

# BRYANSTON

Preparation for Higher Education  
Exit 2021

A Guide for Pupils



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## Introduction

The documents contained in this booklet are essential to your preparations for your application to Higher Education, whether you are applying through UCAS or taking another route such as an art foundation course or applying to a music conservatoire or drama school.

Regardless of whether you eventually decide to pre apply (*apply next year to start university straight after leaving School*) or post apply (*apply after you have left School during a gap year*), please take the time to read through this booklet carefully and make best use of the resources available, as they will help to guide you in your decision-making process. You should be discussing your plans regularly with the HoD in charge of your application and with your tutor.

**If you are pre applying**, once UCAS Apply 21 comes online next term, you will receive a final document, which will support you as you complete your application online.

BRYANSTON

Preparation for Higher Education  
Pre Applicants Exit 2021

UCAS Apply 21  
How to complete and send your application



# I. The Higher Education Preparation programme

## An overview

### A3: Spring Term & Easter Holiday (*engage with the process*)

- **Talk:** Preparing for your Higher Education Application;
- Higher Education **Day** for applicants & Parents;
- Complete the **HE plans form** with your tutor;
- Meet with the **HoD** overseeing your application;
- **Explore** degree courses and universities;
- Begin drafting the **personal statement** with your HoD and tutor;
- Organise **work experience** as appropriate.

### A3: Summer Term & Holiday (*continue to research your options*)

- Careers **Forum** for pupils
- **Talk:** Researching degree courses and institutions;
- **Talk:** Writing the personal statement;
- Attend university **open days** (*see below*) and refine your choices with your HoD;
- Continue working on the **personal statement** with your HoD and tutor;
- Produce a 1<sup>st</sup> draft of your personal statement
- **Register** for UCAS Apply 21;
- Organise **work experience** as appropriate.

### A2: Autumn Term (*fine tune and complete the application*)

- **Talk:** The UCAS Application;
- **Confirm** your HE plans;
- Attend worknight **surgeries** with JEGR to complete 'the easy bits' of the UCAS form;
- **Decide** on your course and university choices with your HoD and tutor;
- **Complete** your personal statement with your HoD and tutor;
- **Send** your application online to your referee (*by half term*);
- **Meet** with JEGR to make any necessary amendments before the application is sent to UCAS.

### A2: Spring Term & Easter Holiday (*be patient*)

- **Talk:** The Next Steps;
- **Monitor** your application on line and wait to hear from universities (*by end of March*);
- Attend **open days** (*see below*) to help you decide on your firm and insurance choices.

### A2: Summer Term & Holiday (*respond to your offers*)

- Confirm your **firm and insurance** choices (*by early May*);
- Apply for student **finance** and **accommodation**;
- Receive your **results** and respond accordingly.

## Attending university open days - Procedure

The recording of open days is done through your hsm so we can keep a record of where you are visiting. You should:

1. **Inform your Hsm and Tutor** of the details of the open day you plan to attend;
2. Your Hsm will record details of your proposed visit;
3. **Get your parents to contact your Hsm** to give permission for you to leave school;
4. **Arrange transport** in consultation with your parents and Hsm;
5. **Excuse yourselves from lessons** beforehand.

## 2. A3 to A2: How to make the best possible application

### Guidance for applicants: Exit 2021

This document summarises information that has already been provided but a reminder seems timely as the application process is complicated and time-sensitive. It is primarily aimed at students submitting an application through UCAS.

### Are you thinking of Art, Music, Drama or Overseas?

**Art foundation, Music conservatoire, Drama school and international applications** have processes which differ from UCAS and there may be earlier deadlines. **See p.18-25 for more details.**

**Art foundation** applicants should be in contact with the Head of Art and their art teacher. An application usually involves applying directly to each college and can involve submitting a UCAS application as well. You must have handed in your application with your personal statement to your Art tutor before the October half term.

For **Music**, you may be applying through UCAS Conservatoires rather than UCAS (*or both*) with earlier deadlines and a slightly different process. Applicants to music degree courses and music conservatoires, including organ and choral awards at either Oxford or Cambridge, should already be discussing their application with SW as some deadlines are before term starts in September. As much of your application as possible should be completed before the end of the summer term.

**Drama school** applicants should have begun discussing a possible application with JFQ and studied the information on the board outside the staff room in the main corridor. An application may involve both an application through UCAS and directly to a number of drama schools. Finding suitable and varied audition pieces should be a priority.

If you are thinking of applying to a **university overseas**, for example in the USA or the EU, you need to be in touch as soon with LCK as possible as processes vary considerably and are different in nature from UCAS.

### Pre application or Post application: which is for you?

**Pre-applying:** you will be making an application in the Autumn of A2, before you have taken your A Levels/IB, for entry in September/October 2021, or for an entry deferred in September/October 2022.

**Post-applying:** you will be making an application for entry in September/October 2022 once you have left Bryanston, after you have taken your A Levels/IB. You will need to attend any Higher Education meetings to ensure that you are aware of what a post-application involves, and you should adhere to the steps and deadlines outlined in Post Applicants: Exit 2021 – A Guide for Pupils which will be available in January of your A2 year.

**Whether you are intending to pre or post apply**, you will be allocated an appropriate HoD to oversee your application. Applicants should be discussing the relative merits of pre vs post application, choice of courses and institutions with their HoD, as well as building evidence for the personal statement. The groundwork needs to be completed at this stage so that the application can be made advantageously early in September/October. For competitive courses and institutions, admissions departments are looking for as much detail as possible to differentiate between the huge numbers of highly qualified applicants. Pupils should be aware that internal exam grades may need to be provided in the reference.

Entry into Higher Education is competitive and good grades alone may not be sufficient to get you into the university of your choice; you will also need to provide evidence of independent learning, passion and enthusiasm for your subject as universities may be making decisions between a great many students, all with good grades. When you are choosing your universities make sure you apply to a wide range and ensure that you avoid listing courses with very similar entrance requirements. With the current level of competition this strategy is likely to result in disappointment.

## UCAS Deadlines - IMPORTANT

**Applications for Oxford and Cambridge and for all medicine, veterinary and dentistry courses MUST BE received by UCAS by October 15<sup>th</sup>**, which means that your completed application should have been submitted to the school ready for the reference to be written **by October 1<sup>st</sup> at the very latest**, to enable sufficient time for a reference to be written. A number of people contribute to writing your reference: your Hsm, in consultation with your subject teachers, HoD and tutor, will draw together evidence of your various skills, abilities and suitability for the course you have chosen.

If you are considering applying to Oxbridge, you should have established with your HoD that you are a viable applicant. It is essential that your tutor, HoD and Hsm are fully aware of your intentions and your progress. In addition to choosing a college (*remember that with online booking for open days, places can disappear fast*), **there are particular requirements that involve submitted work and/or tests at the time of interview or before; some of these may take place at Bryanston. Research thoroughly**; don't forget to look at the podcasts by the Director of Undergraduate Admissions on the Oxford website. Discuss your strategy with your HoD and tutor. The summer will be a key time for the independent research project, which has been recommended to help provide you with evidence of interest and enthusiasm for your subject beyond the constraints of the A Level curriculum. For the IB, you will be completing an Extended Essay as part of your diploma programme.

**Applications for all other universities and courses should be completed (i.e. sent to your referee electronically via UCAS) before the October half term at the latest.**

Admission tutors tell us that putting in an early application is an advantage. It confirms a motivated, organised and focused student, and it frees you from prolonged anxieties associated with this process. The sooner your application is complete the sooner you can concentrate on your academic work and fulfilling your A level/IB potential. Make sure that you keep your Hsm fully informed as to your progress and tell them when you have completed your part of the application so that the reference can then be written. A number of people contribute to writing this: your Hsm, in consultation with your subject teachers, HoD and tutor, will draw together evidence of your various skills, abilities and suitability for the course you have chosen.

## Summer Term 2020: Continue to research your options

Following last term's introductory session 'Preparing for your Higher Education Application', the HE/Careers Forum and conversations with your tutor, you should now be making some real progress and the whole process should seem less scary. By this stage you should have:

- Shortlisted your potential courses and universities on BridgeU;
- Explored the UCAS website and used the UCAS Course Search to look at Entry Profiles and researched department websites;
- Arranged work experience opportunities, if appropriate, during the summer before you intend to submit your application, so that you will be able to reflect on what you have already learnt/done (*rather than what you intend to do*) in your personal statement – a much stronger position to be in;
- Been using the UCAS<sup>tv</sup> link to access a whole range of very useful How-to guides, video diaries and case studies about the whole UCAS process (<https://www.ucas.com/connect/videos>);
- You may also have discovered a couple of Open Days later in the term which would be really productive. Before you book them, discuss the programme carefully with your HoD and tutor to make sure that your absence from school is justified as you will have started your A2 courses by then and may be missing vital lessons/work time. Make sure you get permission from your Hsm and parents to go (see p.4);
- If you are an Oxbridge applicant you will be in discussion with your HoD, have researched and booked an Open Day as appropriate.

If you are still struggling, please ask for help. Please remember you are very welcome to research or explore some ideas in the Careers department. Before you disappear for the summer, we strongly recommend that you make full use of the help and advice on offer here at school. Make sure that you have researched UCAS and universities' websites thoroughly, that you know what the admissions process involves, and that you are aware of any aptitude tests, extra forms or other admissions requirements which may exist and their dates and deadlines. UCAS allows up to FIVE (*but only four for all medicine, veterinary and dentistry courses*) choices of institution, from which only TWO offers may be held in the final analysis. Discuss your course and provisional university choices with your tutor and your HoD as your research progresses. Keep your Hsm up to date as well.

## Key HE preparation dates

### Autumn Term

#### **Week 1: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January @ 7:30pm DJLT**

The HE application process talk (all A3s expected to attend)

#### **Week 10: Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> February**

HE afternoon for pupils & parents. Workshops will run throughout the afternoon on a variety of HE based topics.

### Summer Term

#### **Week 1: Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April @ 8:15pm DJLT**

Writing an effective personal statement talk (*all A3s expected to attend*).

### After Half Term

ALL A3s to discuss progress made on personal statement, course research and proposed summer plans to strengthen their application with their designated HoD and Tutor. You need to KEEP working hard on your personal statement with your tutor and HoD until the end of term, so that it is as close to completion as possible - it will need to go through many drafts!

### Weeks 8 & 9

We have to wait for UCAS to release Apply 21 (*early June*). Once that happens, I will provide sessions in IT on work nights to help you register and complete 'the easy bits' of the form. I will also give you a comprehensive help sheet so that you can complete the rest of the form next term once you have made your university choices and completed your personal statement. UCAS also has numerous help features on their website – do explore these.

If you are not sure about specific details of a course and you have already checked the department's website, read the prospectuses etc., you should contact the relevant department direct. The admissions departments are there to help you. They want to make sure that they get the right students on their courses! For your application you will need to know all your exam results, e.g. GCSEs and A Level or IB (predicted) with dates, grades and exam boards, as well as any music or LAMDA exams with dates and grades, Duke of Edinburgh awards, Young Enterprise, etc. Universities frequently ask to see exam certificates: make sure you know where yours are **now**.

## During the summer holiday 2020: Gathering further evidence

If you intend to pre-apply, remember this is a key time for putting together a successful application. Don't waste this opportunity to strengthen your profile. Being able to reflect on what you have already done, rather than saying what you intend to do, is a much stronger statement.

You will already have discussed and planned what needs to be done with your HoD and tutor, such as: working on an independent study project; keeping up with reading in your subject area (*both books and professional journals*); listening to podcasts; following up any relevant news stories in the media; attending lectures and public readings relating to your subject; carrying out work experience, if appropriate, to supplement your academic results; visiting literary festivals, galleries and museums; and talking to students studying your course and people who already work in your chosen area.

Keep researching your courses and working on your personal statement. Eventually about two thirds of this (*three quarters for Oxbridge candidates*) will need to be about your subject: why you have chosen it, what interests you about it, what you have already read and done, both inside and outside the classroom. If you can't find the answer to a query about the UCAS application process, you should contact UCAS Customer Services department on 0371 468 0 468 (*you will need your UCAS personal ID at this stage, which you are given when you register for Apply 21*).

## **A2: September & October 2020: Fine tuning the application**

By now you really do need to have decided if you are pre-applying or post-applying. Make sure you have discussed this thoroughly with your tutor, HoD, Hsm and parents. The A2 parents' meeting in late September should confirm the decisions being made. If you have decided to pre-apply there is no time to lose now! The collection and checking of information, final tweaking of personal statements, refining of subject and university choices with tutor and HoD takes considerably more time than students seem to realise.

It is essential that your academic profile and predicted grades match the published minimum entry criteria of courses/institutions and that you include a range of institutions in your selection to maximise your chances of receiving offers. Please do not leave your application to the last minute as members of staff will be busy writing references for a great many other people as well. Remember, once you have completed your part of the application process, your tutor, HoD and Hsm at school will then need up to two weeks to write the reference.

Before you submit your application electronically via Apply to your school referee (*your Hsm*), you will have to pay for your application: currently around £24.00 for 2-5 choices. This can be done either by credit card or via the school bill.

## **A reminder of the key deadlines to maximise your chances of success**

### **Oxbridge, medics, veterinary and dentistry applications**

All sections of the application form completed and the form submitted ready for the reference to be written, by **October 1<sup>st</sup>**

### **Applications to other universities**

All sections of the application form completed and the form submitted ready for the reference to be written, before the **October half term**.

### **Late applications**

If you have registered on Apply 21 by the end of September and if your application is completed by the October half term then it will still be processed in time to meet the UCAS January 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. Applications received after November 18<sup>th</sup> are not guaranteed to be received by UCAS before the January 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.



## Once your application has been sent to UCAS

### What happens next?

Submitting your application is just one step of the process. UCAS will acknowledge the application promptly and applicants should **confirm that the details are correct**. (*Seek help from JEGR if there are discrepancies.*) Applicants should then follow the progress of their application on their UCAS Track page, checking regularly to see how it is progressing. Offers, details of departmental open days and requests for interviews will appear here, so you will need to keep checking – and respond. **It is your responsibility to make sure that you know how your application is proceeding and what you need to do next.** NB: You may lose a place if you do not respond as asked.

### Replying to offers

Institutions take varying amounts of time to respond, especially competitive courses and institutions which will be heavily oversubscribed, and some applicants may not hear until the end of March. Once you have heard back from all your choices you will be given a date by which you need to have made a decision (*via Track*) on any offers you have received. The date varies each year - the earliest this year was at the beginning of May. Before you commit yourself, make sure that you have visited the university and have discussed your choice fully.

### Accommodation & Finance

You will need to apply for accommodation as soon as you know which university you are going to, so when you visit a university remember to have a look at what accommodation is on offer. Keep checking the relevant websites and find out what you need to do: choose your hall of residence, fill in online forms, etc. Some universities only have a very small time frame in which to apply for accommodation. There will be a date by which you should have sent off your accommodation application – make sure you do not miss this deadline! **You should to do all this before setting off on your travels if you are planning to take a gap year.**

If you live in the UK or the EU and you are going straight to university (*i.e. not taking a Gap Year*), you will need to apply for your own Student Support if you are planning to apply for a tuition and/or maintenance loan. Information is available online at [www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk](http://www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk). Even if you are not intending to take out any kind of loan, **it is recommended that you register as a UK student so that you are not charged overseas fees, which will still be higher than UK student fees.** You will need to know your National Insurance number. Find this now: you will have been sent a card with this number when you were sixteen. If you are going to apply for deferred entry or are post applying, don't forget you will need to apply for any student support and select your accommodation during your Gap year. Find out what you need to do and what the deadlines are before you go away. You will be making the actual application online so you will need good access to the internet, which may not be so easy in some adventure-gap-type places.

If you are unsure about any of this, please get in touch.

### 3. Degree course research

#### What should you look for in a degree course?

You will be studying at university for three, four or maybe even five years so it is important that you enjoy your course and that you are fully committed to it from the very start. For this reason you should select your course before you choose your university. You may not yet know exactly what you want to do at university, so you will need to explore all your options during your A3 year. There are many courses and universities from which to choose, so the following exercises might help you narrow down your options:

1. Use the profile builder on <https://bridge-u.com> to get your university matches.
2. Consult 'University Degree Course Offers' by Brian Heap. You will find copies in Careers. The first chapter contains two very useful tables: in the first, A level subjects are listed with related degree courses; in the second, career titles are listed against relevant degree courses.
3. Most importantly, use the course search facility on the UCAS website [www.searchucas.com](http://www.searchucas.com) (see below). Having discovered the universities at which particular courses can be studied you can then look at the entry requirements and profiles and visit the institutions' websites and review the course particulars in more detail. Be aware that universities sometimes alter their entrance requirements at relatively short notice (e.g. *between one and two years before the year of entry*), so you should also use the university websites for updates and changes. Clearly, you will need to have realistic ambitions; moreover, you cannot assume that if your predicted grades match the published entrance requirements you will automatically receive an offer: in many cases you will not, especially for competitive courses!
4. Read the 'Choosing your Course and University' guide and use the worksheet at the back to focus and record your research.

BRYANSTON

Preparation for Higher Education  
Exit 2020/2021

Choosing your Course & University



## 4. The Personal Statement Worksheet for Applicants

Please fill in the form below, saving your work as you go along. Make sure that you complete all sections. When you have finished, please e-mail the document to your HoD and tutor.

Write the answers to the questions in the draft boxes **in note form**. Then, once you have answered all the questions, use your answers to build your personal statement **in complete sentences**. Use the examples you have given for each of the questions to give a complete picture of why you want to study your subject. Your final version should be under 4000 characters (*about one side of A4*). About two thirds of this should reflect your interest in your chosen subject, what you have already done in connection with your subject and what you have learnt. Ideally the opening paragraph should justify why you have chosen to study your subject. Check spelling, grammar and punctuation as these will all need to be 100% accurate in the final version, which you will send to UCAS. Just using spell check is not enough!

### What you are trying to achieve

This is your chance to explain to an admissions tutor why you have chosen his/her subject. Use this opportunity to demonstrate your interest and commitment to the subject by writing about the things that you have already done, things you have read, etc.

Admissions tutors will be interested to know how you would answer some or all of the following questions:

#### What interests you about your chosen subject?

Imagine you are talking to someone who is also very interested in the subject: what are you going to say to him/her, which expresses how the subject has caught your interest? For example, you can talk about particular areas of your current studies, practical work you have done, etc.

#### What have you already done which demonstrates this interest?

Talks/lectures you have been to; places you have visited; newspaper or magazine articles which you have read; individual projects/studies you have done or made. They like to see real evidence to support your claim to be interested. Have you done any hands-on practical work (*easier in some subjects than others*)?

#### What have you read which you can mention?

Who are the writers you admire and why? What have you read that is not on the curriculum but is relevant to your application (e.g. *other works by set authors*)? Newspapers and magazines – have you read anything connected with your subject? Say why have you found any of these interesting.

**What have you learnt from these experiences you have just listed?**

Answers could include an increased awareness in the subject; discovery of different areas of study from topics you have covered at school; connections you may have made between past events and today's world; an interest in research.

**Is there a connection between your subject and any future plans?**

Do you have some ideas about your future plans? If so, you can mention how your degree could help you towards your goal. If you don't have any particular future plans there is no need to invent them.

**What did you gain from your work experience?**

Don't just say what you did: write about what you learnt and the skills you used or developed.

**How might your gap year plans support your application?**

Admissions tutors like to know how you plan to use your gap year and what skills you think you will gain. Include any voluntary work and paid work you will be doing. Try to give some detail, e.g. if you will be working on a conservation project, what will you be conserving?

**Do you have any other achievements or non-accredited skills, which you have gained through experiences such as the D. of E. Award, Young Enterprise, etc?**

Mention any leadership opportunities you have had, or times when perseverance and determination were essential. Problem solving and logical thinking are skills that admissions tutors appreciate. Positions of responsibility.

**Other skills?**

Are you numerate? *(useful for scientists and business students)* Good at ICT? *(useful for everybody)* Are you practical? Are you good at working on your own? Do you enjoy research? Give examples, don't just write a list.

**Do you do any sports, hobbies, etc.**

Include recent *(in the last year or two)* sports teams, drama, music, bands, non-academic reading, current affairs, A3 Festival, holiday activities, etc.

**Final Personal Statement**

*(Max. 4000 characters including spaces - Times New Roman typeface, font size 12)*

## 5. The Personal Statement Guidance for Applicants

Make the best use of all the information and resources available to you when writing your Personal Statement. BridgeU has lots of very useful resources on writing a personal statement in their 'Student Guides' section. Read the Entry Profiles on the UCAS Course Search facility, the various universities' departmental websites, departmental prospectuses, etc. You will be provided with a session on personal statements in the summer of A3 after your exams, but here are some of the essential points to help you.

### Advice from an admissions tutor

This is your chance to tell the universities and colleges that you have chosen why you are applying, and why they should want you as a student. Admissions officers will want to know why you are interested in the courses that you have applied for and what you hope to do after your studies. **A good personal statement is important - it could help to persuade an admissions officer to offer you a place or to invite you for an interview. However, in many cases applicants are not interviewed, so this may be your only chance to make the case for your admission. It is your 'paper interview'. Make the most of it!**

You do not have to use all the space but you must not over-run. Your statement must be clear. Please prepare and save draft work in Word, use Times New Roman font size 12. It should be about 500 words/4000 characters. You can use up to 47 lines of text.

In the presentation of your personal statement you will not be able to use features such as bold, italic or underlined text or foreign characters such as á, è, ñ. If you use special formatting or foreign characters, they will be removed from the text when you paste it into your application and save it.

Consider carefully the information you give to support your application and the best way to present it effectively. You have to try to make yourself sound 'different'. Make sure the statement 'flows', is positive and interesting, does not include spelling or grammatical howlers, and avoids repetition. You must be truthful and accurate in what you write. You must be able to justify everything you have written as you may be interviewed. You will need to put in both time and effort to get the statement as you want it. It is up to you how you write your statement but we suggest you include some or all of the following points below. Eventually, about two thirds of your personal statement (*three quarters for Oxbridge candidates*) will need to be about your subject: why you have chosen it, what interests you about it, what you have read and done, both in and out of the classroom.

Remember, you only write one personal statement even though you can apply for up to five different courses. Each university will not see the other choices you have made.

### Suggested structure for paragraphs

1. Introductory statement.
2. Academic: please remember that this will be read by experts in the subject/s for which you are applying, so don't explain the course!
3. Talk about your subjects, projects, any relevant reading, the skills you have (e.g. *data collection, analysis, evaluation, IT*); include non examined subjects if relevant. **Look at/print out the academic/entry profiles on the UCAS website. The more academically competitive the course, the more essential it is to develop these thoughts as evidence of a genuine commitment and interest in studying the course.**
4. Work experience/shadowing, courses (*Career Experience, Taster courses, Medisix, Headstart, Pioneering, Young Enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh*) where relevant to your course or skills.

5. Gap: make sure that you have something structured and planned if you intend to take a gap year.
6. Other achievements/interests: In reality they will do little to help your application unless you can include something of direct relevance. They can be left out and included in your reference by negotiation with your Hsm.

### Further suggestions

- The most important thing to remember is not to just list what you have done but to say what you have learnt from what you have done (*feeling, emotions, etc.*). They are looking for reflective comment.
- Be positive.
- Do not exaggerate or be gushy (e.g. *fascinated, passionate about, always been interested in, intrigued!!!*)
- Do not start every paragraph with 'I' – swap the sentence round.
- Many admissions tutors are not particularly keen on private schools – they do not want to hear about Bryanston or prep school or travelling without a purpose. Just use the word 'school'.

## TOP TIPS

Spelling and Grammar matter

Instant impact

Brevity (*clear and simple*)

Positive/Assertive

Individual

Analytical

Evidenced/Demonstrated

Relevant

Selective

Interesting/Interested (*curious, enthusiastic*)

Strong finish

Finally, please read and follow the news generally and in your subject (e.g. *read broadsheet newspapers and listen to Radio 4's Today programme*).

### Advice from the UCAS website

*“The personal statement is your opportunity to tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and, above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd.”*

#### Does it matter?

Some course tutors find personal statements crucial when making decisions, whereas others might not put as much emphasis on them. Since you do not know who will be looking at your statement, the safest thing is to do a good job. In many cases, applicants are not interviewed, so this may be your only chance to make the case for you to be offered a place.

**The Assistant Registrar for Undergraduate Admissions from University of Warwick says:**

*“For highly competitive courses which attract applications from many more candidates than there are places, comparing all applicants' personal statements helps us to identify the most committed and suitable candidates.”*

If you're offered a conditional place and narrowly miss the required grades for the course, the university is likely to look at your personal statement again to see if your interests and experience demonstrate any extra skills that could help you on the course. So it can make a difference later in the application process as well.

Remember that the person reading your statement is an expert in your chosen area of interest so they will want to know the reasons why you have chosen the subject.

If you mention your personal interests and hobbies, try to link them to the skills and experience required for the course.

The personal statement *could* be used as the basis for an **interview**, so be prepared to answer questions on it.

This may be your only written work that the course tutor sees before making a decision: make sure it is organised and literate. **Get the grammar, spelling and punctuation right.** A statement filled with errors will give a negative impression of your skills and the effort you have put in to being accepted. Your statement must be written in English.

**The Undergraduate Admissions Manager at The University of Nottingham told us:**

*“These types of skills are the basics that academics will expect from someone at this level of education. Incorrect spelling, poor grammar and punctuation can make a poor impression on the reader. For courses such as English, these skills are of paramount importance.”*

Writing about yourself is probably not something you do very often, so you might need to practise writing in this particular style. It is a good idea to list your hobbies and achievements, and then you can decide which ones demonstrate your strongest skills and personality.

**Applying to multiple courses**

Remember that you only write one personal statement so it will be used for all your choices. If you are applying for a joint degree you will need to explain why you are interested in both aspects of this joint programme. If you are applying for different subjects or courses, you need to identify the common themes and skills that are relevant to your choices. For example, both mathematics and law are subjects where you have to think logically and apply rules. You may like both subjects because you enjoy solving problems, using theory and natural or man-made laws to come to a correct conclusion.

If your chosen courses cannot be linked by a common theme, think about your reasons for applying to such varied courses - it might be useful to speak to the careers department to get some guidance. If you mention a subject in your personal statement and are applying to other courses, you may be asked by the university or college for additional information about why you have chosen alternative courses.



### **Attention-grabbing**

Some statements start with quotations, some include jokes, some set out to be unusual or eye-catching. Sometimes it works, but it might have the opposite effect to what you hoped. The admissions decision maker may not share your sense of humour, so be careful when trying to make your statement stand out.

### **Dos and don'ts when writing your personal statement**

- ✓ **Do** create a list of your ideas before attempting to write the real thing.
- ✓ **Do** expect to produce several drafts before being totally happy.
- ✓ **Do** ask people you trust for their feedback.
- ✓ **Do** check university and college prospectuses, websites and Entry Profiles, as they usually tell you the criteria and qualities that they want their students to demonstrate.
- ✓ **Do** use your best English and don't let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement.
- ✓ **Do** be enthusiastic - if you show your interest in the course, it may help you get a place.
- ✓ **Do** make sure that your 'voice' is heard through the statement – it is personal.
  
- ✗ **Don't** feel that you need to use elaborate language. If you try too hard to impress with long words that you are not confident in using, the focus of your writing may be lost.
- ✗ **Don't** say too much about things that are not relevant - if you think that you are starting to, take a break and come back to your statement when you feel more focused.
- ✗ **Don't** lie - if you exaggerate you may get caught out at interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.
- ✗ **Don't** rely on a spellchecker as it will not pick up everything - proof read as many times as possible.
- ✗ **Don't** leave it to the last minute - your statement will seem rushed and important information could be left out.
- ✗ **Don't** expect to be able to write your personal statement whilst watching TV or surfing the internet - this is your future, so make the most of the opportunity to succeed.

## **UCAS Similarity Detection Service: guidance for applicants**

*“This guide is designed to help UCAS applicants understand our similarity detection process. All personal statements sent to UCAS are tested for similarity. There are some example personal statements on the internet that have been used by applicants, in some cases word for word. The service we use, called Copycatch, finds statements that show similarity, works out how much of the statement may have been copied, and reports the findings. It helps admissions staff at universities and colleges judge applications, and it is the institutions who decide what action, if any, to take regarding notified cases. Research has shown that the majority of UCAS applicants do write their own personal statements. However, the number making use of other people's material was high enough to justify the introduction of the Similarity Detection Service.”*

## 6. Other types of application

### Art foundation, Music conservatoires, Drama schools, International

#### Art Foundation (DGK)

##### What is it and why do you need to do it?

An art foundation course comprises one year of intensive study at a local art school. **This is necessary before embarking upon a degree course** because the vast majority of applicants study Fine Art (*painting and drawing*) at A Level and this does not prepare you for the industrial aspects of fashion, graphics and advertising. If you are sure you wish to study Fine Art at university then you may not have to do a foundation course but if you are unsure about the area in which you might like to specialise for your degree, then the foundation course is necessary.

##### How is the course structured?

Courses vary enormously: some are in Further Education colleges, others in Higher Education institutions (i.e. *universities*). This does not make a significant difference to the course or its standing. Some, especially in London, are very large, whereas other courses are smaller. A course in London is likely to be a more impersonal experience and the social aspect of studying in London can be quite different from studying at a more provincial art college. In a provincial setting the town/city will not be as large and therefore you will tend to be more closely located resulting in a more vital social scene. **Locations can vary from leafy suburbs to the inner city but the courses tend to follow a similar pattern:**

- The first term usually comprises a range of **workshops** in various disciplines;
- During the second term you select the area in which you wish to **specialise** and which will be the area you will choose for your degree application, which usually takes place in March;
- In the third term you complete a **major project** in this area, which may form the bases of your **end of year exhibition**.

Some of the courses are very popular. Kingston University has around 1,600 applications for 120 places.

##### How to apply?

Although applications to art foundation courses operate outside UCAS, the process and deadlines are similar. You are encouraged to visit three or four courses on open days to help you decide where to study. All will offer a broad range of disciplines but prospectuses/websites should be consulted in the Art Library for details. **Dates of open days are displayed on the Art Department careers board in the Art Library, which also lists telephone numbers and websites.** You can apply to as many foundation courses as you like although **four is the maximum** we would advise: one as a first choice and two or three back ups.

Owing to numbers and the increasing complexity of the application process, there is a **weekly applications clinic on Tuesday between 4.45-6.00pm, which you must attend.**

**Each college is applied to separately**, so they are unaware of where else you have applied (*except London, see below*). You need to contact each college for an application form or download it from their website. Completed applications, including the personal statement, need to be submitted to your art tutor **by half term in the Autumn term** so the reference can be written and the application processed before the end of term. Applications submitted after the second to last Friday of the term may not be sent until January. **The deadline for applications is 15<sup>th</sup> January** although some colleges have a large number of applications and work on a first come, first served basis.

**If you wish to apply to a London College** such as Chelsea or Central St Martins there is a limit on the number of applications, namely two. The policy for art foundation applications to London colleges changed in 2010 because they are now all part of the same institutions. There are now two main art courses in Central London: Central St Martins north of the River and CCW (*Camberwell, Chelsea & Wimbledon*) south of the River and you can only choose one of these two. The pressure for places is intense and I suspect that they will favour the candidates who put their course first as some London Colleges will not give a second choice application much attention.

It is also worth pointing out that Kingston and Farnham have changed their application procedures fairly recently requiring applicants to submit an E-PORTFOLIO. This is done by photographing all your work, including pages of the sketchbook and uploading your photos. The department will help you with this but owing to the scale of the operation you will need to get your work ready by specific dates. Successful applicants at this stage will then be asked for interview with a real portfolio. **It is expected that this is the direction in which foundation applications will go for most courses in the future.**

## Interviews & portfolios

Following the acknowledgement of an application (*which you will receive if you included a stamped, addressed envelope with your application*), you will be asked **either to send your portfolio or to attend an interview with portfolio** on a particular date. You must, therefore, have ensured that your **AI portfolio is complete by mid-January**. Putting it together takes about a day with a member of the department, so staff need plenty of notice as they cannot stop teaching a class to arrange your portfolio. You also need to bear in mind that some of your work might need photographing, particularly large or 3D work. The best time for photographing additional work (*not the E-PORTFOLIO*) is probably during Week 1 of the Spring term as B lessons will be cancelled because of mock exams. You need to label your portfolio with your name and address in large bold text.

You need to be careful which address you put on your application form, because if the College sends the interview date letter to your home address and your parents are away, this can create a problem. **Most portfolio viewings/interviews take place in February** and colleges operate different policies regarding interviews, varying from a 20-minute interview with one or two members of college staff, to a presentation in front of staff and other applicants. **Some Colleges will interview you; some will just look at your portfolio.** The problem that can sometimes arise (*so you need to be aware of it*), is that some colleges require your work a day or so after your portfolio has been looked at by another college. You need to keep us informed about this. **You must fill in the sheet either on the Art Department office door in the A2 studio or in the ceramics area as to where you have applied, when your interview is and which colleges have made you an offer.** This enables us to keep track of what is going on.

If you apply to Falmouth you will be set a small project prior to your interview. If you intend to apply to Falmouth you need to ensure you apply **by early December** so that you can do the project during the Christmas holiday and not when you return the following term, when you will have coursework deadlines in Art and other subjects and you will be putting your portfolio together.

Offers are usually made two to three weeks after the interview. You may find yourself in the situation that a college makes you an offer and wants a response before you have heard from another college. This is a tricky situation but you have to make a decision. **It is important that you do not accept a place at a college that you intend to reject later** as the School will be having more students applying to that same college in subsequent years. We do not want to prejudice other students' chances of gaining a place at a particular college. You need to inform us of which colleges have offered you a place, so please fill in the large Foundation Tracking sheet already referred to.

## Post applying or taking a gap year?

If you are post applying, then you will be expected to make open day visits during the gap year and not during A2. **It is best to take a gap year before a foundation course as institutions do not look favourably on students taking a gap year between the foundation year and the degree.** If a gap year is being taken you need to be aware that interviews are held mainly during February and March of the year in which you intend to begin the course, which can have implications if you are planning to be abroad at that time. **Furthermore, and very importantly, the portfolio MUST be organised before you leave Bryanston.** It takes about a full day to put a portfolio together with photos, mounting, sequencing, etc. and art staff cannot give up a full day's teaching in the autumn to do this after you have left.

Some of you might be planning to complete an art foundation course for your gap year and then go on to University to study another subject, for example, English; however, last year, for the first time, we learned that the Oxford Brookes course only allowed six places for students in this category on a course of over 200.

## Finance

As art foundation courses are considered to be further education rather than higher education courses they do not currently attract the £9000 fee; however, this may change. **Course fees are free to students who are under 19 on 1<sup>st</sup> September in the year of the course.** This means that if you take a gap year you may have to pay the fees, although these are not particularly high; however, you do have to fund your own accommodation, living costs and art materials, which can be quite expensive. Some courses are located within Higher Education institutions and others are located within Further Education colleges. The main difference is that Higher Education institutions tend to be able to offer accommodation in halls of residence. Such HE places include:

- Falmouth
- Kingston
- Oxford Brookes
- Ravensbourne (Design only)

## The Slade at Bryanston

The Slade operates a fee-paying Summer School Foundation, which is 10 weeks long (*although students can opt for less than that*). They have run some aspects of this course through Bryanston in the Art School during the summer but this has now lapsed; however, several other art schools also run summer courses that you may choose to consider. These would tend to suit better the Fine Art Students. E-mail [slade.enquiries@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:slade.enquiries@ucl.ac.uk) or visit [www.ucl.ac.uk/summer](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/summer) for further details.

## Further information about degree courses

When you apply to a degree course there are two application routes: Route A and Route B. The Route A deadline is in January and the Route B deadline is in March. Usually two thirds of Art degree applications applied for Route B in the last 10 days before the deadline. It is therefore wise to apply early. The reason Art has two deadlines is because foundation students will not have produced enough work by the January deadline and the second term of the foundation course is focused on the area that they specialise in for their degree application, so the Route B path was established. Different colleges and degrees favour different routes so you need to check early to ensure that where you wish to go is not Route A, which would mean you would be applying in the December of your Foundation year.

[dgk@bryanston.co.uk](mailto:dgk@bryanston.co.uk)

## Musical Applications (SW)

### What is a conservatoire?

For those who intend to study music beyond school a number of options are available. You might want to take your A Level studies further and apply through UCAS to study for an academic music degree at university. Alternatively, you might decide that you want to specialise in music technology and apply for a degree in this area. If, however, you want to be a professional performing musician, you will consider applying to a conservatoire. Conservatoires are for students who want to develop their skills as a performer (*or conductor or composer*) to a professional standard. They offer a high proportion of practical training through specialised individual teaching, combined with academic study and professional development for those considering a career in the creative arts. It usually takes four years to complete a bachelor of music degree (*BMus*) at a conservatoire.

## CUKAS

The Conservatoires UK Admissions Service is operated by UCAS and covers applications to **eight** institutions:

- Birmingham Conservatoire
- Leeds College of Music
- Royal College of Music (London)
- Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester)
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (Glasgow)
- Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (Cardiff)
- Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (London)
- Royal Academy of Music (London)

Applications to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama are made **separately and directly**, not through UCAS Conservatoires.

## How to apply?

It costs on average £75 to apply through UCAS Conservatoires (*application plus audition fee*). Applications are submitted online by completing the UCAS Conservatoires form, which is very similar to UCAS, though there are some important differences:

1. The application (including reference) must be submitted by **1<sup>st</sup> October** or it may not be considered;
2. Conservatoires **will** be able see to which others you have applied;
3. Applications for deferred entry **cannot** be made but conservatoires may offer a deferred place;
4. **Two** references are required: academic and musical.

**Up to six conservatoires may be applied to.** Once the application has been scrutinised, invitations to audition may then be issued. The audition process varies between conservatoires. Performers will usually be invited to give a **live audition** at the conservatoire. In some cases they may be allowed to send a recording or video.

Auditions normally include two or more contrasting pieces that demonstrate technique and musicality. They may be asked to play/sing scales, read/sing at sight, and/or take an aural test, all of which help to demonstrate technical abilities. The audition may also include an **interview**.

Different establishments have different qualities and so it is essential that you consider your choices carefully. Bear in mind the following:

- Location and type of city.
- Facilities: old/traditional or more modern; does the establishment have halls of residence?
- Are there opportunities for freelance work?
- What other musical institutions are there in each location: orchestras, etc?
- Are there links with other HE institutions in the city?
- Research the degree of competitiveness to get a place.
- Research the type of degree on offer, e.g. how much flexibility; whether there are exchange programmes?
- It is worth having a consultation lesson or two before audition. **Finding the right first study professor is crucial.**
- Try to talk to a student or two currently studying there, ideally in your specialist area.
- Reputation: each conservatoire has its strengths in specific areas, however much they may claim to be wonderful at everything!
- Institutional links to other organisations such as apprentice schemes with orchestras.
- Research the fees and scholarship opportunities.
- Consider the success rate in graduates finding work. Statistics are available.

## What level of skill is required?

If you intend to take this route you need to be extremely accomplished performers already. The competition for places on these courses is intense and it is a wasted choice if not realistic. As a guide, a strong candidate should have achieved a distinction at Grade 8 well in advance of their time of application. It is not uncommon for applicants to have reached diploma level in advance of their application year. An audition will require either a full recital or an excerpt from a recital and so applicants need to be experienced in this. As such, it is essential for candidates to have a reasonable amount of repertoire at recital standard before applying.

## Types of offers

Conservatoires send their offers to UCAS Conservatoires and not directly to the applicant, which, like UCAS, can be viewed, online via Track. A number of offers can be made:

- **Audition pending (AP):** This is an official invitation to audition. Conservatoires use different methods of communication and may not send any further correspondence about the audition.
- **Guaranteed unconditional (GU):** The conservatoire is satisfied, from the information given, that the conditions for entry have already been met.
- **Guaranteed conditional (GC):** The conservatoire has made the offer subject to certain conditions being met, usually examination results.
- **Reserve unconditional (VU):** The conservatoire is satisfied, from the information given, that the conditions for entry have already been met and have offered a place on their reserve list. In order to be considered for a guaranteed place (*should one become available*) this offer needs to be accepted.

- **Reserve conditional (VC):** The conservatoire has offered a place on its reserve list subject to certain conditions being met, usually examination results. In order to be considered for a guaranteed place (*should one become available*) this offer needs to be accepted.
- **Unsuccessful (R):** The conservatoire does not want to offer any type of place.

Offers must be replied to **by 2<sup>nd</sup> February** if all have been received by 5<sup>th</sup> January. **The number of offers which can be accepted will depend on the type of offers made.** Only one GU or GC offer may be accepted as a first choice. All other offers must be declined. If a VU or VC offer is accepted as a first choice, any other offer may be accepted as a second choice. All others must be declined. If a conservatoire subsequently changes a reserve offer to a guaranteed offer, the second choice will automatically be rejected.

## School requirements

If you are keen to explore this route of application, or you have questions to ask, you must fix a meeting with Mr Williams (who is in charge of these applications) and Mr Iles during the Autumn term of your A3 year. Mrs Hywel-Davies can be contacted to organise this meeting. During the Spring term of A3, you are advised to organise (*in consultation with Mr Scott*) a recital at school. You are advised to attend open days at the institutions that you are considering and it is often a good idea to have a consultation lesson with one or more of the teachers from the faculties in which you are interested. Regular conversations with the above-mentioned members of staff are essential so that we can provide the support an applicant needs. Because application dates are earlier than UCAS submissions, we advise that all paperwork (*including the personal statement*) is completed before the end of the Summer term in your calendar year of application.

## Applying for a choral or an organ award

### Choral Scholarships

Various higher education institutions offer choral scholarships for gifted and keen singers. Oxford and Cambridge universities are the most well known examples but they are not the only ones. The first thing to note is that you do not need to be studying Music in order to be a choral scholar. Although some courses are not especially compatible with the schedule such a scholarship brings, many are. Websites for individual establishments will provide details about what, if anything, is on offer. They will also set out the application procedure for a scholarship. Different universities have different timescales and so an interested candidate needs to research this early. For Oxford the application form **has to be submitted before 1<sup>st</sup> September in the year of application because the auditions are in September.** Thus, the internal deadline is the end of the previous Summer Term (*with a first draft of everything prepared before the Summer Exeat*). The UCAS application is submitted as normal by 15<sup>th</sup> October. **For Cambridge, the auditions are in March** after the UCAS application has been submitted and academic interviews have taken place. If you require any further information, or have questions to ask, please speak to Mr Williams at the earliest opportunity. It is essential that interest in such an award, at whichever establishment you are thinking of applying to, is declared early, ideally during the Autumn Term of A3, so that appropriate support can be given throughout the application and preparation process. As a guide, applicants will need to be approximately ABRSM Singing Grade 8 standard, have good sight-reading and aural skills and are likely to be in Chamber Choir. Attendance on an Eton Choral Course is recommended for any pupils considering this option.

### Organ Scholarships

Oxbridge Organ Scholarships are not the only on offer, but they are the most well known. Anybody for whom this is an appropriate path is likely to be in dialogue with Mr Williams and Mr Iles from an early point (*certainly by the Summer of B*). Details of different awards are available from websites and any likely candidates need to be researching this, in conference with the above-mentioned staff. Attendance on the Oundle Course for Prospective Organ Scholars is recommended. As a guide, candidates should be ABRSM Grade 8 standard well in advance of their application, have good sight reading and transposition skills, and have been involved in playing for junior chapel and for Sunday services at Bryanston. Potential scholars should have developing confidence in service playing, including choral accompaniment.

## Drama school applications (JFQ)

### What is the difference between Drama School courses and Drama at University?

Many universities offer **academic** drama degrees and courses to which pupils can apply through UCAS. Degree courses vary in focus and some are more practical or academic than others, necessitating thorough research and a visit to the institution on an open day. Drama is often offered as part of a joint degree with a number of other subjects. English or Languages are the most popular combinations but subjects such as Psychology or Business are possibilities. Some courses might focus on Arts Administration, Applied Drama (using Drama in the wider community) or Performance Arts to name just a few areas.

However, Drama Schools will prepare you **vocationally** for a career in performance or technical theatre. As a main rule, **candidates apply to each one separately and directly, but some drama schools are applied to through UCAS: Central School of Speech and Drama, Drama Centre, Guildford School of Acting, Italia Conti, LIPA, Rose Bruford, Manchester Metropolitan and East 15 Drama School**, for example. For Birmingham School of Acting and Mountview, some courses are applied for through UCAS and others via independent application form. The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland are other exceptions – you would apply through CUKAS, the Conservatoires UK Admissions Service (see p.20).

The School would advise auditioning for one or more of the 22 Drama schools in the UK currently accredited and recommended by Drama UK. There are many other performing arts or drama courses available at colleges across the country which offer vocational training, but in such a competitive industry the School would advise training at an accredited school which is known to prepare you well for work and give you more support in the form of showcases and contact with agents.

The training offered by drama schools is comprehensive and professional but the emphasis is on practical work and working in the industry. Courses are generally full-time, intensive and demanding, though it is possible to take part-time or weekend courses at some schools so that you can work to support your studies. At most drama schools, students are forbidden to take acting work for the duration of their degree course. Students will be trained by staff with professional experience and have the opportunity to work in professional theatres and studios, but they will be required to work long hours and immerse themselves in their work. Although their course will lead to an academic qualification, usually a BA Hons degree, it will be a practical training for future work and different from a university course in Drama, which will focus on theoretical and academic disciplines as well as practical work.

It is important to remember that there are different careers paths open to candidates. As well as training to be an actor (*classical or musical theatre or perhaps specifically focused on devising or physical theatre or applied drama*), you can also specialise in directing, design, technical theatre (*lighting, sound, stage management, costume or set design*) or theatre education or management.

Drama schools offer different levels of training such as foundation or undergraduate degrees and there is also a rich programme of summer and short courses on offer to help you prepare for drama school and to supplement their studies when they are there.

For details of drama schools and what they offer, visit [www.drama.ac.uk](http://www.drama.ac.uk) and download the excellent 'Drama UK Guide', from which this information is extracted.

### How to apply

Competition for a place at drama school is intense. With over twenty applications for every place and only around 1000 places available nationally, **early application is strongly advised**. Individual schools will be able to advise pupils about the specifics of their application process including deadlines. Most open in October. Every applicant is offered an interview.

Applicants will be asked to complete a form with picture and audition fee which will enable them to demonstrate their educational achievement, relevant experience, knowledge of and interest in other art forms, together with details of activities which have developed a range of skills, such as communication, initiative, enterprise, team work and independence. Sometimes you may be asked to upload a supporting Actor's CV so this is a useful thing



to develop. Academic grades are of less importance for vocational courses in acting than talent, attitude, maturity and determination.

Preliminary auditions and/or interviews are usually held between November and April and a reference will be required from the school in support of the application. In practice it is usually only requested after auditions if the applicant is successful, but the form will request referee contact details, so do ask in advance and check the form references should take.

While you might well have a preferred school to which you want to apply it is very important for you not to put all your eggs in one basket. There are few open days but if you can **speak to current students**, read student blogs or chatrooms or read about alumni. During the audition you will get a sense of what the school is about, but prior to the audition you should have researched the individual ethos of the school, its size, aims, strengths, courses, how alumni have fared in the competitive job market, and perhaps about the staff who will be teaching you. Drama schools may appear similar at first glance, but they will offer different courses and focuses, for example more television acting, more classical theatre, more voice work, or so on. Most drama schools will not give feedback after audition – a couple do however, for example Cygnet, and this can be very valuable, if available.

Given the high volume of applications each year, **applicants may not accept a place at more than one institution**. If you accept an offer from a drama school and afterwards receive an offer from another institution you prefer, you must decline the previous offer and accept the new one. This can be done until July 1<sup>st</sup> when institutions share their offer lists with each other.

### **Auditions and Interviews**

Drama schools will audition most applicants for acting and musical theatre courses. Auditions can be complicated, time consuming and expensive but they are the best way of gauging an applicant's potential. Applicants will normally be expected to prepare one or two short speeches of about 2-3 minutes in length and to perform them from memory. The speeches should be contrasting in mood and tone and you will usually be asked to present contrasting classical and modern pieces. Some institutions set pieces for audition or have a list of banned pieces so check individual requirements. Pick pieces that suit your age and type that you could potentially be cast as. The Drama department can help you find appropriate pieces. You may be asked to take part in improvisation, movement and voice sessions. Those applying for musical theatre courses will also be expected to sing (*probably two contrasting songs*) and may also be asked to participate in a dance/movement workshop.

The audition panel will not necessarily be looking for a polished performance. They will be looking for an understanding of text and character – the ability to connect with the text with intelligence and feeling. You may be asked to perform your speech again in a different way to see how well you respond to direction. Some schools may have several rounds of auditions so applicants may be called back. This can be a long and gruelling process which also tests a candidate's determination, commitment and flexibility.

If you are applying for a technical theatre course, most schools will select by interview, to which applicants will be asked to bring a portfolio of their relevant work. This may include sketches, models, photographs, prompt books, costume designs, light, sound and set designs. Interviews may last all day and could include group exercises and discussions. You may be asked to prepare for an exercise in advance.

### **Funding**

Training at drama school costs as much as university and most drama schools are funded in the same way as universities. This means you will not have to pay up front for your tuition (£9,000 per year). This can be paid by a loan which you will start to repay once you have completed and left your course and are earning over £16,910. You may also be entitled to a grant towards living costs depending on your parents' income.

Government-funded Dance and Drama Awards (DaDAs) may be available for certain institutions for new students starting courses as well as continuing learners; however, awards for new students will now be income assessed for both fees and maintenance on the basis of a national scale – with students from lower income families contributing less and those from higher income families contributing more.



## **International Applications (LCK)**

Applying to overseas universities differs substantially from the UCAS process and invariably demands much earlier preparation, additional administration, a unique timeline and varying application requirements; and so you will need help and support with this. It is essential, therefore, that you speak to LCK about your intentions as soon as possible, as she is your first point of contact and in charge of international applications.

A separate, detailed advice guide with suggested timelines for US applications called 'Applying to American Universities: A guide to getting started' is available from Careers and which LCK will work through with you're your tutor and parents as necessary, to try to ensure that you know what you should be doing when and how to go about it. It is very much a building process, which needs time and careful consideration.

[lck@bryanston.co.uk](mailto:lck@bryanston.co.uk)

## 7. Applying for student support Information for applicants

### Information taken from Student Finance England (correct at time of publication)

Depending on your circumstances, the course and where you study, you may be able to get a range of financial help and support. **Most students won't have to pay anything up front.** You could get:

- A) Tuition Fee Loan (*pay back*);
- B) Maintenance Loan (*pay back*);
- C) Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) (*you don't have to pay back*);
- D) Bursaries and scholarships (*you don't have to pay back*).

Bursaries and scholarships don't have to be paid back. Loans do. There's also extra help for those with special circumstances, e.g. if you have a disability, a mental health condition or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. The following information assumes that you will be a dependent without an income of your own, that you have no children of your own, and that you are resident in England and intend to study a full-time undergraduate course in England, Scotland or Wales. **Information for EU and Channel Isles students is at the end of this section.**

You can get more information and start the application process by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

### A) Tuition Fee Loan

The tuition fee loan covers the cost of tuition fees up to £9,250. There may be different fees in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Check with your university or college to confirm the tuition fee you will be charged so that you can ask for the right amount when you apply. Your Tuition Fee Loan is paid direct to the university or college on your behalf.

### B) Maintenance Loan

This helps towards your living costs while you are studying. Any full-time student who is eligible for student finance is eligible to receive a maintenance loan. The amount you can get depends on your household income and where you are studying. The table below shows the maximum amounts for this year.

Living with parents	Up to £7,324
Studying in London and not living with parents	Up to £11,354
Studying outside of London and not living with parents	Up to £8,700
Living and studying abroad for at least one academic year	Up to £9,963

### C) Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)

These are available to students who have extra costs because of a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. DSAs can help pay for specialist equipment, a non-medical helper, travel or other extra costs. DSAs do not depend on household income. How much you will get depends entirely on your circumstances and you won't have to pay it back unless you leave your course early. For more information on applying for DSAs, visit [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance).

### D) Bursaries & scholarships

Bursaries and scholarships may be available from your university or college. You will not have to pay these back unless you leave your course early. Check the university or college websites for details.

## How to apply?

**You don't have to wait until you've accepted a course to apply for student finance.** Just create your student finance account and apply using your first choice of course. You can easily change your course or university details online later. **So apply online now and have everything in place at the start of your course.** If you're only applying for the Tuition Fee Loan and the basic Maintenance Loan (*the bit that doesn't depend on your household income*), you can fill in your application without your parents. If you're applying for finance that depends on your household income, your parents will need to provide some information about themselves and their income. They can log on and fill in their part separately. (*If parents want to get information on their child's application they will need consent from the student before Student Finance England can give them any details. The student can give consent in the online application.*)

**Remember: your application isn't complete and can't be assessed until all the necessary information has been received.**

Before you start your online application, make sure you have the following to hand:

- Your passport;
- Details of the university and course;
- Your bank details;
- Your National Insurance number;
- Your parents' details, including their National Insurance numbers and income.

**You need to complete your application for student finance before 31 May 2021** to be sure you have your money when you start your course. If you apply after this date, you might not get all your money on time. If any of your details change after you have applied for student finance, don't worry, it's easy to update your application. You can use your online student finance account to make changes to:

- Your course details;
- Your university or college details;
- Your loan amount;
- Your personal details.

Provide your UK passport number when you apply and they'll check your identity so you won't need to send them your passport. Evidence of your household income is not usually needed when you first apply. However, you may be contacted at a later date for evidence to support your application. Once your application has been assessed, you will be sent a **Student Finance Entitlement letter** showing what student finance you are entitled to. **This letter will include a declaration form that you must sign and return to them.** You should keep this letter as you might have to show it to your university or college when you register. If you don't, your student finance might be delayed and you might not be paid on time. If you are asked to provide any financial evidence at a later date, you will only be asked for photocopies, not originals. For more detailed information on how to apply, visit <https://www.gov.uk/get-undergraduate-student-loan>. **Remember: put your customer reference number on everything you send them.**

## Starting university or college

**You have to register at your university or college before your first payment can be made.**

You will usually do this in the first week of your course and you may have to take along your Student Finance Entitlement letter, so make sure you keep this safe. Once you have registered, your university or college will let Student Finance England know you're attending and your payment will be made. You don't need to do anything else. It can then take two to three working days for the money to reach your account. Any Maintenance Loan that you're entitled to will be paid into your bank account. Your Tuition Fee Loan is paid direct to your university or college.

Beware of fraudulent e-mails from anyone claiming to be Student Finance England. You will **never** be asked to update your bank details or verify your student account details by email. If you get an email asking you to follow a link to the Student Finance England website to confirm your account details, you should forward it to [phishing@slc.co.uk](mailto:phishing@slc.co.uk).

## Reapplying next year

**You need to reapply for student finance for every year of your course.** Fees may go up each year and grant and loan amounts can also change. You will be contacted when you need to reapply. Remember to keep your password and secret answer safe as you'll need these to reapply each year or to change your details. Your parents will have their own password and secret answer so they will also need to keep these safe.

**Remember: the amount of student finance available may change each year.**

## Repaying your tuition fees and maintenance loan

You have to pay back your tuition fees and maintenance loan (plus tax: inflation plus up to 3%) but the earliest you'll start repaying is the April after you leave your course and only if you are earning over £21,000 a year. You'll stop paying if your income drops below this amount.

Annual Income	Monthly repayments
£21,000 and under	£0
£25,000	£30
£30,000	£67
£50,000	£217

## Useful information and contacts

You can go to [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance) at any time, or phone 0845 300 5090 between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9am and 5.30pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

- Download the key dates checklist about what to do and when to do it at [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance);
- Check the student finance zone at [www.thestudentroom.co.uk/studentfinance](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/studentfinance).

### **National Union of Students (NUS)**

You can get more information from the NUS website at [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk).

### **Scholarship Search UK**

This provides information about other sources of funding for undergraduates. The website is [www.scholarship-search.org.uk](http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk).

## Where you live – who qualifies for Student Finance?

To qualify for student finance as a student from England, you will need to meet all of the residence requirements. Generally, on the first day of the academic year in which your course starts, you must:

- Be a UK national or have 'settled status' in the UK (*under the terms of the Immigration Act 1971*);
- Be 'ordinarily resident' in England;
- Have been 'ordinarily resident' in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before starting the course and not for the purpose of receiving full-time education.

If not 'ordinarily resident' in the UK students have to apply to their own governments for funding, e.g. Channel Islands, Isle of Man. Students who are settled in the UK may also be eligible if they have exercised a right of residence in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland before returning to the UK to study. 'Settled status' means that there are no immigration restrictions on how long you can stay in the UK. You are 'ordinarily resident' if England is where you normally live, even if you live abroad on a temporary basis. If you move from England with your family overseas due to an armed forces posting you are also considered 'ordinarily resident' in England. But this doesn't cover all circumstances - even if you don't meet these criteria, you may still qualify for student finance.

## **Students living in the EU**

If you are intending to study a full-time undergraduate course in England, Scotland or Wales you can get information from the European Union Helpline 0141 243 3570 open 09.00-17.30 Monday to Friday. Similarly if students from the EEA (*European Economic Area - Norway, Iceland or Lichenstein*) are settled in the UK they may also be eligible if they have exercised a right of residence in the EEA or Switzerland before returning to the UK to study. Go to [www.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.gov.uk/studentfinance) and click on 'who qualifies?'

## **Students living in the Channel Isles**

### **Who is eligible for funding?**

To be eligible for funding from the States of Jersey or Guernsey you must meet certain residency and academic criteria and must not be in possession of a loan or financial award from another education authority. Applicants should contact the relevant government directly:

### **Residents of Jersey**

[www.gov.je/Education/Adults/Financing/HigherEducation/Pages/StudentGrants.aspx](http://www.gov.je/Education/Adults/Financing/HigherEducation/Pages/StudentGrants.aspx)

**Phone:** +44 (0) 1534 449457 / 449279 / 449450

**Fax** +44 (0) 1534 447420

**Email** [studentfinance@gov.je](mailto:studentfinance@gov.je) Opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm

### **Residents of Guernsey**

<http://education.gg/article/2127/Funding-for-University>

**Tel:** +44 01481 733000

**Fax:** +44 01481 714475

**Email:** [grants@education.gov.gg](mailto:grants@education.gov.gg)

## **International Students**

Applicants who do not qualify for UK funding will need to contact universities directly to enquire about how the level of their tuition fees and how they are to be paid.

## 8. UCAS Offers and Tariff Points Appendix

UCAS tariff points are used by some universities (*around a third*) when making conditional offers. Instead of asking for grades (e.g. BBC), a university may express the offer as 112 points. However, not all universities use tariff points. The more traditional universities are more likely to make an offer stipulating grades and not points. Also, universities may not, for example, consider BBB at A level to be the same as ABC at A level.

Entry requirements and offers that state tariff points may also require a minimum level of achievement in a specified subject, for example '128 points from a minimum of three A levels to include grade A in A level Chemistry', i.e. an A in Chemistry (48) and B grades in two other A levels (40+40). The same is true of tariff offers made to IB pupils, which may still specify a higher level profile or total points.

Bear in mind that there is no double counting. With certain qualifications like A levels, which build on an earlier qualification like AS, only the higher qualification will be counted. This principle also applies to music and speech & drama exams at grades 6, 7 and 8.

Although tariff points can be accumulated in different ways, not all points will necessarily be acceptable for entry to a particular course. The achievement of a points score, therefore, does not give an automatic entitlement to entry and many other factors are taken into account in the admissions process.

Using the table below, you can calculate how to convert A level and IB grades into tariff points for those universities who use the tariff system:

A Level	AS Level	EPQ	IB HL	IB SL	IB EE	IB ToK
A* = 56	-	A* = 28	7 = 56	7 = 28	-	-
A = 48	A = 20	A = 24	6 = 48	6 = 24	A = 12	A = 12
B = 40	B = 16	B = 20	5 = 32	5 = 16	B = 10	B = 10
C = 32	C = 12	C = 16	4 = 24	4 = 12	C = 8	C = 8
D = 24	D = 10	D = 12	3 = 12	3 = 6	D = 6	D = 6
E = 16	E = 6	E = 8	-	-	E = 4	E = 4

### Example 1 (A level)

A student with AAB at A level and a B grade in a fourth AS subject will have a tariff score of 152; however, some university courses may specify that they would like the student to reach a certain target without the fourth AS, in which case the student's score in this example would be 136.

### Example 2 (IB Diploma)

A student with 665 at Higher Level (*i.e. roughly AAC A level equivalent*) and 554 at Standard Level (*i.e. roughly BBC AS level equivalent*) with a B in the Extended Essay and a B for ToK (*i.e. 2 IB core points or an equivalent of a B in an EPQ*) would have an IB Diploma score of 33 but the UCAS tariff equivalent would be 192.

Other qualifications, such as practical music or speech and drama exams like LAMDA and ESB, also have a tariff value but it is unlikely that these tariff points will count towards your offer unless you are applying for a specialist practical music or drama course, in which case it will be the qualifications themselves and not their tariff points which will be valued:

Grade	Grade 8	Grade 7	Grade 6
Distinction	30	16	12
Merit	24	12	10
Pass	18	10	6

You can use the tariff calculator on the UCAS website to work out what other qualifications are worth and there is also a helpful video which explains the tariff system in more detail.

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>

### Grade-based offers for applicants with the IB Diploma

Although universities operate slightly different policies with regard to the offers they make and there is not a standard 'exchange rate', it can be helpful to bear in mind the following:

IB Grade	A level Grade	IB Score	A level equivalent
7	A*	38	A*AA
6	A	36	AAA
5	C	34	AAB
4	D	32	ABB
3	D	30	BBB

Offers will usually specify a total diploma score and may ask for a specific grade in the subject of study or in related subjects, for example:

- Biology at Bristol 35-38 points with 666 at higher level including two sciences or maths
- Business Economics at Exeter 34-38 points
- English at Leeds 38 points including 18 higher level points with 6 in higher level English

More detailed information can be found at: [www.ibsca.org.uk/index.php/universities-and-ib/university-offers](http://www.ibsca.org.uk/index.php/universities-and-ib/university-offers).