

**The Highfield School
Sixth Form**

Year 12 into 13 Bridging Project

Summer Term / Holiday 2020

UCAS

Apprenticeships

Personal Statements

Overview

This bridging project has one main purpose: to help get you started on your plan for life after Highfield! Contained within this document is a wealth of information and activities to get you thinking about your life after you leave the sixth form.

If your plans involve study at university, it covers topics such as how to choose a course to study, where to study and what the different types of university you could study at.

If you are considering an apprenticeship, you will find in this bridging project, information, advice and guidance to get you started.

All of the information in this document is supported by the knowledge of your sixth form leadership team (email addresses below) – you can contact us for more information, guidance and support with any aspect of your future planning activities. We are completely aware of the struggles and difficulties many of you are experiencing during the current situation with Covid19 and we do urge you to get in touch with us for help if you need it.

Mr Furness – furnessm929@highfield.herts.sch.uk

Mr Holmes – holmesa226@highfield.herts.sch.uk

Timeline

A summary of some of the key dates over the coming weeks:

Date	What?
Now!	Start researching universities, courses and apprenticeships
July	Register for UCAS
July – September	Produce first draft of your personal statement for review by your tutor.
September – December	Apply to universities through UCAS

Applying to university

UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) is the organisation through which students can apply for universities and is used by all further educational establishments in the UK.

At Highfield we ask every student in year 12 to sign up with UCAS, regardless of whether your future plans involve university education. The reason for this is that by applying through UCAS and receiving offers for places on courses, this will give you choices on results day. You may decide on receiving your results that you wish to turn down places you have been offered and pursue a different path which is absolutely fine, but we know from experience that those who didn't apply sometimes regret that decision.

Activity One – Sign Up for UCAS

Follow the instructions below to sign up for UCAS Apply.

1. Log onto GOOGLE CHROME and type www.ucas.com
2. Sign in (right hand corner)-students-undergraduate-apply 2021
3. REGISTER-agree (bottom of page)
4. Title-name-date of birth—NEXT
5. Address-NEXT
6. Phone number and email address, that is the one you want to communicate with UCAS (look at your email address to make sure it looks professional)-NEXT
7. ONLY have bottom icon GREEN showing-others NOT green-SAVE
8. Password-read criteria carefully
9. Security questions-answer all
10. MAKE NOTES OF YOUR USERNAME/PASSWORD/SECURITY QUESTIONS ON YOUR PHONE-you will need this later!
11. LOGIN-apply –find school/The Highfield school-
12. ENTER BUZZWORD-**STT2021**
13. Highfield-tutor group-PERSONAL ID-sent to you on your selected email address/SAVE ID ON YOUR PHONE
14. Verify email address-go to email and verify and be given a CODE/save this on your phone-type in CODE on UCAS to register

We would like all students to have registered with UCAS **before the end of the summer term.**

Universities – a rough guide to the UCAS application process

UCAS Apply

After signing up to UCAS, you will have access to the **UCAS Apply** website. This is where you will enter all of the details needed to apply, such as your personal information and your choice of universities and also where you'll upload your personal statement and tutor reference.

A lot of the information on this application can be left until we get back to school in September, for example you may need help identifying exactly which GCSEs you received. The main objective over the summer is simply to get registered!

If you felt like making a start before September, you will find a link to a comprehensive guide to completing the UCAS application below:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/filling-your-ucas-undergraduate-application>

University choices

You apply for **five** universities through UCAS. The courses you can apply for are based on your predicted grades. We recommend that you apply for one university which is above your predicted grades (your aspirational choice), three universities which match your predicted grades and one university which is below your predicted grades (your insurance choice).

Your predicted grades would normally be produced by your teachers over the summer term and based in part on the end of year 12 exams. The process for producing these is still to be decided for this year, but this should not prevent you from starting your research.

Each university course has a required number of tariff points, or will specify what grades they will require for you to be accepted on the course. The points and their equivalent grades are shown below.

A Level Grade	Points Equivalent
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16

The information on requirements for the courses can be found on the university websites and is also published in the '**Indigo**' guide which we will give you a code to access online – this code will be sent to you as soon as we have it.

When your application is complete and your personal statement and tutor reference have been uploaded, your application will be submitted to UCAS. Each university will receive your application (they do not know which other universities you have applied to) and then you will respond to you. This response will usually be either an offer (conditional or unconditional) or an indication that you have been unsuccessful in your application. A conditional offer means that you need to meet certain criteria (e.g. a minimum number of UCAS points) whereas an unconditional offer means that you have been accepted on the course without having to meet minimum criteria.

After all of your offers have been received (universities usually respond pretty quickly), you must then make a decision about which offers to decline, which one to make your first (or firm) choice and which one to make your insurance choice (in case you fail to make the criteria for your firm choice).

[Timetable for applying](#)

Currently, the deadline to complete your UCAS application is **15th January 2021**. Having said this, we strongly advise all students to complete their application to UCAS **before the end of the Autumn term**. Getting your application in to universities before Christmas means the admissions tutors have more time to look at your application and we have been told that this often results in more favourable offers.

If you are looking to apply for a course in medicine, dentistry or veterinary science or are thinking of applying to Oxford or Cambridge, these courses and universities have earlier deadlines, usually the **middle of October**. Your tutor and head of year will support you with these types of application.

For courses involving medicine, you will also need to take the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT). The final date when you can take the test is usually the start of October and the test itself can be booked from the **beginning of July**.

Research

This is the most important part of planning for the future – you need to do your research!

Activity Two – types of university, teaching and assessment

Universities fall into two main categories, campus and city. The types of teaching on each of their courses is varied – for example you could be taught in seminars, lectures or in tutorials. The ways in which you will be assessed will vary too – some courses will assess solely using exams whereas others will focus on projects and practical work.

For this second activity you should research each of the above and find answers for the following questions:

1. What is the difference between a campus and a city university?
2. What are the features of the different ways in which you might be taught?
3. What are the features of the different types of assessment?
4. What is a 'sandwich course'?
5. What is the Russell Group?
6. Who are the University Alliance and what type of courses do these universities typically offer?

Key questions

You need to start by answering a number of questions:

1. What subject should I study?
2. Where should I study?
3. What type of university would suit me?
4. What type of teaching would I prefer?
5. What type of assessment do I prefer?

What subject should I study?

You might already have a good idea of what career you want to have in the future. If this is the case, you need to research that career and find out exactly what qualifications and what subject you will need to study for that career. If you are not sure yet about your future career, think about the subject that you get most enjoyment from – a degree is a minimum of three years, so you need to choose a subject you know you will still be enjoying a few years from now.

If you need further inspiration you could start by looking at the subject guides on the UCAS website:

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

Where should I study?

You may already know where you want to study – you might have already set your mind on a particular city or location. You might want to study near to home, or you might have decided that you want to study somewhere far away! Where you decide to study is a hugely important decision as once you have started your course, it is difficult to swap to somewhere else. You will be living and learning in this place for a minimum of three years, so you need to do your research.

The best way to decide if a location is for you is to pay a visit. Universities will hold ‘**open days**’ throughout the year and hopefully these will begin to happen again after the summer. In the meantime, the next best thing is to take a ‘**virtual**’ or ‘**digital**’ open day. Most universities will have information on these on their websites – some of these will require you to sign up and will happen on specific times and dates.

Chat to current students

A great way to get an idea of what a university is like is to speak to students who are currently studying there. Normally, you would do this on open days or at exhibitions, but UCAS provides a way of doing this online using their website. Follow the link below:

<https://www.ucas.com/chat-to-students>

University league tables

There are three main national league tables for universities (links below) which might help you choose a place to study. Each of these tables look at different criteria in their rankings, so be critical and use them all together!

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2019/jun/07/university-league-tables-2020>

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-uk>

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>

Activity Three – start researching!

Now that you've got a better idea of the what you might like to study, where you'd like to study, the different types of universities, teaching methods and ways of assessing progress, it's time to start your research.

As you do your research using the website links above and using the information you've discovered, you should document what you've found out.

You should produce a **research log** which provides details for **at least 5 universities and courses**. For each of these universities, provide (as a minimum) the following information:

1. Name of university
2. Type of university (campus or city)
3. Unique features of the university (e.g. near the Lake District!)
4. Accommodation
5. Open days / virtual open days
6. Fees and funding
7. Course(s) looked at
8. Entry requirements
9. What will you study
10. Length of course
11. Type of teaching
12. Type of assessment
13. Additional course information (e.g. year abroad as part of the course)
14. Other general information (e.g. location in league tables, cost of living, distance from home and how to get there, student satisfaction rating, number of students on course, bursaries available, career prospects)

Summary

After completing the first three activities of this bridging project, you should have discovered a wealth of information about possible universities and courses. You may find the UCAS Hub on the UCAS website a good way of keeping track of your research moving forward – the link is below:

<https://www.ucas.com/what-are-my-options/create-your-ucas-hub-today>

Apprenticeships

Universities are not the only option when you leave sixth form! Another option open to you and one that is becoming increasingly popular is apprenticeships.

An apprenticeship is a real job with a real employer and allows you to work and learn at the same time. You will be paid a salary, gain qualifications and real work experience and have the support of a training provider. You will be given real responsibilities and expected to work hard, just like anyone else in the company. An apprenticeship usually lasts from 1 to 4 years.

It's important to remember that apprenticeships aren't the 'easy option'. Holding down a full time job and studying takes a certain skill, and it won't be right for everyone.

When we talk about apprenticeships, people often assume we're referring to traditional apprenticeships like construction and engineering. There are many brilliant apprenticeships in these areas, but there are also hundreds of new apprenticeships in exciting areas that you might not know exist. As an example, the image below shows some of the areas you could take an apprenticeship in.

ACCOUNTING | ADVERTISING & MARKETING
AGRICULTURE | ANIMAL CARE | AVIATION
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION | CATERING
CREATIVE & DIGITAL | DENTAL NURSING
CONSTRUCTION | CUSTOMER SERVICE
CYBER SECURITY | EVENTS MANAGEMENT
FLORISTRY | HIGH PERFORMANCE ENGINEERING
HAIRDRESSING | HEALTH CARE | HOSPITALITY
HORTICULTURE | JOURNALISM | JEWELLER
LEGAL SERVICES | GAMES TECHNICIAN
POLICE OFFICER | PROJECT MANAGEMENT
SURVEYING | SOLICITOR | TEACHING
VETERINARY NURSING

Higher and degree apprenticeships

Higher and degree apprenticeships are a real alternative to following the traditional route of going to University as a full time student.

They offer all the benefits of higher education with none of the cost. You will not only be learning, but earning a salary, from day one.

So with a degree apprenticeship, you're much less likely to build up any debt. Your tuition fees are paid for by your employer and the Government, so you will not be expected to pay £9000 a year. Universities offer their degree apprentices exactly the same student experience as other students, so you will still have access to the student union, sports facilities, student discounts etc.

In the past, going to university was seen as the best way to advance your career to a higher level. But with the current level of competition for jobs amongst graduates, it might not be the best route for you. With an apprenticeship, you gain the competitive advantage of gaining at least 3 years' work experience whilst completing your degree.

But remember – it is hard work as a degree apprentice! You'll be working full time and fitting in the equivalent of a full time degree alongside it. It might take a bit longer, 4 years instead of 3, but you'll achieve exactly the same degree.

What is an apprenticeship worth?

The table below shows the different types of apprenticeships and the values of these types.

Apprenticeship Type	Value of qualification	Equivalent to academic study	Typical entry Requirements
Degree Apprenticeship	Level 6 & 7	Bachelors degree or Masters degree	A Levels (UCAS points score)
Higher Apprenticeship	Level 4 & 5	Certificate of Higher education or Diploma of Higher Education	A Levels (UCAS points score)

Applying for an apprenticeship

The process of applying for apprenticeships is different to that for university. The process is usually managed using the government's apprenticeship website:

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/#>

There are three main steps to applying:

1. Search for an apprenticeship!
2. Sign in to the official UK apprenticeship website
3. Complete and submit you application

When you sign up to the website, you will be given the opportunity to sign up for alerts when apprenticeships you might be interested in come up.

Should you choose to apply for an apprenticeship you supported through the process in school with help to put together your CV, application and support with interviews. You will also be supported by the Youth Connexions service.

Activity four – researching apprenticeships

It may be that you have never considered an apprenticeship as an option, or you have always known this was the route for you after leaving sixth form. Either way, this task asks you to undertake some research into the different options open to you.

For this task you could use the ‘Find an Apprenticeship’ service on the government’s website. This allows you to search for apprenticeships in a particular interest and also allows you to state how far away from home to search. The link is below:

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/real-stories/apprentice>

This service will find apprenticeships of all levels, including degree apprenticeships. If a degree apprenticeship is something you are interested in, you will also find details of these on university websites too.

You should produce a **research log** which provides details for **at least 5 different apprenticeships**. For each of these apprenticeships, provide (as a minimum) the following information:

1. Area of apprenticeship (e.g. engineering)
2. Level of apprenticeship
3. Employer
4. Location
5. What will you be doing?
6. What training is provided?
7. What qualification will you get at the end?
8. What is the expected career progression after the apprenticeship?
9. Annual wage
10. Duration
11. Requirements (e.g. GCSEs needed, personal skills desired)
12. How do you apply for this apprenticeship?

Summary

This part of the bridging project should have given you a better understanding of how apprenticeships work and the routes open to you should you decide to apply for apprenticeships following sixth form. As mentioned before, apprenticeships are not the ‘easy option’, but they do provide a number of benefits, not least the fact that you get paid whilst training!

Another alternative to the government’s website to support you in looking for an apprenticeship is the Amazing Apprenticeships (website below).

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/>

Personal statements

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.

The personal statement is a requirement for applying to university, but it can also be adapted to use with an application to university. With this in mind, we ask all sixth form students to create one.

Structuring a personal statement

Below you will find advice on how to organise your personal statement. You do not have to stick to this, or use it as a template, but it might help you to organise your thoughts and ideas.

1. Why do you want to study this course?

- What inspires you about the subject, how did you first become interested in it?
- Talk about the course – show you understand what you will be doing if you are accepted onto the course.
- Describe what you like about the subject – mention particular issues or topics that you've enjoyed and why.
- Show you're interested in the subject outside of the classroom – what background reading have you done, what research have you done?
- Express your enthusiasm for the subject.

2. What are your academic skills and qualities?

- Demonstrate skills and qualities that are relevant to the course you want to study – give examples of each, for example a situation where you used that skill or quality.
- What study skills have you developed?
- Show evidence of independent learning.
- What skills and qualities (not related to study) have you developed – give examples and explain how these are appropriate to the course.
- What are you most proud of from your time in school?

3. Work experience

- What **relevant** work experience do you have? Talk about and reflect on this and explain what skills you developed as a result.
- What did you learn from the work experience?
- Has your work experience changed your outlook on work or your perceptions?
- Can you link the work experience to your studies?
- Give specific situations where you have demonstrated a skill – don't be generic – e.g. "I developed my communication skills"

4. Extra-curricular interests

- What other interests, experiences, hobbies or achievements do you have?
- Demonstrate the skills, qualities and knowledge that you have acquired as a result.

- Mention any outstanding achievements.
- Avoid generic interests – e.g. reading – unless you can say it in an interesting and academic way.

5. Career / future plans

- If relevant, explain what your future career plans are.
- Talk about your intentions for a gap year if you're planning to go on one.

6. The ending

- Don't simply repeat in the final paragraph everything you've already said
- Be succinct, try to tie the ending back to your opening paragraph if possible

Additional help with producing a personal statement

The UCAS website provides a wealth for further information, advice and guidance on how to put together a personal statement, including a 'Personal Statement Builder' which tracks how many of the permitted 4,000 characters you have used – follow the link below to access this:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement>

Example personal statements

In the sixth form section of the school website there are a number of good examples of personal statements. Whilst we recommend you take a look to get an idea of what a good personal statement looks like, remember the personal statement is personal! Universities use software to spot plagiarised statements. Make your personal statement unique – it needs to be unique and stand out from the crowd.

Activity five – create your personal statement

Using the information, advice and guidance above you need to create the first draft of your personal statement. This will be reviewed and re-drafted many times before you produce a final version, so don't think this first version needs to be perfect.

Your tutor will review your personal statement and suggest possible improvements, but you can get anyone to help with this process for example parents, subject teachers, head of year or friends.

The first draft of your personal statement should be with your tutor in the **first week back in September**. If you would like feedback before then you can send to the head of year for review.

Supporting your application

As well as your academic achievements, universities and employers are looking for 'well rounded individuals'. What does this mean? It means that they are looking for evidence in your personal statement or application of the following:

1. In school extra-curricular activities – e.g. subject ambassador, prefects, prom committee, Duke of Edinburgh, NCS
2. Out of school activities – e.g. part time jobs, scout / guide leader, sports teams, hobbies, volunteering work
3. Subject related activities – e.g. visiting galleries / exhibitions, summer subject courses, taking part in webinars
4. Soft skills development – e.g. leadership, communication, organisational skills

Take every opportunity you are given to make yourself more attractive to university admissions officers or employers. You are looking to make yourself stand out from the crowd!

Checklist of Activities

The list below summarises the main activities in this bridging project. You should make sure you have done all of these and are able to provide the evidence to your tutor on return to school in September.

Activity	Description	Deadline	Completed?
One	Sign up for UCAS.	July 17 th	
Two	Investigate types of university, teaching and assessment.	Start of Autumn term	
Three	Researching universities and courses.	Start of Autumn term	
Four	Researching apprenticeships.	Start of Autumn term	
Five	Write the first draft of your personal statement.	Start of Autumn term	

Support

You will be made aware of who your tutor is before the summer holiday. You can contact them (or your current tutor) for support during the remainder of the school term.

You can also contact Mr Furness (head of sixth form) or Mr Holmes (head of year 13 from September) for support at any time using the email addresses below:

furnessm929@highfield.herts.sch.uk

holmesa226@highfield.herts.sch.uk

Mr Furness will continue to email weekly updates with important updates and information on universities and apprenticeships, including links to webinars and other events with deadlines – please do make sure you take the time to check this email each week.

Summary

As is stated at the beginning of this document, the main objective of this project is to help get you started on your plan for life after Highfield.

By the time you have completed this project, you should have achieved the following:

1. Have signed up to the UCAS Apply website
2. Have a good understanding of the different types of university and how subjects are taught at these universities
3. Have an idea of what you want to study and where you want to study it
4. Have a good understanding of what an apprenticeship is, the types you could apply for and the advantages of doing an apprenticeship
5. Have a clear idea of the different areas you could do an apprenticeship in
6. Have an understanding of what makes a great personal statement and completed the first draft of your own