

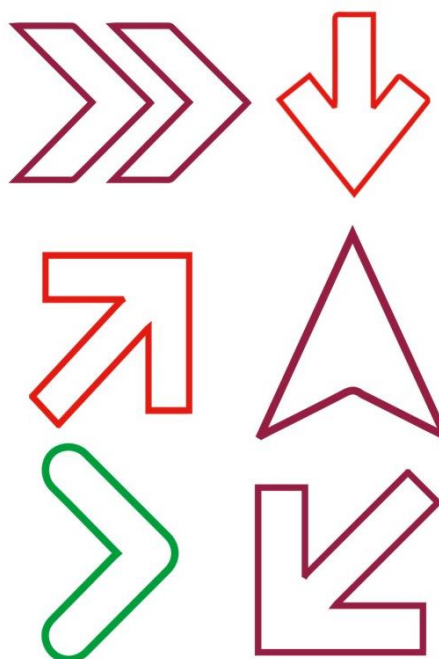
# After Sixth Form

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THE SIXTH FORM  
AT WOODHOUSE GROVE

**Explore**  
*your*  
**options**



# After A levels

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If you would like to make an appointment to discuss your options then please contact:

Mrs Nott (university): [nott.cl@woodhousegrove.co.uk](mailto:nott.cl@woodhousegrove.co.uk)

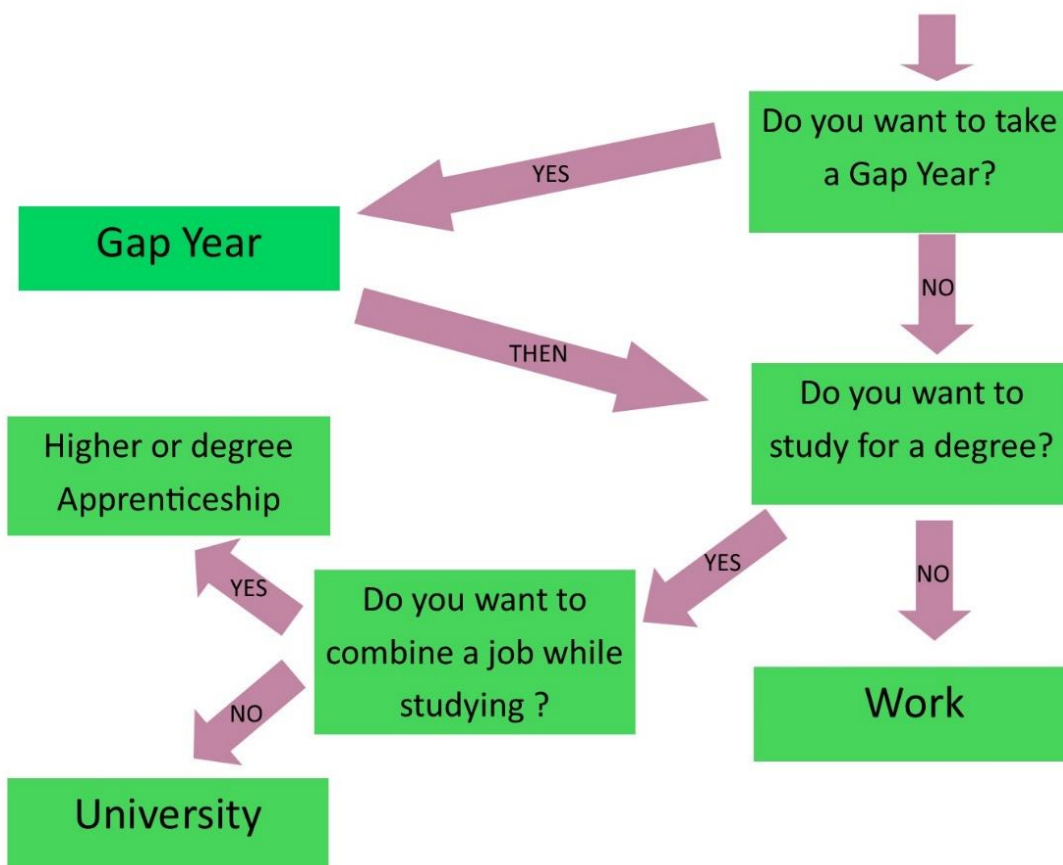
Mrs Watson (apprenticeships): [watson.pl@woodhousegrove.co.uk](mailto:watson.pl@woodhousegrove.co.uk)

## Choices, choices....

You have much to decide over the next 12 months or so. Whether to go to university or to take an apprenticeship or to start work immediately is one of the decisions to make. Remember that you can follow more than one initial pathway before making a final choice at the end of Year 13: don't be too quick to dismiss any route, explore them all.

You are about to begin a process of decision-making that will have significant implications for your future. You will need to give serious thought to the question of what you are going to do for the three or four years immediately after leaving school. Not only will you be deciding where to spend those years, but you will also be shaping the direction of your future career.

You may find the following flowchart helpful in thinking about your options. Each route is followed up in more detail in the later sections of this guide.



## Higher Education

Most WGS students do go to university. Although the percentage following this route has fallen slightly in recent years as more attractive apprenticeships have become available, over 90% of our sixth form leavers still decide to go into higher education.

If you decide to apply to university, you can choose up to five courses.

Your choice of courses must be made carefully after **detailed individual research** and consultation with both sixth form and subject staff. Now is the right time to start your research. Use online resources, paper-based prospectuses, open days, taster days and speaking to friends or family members who are currently at university to help you to make your choices.

Why university?	Why a degree apprenticeship?	Why go straight into work?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I enjoy studying</li> <li>• I need a degree for my chosen career</li> <li>• I will probably earn more eventually</li> <li>• University life looks fun</li> <li>• I'll gain transferable skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I want to combine studying and working</li> <li>• I want more of an emphasis on practical skills</li> <li>• I want to earn as I study</li> <li>• I don't want to leave university in debt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know what I want to do</li> <li>• I want to start my career straightaway</li> <li>• I want more money now</li> </ul>

If you have no idea what you want to do eventually for a career, a degree course can delay that decision for a few years whilst broadening your horizons. You can keep many options open by applying to university. If you are in doubt about whether or not to apply, you should apply, to reserve a place. It is more difficult to find a suitable course late in the admissions cycle. Although there is a late application process many of the places will already have been filled and universities do not have to consider your application. You can withdraw from the UCAS process at any stage.

University study allows students to follow particular academic interests, and to develop new friendships in a university community. Degree level study will allow you to develop new skills and personal qualities such as self-reliance, adaptability and the ability to communicate effectively, all skills that are valued by employers. You also have the opportunity to demonstrate 'soft' skills by, for example, running a university society or sports team.

Perhaps most important of all, higher education may be a way of obtaining a better job. Some professions, such as medicine, are 'graduate only' but as more graduates enter the job market a higher education qualification is increasingly becoming the norm.

However, the rise in university fees a few years ago and apprenticeship levy on companies has brought a response from employers. There are now apprenticeships available in most areas e.g. IT, finance, nursing and law, which provide an alternative route to professional qualifications. These apprenticeships have entry requirements similar to those for a degree course. Some

apprenticeships include the opportunity to study for a degree whilst working, with your employer paying the university fees.

Having a university place to aim for can be a good motivator. The offer of a place conditional on achieving particular grades can act as 'the light at the end of the tunnel' to help you to maximise your achievement at A-level.

Despite these advantages, you do not necessarily have to go to university. There are increasing financial pressures on students and you may feel that you do not wish to continue studying.

Each year, a few students drop out of university. Often, this is the result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. **If you are not content with your surroundings you will not do well.**

University is about far more than just your course of study – it is about your learning being developed through the people you meet and the things you do. Everyone has different needs, abilities and ambitions, and they must all be carefully taken into account when deciding about higher education. Your course must interest you deeply **and** you must be happy about where you have chosen to live.

There is no such thing as one 'best' university for a particular course: you have to find the best university for YOU.

## Research and Decisions

University entry is based on the principle that students are selected by those who will teach them. The student is not selected by the UCAS computer or by a university's central administration but by the subject department or faculty teaching the course the student wants to take. Different universities have different admissions policies, and admissions procedures may vary between departments and/or colleges within the same university.

Although universities take a great deal of time and care to perfect their admissions system, the sheer volume of applications occasionally leads to flaws in the system. Almost all of our students receive offers of places from almost all of the courses which they choose. However, some courses, especially in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, law or economics, are very heavily over-subscribed: they have more excellent candidates than they can take, so not every applicant can be offered a place.

You are more likely to make a successful application if you:

- (a) start your research **early**;
- (b) recognise that it is up to **you** to make **your own** decisions;
- (c) make your choices **sensibly**;
- (d) **listen** to advice.

There are no shortcuts and you have many hours of research ahead of you. **This is your decision, but we will help you to make it.**

## Which Subject?

There are many hundreds of different subjects available in universities. Many (maybe most) degrees are in subjects not studied at school.

The websites 'UCAS Subject Guides' (<https://www.ucas.com/explore/subjects>) and 'TheUniGuide' (<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/>) may help you to identify suitable areas for study.

1. If you have already formed some idea about the career you eventually wish to follow, then a **vocational** course may be what you want. Vocational courses have direct relevance for a particular job e.g. dentistry, primary education, midwifery.

However, you must know what the career actually involves –the length of training, and the nature of the work. You will need to do work shadowing to get this knowledge. It's not always easy to get, so start straight away.

If you are simply attracted to the status and salary of a career, and don't know about the demands that it will make, then you are approaching the issue in the wrong way and may well make a foolish choice. 'I want a job which will earn me a lot so I'll be a doctor' doesn't often end well.

Taking a vocational degree does **not** commit you to follow a particular career – it is a measure of intellectual attainment. At least half of all job vacancies (such as in marketing, publishing, management and the Civil Service) are available to graduates in any field. Many students who take vocational courses find employment in fields other than that of their degree.

2. You might choose a subject stemming from your A-level courses and interests, where your intellectual curiosity has already been stimulated. You could choose to combine subjects: there are a very large number of joint or combined honours courses available.
3. You might want to choose an entirely new subject such as zoology, sociology, anthropology, engineering....

Remember that a future employer will be looking for evidence of your academic ability, initiative and determination – all qualities that are needed to obtain a degree in **any** subject. The subject matter is far less important than the development of your skills of analysis, evaluation, initiative, communication and presentation. Graduate employment is increasingly about **the quality of the degree, the quality of the applicant and their extracurricular activities whilst at university**. However, if there are specific degree requirements for a particular career you need to find out about them **now**. Check that you meet the GCSE requirements. A few courses need a particular set of A-level subjects. Check that you have what is needed.

# Which Course?

## Types of courses

Now you need to investigate features of the courses on offer at the various institutions with a view to finding some that particularly appeal to you. Courses can differ considerably in both approach and content, in the way in which you will be assessed and in the number of hours of 'contact time' which you will have. Not every university offers every subject.

**The university's own webpages will have the most detailed and up-to-date information about the content of each course.**

Guide to the names:

**Single Honours** – One subject is studied within which a range of specialist options is generally provided. The first year may be more general and you specialise in later years.

**Joint Honours** – Two separate but equal subjects are studied which may or may not be related e.g. History and French; Economics and Accountancy (There can be sometimes be little, or no, co-ordination between the departments). Sometimes there is a 'major' and a 'minor' subject, indicated by History with French. Business Studies **with** German means that Business Studies is the major subject and German is the minor subject; Business Studies **and** German means that equal time is allocated to each subject; Business Studies and German **Business** lays stress on German business, and not on German language or literature.

**Combined Honours** – Several subjects are studied, which may or may not be related, often narrowing to one or two subjects as the course progresses e.g. Natural Sciences, Combined Social Science, Liberal Arts.

**Interdisciplinary Courses** – Several subjects are studied, all related to a particular theme e.g. American Studies, Environmental Studies, Media Studies.

**Sandwich Courses (now often called 'Courses with a Placement Year')** – These are alternating periods of study and related work placements, normally lasting four years, although some are extended to five years.

**Foundation Year** - a year-long course which gets you up to speed with the skills to go into the first year of a university degree. This may be because you haven't studied relevant subjects at A-level or because your grades are not likely to meet the entry requirements. Sometimes this is integrated into a full degree course, making the degree last 4 years (or 5 with placement year)

**Sponsored Degree** – similar in some ways to higher apprenticeships. The employer pays your tuition fees and provides you with employment e.g. during university holidays.

**Be aware that similar sounding courses may have completely different content.**

## How long is the course?

Most courses take three years, but many extend to four, five or six.

Medicine, veterinary science, dentistry and architecture take 5 or 6 years; courses in Scottish universities, many engineering courses, courses with practical training (i.e. most modern languages courses and sandwich courses everywhere) take four.

Some courses offer a master's level degree as a part of the course (integrated master's degree). This can be good value for money as a separate master's degree after your first degree is likely to charge higher fees.

Some courses offer the opportunity to spend a semester or entire year of study abroad, possibly in the EU or further afield, for example, in the USA. You would need to investigate the funding of these opportunities.

### **What you should look for in a degree course:**

You should select your course before you select your university. It is important to recognise that courses are not necessarily better than one another, but simply different. The **'best course'** is the one that suits **you** most. A course which demands higher grades is not necessarily 'better' than one accepting lower grades; the grade requirement reflects the number of students competing for places on a particular course.

<https://discoveruni.gov.uk/> is a very useful government website which provides detailed information about costs, student satisfaction, graduate salaries and contact time for UK university courses.

Questions your research should answer include:

- Is the course largely theoretical, practical, or vocational?
- What kind of teaching? Lectures or tutorials, or both? Seminars? How regular and frequent are tutorial and seminars? How many students will be at them? Are they formal or informal? Who does the teaching? Seminars may be led by graduate students or by lecturers. Graduate students are not necessarily bad, but it's good to know what you are getting for your fees.
- How many contact hours with tutors? How much free/study time?
- How much written work? How much laboratory work? Are there workshops?
- Are there written examinations or continuous assessment? Or both? Which suits your learning style better?
- How much work can you expect to have marked?
- How much specialisation and how early? How wide is the range of course options?
- What library or laboratory facilities are there?
- What is the balance between lectures, tutorials, practicals, projects, dissertations, teamwork and private study?
- Is the stress on independent academic development or on group learning?
- For law courses: be aware that qualifying to become a solicitor changed in September 2021 with a new system of exams called SQE. Having a law degree will no longer exempt you from any stage of these but the content will help.
- Do I need the structure and discipline of a course with regular assignments and exams?
- How much academic support will I get? Will I have a tutor with time to meet me?
- What are the department's views of a gap year?
- What is the employability record of graduates from this course?
- DiscoverUni can answer some of these questions; others are best explored at an open day.



If you are planning to study a 'new' subject at university, then some background reading is essential. You need to be certain that you have a genuine academic interest in the discipline concerned. It is a good idea to undertake an EPQ in a relevant topic to demonstrate your commitment and interest in the subject.

In choosing a course, you should be confident that it matches your interests, abilities and plans. However, there is another important factor – you must be confident that you have a reasonable chance of getting a place on the course! This consideration is intimately linked with your choice of universities.

## Which University?

You must apply to universities where the right courses and learning conditions are available, and where you have a realistic chance of acceptance. Only you can establish what are the right courses and learning conditions: no two applicants are likely to take the same view.

There is no such thing as a 'good' or a 'poor' university – all universities have their particular strengths and weaknesses. It is dangerous to rely just on the accumulated wisdom of parents, teachers and friends. Detailed research is essential. Sources of information include DiscoverUni and various university guides published by The Times, The Guardian, The Complete University Guide and others. Opinions will vary from guide to guide, so look at several.

When you have decided on your subject and course, you should seriously consider the following factors:

- **Size and facilities** – sports, social, career-related activities? How social are you? University life is socially intense and exposed. Would you enjoy the closed society of a small university or a campus which creates its own world?  
Or do you like the idea of an easy escape into a larger, wider community?
- **Location** – in a city centre? (e.g. Leeds, Newcastle) – a campus on the edge of town? (e.g. Reading, Exeter) – in ancient buildings in a small city? (e.g. Durham, St. Andrews) – in a rural location? (e.g. East Anglia). Distance from home? Cost of travel?
- **Accommodation** – Halls of residence? 'Private' halls or uni owned? Self-catering? Catered? Flats? Availability of each? Location of each? Cost of each? Remember that most universities will offer university owned or managed accommodation for the first year only, so the nature of the university's accommodation should not weigh too heavily in the balance.
- **Entry requirements** – grades and specific subjects needed for both the university in general and for your course in particular. **This is really important.** For most courses, if you are likely to get the required grades, you are likely to be offered a place, conditional on actually securing those grades. If the grades are significantly higher than you expect, you are not likely to get an offer.
- **Employability of graduates**, which may vary between courses at one university (look at <https://discoveruni.gov.uk>)

## Types of Universities

Every university has its own distinct character. **Go to look** if not before you apply, then for certain before you accept a place. DO NOT commit yourself to a lot of time and money for something you haven't even looked at!

Some unis are large, while others are small and intimate. Some are in the centres of big towns and cities and have a strongly urban character whereas others are to be found in the suburbs or the country. Some have buildings scattered about a town centre, while others are concentrated on one site, commonly called a 'campus'. Some campuses are central and tightly packed, whilst others are out of town, self-contained and pleasantly landscaped.

Wherever you choose to apply, you must select the kind of places that will suit you best and offer the sort of environment and activities from which you will benefit.

Universities can be broadly categorised as follows:

- **Civic Universities** – sited centrally **in a major city**. Halls of Residence may be some distance from the University. Examples include Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield.
- **City Campus Universities** – Universities that have developed **just outside their cities**. Birmingham, Exeter, Nottingham and Reading have sites large enough to contain academic buildings and a large proportion of residential accommodation. Hull and Leicester have academic sites a mile or so from the city centre with accommodation complexes two miles further out. Southampton is on the outskirts of the city with scattered halls of residence.
- **Greenfield Campus Universities** – mainly the 1960s wave of 'new' universities established on green field sites, and designed as self-sufficient, self-contained social and academic units. Most have developed very strong academic reputations: East Anglia, Essex, Keele, Lancaster, Sussex, Warwick, York.
- **Collegiate Universities** – Oxford, Cambridge (and in a different way Durham, Lancaster and Kent).
- **London** – each constituent college is of the size of a full-scale university and functions as such (e.g. Goldsmiths, Imperial, Kings, LSE, Queen Mary, Royal Holloway, SOAS, UCL).
- **Technological Universities** – have their roots in the old technical and technological colleges with close links to industry. They offer courses with strong technological bias on hi-tech campuses. Examples include Aston, Bath, Bradford, Brunel, City, Loughborough, Salford, Surrey.
- **Scottish Universities** – e.g. Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt, St. Andrews, Stirling, Strathclyde. All **Scottish universities offer four-year courses** and have a more open structure to most degree courses. They are an excellent choice if you aren't sure exactly what you want to study – you can decide during the course. Students are admitted to a faculty rather than a specific department and can usually select three or four subjects in their first year from a wide range of possible courses. It is possible to be admitted directly to the second year of a degree course with sufficiently high A-level grades.
- **Northern Ireland Universities** – Queen's Belfast and Ulster are part of the UCAS system.
- **Irish Universities** – Dublin, Cork etc: application is by a central admissions service similar to UCAS, called the CAO.

- **The Russell Group Universities** – A self-selected group, named because of a meeting of universities held in the Russell Hotel in London. These universities consider themselves to be the ‘Premier League’.
 

Birmingham	London School of Economics (L.S.E.)
Bristol	Manchester
Cambridge	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Cardiff	Nottingham
Durham	Oxford
Edinburgh	Queen Mary, London
Exeter	Queen’s, Belfast
Glasgow	Sheffield
Imperial College, London	Southampton
King’s College, London	UCL (University College London)
Leeds	Warwick
Liverpool	York
- **Specialist Universities** – they focus on a limited number of subjects and can be very highly regarded in their field e.g. conservatoires, LIBF, UCFB, LIPA, Leeds Art Uni, University of Law

## Prospectuses, Visits and Open Days

All universities have websites; the UCAS website, [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com), has links to individual university sites. University prospectuses and websites can be glossy exercises in marketing. Their range, quality and accuracy are very variable. Alternative Prospectuses (produced by students) are usually readable and informative, but also uneven and highly subjective. You are advised to treat all such literature with caution – it is intended to recruit students.

All universities also offer Open Days that provide you with an opportunity to talk with academic staff and students. The value of this exercise varies from place to place, and you should select your Open Days carefully. Open Days organised by university subject departments are much more useful than general university open days. Use open days as an opportunity to ask probing questions.

Some universities and courses offer worthwhile taster days.

**Remember that repeated absence from school will disrupt your academic courses and therefore jeopardise your academic progress; for this reason we suggest you restrict yourself to a maximum of three visits in school time. Many universities have Saturday Open Days. These should be preferred to school days.**

## What about Finance?

The **student finance** system is complex, and the cost of a university degree is now higher than it was a few years ago.

In outline: UK students who plan to go to university in 2025 can apply for loans to support tuition fees, maintenance or both. We will advise students when the loan application website opens (usually online, between February and a deadline in May) and will guide them through the process.

UK students are charged up to a maximum of £9250 per year for tuition even though the full cost of university tuition can be as much as £30 000 per year, depending on the course and the university. A few courses charge fees lower than the £9250 maximum.

Fees can be borrowed in full from the student loan company by any UK based student and no repayment is expected until the student has graduated and earns more than £25 000 a year. Once you are earning over the threshold you'll pay back 9% of anything above the threshold and these repayments are taken automatically from your salary.

Interest, based on RPI, is added to the loan from the moment that the money is taken.

In addition, all UK students are entitled to receive repayable student loans to cover part of the cost of maintenance. The maximum maintenance loan available depends on where your university is located, whether you will be living at home, and what your household income is. Some students may be eligible for non-repayable scholarships from their universities – see the fees and finance tab of your course on the UCAS course search website. Maintenance loans and grants are also applied for online. Any student loan, whether for fees or maintenance, which is outstanding after 40 years will be written off as long as payments are not in arrears. It is also possible to apply for Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) if you are likely to face additional costs for studying as a result of a disability. DSAs do not have to be repaid. More information on them can be found at [gov.uk/disabled-students-allowancesdsas](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowancesdsas). Students in pre-registration nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy and many other allied healthcare degrees receive a £5000 bursary per year of study which does not have to be repaid.

**For more information, including the student finance calculator please visit:**

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

## Other things to think about...

### Studying Abroad

There are various reasons why students may want to move abroad for university. It might be to do with the range of courses offered, finance, or to broaden their experience and make them stand out amongst other graduates.

Studying abroad could be as **part of a course at a UK university**. Many universities offer up to a year abroad for certain courses through the Turing Scheme. Typically, you would only pay 15% of the usual fees for that year. Some courses manage this year abroad as part of a 3 year course, whilst others have it as the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a 4 year degree.

There are two different ranking sites that may be of use in your research. QS World Rankings: <http://www.topuniversities.com> and The Times <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/>

### Study in Europe

European universities offer a wide range of courses taught in English. Although UK students will no longer qualify for the same fee as EU nationals, the international fees may still be comparable to UK fees but be aware that student loans are not currently portable so you will need to have plans in place for funding your studies.

Several universities in Europe have courses including **medicine, dentistry and pharmacy** that are taught in English eg Prague, Budapest. Each course is applied for individually with a separate application fee. <https://www.medicaldoorway.com/> is worth investigating if you are interested in this option.

Doctors and dentists who study in an EU country are currently able to work in the UK without any employment barrier. You must check that this will continue for people who qualify from your course.

### Germany

Germany is an excellent option for study with many courses having no fees for any international student, although there is a limited range of courses taught in English at undergraduate level. However, some of these are Liberal Arts and Sciences, therefore leading to a whole range of options. Courses often require a maths and a language A-level (it doesn't have to be German). Two examples of courses with no or low tuition fees are here: Animation and Games Design <https://ag.medien-campus.h-da.de/> and Liberal Arts and Sciences <https://www.ucf.uni-freiburg.de/liberal-arts-and-sciences>.

### The Netherlands

The Netherlands has the largest range of courses taught in English. Fees are approximately €9000 - €25000 per year depending on the faculty. Courses cover everything from the liberal arts and sciences course at the university colleges, to medicine, economics, engineering, European law, music, hotel management and hundreds more.

The process of applying is straightforward. Most course and universities use a central application system on [www.studielink.nl](http://www.studielink.nl).

**State universities in several European countries, including Norway and Germany, charge no fees, regardless of your nationality, but there may be an administration fee to pay. Private universities in these countries do charge fees.** There is a wide range of courses taught in English, from economics to animation to sports management and thousands more.

### **Other European Options**

Other countries that offer courses in English include Malta (medicine along with a wide range of other courses), Estonia, Spain, Ireland, Italy (medicine and engineering).

A good starting point to search for courses taught in English across the whole of Europe is [www.eunicas.co.uk](http://www.eunicas.co.uk)

### **American Universities**

Studying in America can be very expensive, but many universities offer sports scholarships to overseas students and most universities have some full academic scholarships available for overseas students. A full scholarship covers tuition fees and board and lodging.

The process is more time-consuming than UCAS, and costs more. **The application process should be started in Year 12**, so students should see Mrs Nott as soon as possible.

If you are considering American Universities, you should already be practising the standard aptitude tests (SAT/ACT) necessary for entry (although, since COVID, some institutions have gone 'test-optional'). Useful websites are [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) (SAT) and <http://global.act.org/> (ACT)

The Fulbright commission ([www.Fulbright.org.uk](http://www.Fulbright.org.uk)) usually holds an informative exhibition in London early in September. You should go to this if you are interested.

You will need to take SAT/ACT in the summer term of Year 12 or at the very latest in the early autumn term of Year 13. Once you know how high your SAT scores are, you will be in a better position to decide which universities to apply for. Some universities use the Common Application System (<https://www.commonapp.org/>, similar to UCAS but requiring much more input) whilst others you apply to direct. There are usually essays to be completed for each institution you apply to.

Costs of attending a US university are high but are inclusive of fees and board and are typically \$27,000 – \$65,000 per year. However, these costs are often means tested and even with a household income of say £100,000 there could be a 50% discount.

There are UK based businesses that offer services to find university places with scholarships- these may be sport and/or academic. These can be expensive but, if they save you money on tuition fees, may be cost effective. Do research any advisors before signing up – some are members of recognised bodies such as International ACAC.

**Overseas study elsewhere** – Students from WGS have also gone on to study at universities in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

As with UK university applications, pupils will be supported through the process of applying to universities outside of the UK.

## Other things to think about....Alternatives to University

The following websites will be of use:

[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)

[www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

<https://www.ucas.com/apprenticeships-in-the-uk>

With government funding for Higher Apprenticeships, and businesses not always happy with the quality of graduates to choose from, there has been a huge increase in positions for A-level school leavers. In recent years, we have sent up to ten students a year onto apprenticeships, in well-paid posts with good training opportunities.

Vacancies usually start becoming available to apply for in September/October of Year 13 and go right through to the following summer although some competitive schemes require applications in the summer of Year 12. All positions include significant training, often with a paid-for degree (or equivalent qualifications), and usually very good pay.

Appropriate current vacancies are advertised on a Teams page for Year 13 students.

Help and support is available in school for applying for the positions including help with the online tests and assessment centres that many of the recruiters use. Most vacancies require 2 or 3 A-levels, usually between grades A and D, depending on the firm and type of job.

Examples of current higher apprenticeship recruiters:

The 'Big 4' accountancy firms: KPMG, Deloitte, Ernst and Young, and PWC  
Jaguar Land Rover, The National Grid, Rolls Royce, Unilever, BAE Systems  
Marks and Spencer, Nestle, Boots, BAM Nuttall

Examples of typical pay and training packages for an A Level leaver:

**AECOM** Degree Apprenticeship in Quantity Surveying, London

A-level – 96 points (equivalent to CCC)

GCSE – at least grade 4 in GCSE Maths and English

Starting Salary - £25,000

**Experian** Degree Apprenticeship in Data Science, Nottingham

A-level – 120 points (equivalent to BBB)

GCSE – at least grade 4 in GCSE Maths and English

Starting Salary - £24, 650

**DLA Piper** Degree Apprenticeship Solicitor, London

A-level – at least 3 grade Cs

GCSE - 5 GCSEs including English and maths at grade 4 or above

Starting Salary undisclosed

## Gap Year

Pupils may decide (for a variety of reasons) that they would like to take a gap year.

This gap year could be because:

- You need some experience before applying for university for specific courses
- You feel that you need a break from studying
- You are unsure of what to do at university and need some time
- You would like to carry out some volunteering
- You would like to gain some different qualifications e.g. sports coaching

There are variety of companies that can help you find placements for a gap year.

Examples include

<https://projecttrust.org.uk/>

<https://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/>

<https://raleighinternational.org/>

<https://www.workaway.info/>

If you don't want to commit to a full year away from studying or work, it is possible to find projects to join that last 1 – 3 months so are ideal for university vacations.

If you want to take a gap year, you can still apply to university during Year 13 for deferred entry (2026 entry) or you can apply during your gap year.

## Reminders

Remember that university is not an extension of school. Teaching methods are very different. Lecturers lecture, often to very large groups, and do not stop to answer questions or to sort out difficulties and misunderstandings. You have to work these out for yourself later. Work will be set and marked, but you will be expected to organise yourself and will not be reminded or nagged in school fashion if you fail to do so. However, you will run the real risk of not completing the course, which can be expensive both in financial and personal terms. You would be older than when you left school, but would have no more qualifications and, almost certainly, more debts.

Remember too that the course you do and the institution you do it at must be your own personal choice. Teachers and parents can advise, but it is you who will be doing the course, not them. This means that it must be right for you.

Despite all the apparent difficulty of application, going to university can be an immensely rewarding experience which will have a positive impact on the rest of your life. It is worthwhile spending the necessary time and effort getting it right at the beginning of the process.

We will help you to complete your UCAS application nearer the time, but you must start thinking seriously about what you want to study and where you want to study it **now**. Remember that sixth form and careers staff are always available to help if you get stuck. If in doubt, ask.



## Timeline of Key Dates for Applying to University

### 2024

Tues 16 April	Post Sixth Form Launch Event
Spring/Summer	University open days – make sure you book places in advance
Wed 19 June	UCAS Fair, Leeds Beckett University
Mon 1 July	Deadline for first draft of personal statements for those applying to Oxbridge, conservatoires or for medicine, dentistry or veterinary science
Start of July	Provisional UCAS Predicted Grades emailed to students and parents
Wed 4 September	Start of Year 13
Wed 2 October	6pm: Deadline for applications to most conservatoire music courses
Fri 4 October	Deadline for first draft of all other personal statements
Tues 15 October	6pm: Deadline for UCAS applications to Oxbridge or for medicine, dentistry or veterinary science
Tues 15-Thurs 17 October	TMUA and ESAT window (sit at Pearson Vue centre) Oxford admission test dates yet to be confirmed
Fri 6 December	WGS target for completion of all UCAS applications

### 2025

Wed 29 January	6pm: UCAS deadline for applications to be given equal consideration
Oct 2024 to May 2025	Students receive offers of university places
March 2025 to May 2025	Students must complete student finance application
By 9 June (tbc)	Students notify UCAS of firm and insurance offers
Thurs 14 Aug (tbc)	A-level results are published and Clearing begins
Sep/Oct 2025	University courses begin

## Applying to Higher Education: useful websites

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/tools/skillshealthcheck/Pages/default.aspx>

Check which skills are relevant for which occupation – carry out your own skills check.

<http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/>

Lets you explore non-university routes beyond school.

[www.prospects.ac.uk/](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/)

is aimed more at graduates, but has a very useful *prospects planner* which has a diagnostic section for working out which job might suit you. It contains a careers quiz.

<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/> and [Match your A-levels to degree subjects - SACU - Career Cloud Quiz \(sacu-student.com\)](https://www.sacu-student.com/)

Try the A-level explorer to get ideas of university subjects that may appeal to you

<https://www.ucas.com/explore/subjects>

Explore subject guides which give you ideas of careers and entry requirements in different fields

<https://new.myglobalbridge.com/>

You have already started building up a record of your interests and achievements on this website. Use these and the contacts available on the site to network and showcase your achievements. Having all this information in one place will help you to write your personal statement.

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

has direct links to all university websites. Expanding all the time. Explore the UCAS HUB.

<https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

detailed statistical information, including entry requirements, student satisfaction, graduate employment

<http://www.fulbright.org.uk/>

gateway for information about study in the USA. Click on 'going to the USA'.

<https://woodhousegrove.fireflycloud.net/careers/ucas-and-higher-education>

lots of information for students to access on Firefly about all aspects of applying to university/apprenticeships including Oxbridge information, healthcare applications, examples of personal statements etc

**Don't forget that the school library is full of useful resources including books about interview practice and apprenticeship leaflets. Why not explore the shelves for books you can read to demonstrate a wider interest in the course you are applying for? For example, 'War Doctor: surgery on the front line' would be a good read if you are thinking of applying for healthcare courses.**

## UCAS Form

Completing the UCAS application form is relatively straight-forward. There are a number of sections to complete:

- Personal details
- Contact and residency, including details of all addresses in the last 3 years
- Nationality
- Student visa and settled status
- Diversity and inclusion
- More about you (a chance to let universities know about situations in which you may need support)
- Extra activities (that you've done in preparation for uni eg online courses, taster days)
- Finance and funding
- Employment
- Choices (you can choose up to 5 courses although only 4 may be medicine/dentistry/veterinary medicine)
- Qualifications (both those you have already taken and those which are pending)
- Personal Statement
- The school then attaches a reference and the predicted grades

There is a cost of £28.50 to submit the application form – you make a card payment on the UCAS website. Applying to conservatoires is considerably more expensive due to the cost of auditions.

The personal statement is the part of the application that causes most anxiety and can take several drafts to perfect. There is plenty of support available in school and online for writing personal statements and workshops will be held in the summer term. In summary, the personal statement

- Is a maximum of 4000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines
- Is a way for you to tell the universities about yourself and why they should make you an offer but remember that the same personal statement goes to all the universities you have applied for
- Is a way to demonstrate your writing style if you are applying for essay based subjects
- Should contain evidence of your interest in the subject you are applying for eg wider reading, taster days, relevant work experience, EPQ details
- Should demonstrate how you have the skills/qualities required for your chosen course
- Should be approximately 75% subject related and 25% about wider interests

Examples of good personal statements are on Firefly and Student Room; YouTube also has lots of examples and advice. Beware – UCAS run all personal statements through a plagiarism tool so it must be your own work.

### Submitting the UCAS Application

A member of the Sixth Form Team sits with every student to read through the whole application before it is submitted.

## UCAS Tariff

Universities make conditional offers based on A-level grades, or tariff points or a combination of the two.

### GCE/IFS/EPQ

	A-level IFS Diploma	AS-level	EPQ IFS Certificate
A*	56		28
A	48	20	24
B	40	16	20
C	32	12	16
D	24	10	12
E	16	6	8

### BTEC

	National Extended Certificate (equivalent to 1 A-level)
D*	56
Distinction	48
Merit	32
Pass	16

### Music

Music Practical	Grade 8	Grade 7	Grade 6
Distinction	30	16	12
Merit	24	12	10
Pass	18	10	6

Music Theory	Grade 8	Grade 7	Grade 6
Distinction	10	8	6
Merit	9	7	5
Pass	8	6	4

The Diploma in Finance is graded in the same way as an A level; the Certificate in Finance is graded like an EPQ. Many universities, including Durham, will accept these qualifications, sometimes as grades, sometimes as points, especially for finance-related courses. Some universities accept up to 5 qualifications towards a point-based offer but most will only count three.

UCAS offers can be very subtle. Please ask for advice if you are unsure about what your offer means.

## Universities attended by WGS leavers:

2023	2022	2021
Bath	Aberdeen	Bangor
Bournemouth	Birmingham	BIMM
Bradford	Bradford	Bradford
Bradford College	Bradford College	Bradford College
Brighton	Brunel	Bristol
Brunel	Capilano University, Canada	Bristol UWE
Cardiff	Durham	Cardiff
Durham	Edge Hill	Chester
Hong Kong Shue Yan University	Edinburgh	Doncaster
Huddersfield	ETH (Zurich)	Durham
Hull	Exeter	Exeter
IE University, Madrid	Heidelberg University	Glasgow
Imperial	Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts	Huddersfield
Keele	Imperial	Icade, Madrid
Lancaster	Keele	Keele
Leeds	Lancaster	Kings College London
Leeds Arts	Leeds	Leeds
Leeds Beckett	Leeds Arts Uni	Leeds Beckett
Leeds Trinity	Leeds Beckett	Liverpool
Leicester	Leeds Conservatoire	Liverpool John Moores
Lincoln	Leeds Trinity	Loughborough
Liverpool	Leicester	Manchester
Loughborough	Lincoln	Manchester Met
Manchester	Liverpool	NYU, Abu Dhabi
Manchester Met	Liverpool Hope	Newcastle
Newcastle	Liverpool John Moores	Northumbria
Northumbria	Loughborough	Nottingham
Nottingham	Manchester	Nottingham Trent
Oxford Brookes	Manchester Met	Pace University, NYC
Plovdiv University, Bulgaria	Myerscough	Plymouth
Reading	NYU, Abu Dhabi	Reading
Sciences Po, Paris	Newcastle	Royal Holloway
Sheffield	Northumbria	Swansea
Sheffield Hallam	Nottingham	University of Law, Leeds
Southampton	Nottingham Trent	York
University of the Arts, London	Oxford	York St John
University of Law, Leeds	Portsmouth	

Warwick		Plymouth	
York		Queen Mary, London	
York St John		Royal Holloway, London	
		Salford	
		Sheffield	
		Sheffield Hallam	
		St Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas	
		Swansea	
		Teeside	
		University of the Arts, London (UAL)	
		York	

## Courses chosen by WGS students

	2023	2022
	Access to Nursing and Midwifery	Actor Musician
	Accountancy with finance foundation year	Aerospace Engineering
	Accounting, Business Finance and Management (various courses of similar name)	Aerospace Engineering with a Year in North America
	Aerospace Engineering	Art Foundation
	Applied Science Foundation	Biomedical Science
	Architecture	Business and Management
	Art Foundation	Business and Management Foundation Year
	Biology	Business and Geography
	Biomedical Science with an industrial placement year	Business Management with Professional Experience Year
	Computer Science	Chemistry
	Creative Writing and Media	Chinese Opera
	Criminology and Sociology	Classical Studies
	Dentistry	Clinical Sciences
	Economics	Commercial Management and Quantity Surveying (with placement year)
	Economics and Finance	Comparative Literature
	Education	Computer Science
	Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Creative Writing (Multidiscipline)
	Engineering Foundation (General)	Design for Branded Spaces
	English Literature and Philosophy	Economics
	Environmental Geography with Foundation	Education Sciences and Maths
	Ethics, Religion and Philosophy (Foundation)	Educational Psychology
	Fashion Management	English Language and Literature
	Fashion Marketing	English Literature
	Film with foundation year	Fashion Business and Management
	Finance	Film Studies
	Finance and Investment	Finance

Food Science with international foundation year	Finance and Investment Management
Foundation in Architectural Studies	Food Business Management and Marketing
Foundation in Clinical Sciences and Medicine	French and Spanish
General Engineering	General Engineering
Geography	Geology
Geography and Environmental Sciences Foundation Year	Geology with Geography with a Year Abroad
Human Resource Management (Foundation)	Health Foundation Course
Interior and Spatial Design	History and Politics
Interior Architecture	Interior Architecture
International Tourism and Hospitality	International Business Management
Journalism	International Relations and Politics
Languages and Cultures (Italian and Spanish) with a year abroad	Law
Law	Liberal Arts (with Placement Year)
Liberal Arts and Sciences	Management (with Placement Year)
Management with placement year	Marketing and Management
Materials Science and Engineering	Mathematical Physics
Mathematics	Mathematics and Statistics
Mathematics and Computer Science	Mechanical Engineering
Media and English Literature	Medicine
Medical Sciences	Molecular Cell Biology
Midwifery	Motorsport Management and Logistics
Modern Languages	Music (Production)
Natural Sciences	Music and Psychology
Pharmacy	Natural Sciences
Physiotherapy	Ophthalmic Dispensing
Politics and International Relations	Osteopathy
PPL (philosophy, politics, law and economics)	Pharmaceutical Science with a Foundation Year
Primary Education with QTS	Physical Education with Outdoor Education
Product Design	Physical Geography
Psychology	Physics
Sport and Exercise Nutrition	Planning and Real Estate
Sport and Exercise Science	Psychology
Sport and Exercise Science with professional placement or study abroad	Robotic Engineering
Sport Business Management	Sport and Exercise Science
Sport Journalism	Sport Management
Veterinary Medicine	Sports Coaching

### Apprenticeships

2023	2022	2021
Auker Rhodes Accountancy	Direct Line Insurance	L'Oreal
Bayfields Opticians	Kraft Heinz	Marks and Spencers
Stagecoach	Optm	
	Proctor & Gamble	
	Zenith	

## Templates to help with decision-making

These forms can help you decide what factors are important to you when choosing a course or university and then allow you to compare different universities using your top criteria.

Decision-making criteria	Rating				
	Not important	Not very important	No preference	Fairly important	Very important
Accommodation					
Sports centre					
Study abroad option					

Decision-making criteria	Courses/Universities I am considering				