

# Applying for University





The purpose of this booklet is to bring together some of the resources available to help you to develop the best personal statement possible. There is no substitute for research, reading and effort in a good UCAS application and personal statement – it is down to you but there is a lot out there to help you.

Please use your form tutors, they are there to advise, criticise and support you. If you have any questions, just ASK.

## TIME SCALE OF APPLICATIONS

- UCAS Apply is already open for applicants for 2020/21. You should be registering and completing the online application form NOW! All sections of the form, except the university choices and personal statement, should be completed by **Monday 14th September**.
- A first draft of your personal statement should be ready to show your tutor on UNIFROG by **Monday 14th September**. Do not go to them with nothing, they won't do it for you! At the very least, you should have completed the **How to Start a Personal Statement** worksheet (found on our website) and put it together as a basic draft.
- Personal statements will then be worked on in conjunction with form tutors over the next few weeks. Remember that they are also have other commitments.
- Anyone applying for Oxford/Cambridge/medicine/veterinary medicine or science and dentistry should apply as soon as possible, the deadline is **15th October**. Make sure that Miss Hughes knows your intention so she can support you. You may also need to sit tests for certain courses and universities - it is your responsibility to find out how and when to do this via the university websites
- Those applying to nursing/Allied health professions/primary teaching courses should also apply as soon as possible. These courses attract huge number of applicants so your application needs to be a) top notch and b) in a timely manner
- Everyone else should be aiming to have their personal statement and application ready to send by October half term, **Friday 23rd October**. This then gives time for the applications to be checked carefully and references written by your form tutors. Please remember that writing a good reference also takes time and will need to be done far in advance of the 15th January
- The final deadline for school to complete the final submission to UCAS is **15th January**. However, the vast majority of applications are in before this date and places already allocated. If you leave submitting your application to school after the 10th January we cannot guarantee that we will be able to submit by the 15th.



# IN SUMMARY

(for most students)

Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Form completed except choices & personal statement.
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	First draft of personal statement ready to show form tutor.
Friday 23rd October 2020	Form, with choices and personal statement, completed, paid and ready to send for reference.
Throughout October/ November 2020	References will be written and applications checked and sent as soon as possible.
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	<b>Final</b> UCAS deadline for submission from school. This is a UCAS deadline, not a school deadline.

## WHAT COURSE SHOULD I APPLY FOR?

You can make up to five applications on your UCAS form. You should make sure that you apply for courses with a range of (realistic) entry requirements. Don't sell yourself short, but don't apply for courses requiring straight A's if you're predicted B's.

**Do your research!** Each course at each university will be different. Don't think that History will be the same wherever you study it. You should consider the following things when weighing up different courses:

- What are the entry requirements? Some courses require specific GCSEs as well as AS/A Levels. Make sure you don't waste one of your five choices
- What will I be studying? The course outlines will show you the content of each course
- How will I be assessed? Different courses at different universities will be assessed differently. Some have a much larger coursework component than others, whilst some are only exams. Which is best for you?
- Will I enjoy it? You will be on this course for at least 3 years. You need to enjoy it.
- What will it lead to? What do graduates of your course go on to do for their careers? Are graduates of your subject employable?
- Can I study abroad, do a work placement, or take a sandwich year?
- How much will it cost? Some courses, such as the allied health professions courses (physiotherapy, occupational health etc) and nursing are partly, or wholly, funded by the NHS.





Take a look at the library of prospectuses in the Sixth Form study area or visit the universities' websites. Sometimes just flicking through a prospectus can give you ideas about courses that you've never heard of before.

Think outside the box – many universities offer joint honours courses that cover more than one subject. Others allow you to study a wider range of subjects and specialise in your second and third years.

## WHAT UNIVERSITY SHOULD I APPLY TO?

You can make up to five applications on your UCAS form. This does not have to be five different places, you may apply for more than 1 course at a university. There are lots of things to consider when you are thinking about which universities to apply to such as:

- Does the course at this university suit me?
- Is it a research-based university?
- Where does it rate on the performance tables?
- Do I want to be in a city or on a campus?
- Do I want to be near/far from home?
- What are the sporting facilities/halls of residence/study facilities like?
- What are the transport links like?
- Are there any bursaries/scholarships available?

If possible, visit the universities you are applying to on an open day. Many open days now take place at weekends or over October half term. Keep an eye out for when these are advertised so you can go and get a feel for the place you are applying to.

You will need to complete a yellow form from Miss Hunt to request time to visit.

## UCAS APPLICATION

To apply to study at university you will need to go through UCAS Apply. Log in at [ucas.com/students](https://ucas.com/students) you need to select 'Undergraduate' and then 'apply' under 2021 entry. You'll then need to register. The registration process takes about 15 minutes and then you can save and edit any of your application at any time.

# REGISTER

- **Personal details** - You will be asked for your name, gender, date of birth, address, home phone number and email address. Consider whether your email address is suitable for this purpose – comedy email addresses are not appropriate from now on!
- **Security** - You will need to set a password and some security questions. You will then be given a username. Keep a note of it. Some good advice might be to email yourself with your username and password for future reference
- **Log in** - The website then asks you to log in using your username and password. Click the box that says you're applying through a school. You will be asked to enter a buzzword, ours is *Sycamore21*
- **Initial log in questions** - You will be asked to confirm that you are applying through school and that our school is The Whitby High School. You will then be asked to select your tutor group from the drop down menu.
- **Personal ID** - You will be given a personal ID number, 10 digits. Keep a note of this for any communication with UCAS.

## Now you have finished your registration

On the left hand side of the page you will see a number of headings. These all open up different sections of the application form. You can save and edit these at any time. Each section has a video showing you how to complete it. You can complete the sections in any order. You should try to complete the whole form apart from 'choices' and 'statement' within the first week back to school so that it can be approved by your form tutor and Mrs Begbie. Nothing can be sent until Mrs Begbie has approved it.

## SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS:

Check your name, address, contact details are all correct.

You will then need to enter:

- **Country of birth**
- **Nationality**
- **Area of permanent residence** - for most this will be Cheshire. You can click 'see list' for the options
- **Residential category** – for most this will be 'UK citizen-England'. Click 'see list' for the option
- **Passport information** - leave blank unless your permanent home is outside of the EU
- **Student support** – Fee code - you need to enter a fee code. This will be **02** for most of you, unless you are going to receive a bursary e.g. from the NHS. If so, choose 05.
- **Student support arrangements** – enter your local county, for most this will be 'Cheshire'
- **Questions about you** or your parents working outside of the UK.
- **Criminal convictions** – only tick the box if you have a conviction that is not spent.
- **Nominated access** – complete this if you want someone else to be able to discuss your university applications for you if you are not available on results day –for example if you are away on results day.
- **Any additional needs** – you will need to select something, 'no disability' if nothing to state. Complete as necessary

**You must then tick the 'section complete' box and your information will be saved.**





## SECTION 2: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are some questions about your background next. You have to answer some, some are optional. They are straightforward.

- **Activities in preparation for higher education-** Some of you have been to summer schools at universities or on subject specific insight courses. Do not put open days down on here.
- **Have you been in care?** You need to answer yes or no and give some details if so.
- **Occupational background** – click 'find' to find the most appropriate job title for the parent/guardian who earns the most in your family.

***You must then tick the 'section complete' box and your information will be saved.***

## SECTION 3: STUDENT FINANCE

You simply need to show whether or not you will be applying for student finance. Most of you should tick yes. There will be an information evening about this later in the year. Also there are more details on student finance later in this guide.

***You must then tick the 'section complete' box and your information will be saved.***

## SECTION 4: CHOICES

Here you can add in your 5 choices for your applications. Follow the links by each section for information about how to complete it.

***You must then tick the 'section complete' box and your information will be saved.***

## SECTION 5: EDUCATION

Use the drop down/search menus to select your high school. Select your school, add start and finish dates (your finish date will be June 2021) and confirm that you have received qualifications.

Click 'add qualifications' and then 'GCSE' in the popular qualifications box (or type GCSE into the search box). You will now need to add details of all of your GCSEs. If you are unsure about any of the exam boards ask your form tutor to give you a print out from SIMS for you to use. Make sure these are all accurate – you will be asked to show evidence before you take up an offer.

Next - click 'add qualifications' again to add your qualifications from the Sixth Form. Search for 'GCE Advanced Level' or the name of your vocational course. Complete the form as before but the qualification date will be August 2021. Leave the result as 'pending' – later staff will add predicted grades to your application.

## SECTION 6: EMPLOYMENT

Add details of any PAID employment. If this is relevant to your application, still mention it in your personal statement. If you haven't had any paid employment you will still need to click section complete.

***You must then tick the 'section complete' box and your information will be saved.***

## SECTION 7: STATEMENT

This is for your personal statement. There is more information on this in the booklet. You will write your statement on Word and copy and paste it into the application form when it is finished.

***You must then tick the 'section complete' box and your information will be saved.***

## SECTION 8: VIEW ALL DETAILS

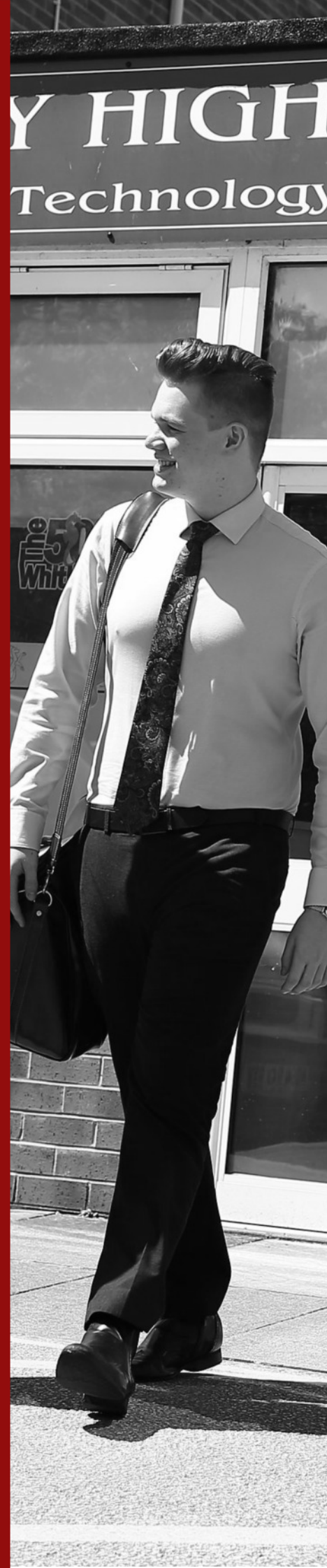
This allows you to look at everything you have entered. Check and double check this. Your form tutor and Mrs Begbie will also check but it is sometimes not obvious when things are wrong, especially personal details.

***You must then tick the 'section complete' box and your information will be saved.***

## SECTION 9: PAY/SEND

When everything has been completed you can pay the admin fee (£24) and send your application. You will need to pay using a debit card. If there are any problems with this please see Miss Hughes. When you pay/send it doesn't go to UCAS, but goes to Miss Hughes for final checking. It is likely that it will be sent back to you if there are any changes to be made so do this in good time.

***Then cross your fingers! Any replies from universities will come through using the UCAS website on the Track section. The website shows you how to check this. You will also get email updates.***





# PERSONAL STATEMENTS

This is your chance to speak to the admissions tutor and tell them all about yourself and why they should offer you a place on one of their courses.

You have 4000 characters or 47 lines to 'sell' yourself to the admissions tutor on the other end of this process. There is a lot of information online about writing the perfect personal statement, some of which is included below.

The best advice is not to dive straight in and write it all at once. Take your time, plan and draft your personal statement as many times as you need to. Try to get as many people as possible to read it through for you. Unifrog has numerous resources aimed at supporting you in writing the best personal statement. Just head to the resources library and type in "Personal Statement".

## DO'S and DON'TS

### Do:

- Remember that first impressions count. Creating an original and engaging start to your statement will help to hold the reader's interest throughout
- Be positive. Even if selling yourself is a skill that you are not comfortable with, now is the time to embrace it
- Keep your language clear, concise and honest. Your personal statement should sound as though it's coming from you, not a thesaurus
- Make it personal. Your statement should not sound generic. It should pull together all the motivations, interests and experiences that make you unique as a person
- Be prepared to write several drafts
- Proofread for errors (and get others to proofread it too) – a personal statement full of mistakes represents a sloppy attitude and a lack of attention to detail

### Don't:

- Simply list details they already have like the courses and modules you are studying. Mention them only in a relevant context, e.g. information about the skills and knowledge they have helped you to develop
- Try and be funny. Humour is subjective and therefore risky.
- Use quotes, unless it is absolutely critical to the point you are making. Focus instead on what *you* want to say,
- Copy the work of others. The anti-plagiarism software that is used will pick up on statements containing as little as 10% of previously used sentences and phrases and report this to your universities
- Leave it till the last minute. Unless you really need the extra time to consider your choices, an early application will generally make it much easier to create a positive impact on the reader.



**Consider this advice from Which? University about evidencing your experiences -**

Don't just say what you did. Reflect critically on your experience, achievements or knowledge. So:

- how did you develop the customer care skills that made you employee of the month?
- how has basketball improved your teamwork, leadership or communication skills?
- how did you get Richard, who has dementia, to tell you about his life?
- what is it that you admire about Cervantes' novels or Katherine Dunham's choreography?

**Remember ABC:**

**Action** = Explaining what have you done, achieved, read or experienced

**Benefit** = Reflecting on what have you learned or gained from it, or what you think about it

**Course relevance** = Making sure you convey why this makes you a good applicant for your chosen course (you don't necessarily have to spell this out after each point – tutors can read between the lines).

# STUDENT FINANCE

There are lots of websites out there with information about student finance. The main thing to remember is that you have access to both Tuition Fee loans (to pay for tuition fees) and Maintenance loans (to pay for living costs). These do not have to be paid back until you have graduated and you earn more than £25,000 per year.

A good source of information on student finance is - [thestudentroom.co.uk/student-finance](http://thestudentroom.co.uk/student-finance)

**You will need to apply for your loans by May/June of 2020.**

Depending on the demands of their course, many students work part-time alongside their studies to assist with their finances. It goes without saying that part-time work should not be allowed to hinder your success on the course.



## THE WHITBY SIXTH FORM

SYCAMORE DRIVE  
ELLESMERE PORT  
CH66 2NU

WHITBYHIGH.ORG