



**FUTURE  
HORIZONS**

---

## **Student Guide 2019/20**

**Name:**

**Tutor Group:**

## Contents

1. Introduction
  2. Super Curricular planning and records
  3. Future Horizons programme and records
  4. Motivation and Inspiration
  5. Career planning and work experience
  6. CV
  7. Work experience planning and records
  8. Higher Education, Training or Employment: What are my options?
  9. University: How do I decide which course to apply for?
  10. Course Investigation
  11. University Investigation
  12. Open days and records
  13. Personal statement advice
  14. Personal statement template
  15. Filling out your UCAS Application
- Appendix 1: Glossary of key terms
- Appendix 2: Useful websites for careers and course research

## Introduction

This booklet is our guide for you to use during lower and upper sixth on how to decide your career path and apply for academic studies at university through UCAS.

In your lifetime it is likely that you will change career paths many times; focusing on gaining knowledge, skills and experience in areas that interest you will therefore assist with sound decision making and personal fulfilment.

Choosing a university course or apprenticeship and/or career direction is a very exciting part of being in the Sixth Form. You can look forward to enjoying academic lectures, learning from work experience, attending employer presentations and going to university open days. All of these will help you “dream big” about where you would like your next academic and social adventures to take you.

Along with the excitement comes challenges and stresses, so please be reassured that we are here to help you. We look forward to discussing your hopes and aspirations for the future and helping you to make key decisions about where you will study and live for the next three (or more) years of your life.

It is important for you to take personal ownership of decisions: whilst school, parents and peers are here to inform, help and mentor, the responsibility for UCAS applications, applying for work experience and extending academic and career knowledge outside of the classroom is yours. Please take advantage of the opportunities and advice available, both inside and outside school. Decisions will take time, research and plenty of discussion.

Your first port of call for advice is your tutor, but the whole Sixth Form team understand the journey you are embarking on very well and have experience and advice to offer. Please do not hesitate to talk to any of us at any time.

Best wishes,

*The Sixth Form Team*

## Super Curricular Planning and Records

Many universities (especially Russell Group/Oxbridge) look for evidence of independent learning outside the A level curriculum in a UCAS application. Sixth Form teachers have produced a recommended Reading List for each subject to help you with this, as well as the Super Curricular Bulletin which highlights external sources of study and lectures, in addition to our own Super Curricular Lectures. It is important to make notes of these events in your **Student Participation Record** to remember what you have learnt and from whom.

### Sources of information

- Lectures / Talks
- Books / articles
- TV / radio programmes
- Websites / YouTube channels
- Plays / performances
- Subject-relevant clubs / societies
- Newspapers
- Trips / visits

## Future Horizons Programme and Records

Future Horizons is Beechen Cliff's programme for Sixth Form students with the following three aims:

1. To inspire and educate you to be aspirational about your future;
2. To help you understand your choices when you leave the Sixth Form; and
3. To explain the steps you need to take to realise your aspirations.

Over the coming weeks and months, you will receive lots of information and guidance; it is important to record details of these events in your **Student Participation Record** to help you capture what you learn. Highlights in the Future Horizons calendar include the Graduate Careers Showcase event, our trip to the UCAS Fair, this year hosted at UWE, and an extensive programme of external speakers.

## Motivation

Everyone works for money however it is not the only significant motivator. Every individual has different motivations for working but all people work because work provides something that they need. Choosing a career that includes the right motivators for you will improve your morale and the quality of your life.

Rate the following common motivators:

High Income	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Seeing the World	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Stable family life	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Flexible hours	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Being your own boss	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Love of the day to day work	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Personal and professional fulfilment	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Accomplishing goals	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Contributing to /Creating something large & important	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Personal missions accomplished through meaningful work	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Love the clients you serve	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Camaraderie and interaction with others/teams	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Filling time with activity, maybe outdoors	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Seeking change, challenge and diverse problems to solve	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)
Other ?.....	(High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

## Inspiration - Popular Degrees

Accounting & finance	Food science	Performing arts
Aerospace engineering	Forensic science	Pharmacology
Agriculture	Games design	Pharmacy
American studies	Genetics	Philosophy
Animal science and management	Geography	Photography
Animation	Geology	Physics
Anthropology	Graphic design	Physiology
Archaeology	Health studies	Physiotherapy
Architecture	History	Politics
Biochemistry	History of art	Product design
Biology	Hospitality management	Psychology
Biomedical sciences	Human resource management	Public relations
Building & Construction	Illustration	Quantity surveying
Business management	Information systems	Real estate
Chemical engineering	Interior design	Social policy
Chemistry	International business	Social work
Civil engineering	International relations	Sociology
Classics	Journalism	Software engineering
Computer science	Landscape design	Sport & exercise science
Creative writing	Law	Sport and leisure management
Criminology	Linguistics	Sports coaching
Dance	Marketing	Statistics
Dentistry	Materials science and engineering	Television production
Drama	Mathematics	Textile design
Early childhood studies	Mechanical engineering	Theology & Religious studies
Economics	Media studies	Travel and tourism
Education	Medical sciences	Urban planning
Electrical/Electronic Eng	Medicine	Veterinary medicine
English	Microbiology	Web design & development
Environmental science	Modern languages	Youth and community work
Events management	Music	Zoology
Fashion	Nursing	
Film production	Nutrition	
Film studies	Occupational therapy	
Fine art		

## Inspiration - Popular Industry Sectors

- Accountancy, banking and finance
- Business, consulting & management
- Charity and voluntary work
- Creative arts and design
- Energy and utilities
- Engineering and manufacturing
- Environment and agriculture
- Healthcare including Medicine
- Hospitality and events management
- Information technology
- Information, research and analysis
- Law
- Law enforcement and security
- Leisure, sport and tourism
- Marketing, advertising and PR
- Media and internet
- Property and construction
- Public services and administration
- Recruitment and HR
- Retail
- Sales
- Science and pharmaceuticals
- Social care
- Teaching and education
- Transport and logistics

Identify at least TWO sectors and TWO degrees from the lists above or of your own choosing. Fill out the table below with your research from the websites below and take the quiz on each. Look at job profiles and career prospects from particular degrees.

Prospects - <https://www.prospects.ac.uk> SACU - <https://sacu-student.com>

Degree	Industry	Career
<i>Examples Below:</i>		
	<i>Environment &amp; Agriculture</i>	<i>Forest/woodland manager</i>
<i>Geography</i>		<i>Town Planner</i>

## Career Planning and Work Experience

### Have you an idea of what career you would like to pursue?

Having a career aspiration beyond education will help you decide what further education or training you may wish to take, including courses at university. Undertaking work experience is key to setting these goals and is also highly sought after by employers. Research has shown that only 5% of employers consider themselves 'very likely' to employ a graduate with no work experience (High Flyers, 2016). There are thousands of different choices of careers and permutations within them. Seek experience in a **variety of placements** in order to confirm your thoughts about a role the reality may be different from your expectations.

There are very few work activities that you cannot do due to health and safety law. This can be checked by contacting HSE's Myth Buster Challenge Panel. Guidance on which can be found at the web address below. Please note we would prefer you to arrange work experience in your free time/holidays ideally in the Easter or summer lower sixth holidays. In exceptional circumstances, a placement may be authorised during term time and you should put a request for this in writing to Mr Oldham. If approved, you will need to complete a Work Placement Agreement, which is signed by the employer, parents and yourself.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/cutting-bureaucracy.htm#responsibilities>

The school assists but does not organise work experience placements; it is up to you to research and approach employers directly. When seeking work experience some employers are more likely to respond to a request for shadowing rather than work experience, as this can be less onerous for employers. Also, whilst some employers may offer you a week or so of experience, others may not be able to provide more than a day. Any amount of time is valuable. Many organisations are now centrally organising work experience, with limited numbers of students, and you will need to apply within a certain time frame. If you have no success in this route do not be afraid to ask to visit for the day "just to see what they do" - this often circumnavigates the work experience application route and provides a valuable insight.



## Curriculum Vitae

A CV provides information to a prospective employer/work experience placement about your skills, experience, education and interests. It is a good idea to write a CV before you need it! You never know when you might be asked to provide one.

A typical structure is as follows:

### **Personal statement**

2-3 sentences that sum up you and your motivations.

### **Skills**

A bullet point list of your key skills.

### **Education & Achievements**

A list of the secondary schools and dates you have attended, your current studies and your GCSE results. Include any awards you have received.

### **Employment & Work Experience**

A list of employer(s) and your roles and responsibilities, most recent first. You can also include work experience placements you have gained.

### **Hobbies & Interests**

A list of your extracurricular interests and achievements

### **References**

Two people and their contact details. Usually Mr Oldham or your tutor and an employer or professional who knows you well

Your CV should also include your name and contact details. It does not have to include your age, although this should be implicit from your education!

Overleaf you will find a template for a CV to help you plan one.

## **Personal Statement**

### **Skills**

- 
- 
- 
- 

### **Education & Achievements**

### **Employment & Work Experience**

### **Hobbies & Interests**

### **References**

## Work Experience Planning and Records

### Finding an Employer for Work Experience

- Using the internet as an investigative tool will serve you well simply type in what you want and the geographic area e.g. Patent Lawyer in Bath.
- Ask your friends and family, share contacts within your tutor group
- Ask the Sixth Form team for employer contacts.
- Ask employers that visit Sixth Form between February and July as part of the Future Horizons programme. Many of these are able to offer work experience and provide an invaluable source of information.

### Contacting the Employer

Once you've found something you would like to know more about you need to find out whom to write to. A quick phone call is the best way: call the main number on the website and ask who would be best to contact regarding work experience, and ask for their email address. Ensure you make notes of all names, telephone numbers and emails in an Employer Contact Record.

As many of you may never have made a "cold call" before, remember to be formal and practice out loud what you are going to say with a friend or teacher. Thinking it in your head is not the same. For extra confidence standing up whilst you make the call helps.

Pointers for your phone call:

- Ask if you have the right company
- Introduce yourself and explain why you are phoning
- Ask if they provide students with work experience or the possibility of shadowing someone in the organisation
- Ask for the contact details, email and mobile number, of the appropriate person

## Writing to the Employer

Send an email to your contact and attach your CV.

Dear xxx

I am writing to ask about the possibility of work experience within your organisation in July or August 2019. I am currently at Beechen Cliff Sixth Form studying for A Levels in X, Y and Z and am hoping to attend university to study DEF with a desire to pursue a career in ABC at the end of my education. I would like to work in ABC because YYYYYYYYYY. Having researched possible employers I came across NAME of COMPANY and would like to find out more about what you do and whether a career in ABC is right for me. Any amount of time at your organisation would be appreciated. I have attached a CV showing my personal details and GCSE qualifications. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,  
A Student  
Mobile 0999999999

## Following up with Employer

If after there working days you don't receive a reply to your email make a follow up call (Possibly the scariest call you will make).

Using the same pointers as before, this time ask to speak to the person you emailed. If they are busy don't take it personally, ask for a good time to call them back. If they are free ask if they received your email and whether there is a possibility that they may be able to take you. It is important to keep a log of all your employer contact to ensure you stay on track with your aim. An example is attached. Once you have completed your work experience ensure that you record what you did and with whom.

Don't be dejected if they say no. Keep asking other employers and accept any offers that come your way. No experience is wasted, what you learn about different working environments, and the content of the work, the negatives and positives, will help you make decisions about your future.

## Employer Contact Record

Name of Organisation	
Type of Work	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Contact Name	
Date of Telephone Call	
Date Email sent	
Date Follow Up Call (1)	
Date Follow Up Call (2)	
Success?	
Lessons learnt?	
Start Date	

Name of Organisation	
Type of Work	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Contact Name	
Date of Telephone Call	
Date Email sent	
Date Follow Up Call (1)	
Date Follow Up Call (2)	
Success?	
Lessons learnt?	
Start Date	

## Confirming the Offer of Work Experience

Before you formally respond to an offer check that you are able to commit to their start date, duration of work and expected working hours. You may need to ask for time off school, contact Head of Sixth Form for Permission and obtain the relevant forms. Once all details are confirmed ensure that you formally accept their offer. Details you may want to confirm before you start:

- Where should you go – get an address?
- Who should you report to on your first day?
- What time do you start and finish on what days?
- What should you wear or bring with you?
- What about lunch, is there a canteen/shop?

During your work experience ensure you make notes of the work that you are doing using the **Work Experience Record**.

## Work Experience Record

Organisation Name	
Type of Work	
Whom I worked with	
Contact Email	
Contact Telephone Number	
What I did	
What I learnt	
High Points	
Low Points	

## Higher Education, Training or Employment: What are my options?

The majority of students at Beechen Cliff go to university to continue their education. However, it is important to highlight that there are a number of other options including foundation degrees, apprenticeships and HND's.

### Straight To Work Programme

If a student wishes to enter employment directly from sixth form then we provide the resources and information necessary to help them decide which career to pursue, researching suitable employers and help with their applications. This help includes; creating a CV including a mini personal statement, filling out on line applications, interview skills and presentations from a range of local and national employers offering a range of schemes for school leavers.

Students can register for this programme in November of Upper Sixth and attend an off timetable day to get them started in the same term to get them started. Most employers start recruiting in the autumn term and finish towards the end of February. One to one advice and help is available from both Tutors and the Future Horizons Co-ordinator throughout the Upper Sixth.

### Apprenticeships

All apprenticeships are real jobs so all apprentices earn a salary. You must be paid at least the national minimum apprenticeship wage – and many employers pay significantly more. Apprentices will also receive training either through the employer, an external body, a college or university. Apprentices should work for at least 30 hours per week (although with some higher and degree apprenticeships this is condensed into 2 days or a summer work programme). An apprenticeship takes between one and five years to complete, depending upon the level of apprenticeship and the industry sector.

The training/education is specifically tailored to ensure you develop the skills the employer wants, giving apprentices a real advantage in the workplace.

This means that apprentices not only have better long term salary prospects, but they also have excellent progression opportunities, whether looking to study further or climb the ranks within the workplace.

In 2017/18, there were 369,700 apprenticeship starts in England. There are several levels of apprenticeships which include higher and degree apprenticeships.

Higher Degree	Levels 4,5,6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
	Levels 6 and 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

People aged 25 and over accounted for 46% of apprenticeship starts in 2016/17. People aged 19-24 accounted for 29% and those aged under 19 accounted for 25%. In 2016/17 53% of apprenticeship starts were at intermediate level, 40% were at advanced level and the remaining 7% were at higher level.

The number of higher level starts has almost doubled in the last two years. These 12,500 higher apprenticeship places (roughly the half the number of successful applicants to a medium sized university) making securing places for Higher Level apprenticeships very competitive.

The majority of apprenticeship starts were in the service sectors in 2016/17. 86% of all starts were in four subject areas: Health, Public Services and Care; Business, Administration and Law; Retail & Commercial Enterprise; and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies. Over 2018 there has been a significant increase in Russell Group Universities offering degree apprenticeships.

There are many ways to find an apprenticeship, either by using the government website or sponsored websites or by contacting employers directly. It is important for students to not under estimate the amount of time, research and preparation that is required to successfully secure a good apprenticeship, the variety and quality of schemes varies and it is important to ask about training and future prospects. You will need to contact individual employers and universities, unfortunately there is no centralised database for these yet and so students will need to do their research.

Contact Mrs Jones in Sixth Form for help and advice if you are interested.

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeship>

<https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/apprenticeships-223>

<https://careerfinder.ucas.com/jobs/apprenticeship/south-west-england/#browsing>



## Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates

Both courses are undergraduate qualifications and are designed to prepare you for a specific career such as accountancy or computing. An HND is a work-related course provided by higher and further education colleges. A full-time HND takes two years to complete, or three to four years part-time. Generally an HND is the equivalent to two years at university. A full-time HNC takes one year to complete, or two years part-time. Many HNC courses cover the same subjects as an HND, but an HNC is one level below an HND (it's generally equivalent to the first year at university).

## Foundation Degrees

Foundation degrees are ideal if you're unsure about taking a full degree or if you want to study while you work. Whether you're working in or towards the role now, you can gain professional and technical skills to further your career – within a shorter time frame than a full degree. They usually take two years full-time to complete or longer for part-time students. Normally you can continue for a further year to gain a full honours degree, which is useful if you decide to go for a full degree after all. Applications are made via UCAS.

## Higher & Degree Apprenticeships

Students can apply directly for degree apprenticeships in addition to the five choices of courses at university places via UCAS. Students sometimes attend the same course at the same university as non-apprentices but will work at the business either one or two days a week or in the holidays. The advantage of this is that employers pay all tuition fees and the student has a salary of around £18k and no student debt. A large number of technology, computing and engineering degrees are available as well as an increasingly large number of other subjects, as well as sponsorship via the armed forces.

Some recommended apprenticeships:

Wessex Water	<a href="https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/Careers/Apprenticeships">https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/Careers/Apprenticeships</a>
Bishop Fleming	<a href="http://www.bishopflemingjobs.co.uk/graduates-trainees/">http://www.bishopflemingjobs.co.uk/graduates-trainees/</a>
Dyson	<a href="https://careers.dyson.com/early-careers/school-leavers/">https://careers.dyson.com/early-careers/school-leavers/</a>
PWC	<a href="https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/school-jobs/jobs.html">https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/school-jobs/jobs.html</a>
Airbus	<a href="http://company.airbus.com/careers/apprentices-and-pupils/In-the-United-Kingdom.html">http://company.airbus.com/careers/apprentices-and-pupils/In-the-United-Kingdom.html</a>
Rotork PLC	<a href="https://www.rotork.com/en/careers/apprentice-scheme-bath">https://www.rotork.com/en/careers/apprentice-scheme-bath</a>
Rolls-Royce Plc.	<a href="http://careers.rolls-royce.co.uk/united-kingdom/apprentices-and-school-leavers">http://careers.rolls-royce.co.uk/united-kingdom/apprentices-and-school-leavers</a>

NB You can apply for any number of degree apprenticeships via employers as well as undergraduate degree courses via UCAS.

## Undergraduate Degree Courses at University

You have two main questions to ask yourself when you are applying to university:

1. What course do you want to do?
2. Where do you want to do it?

Choosing the correct course is the most important part of your research; you are going to spend three or more years studying it and you need to be sure you will be successful and enjoy it. The websites in Appendix 2 will help you, with the UCAS website being the most important to get your head round first.

You can choose up to five courses on your UCAS application. Usually these are five similar courses from five different universities. However, it can include different courses at the same university if you wish, or a range of totally different courses.

However an important part of the application is your personal statement that needs to cover all the courses for which you are applying, so you will need to think carefully about writing this if applying for a variety of courses.

## University: How do I decide which course to apply for?

### 1. Does your choice of career dictate a certain degree?

For example, vocational careers in engineering, medicine or ecology

Many career paths may appear to require specific degrees but upon investigation they do not. For example, a career in accountancy does not require a numerate degree and humanities graduates are equally employable. However, there may be an advantage to choosing a business and finance degree as it could lead to professional accreditations that count towards accountancy qualifications.

### 2. No specific career path....?

List any academic course(s) e.g. history, biology you might be interested in.

Some questions to think about:

- What method of assessment do you prefer: course work or exams, or mixture?
- Do you prefer a practical or theoretical course?
- Look at new subjects and unusual courses that may include aspects of subjects you know and maybe less competitive e.g. Biology/Sociology vs Anthropology.
- Would you consider applying for a course(s) that are 4 years long, gaining you a Master's degree as well?
- Would you like to have a year in industry or business placement? These greatly improve your employability
- Are there recognised/preferred courses by industry – ask a potential employer? e.g. University of Bath and Architecture
- If wanting to continue in academia where is there greatest investment in research?
- What are student satisfaction levels on the course? See student review websites
- What are the employment statistics after graduation – investigate what types of jobs?
- Do you want to include a year studying abroad in your course?
- How much contact time would you like with tutors and lecturers?

## Course Investigation

Below are four of activities to help you learn to navigate it:

Activity 1: Go to the UCAS website and use the search tool. Type in: History, Go down to Birmingham University as an example.

How many History courses are there? .....

Write down three examples and what the entry requirements are:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Activity 2: Find 3 university subjects which are not A level subjects:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Activity 3: Find the entry requirements for each of the following courses:

1. Medicine at Bristol :
2. Creative Writing at Bath Spa :
3. Engineering at Brunel :
4. Mathematics at Portsmouth :
5. Nursing at University of West of England :
6. Psychology at Gloucester :

Activity 4: Choose a subject and find out how many universities do that course.

Subject:

Number of universities offering this course:

## University Investigation

- Are there any universities which are particularly good for the course(s) in which you are interested? Compare the league tables for the course you have chosen. List the best:
  - <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/>
  - <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-uk>
  - <https://www.studentcrowd.com/>
- What are student satisfaction levels at the university? See student review websites
- Is there anywhere (region, city) you would particularly like (or not like) to study?
- Would you prefer a campus or city university?
- Consider cost of living
- Consider cost and length of time of travelling
- Would you be interested in studying abroad?
- Do you want to apply to a Russell Group / Oxbridge university?
- If you don't want to use or continue studying your chosen subject after graduation which university has the best reputation for employment?

## Open Days and Records

Open days can be very important for getting the feel for a university, for understanding courses better and for exploring cities / campuses and all they have to offer.

University and course-specific open days can be found on university websites, on [www.opendays.com/calendar](http://www.opendays.com/calendar) and on the UCAS website. Below is a map of some of the cities/towns with large universities. Plan your open days by region, you may be able to do two in a day:



Use the table below to fill in some dates of open days you would like to attend:

Date	University	Course(s)

University	Date
Courses	Questions to ask
What I liked	What I did not like

University	Date
Courses	Questions to ask
What I liked	What I did not like



## Personal Statement Advice

Universities will consider three things when deciding whether to make you an offer, which is usually conditional on 3 A-level results; Your academic record, Your personal statement, Your reference, written by your teachers and Mr Oldham

Your performance at interview will also be considered for some courses (usually at top universities) and on rare occasions unconditional offers are made.#

Securing the best possible grades throughout the Lower Sixth should be your priority. Your personal statement then needs to contain evidence that you are genuinely excited about higher study i.e. you can prove it, not just say it. It is your opportunity to sell yourself and explain why you will make an ideal candidate for the course.

A personal statement is called a *personal* statement for a reason. There can be a temptation to look up examples of 'good personal statements' and try to use this as a basis for your own. Whilst doing some research and activities, such as below, to get an idea of a good personal statement can help, you should be careful not to use someone else's as a basis for yours. Universities also use software to check for plagiarism (copying others' work) so you certainly should not copy phrases from someone else's!

That said, we can offer some guidelines for writing a person statement:

1. Explain what **motivates/interests within and beyond your A Levels** you e.g. super curricular activities / parts of your courses you have particularly enjoyed.
2. Describe your **suitability** for the course e.g. skills/knowledge from past studies / experiences.
3. **Link** aspects of your studies and other activities e.g. relevance of maths to psychology or an idea in physics that you saw taken a step further at university lecture OR application of knowledge in a work experience placement.
4. Use your **extra-curricular** activities to demonstrate your ability to cope with university life e.g. time management / having a balanced set of interests.
5. Talk about your **future plans or ideas** (these do not have to be set in stone, but you can give an idea about potential careers / fields of work)

In addition to these, there are some good rules for ensuring you come across as a serious candidate:

1. Make sure your **spelling, punctuation and grammar** are accurate.
2. Be **enthusiastic** and don't be afraid to talk about your **strengths**.
3. Don't **exaggerate!** You could get caught out at a later date.
4. **Show, don't tell** i.e. you can say you are interested in something but it is better to show it with an example(s).
5. Avoid  **clichés** e.g. "Ever since I was a child, I have always wanted to study Economics."
6. Be very careful using **quotes from others** i.e. only use it if you can offer some analysis of it and relate it closely to your personal ideas.
7. Be careful using **humour** unfortunately an admissions officer might not share yours!

You should expect to write 3-4 drafts (maximum) of your personal statement. After this, you will not gain much more by re-writing!

The key is to plan your statement well before you start writing. The first draft is the hardest so set aside a good chunk of time to get this done. Writing the first paragraph is often difficult. Our advice would be to write something off the top of your head (i.e. don't worry too much about finessing it) then come back to it at the end once you have written the rest of it.

Remember, the personal statement is what will make you stand out. Many other students applying to university will have a similar academic profile to you; you need to show why you would be a better undergraduate than them!

Below is an activity to help you think about a good personal statement. Read through the examples and decide whether you think they would be good to read in a personal statement.

## Personal Statement Phrases:

### Good and bad examples

Lollipops and watermelons - that's what got me into Spanish.

Growing up, Kerouac's 'On the Road' was personally inspiring to me as a tale of youth, personal freedom and expression in a culturally dynamic environment.

Deficits, wars and scandal: this seems to be the current interpretation of politics today.

Growing up in post-Soviet Belarus I wasn't surrounded by architectural wonders - all the buildings were dull and grey, therefore my early childhood was spent designing the houses of my dreams.

Maths has been a passion of mine since I was 5 years old.

'Now' is a point at a precise time and therefore it is no longer 'Now' one second later. Presentists would argue that only the present moment exists and therefore we can only be certain of 'Now'.

I am currently studying Geography A Level and am particularly enjoying learning about immigration.

...I particularly like the way Jason Stearns does this in his book, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*. Taking Arendt's theory of the banality of evil as his starting point, he explores the horrific events in the Congo...

To develop my understanding of Polar regions, I attended a lecture entitled 'Contested Arctic' run by the British Geographical Association. I was struck by...

Making an evacuation suitcase at the age of nine made me realise for the first time how historical events had affected real people.

I have a part time job as a waitress.

For extra-curricular activity, I have done 10 Tors, Gold DofE, Centurion, mountaineering, volunteering with younger students, played rugby, football, hockey and cricket...

I am a really sociable person.

I secured a work experience placement with Bath University pharmacology department, during which I ran NMR samples, developing my understanding of the use of solvents such as  $CDCl_3$

**Good statements...**

**Bad statements...**

**Statements you would revise and how you would do this...**

## Personal Statement Template

You can use the outline below for planning what you would write in a personal statement, which usually is 4 – 6 paragraphs long, containing up to 4000 characters (including spaces).

'The hook' – Why do you want to study this course?
Highlights of A level courses / application and analysis of A level knowledge / super curricular activities / work experience / wider reading / academic skills from A-levels
As above
As above
Extra-curricular activities

**NB** The extra-curricular activities box is smaller than the rest! Universities want you for your academic credentials above and beyond anything else. Extra-curricular activities should prove something about your ability to be successful at university e.g. independence / teamwork / responsibility

## Filling out your UCAS Application

There is lots of guidance on the UCAS website about this, however every year we see common mistakes/omissions. To avoid these you should:

1. Only make one UCAS account in your name.
2. Link your application to the school in order to get a reference from us. This you do when you create a UCAS account and are asked to 'link to a centre'. You will then be asked the buzzword which will be 'griffin2019'.
3. Choose the correct language i.e English, as there is an option to select Welsh.
4. Make sure you select Fee Code '02' in the 'Personal Details' section. This indicates you are going to apply for student loan.
5. Make sure you put 'August 2019' as your end date at Beechen Cliff. This means you can select the A Levels you will take at the end of the Upper Sixth and put your grades as 'pending'. The school will then add predicted grades.
6. State if you have a disability/special educational need.
7. Talk to your tutor, Mr Oldham or Miss Mather if you have extenuating circumstances we should know of. Again, universities take these very seriously and we can write about them in your reference. These could be things such as: on-going or past physical or mental health issues, difficulties at home e.g. divorce, an ill sibling, or family bereavement.
8. When choosing your courses, ensure you have a range of offers, tending towards the aspirational. If you are predicted ABB, you might go for courses with these typical offers: AAA, AAB, ABB, BBB, BBB/BBC. Talk to your tutor if you are unsure about this as it is a very important decision!

Once you have completed your application, pay and send it. It comes to the school and we then send it to UCAS. If we see an error we will return it to you. You should make the recommended change and then re-send to us. You will not be charged twice!

## Appendix 1: Glossary of Key Terms

- Undergraduate

This is what you will be for your first degree. In other words, you are studying to graduate (i.e. you are ‘under graduating’). You will either study for a BA (Hons) in the arts subjects or a BSc (Hons) for the sciences BEng (Hons) for engineering. These are all known as ‘Bachelors’ degrees. There are also some course specific names for degrees, such as an LLB in Law. These are all equivalent qualifications. After your degree, you may want to stay on to study for a Postgraduate qualification, otherwise known as a ‘Masters’ or ‘Doctorate’ degree. These are higher qualifications and similarly you would receive an MA, MSc, MEng, LLM or PhD.

- Entry Requirements

In September you must find out your predicted grades from your subject teachers. You can use these as guidance for which courses to apply for. You must be realistic in your choices. Many people choose to be ambitious; however it is worth having one ‘back up’ choice which has lower entry requirements so that you are more likely to have at least one offer from your five choices. This also allows for the possibility of you not reaching your predicted grades in summer.

Most universities make offers based on three A-level grades e.g. ABB, which are not subject-specific. For some courses, the university can request for you to have a certain grade in the specific subject e.g. to study Maths at Reading University, the normal entry requirement is ABB with an A in Maths A-Level. You can find out entry requirements for all courses on the UCAS website, on university websites and in prospectuses.

Some universities make offers based on points. This takes into consideration students studying other qualifications, such as BTECs. You can find a table explaining the new points tariffs on the UCAS website.

- Russell Group

This is a group of around 20 top universities in the UK. It is worth noting that there are some excellent universities that are not included in this group e.g. Bath. Typically Russell Group universities are working universities with major research facilities and are recognised globally as being respected establishments producing top quality graduates.

- Oxbridge

This just means Oxford and Cambridge universities. These are widely viewed as the top two universities in the country (but not necessarily for all subjects). You can only apply to one or other, not both, in each application year, and this counts as one of your five UCAS choices. Terms are shorter but far more intense and they have a very different teaching approach to other universities, comprising tutorials/supervisions of 1:1 or 1:2 often with world-leading experts. You will need to be looking to get at least an A\* and two As at A level to think about applying to these. You usually have to do further entry tests and/or submit written work before you may be offered an interview and your application has to be sent off by mid-October rather than January.

- Campus universities

These are universities where all the departments and facilities, including first year accommodation, are on one site. Both Bath University and Bath Spa University are good examples of this. It can be very convenient but it can also mean you are in a little bubble away from the real world. It can make it easier to get to know new people quickly. Usually second and third year students have to move away from the campus into private accommodation as there is only accommodation on campus for first year students.

- City universities

Some universities have their buildings mixed in among the regular shops, houses and businesses in the rest of the city, although they are usually quite close to each other. Bristol University is a good example of this. It can mean that you find yourself a bit lost at first but it has the advantage of not just being around other students and being able to better explore the city you are living in.

- Former Polytechnics

You may hear some people being a bit contemptuous about some universities because they used to be something called a 'polytechnic'. Generally, you should ignore this as some of these former polytechnics such as Oxford Brookes, are now of equal standing, if not better than, some long established 'traditional' universities.



- Private Universities

There are a few private universities that you can apply to directly. They usually cost more money but can be suitable for some people. Examples include Buckinghamshire University and the New College of Humanities.

- University League Tables

There are a lot of these done by all sorts of organisations, but be very careful with them. They can be useful but you need to look beyond the rank order. The top universities will be good at all the subjects they offer, whereas the lower end ones will be good at some things but not all. For example, Bath Spa University is very good for courses in education and teaching but other subjects are more variable. Other interesting things to look for are employability rates, dropout rates, and student satisfaction ratings.

- Universities abroad

UCAS only covers universities in the UK. It may be worth looking at other countries. The USA offers lots of choice but is very expensive. Often, however, American universities do offer scholarships and other means of financial help. The Republic of Ireland has some good universities – for example, there are two excellent universities in Dublin but they are hard to get in to. The Netherlands have many universities offering lectures and classes in English and the fees are much lower. Similarly in Hong Kong the lectures are in English but the distance from home will not suit everyone. If you are not fazed by moving far from home, Australia and New Zealand are worth looking into but might prove expensive unless you are dual nationals. There are plenty of other places to study abroad – but make sure you check if lectures are in English. It is worth noting that most university courses offer the chance to study on a ‘year abroad’ in third year, meaning you could attend a UK university, but have the chance to go to a different university just for a year.

- Deferred Entry

This is where you apply for courses starting in the following year. For example, most of you will apply in autumn 2018 to go to university in September 2019, but a deferred entry application would be for September 2020. This would enable you to have a gap year with a guaranteed place already sorted for the following year if you meet the terms of your offer.

## Appendix 2: Useful Websites for Careers and Course Research

<b>ucas.com and/or search.ucas.com</b>	UCAS undergraduate course search tool. You can either search by course, provider or location, or you can browse through subjects.
<b>ukcoursefinder.com</b>	Try the study interests questionnaire to pinpoint your interests in 150+ degree disciplines. Search for courses within Low, Medium or High tariff points bands.
<b><a href="http://sacu-student.com/">http://sacu-student.com/</a></b>	Independent & impartial source of careers information to students, parents and teachers
<b>opendays.com</b>	A calendar of all the open events at HE institutions throughout the country.
<b>unistats.direct.gov.uk</b>	Compare HE courses using official data from satisfaction scores in the National Student Survey, the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, plus jobs and salaries after study.
<b>university.which.co.uk</b>	Search for degree courses (filter by predicted grades & location) – search results show % of applicants receiving a place & other data. Explore subject guides and University profiles.
<b>thescholarship.org.uk</b>	Search for UK scholarships, grants or bursaries for university using this database of funding for UK/EU undergraduates and postgraduates.
<b>bestcourse4me.com</b>	Find out what degree and career your A Level subjects could lead to. See earnings by age for different degree subjects.

<b>Nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk</b>	Helpful job profiles for looking up any career and entry requirements
<b>Careerpilot.org.uk</b>	Research job sectors (includes South West region info), plus a guide to post-18 options.
<b>Prospects.ac.uk</b>	Graduate careers website with job sector info, job profiles, 'What jobs would suit me?' and 'What can I do with my degree?' tools.
<b>Apprenticeships.gov.uk</b>	The National Apprenticeship Service website. Look into Types of Apprenticeships available, plus search/apply for vacancies.
<b>Studentladder.co.uk</b>	Information on choices after year 13, including school leave programmes, work placements and internships, plus other articles.
<b>Notgoingtouni.co.uk</b>	Info on other post-18 options, including apprenticeships, gap years, distance learning, jobs, HE at College and sponsored degrees.
<b>TheBigChoice.com</b>	Student jobs, school leaver programmes and work placement information.
<b>Careermap.co.uk</b>	Apprenticeships and School Leaver jobs shown on a map of the local area.
<b>Allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk</b>	Explains your options at 18. Job search and sections with advice on CVs, applications and interviews.



Kipling Avenue, Bath BA2 4RE  
Tel: +44 (0)1225 480466 [www.beechencliff.org.uk](http://www.beechencliff.org.uk)  
Email: [HeadofSixth@BeechenCliff.org.uk](mailto:HeadofSixth@BeechenCliff.org.uk)