course(s) will help you achieve this.</p> <p><b>Show. Don't Tell. Evidence</b> how you think these experiences have been helpful to you and the course you are about to undertake.</p>	



Question	Suggestions	Your initial ideas – bullet points, brain dumps, key words, achievements, things to remember etc
<p><b>Question 2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?</b></p> <p>This is your chance to shout about the relevant or transferable skills you've gained from your formal education and highlight your understanding of how they will help you succeed in this subject area.</p>	<p><b>How your studies or training relate to your chosen course(s) or subject area</b></p> <p>This could be current or previous studies within a school, college, training provider, or a short online university course – any form of formal education. The main thing here is to focus on what's most recent and relevant to your chosen course(s).</p> <p><b>What relevant or transferable skills you have that make you a great candidate</b></p> <p>Maybe there are a couple of subjects that have helped you develop a core set of skills required for your chosen course(s). Or, a particular module that helped you understand where your interests and strengths lie, completing the EPQ or NEA/coursework which sparked your interest</p> <p><b>Any relevant educational achievements</b></p> <p>Universities and colleges will see your grades elsewhere on your application so don't waste time talking about these. Consider accomplishments like entering and/or winning a school or national competition, serving as a student ambassador or team captain, landing the lead role in a play, working with students in lower school</p> <p><b>Show. Don't Tell. Evidence</b> how you think these experiences have been helpful to you and the course you are about to undertake.</p>	

Question	Suggestions	Your initial ideas – bullet points, brain dumps, key words, achievements, things to remember etc
<p><b>Question 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?</b></p> <p>This is your chance to talk about any other activities you have undertaken outside of your formal education which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section is likely to be highly personal to you and anything you do include should</p>	<p><b>Work experience, employment, or volunteering</b></p> <p>Whether in-person or virtual work experience or volunteering in the community; the key thing here is for you to reflect on your experiences and the skills gained relevant to your chosen course.</p> <p><b>Personal life experiences or responsibilities</b></p> <p>Is there a situation you've personally overcome that has influenced your decision? E.g. caring for a family member that has helped you develop essential qualities for the course like resilience and empathy?</p> <p><b>Hobbies, extracurricular, super curricular or outreach activities</b></p> <p>Think sports, reading, researching, community work, summer schools, fundraising – any activities outside of your studies that help further showcase why you'd make a great student.</p> <p><b>Achievements outside of school or college</b></p> <p>This could be a position of responsibility such as captain for your local club, a musical achievement, competition you won, or a qualification you've attained outside of the classroom.</p> <p><b>Show. Don't Tell. Evidence</b> how you think these experiences have been helpful to you and the course you are about to undertake.</p>	

## Some short examples given by NetSixthForm



### Section 1 - Medicine

My decision to study medicine originates from a desire, not only to develop an understanding of the complexities of the human body, but for a hands-on career in which I could apply this knowledge to improve the quality of life of others. The medical field is constantly evolving, and the prospect of the varied, stimulating and challenging career that it provides appeals to me greatly.



### Section 1 - Chemistry

The relationship between chemistry research and its role in solving real world problems drives my interest. I believe that, by studying chemistry, I will be able to better understand many of the major problems currently facing the world and contribute to solving some of them. In addition, the opportunity to study chemistry, with its many applications and capacity for new ideas, is appealing as it means there will always be the possibility of discovery and learning.

### Section 2 - Geography

Throughout my study of geography I have been fascinated by the differences and inequalities visible in issues such as the development gap and fuel politics. In studying these and other phenomena in a geography degree, I hope to develop a greater understanding of the human condition and its repercussions upon society and the environment. My interest in difference and inequality originated when studying development: specifically, the geography of shanty towns where poverty and luxury coexist within metres of each other. At university I want to investigate how political and economic theories generate such contrast in space and human experience.



### Section 2 - History

Studying Economics alongside History has given me an insight into another side to historical analysis, discovering the inevitability of some forces of change. This spurred me on to explore what happens when people challenge these forces. I attended the Radio 3 discussion 'Were the Luddites Right?' that demonstrated to me the importance of nostalgia in moments of change. I discovered this relationship between radicalism and nostalgia again at a recent Sutton Trust summer school, where I worked with academics on the issue of National Identity in the Interregnum.



### Section 3 - Law

By taking part in the Amnesty International group at school I have become more interested in both international and human rights law. I want to have a better understanding as to how international organisations, like the UN, approach conflict resolution and human rights violations across the world.

I find the continuous legal debate regarding our security and liberty, which I frequently read about in broadsheet newspapers, intriguing. As a result, I have led a debate on the issue under the title of 'If you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear' at my school's debating society.



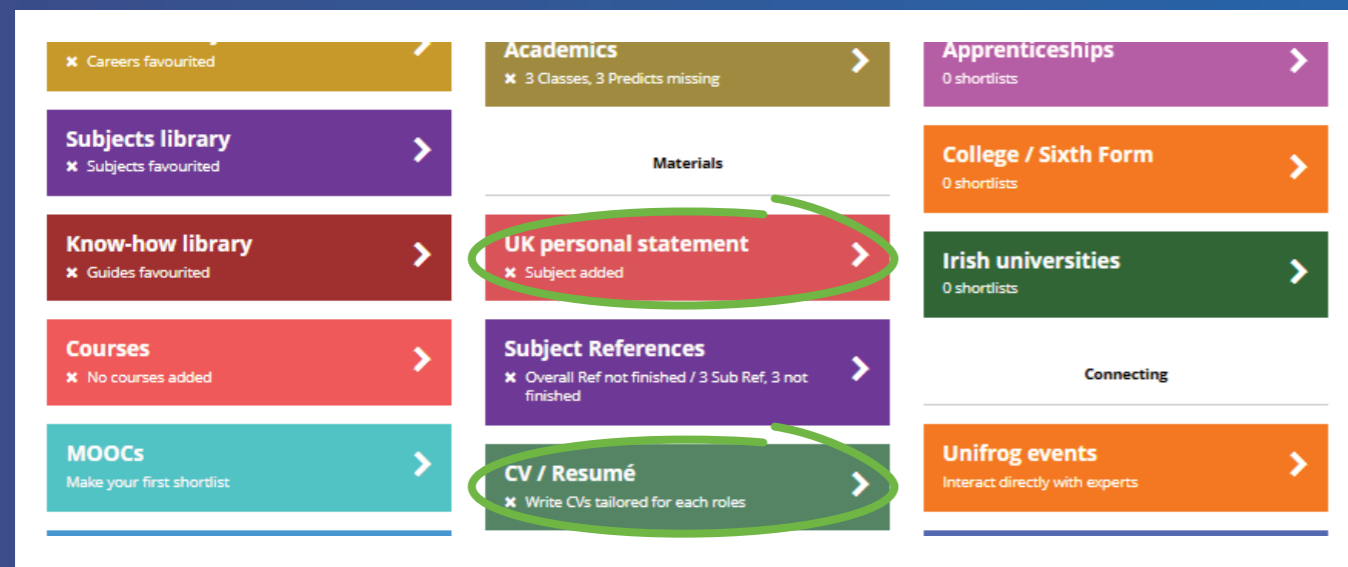
### Section 3 - Engineering

Some of the 50-year-old machines I've worked on would have seemed modern at the time of manufacture but have been superseded in almost all areas. Certain design aspects, such as their serviceability and versatility, seem to have been lost, which makes me realise how fast engineering is developing. I enjoy the practical side of engineering but also appreciate its crucial dependence upon theory and design and the way my maths and physics skills can be applied.

I took part in a Low Carbon Energy course with the Smallpiece Trust focussing on marine engineering. We designed, tested, made and presented a tidal turbine, as a real engineering project. Working in a multidisciplinary team with state-of-the-art equipment has motivated me to take this subject further.

## Using Unifrog to draft and redraft your personal statements and/or CVs.

At Ridgewood, we use Unifrog as a way to draft, receive feedback and redraft your personal statements, CVs and applications. The three questions you will be asked when finally uploading to UCAS are here for you with further prompts and ideas for you to consider as well as a structured approach to CVs. **Your first drafts should be written and sent to your tutors, via Unifrog by the 3pm, Friday 4th July.** To find the right section, scroll down on your home page to the UK Personal statement and/or CV boxes highlighted below.



## FAQs

**Can I use AI to help me?** – No! This is about you! Your Interests, your knowledge, your experiences, what makes you stand out. If AI is suspected to have been used your application will not be considered.

**I don't want to go to University, should I still write a personal statement?** Yes. The process for applying for an apprenticeships may be very similar, so having the personal statement ready for your area of interest in industry, with the help and guidance of your teachers, will be advantageous for you.

**Can I apply to Uni after 15th January 2026 (equal consideration deadline)?** – Yes. But you will not be given 'equal consideration' unlike your peers who met this deadline

**Can Universities offer places as soon as I have applied?** – Yes! Some make offers within days of receiving an application. Others take longer.

**Can I apply for 2026, and go in 2027 instead?** Yes! The university can hold your place for one year. This is called a deferred entry.

**Can I apply to university without using UCAS?** No. All UK universities use the UCAS platform

**Is there a fee for applying to university?** Yes, a fee of £28.95 is charged to apply. However, if this is the reason you feel unable to apply please speak to a member of staff. All bursary students will have this fee paid for by the school.

**Can I apply for university and an apprenticeship?** Yes. You can apply for both in order to keep your options open.

**Can I get financial help?** Yes. The student loans company is specifically set up to help students pay for tuition and everyday living costs. There are also a variety of schemes which may be available for due to your circumstances and/or your academic excellence.

**What if I don't get the grades needed to get into my firm or insurance choice university?** There is an option on results day to go through clearing. This is where universities advertise courses they haven't yet filled. If you meet their entry requirements you may be accepted onto their course.

**What if I get higher grades than needed to get into my firm or insurance choice university and want to consider a more prestigious university?** There is an option on results day to go through clearing. This is where universities advertise courses they haven't yet filled. If you meet their entry requirements you may be accepted onto their course.

**What are UCAS points and how do I calculate them?** See the information table under Jargon Buster (along with many frequently used terms) that follows, this clearly sets out all UCAS tariffs.

## Understanding the Jargon surrounding Post 18 study in the UK

As students prepare, it's essential to become familiar with the terminology and shorthand commonly used in the UK education system. This jargon buster will help to navigate the application process, understand different types of courses, and comprehend finance options.

**Levels of study** - The UK educational qualification system ranges from level 1 to 8. Students at 6th Form are studying Level 3 qualifications (e.g. A Levels, BTECs and Diplomas). Degree-level courses start at level 4. Undergraduate degrees are typically at level 6, while postgraduate degrees begin at level 7, and doctorates are at level 8

**Level 3 course grades** - Although GCSE students are graded from 1-9 (9 being the highest achievable grade), A Level students are graded from E-A\* (A\* being the highest achievable grade) and in BTEC courses are Graded Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction\* (Distinction\* being the highest achievable grade).

**UCAS** - The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is the organisation that manages applications to higher education courses in the UK. When applying to university, you will use the UCAS system to submit your application, which includes your personal statement and details of your qualifications. There is a small administration fee to apply.

**UCAS points** - Each grade you receive in your level 3 courses equates to UCAS points. When you receive an offer from a university they may ask that you gain x number of UCAS point from your subjects (alternatively, you may stipulate specific grades you need to achieve)

UCAS points are calculated as seen below:

A* Levels	BTEC Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC National Diploma	BTEC National Extended Diploma
A* = 56pts	D* = 56pts	D*D*D* = 112pts	D*D*D* = 168pts
A = 48pts	D = 48pts	D*D = 104pts	D*D*D = 160pts
B = 40pts	M = 32pts	DD = 96pts	D*DD = 152pts
C = 32pts	P = 16pts	DM = 80pts	DDD = 144pts
D = 24pts		MM = 64pts	DDM = 128pts
E = 16pts		MP = 48pts	DMM = 112pts
		PP = 32pts	MMM = 96pts
			MMP = 80pts
			MPP = 64pts
			PPP = 48pts

**Degree** - A degree is an academic qualification awarded by a university upon completion of a program of study. Common types of degrees include bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. In the UK, there are several types of degrees across different educational levels:

**Foundation Course** - A **foundation course** is a program designed to help students bridge the gap between school and university. These courses often focus on enhancing skills in specific subjects and preparing students for undergraduate study. They are typically 1 year in length.

**Undergraduate** - An undergraduate is a student who is pursuing a bachelor's degree. This is the first level of higher education, typically lasting three to four years. E.g. Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Education (BEd), Bachelor of Engineering (BEng), Bachelor of Laws (LLB), Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB) etc

**Postgraduate** - A **postgraduate** student is someone who has already completed a bachelor's degree and is now pursuing advanced study,

**Master's degree** including Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MSc), Master of Research (MRes), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Laws (LLM)

**PhD** - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is the highest academic degree one can achieve. A PhD involves conducting original research and contributing new knowledge to a specific field.

**Conservatoire** - A **conservatoire** is a specialised higher education institution focused on music and the performing arts. Students receive training in their chosen artistic discipline.

**Russel Group Universities** The Russell Group's 24 members are **world-class, research-intensive universities**. They are unique institutions, each with their own history and ethos. Oxford and Cambridge are part of this as well as other universities. E.g. University of Sheffield, University of York, University of Southampton etc. These are the most prestigious universities in the UK and therefore the most competitive.

**Oxbridge** the term used for Oxford and Cambridge universities together. These institutions often require students to take specific entry tests and achieve the highest grades possible.

**Early Entry Students** - Students wishing to apply for Oxford and Cambridge, or students applying for Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary courses will apply earlier than other students in the cohort. With the deadline in the October of Year 13.

**Admissions Tests** - For some courses and universities you are required to pass an Admissions Test. Commonly, UK University Tests are for students who are looking to study medicine, dentistry, veterinary or entry to Oxford and Cambridge. These include UCAT, LNAT, ESAT, MAT, BMAT, PAT. Please ask a member of staff for further information.

**Student Finance - Student finance** refers to the financial support available to help students cover the cost of their higher education. This includes tuition fees and living expenses.

**Loan Tuition - Loan tuition** refers to the amount of money borrowed to pay for university tuition fees. Students typically repay this loan after they graduate and start earning above a certain income threshold.

**Maintenance Loans** - A **maintenance loan** is a type of financial aid that helps cover living costs while studying. The amount you can borrow depends on your household income and where you study.

**Scholarships and Bursaries** - **Scholarships** are financial awards given to students based on academic achievement, talent, or other criteria.



**Bursaries** are grants offered to students based on financial need to help cover tuition or living expenses. These are not loans and are therefore non repayable.

**Halls of Residence - Halls of residence** are accommodations provided by universities for students. Living in halls can offer a supportive community and is often a great way to meet new people.

**Campus** - A **campus** is the physical area where a university is located, including buildings, facilities, and outdoor spaces. It is the hub of university life.

**Deferring** - A deferred entry means applying for a course and then taking a year out before starting it – after you successfully accept your offer the university will hold the place for you for a year.

**Placement Years** - A **placement year** is an opportunity for students to gain practical experience in their field of study, included in some degree programs. This year typically takes place between the second and final years of study

**Sandwich Years** - **Sandwich years** are similar to placement years but involve alternating periods of study and work experience, giving students more exposure to their field.

**Joint Honours** - **Joint honours** degrees allow students to study two subjects simultaneously, providing a broader educational experience and skill set.

**Open Days** - **Open days** are events hosted by universities to allow prospective students to explore the campus, meet the faculty, and learn more about their programs. These can sometimes take place virtually if required.

**Conditional Offers** - A **conditional offer** is an invitation to study at a university, contingent upon meeting specific requirements, such as achieving a certain grade in your exams.

**Unconditional Offers** - An **unconditional offer** means you have been accepted to a university without any conditions; you have met or exceeded the entry requirements.

**Contextual Offers** - **Contextual offers** take into account the applicant's background and circumstances, allowing for a more flexible approach to meeting entry requirements.

**Firm Choice** – From the universities/colleges that have offered you a place, you will have to decide which is your preferred place and identify this as your ‘firm choice’

**Insurance Choice** - From the universities/colleges that have offered you a place, you will have to decide which is your second-choice place, this is usually a lower offer, allowing you some security in case you don't meet the requirements of your firm choice.

**Clearing** - **Clearing** is a process that helps students find available university places if they did not secure a spot during the main application cycle, if they did not meet the requirements of their offers or if they exceeded their expectations and wish to apply for a more prestigious university. This typically occurs after A-level results are released, and only where places are still available on specific courses.



**Outreach Programmes** - **Outreach programmes** are initiatives aimed at encouraging and supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds to consider higher education, these typically include students from low-income families, are care experienced, have a physical or learning disability, are from ethnic minority background or other criteria chosen by the individual university.

**Freshers week** – is a welcoming week or orientation week at university usually at the end of September. It is a period at the start of the academic year where new students are welcomed to university life with a variety of events, parties, and networking opportunities. It's designed to help students settle into their new environment, meet classmates, and explore the university and city before your lectures begin.

**Higher Apprenticeships** - **Higher apprenticeships** combine work and study, allowing students to earn a salary while gaining practical experience and working towards a higher education qualification.

**Degree Apprenticeships** - A **degree apprenticeship** is a particular type of job, which combines work with higher-level learning, and which leads to an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Apprentices spend most of their week at work. But they also spend at least 20 per cent of their time in off-the-job study or training. A university will support the degree but the employer will pay for the full cost of the degree course.

**CV** - or a **Curriculum Vitae** is a summary of your skills, achievements and experience that you use to apply for jobs. Much like a personal statement for university

**Cover Letter** – Often this accompanies a CV. Its states your interest in position advertised, why you see this as the right position/company for you, why you are right for the position and where it might fit into your future plans.

**Where to look for apprenticeships** - one of the places is on the government website, but you may also see advisements on companies own websites, you might be able to sign up for alerts for example, and on social media pages. See links and example below



[.gov.uk search](#)



[Amazon careers](#)

Understanding these terms will help you navigate the university/apprenticeship application process with confidence. As you embark on this exciting journey, remember that it's essential to research and ask questions to ensure you make informed decisions about your future education.

# NOTES

# NOTES





 [www.ridgewoodschool.co.uk/sixthform](http://www.ridgewoodschool.co.uk/sixthform)

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