



# POST-18 PATHWAYS GUIDANCE 2020



## **Post-18 Pathways Available:**

- **Under-graduate degree at university**
- **Degree Apprenticeship**
- **Higher Education Study**
- **Higher Apprenticeship**
- **Employment (not linked to an apprenticeship)**
- **Gap year - travelling or volunteering**

The range of opportunities can be quite daunting, but we hope you will find this booklet helpful in making an informed decision.

Remember, once you have secured good Level 3 qualifications you will always be able to access these opportunities, even if currently you choose not to do so.

If you are unsure, a good starting point would be to talk to your Form Tutor or Ms Giordano (theop007@sflt.org.uk), and access the link below for further guidance:

<https://www.ucas.com/what-are-my-options>

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### **UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE- UNIVERSITY**

Having a degree is a requirement for an increasing number of professions and graduates can expect to earn considerably more than non-graduates (in 2019, graduates earned, on average, £10,000 per annum more than non-graduates).

Securing your degree through studying at university provides an opportunity to leave home and live independently whilst learning, furthermore it will provide you with access to a wide range of job roles and opportunities on graduation.

There is an initial cost to studying at university, but over time this is off-set by increased earning potential, as well as the life experience of studying and living away from home.

## **Undergraduate Degree: Choosing a Course**

This is something that you need to be researching **now**. It is important that you consider *both* location, and course content.

For some, the course will be straight forward as you have chosen a career path that requires a certain degree so you will know what you need to achieve. However, for many professions, entry is post-graduate regardless of the degree, so you may simply want to take a degree in a subject that you are interested in, rather than specific to a career choice.

There are thousands of different courses and this can be quite overwhelming. We would suggest looking at list of courses at universities that you are interested in attending. These tend to be listed under subject areas, so for example if you are studying Business, look at management and business courses and explore the range of degree courses available.

Be inspired!

This is a big decision and we would *strongly* recommend that you spend some time carefully thinking about it. Choosing the wrong course can result in students dropping out of courses. If you are at all unsure please talk to friends, parents and teachers before making decision.

If you are applying to Oxbridge, or hoping to study medical or creative performance courses, please see below:

### **Medical/Veterinary**

**Deadline:** 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Usually, you would be expected to provide evidence of work experience in a related environment, but Covid-19 means that is currently not possible, so universities will consider candidates without this. However, if you have any other relevant work experience or volunteering experience, you should detail it in your personal statement.

You can also access on-line work experience (or, equivalent):

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/discover-general-practice/observe-gp.aspx>

You will have to complete a UCAT (University Clinical Aptitude Test) before submitting. This year these will be completed on-line, or at a local test centre (details on the link below), and you need to apply now to secure a slot. Bookings open on 1<sup>st</sup> July. UCAS are advising booking earlier slots.

<https://www.ucat.ac.uk/ucat/ucat-2020-update/>

We would strongly recommend completing practise tests on-line:

<http://practice.ukcat.ac.uk/pages/menu.aspx?pack=bd52c8e6-da13-44a8-ac5d-3a02d2c1e21b>

## **Oxbridge**

**Deadline:** 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

After submission, you will be required to complete an admissions test, which are at a local test centre (although likely to also be made available on-line this year).

We would strongly recommend completing practise tests on-line:

<https://oxbridgeapplications.com/mock-tests/>

## **Conservatoires**

These are for performance-based courses, including: music, drama and screen production courses. Conservatoire courses are based around individual tuition, as well as practical training and frequent opportunities to perform. All teaching staff at conservatoires are working professionals. There is a strong emphasis on one-to-one tuition, alongside group work and performances.

Universities offer similar under-graduate courses so please do research all options before making a decision.

The application process is similar, but you will have to attend an interview.

For more information, please see the UCAS link below:

<https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires>

**Deadline:** Application deadlines vary, so please use the link to check for your particular course - <https://digital.ucas.com/search>

## **Undergraduate Degree: Choosing a University**

Think carefully about where you want to spend the next three or four years. Do you want to look at local universities such Greenwich, Canterbury Christ Church, or the University of Kent, which provide the option to live at home, or do you want to look further away and live independently?

This is a big decision and we would very strongly recommend that you spend some time thinking about this. Choosing the wrong university can result in students dropping out of courses, or just being very homesick and unhappy.

### **Open Days:**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 2021 universities are providing virtual open days, which include 360° tours of campuses, subject specific talks, and seminars on student

finance and accommodation. Some universities will require you to register in advance if you wish to attend these, so please check university home pages.

We would strongly recommend that you do visit university campuses and towns before accepting a place at a university as you need to get a good 'feel' for a place before deciding to spend three or four years there.

## **Undergraduate Degree: Application**

You should start your application as soon as possible as they take time to complete. Rushed applications tend to lead to hasty and poorly informed decisions on universities and/or courses.

There is excellent step-by-step guidance on the UCAS website:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university>

We would strongly recommend that you use all five available choices (but choose universities and courses carefully), although you can submit an application with less choices.

University admissions teams will start looking at your application as soon as it's received. Some will respond within a day or two, others will wait until their own internally set deadlines, so response times do vary. It is very important that you remember to check emails regularly as they will often require quick responses to information sent.

If you are applying for a course where an interview is required as part of the application process (this will be clear on the course details), you are permitted to request absence from school to attend (likewise to visit any campuses before making decisions).

Once you have started application process you will have to create login details and a password. Do not lose this information as you will need to use this to check status and accept offers.

## **Applying Deadlines**

**Medical, veterinary and Oxbridge:** 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 (deadline to submit completed applications to Mr. Mallia and Mr. Cross is Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2020)

**Conservatoires:** Varies, check <https://digital.ucas.com/search>

**All other applications:** 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 (deadline to submit completed applications to Mr. Mallia and Mr. Cross is Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2021)

## **Applying - Buzzword**

As part of our application process, you will be required to provide a 'Buzzword.'

**PGW Sixth Form's Buzzword is: PGW2021**

This links you to PGW Sixth Form and it is essential that you correctly enter this otherwise we will not have access to process your application.

### **Applying – Payment**

The application fee is £20 to apply for just one course, or £26 for multiple courses.

This is requested before your application can be submitted.

### **Applying - Personal Statement**

All applications require you to provide a Personal Statement.

This is your opportunity to stand out from all the other applicants; to tell the university why they should choose you for their course, many of which will be over-subscribed.

The UCAS Personal Statement is your opportunity to tell universities about your suitability for the course/s that you have decided to study.

You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all ensure that you stand out from the crowd.

The UCAS website provides some brilliant tips and advice on writing effective personal statements, and we would strongly recommend that you access these before starting.

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

### **Applying - School Reference**

Your reference is completed by Mr. Mallia and Mr. Cross using information supplied by your subject teachers, and their knowledge of your academic and non-academic achievements.

### **Undergraduate Degree: Finance**

Course fees are typically £9250 per year, paid via student loan that you repay following graduation. You can choose to pay fees upfront rather than taking out a student loan.

Undergraduate courses are generally three years, but an increasing number of courses have a four year option, which includes a work placement year, often with the opportunity to complete this abroad.

You also need to factor in your cost of living, including accommodation, if you are attending a university away from home. This varies depending on your choice of university and standard of accommodation. You are also able to apply for

maintenance grants to cover some of these costs, which are assessed based on your parents' income.

There is lots of information about finance on the UCAS website:

<https://www.ucas.com/money> and individual universities will also provide their own information via their home pages.

## **Undergraduate Degree- Next Steps**

Once you have submitted your application, you will start to receive emails from universities. Please ensure that you check emails regularly.

Some courses may require you to complete admissions tests, attend interviews and/or applicant days, so you need to make sure that you don't overlook any requests. Offers will be made following interviews and tests.

For other courses, you will receive an immediate conditional or unconditional offer.

A conditional offer is subject to achieving certain grades in your exams.

An unconditional offer is just that, an offer based on your application and predicted grades only.

If you accept an unconditional offer, you must remember that whilst the university may not require a certain grade, employers will most definitely be looking at A Level/BTEC grades. So it is still vitally important for you to continue working hard in your studies to achieve the best possible grades.

The process of accepting courses is relatively straight forward, although be aware that you *cannot* accept a place until you have had a response from all universities.

If your firm choice is conditional, you can also accept an insurance (back-up) choice. If your place is unconditional, the university will ask you to reject all other offers in order to accept this place.

There is no pressure to make early decisions if you don't want to, as you have until May 2021 to make your final decision. Any offers are valid until this date, although some that have offered unconditional places might ask you to immediately accept to secure your place.

There is a lot of information to help you with tracking your application, and next steps, on the UCAS link below:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/track-your-ucas-application>

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## DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP

Having a degree is a requirement for an increasing number of professions and graduates can expect to earn considerably more than non-graduates (in 2019, graduates earned on average, £10,000 pa more than non-graduates).

Securing your degree through an employer means that you will be working whilst studying. This is hard work, and is certainly not the easy option, but is a very good decision if you are confident about your future career path and you don't mind missing out on the university experience.

Salaries are at entry-level, but employers are also paying the cost of your degree course. Some will also offer subsidised accommodation or travel if you need to relocate for your work.

As your employer has invested in your degree, you will be *expected* to remain with your employer for the duration of your studies, and for a number of years following this. If you leave, they would be entitled to ask you to pay the cost of your degree.

As you are working at the same time, it will take typically 4-5 years to secure your degree rather than three years.

You will spend approximately 80% of your time working, with 20% set aside for study – this may be on a university campus.

Degree apprenticeships are advertised through employers, and you will have to complete a rigorous selection process to be successful. They are highly sought after, and very competitive. You will need top grades, as well as be able to demonstrate personal experience and qualities that make you stand out from other applicants.

All employers who offer Higher Apprenticeships are government approved, and subject to stringent checks to monitor the quality of the training.

There is information on Degree Apprenticeships on both the UCAS *and* Government Apprenticeship websites:

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships/what-types-of-apprenticeships-are-there/degree-apprenticeships>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

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## HIGHER APPRENTICESHIP

These are full-time jobs with a study element – typically a 30-hour working week, plus a day of study towards professional qualifications through an approved awarding body.



Any tuition fees are paid by your employer but, as with degree apprenticeships, you must commit to remaining with your employer. So you need to be **100%** sure about the sector you are entering before you apply.

Higher apprenticeships are advertised through employers, and you will have to complete a rigorous selection process to be successful. They are highly sought after, and very competitive. You will need good grades, as well as be able to demonstrate personal experience and qualities that make you stand out from other applicants.

All employers who offer Higher Apprenticeships are government approved, and subject to stringent checks to monitor the quality of the training.

There is information on Higher Apprenticeships on both the UCAS and Government Apprenticeship websites:

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships/what-types-of-apprenticeships-are-there/degree-apprenticeships>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

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## **GAP YEAR**

Assuming that your parents/carers are supportive, this can be an option if you are unsure about what you want to do post-18, or just don't feel ready for the next step.

If you have applied to university, but subsequently decide that you would like to take a gap year, for most courses it is possible to defer for a year. You will need to contact your university admissions team to discuss.

Equally, if you are hoping to secure an apprenticeship but have found this difficult due to the challenges of a post Covid-19 job market, you may want to take a year out to gain some experience ahead of applying as opportunities arise – **remember, apprenticeships become available throughout the year, not just in September.**

If you are feeling adventurous, there are lots of organisations that will help you to undertake volunteering abroad. Some will have a small cost which is often covered by fundraising, others may be free on the basis that you are completing projects on arrival.

There is further information on gap years on the UCAS website:

<https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/gap-year/gap-years-ideas-and-things-think-about>

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## **EMPLOYMENT: PUBLIC SERVICES**

### **POLICE FORCE**

There are lots of different routes to access a career with the police.

You can either join their three year degree apprenticeship at post-18 (Professional Policing Degree) or continue to university and join at post-graduate level having already obtained this degree.

As a police officer, you will be expected to take responsibility for developing your own skills and ensuring that your fitness levels are maintained, as the work can be demanding, both physically *and* mentally.

There is further information on joining the Police on the website below:

<https://www.joiningthepolice.co.uk/ways-in-to-policing>

### **FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

The process of joining the Fire Service varies according to where you live, and is quite complicated. It is a very rewarding career with a continuous training programme involving attending lectures, exercises, practical training sessions and other forms of training to maintain competence levels.

As a fire officer, you will be expected to take responsibility for developing your own skills, and ensuring that your fitness levels are maintained as the work can be demanding, both physically and mentally.

As part of the application process, you will need to pass a fitness test. Although slightly less onerous than in the past, this is still rigorous and you will **need** to be fit to pass the test.

There is further information on joining the Fire and Rescue service on the website below:

<http://www.fireservice.co.uk/recruitment/>

### **ARMED FORCES**

There are a wide variety of post-18 apprenticeship routes into the armed forces.

You can apply post-18 with your Level 3 qualification and receive further training once enrolled. However to progress to the higher ranks you will require a degree, so depending on your career goals, you may need to go to university.

For all of the forces options, as part of the application process you will **need** to pass a fitness test. This is rigorous, and is a stumbling block for many applicants.

Ensure that you are fit before you apply – and then stay fit as you will be continually assessed.

If you are interested in joining any of the armed forces, we would strongly recommend researching different apprenticeship pathways using the links below.

**ARMY:** <https://www.army.mod.uk/careers/>

**RAF:** <https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment/find-your-role>

**Royal Navy:** <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/joining>

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## Career Support

PGW Sixth Form has expert career support available to you. You can contact Marie or Emma for: careers advice; job and apprenticeship searches; applications; CVs and cover letter writing; interview skills; training; work experience opportunities, plus anything else that you might need support with.

Some of you have already met Marie Colgan from Chatham Job Centre. She has been running the monthly drop-ins for us since September and also talked about apprenticeships at our Higher Education evening.

### Marie Colgan

MARIE.COLGAN@dwp.gov.uk

Tel: 07393 761921

Emma Inch is an Information, Advice and Guidance Specialist working for Medway Council. She specialises in helping students in Sixth Forms who are leaving school without a job, apprenticeship or training opportunity organised. Emma is usually based at The Wrec Room in The Pentagon, so you will be able to visit and talk to her in person eventually. She is also happy to make home visits if necessary.

### Emma Inch

emma.inch@medway.gov.uk

01634 335599 ext. 7821 or 07719419953

Finally, you are not expected to know exactly what you want to do, so don't panic if you're still unsure! There is no pressure to make decisions (although if you are even vaguely thinking about university, you should apply and then withdraw if you change your mind) – and there is always the option of taking a year out before committing to university or an apprenticeship.

Just focus on securing the best possible outcomes for your qualifications, so you have as many options as possible in the future.

**Good luck 😊**