

## Applying for University in the UK

### Preparation

While completing the Intermediate Certificate, students should begin to research possible courses and universities (5 maximum). The available courses are listed on UCAS ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)) and each university website. *The Times* or *The Telegraph University Guides* are also useful. Prospectuses can be downloaded or ordered through each university website. Universities also host Open Days (dates available on their websites). Most Open Days need to be booked in advance. Parents are usually welcome too. Some universities offer the students lunch and overnight accommodation. These are good opportunities to get the feel of the place.

Check the full entry requirements for each course choice. Courses requiring 3 A Levels will be suitable for ICCE Advanced Level graduates. Students should ensure their Advanced Level subjects cover all subjects required for entry. Some courses have standard entrance exams (UKCAT, QTS, etc.), which should be arranged and prepared for well in advance. Some courses require specific work experience e.g. work shadowing in hospitals or schools.

For Medicine and Veterinary Science, students are required to sit a clinical aptitude test (e.g. UKCAT). Further information is available on the UKCAT website. A separate information sheet is available from ICCE for Medicine applications.

All Music students will be required to attend an audition/interview usually in early December.

### Checks:

- Have they researched courses through UCAS and university websites?
- Have they obtained the Prospectuses?
- Have they booked to attend Open Days?
- Are any specific subjects required?
- Does the student's Advanced Academic Projection cover those subjects?
- Are any standard entrance exams required (UKCAT, BMAT, QTS, etc.)
- Have they done enough relevant work experience?
- Are they working on a portfolio of suitable extra-curricular interests e.g. sports, hobbies, music, drama, work shadowing?
- Are they reading books and researching areas of their specific subject?

# INFORMATION SHEET UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS



## The Application Process

Applications are submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS). Applications open in September for the following academic year. Applications to Oxford, Cambridge, Music Colleges or for Medicine must be submitted by 15<sup>th</sup> October. All other applications must be submitted by 15<sup>th</sup> January.

The Intermediate Level Certificate should be completed before applying. However, if the course only requires the Intermediate Certificate, the General Certificate should be completed before applying. Universities are not informed of the student's other choices, although an application made before 15<sup>th</sup> October indicates the student has also applied to Oxbridge or for Medicine or Music.

## Personal Statement

The UCAS application requires a Personal Statement (4000 characters or approx. 600 words). Because of the large numbers of students applying for university, most places do not usually interview. Therefore much hangs on the Personal Statement, which must be carefully prepared. The student must be concise, relevant, precise, positive, enthusiastic, passionate and dynamic in their writing.

Catch attention in the opening paragraph with a dynamic statement and write in short sentences to facilitate effective communication. Use linking words or ideas which cause flow between the paragraphs. Students should write compelling evidence about themselves which will make admission tutors want to select them for a place.

Students must cover their suitability for the course they have selected and show that they are well researched in the content of the subject. Show that they are qualified for it, that they have the ability to cope with the demands of the study and they can work well under pressure. Mention that they have good communication skills, that they will easily be able to adjust to life in university and that they have a genuine desire to learn more about their subject. Briefly state the area of their current studies that has caught their interest and show how they have followed up their interest with journals, websites or books. Draw attention to any work experience or conferences they have participated in that are related to their study programme and experiences which might affect their knowledge of the subject (part-time job, business enterprise scheme). Other items could include community charity work, any 6<sup>th</sup> form committees, assistance with school events (play/concert productions), D of E awards, other societies and prizes and certificates obtained which are not on the UCAS form.

Students should be clear in their direction, write about their future career plans and stress how suitable the course will be in the furthering of their ambitions.

Oxbridge Application, an online company, sells good courses on interview technique and will vet personal statements and offer advice, for a fee. Sometimes paying this would be a good investment.

# INFORMATION SHEET UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS



## What happens next?

Some Universities will contact the student directly for copies of their Transcripts/Certificates. Scans can be emailed with further information on ICCE, which can be obtained for the ICCE office.

If interviews are required, prepare carefully and reread any books mentioned in the Personal Statement. It would help for students to have a few mock interviews. There are books and advice available online.

Between March – April, students will receive the offers or rejections through their UCAS account.

Generic rejections should be followed up requesting a specific reason from the university.

If the student receives no offers, there is a system for re-applying the same year. Follow UCAS' instructions. If they still receive no offers, there is always clearing, or polishing up the CV and trying again, after a gap year working in an area relevant to the subject/course choice.

## Clearing

Universities and colleges fill the remaining places on their courses through clearing. Clearing is available from July – September. If students have their results and haven't received any offers (or haven't met conditional offers), they can use Clearing from July. Clearing vacancies will be listed on the UCAS search tool.

If the student is interested in a course with vacancies, they should contact the university directly to ask if they will offer them a place. Give the university the student's Clearing number (stated in UCAS account) and Personal ID number so they can see the student's application.

The UCAS website has further information on Clearing.

## Certificate submissions

Students that accept a conditional offer will need to email a copy of their final ICCE Transcript directly to the university admissions to confirm their place. The university will inform the student when the Transcript should be submitted. The deadline is usually around the end of August.