



# Supporting your child through the application process

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# This session

- How you can support your son or daughter in choosing courses and universities
- How you can help them to navigate the application process
- How you can help them prepare for university
- Student funding – what we know so far



# What are the benefits of going to university?

- It is the chance to study a subject they love for at least three years
- Over 40,000 courses to choose from in UK from over 160 universities and colleges
- Vocational or Academic preparation for career, development of skills for life
- Development of team work, time management, communication and leadership skills
- Experience a whole new social life.



# Doing their research

- Take advice
- UCAS website
- Entry profiles
- Prospectuses and university websites
- Open Days



# 🔥 How is university different from school/college?

- Based on one (or two subject areas)
- It's all about independent learning – there's no one to chase them up if they don't hand work in on time
- You will not get progress reports
- Teaching style based on lectures and seminars rather than classroom-based learning



# 🔥 How is university different from school/college?

- They are surrounded by people who have chosen to be there and have an interest in the subject they are studying
- It is much bigger than school/college
- Completely different contact hours for different subjects
- Accommodation – living in halls/student houses or staying at home to save money



# Choosing the course

- Very important!
- Subject interests at school
- Type of course
- Flexibility / choice of subjects, opportunity to specialise
- Assessment methods – continual v exams
- Entry requirements – be realistic!



# Choosing the university

- City centre or campus based?
- Close to home?
- Accommodation
- Cost
- Size of university
- Facilities offered
- Right course?



# Other things to consider

- Opportunities to travel
- Sandwich courses – year in industry
- Language options
- Combined honours
- Optional units



# To gap year or not to gap year...?

- If they would like to take a gap year, make sure they make it count.
- Gap years can look great on the UCAS form – voluntary work, travel, skills etc
- They may also choose to get work experience / build up your skills in a related area.
- They have two options – defer your entry or apply again for the next year.



The choice of course and institution is very personal. They should think carefully about what they want to study and what they will enjoy. They can listen to friends, parents, teachers and explain these reasons to you but they are more likely to succeed if they are enjoying their studies!



# Glossary

- UCAS – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
- Apply – UCAS online application system
- Track – follow progress online
- Offer – university decides to give a place
- Conditional offer – must obtain certain grades
- Firm choice – no. 1
- Insurance choice – no. 2
- Defer – hold place over for a year
- Extra and Clearing – making choices later on
- Halls – student accommodation
- Faculty – group of departments



# 🔥 What are universities looking for?

- Relevant academic ability
- Motivation
- Study Skills
- Relevant experience
- Passion for the subject
- The whole person



# What do Admissions Tutors look for?

“It’s good to know that someone has a realistic understanding of what’s involved in studying for a history degree – not just watching TV documentaries and visiting castles but lots of reading and thinking!”

“Students who stand out demonstrate vocational commitment, so have taken time to visit an audiology department, spoken to an audiologist about what the job involves or contacted us to see what qualifications are required.”



# What do you apply for?

- Up to 5 universities
- 1 personal statement



# What gets taken into account

- GCSE grades
- A2 predicted grades (or alternative)
- Any other qualifications
- Personal statement
- Teacher reference



# Application timetable

- From now onwards – visit university Open Days
- School deadlines
- September 2011 – UCAS application opens
- 15 October 2011 – deadline for applications to Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science/ Medicine
- 15 January 2012 – deadline for receipt of all applications
- March 2012 – universities should get back to you
- May 2012 – all decisions made – decide firm and insurance choices
- Mid August – Most results known, Confirmation and Clearing



# Structuring the personal statement

- About two thirds of the personal statement should be focussed around their desire to study the particular subject
  - Where did their interest in the subject come from?
  - What have they done to develop this interest?
  - Why do they want to study the subject at university?
  - How have their current studies shaped your desire to study this subject?
- The rest of the statement should be about them as a whole person – hobbies, jobs, interests.



## **Classic mistakes**

- Incorrect date of birth
- Choices incorrectly entered
- Criminal conviction box not completed
- Too many choices for Medicine/ Dentistry/ Vet Science
- Spelling / grammar mistakes
- Trying to apply to more than one course / subject area.
- Finally, make sure that they know the school deadlines and that your form is in on time



# Applying for high demand courses

## Qualifications

- Have you got anything over and above the basic 3 A Level formula?

## Research

- The market
- The course
- The selection criteria (not just the standard offer grades)
- Actual grades of successful applicants

## Read around the subject

- Evidence of motivation and commitment

## Tailor your application

- Evidence of close fit with selection criteria



# 🔥 You've Applied – What Next?

- Depending on where you apply and what course you apply for your application may be treated differently (i.e. Oxbridge have earlier deadlines)
- Applications are read by admissions tutors
- Interviews – at Bristol we interview for Medics and Vets, Drama and some engineering – not so much to test you but to check suitability
- Decisions – will come through at different times (no later than 31 March)



## **They've been accepted...What next?**

- Start properly researching the universities and courses that they have been accepted onto
- Make sure they know what they want out of the university they choose – academically and socially
- They choose their conditional firm (CF) and conditional insurance (CI)



# What if things go wrong?

**Clearing:** If they don't get the grades they were due to achieve and their offer is not confirmed they will go into Clearing. This process runs from the middle of July and helps students find places that are still available. If your results are reasonable and you are a bit flexible, it should be possible to find you a place.

**NB – You do need to be around in person to deal with this so make sure you are back from holiday to sort things out ASAP.**



# What you can do to help

- Overview of key dates
- Overview of key financial information
- Offer advice but let them make decision
- Choice should suit both academically and personally
- Allow them space to change mind, have a crisis, express their worries



# 🌿 Preparing for university

- Accommodation
- Funding
- Insurance
- Travel arrangements
- Reading
- Other things to take
- Survival skills
- Keeping in touch



# Support at university

- In halls and student houses – tutor who is named support person
- Personal academic tutor
- Mentoring schemes
- Student welfare adviser, counselling service
- Students' Union



# How parents can help

- Make sure finances sorted and discuss budgeting
- Check deadlines for accommodation and when payments due
- Discuss means of communication
- Offer support but too much contact can make homesickness worse



# Student funding at Bristol

- Tuition fees - annual tuition fee of £9,000 (increasing annually in line with inflation) for all UK and EU students on full-time undergraduate programmes – subject to approval by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).
- Students whose residual household income is £15,000 or below, and in receipt of a maintenance grant (or special support grant), will pay a reduced tuition fee of £3,500.
- Students whose residual household income is between £15,001 and £20,000, and in receipt of a maintenance grant (or special support grant), will pay a reduced tuition fee of £4,500.
- Students whose residual household income is between £20,001 and £25,000, and in receipt of a maintenance grant (or special support grant), will pay a reduced tuition fee of £6,000



# Living costs loan

- The maximum Maintenance Loan available for students starting their course in 2012/13 is:
- £4,375 if you're living at home
- £5,500 if you're living away from home outside London
- £7,675 if you're living away from home in London
- You can apply for 72 per cent of these maximum Maintenance Loan amounts without your household income being taken into account. How much you receive of the remaining 28 per cent will depend on your household income.



# Living costs grant

- You can also apply for a Living Cost Grant to help you with your living costs each year. You don't have to pay grants back.
- You'll be entitled to a full grant of £3,250 in 2012/13 if your household income is £25,000 or under.
- You'll be entitled to a partial grant if your household income is between £25,000 and £42,600.



# Other sources of funding

- University of Bristol Hardship Fund
- Vice-Chancellor's Scholarships
- Eliahou Dangoor Scholarship Scheme
- National Scholarship Programme (NSP)
- Childcare grant
- Disability Support Allowance



# Repayments

- Eligible students will not have to pay up front for their tuition. The cost of tuition will be paid by a loan which students will only start to repay once they have left their programme and are earning over £21,000.
- If for any reason your income falls below £21,000 your repayments will be suspended.
- All outstanding repayments will be written off after 30 years.
- The repayment process is simple as it will be deducted automatically from their pay packet through the tax system.
- Interest on the loan will be charged at inflation plus 3% whilst they are studying, and up until the April after they leave university.
- From the April after they leave university if they are earning below £21,000, interest will be applied at the rate of inflation.
- Graduates earning between £21,000 and £41,000 will be charged interest on a sliding scale up to a maximum of inflation plus 3%.
- Repayments will be 9% of income above £21,000, so the amount repaid each month will depend on earnings. Someone earning £21,500, for example – currently the salary of a newly-qualified teacher – would initially make repayments of £4 per month. The monthly repayment would increase to £23 for someone earning £24,000 per year; £30 on a salary of £25,000; £45 on £27,000; and £68 on £30,000.

# How to apply

- Prior year financial details used to assess household income
- Sponsors or parents can be registered online by student
- Online application preferred option
- Timings not confirmed but should register as soon as possible



# Useful resources

- [www.ucas.com/parents](http://www.ucas.com/parents)
- [www.bristol.ac.uk](http://www.bristol.ac.uk)
- [www.unistats.com](http://www.unistats.com)
- [www.russellgroup.ac.uk](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk) – Informed Choices
- [www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com)
- [www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk) – myth buster
- [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)



 **Any questions?**

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