

# THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL SIXTH FORM

## PLANNING YOUR FUTURE



This booklet contains a variety of information to help you to organise and plan your future higher education or career plans.

Some of the information has already been covered in assemblies or tutor time plus new information that you will need to consider in applying for careers or higher education.

Much of the information directs you to other sources of more detailed information that you need to study carefully.

A copy of this booklet has also been emailed to your parent. The UCAS website in particular has a detailed section specifically aimed at parents.

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## INTRODUCTION

You are now at the stage of making decisions that will determine your 'next steps' post 18 and away from Thomas Mills High School. There are a huge number of options available to you and I would advise you to think about these options carefully and thoughtfully.

The choices you make will be affected by many things like your financial situation, interests, your attitude to study, your qualifications, the job market, etc.

Another big factor is the job or career you have in mind and now is a good time to really get into the detail about which job sectors you are interested in, what sort of opportunities they offer and what qualifications they are looking for.

### **Possible choices include:**

- Doing a [higher education level course](#) – either full-time, part-time or by distance learning, at a university or a college;
- Doing an [Intermediate, Advanced, Higher or Degree Apprenticeship](#);
- Getting a [job that offers training](#);
- Doing a [vocational course at a Further Education College](#)
- [Taking a year out \(a gap year\)](#).
- Full time employment.

This booklet explores the various routes available to you and will offer advice along the way.

### **Context:**

Each year around 80% of students at Thomas Mills High School Sixth Form go on to some form of Further or Higher Education in a wide variety of courses in far flung places around the United Kingdom and sometimes beyond.

Around 50% of university applications are to prestigious universities referred to as Russell Group Universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, where there is a strong tradition of success.

Students regardless of ability can be successful in being accepted on to a range of courses.

We firmly believe that if you have an aspiration to continue your education, there will be a place out there for you.

University may not be the route you choose and we will work closely with you to secure a plan and support you through relevant application processes.

### **Starting points:**

Some useful websites to get you thinking include:

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/your-choices-at-18>

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

<https://www.whatuni.com/>

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/>

<https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

<https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/>

<https://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/gap-year-projects/>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/get-a-job/cv-sections>

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>

### **Hopefully helpful points of advice:**

Start with your interests. What subject or sub parts of a subject do you enjoy?

Ask questions of yourself such as: Do I have an idea about what job you can see yourself doing? Do I want to work with people? Can I see myself in an office? Am I creative? Do I have a vocation in mind? Am I interested in research-based projects?

The answers you come up with may determine your future pathway. Keep an open mind and take time to explore the varied and numerous opportunities open to you. Don't do it all in one go.

Use this booklet as a workbook. Make notes. Keep looking through the various sections refining your search.

Remember - young people with qualifications are more attractive to employers than those without. Work experience and general employability skills, such as teamwork and communication skills, are also valued.

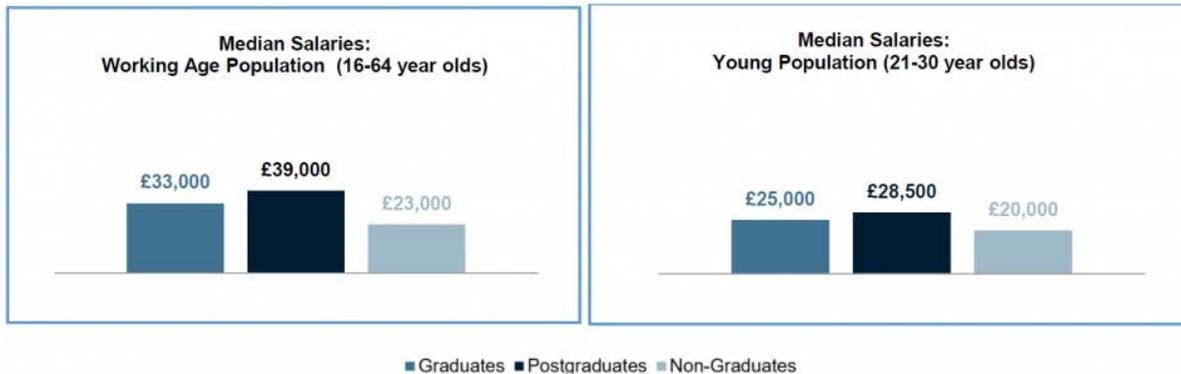
Ask for help or advice, it is always on hand.

Early research helps you focus and allows you to be thorough.

Enjoy the next phase of your search.

Look at the following graphs of comparison for 2017 earnings between graduates and non-graduates.

Often the more you learn the more you earn! That's not always true but the graph below shows that in 2017, 21-30-year-old graduates (people with a degree) earned £5,000 more than non-graduates on average, and the average working-age graduate earned £10,000 more than the average non-graduate.



In simplistic terms, over a working lifetime of say 40 years, with a degree you are likely to earn a significant amount more (£400,000) than if you choose not to pursue a degree course. This outweighs the 'cost' of a degree through the student finance route. I prefer to liken the cost of studying for a degree as a 'graduate tax' where you pay for the cost over your working life.

## HIGHER EDUCATION – WHERE TO START

If you are intending to look into Higher Education, I would encourage you to sign up to the UCAS HUB. Use the following link:

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

This programme will allow you to explore your options and store information. There is a toolkit to help you research all manner of material. This is a very good tool to help you research and make important decisions.

**THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL**  
**HIGHER EDUCATION GUIDANCE IN THE SIXTH FORM**

**Application to a university or college in the UCAS Scheme for 2022 or deferred entry for 2023.**

- Applications can be made for places at up to five universities or colleges via UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service).
- The form is completed online by the student, checked, and then sent, together with the school's reference, to UCAS who processes the information and then send a copy of the form to each of the institutions chosen.
- The application is then considered by the relevant department, who may decide to interview the candidate but often does not. Interviewing policy varies between institutions. Some will always interview before making an offer, whereas others only interview for particular courses.
- Most institutions run "Open Days" (on a specified day) either for an individual department or for the entire institution. These are designed to give the potential student some idea of what university life is like. Some institutions do use attendance at an open day as part of the selection criteria.
- The university's or college's reply is made via UCAS and may be: -
  - 1 An unconditional offer - if the applicant has already completed Advanced level examinations.
  - 2 A conditional offer - usually based on the attainment of specified grades/points at Advanced level (these may vary between universities and colleges). The offers may be in the form of specific grade requirements or a total points score.
  - 3 A rejection.
- Each institution and each department have its own method of considering applications, and this can lead to a great variation in the time taken to reply. However, most applicants will have received replies from all of their chosen institutions by April.
- Each applicant is allowed to hold two offers. The normal procedure is to hold an offer from the first preference and another, where the grades required are lower, as an insurance. No decisions need to be taken by the applicant until they have heard from all applications. They will then have to decide on their offers unless they are awaiting an open day visit in which case the decisions must be made immediately after the visit.
- If the candidate is rejected by all institutions, he/she can participate in the clearing system, UCAS will automatically send details of this, if the situation does occur. An early clearing system, UCAS Extra, begins to operate in February for any applicants not holding any offers. The main UCAS clearing system comes into operation in July. The clearing system sends details of vacancies to candidates whose original applications have been unsuccessful or those who have not attained the required grades. Applicants will receive clearing entry instructions to be undertaken online, which, when completed, will give details of the candidates' examinations/results and institution and courses preferred, which will then be processed by UCAS. If the candidate has to go through the clearing system, it may well be by mid-September before he/she knows whether they have a place.
- If an applicant obtains higher grades than that required by their firm offer, they will be eligible for 'Adjustment', a process whereby they can ask to be considered by an alternative university.
- UCAS Track is an online system by which students can track the progress of their application at all stages and reply to their offers. It is important that students check this regularly to ensure they are updated on the processing of their application. Information is also sent to students via email and text if they have selected this option on their original application. If the candidate attains the

required grades, he/she will receive confirmation of their place, shortly after the examination results are issued.

- All applicants for higher education must consult the UCAS website [www.ucas.co.uk](http://www.ucas.co.uk). This gives all the relevant information for the UCAS form. A charge is made by UCAS for administration. This can be made directly to UCAS at the time of application.

## Selection of courses

There is a wide variety of courses available. Full details of the content of all degree courses are to be found in the various Degree Course Guides for each of the subjects or groups of subjects. The school has reference sets of these. This information is also easily accessible via the internet using the UCAS website.

Joint Honours Courses where two or more subjects are studied equally, often involve more work than a single subject, but are sometimes preferred if students find it difficult to choose between subjects.

When making the choice of five courses, it is preferable, though not always possible, to apply for similar courses in each case. The content and nature of courses with the same name varies greatly among institutions, and the choice of subsidiary subjects also needs to be considered carefully.

It is also vital to check the institution's course requirements carefully before making a choice, to ensure that the qualifications required by the institution or the particular department are fully complied with. The requirements are set out in "University and College Entrance Guide", copies of which are in the resources area and library. Also consult Degree Course Offers to obtain an indication of likely Advanced level grades required. **The UCAS website <https://www.ucas.co.uk> gives direct access to university and college courses and course requirements. Equally useful for student information is the Student UK website <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk>** In addition, a list of useful websites is attached.

UCAS course search for 2022 entry is already available. Final university fee information may not be available via the UCAS database until July. Individual institutions should have the information available prior to this. It is likely that similarly titled courses at different Institutions will charge different fees. It is important that prior to submitting their application, students are clear on how much they will be paying for their studies, as well as the course they wish to apply for.

## Selection of an Institution

There are few generalisations which can be made on this subject, but points which should be considered are:-

- 1 Course content and Advanced level grades required.
- 2 Whether to apply to an older university or college with a more 'traditional' image, to apply to campus-based universities, often situated on the outskirts of a city and virtually self-contained, or to apply to one of the newer universities.
- 3 Accommodation - many universities and colleges are able to place a high proportion of first year students in hall of residence and many provide two years in hall. All universities and colleges have accommodation bureaux to help students find accommodation.

It is important that the prospectus for each institution is studied carefully. Reference copies of these are available in the careers area of the library. It is advisable that each student obtains their own copy of the prospectus of an institution in which they are interested. These can often be ordered via e-mail.

Increasingly UCAS and universities are providing podcasts on their websites or via 'YouTube' or 'iTunes' to help students make selection choices. In addition, UCAS–Yougofurther.co.uk provides forums through which potential students can discuss courses and universities with existing students.

**Oxbridge and Cambridge and other 'competitive' universities – extra 'tests' for entry to these universities is often asked for. Students do need to discuss the entry arrangements for these tests. Some are undertaken by the student, others by the school.**

**Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry – BMAT or UCAT admissions tests are required for most courses.** Applications have to be completed by 15 October. **If you are applying to any of these professions, a maximum of four choices is permitted. A further choice in different subjects could be added.**

### Conservatoires

Some music, dance and drama applications to conservatoires are processed through UCAS Conservatoires, a similar system to UCAS. Please check carefully which ones. Some have very early application deadlines.

### **Sponsorships**

These are available from a wide variety of industries, organisations and institutions. They are available for degree and HND courses often in return for a commitment of 1-3 years' employment within the industry on completion of that course. There is usually intense competition for such sponsorships. Various booklets about sponsorships are available in the careers area.

### **Nursing**

Applications for nursing are all processed through the UCAS system.

### **Other careers**

There is an extensive collection of careers literature on file in the careers area in the library. Requests for individual careers interviews may also be made.

### **Financial Assistance**

Applications for assistance with tuition fees are made online through: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance>

Links are also available from the site explaining the arrangements for student support and how loans are repaid.

Applications usually have to be made by the end of March before the start of the following academic year. The system of financial support in higher education has changed considerably in recent years. Full details of the arrangements applicable to this application cycle will be made available when published.

## Conclusion

It is important that each student should show initiative in writing for and studying prospectuses, in looking up and digesting relevant literature, and in obtaining forms and filling them in. Competition for places in higher education gets stiffer every year. It is therefore **vital** that every student aims for as good a performance at Advanced Level as possible at the first attempt. The staff at school are always willing to discuss problems concerning careers matters with parents and students.

## CLOSING DATES FOR UCAS ADMISSION IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

15 October 2021 for candidates applying to Oxford and Cambridge; applications must have reached the university by this time. Special arrangements for specific subjects, for example, art at Ruskin College or music awards apply.

15 October 2021 for all applicants for medicine, dentistry and veterinary science.

1 October 2021 for applicants applying to music conservatoires in the CUKAS system. Some music conservatoires have earlier application dates.

15 January 2022 for all other candidates. We will be expecting all applications to have been completed by 10 December 2021 to avoid any problem that might arise with late applications.

Applications for Art and Design degree courses have been changed. Applications have two possible closing dates – 15 January 2022 or 24 March 2022. Applicants must check these very carefully to ensure they apply at the right time.

**Early** application is advisable provided it does not involve over-hasty decisions. Remember, too, that it takes us time to check the UCAS forms and write references for a large number of students. Late applications will be considered by UCAS, but lateness may well prejudice your chances.

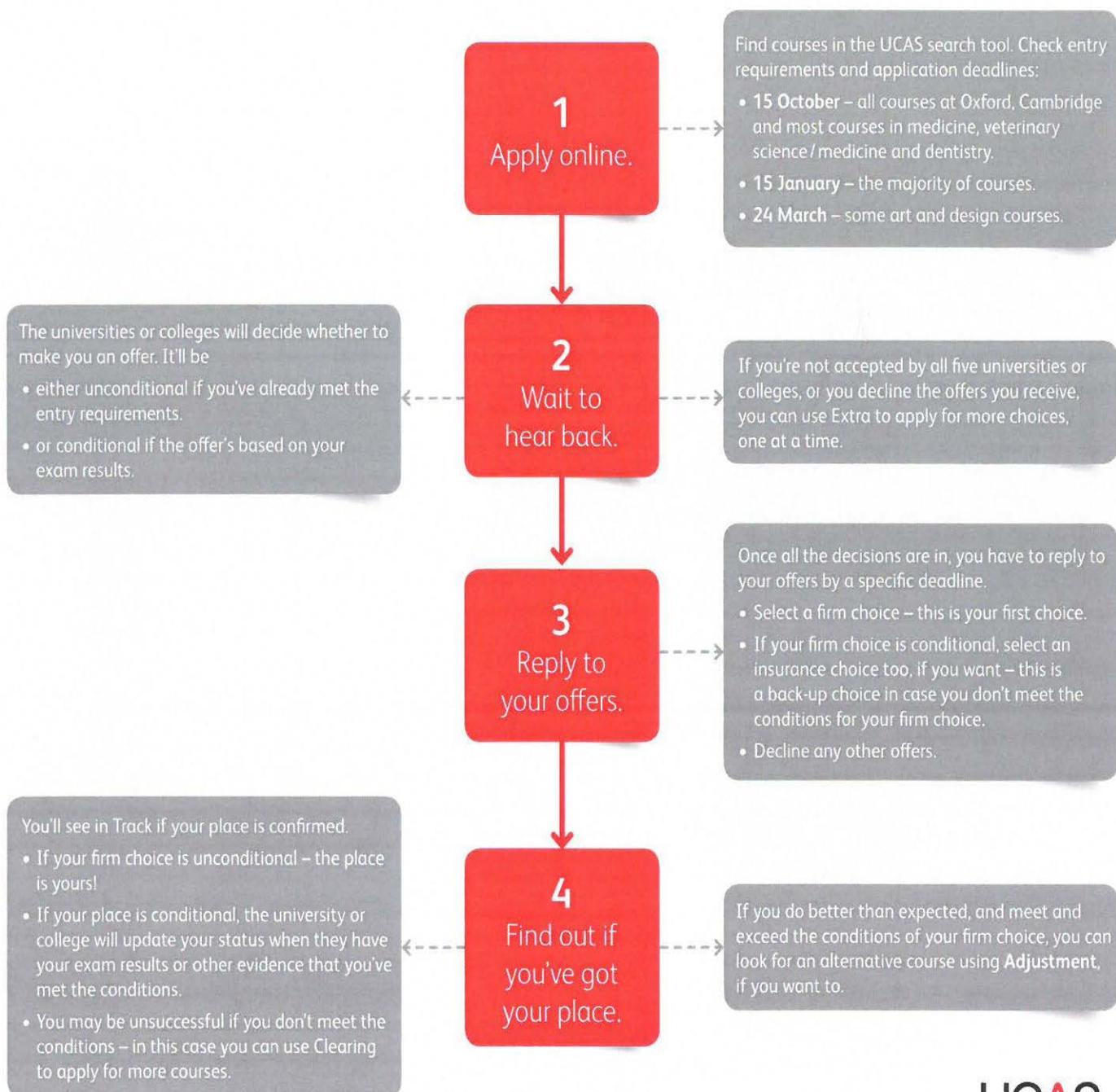
The charge made by UCAS for administration for 2022 applications will be £26.50. This fee should be paid at the time the application form is completed. If you apply for one course at one institution the fee is reduced to £22.

## Recent experience of Higher Education Applications

In the past two to three years we have received many communications from universities and institutions of higher education concerning competition for places. Competition is most intense for medicine, law, English, business studies, psychology and media related studies. We anticipate that competition for places will continue to increase.

University offers in response to the AS/A Level examination structure varies widely. A standard pattern appears to be an offer based on a combination of three A Levels plus a further AS level. Many universities have moved towards using the UCAS tariff when giving offers. For 2022 some competitive universities have indicated that they will be using the A\* grade as part of their conditional offers. In some cases they also request individual unit scores to be made available.

# How it works: applying to a UK university or college



UCAS

## UCAS APPLY ELECTRONIC APPLICATIONS 2022/23

This system can be accessed from any computer that has access to the Internet. It can be saved and updated as you complete the form. Basic details, names and addresses along with examination results can be inserted quickly, with final details of course choices and a personal statement added at a later date.

The system will require you to create and remember a personal password. You will complete an application form electronically and then once it has been checked by your tutor you send it electronically to the 'school postbox' from where it can be collected to add your reference and have final checking completed. It is important that;

1. You use your full and correct name.
2. You remember/store your USER name, password and security questions/ answers and user ID
3. You keep a hard copy of your application.
4. You pass a hard copy to your tutor and Mr Cann
5. You keep a copy of your personal statement pasted into a separate word document.
6. You inform your tutor and Mr Cann when you have sent your form to the school post box so that it can be collected for final processing.
7. **You do not send your form to the School Postbox until it has been checked.**

You will need the follow the following instructions to register so that you are matched with the school data base.

Log on to <http://www.ucas.co.uk/students/apply>

There is a link directly to this from the UCAS home page

CLICK ON Register/logon to use apply **2022 (Not 2021!!!!)**

The first time you log on you will need to register

Agree to conditions

You will be asked to provide basic personal details, name D.O.B.

You will then enter postal address details, telephone numbers and email addresses. It is vital that these are correct this information will be used to contact you by UCAS and universities.

You will then set up a password and security questions. Make sure you keep a record of your password and security questions securely stored.

YOU WILL HAVE TO HAVE AN EMAIL ACCOUNT TO REGISTER

You will be given/sent a user name, store it safely and securely.

You will then be able to log on

You will be asked to indicate who you are registering through

You will then be asked for a buzzword, type in

(all one word and UPPER CASE)

Is this correct?

It will then know that you are applying from Thomas Mills.

It will ask you to select an Applicant group from a menu

Click on

You will be sent a code via e-mail which you will be asked to verify before you can send your application to UCAS

These procedures will register you. YOU will be given a personal ID save it carefully, you will need this if you contact UCAS

You then complete an application form on line. You can log off and return to it as many times as you like.

**DO NOT FORGET YOUR USER NAME, PASSWORD & SECURITY QUESTION/ANSWER & PERSONAL ID**

When you are completing the form, it looks nothing like the real application form. Do not worry it is turned into a form by UCAS.

Follow the instructions. It will only let you send the form once all sections have been completed.

**Keep those forms rolling in. We would like to get them all processed by October half term at the latest.**

**Wishing you all the best in your quest.**

## **EXTRA UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

A number of universities are now including an extra entrance 'test' in addition to A Level courses as part of their selection process for certain courses.

The main subjects are law, medicine and dentistry, and veterinary science. Tests for these subjects are sat prior to interviews. Students may have to register themselves for the test and in some cases the tests are taken at a local test centre (normally in Ipswich) students have to make their own arrangements for sitting the tests. A fee is normally charged, should the fee present any difficulties please do not hesitate to discuss this with me.

A number of Oxbridge colleges ask students to take a 'Thinking Skills Assessment' test normally as part of the interview programme. One or two other university courses may also ask for this.

Information about the tests together with past papers is available online. It is important that students take the opportunity to check the content of the papers. Very often it is not subject knowledge that is being tested but the ability to deal with unfamiliar information or the ability to frame a logical argument.

A few colleges ask for sixth term entrance papers. These are sat at the same time as final A Level examinations.

A number of universities, in particular Oxbridge, ask students to submit written work as part of the selection process. This is most common in arts subjects. The work should be recent and often university tutors ask to see work that has already been marked by the school. Students applying for courses which require this written work need to liaise with subject staff about appropriate work and prepare the work well in advance of when universities may be asking for the work to be submitted.

These extra university entrance requirements do require students who are applying for popular courses at the most popular universities to be particularly careful when checking the entrance requirements for the courses that they are considering.

Details of these extra tests are available at  
[www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/admissions-tests](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/admissions-tests)

## 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
- (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:-

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/ucas-undergraduate-what-study>

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/>

**(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.

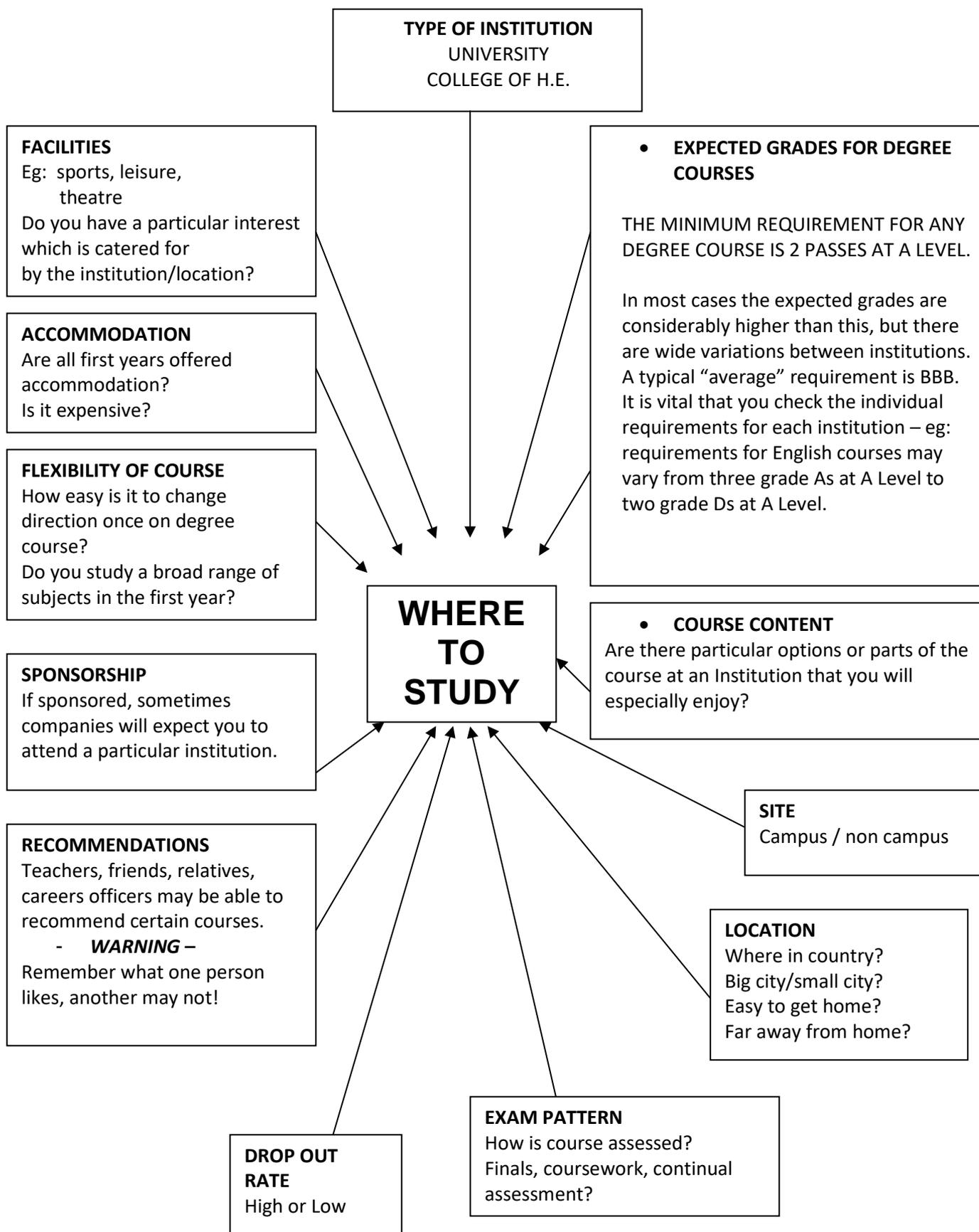
**(c) Further Education Courses/Diplomas**

These courses are usually studied at Colleges of Further Education. Often they are linked into higher education university courses. Some universities offer these courses. Further education courses have different funding arrangements from those which apply to higher education.

- (i) Foundation Course in Art and Design. This is a one-year course which provides progression on to specific degrees in art and design.
- (ii) BTEC National Diplomas. These are level 3 courses normally studied over two years. They cover the full range of vocational areas.
- (iii) A wide range of employment sector specific diplomas exist. In addition to Colleges of Further Education some are also offered at specialist colleges, for example, some drama diplomas.

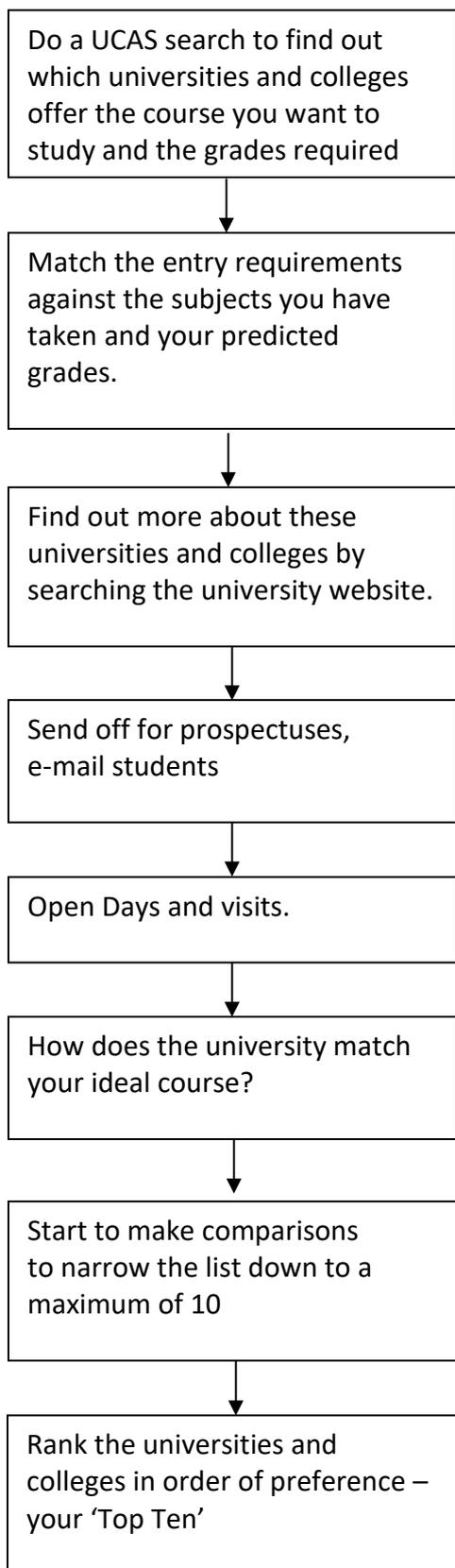
# STAGE TWO

Choosing a University or College – [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk)



## HIGHER EDUCATION PLANNING

### CHOOSING A COURSE



### MY IDEAL UNIVERSITY

Use this chart to build a picture of your ideal course and university or college. Add to and alter your ideal vision as your research grows so that when your research is complete you can compare the universities and colleges to find an 'ideal' match.

Which region would you prefer?	
Ideal course and entry requirements	
What interests you about this course?	
Ideally single course or combined or modular?	
Ideally what facilities do you need/want?	
Do you want a small or large institution?	
Do you want to be in a large city or town or in the country?	
Do you want to be on campus?	
Do you want to live in the hall of residence in the first year?	
What facilities do you want?	
How far do you want to be from home?	
Will you travel by train?	
What clubs and societies do you want?	
What sport/music/drama/ do you want?	
What else is important to you?	
When can you go to open days?	

THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

HIGHER & FURTHER EDUCATION  
CHOOSING AN INSTITUTION

	<i>Institution 1</i>	<i>Institution 2</i>	<i>Institution 3</i>	<i>Institution 4</i>	<i>Institution 5</i>
Name of institution					
Region of UK					
List the courses offered by this institution that you are interested in together with the entry requirements for each course.					
What interests you about each of these courses?					
Is this a single/combined or modular course?					
What facilities does this institution offer which would help you with your study? (eg library, computers, laboratories)					
How many students are there at this institution?					

	<i><b>Institution 1</b></i>	<i><b>Institution 2</b></i>	<i><b>Institution 3</b></i>	<i><b>Institution 4</b></i>	<i><b>Institution 5</b></i>
Is it a campus or non-campus institution?					
Can you stay in the halls of residence in the first year? What are the hall of residence facilities like? How much will accommodation cost?					
How far is this institution from home? Is there a train station nearby?					
What clubs and societies are offered? Are there any sports/music/drama facilities?					
What else is important to you?					
When are the Open Days?					
After your research, how would you rank this uni/college (out of 10)?					

THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

HIGHER & FURTHER EDUCATION  
CHOOSING AN INSTITUTION

	<i>Institution 6</i>	<i>Institution 7</i>	<i>Institution 8</i>	<i>Institution 9</i>	<i>Institution 10</i>
Name of institution					
Region of UK					
List the courses offered by this institution that you are interested in together with the entry requirements for each course.					
What interests you about each of these courses?					
Is this a single/combined or modular course?					
What facilities does this institution offer which would help you with your study? (eg library, computers, laboratories)					
How many students are there at this institution?					

	<i><b>Institution 6</b></i>	<i><b>Institution 7</b></i>	<i><b>Institution 8</b></i>	<i><b>Institution 9</b></i>	<i><b>Institution 10</b></i>
Is it a campus or non-campus institution?					
Can you stay in the halls of residence in the first year? What are the hall of residence facilities like? How much will accommodation cost?					
How far is this institution from home? Is there a train station nearby?					
What clubs and societies are offered? Are there any sports/music/drama facilities?					
What else is important to you?					
When are the Open Days?					
After your research, how would you rank this uni/college (out of 10)?					

## THE UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENT

The statement is your chance to sell yourself. Most students applying for the courses that you are applying for will have similar GCSE and A Level grades and will be getting supportive references from their schools. The personal statement is your opportunity to make you stand out from the crowd and secure that offer or interview. There is no standard formula for success, it should be personal.

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement> has detailed information about what to include, many university websites also offer advice.

The following frame might help you to structure it. Please do not make all the statements clones of each other.

What interests you about the subject you have applied for? Where has this interest come from?

Have you done/seen/heard anything to prepare yourself for this particular course? This could cover trips, work experience, work visits.

Is there anything particular about the type of courses that you have applied for that makes them different from other similar courses? i.e. you have done your research

What aspects of your A Levels interest you? What particular topics/coursework have you done? Hopefully these will relate to your HE courses.

You are expected to like reading! If you mention reading, what have you read? books articles, periodicals, magazines etc. How do they relate to your course, be prepared to talk about them.

What activities have you undertaken in school? Sport, drama, music, officials, prefects, readers, voluntary work. Together with particular skills eg music exams

What activities have you undertaken out of school - sport, drama, music, officials, prefects, readers, voluntary work, together with particular skills eg music exams, Duke of Edinburgh, scouts, guides, ATC
What paid or unpaid work experience have you got? Show how it has developed, reliability, responsibility, team work etc.
If you are having a gap year what do you intend to do?
Have you any special needs that need mentioning?
Are you seeking sponsorship?
Have you any very clear career aims at this stage?

**Not all of the above points will necessarily apply to you.**

**The order of the points can be moved around to suit your own application.**

**There may be other factors that you wish to mention.**

Your statement has to go into 47 lines of 12 font. There is little room for 'waffle'. The frame above has 12 sections if you had two sentences in each section you would reach 47 lines. NB This does not mean that you have to cover every section.

**Make sure you can substantiate, discuss or explain any point that you have made. A certain law dictates that if you say you have read/studied a particular topic, no matter how obscure, the person who interviews you will be an expert on the topic.**

**Prepare your statement as a word document and paste it into the form when it has been checked. Keep the original saved in your user area. You may need it later in the year.**

## Some examples of personal statements from past students of Thomas Mills High School

By nature, I have an enquiring mind and as long as I can remember I have been endeavouring to discover, and understand how and why things behave as they do, and what makes them work. From my earliest memories I asked my parents questions about everything I came across and received fascinating answers in return. However, far from quenching my thirst for knowledge this encouraged me to ask more detailed questions. My interest in science started in primary school and, with the enhanced facilities of secondary school, developed strongly. The laboratories and other resources the school provided have helped consolidate and develop the breadth of my knowledge. This led me to a tighter focus on physics and chemistry, and especially the practical work which I had sorely missed in my earlier schooling. With the advent of my A Level mathematics courses I started to develop, much to my surprise, a passion towards mathematics. I am looking forward to studying physics at university in order to further my understanding of the world around me. I enjoy the whole range of physics, from the theoretical abstractions to the intricacies of accurate practical work.

My A Levels have introduced me to a wide variety of fascinating topics. This has greatly helped me answer the many questions I had pondered on in previous years but had been told were 'not in the syllabus'. This has led me to explore many of the topics covered in class to a much greater level of detail, and posed considerably more questions. In particular I have studied further the mathematics used in physics. I have enjoyed many areas of chemistry, especially the organic components, the modelling of reactions and the synthesising of chemicals. However, it is the physics and maths elements of my course that I most enjoy. I have particularly enjoyed the calculus topics in mathematics and look forward to covering them further at university. Some of the other topics I am looking forward to studying at university are particle and quantum physics.

My passion for science and technology, and in particular physics, extends outside of the classroom. I regularly read online journals and 'New Scientist'. I also enjoy extending my knowledge of lesson topics outside of class. I have recently particularly enjoyed the A2 'Advancing Physics' practical investigation, for which I performed an investigation of the factors affecting the magnitude of the magnetic flux in the core of an electromagnet. This investigation taxed, and improved, my practical and analytical skills. I have also enjoyed the alternate learning style of the Open University course I am currently studying.

In my free time I enjoy a wide range of activities. I enjoy playing my cello in local and school orchestras and youth ensembles, as I have done for 7 years. I sail competitively at my local sailing club and also regularly help teach younger members of the club. I have undertaken several software and electronic equipment design projects for local individuals and companies. These include using my programming skills in C, C++, Python, ARM and x86 assembler and also designing and prototyping digital electronics. My current project is writing a three dimensional Navier-Stokes solver. I also take part in charity work; this year I have made a sponsored parachute jump for a local children's charity, East Anglian Children's Hospice. I also help younger children at my school in a 'paired reading' scheme.

I have enjoyed studying science at school, but I am greatly looking forward to studying physics at undergraduate level.

I have always enjoyed biology and for me the attraction of medicine is the opportunity to improve people's health and well-being by the application of science. I also believe that it will be a varied, exciting and challenging career with many opportunities for professional development. My understanding of medicine has developed through discussing medical studies with students attached to our local general practice and discussing with doctors and other health care professionals about the changes and current issues affecting the NHS. I have read some interesting medical articles such as a recent one about women in medicine, published in the BMJ. Work experience has included shadowing members of a primary care team, attending surgeries with a local GP and spending a session with the out of hours medical service. This work experience has shown me the links between science and health but also the importance of social factors, such as when I visited a recently bereaved 65 year old lady who had severe rheumatoid arthritis and was finding it increasingly difficult to cope on her own. I had considered a career as a vet and my earlier work experience reflects this. However, whilst examining both careers closely I became increasingly attracted to medicine and this was strongly reinforced by my primary care work experience. I still consider my veterinary work as a receptionist valuable for medicine as I have frequently dealt with owners who have been concerned and distressed, and whose anxiety sometimes caused them to be angry or rude.

I have always been actively involved in school life and was head girl ..... school and am currently ..... at Thomas Mills. I have been an HSBC school branch worker; school council member; volunteer in the school sixth form and Framlingham Youth Centre tuck shops and have represented both schools in various sports including being ..... captain. These roles have developed my leadership skills and have shown me that the ability to work well with others in a team achieves best results. I have supported a lower school pupil through the paired reading scheme, helping her to improve reading aloud, and through school completed my community sports leadership award, part of which involved me helping with sports sessions for disabled children. During both of these activities I have understood the importance of enthusiasm and commitment and empathy when helping others achieve their potential. Outside school I have completed my bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and I am working towards my gold. I am a young leader at ..... Girl Guides and play hockey for a local team. Volunteering in the community and at school has developed my understanding of the importance of taking responsibility, team working and reliability, which my work experience with the primary care team has indicated are essential attributes for a doctor.

I have a particular interest in music and am planning to take Grade 8 oboe in December. I have played keyboard in a blues band, piano and oboe in school and charity concerts, won various prizes at the Suffolk Music Festival and at school and play in the school and South Suffolk Youth Orchestras. I enjoy travelling and recently have been to ..... I have enjoyed visiting these different cultures immensely, although the poverty is alarming, and would hope to take an elective period in Africa if possible.

I am fortunate in having had opportunities and hope that I have made the most of them. I think that I am sociable, work well with others and appreciate difficulties they may be having. I believe that the skills I have learnt and developed will have helped to prepare me for medical training.

I have always loved reading and enjoy the variety and diverse range of novels studied in English Literature, so therefore a degree in this subject is the next logical step. I was particularly spurred to continue English after ..... for GCSE English, an achievement with which I was delighted. I love to read anything and everything – particularly classics and books that explore the technical side of English as a language, such as Bryson’s ‘Mother Tongue’, as well as dipping into current bestsellers.

As part of our synoptic module in A2 literature, ‘Twentieth Century American Literature’, I have read numerous novels to aid my background knowledge. These have ranged from romances like ‘Gone with the Wind’, to humorous novels like Heller’s ‘Catch-22’, both of which I enjoyed immensely due to the turbulent plot and strong characters in each. I found using contextual references in our essays of the literature last year interesting, as it involved learning about the authors and the times they lived in, revealing the inspirations and influences behind the plots and characters. The synoptic module will also hopefully extend our study of Steinbeck’s ‘Of Mice and Men’, our GCSE text, the themes in which we were only able to touch on briefly at the time.

Art complements my English courses by allowing me to practise analytical writing, as we were required to analyse the various pieces of art studied. I studied the German war artist Anselm Kieffer, which linked in with the contextual references within the war anthology we studied in English Literature, ‘Poets of the Great War’, again allowing me to see the influences of his work. German was equally interesting; I particularly enjoyed the work experience in Rendsburg, North Germany, in which we worked as classroom assistants in local kindergartens for ten days. This helped my understanding and speaking skills immensely; as well as evidently being an excellent opportunity to practise ‘speaking’, it also gave us an impression of the culture and different lifestyle.

I find English Language complements the literature course; language improved my understanding of the techniques employed by authors and also enhanced my knowledge of the semantic field technicalities. Language was especially beneficial as it allowed me to practise the oral side of English; we were required to write and deliver our own speeches and presentations on topical issues and organise and execute lesson plans. ‘Language and Technology’ was especially interesting. As I have grown up with and use the developing ‘Textese’, the language of mobile phones and computers, I had formed an opinion already about the subject and as a class we were able to discuss the issues the language of text presents from first-hand experience. Outside of school, I have taken part in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Bronze Award, which, as well as being a lot of fun, encouraged and promoted leadership and responsibility within individuals of the group.

As well as reading and art, I am also interested in music and like going to concerts. I like to take part in various school activities too. Earlier this year I was elected ..... which I was pleased with, not only as it allows me to give something back to the school, but because it allows me to practise more public speaking. I have also represented the school in badminton on several occasions, and I like to play regularly outside school. As well as this, I participate in the ‘Young Readers’ Scheme’, in which sixth formers aid younger pupils who have reading difficulties. I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that will be offered by a demanding degree course.

## STUDENT FINANCE

Finance is an important consideration when thinking about Higher Education. This sometimes puts people off going to University.

Until 1998, university education was free to students and paid for by the tax payer. Since then the financial burden has increasingly been placed on the student.

There are two stages to student finance.

Firstly, there are the tuition fees which in 2021 is set at a maximum of £9,250 per year (at the time of printing 2022-23 tuition fees have not been set).

Secondly there is a student maintenance loan which is means tested.

Instead of looking at the situation as a huge amount of debt, look at it as a graduate tax.

When broken down, the repayments are manageable.

The important thing to remember is that the amount you'll repay will be based on how much you earn, not how much you borrow.

Repayments start in the April of the year AFTER graduation and are paid monthly.

There is a threshold below which no payments are made. For 2021-2022 this figure is £27,295. Therefore, if your starting salary is below this amount, you pay nothing.

You'll repay 9% of your income above the repayment threshold – earn less and you won't repay.

Once you leave your course, you'll only repay when your income is above the repayment threshold. The current UK threshold is £27,295 a year, £2,274 a month, or £524 a week.

For example, if you earn £2,310 a month before tax, you'll repay £3 a month. This is because £2,310 is £36 above the monthly threshold of £2,274, and 9% of £36 is £3 (rounded down to the nearest pound).

Look at the table for some more examples of how much you could repay.

<b>Yearly income before tax</b>	<b>Monthly income before tax</b>	<b>Monthly repayment</b>
£27,295	£2,274	£0
£28,000	£2,333	£5
£29,500	£2,458	£16
£31,000	£2,583	£27
£33,000	£2,750	£42

If your income changes, the amount you repay will change too. This happens automatically.

If you stop working, or start to earn below the repayment threshold, your repayments will stop until you earn over the threshold. Any outstanding loan balance will be cancelled 30 years after you're due to start repaying – even if you haven't repaid any of it.

The most up-to-date information on student finances, advice on tuition fees, student loans and financial help is best found at the following websites:

[www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

<https://studentmoney.io/> - A search engine to help find further information and a guide to organising and planning your student finances.

<https://www.ucas.com/money> - Linked with the UCAS website and has masses of information

Other funding may be available and is worth researching.

A bursary is non-repayable support available from your university or college which is available to a wide range of students. You need to check what is on offer and how you can claim this additional support.

Sponsorships: Are available for many courses, if you have a specific career in mind, search company websites for information about graduate recruitment and sponsorships.

Please ask me for clarification or for further information on any of the points made.

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LOWER SIXTH TO HELP PLAN YOUR FUTURE

The task of choosing a particular career or higher education course is often daunting. The breadth and range of choices and, in some cases, the uncertainty associated with applications, makes decisions difficult.

The key factor is to do as much research as possible. We will be covering a variety of topics in assemblies and tutorial time. These are some of the suggestions that have already been made to you for you to consider helping you to make up your mind.

1. <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> – a site that covers everything from employment, training, apprenticeships and higher education
2. **University open days** - general days and subject specific days. Every university will have details about these on their websites. A directory of open days is also in the careers areas in the Sixth Form Centre and the Library.  
You have to book for some. These take place from now onwards. E.g. April veterinary science at Cambridge, campus tours at Birmingham most Tuesdays and Thursdays, June, science and engineering at Imperial – [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) is an excellent starting point.
3. **Headstart** - one-week courses in July at universities specifically aimed at maths, science and technology courses. Information online
4. **Sutton Trust Courses** - taster weeks at universities, UNIQ etc.
5. <https://www.workshop.com/> <http://www.careers.smcs.com/> <https://www.medlinkstudents.com/>  
- Taster courses in medicine, law, physiotherapy, forensics, business, nursing, veterinary science.
6. **Centigrade** - a computer based career profiling programme. A bit like Kudos which some of you may have used in the past. Information online
7. Register for a UCAS card 'YOU GO FURTHER' this will generate all sorts of information for you.
8. Noticeboards, have a browse
9. Morning bulletin - we regularly receive information about careers events, these are advertised with specific information often distributed.
10. Careers areas in the library and sixth form centre contain a variety of general and job specific information.
11. Most professions have specific websites which give detailed information on careers. E.g. BMA: - medicine, surveying; - Institute of Chartered Surveyors, engineering: Royal Institute...., teaching, nursing, architect etc.
12. BBC, Channel 4 both have good careers sites.

13. National newspapers have careers advice areas, e.g. Independent, Guardian, Times, Telegraph.
14. Many universities have excellent online careers sites that you can access, giving detailed information about employment requirements and prospects. For example, the University of London one is a good one - <https://london.ac.uk/the-careers-group>
15. <https://www.fish4.co.uk/> is quite a useful job search database that gives careers ideas.
16. The following are some ideas on how to seek out graduate and training opportunities with larger local and national employers. Most have careers or recruitment sections on their websites with links to either graduate employment, A level recruitment, apprenticeships or school leavers

If you have a particular career area that you are interested in it is a good way to start your research. There are obviously loads more.

[www.britishgas.co.uk/](http://www.britishgas.co.uk/)

<https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/>

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/> Suffolk County Council

<https://www.balfourbeatty.com/> Balfour Beatty Engineering etc

<https://careers.willistowerswatson.com/> Willis

<https://search.jobs.barclays/> Barclays Banks, ditto other banks

<https://careers.marksandspencer.com/> Marks and Spencer

<https://www.tesco-careers.com/> Tesco

<https://jobs.axa.co.uk/> AXA Insurance

<https://careers.aviva.co.uk/> Aviva

<https://www.centrica.com/careers/> Gas

<https://www.suffolkjobsdirect.org/Index.aspx>

<https://www.civil-service-careers.gov.uk/> Civil Service careers

<https://www.larking-gowen.co.uk/careers/> accountancy

<https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers.html> Tax and Finance

<https://www.gsk.com/en-gb/careers/> Science and Pharmaceuticals

17. **GAP Years.** The range of information and opportunities is again very wide.  
Early research to clarify your ideas is important.

Search any of these sites: GAP, Project Trust, Operation Raleigh, Teaching Projects abroad.

Year in industry - <https://www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry> - provides work placements in engineering and technology prior to undergraduate courses.

This list only scratches the surface each of you needs to take an individual approach towards your research to fit the right career path and progression route for you.

The key to maximising your choices and opportunities will be to secure the highest grades possible.

If you need advice please ask any member of the sixth form team.

**HIGHER EDUCATION, CAREERS AND GAP YEAR**  
*Some useful websites to help your research.*

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/> covers all aspects of careers and higher education

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**UCAS**

<http://www.ucas.com>

An excellent site which includes information on university and college courses with search facilities. There is also an advice centre for applications, finance, advice for parents etc.

**FULBRIGHT COMMISSION**

<http://www.fulbright.org.uk/>

Includes a beginner's guide to undergraduate study in the US, links to other websites, postgraduate opportunities.

**NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS**

<https://www.nus.org.uk/en/who-we-are/work-for-us/>

Amongst other things, this has a useful links page, insights into welfare, money issues and student media around the country.

**PROSPECTS WEB**

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

A guide to graduate careers and postgraduate study in the UK. It includes useful sections on getting started, what next after a degree in ..., occupational info, job destinations for recent graduates as well as current employment and jobs.

**PUSH ONLINE GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY**

<https://www.push.co.uk/>

This includes the why, what, where, how of applying to university and a guide to money issues.

**STEPSTONE:** A general site.

<http://www.stepstone.co.uk>

**OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION**

*There's absolutely tons of it! Here are just some examples. NB many employers now have their own website so it's always worth doing a search on 'google' first.*

**ARMED FORCES**

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers>

<https://apply.army.mod.uk/>

<https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment/>

The Royal Marines can be found on the Royal Navy website.

**BBC**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/careers/>

**BPS**

<https://www.bps.org.uk/about-us/jobs>

'The British Psychological Society' site has lots of useful information on studying psychology, the range of careers, etc.

**BT** <https://www.btplc.com/careercentre/>  
Info on graduate recruitment with on line applications, placement scheme, modern apprenticeships, R & D vacancies and research fellowships.

**CITB** <https://www.citb.co.uk/about-citb/jobs-at-citb/>  
Explanation of jobs in the construction industry.

**CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MARKETING** <https://www.jobs.cim.co.uk/>  
Information on qualifications, training, career and development, job vacancies.

**NURSING** <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>  
‘The English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting’ site has useful careers info which includes details on degree and diploma courses, explanations on the different branches, entry requirements, the application process, bursaries and grants.

**KPMG** <https://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/>  
KPMG is a large European firm of business advisers. Their ‘jobs’ page has lots of info on graduate, undergraduate and school leaver opportunities.

**LANTRA** <https://www.lantra.co.uk/jobs>  
Lantra is the National Training Organisation for the land-based sector.

**NCTJ** <https://www.nctj.com/>  
The National Council for the Training of Journalists’ site includes careers advice and information on the training of journalists.

**POLICE** <https://recruit.college.police.uk/Pages/home.aspx>

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL** <https://www.suffolkjobsdirect.org/Index.aspx>  
Lists of current vacancies.

**TEACHER TRAINING AGENCY** <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/>

## SITES FOR VACANCIES

**EASTERN COUNTIES** <https://www.jobs24.co.uk/jobs>  
Under ‘Buy, sell and find’ there are vacancies from the 4 East Anglian newspapers.

**MONSTER BOARD** <https://www.monster.co.uk/>  
Includes job search, employer profiles, CV builder and interview tips and a job search agent to help you find the perfect job!

**REED EMPLOYMENT** <https://www.reed.co.uk/>  
Vacancies for accountants, IT professionals, graduates and insurance specialists. Not a good site for entry level jobs.

**JOBS UNLIMITED** <https://jobs.theguardian.com/>  
The Guardian’s job site.

## **GAP YEAR**

**AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FOREIGN STUDY**

<https://www.aifs.com/>

**BUNAC**

<https://www.bunac.org/uk>

**GAP ACTIVITY PROJECTS**

<https://lattitude.org/>

**YEAR IN INDUSTRY**

<https://www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry>

## **OVERSEAS**

**CAREERS EUROPE**

<https://www.careersineurope.eu/>

Working and studying in EU eg finding a job, residence regulations. Also includes studying and working in UK in 6 languages and links to the UCAS and HE institutions' websites.

**COOLWORKS**

<https://www.coolworks.com/>

Opportunities in US - jobs on camps, resorts, ranches, amusement parks, national parks, volunteering, etc.

**EUROPE DIRECT**

[https://europa.eu/european-union/index\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en)

This site includes a route map for job seekers in other EU countries - very comprehensive info on working, living, studying, travelling in the EU and also access to the European employment services EURES.

## CONCLUSION

This booklet has hopefully given you food for thought regarding your future.

I would encourage you to take the time to explore the numerous options contained in these pages.

Next year will be upon you before you know it and I really do not want you to be unprepared.

It is not surprising that those with a plan nearly always go on to succeed. Conversely, those without a plan are the ones who drift without purpose and often go on to underachieve. This to me, is such a shame and a waste of talent.

Aim high, have confidence and develop your dream.

Never let self-doubt hold you captive. It kills more dreams than failure ever will.

You have our backing and support and we are rooting for you in whatever you wish to aspire to achieve.

Someone has to fill those aspirational courses at inspirational locations whether it is studying Physics at Oxford, a nursing degree at Manchester, studying English at Bristol, teacher training at Durham, or joining the Armed Forces and I would rather these courses or positions be filled by a student from Thomas Mills High School Sixth Form than from any other institution!

Let us help you get to where you want to be!

Andrew Cann  
Head of Sixth Form

May 2021