

## **THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL CONSIDERING HIGHER EDUCATION**

Two key areas to begin to consider at this stage are:

- 1 Type of course: Degree; Foundation Degree; HND; Certificate; Diploma.**
- 2 How to choose where to study.**

Application procedures and forms will be explained to you later on in the year.

If you are unsure as to whether you should continue with your education post-school, it is still worthwhile considering the information you will be presented with in the coming year.

As a general rule, the more qualifications that you obtain, the more career opportunities become available to you.

### **1 Types of courses:**

#### **(a) Degree courses:**

- (i) Vocational degrees: These prepare you for a specific career area and, in some professions, eg Medicine, are a specific entry requirement.
- or
- (ii) Academic degrees: A degree that is studied for its own sake.

**Remember approximately 60% of graduates do not use their degrees directly in their subsequent employment.**

#### **(iii) Degrees come in all forms of guises:**

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Single:   | You study one subject.   |
| Combined: | You study more than one subject.   |
| Joint:    | You study two subjects that have equal value in your final degree.   |
| Sandwich: | Your course is mixed with periods of employment. These can be a number of short periods of employment, a thin sandwich, or one or two long periods of employment - a thick sandwich. |
| Modular:  | Your degree is made up of a number of modules in a variety of subjects. A minimum number of modules are required to complete the course.   |

#### **(iv) Subject variations: Most degrees have a number of variations, eg:**

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Engineering can be -      | Civil, Electronic, Electrical, Mechanical, etc.                             |
| Social Sciences can be -  | Arts or Science degrees.  |
| History can be -          | Ancient, Modern, Medieval, Economic, Irish, etc.                            |
| Modern Languages can be - | Normally based on literature and normally involve at least one year abroad. |
| Biology can be -          | Applied, Micro, Environmental, Biochemistry, etc.                           |

- (v) Degree courses used to mean University. Today, degree courses can be followed at Universities, Colleges of Higher Education and Colleges of Further Education. There are a wide variety of reference sources to help you through the daunting maze. The ones to start with are:-

[www.ucas.co.uk/courses](http://www.ucas.co.uk/courses)

University and College Entrance - 'The Official Guide'

(b) **Foundation Degrees/Higher National Diploma**

- (i) These courses are generally more vocational than Degree courses. They therefore tend to prepare students for entry into certain career areas rather than being purely academic courses.
- (ii) The range of courses is again large. Many of the subject combinations and variations available in degree courses can also be found, including Modular and Sandwich courses.  
In the Sciences and Engineering, one/two year foundation courses are often available if you have weaker 'A' level results or if you have done non-science 'A' levels, the course is part of a four year degree programme.
- (iii) Most HNDs/FndDs will allow progression on to the 2nd year of a degree course provided that a high enough standard has been achieved.
- (iv) Major subject areas: Business; Engineering; Hotel and Catering; Computing; Tourism and Recreation; Surveying.
- (v) These courses are offered at Universities and Colleges of Further and Higher Education.

Main reference areas:

[www.ucas.co.uk/courses](http://www.ucas.co.uk/courses)

University and College Entrance – 'The Official Guide' [www.ucas.co.uk](http://www.ucas.co.uk)

(c) **Foundation Courses in Art and Design**

There is a one year course which provides progression on to specific degrees in Art and Design. These are further education courses which have different funding arrangements from those which apply to degree courses.

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