

APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

September 2022 or 2023 entry

- Is university the right path for your child?
- How does your child apply to university?
- How does Rooks Heath School support your child's application?
- How can you, as a parent, support your child's application?



Student choices after A Levels.....

- **University**
- **Gap Year**
- **Internship or Employment**
- **Apprenticeships**
- **Part-time courses**

Applying for an apprenticeship: All apprenticeships are advertised on the government website but students also have a search facility in Unifrog.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

There are many apprenticeships on offer to students who successfully complete A levels and/or BTEC level 3 course.

A popular route to gaining a degree are the new Degree Apprenticeships which are being offered by an increasing number of universities in a wider range of subjects – click on the link to find out more:

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>

Unifrog

WHAT IS UNIFROG?
A one-stop-shop for getting in.



Opportunity searching
Unifrog brings into one place every university course, apprenticeship, and college course in the UK, as well as other opportunities, such as School Leaver Programmes, MOOCs and every college at Oxford and Cambridge.

Taking a Gap Year

Why?

- The experiences gained make people **better prepared** for university
- A chance to **earn money** for university, reducing the financial burden of university
- A chance to develop new **skills**
- An opportunity to experience **life away from home** before starting university
- Opportunity to gain work experience that increases **employability**
- Opportunity to volunteer and **help** organisations and/or people

Why not?

- Travel and/or organized gap year programmes are **expensive**
- There may be changes to courses or **student finance packages / fees** during the year off
- Choose a **course with an industrial placement** if you want work experience
- People can **forget** a lot in a year that would be useful on the course
- If people don't get organised, they may end up spending their gap doing nothing but watching TV. Not great for the **CV!**



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career opportunities

- Potential earnings
- Passion for learning
- Once in a lifetime opportunity
- Independence – development of social skills
- Becoming the norm
- Parental decision

Are there jobs for graduates?

- Competition is fierce: It is now becoming the norm for a degree to be a minimum educational requirement for many occupations
- For many employers, quality of degree (First and Upper Second) is more important than course followed
- But many graduate employers want to see evidence of skills and competencies in addition to the degree
- So need to provide evidence of work experience and extra-curricular activities
- Universities provide information on employability of their graduates – students have access to this via Unifrog and <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>
- Universities provide links to employers – Milkrounds, work placements, websites (www.prospects.ac.uk)

Financial payback-is it worth getting a degree?

- YES or NO?
- UK university graduates between 30 and 44 earn 77% more than those without.
- Average starting salary for graduate vacancies is higher.

Subject	Graduate employment or self-employment	Non-graduate employment or self-employment
Dentistry	£30,775	—
Medicine	£29,383	—
Geology	£29,182	£14,558
Chemical Engineering	£27,722	£16,000
Economics	£26,940	£16,630
General Engineering	£26,294	£19,859
Mechanical Engineering	£25,703	£16,761
Veterinary Medicine	£25,690	£18,880
Mathematics	£24,296	£16,196
Electrical and Electronic Engineering	£24,214	£15,510
Aeronautical and Manufacturing Engineering	£24,133	£16,008
Physics & Astronomy	£23,964	£16,687
Civil Engineering	£23,707	£15,774
Social Work	£23,445	£14,391
East and South Asian Studies	£22,922	£18,429
Complementary Medicine	£22,818	£14,205
Computer Science	£22,793	£15,780
Nursing	£22,626	£17,403
Politics	£22,479	£15,251
Business & Management Studies	£22,103	£15,910
All Subjects	£22,057	£15,376

Trends in the Graduate Employment Market

- Media and teaching are the most popular destinations.
- Investment banking, marketing and accounting are next most popular job sectors.
- 70% of all advertised vacancies were open to graduates from any degree discipline.
- Employers value the “soft” transferable skills over subject knowledge.
- However, engineering and technology require specific subject knowledge (and tend to pay better).
- To see the effect Covid-19 has had on graduate employment [click here](#)

How much does university cost?

There are two main costs:

1. Annual course/tuition fee.
2. Living costs.

1. Tuition Fees

- They depend on what and where a student studies
- For 2021, universities and colleges can charge up to £9,250 a year. Fees for 2022 have not been agreed.
- Don't forget that some courses have extra expenses too, such as costumes for drama, protective wear for engineering or archaeology, or travel for languages or hospitality courses

How do I pay the fees?

Tuition Fee Loan

Student finance, loans and universities

- Loan available to match tuition fee charged
- Available to all eligible students
- Not subject to household income
- No UPFRONT costs – students never see this money, it is paid direct to institution on behalf of student
- Students will have to pay it back - Government advise students to see it as a graduate tax rather than a loan which they start paying back when they are working
- Not compulsory
- Check website for more details:
- <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

2. Living costs-how do I pay for these?

- Covers accommodation, food, travel and course resources which will vary on where students study (most universities have online cost of living calculators available)
- Students are eligible for a **maintenance loan paid in three instalments** which they have to pay back.
- Students may not get the full amount, so they may have to find other ways to fund the rest of their living costs. This could include, for example, part-time work, local authority assistance, bursaries, scholarships, or family contributions.
- Students can use the [student finance calculator](#) to estimate how much Maintenance Loan they will get - it will also tell them if you're eligible for extra grants or allowances.

	2020 to 2021 academic year	2021 to 2022 academic year
Living at home	Up to 7,747	Up to £7,987
Living away from home, outside London	Up to £9,203	Up to £9,488
Living away from home, in London	Up to £12,010	Up to £12,382
You spend a year of a UK course studying abroad	Up to £10,539	Up to £10,866

Student living costs calculators:

Google “university cost of living calculator” for lots of examples

Expense	Cost per month
Accommodation	£££-££££
Transport	£80
Food shop	£74
Water, gas and electricity	£46
Interests and hobbies	£46
Clothing	£42
Holidays and flights	£89
Bank charges and fees	£30
Takeaways and snacks	£26
Phone and internet	£27
Alcohol and cigarettes	£15
Personal care	£12
Coffee and tea	£6
Other expenses	£21

How will students repay these loans?

- Graduates pay back loans when they finish the course and start earning over the threshold of £27,295
- They pay 9% of the amount they earn over the threshold
- Loan is scrapped after 30 years if they never earn over the threshold
- This is subject to change as there is talk of extending the loan period to 40 years

Interest Rates on student loans

- Interest is added to the loan immediately from when a student first borrows money.
- The rate of interest varies on how quickly you pay the loan back – it actually increases if you pay the loan back more quickly than the minimum payments
- The minimum interest rate is linked to the Retail Price Index (currently about 3%) plus 3%. Therefore, it is approximately 6% at the moment.
- Students have to pay interest on loans whilst still at university. Therefore, they accrue interest for at least three years before starting to pay their loans off.

More about interest rates

- Interest charges on student loans are becoming increasingly unpopular.
- This is because they are linked to the Retail Price Index (RPI) which increased substantially in March 2017 to 3% and is currently 3.3%. Consequently interest rates on student loans have increased from 4.6% in 2016/7 to 6.1% from September 2017 to currently 6.3%.
- Furthermore, students have to pay interest on loans whilst still at university. Therefore, they accrue interest for at least three years before starting to pay their loans off.
- Which have a very good factual summary of student loans [here](#)

Financial support available – check out university scholarships

- **National Scholarship Programmes**

£1000 grant for lower income families (less than £25,000) but Government cuts have meant that focus is now on postgraduate courses.

- **Scholarships, Bursaries and Hardship Funds from individual universities**

University of Southampton

[Home](#) | [University life](#) | [Fees and funding](#) | [Undergraduate students](#) | [Scholarships](#)

Scholarships for UK and EU undergraduates

As an institution in the top one per cent of world universities*, we are committed to attracting bright, ambitious students from all backgrounds onto our courses. Scholarships are available to talented students across our subject areas.

This information applies to students from the UK or EU. **Visit our international fees and funding pages** if you are looking for information about scholarships for international students.

Southampton Merit Scholarships

Our £1,000 Southampton Merit Scholarships are awarded to the highest-achieving, first-year entry UK and EU students across the University (with the exception of Medicine and NHS-funded Health Sciences programmes). There is no need to apply and the criteria for the scholarship for 2015/16 entry are as follows:

1. You must exceed the grades contained within your offer.
2. You must achieve a minimum of AAA or equivalent (for some subjects this may include your portfolio or audition).
3. You must make the University of Southampton your firm acceptance to be eligible.
4. 'Your offer' will be the highest of any offers you are made, should you transfer to another course. In certain cases, where a group of programmes share a first semester, any scholarship will be based on the highest offer for that group of programmes.



How much does university cost?

The two main costs (for Sept 2021):

1. Annual tuition fee.

3 years at £9,250

£27,750

(at current levels, remember not all universities charge or are allowed to charge the full amount)

2. Living costs.

3 years at £9,488

£28,464

(Living away from home outside London)

Total debt = £56,214 minus any other income (parents, work) plus debt interest and extra living costs.

Approaching a debt of mortgage proportions!

Choosing the correct course and university is more crucial than ever



choose a university

- Level 3 grades or UCAS points
- Teaching styles vary
- Facilities
- Home or away? – how far away?
- Cost of living: London or not (on average £3,000 per year more expensive)
- Campus / non campus
- Social life
- Family advice
- Job prospects
- Favourite subject

- Students need to research

UCAS & Unifrog search engines: Students have weekly tutorial sessions where they are supported with their searches on UCAS and Unifrog



The screenshot shows the UCAS search tool interface. At the top left is the UCAS logo and 'Search tool' text. Below this is a 'Search courses' section with a dropdown menu for 'Where do you normally live?', radio buttons for '2015' and '2016', and a 'Search' button. To the right is a 'Don't know what to study?' section with a 'Browse' button. Below the search tool is a 'UCAS Search tool' section with a paragraph of text and a list of links: 'Postgraduate courses', 'Postgraduate teacher training courses', and 'Foundation degrees'. A large image of two students looking at a tablet is positioned to the right of the text.

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HOME SHORTLISTS

- 1 Qualifications
- 2 Subjects
- 3 Longlist
- 4 Shortlist
- 5 Complete



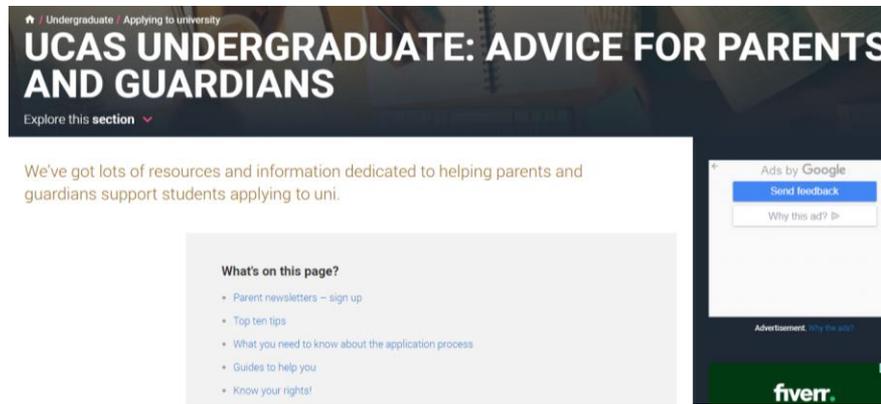
Search our database of every University Course in the UK to find the best 5 Courses for you

The Guardian's Good University Guide:

Online guides offer detailed guidance now on subjects as well as universities

Sociology										
Find out more about studying sociology » Key to headings »										
Rank 2015	Institution	Guardian score/100	Satisfied with course	Satisfied with teaching	Satisfied with feedback	Student to staff ratio	Spend per student/10	Average entry tariff	Value added score/10	Career after 6 months
1	Cambridge	100	92	94.5	74.1	13.7	7	546	8	81
2	Manchester	84.4	91	92.8	78.4	9.3	10	391	6	52
3	Warwick	82.2	92	91.6	68	16.1	10	428	6	64
4	UEA	81.8	90.1	94.7	69.1	6.3	8	446	-	-
4	Bath	81.8	89.1	91	66.4	14.1	8	416	8	71
6	Exeter	81.3	95	94.8	78.5	14.2	5	408	7	-
7	Edinburgh	80.4	86	89.8	56.8	16.4	10	453	9	-
8	Huddersfield	79.3	100	99.5	89.8	20.5	5	252	8	-
9	Surrey	78.6	89	92.3	70.1	15.8	8	401	8	58
10	Durham	77.4	90	84.5	68.7	18.7	6	431	8	70
11	Birmingham	76.6	76.8	75.7	61.7	17.2	10	380	9	88
12	Kent	74.9	93.1	88.5	66.2	12.9	8	363	6	68
13	Bristol	74	81	92	68.9	20.6	7	437	6	61
14	Leeds	72.4	86	90.5	68.3	18	7	399	8	57
15	Portsmouth	71.7	96	93.5	73.3	21.9	6	323	9	55

How to apply to university



- All University applications are made through a system known as **UCAS**: University & Colleges Application System
- www.ucas.com
- Parent guide available [here](#) with lots of video clips to help explain the different stages of the application process
- Students have two further guides available on SharePoint which include information on applying to Oxford and Cambridge entrance exams for competitive courses such as medicine and law

UCAS APPLY ON-LINE APPLICATION

- All university applications are made via the on-line application system - UCAS APPLY
- One UCAS application form, FIVE choices, £26.50 fee
- One personal statement written by the student
- One UCAS reference written by the college
- Applicants cannot indicate a course preference
- Invisibility of choices – universities do not know which other universities students have applied to

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- Two deadlines for applications:
15th October for applications to Oxford and Cambridge Universities and all medicine, dentistry and veterinary science courses.
26th January for everything else apart for Art and Design courses who have their own application process.
- UCAS sends copies of the form to each of the five choices for **equal consideration**.
- June – March: Interviews & Open Days (attendance to which can be a requirement for an offer to be made)
- Sept – May: Offers (both Conditional and Unconditional) and/or Rejections
- **19th May**: Final Decisions Time (students have to nominate 1 Firm and 1 Insurance)

BMAT / UCAT / LNAT tests

- **BE AWARE!**
- **External Entrance Exams** for students applying for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science or Law at participating universities
- Students are responsible for arranging their own exam entry **MUST CHECK CLOSING DATES** & these need to be added on their application form
- Use these websites for more details www.bmat.org.uk
www.lnat.ac.uk <https://www.ucat.ac.uk/>



HOW TO GET THAT PLACE: What are the students being told?

RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH!

Course content varies between universities – no common specification

Check entry qualifications – any **specific** GCSE/A Level **subjects/grades/tariff points** plus and any other requirements e.g. work experience

- Find out if and what work experience (real or virtual) is necessary (medicine, teaching, NHS supported degrees, social work, journalism, law). It is asked for by universities for 2 main reasons:
 1. To demonstrate commitment to career choice
 2. So the university is sure that the applicant is going into this career path with their eyes open.
- Research University Scholarships & Bursaries – find out what's on offer
- Produce a high quality Personal Statement
- Co-operate with your tutors – they are a very important aspect of your application

HOW ELSE DOES THE COLLEGE SUPPORT STUDENT APPLICATIONS?

- Specialist help for those wanting to apply for Oxford & Cambridge and Medicine, Dentistry & Veterinary Science including help with interview technique and entrance exams
- Tutorial programme – most of the Autumn term in Year 13 devoted to university applications, time and support to perfect personal statements
- Time off to go to Open Days-only 2 though!
- One to one meetings with Ms Malins or Mr Wright to check all aspects of the UCAS application

WHAT HAPPENS IF...?

- **UCAS Extra:** February – June
(for students without any offers)
- **Results and Confirmation** of place
Mid August
- **Clearing:** Mid August – September
(for students with lower than predicted grades)
- **Adjustment** Mid August for 5 days
(for students with higher than predicted grades)



How can parents/carers help?

- Discuss the key points from this presentation with their child – choosing to go to university is a really important decision which should be justified by more than a shrug of the shoulders!
- Encourage and support students to attend university Open Days (even if they do not want to go to university as it can really help them to visualise what attending university is like)
- Help them check course details and entry requirements on www.ucas.com or Unifrog. Show interest and support (read up about universities by referring to good university guides or work together on Unifrog)
- Proof read their Personal Statements but please do not write it for them – many admissions tutors say this is the easiest thing to spot
- Encourage them to work hard for exams
- Encourage them to seek advice from the College Careers team if having difficulty in finding a suitable course (tutors will book appointments for students on request)
- Work with them to apply for Student Finance from January onwards – students do not need to know their specific university before they start their application
- Encourage them to complete their UCAS online application ASAP – we like all applications to be sent before the Christmas holiday

If I can help you....

- Email:
awright@rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk
- Phone:
0208 872 8919

Thank you, Mr Wright

- Useful websites for further information
- Costs of studying at university:
<http://www.nus.org.uk/en/advice/money-and-funding/average-costs-of-living-and-study/>
- Student Finance:
<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>
- University and course finder:
<http://www.ucas.com/>
- Good University Guides:
<http://www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide>
<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/>
- Online help and advice:
<https://sacu-student.com/>
- <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/ucas-undergraduate-advice-parents-and-guardians>