



**Hugh Christie School**  
**UCAS APPLICATION**  
**PREPARATION**  
**APPLY 2024**



# UCAS APPLY 2024



# WHY GO TO UNIVERSITY?

University isn't just about learning, the experience will enrich your life. You will:

- **increase your knowledge** – study what you love, you're interested in and with the top experts in their fields
- **get your first true taste of independence and freedom**, build self-confidence, experience all aspects of student life, broaden your horizons and meet new people
- **gain a qualification that's internationally recognised** – UK higher education qualifications are recognised and respected by employers and academics worldwide
- **develop the essential skills you'll need in your career and working life** – communication, organisation, time management, team work, leadership, problem-solving
- **increase your earning potential** – having a degree makes you more attractive to employers, you'll have a greater choice of jobs and you'll earn more. The average salary for graduates is 30% higher than for non-graduates aged 25-30. In 2013-14, 90% of all graduates were in work or further study within six months of leaving university
- **experience student life** – yes, you're expected to work hard but uni is also fun. Whatever your interests, there are a huge range of clubs, societies and a diverse social life on offer

# RESEARCH



# TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

The University Taster Course Programme offers a taste of university life:

- Over a hundred taster courses in a range of subjects
- A range of universities in and around London
- From February 2023 onwards – it's free
- Some are currently online due to COVID-19



Facebook @universitytastercourses



Twitter: @unitastercourse

# DO YOUR RESEARCH

- UCAS website and Course Search at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)
- Check university websites
- Order a 'hardcopy' prospectus
- Check the career entry profile for courses on course - EP
- Minimum Entry for all HE – 4 in GCSE Eng & Ma (+ 4 in GCSE Science for Primary Education)
- Check Level 3 Grades/Points needed

# UCAS TARIFF CALCULATOR



AS LEVELS	A LEVELS	BTEC
	A* = 56 points	D* = 56 points
A = 20 points	A = 48 points	D = 48 points
B = 16 points	B = 40 points	
C = 12 points	C = 32 points	M = 32 points
D = 10 points	D = 24 points	
E = 6 points	E = 16 points	P = 16 points

Use the Tariff Calculator on the UCAS website to work out what points your predicted grades will give you.

# RUSSELL GROUP

We are pleased that many of our students apply to some of Britain's elite universities. These institutions, known as the Russell Group of universities, are very competitive.

Students need high grades to get into these universities and the interview process can be quite challenging.

These universities tend to focus on academic courses.

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





# OXBRIDGE

The deadline for applications to University of Oxford and University of Cambridge (Oxbridge) is early: **16<sup>th</sup> October 2024**.

Students need very high grades to get into these universities and the interview process is challenging.

For many courses students will be required to do an entrance exam.

We support our students through this application process by linking with Tonbridge School – they provide some subject enrichment opportunities, interview preparation, mock interviews and training for the Oxbridge entrance tests.

# RUSSELL GROUP UNIVERSITIES


**University of Birmingham**  
**University of Bristol**  
**University of Cambridge**  
**Cardiff University**  
**Durham University**  
**University of Edinburgh**  
**University of Exeter**  
**University of Glasgow**  
**Imperial College London**  
**King's College London**  
**University of Leeds**  
**University of Liverpool**

**London School of Economics & Political Science**  
**University of Manchester**  
**Newcastle University**  
**University of Nottingham**  
**University of Oxford**  
**Queen Mary, University of London**  
**Queen's University Belfast**  
**University of Sheffield**  
**University of Southampton**  
**University College London**  
**University of Warwick**  
**University of York**

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

# FINDING A COURSE

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

1. Using the search tool – type in the subject(s) you would like to study.
2. All related courses in the UK will be listed.
3. Consider where in the country you want to study.
4. Consider whether you want a campus university or one in the city.
5. Look at the course details: modules, assessment, entry profile (EP).
6. Research what others say about the university/course:
  -  Uni Compare App
  - [www.unistats.com](http://www.unistats.com)
  - [www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide)
  - [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables)

# APPLICATION PROCESS


1. Investigate Courses – online & at open days
2. Register and Apply (JULY 2023)
3. Complete Application (5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2024)
4. Send Application (OCTOBER 2023 – JANUARY 2024)
5. Interviews and Offers (OCTOBER 2023– MAY 2024)
6. UCAS Extra opens (28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – 4<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024)
7. Accept Firm and Insurance choices (JUNE 2024)
8. Apply for Student Finance & Accommodation (FROM FEBRUARY 2024)
9. Results (AUGUST 2024)
10. Confirm Place at Firm/Insurance choice (AUGUST 2024)

# CONSIDER A RANGE OF COURSES

In addition to the traditional academic subjects offered at school, universities also offer a range of other courses too, find one that will suit you:

- Outdoor Adventure Leadership & Management BSc (Hons)
- Marine Biology & Oceanography BSc (Hons)
- Sports Journalism BA (Hons)
- Music Industry Management BA (Hons)
- Criminology BA (Hons)
- Agriculture & Countryside Management BSc (Hons)
- Hair, Make-up and Prosthetics for Performance (Hons)
- Computer Games Design: Story Development (Hons)

# LOOK AT COURSES IN DETAIL

- Prospectuses in SIS
- Look at university websites
- Order prospectuses free from universities
-  Uni Compare App
- University course ratings at:
  - [www.unistats.com](http://www.unistats.com)
  - [www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide)
  - [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables)

# VISIT ALL OF YOUR CHOICES

- Open Days – book these online on the university/UCAS website [www.ucas.com/ucas/events-training](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/events-training) or via links on the Uni Taster Course on Facebook and Twitter
- Consider distance from home
- Research travel costs - rail and coach
- Consider accommodation and parking
- Self-catering or catered?
- Town or country?
- Social facilities?

# THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Personal details & Additional Information
- Make up to 5 choices (£27.50 in 2024)
- Education and Qualifications
- Employment
- Personal Statement
- Academic Reference – Advisor/subject teachers

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

SCHOOL BUZZWORD: jacobson2024





# WORK EXPERIENCE

Work Experience is crucial for:

- Primary teaching
- Secondary teaching
- Medicine/Nursing
- Nursery teaching
- Veterinary

You will need to write about your experiences in your Personal Statement

# INTERVIEWS

- Medicine/Nursing/Midwifery/Paramedic Sciences
- Teaching
- Fine Art & Photography (portfolio)
- Fashion Design (portfolio)
- Drama (Audition)
- Music (Audition)
- Website Design
- Some ICT courses

There is currently a trend towards group/role play or digital interviews rather than individual ones.

# APPLY EARLY

Applications open: NOW (you can't send your application off until 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 though). Universities will start to offer places as soon as they begin to receive applications.

- In the early stages of the application process there are a small number of applicants applying for a large number of places – if you apply early you are more likely to get an offer if you have a strong application (possibly an unconditional offer) as universities want as many students as possible to sign up.
- If you wait until the deadline to submit your application there will be a large number of applicants applying for a much smaller number of courses so competition will be tighter.

# OFFERS

- **CONDITIONAL** offers will be made based on A Level grades or a points score (Maths & English GCSE at a grade 4 or above will be needed)
- **UNCONDITIONAL\*** offers require no additional qualifications

\* Now there is no cap on numbers for university places unconditional offers are becoming more common, universities do this to boost numbers and to get the best applicants early:

PRO: accepting an unconditional offer takes the pressure off

CON: once you accept an unconditional offer you lose all other offers

**MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE TOTALLY HAPPY WITH THE COURSE BEFORE YOU ACCEPT AN UNCONDITIONAL OFFER!**

# IF THINGS DON'T GO TO PLAN


HCS Sixth Form staff will assist you and help you to find a course:

- UCAS Extra from February to July 2024
  - If all choices are rejected you can apply for extra courses one at a time
- Clearing in August 2024
  - Courses are still available after results
  - Universities can be contacted by phone on results days and for a few days after
  - If you sign up for the free UCAS Update Service universities with available places will contact you with an offer if you miss your grades

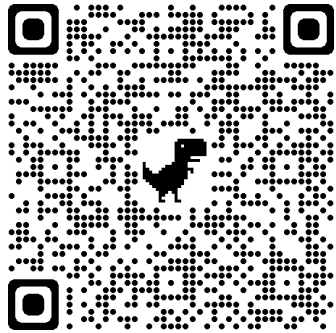
# RESOURCES & SUPPORT



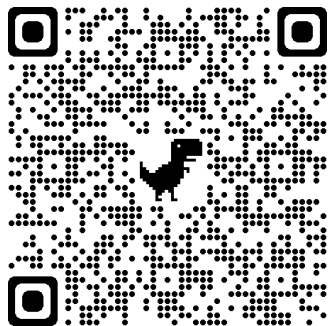
# YOU CAN APPLY AND DEFER

-  Future Learn Courses – [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)
- Take a Gap Year (travel, volunteer etc.)
- Work abroad
- Get some work experience in the UK

# USEFUL INFORMATION



[UCAS - advice for parents and guardians](#)



[UCAS - tuition fees and student loans](#)



# USEFUL WEBSITES

- [www.opendays.com/calendar](http://www.opendays.com/calendar)
- [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)
- [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)
- [www.russellgroup.ac.uk](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk)
- [www.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ox.ac.uk) & [www.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cam.ac.uk)
- [www.london.ac.uk/tasters](http://www.london.ac.uk/tasters)
- [www.unistats.com](http://www.unistats.com)
- [www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide)
- [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables)
- [www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university](http://www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university)
- [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)
- [www.purepotential.org](http://www.purepotential.org)
- [www.ukuniversitysearch.com](http://www.ukuniversitysearch.com)
- [www.loudmag.co.uk](http://www.loudmag.co.uk)

# KEY DATES 2023-24



# KEY DATES

Research and visits	JULY – NOVEMBER 2023
Deadline for: Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry & Veterinary	16 <sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023
School deadline	NOVEMBER 2023
UCAS deadline	31 <sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2024
UCAS Extra	28 <sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – 4 <sup>th</sup> JULY 2024
Investigate student finance at: <a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance">www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance</a>	JAN – MAY 2024
Accept ONE firm and ONE insurance offer	JUNE 2024
A Level results and Clearing	AUGUST 2024
University starts	SEPTEMBER 2024

# HUGH CHRISTIE SIXTH FORM

- Sixth Form Study Area - SIS:
  - university prospectus library
  - Exemplar applications and Personal Statements
- Sixth Form Team:
  - Mr Sheppard
  - Miss Jacobson – UCAS Co-ordinator [sjacobson@tonbridgefederation.co.uk](mailto:sjacobson@tonbridgefederation.co.uk)
  - Mr. Goss
  - Mrs. Jackson
  - Mr. McPherson
  - Mr. Thomas
  - Mrs. Hudson
  - Ms. Allen - HOY

# UCAS HUB

With your very own UCAS Hub, you can plan your next step. The best bit – you can save your progress and carry on whenever you want. UCAS have created lots of handy tools to help you make choices and prepare your application:

1. The explore tool – where you can search subjects and discover courses.
2. The notepad – so you can keep all your thoughts about your next step in one place.
3. Apprenticeship finder – for the latest vacancies, locally and nationally.
4. The personal statement builder – to help you structure your writing and introduce yourself to universities.
5. The Tariff calculator – for tallying up your UCAS points to see if you meet entry requirements.

Your Hub is your space. Organise the widgets, remove the ones you don't need, and tick off your to do list. However you use it, make it yours.


# STUDENT FINANCE



# STUDENT FINANCE CHANGES

September 2023 will see the biggest shift in student finance for a decade, as new 'Plan 5' loans launch for new higher education starters from England. Paradoxically, the changes are both subtle and massive. On the surface it looks like a tweak, in practice it will increase the cost by over 50% for many typical graduates and double it for a few.

Tuition fees are capped at £9,250 a year (£9,000 in Wales) until the 2025/26 academic year and most places charge the maximum. Yet you don't need the cash to pay upfront.



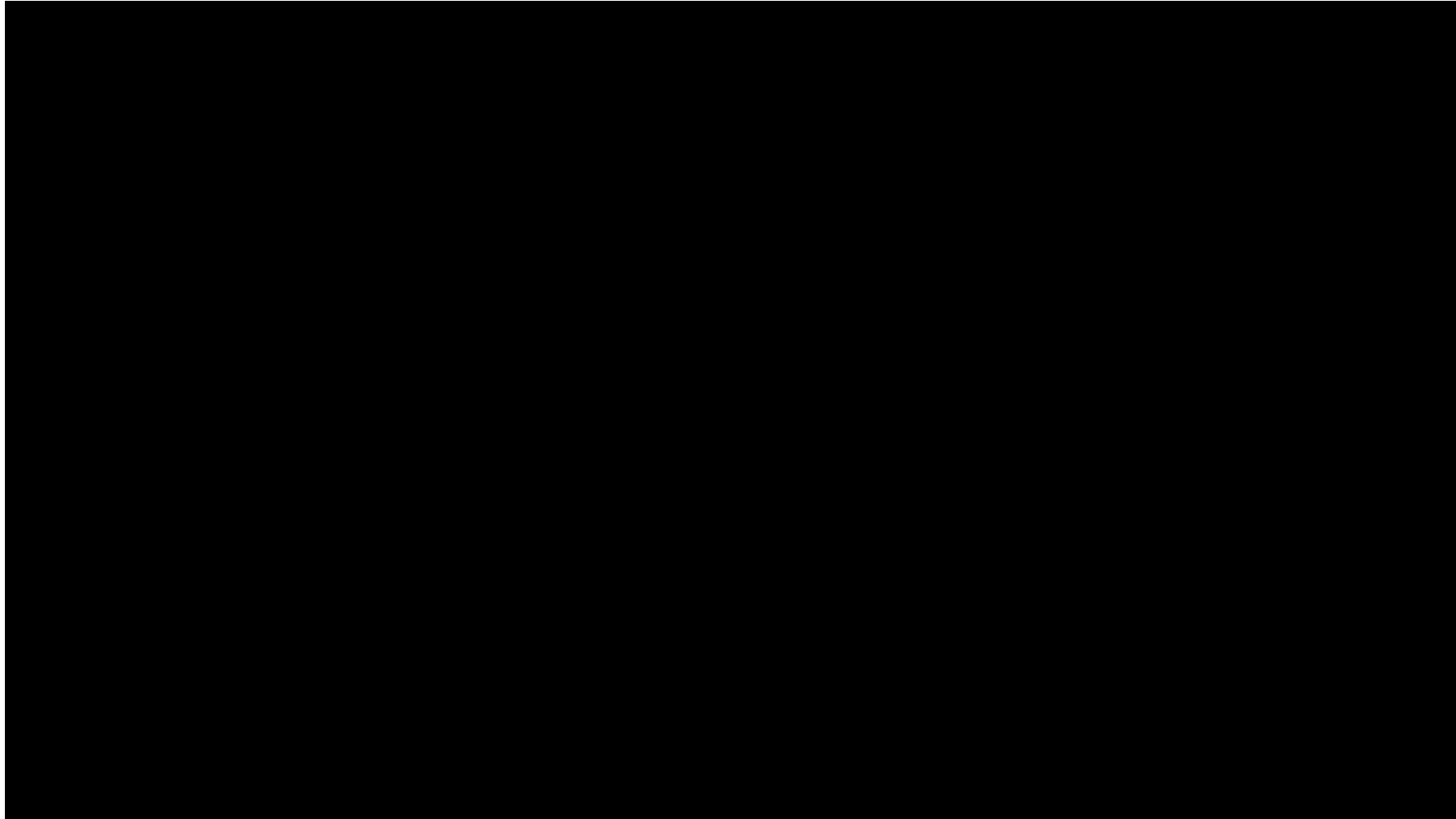
Over a typical three-year course, the combined full loan for your tuition, and living costs, can be £60,000+. But that's not what counts, what matters is what you repay...

- **You only repay when you earn over £25,000 a year – earn less and you don't pay.**
- **You repay 9% of everything earned above the (currently £25,000) threshold.**
- **You only start needing to repay in the April after you leave university.**
- **The loan is automatically WIPED after 40 years (or if you die).**
- **You repay automatically via the payroll, just like income tax.**
- **It DOESN'T go on your credit file.**
- **You do still need to repay if you move overseas.**
- **You can volunteer to overpay if you have more cash.**





**Martin Lewis: Student loans costs will double for many from Sept 2023 (England) – 2 minutes 17 seconds**



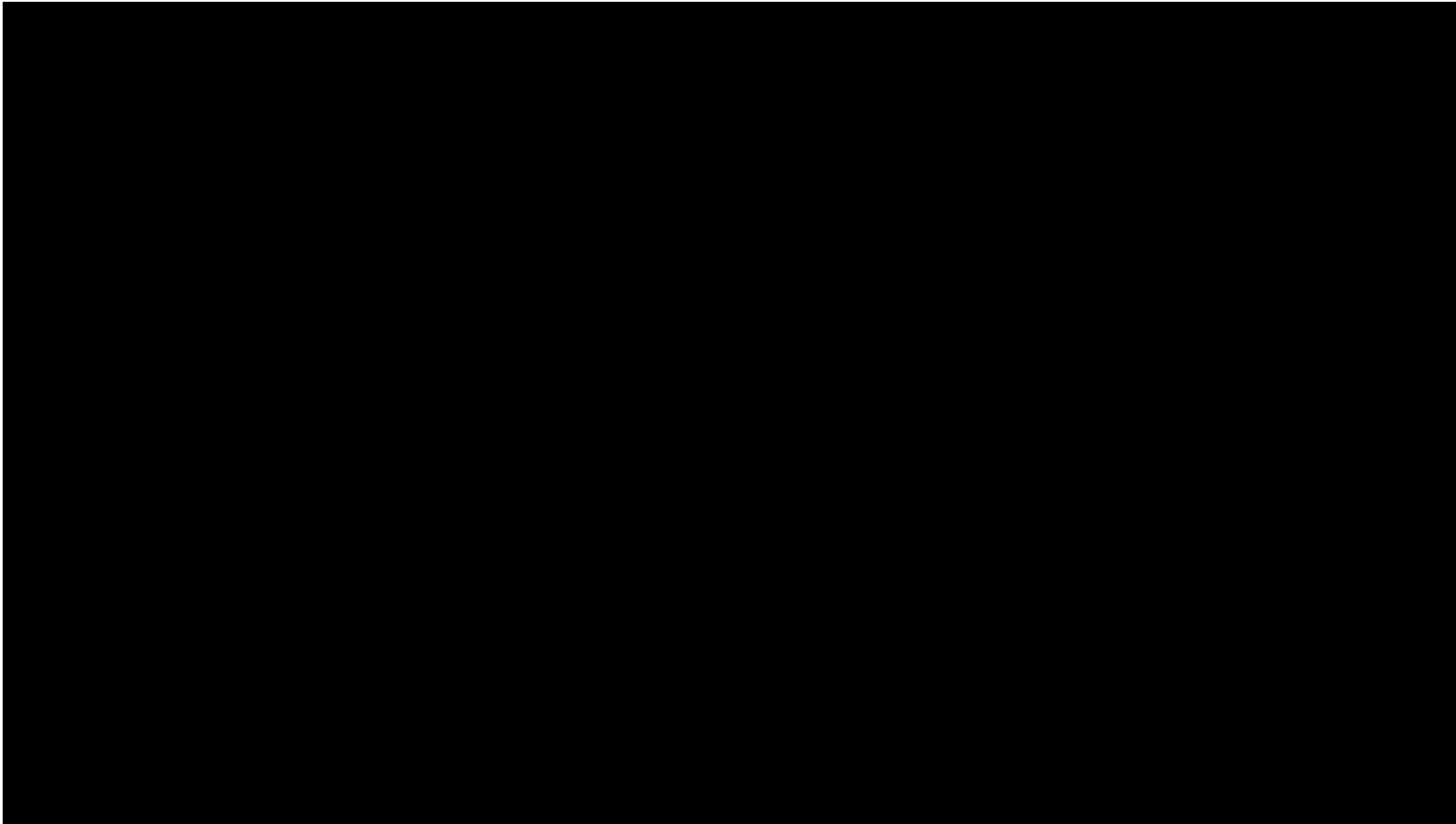
# HIGHER COST FROM 2023



**New student loans to cost 50% more: Martin Lewis' 6 need-to-knows about 'Plan 5' English student finance  
- Martin Lewis 19 June 2023**



**Martin Lewis: Student loans decoded – 58 minutes (based on the current arrangements pre-2023 changes)**



Also, see 'Student Finance Guide' on <https://www.hughchristie.kent.sch.uk/ucas> (based on the current arrangements pre-2023 changes)

# PERSONAL STATEMENT



# PERSONAL STATEMENT

A Personal Statement supports your application to study at a university or college.

It's a chance for you to articulate why you'd like to study a particular course or subject, and what skills and experience you possess that show your passion for your chosen field.

It is the most important part of your application and is what makes you stand out from the thousands of others applying.

# WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Look at course descriptions and identify qualities, skills, and experiences it requires.
- Tell the reader why you're applying – include ambitions, as well as what interests you about the subject.
- Think about what makes you suitable – this could be relevant experience, skills, or achievements you've gained from education, work or other activities.
- Include clubs or societies you belong to – sporting, creative, or musical.
- Mention any relevant work experience.
- Mention skills you have learnt through things like DofE, NCS etc.
- Include information about HE taster courses, workshops or summer schools.

# OPENING

'A paramedic is not just all about the blue lights and trauma cases; being a paramedic is more about the social care aspect, trauma being only a small portion of the responsibilities of the job. The idea that I could pursue a career, which is so dynamic and varied, where no two days are the same, really excites me. Paramedics bring comfort and support to distressed people at difficult times, and as someone who is compassionate and caring, this is something I want to do as a career. A degree course in Paramedic Science will really equip me with the knowledge and ability to make life-changing decisions and to be successful in this field.'

'I have shown real enjoyment and dedication for the outdoors over many years, and this is why I am interested in studying an Outdoor Education or Leadership and Management degree. Pursuing this as a career is very important to me as I want to share my interest as well as gain experience and knowledge of leadership in this field, so that in the future I am able take on the responsibility of leading groups on expeditions, as well as ensuring people's safety whilst undertaking outdoor education.'



# ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

'A Level Geography was my first choice subject to learn in Sixth Form as the course explores so many different topics. I further my knowledge lesson by lesson, developing analytical skills, team working skills and working as an independent learner. The individual case study on how humans have intentionally caused changes to landscape systems has given me the opportunity to showcase these skills. I have particularly enjoyed the practical elements of the course and the coursework undertaken, collecting primary data in Hastings looking at the impact on the coastline. My BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Business has enabled me to explore and evaluate both financial aspects of a business and the structure and success of businesses. This evaluation has improved my data handling skills and my interpersonal skills through group work and presentations. My BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Creative Digital Media Production has given me the platform to employ my imaginative skills, in particular through the creation of a short horror film as a project. The exam element of the course has enabled me to further evolve my ability to analyse media content and contexts and developed my use of digital editing software.'

# NON-ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

'Outside of school I work for the National Trust in the Knole Brewhouse Cafe where I have a number of responsibilities, demonstrating that I am trustworthy and reliable. It has taught me the value of patience and professionalism. I recently participated in independently organised work experience placement at The Big Cat Sanctuary in Headcorn, and was involved in primary conservation work with critically endangered big cat species, creating my own enrichment activities for the animals. I was particularly inspired by having the opportunity to observe a cheetah's touch training, allowing me to see conservation practices making a difference. Not only did this experience heighten my enthusiasm for the importance of conservation, but meeting visitors greatly enhanced my public speaking skills. I have now been invited back to continue to broaden my interest and assist in their work. In Year 12 I applied to take part in the Inspiring Girls Expeditions 'Girls in Icy Fjords' expedition in Alaska to broaden my knowledge of glacial environments and for my own personal development, sadly my application was unsuccessful as there were only 12 places available, and the programme was open to girls across the world, this has, however, inspired me to want to take part in this kind of expedition in the future.'

# NON-ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

'In terms of my personal development, I have taken part in several external seminar days. These networking days included those hosted by Pathways CTM and the Debrett's Foundation, involving a range of activities and discussions designed to develop communication and interpersonal skills. Another strand of my personal development has been associated with becoming a qualified Level 1 accredited badminton coach. I qualified in October 2016 and have since coached on a weekly basis. I work with players of varying ages, needs, abilities and enthusiasm; I tailor responses and teaching methods accordingly to support each individual in the best possible way.

In the summer of 2017, I completed a four week programme for the National Citizen Service. As part of our challenge, we engaged in team building activities such as planning and managing a social action project for a local charity. Implementation proved challenging; it required adapting our delivery to meet the circumstances we met. Not only did we increase awareness of breast cancer locally but we raised 1,264.17 GBP for CoppaFeel! Inspired by the project I became an Ambassador for NCS. The next step in my journey is to become a Summer Young Leader where I will support other young people. Outside of my academic studies, I work part time for GO Outdoors, a large national company.'

# NON-ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

'Outside of school, I enjoy going to the gym regularly. I enjoy it as it is social, and it helps me to stay healthy. I have participated in a fitness camp, which I attended in 2016 for five days with some family friends. The camp tested my fitness and pushed me to the limit, taking up to five hour-long classes daily, sticking to a strict diet, making it an even tougher challenge. Although difficult, I overcame many goals, which I am proud of. The camp also inspired me to keep attending the gym and to carry on developing my fitness. I work part-time as a kitchen assistant at Brands Hatch, this experience has really helped me to develop my communication and interpersonal skills, working with a team of people and also interacting with customers. My time management and organisational skills have improved and the experience of working has boosted my confidence. I have not had a lot of opportunity to do any other work experience, but I am in the process of organising some work experience within the field of marketing and advertising.'

# ENDING

‘Overall I am an independent, responsible and empathetic student and believe studying Biomedical Science will allow me to fulfill my ambition of helping others on a larger scale and making a difference to the wider community. I look forward to expanding my knowledge and meeting a diverse range of students.’

‘I am enthusiastic, competitive and resolute and feel that I have the qualities needed to be successful on a Sport and Education degree, and that this will equip me with the skills needed to be a successful teacher after graduating. I look forward to the opportunities and challenges that Higher Education will bring.’

# WHAT'S NEXT?



# WHAT'S NEXT

1. Narrow down your course choices to 5 and visit universities
2. Complete your application
3. Complete your Personal Statement
4. Talk to your subject teachers about your course choices and predicted grades – ask them to provide a subject reference
5. Meet with your Advisor to check your Personal Statement and talk about your academic reference
6. Make an appointment to meet with Miss Jacobson to check your application, personal statement and academic reference and to send your application to UCAS

# SUMMER HOMEWORK

- ❖ Research course choices – what do you want to study and where?
- ❖ [www.ucas.com/undergraduate](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate)
- ❖ Make visits to the universities and cities you have chosen.
- ❖ Write a first draft for your Personal Statement.

**UCAS session for all – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
for**

**Personal Statements**