



Post-18 Pathways

2018-19

UCAS



Contents

Section 1 – Possible pathways

Section 2 – Deadlines and dates

Section 3 – Self reflection

Section 4 – Higher education – Choosing the right university

Section 5 – The UCAS application system

Section 6 – My personal statement

Section 7 – Work experience

Section 8 – Student finance

Section 9 – Useful websites

Name	
Form	
UCAS Username/ID	
UCAS password	
Gov. Apprenticeships Username	
Gov. Apprenticeships Password	

Section 1 – Possible pathways

Getting the right advice, support and guidance from people who know you - or are career experts is very important. Finding out about the different pathways available when you leave sixth form and the qualifications you might require should not be left until the last minute.

Up until a few years ago this process was quite simple for most A Level learners. More than 90% followed the route into Higher Education, applying through UCAS. Recently the cost of tuition fees, concerns about student debt and some uncertainty in the job market have meant that many learners are considering other pathways more seriously.

Higher education

There are many different types of higher education (HE) courses available today. Higher education means any sort of nationally recognised qualification which is at Level 4 or above (A Level, BTEC Diploma, Extended Diploma and Apprenticeships are Level 3). A degree starts at Level 4 and progresses to Level 6 in the third year.

Although in the past higher education courses were delivered at just universities, they are now also offered by colleges and some training providers. So, by the end of your two years of study at the Denys Salt Sixth Form, if you have secured your Level 3 qualifications then you could explore higher level study at aged 18/19.

Most learners follow an honours degree course for three to four years, leading to a BA or a BSc. Foundation degrees (with lower entry requirements) may also be appropriate for some learners as there is the possibility to progress onto an honours degree after one or two years of study.

A good degree improves your career prospects and earning potential and is still the only route available into certain professions. Studying at university is a fulfilling experience and allows you the freedom to develop yourself intellectually and socially and gives you the chance to live away from home.

Higher Apprenticeships

If you are studying Level 3 courses at Denys Salt Sixth Form Centre you might be considering an apprenticeship as well as higher education (university) when you finish. An apprenticeship can be a good route if you want training for a specific job sector while earning at the same time. There are opportunities for lucrative apprenticeships developing all the time, many of which have only been open to graduates in the past. Places on

apprenticeships are highly competitive and you must do your planning and research carefully.

Apprenticeship vacancies for the summer after you finish your A Levels will normally be advertised sometime after 15 January, which is the application date for higher education. There are dozens of different job areas now offering Higher Apprenticeships, which are equivalent to higher education level qualifications (Level 4+).

Employers are asking for A Levels and other Level 3 qualifications as entry requirements. You can easily search for vacancies online at the gov.uk website and by looking at company websites or even by making speculative applications. There will be up to 15,000 apprenticeship vacancies in over 1,400 job roles available to learners getting their exam results this summer. Last year, there were 3,700 Higher Apprenticeships available (up by 67.6% on the previous year).

Degree Apprenticeships are now also available. These have been designed collaboratively by employers and universities.

Employment with training

When you have finished your studies at the Denys Salt Sixth Form Centre you might want to start work, rather than stay in full-time education. In recent years you will have heard there are lots of young people struggling to find a job but the situation is improving. There are opportunities out there but the job market is competitive.

If you do want to enter into employment, you must find out what training the company offers and what the opportunities might look like for promotion in the future.

You should research jobs where you can combine work with formal training (leading to a nationally recognised qualification) as this will enable you to continue learning as you work. This could mean that you will have more job satisfaction as you develop and use those critical higher level skills and could also mean you get more pay in the future.

You might also want to consider an internship. An internship (or work placement) gives you the opportunity to work at a company with the intention of learning new skills and gaining experience in a particular industry. More and more companies are offering these types of positions to school leavers (as well as graduates).

There are three different types of internships:

- Work Shadowing - Interns follow one or more members of a team throughout their day-to-day routine, allowing them to learn from top industry professionals.

- Vacation Schemes - These are offered by some of the larger management, financial, and accountancy firms. They act as training programmes and as a way for firms to assess candidates for future roles within the company. These schemes also give candidates the opportunity to see if the company is right for them.
- Work Placements - Often part of a degree programme, they tend to be available in the fields of finance, consultancy, marketing, and management. Work placements are designed to give learners a taste for working life in their chosen profession, and help add to a more well-rounded education whilst at university.

Gap year

Taking a gap year is not necessarily a career choice, but is a useful way of gaining valuable life experience before starting a degree course, an apprenticeship or a career. Most universities and employers look upon gap years favourably, especially when your experience includes travelling, gaining work experience, volunteering and teaching abroad.

Planning a gap year should not put you off delaying your application for university. Most sixth formers, apply for and secure a place at university and then ask for their place to be deferred.

Whichever route you decide on, make sure you do your research and make sure that your application has that competitive edge.

Section 2 – Deadlines and dates

If you are considering higher education, the following dates and deadlines will be useful to you:

September 2018	UCAS begins to process applications for 2019 entry
25 September 2018	Post-18 Information Evening – Denys Salt Sixth Form
15 October 2018	Oxford and Cambridge applications deadline
15 October 2018	Entry deadline for courses in Medicine, Veterinary Science, and Dentistry
1 December 2018	School deadline for completing UCAS form
December 2018/January 2019	Oxford and Cambridge interviews.
December 2018/April 2019	Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry Interviews

3 January 2019	Year 13 Progress Exams start
15 January 2019	Deadline for entry to the majority of undergraduate degree courses
25 February 2019	UCAS Extra opens (if you have made all five choices and have no offers, you can add extra choices one at a time)
April 2019	Submission of Student Finance application forms
May 2019	Make final choices ('Firm' and 'insurance')
May to June 2019	Final exam period
15 August 2019	A-Level Results Day
August 2019	Confirmation/rejection of conditional offers
Aug/Sept 2019	Applications entered into Clearing system
October 2019	University commences

Section 3 – Self reflection

Now is the time to put together a realistic plan of action to help you see your future more clearly. By getting to know yourself better, through identifying your own strengths and weaknesses, you will be able to model your future pathway more successfully.

Use the following page to help you think through the following questions:

- Where do I want to be after sixth form?
- What do I need to find out about right now?
- How am I going to get there?

	Positive	Negative
Personal	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your strengths? • What do you do better than others? • What do others think your strengths are? • Do you know what you want to do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your weaknesses? • What can other people do better? • Where could you do better if you tried? • What do you feel unsure about?
External	Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What post-18 options are available for you? • What opportunities could you take advantage of? • What might you need to find out about? • What will you have to do to achieve? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What might get in the way of what you want to achieve? • Are there any circumstances beyond your control? • Is there anything that particularly worries you about the future?

Once you have had an opportunity to jot down your answers, speak to your Form Tutor and teachers about your next steps.

Things I think I'm quite good at:

Courses that might suit my strengths and areas for development:

Section 4 – Choosing the right university

There are over 50,000 undergraduate courses at over 395 providers in the UK. Start researching the right course for you. Not surprisingly, lots of sixth form learners are unsure when to begin – or where – so if you don't know at the moment, you're certainly not alone!

A higher education course typically lasts three or four years and will most likely involve borrowing a lot of money (see section 8), so it makes sense to be sure that whatever you want to do will be worthwhile in the long run. Start by asking yourself:

- Why do you want to go to university?
- Is there a specific career you are interested in?
- What subject areas interest you most?
- Do you have any preferences about where you study?
- What are your thoughts about size, location, accommodation and distance from home?
- What financial help may be available to you?

What you need at this stage is a commitment to research your options. Inevitably this is a time-consuming process. Make the commitment to start early and don't be rushed. Don't leave this process until Year 13, when pressure from your studies will start to build!

Which course?

More than half of graduate jobs are open to graduates with any degree. This means that, unless you have a specific career plan in mind that requires some kind of vocational degree (such as engineering, medicine or veterinary science), it makes sense to do a subject you enjoy and have a genuine interest in. Of course, this could be an entirely new subject or combination of subjects.

Be aware that some courses that share the same title (and code) may vary hugely between different universities. Not only can the entry requirements differ but the way the course is delivered and taught, the amount of contact

time, the type of study involved and the mode of assessment can differ greatly between different institutions.

Go online

www.ucas.com lets you search courses and universities, with entry requirements and links to each university's website. The new search tool can be found at www.ucas.com/search

www.unistats.co.uk and www.push.co.uk are just two websites that allow you to make direct comparisons between courses at different universities. You can compare course content, competition for places, staff/student ratios, student satisfaction figures, graduate employment and lots of other factors that will help you to narrow down your choice.

Go to events and Open Days

UCAS hold higher education conventions and meetings around the country and universities hold their own Open Days. They are a useful way of finding out about courses and university life in general. Check out www.ucas.com/events and www.opendays.com for up-to-date details.

Do not suffer in silence!

Family and friends, anyone you know who's been to university (and your teachers) are all good people to talk things through with. Ask them about their experience. Go online too, in order to read student testimonials about their experiences at university.

Be realistic

Many university courses are highly competitive. The most competitive often make offers based on grades; while the majority of courses use the UCAS tariff (see below).



	A-levels	AS levels	Scottish Highers	Advanced Highers
A*	56			
A	48	20	33	56
B	40	16	27	48
C	32	12	21	40
D	24	10	15	32
E	16	6		

Which? University

BTEC Nationals:
(first taught September 2016)
Ucas Points



National Extended Certificate		National Diploma		National Extended Diploma	
D*	56	D*D*	112	D*D*D*	168
D	48	D*D	104	D*D*D	160
M	32	DD	96	D*DD	152
P	16	DM	80	DDD	144
		MM	64	DDM	128
		MP	48	DMM	112
		PP	32	MMM	96
				MMP	80
				MPP	64
				PPP	48

(D) distinction (M) merit (P) pass



It's important to look in detail at your own academic profile and match it carefully to the **course entry profile** of courses you are interested in. Be aspirational – your ideal course might require you to stretch yourself academically and that's fine –but also be realistic and make sure you settle on a spread of courses to maximise your chances of getting an offer you can realistically achieve.

Points to note

- Universities making tariff offers will ask for a certain number of points that can be made up from any combination of qualifications
- AS Level qualifications are only counted separately if you do not continue with that subject to A2 Level. (AS qualifications have a tariff of 40% of A Level courses)
- Tariff offers may contain extra conditions, such as a certain number of points from 2 A Level subjects, or a certain grade in a named subject, or they may specifically exclude certain subjects
- Universities may require specific GCSE grades
- Not all universities make use of the tariff; some make offers based on a combination of grades, e.g. ABB at A level
- The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) carries half the points of an A Level, e.g. 28 points for A*

Size: Universities vary in size and shape, from the elite research-led **Russell Group universities** which have a worldwide reputation, to the newer universities that have their roots in the old polytechnics. They range in size from 1,800 to 30,000 students, so there are lots of things to consider in that respect.

Location: Is location important to you? Would you rather be at university in a big city, which is handy for shopping and nightlife, or on a campus, where everything you need is located on one handy site? – accommodation, library, students' union, sport facilities. Sometimes, however, a campus university might be some distance from the nearest town or city. Distance from home is another factor to consider.

Reputation: Russell Group universities (such as the University of Manchester) base their reputation on the depth and quality of their research, which means students are often taught by world experts in their field. Russell Group universities tend to offer a more traditional academic style of education and usually demand higher A Level grades. Some of the newer universities (such as Manchester Metropolitan University) often take a much more practical approach to their degree courses. It's important that you research whether a particular university will suit your style of learning.

Facilities and activities: Many universities have a reputation for certain sports and other activities such as drama, debating and outdoor pursuits. University is not just about work, work, work (important though that is) so you need to choose somewhere you'll be happy.

Accommodation: Universities differ in terms of quality and available facilities (such as en-suite rooms and catering etc.). The cost of living can vary hugely from one part of the country to another; the cost of living in London, for example, is much more expensive than other cities. That means that you can borrow more money through your student loan but this means more debt too.

There's lots of information out there: you need to start your research early!

Section 5 – UCAS application

All university applications are processed by UCAS but each course you apply for is considered individually by an admissions tutor at each university. The most important points about the UCAS process are:

- You can apply for up to 5 courses (medicine, veterinary medicine and dentistry are limited to 4, plus one other if desired)
- You register with www.ucas.com/apply and complete your application online. The fee is payable online when the application is ready to be sent. £13 for a single choice or £24 for more than one choice.
- The deadline is 15 January 2019, although you are strongly advised to complete your application well before that so you can concentrate on your A Level study (see Section 2).
- If you are applying for medicine, veterinary science, dentistry, Oxford or Cambridge the deadline is 15 October 2018.
- Some courses require an admissions test (e.g. UKCAT, BMAT or LNAT): It is your responsibility to find out whether one is required, and when and where to take it. Practise it beforehand!
- Once you receive offers, you will be given a deadline by which you have to respond. Eventually you will be able to accept one **firm** offer (CF conditional firm) and one **insurance** offer (CI conditional insurance). This offer would normally be for lower grades or points, in case you don't make the grade for your firm offer. You do not have to have an insurance offer.
- If you receive no offers, then you will be eligible for UCAS Extra which allows you to make applications to courses that still have vacancies.
- If, on Results Day, you don't make the grade to get onto your chosen courses you can use UCAS Clearing to find a course that still has a vacancy.
- For a more detailed explanation of how to fill in the UCAS form online, look at the FAQs section on p28

Section 6 – My personal statement

Writing a personal statement can be tricky as you have only 4000 characters available to sell yourself! It is important to be honest and demonstrate your confidence and experiences as an individual – in essence it is an extended essay about you!

While many candidates may apply with the same grades as you, they aren't *you*, with *your* skills, *your* experiences and *your* thoughts. You need to stand out as a real person to an admissions tutor, as opposed to just being one of the many applicant numbers that will pass before their eyes!

Your personal statement is where you can distinguish yourself from other candidates; fill in the picture a tutor has of you in their head; leave a real impression that makes them want to meet you or offer you a place.

Remember that what you write could be used to decide between you and another candidate for the final spot on that dream course.

Top ten tips from Which? – A University Guide

1. Explain your reasons for wanting to study the course

What motivates you to take this course further at a university level? Mention how your interest developed, what you have done to pursue it or how you've drawn inspiration from your current studies. Or, just demonstrate your enthusiasm for it. If you want to get something specific out of it, provided it's reasonable, say so.

2. Explain how you're right for the course

Provide evidence that you fit the bill to show that not only do you meet the selection criteria; but also that you've researched the course (or profession) and understand what studying the subject at university level will involve. Also show that you're prepared for this.

3. Say what you've done outside the classroom

If possible, outline how you've pursued your interest in your chosen subject beyond your current syllabus.

For example, talk about any further reading you've done around the subject *and* give your critical views or reflective opinions about it (don't just write a list). This could be from books, quality newspapers, websites,

periodicals or scientific journals or from films, documentaries, blogs, radio programmes, podcasts, attending public lectures and so on.

Try to avoid mentioning the wider reading that everyone else is doing.

4. Why it's relevant to your course...

Reflect on your experiences, explaining what you've learned from them or how they've helped develop your interest in the subject – it could be work experience, volunteering, a university taster session or outreach programme, summer schools, museum, gallery or theatre visits, archaeological digs, visits to the local courts, travel, competitions or a maths challenge.

5. ... And relevant to your chosen career

Reflecting on relevant experience or observations will be essential for some professional courses where, in effect, you're applying for the career as well as the course:

Reflect on your experience, don't just describe it. Talk about the skills the profession needs, how you've noticed this and how you've developed those skills yourself.

Whatever environment you've been in, what did you spot or learn from what happens there, or what have you observed about how the qualities exhibited by professional staff helped them engage effectively with patients or service-users?

6. Can you demonstrate transferable skills?

Yes, you can – and admissions tutors will want to hear about them.

It could be your ability to work independently, teamwork, good time management, problem-solving, leadership, listening or organisational skills. Always back up your statements with evidence and examples.

7. Expand on the most relevant ones

But don't simply list off the skills you think you have – think about which ones relate most readily to the course you're applying to. Then demonstrate how you've developed, used and continued to strengthen these.

Again, admissions tutors want to hear about *specific* examples, like:

- projects and assignments (what role did you play, what went well?)
- positions of responsibility (what did you achieve, how has it improved your self-confidence?)
- sport, music or drama (what did you learn from your role, how did you work as a team?)
- Young Enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh's Award (what was the biggest challenge, how did you overcome it?)
- volunteering or a part-time job (what have you observed, what extra responsibilities have you taken on, what skills have you demonstrated yourself?).

8. Show that you're a critical thinker

University is all about being able to think independently and analytically so being able to demonstrate that you're working like this already is a big plus point.

Briefly explaining how one of your A-level subjects, a BTEC assignment or placement, or additional studies such as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) has made you think more critically could be a way of doing this.

If you're taking the EPQ, do talk about it, as it's the kind of studying you'll be doing at university.

9. What's the long-term plan?

Mention what your longer term goals are if you can do it in an interesting way and you've got a specific path in mind. If you do, then try and show a spark of individuality or imagination.

Just saying you want to be a journalist isn't exactly going to stand you out from the crowd.

If you're not sure yet, just talk about what you're looking forward to at uni and what you want to gain from your course or from university life.

If you're applying for deferred entry, do mention your gap year plans if you've made a firm decision to take a year out. Most courses are happy for you to take a gap year – but they will want to know how you plan to spend it.

10. Keep it positive

It can be difficult to get started with your personal statement, but don't panic. Start with your strengths, focus on your enthusiasm for the course and talk positively about yourself.

The balance has to be right. At least half of your personal statement should be directed to your chosen course. You need to grab the reader's attention and make yourself stand out from the crowd.

Here are also some Do and Do Not points to bear in mind:

Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be prepared to draft and re-draft: it will take two or three attempts to get it right• ensure that it's well written, paying attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation• structure it carefully to make it easy to follow• focus on why you want to study your chosen course• show how you have pursued your interest in the subject outside the classroom• give evidence of where you have demonstrated skills that will help you succeed at university• include what you have gained from work experience or voluntary work• mention factors that an admissions tutor should take into consideration (things that may have affected your grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use quotes from the internet – admissions tutors want to know what you think• plagiarise. UCAS puts every application through anti-plagiarism software and may disqualify you• list things you have done without showing what you have learnt• over-do it: too many applicants talk about being 'passionate' without being specific

If you are not planning to go to university, elements of your personal statement could still form a key part of any potential letter of application for an apprenticeship or a job.

Section 7 – Work experience

Organising a worthwhile period of work experience is widely recognised as being a very valuable indicator of suitability for candidates for university courses, jobs and apprenticeships. In any application form or personal statement it is vital to demonstrate that you have reflected upon what you have gained from any work experience. Use the following pointers to help formulate your ideas.

Where did you complete your work experience?

Summarise briefly the nature of the work you completed?

How has work experience influenced your decision about your future?

What did you do that was relevant to your chosen course or intended career?

Which cross-transferable skills do you utilise during your work experience?

Write a sample paragraph on how work experience has benefited you.

Section 8 – Student finance

If you're not sure how to pay for university, or how you'll cope during your studies, don't worry – there's a wide range of finance available.

Study now – pay later

You don't have to apply for student finance until you have completed a UCAS application – the deadline is in May 2019. The place to apply for student finance and the best place to find out about it is www.gov.uk/student-finance or on the UCAS website itself.

As a student you can apply for tuition fee and maintenance loans to pay for course fees and living costs. Depending on where you live in the UK, where you want to study and your personal circumstances, you may be eligible for grants and bursaries too.

Tuition fee

The maximum tuition fee that publicly-funded universities and colleges can charge students annually is currently £9,250. The amount they can charge you depends on where you currently live and where you'd like to study. You can apply for a tuition fee loan to cover the full cost of your undergraduate course in a publicly-funded institution. Tuition fee loans go directly to your university or college and not into your bank account. You only start repaying the loan, along with any maintenance loans you have taken out, once you've completed your studies and started earning above a certain amount.

Maintenance Loan

Students can borrow money to cover their living expenses, e.g. accommodation, food, transport. The amount you are entitled to is dependent on household income and on where you study. This too is paid back after graduation.

Scholarships and bursaries

Universities also offer non-repayable cash support. Scholarships are often based on academic success (A Level results), while bursaries depend on household income. Check the university websites and course details carefully to see what is available.

Section 9 –Useful websites

[UCAS](#)

[UCAS Parent Guide](#)

[UCAS Higher and Technical Apprenticeships](#)

[UCAS Degree and Professional Apprenticeships](#)

[Sutton Trust UK Summer Schools](#)

[Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Internships](#)

[Higher and Degree Level Apprenticeships](#)

[National Apprenticeships](#)

[Open Days Directory](#)

[Careers and Employment](#)

[Student Finance England](#)

[Pure Potential](#)

[Study Abroad](#)

[University Which?](#)

[Russell Group Universities](#)

[The Complete University Guide](#)