



Urmston Grammar Sixth Form

# Post-18 Options Evening

May 2025

## Session 1

Amy Marshall – Apprenticeships

Faye (MMU) – Degree Apprenticeships

## Session 2

Sixth Form Team – University choices and the application process.



# Urmston Grammar Sixth Form





# Undergraduate Study

## **Option 1**

Straight into study on an Undergraduate course at university.

## **Option 2**

A gap year, prior to studying on an Undergraduate course at university.

Students planning on a gap year should still apply for university whilst in the sixth form but select 'deferred entry'.

- Gap years can be a very positive thing provided they are used effectively to gain more knowledge, experience or travel.
- Students planning a gap year are actively encouraged to have a plan of study lined up for after the gap year.







Some Gap Year companies had virtual stands at the UCAS discovery event that students attended earlier this month. Booklets are available to students in the LRC.





# Applying to University

## Students have already:

- Visited the University of Sheffield for a taster day (28<sup>th</sup> January).
- Attended the Northwest UCAS Discovery Day (5<sup>th</sup> March).
- Had opportunity to apply for a place on numerous summer schools.
- Engaged in 1:1 meetings with Amy Marshall, our careers advisor (ongoing).
- Been encouraged to engage in Spotlight Masterclasses and the super curricular programme
- Have organised summer work experience placements.





# Applying to University

## **Students have already:**

Engaged in presentations on;

- Widening participation schemes - e.g. Manchester Access Programme, Sutton Trust and The Social Mobility foundation.
- How to make the most of Y12 – Huddersfield University
- Choosing the right course and university – Newcastle University
- Why university – University of Leicester
- Degree apprenticeships – Manchester Metropolitan University
- Introduction to post-18 careers – Amy Marshall
- Choosing what are where to study – The University of Manchester
- Future choices - Newcastle University
- Alternatives to university - Amy Marshall
- Post-18 options – Ms Mohamed & Miss Lingwood







# Applying to University

**The following support that is yet to come:**

**Presentations on:**

- Revision techniques – 
- Making the most of work experience – Mrs Kinder
- Writing your personal statement – Newcastle University
- Making a competitive application
- Introduction to OSCAR, Personal Statement software developed by the Russell Group.
- Intro to 

**Engagement in:**

- A mock interview for every student.
- Personal Statement writing workshop (Wednesday 21st May).







# Supporting MDV & Oxbridge students

## **Students have already:**

- Attended preparation for MDV / Oxbridge presentations.
- Selected to attend a conference held by the University of Cambridge (18<sup>th</sup> March).
- Had the option to attend an Oxbridge evening held by the University of Cambridge & Oxford University at AGSB (7<sup>th</sup> May).
- Attended online Masterclasses in specialist subjects.
- Led societies and arranged/attended meetings held in school by students and professionals.
- Been informed of the UCAT & UAT dates and preparations.
- Continue to be informed of relevant webinars, support and events through email group.



# Supporting MDV & Oxbridge students

## Students will:

- Have the option to attend an Oxbridge Practice essay writing, UCAT & UAT skills.
- Practice interview skills.





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**Any student planning to go to university must take the following steps:**

- 1. Decide WHAT to study**
- 2. Decide WHERE to study**
- 3. Complete their UCAS application online, including their personal statement.**
- 4. Some universities and courses may also require:**
  - Aptitude Assessments**
  - Submit essays**
  - Interview/MMI**



# I. Decide **WHAT** to study

- Many students already have a specific career path in mind.
- Many students know a general area of study.
- Some students don't know where to start!

Subjects you enjoy	Subjects you are good at	Discussion with teachers
Joint honours courses or 'Natural Science'	Sandwich Courses 'Year abroad' 'Year in industry'	Which courses lead on to good career opportunities/salaries
Qualification: BA, BSc → MSci	Duration of course: 3,4,5+ Years	Foundation Year
<a href="https://discoveruni.gov.uk">discoveruni.gov.uk</a>	<a href="https://ucas.com/explore/subjects">ucas.com/explore/subjects</a>	<a href="https://www.myunichoices.com">www.myunichoices.com</a>

Approximately 70% of jobs are open to all graduates.





## 2. Decide **WHERE** to study

- **CITY University**



- **CAMPUS**



- **NEW**



- **RURAL**



- **COLLEGIATE**



- **Location:** Live at home, nearby, far away.
- **Cost of living:** Closer to London, more expensive
- **University Rankings:** Oxbridge, Russell Group.....  
Guardian, Times, Complete University Guide
- **Open Days / Prospectuses / Website**

3+ years is a long time. Go visit!	Speak to the academic staff
See the buildings, lecture theatres, labs etc.	Find out the structure of the course
See the accommodation and student areas of the city.	See how easy/costly it is to get there
Speak to current students who are there	Check entry criteria/Interviews



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**In school we will provide as much tailored guidance and support as we can:**

- Mentoring System
- 1:1 careers interview with Amy Marshall
- Enrichment Sessions & Assemblies
- Informal discussions with tutors, subject teachers, sixth form team.

*If we feel any student's post-18 plans are inappropriate, the sixth form team will provide more firm guidance.*



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**UCAS Coordinator**  
***Miss Kathryn Longden***





### 3. Completing UCAS Application

- UCAS stands for 'University and College Admissions Service.'
- Towards the end of this month, Year 12 students will set up their **'UCAS Track'**
- Much of the application is straight forward to complete.
- Students can apply for 5 universities/courses.
- Students must write a 4000 character 'Personal Statement' and this is an extremely important part of the application.
- Students gain guidance on writing their Personal Statement later this month.
- There is a fee of £28.95



# UCAS – Personal Statement

**The UCAS Personal Statement is changing this year...**

The statement is still 4000 characters.

However, it is now broken into 3 'sub-questions' (students can flex how much they include in each option).

- Why do you want to study this course/subject?
- How have your qualifications and studies helped to prepare you for this course or subject?
- What else have you done to prepare outside of education & why are these experiences useful?

*There is no longer a line count (as was previously a requirement).*

*Centres will still read the whole statement (not just one section).*



# UCAS Personal Statement

- Competitive universities/courses actively discourage irrelevant extra curricular and enrichment information from Personal Statements
- Students need to have lots of subject specific content: Supercurricular
  - Background reading
  - Additional lectures/TED Talks
  - Work Experience
  - Relevant hobbies/projects/portfolios
- Last year we set up a super-curricular programme in school to provide more structure for students.
- Students to work on their personal statement with their mentor.  
May take up to 6, 7, 8+ drafts to get to the finished article.
- Students need to be proactive!



# UCAS – Personal Statement

**The UCAS Personal Statement is still 400 words long this year...**

The statement is still 400 words long. However, it is now broken down into sections so you can flex how much they count towards your overall word count.

'Top-flight' universities will still want to see a focus on why they have studied this subject & the qualifications & studies completed.

- **Why do you want to study this course/subject?**
- **How have your qualifications and studies helped to prepare you for this course or subject?**
- What else have you done to prepare outside of education & why are these experiences useful?

*There is no longer a line count (as was previously a requirement).  
Centres will still read the whole statement (not just one section).*





# UCAS – Personal Statement

## **What can/should students be doing now?**

- Researching courses that they are interested in
- Using this to think about 'why' they would want to study this course.
- Completing extra reading & research – super-curricular about each subject (more ideas on the next slide)
- Looking at the skills/attributes required for this course & auditing how much of this they would hit currently.



# UCAS – Personal Statement

**UCAS examples of how students can demonstrate they are interested/have developed skills in a particular area**

In person work experience	Blogs & vlogs	Positions of responsibility	Projects or essays	Mentoring
Virtual work experience	Documentaries	Awards	Books	Tutoring
Work shadowing	Podcasts	Challenges	Influencers	Online subject courses
Paid employment	TED Talks	Personal life experiences	Hobbies	Trips or visits
Volunteering	Articles	Work based learning / training	Clubs	Competitions

## Similarity Detection

- Personal statements are checked against a library of those already in the system, and from a variety of websites and paper publications.
- Each new statement is added to the library after processing.

### **Make sure that your personal statement is your own work**

We will carry out checks to verify that your personal statement is your own work. If your personal statement appears to have been copied from another source we will inform the universities and colleges to which you have applied. They will then take the action they consider appropriate. We will also contact you by email.

Once the student has completed their part of the UCAS  
**Application...**

- The mentor will write a UCAS Reference (checked by a member of the sixth form team).
- Add Predicted UCAS Grades (PUGs). These are subject teachers' best estimates of what grade each student will achieve in their subject.
- PUGs will be based on Assessments, the end of Y12 Exams.





# 3. Completing UCAS Application

- Those applying to Oxford or Cambridge, or for Medicine, Dentistry and Vet Science Courses have a UCAS deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025.
- School deadline is 1 week before this.
- UCAS closes for applications on January 14<sup>th</sup> 2026.
- All students applying to university should have their UCAS forms completed by the end of November 2025.
- As a Sixth Form we aim to have applications sent off within 2 weeks of when the student has completed their part.





## 4. After Submitting UCAS Application

- Many universities choose to make an offer (or reject an applicant) based on the information in the application. Students are informed about through 'UCAS Track'
- Some universities/courses require interviews. Some are quite academic and rigorous (e.g. MDV/Oxbridge/Physiotherapy), others are more informal. Interview support provided in school.
- Some courses may require a portfolio of work i.e. architecture, arts etc.



## 4. After Submitting UCAS Application

- Students can only apply to either Oxford OR Cambridge, not both.
- Many courses require students to complete an aptitude test. E.g. PAT, GAT, ELAT, MAT etc. Completed in school in early November. Students not given their results. Support in subject areas for these assessments.
- Some subjects require essays to be submitted.
- Interviews during December. Sometimes a good amount of notice given, at times only told a few days in advance. Multiple mock interviews held in school to help prepare.
- Offers usually made mid-January.



## 4. After Submitting UCAS Application

- Students can only apply to 4 MDV courses.
- 5<sup>th</sup> choice should be related: Biomedical Science, Dental Technician.
- Medicine courses require completion of the UCAT. We provide support for this in school.
- Interviews usually between December and February. Many interviews are 'MMI'. Significant preparation for these in school.
- Offers usually made mid-January to late-March.





## 4. After Submitting UCAS Application

Other information to be aware of:

- Some universities offer to reduce their entry requirement if:
  - Students put them as their first choice.
  - Students offer a strong grade in their EPQ
  - Students fulfil certain socio-economic criteria  
(i.e. first generation to go to university, certain postcodes)
- Some universities make unconditional offers, however the **'Fair admissions code of practice'** (2022) states that universities *"should avoid applying pressure through their offer making practices, including by avoiding the use of 'conditional unconditional' offers, restricting the use of unconditional offers to specific circumstances, and using incentives appropriately and transparently."*



## 5. What if it doesn't go to plan?

We of course hope that all students achieve the grades needed for their first-choice university, or if not their insurance choice. Every year there are a small number of students who don't get the grades they need though. If this occurs the following options are available:

- On A level results day apply for a priority paper review.
- Find a university place through Clearing Plus.
- Delay going to university for a year. Re-apply the following year (still with the support of Urmston Grammar), completing some re-sits if necessary.



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**Money** - For current information on loans visit:

[Student finance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

- The average debt among the cohort of borrowers who finished their courses in 2024 was £48,470
- The Government expected that before its 2022 reforms only 25% of current full-time undergraduates who took out loans would repay them in full. They forecast that after the reforms this would increase to more than half among new students from 2024/25.
- While the exact amount varies, research suggests that graduates can earn approximately a third more than non-graduates ten years after graduation. The earnings gap continues to grow as careers progress, with graduates potentially earning 37-38% more by age 31.

## Repayment Plan 5

For any student not starting undergraduate university course they will be on the new **‘repayment plan 5’** (started August 2023). This means students will pay 9% of their income over the new lower repayment threshold of £25,000 a year, £2,083 a month or £480 a week in the UK.

This means you’ll start paying your loan back at a lower level and monthly payments will be higher at every level.

Income each year before tax	Repayment plan 2 approximate monthly repayment	Repayment plan 5 approximate monthly repayment
£26,000	£0	£7
£27,000	£0	£15
£27,500	£1	£18
£28,000	£5	£22
£29,500	£16	£33
£31,000	£27	£45
£33,000	£42	£60

Any loan plus interest remaining still unpaid 40 years after graduating is written off.





# Student Loans

## Martin Lewis: Student Loans Decoded (YouTube)

Highly recommended watch.

### MARTIN LEWIS: Student Loans Decoded

How much does it cost  
to go to university?

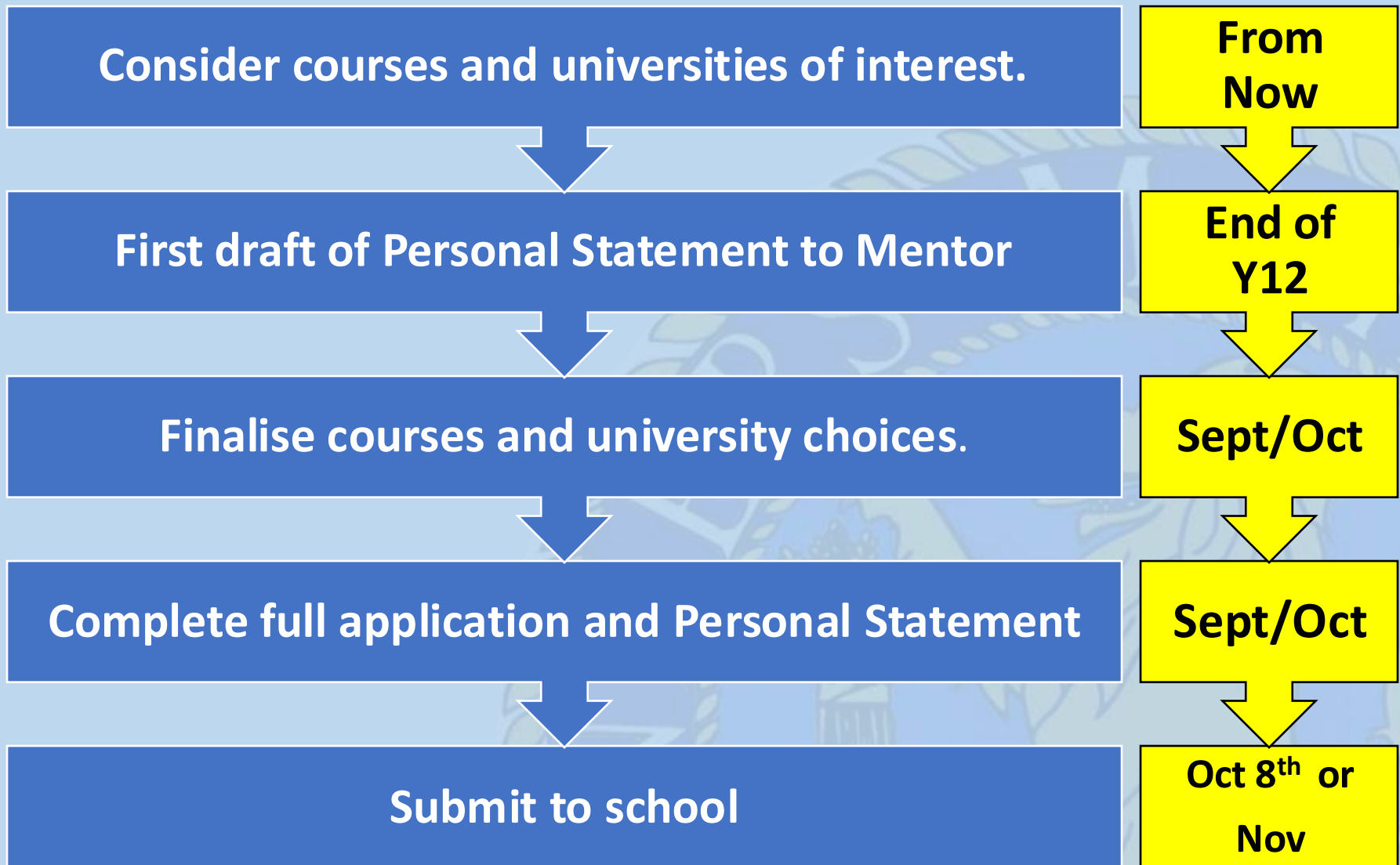
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MoneySavingExpert.com





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Thank you for joining us this evening,  
please let us know if you have any  
questions.