

# Preparing for Higher Education

Mrs K. Lynch-Howard

Mr R. Guy

# Is university still relevant?

- ▶ 25% of jobs are considered graduate jobs.
- ▶ Graduates still have higher employment rates.
- ▶ Graduates still earn more on average.
- ▶ The experience of university gives students a wider world view through meeting a wider variety of people.

# I should consider going to university because.....

- ▶ I am passionate about my subject and want to learn more about it.
- ▶ I have the qualifications and qualities that are required to pursue the degree.
- ▶ It is compulsory for my desired career

# Choosing a Course I

- ▶ **Talk to people!** – Mrs Brown–Hume, teachers, friends, parents, relatives – anyone really
- ▶ **Look at prospectuses;** Mainly online, Heap guides
- ▶ **Use the [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) search tool. Useful section for parents too**
- ▶ **Open Days/Visits** we strongly recommend using the period after internal exams. Weekends and vacations are also good times. Go with a list of questions eg what do graduates from this course go on to do? What makes this course unique? What are the accommodation options? Is there a ‘near miss’ policy?



# Choosing a course II – areas to research

- ▶ Employment opportunities; graduate employment records; internship links
- ▶ Admissions Tests (medicine, law, Oxbridge, but increasingly other universities are using online tests as an early filter)
- ▶ Length of course/cost
- ▶ Popularity – perhaps consider combined honours for lower offer?
- ▶ Teaching and assessment methods
- ▶ Focus of Department; what are academics' key areas of interest? Student/staff ratios – is a department increasing the student intake?
- ▶ Art college – Foundation Year? Speak to Art Dept.

# Choosing a course III

- ▶ Entry requirements. You must match these; check the grades required, including GCSE
- ▶ Be realistic. Minimum entry requirements are minimum entry requirements, if in doubt contact the department and discuss your situation.
- ▶ Everyone competing for the place you want will also meet the minimum requirements
- ▶ Keep a broad choice of university and course
- ▶ Increasing numbers of students are meeting their firm choice, with consequent huge rise in 'near-miss' students dependent on insurance offer. A good insurance choice becomes key.
- ▶ Likelihood of an unconditional offer

# Choosing a Course IV

## Useful Websites:

- ▶ [www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide)
- ▶ [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/)
- ▶ [www.unistats.com](http://www.unistats.com)
- ▶ [www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/gug/](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/gug/)

# Applications are made through UCAS

- ▶ The University and Colleges Admission Service
  - Purely on-line submission
  - Fill in sections on
    - Family history and education
    - Health
    - University choices
    - Education history and results
    - Examination predictions
    - Personal Statement
    - Reference
  - Music colleges, drama schools; apply through CUKAS and directly. It is still important to have a UCAS reference prepared.





# Evidence of Academic performance

- ▶ While many courses only require 3 A levels, we ask you to study 4 at Judd and most students will complete 4.
- ▶ Universities will be aware that selective schools like Judd expect you to take 4 A levels, so you will need to think carefully about how you explain a reduced 'portfolio'.
- ▶ In our experience, taking 4 A levels generally gives an advantage to applicants to selective universities/courses.

# Personal Statement I

- ▶ This crucial document, which may be no more than 4,000 characters in length, is the tool with which you will impress university admissions officers
- ▶ The content should be 70% academic in focus, 30% extra-curricular. Oxford and Cambridge 75:25
- ▶ Work experience, where relevant (eg medicine, veterinary, dentistry, law etc) should be discussed knowledgeably



# Personal Statement II

- ▶ You will be given advice on structure by tutors, teachers, heads of department and by UCAS Coordinator. However, the key word is 'personal', so your expression and content is key. UCAS do run tests for plagiarism! Paying someone online to write your PS isn't a good idea.



# References

- ▶ These are composed by your form tutor, from the subject reports which your teachers write this term.
- ▶ Judd references are positive and honest
- ▶ We include brief contextual comment about school
- ▶ All references are open; your tutor will show you yours when it is completed. If there are inaccuracies, that is the time to change them. Judd references are not sent home.
- ▶ All UCAS forms, including references, are checked by the UCAS Coordinator and Headteacher.



# Predicted grades

- ▶ We are responding to what students do
- ▶ We are optimistic (four times more likely to over predict than under predict)
- ▶ We are right (more often than we are wrong)
- ▶ We are on your side
- ▶ We have to be fair to everyone (other students, future Juddians, universities...)

# Predicted grades

- ▶ Starting point is UCAS exam grade
- ▶ Might be adjusted up (+1) based on work so far and sent home after half-term.
- ▶ **All** predictions reviewed in early July. Early applicants predictions won't change in September.
- ▶ Predictions not already with UCAS reviewed early October. No changes after that.
- ▶ What's the worse that can happen?

# University Choices I

- ▶ You may choose up to a maximum of 5 institutions
- ▶ Applicants for Medicine/Vet Science and Dentistry may only choose 4 such courses
- ▶ You may not apply to both Oxford and Cambridge
- ▶ UCAS currently charge £24 for 2–5 choices, £18 for a single choice. This may well rise.



# University choices II

- ▶ Location – city or campus?
- ▶ Is it a pleasant place in which to live?
- ▶ Will I be able to continue/develop my extra-curricular interests?
- ▶ Is it far enough from home? Is it too far? (petrol costs)





# Some of the (Russell Group) universities Juddians often choose

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



Imperial College  
London

KING'S  
*College*  
LONDON



UNIVERSITY OF  
Southampton



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WARWICK

# The Russell Group was not set up to be the 'best' universities for undergraduates

- ▶ It was primarily a lobby group concerned to influence government allocation of research grants.
- ▶ 'large, research-intensive' universities
- ▶ Lazy journalists use 'Russell Group' as a proxy for the best universities
- ▶ Don't imitate their laziness!

# Not Russell Group

Loughborough

UEA

Kent

St Andrew's

Lancaster

Royal Holloway

Bath

Reading

Oxford Brookes

Brunel

Leicester

Sussex

... and many more, including art/music colleges

*Remember – the course must be the right one for you.*

# Oxford and Cambridge

- ▶ Highly competitive – Early application is necessary
- ▶ Be prepared for rejection ☹️. The number of excellent students applying to Oxbridge far exceeds the number of places available.
- ▶ Excellent GCSE results required
- ▶ Intense, fast-paced study. One-to-one tuition. Short terms.
- ▶ Both Oxford and Cambridge require applicants to sit pre-interview tests in most subjects. It is your responsibility to enter yourself for these and pay the appropriate fee. Tests are taken in school.
- ▶ [www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/apply](http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/apply)
- ▶ [www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/](http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/)

# Interviews I

- ▶ The practice interviews offered here to all Year 12 students in the summer term are an invaluable first step in presenting yourself to others. The feedback from the panel is your first opportunity to discover the impression you create.
- ▶ University interviews may be formal or informal – recent feedback suggests they are increasingly important and not just for early application courses.
- ▶ Competitive courses view them as an oral exam, i.e. an experience to be prepared for. You also need to come across as teachable.



# Interviews II

- ▶ They may be individual interviews, but panel interviews or MMIs (multiple mini interviews) are becoming increasingly common.
- ▶ Be aware of current developments in your field of study and show intellectual flexibility.
- ▶ Admissions Tutors will keep notes on good interview performances – may be useful at decision time.
- ▶ Some universities may make an offer at informal interview.

# Studying Abroad

- ▶ We have experience in supporting applications to the USA.
- ▶ Worth thinking about if you
  - (a) have a US passport,
  - and/or (b) have money
  - and/or (c) play the right sport to a high level
- ▶ Liberal arts degrees
- ▶ Very significant scrutiny of results (back to year 10)
- ▶ Very significant scrutiny of your curriculum and wider activities
- ▶ Universities will ask not just are you teachable, but will we enjoy teaching you?

# Gap Year or Deferred Entry?

- ▶ If you're uncertain about your subject choice, it would be best to take some time before committing to such a significant step.
- ▶ However, some universities and some faculties (eg Maths) do not encourage deferred entry, so check your choices carefully.
- ▶ Do not assume that if you receive offers for a course starting in 2020, that all universities will allow you to defer to 2021.
- ▶ Important to have concrete plans for a gap year: volunteering; employment; internships/work experience; training. All show commitment, drive, eagerness for new experiences.
- ▶ If you choose to apply to university after finishing A levels, you should still apply through the school. Do the process in year 13 anyway.





# Key Dates I

- ▶ UCAS Search tool for 2020 goes live in May 2019. We also have Unifrog, which includes up-to-the-minute course information and has some clever search features. (It also covers apprenticeships.)
- ▶ We brief students on UCAS process in more detail on 15 May – attendance is essential. The updated Judd UCAS guide will be accessible to students and parents on the school website from that date. Unifrog will be launched at around the same time – more details early next term.



# Key Dates II

- ▶ Early applicants submit completed applications to tutors by 20 Sept.
- ▶ 15 October – Oxbridge, Medic, Vet, Dentistry, applications deadline. We aim to have all these applications in well before the deadline
- ▶ All other UCAS applications to be submitted to school by half-term. No enhancement of predicted grades will happen after this point.



# Not a key date: 15 January

- ▶ 15 January is widely advertised as the UCAS deadline
- ▶ This is misleading – many offers are made before 15 Jan
- ▶ Equally, universities with places will still offer to late applicants
- ▶ You know two things: (a) applying in the Autumn makes you look focused and organised, (b) 15 Jan is our ‘deadline’ not yours.

# Offers I

- ▶ Once the application is sent to UCAS it is out of our hands and with your chosen universities.
- ▶ They may choose to interview you, or make an offer directly, or send a rejection. This may take months, depending on course and university

# Offers II

- ▶ When all universities have replied, you must make one 'firm' and one 'insurance' acceptance. The insurance should be your back-stop, but a sensible one i.e. lower than the 'firm' acceptance, but it should be an institution you would be happy to attend.
- ▶ Offer Days are proving increasingly popular with universities and students – we do recommend you follow these up.

# No Offers?

- ▶ UCAS Extra
- ▶ Clearing. Increasingly important as a resource for students and universities, but requires you to be flexible. (Only about 6 universities choose *not* to use Clearing)
- ▶ Adjustment Period
- ▶ Gap year – talk to Mrs Brown–Humes for further advice and suggestions

# Results Day August 2020

- ▶ Do not book holidays over this period!
- ▶ Collect results from school. You may find out whether you have been accepted by your chosen university from 8am on UCAS Track. They cannot, however, tell you your grades. You may still be offered a place, even though you have not made the required grades.
- ▶ Come to school with a fully charged mobile phone.

# A lot to take in!

- ▶ This presentation will go on line
- ▶ All important deadlines will be communicated multiple times in letters, reports and emails!
- ▶ Please feel free to stay and ask questions.

