

## **6<sup>th</sup> Form @ Swakeleys - Higher Education Guide**

Throughout Year 12 & 13 students receive support and guidance with their higher education and career options through a programme of workshops, talks and presentations by Post 16 Staff and local universities. These presentations cover topics on how to choose a university course, how to write an effective personal statement and alternatives to university. There are also opportunities during the year to attend higher education events, workshops and conferences. Students should be proactive in making sure they make the most of opportunities they are offered and should be checking notice boards for up coming events. We also encourage students to attend Open Days for their chosen universities but request that students try to attend these at the weekend so as not to interfere with their studies. It is important that students thoroughly research their course and university options and that they are full aware of all entry requirements.

Post 16 students who wish to apply for University will register in **the July prior to entry** through Post 16 via the UCAS online application process. (University and Colleges Admissions Service).

The online application is made up of various sections and these can be completed either at school or at home. Students will receive support with writing personal statements and help with completing the various sections of the application. **However it is the individual student's responsibility to ensure that they meet all deadlines set. Failure to meet deadlines will jeopardise their chances of receiving offers from their chosen universities.**

The Post 16 deadline date for applications (general entry) is **October prior to year of entry (applications for 2013 entry will need to be submitted by 19th October 2012)**. Students wishing to apply for Oxford or Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine have an earlier deadline date and need to speak to Mr Hull about their application early during the spring term of Year 12.

Students who are applying for Art & Design courses need to check with the individual universities or colleges as some courses have a later deadline date.

### **Personal Statement**

The personal statement is an important part of the online application and a well written statement can make the difference between receiving an offer or not. Students will begin drafting their statements in July and are expected to continue work on them during the summer break. In September of Year 13 a final copy of the personal statement should be handed to form tutors for feedback.

### **Education Section (qualifications)**

On return to school in September (Year 13) students will begin completing the Education section of the online application. All certificated exam results must be entered on the application. This includes GCSE's and AS's including subjects not taken on to A level, as well as re-sits or retakes. All pending qualifications (qualifications not yet taken or

awaiting results) should also be entered into the application. Tutors will give a predicted grade for these qualifications in the reference.

### **Choices Section – University/Course selection**

Students can choose up to a maximum of **5 choices** of university or course. With no more than **4 choices** in any one of the following areas **a) medicine; b) dentistry; c) veterinary medicine or veterinary science** and no more than **one choice for Oxford university or the University of Cambridge**. Universities will be unaware which other institutions have been selected and applications are not sent out in order of preference.

Before students make their final choices it is really important that they thoroughly research their options and ensure that their predicted grades meet the course entry requirements. Students should also ensure that they have selected at least one, preferably two courses that offer slightly lower entry requirements; this will give the student an insurance option. Some universities also require specific GCSE results (most require minimum of grade C in Maths and English), specific A level grades and/or subjects. Law courses often require an assessment test (LNAT). Medicine, veterinary and dental courses usually require BMAT or UKCAT assessment tests. Full information on entry requirements, assessments test can be found on [www.ucas.com/coursefinder](http://www.ucas.com/coursefinder) or on individual university websites. University prospectuses and guides can also be found in the LRC.

### **Paying and Sending**

Once students have completed all the sections of the application and checked there are no errors or mistakes, they will need make an online payment by credit or debit card of £12 (one choice) or £23 (2-5 choices). **Only when payment has been made can the application be sent to the referee to add the reference.**

### **Offers**

Once UCAS have received the students' application they will send it to their chosen universities. Information will be sent on how to check the progress of an application via UCAS system called 'track' [www.ucas.com/students/track](http://www.ucas.com/students/track).

Once students have received all their replies from their chosen universities, they will be able to choose (via 'track') their first (firm) choice and second (insurance) choice. When selecting an insurance choice it is important to select an offer that has a lower entry requirement than the first choice. Any other offers must then be declined. Students will receive an individual reply by date and **must reply by this date or their offers will be withdrawn**. Students should ensure that they read carefully the conditions of any offers.

Students who receive no offers or decline all their offers will be eligible for 'EXTRA' which is an opportunity to choose another course or university that has vacancies. Further details of this will be given nearer the time.

## **Confirmation of Offers**

On receipt of exam results in **August of year of entry**, universities will confirm their offers. Students who have met the conditions and requirements for their firm choice are committed to take up this place. If a student does not meet the entry requirements but does meet those of the insurance choice, they are then committed to take this place. Students who exceed their requirements have a period of 5 days (adjustment) to research alternative courses whilst holding their offer. Further details of this are on the UCAS website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

If students don't get the exam grades they had hoped for and their places are not confirmed, they have the opportunity to find another course through Clearing. Lists of courses available in Clearing are available online and in national newspapers in August.

We recommend that students plan their summer holidays so they are at home when their exam results are out. Any changes or amendments to their university offers needs to be dealt with by them, as admissions tutors will want to speak to students not their parents or tutors.

Further information on all aspects of the online application process including tips on writing personal statements can be found on the UCAS website: [www.ucas.com/students](http://www.ucas.com/students). Information is also available on the School R Drive/UCAS and in the LRC.

### Other useful websites:

#### **Course search sites**

[www.ucas.com/coursefinder](http://www.ucas.com/coursefinder)  
[www.education.guardian.co.uk](http://www.education.guardian.co.uk)  
[www.ukcoursefinder.com](http://www.ukcoursefinder.com)  
[www.whatuni.com](http://www.whatuni.com)  
[www.telegraph.co.uk/education/university course finder](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/university_course_finder)

#### **University League Tables & Statistics**

[www.unistats](http://www.unistats)  
[www.education.guardian.co.uk](http://www.education.guardian.co.uk)  
[www.independent.co.uk/student/](http://www.independent.co.uk/student/)  
[www.timesonline.co.uk](http://www.timesonline.co.uk) (£1.00 charge)

#### **Open days/Summer Schools/Taster sessions**

[www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com)  
[www.suttontrust.com](http://www.suttontrust.com)  
[www.lon.ac.uk/tasters](http://www.lon.ac.uk/tasters)  
[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/ opendays/](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/opendays/)  
[www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/opendays](http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/opendays)

#### **Student Loans/grants**

[www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)  
[www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com)  
[www.your future.direct.gov.uk](http://www.yourfuture.direct.gov.uk)

#### **Career information**

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/youngpeople](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/youngpeople)  
[www.careers4u.tv](http://www.careers4u.tv)