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INTRODUCTION

Each year, the vast majority of Cranleighans go on to tertiary education, either directly after their A Level results or following a gap year. Students apply through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service), the organisation which processes university applications in the United Kingdom. Increasingly, however, students are looking at options beyond these shores; there has, over the last few years, been a marked increase in interest in universities in both the United States of America and Canada.

The process of applying to universities can initially appear a daunting one and, for this cohort, we appreciate that there might be particular anxiety, given the disruption through which we have been living. The purpose of this booklet is to ensure that Cranleighans, and their parents, are clear about

the process, the timeline, how to complete an application form and how best to research their options. It is as accurate as it can be at the time of writing but, of course, the timeline might.

If you have any queries or concerns about our provision of university advice, please contact Mr Gordon Neill – gjnn@cranleigh.org

THE UCAS TEAM AT CRANLEIGH



MR GORDON NEILL (gjnn@cranleigh.org)

Mr Neill is Head of English and Head of University Applications. He is your first point of contact with regards to both UCAS and overseas admissions and oversees all Upper Sixth Formers' applications.



MR WILL CHADWICK (wec@cranleigh.org)

Mr Chadwick teaches Modern Languages and is one of two Assistant Heads of University Applications. He assists Mr Neill with the Upper Sixth applications process and is a point of contact for any Upper Sixth student pursuing a UCAS-based university application.



MR FREDDIE LAUGHTON (fpal@cranleigh.org)

Mr Laughton is Head of Biology and is one of two Assistant Heads of University Applications. He is particularly responsible for Old Cranleighans who decide to make a university application in the year following their A Levels. He also has specific responsibility for those students who are applying to read Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine.



MRS AMANDA READER (aer@cranleigh.org)

Mrs Reader is Head of Careers. If you have any inquiries about post-Sixth Form life outside of university, Mrs Reader is your first point of contact.



MR ADAM ROTHWELL (asjr@cranleigh.org)

Mr Rothwell is Head of History and has specific responsibility for those students who are applying to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge (known collectively as Oxbridge).

THE TIMELINE

LENT TERM 2023

Each student will have an individual meeting with Mr Neill, Mr Chadwick or Mr Laughton for a preliminary discussion about university plans and to clarify how the application process works.

SUMMER TERM 2023

During PSHCE sessions, the Lower Sixth will be given presentations on university options and writing a personal statement.

18th JUNE 2023

University Visits Day.

25th JUNE 2023

Cranleigh UCAS Day. Lower Sixth students will be registered on the UCAS website, shown how to complete their UCAS form and given the opportunity to meet Old Cranleighans from a range of different universities.

END OF SUMMER TERM 2023

Preliminary UCAS grades given to students, in the wake of internal Lower Sixth exams. These are intended to give students parameters within which they should be researching their courses. Students wishing to apply for Oxbridge or Medicine should be being predicted at least AAA at this stage — preferably higher.

All other students have the opportunity to improve their predicted grades, should their work in the first half of the Michaelmas Term of their Upper Sixth suggest that they are working at the level necessary to attain a higher grade.

22nd SEPTEMBER 2023

Internal school deadline for **Oxbridge applicants and Medics** to complete their applications. This is earlier than the UCAS deadline of October 16th, to enable us to ensure that there are no issues with students' applications.

18th OCTOBER 2023

Final UCAS grades (what UCAS calls predicted grades) confirmed for students. All students should have completed their **personal statements** by this point.

13th DECEMBER 2023

School deadline for all UCAS applications to be submitted.

18th MAY 2024*

The UCAS deadline by which students should have received decisions from their five chosen universities. At this stage — if not before — they should decide which offer to make their Firm Acceptance (their F choice) and which offer to make their Insurance Acceptance (their I choice).

8th JUNE 2024*

Final deadline for replying to offers.

In order to submit an application, students must book an appointment with Mr Neill or Mr Chadwick during the Michaelmas Term of their Upper Sixth year when they believe they have finished their part of the process; they will do the final check of each application and send it off to UCAS.

*: provisional dates, based on previous years' precedents



CHOOSING A COURSE

MORRISBY

Pupils are encouraged to use the Morrisby tool (www.morrisby.com) in order to enable them to make choices about university that will be a good match for their skills set and interests. The Study Interest questionnaire will help them to narrow down their search and support them in their research. In order to answer these questions, we strongly encourage you to consider the following seven key factors when looking at courses and universities:

1. Do you have a specific career in mind?

If you want to be a doctor, an engineer or a physiotherapist, for instance, your choice of course will be very straightforward. If you're less clear what you want to do in the future, remember

that many employers aren't looking for graduates with a specific degree; they see a degree more as an indicator of desirable skills, such as the ability to analyse, reason, communicate, etc. If you are not sure what you want to do, your best bet is to take a degree in a subject in which you are genuinely interested, as you are likely to emerge with a better class of degree.

2. What are the entry requirements for your chosen course?

Are they in line with your predicted grades? If, for instance, you are predicted BBB, there is very little point in applying for a course that demands A*AA.

3. In what ways does the course content vary between universities?

If you decide to study Modern Languages, for instance, some courses are heavily literature-focused, whereas others have a broader cultural/political focus. Make sure that the course content matches your interests.

4. How is the course assessed?

This can differ wildly between institutions. If you read English at Loughborough, for instance, the course is 100% coursework; if you read English at UCL, you will have to do some six-hour exams. Think carefully about whether or not you perform better in exam conditions and choose your courses accordingly.

5. What do graduates from the course go on to do?

In addition to looking at what universities say themselves, it's also worth looking at this website:

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>

Its 'Graduate Prospects' rating, out of 100, is instructive; it shows you the percentage of graduates from that course who leave the university to take up employment in positions for which a degree is desirable or essential.

6. Would you prefer to live in a city or somewhere smaller?

Universities like Leeds, Bristol and Liverpool are located in the heart of big, bustling cities and provide a very different experience from the likes of Durham and St Andrew's, where the university dominates the town. There are also campus universities, such as Warwick and Bath, which are very self-contained.

7. How academically challenging do I want my course to be?

If you are academically very able and ambitious, you may wish to apply to Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Bristol, Bath, Imperial College, etc. Equally, you may not be looking for such a traditionally academic course. On the next three pages are details of the different sorts of institutions you may wish to consider.

CONTACTING AND VISITING UNIVERSITIES

It is, of course, very useful for you to make contact with universities. There are a number of ways you can do this:

1. Organised Visits

We intend to offer a number of university visits on Friday 18th June to universities within a three-hour journey of Cranleigh. Oxbridge applicants' visits to Oxford or Cambridge are organised separately by Mr Rothwell.

2. Campus Tours

Campus tours can be arranged throughout the year at most universities. You are guided around the university, usually by a current undergraduate who will give you their impression of what studying at that particular institution is like. These are not usually subject specific, so you might not be able to meet admissions tutors, etc. on a campus tour.

3. Open Days

Open Days are designed to enable you to meet students and staff at a university. There will be a range of talks and tours available and you will be able to look at the accommodation and facilities that a university offers. Cranleigh students are allowed to attend **two Open Days during term time**, provided it does not clash with a major school commitment. This can be **either** in the Lower Sixth or the Upper Sixth. You need to let your Housemaster or Housemistress know when you are going to attend an Open Day so that they can confirm that there is no such clash. Although universities offer Open Days on site, it is also worth noting that the vast majority

of institutions are now doing virtual tours and virtual open days, which students are warmly encouraged to explore.

4. Private Visits

If you have a friend or a family member at a university you can, of course, organise a private visit.



RUSSELL GROUP UNIVERSITIES

The Russell Group is an academically prestigious group of universities united by a desire to be at the cutting edge of research and to offer their students an excellent academic experience. The Russell Group comprises the following universities:

University of Birmingham	London School of Economic & Political Science (LSE)
University of Bristol	University of Manchester
University of Cambridge	Newcastle University
Cardiff University	University of Nottingham
Durham University	University of Oxford
University of Edinburgh	Queen Mary University of London
University of Exeter	Queen's University Belfast
University of Glasgow	University of Sheffield
Imperial College London	University of Southampton
King's College London	University College London (UCL)
University of Leeds	University of Warwick
University of Liverpool	University of York

A degree from a Russell Group university is certainly prestigious and desirable. As a result, offers from these universities tend to be pretty demanding — for many courses in these institutions, A*AA and AAA are standard offers. There are, however, some Russell Group universities, such as Cardiff, Glasgow and Liverpool, where you will find quite a lot of courses offered at AAB and ABB. Indeed, there are some courses at very exclusive universities (recent examples include Neuroscience at Bristol, Modern Languages at Exeter, Biology at Warwick) where we have seen Cranleighans receive AAB offers.

It is also worth stressing that some of the most well-known and respected universities in the country are not part of the Russell Group and that this in no way diminishes the quality of a degree from these institutions. Universities such as Bath, East Anglia, Lancaster, Loughborough, Reading, Royal Holloway, St Andrew's, Sussex and Swansea are popular and prestigious places — and rightly so.

WHERE DO CRANLEIGHANS GO?

Over the last five years, of the Russell Group universities and equivalent, the most popular institutions are listed below, along with the number of students who have been admitted there in that period of time:

UNIVERSITY	ADMISSIONS	UNIVERSITY	ADMISSIONS
Exeter	48	Southampton	9
Newcastle	45	Swansea	9
Durham	41	York	9
Bristol	40	Reading	8
Nottingham	40	Cambridge	7
Cardiff	39	Liverpool	7
Edinburgh	23	Oxford	7
Loughborough	21	Lancaster	6
Bath	19	Surrey	6
Leeds	19	Imperial College London	5
Manchester	18	Sheffield	5
Birmingham	11	UCL	5
King's College London	9	St Andrew's	4

UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE

The University Alliance is a group of universities that pride themselves on being engaged and in tune with the business needs of employers. Courses at these universities can often be innovative and exciting and their admission criteria are not generally as strict as the Russell Group universities'. Universities in the University Alliance include the following:

Anglia Ruskin University	Leeds Beckett University
Birmingham City University	Middlesex University
University of Brighton	Oxford Brookes University
Coventry University	Robert Gordon University
University of Derby	University of South Wales
University of Greenwich	Teeside University
University of Hertfordshire	University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE)
Kingston University	

These can be excellent choices for students whose predicted grades are in the BBB–CCC range. For some career-specific degree subjects, such as Physiotherapy, Forensic Science, Events Management, etc., these universities are amongst the highest ranked in the country.

WHERE DO CRANLEIGHANS GO?

Traditionally, for Cranleighans, the most popular of the University Alliance institutions, by a considerable distance, has been Oxford Brookes. Again, see below for the most popular universities amongst this group over the last five years.

Oxford Brookes University (46)

UWE Bristol (3)

OXBRIDGE

Admission to the universities of Oxford or Cambridge is very competitive; they are universities with an outstanding global reputation and are regularly ranked amongst the top 10 universities in the world. Graduates from these universities are highly valued in the workplace. In order to make a realistic application to either university, you should anticipate that you will attain at least A*AA in your A Levels.

Once you decide you wish to pursue an Oxbridge application, you will be allocated a subject-specific mentor, who will aid you in your preparation. You will meet your mentor at least once a week, for rigorous exploration of your chosen subject. The purpose of mentoring is a) to challenge and inspire you academically, b) to enable you to write a more academically informed personal statement and c) to prepare you for interview.

With regards to interviews, many urban myths circulate about them, most of which are ingenious fabrications. They are only one part — albeit significant — in the process and considerable weight is also placed upon a student's academic record, personal statement, school reference and, where applicable, performance in aptitude tests. Oxford's policy is to interview three students for every place available; Cambridge interview 80% of all applicants. In practice, this means that Oxford is a little more ruthless/selective in

deciding whom to interview. If you are invited for interview, the school will ensure that you are given plenty of interview practice before the real thing.

If you decide to apply to Oxford or Cambridge, it is important to remember, when writing your personal statement, that these universities are exclusively interested in your academic ability and potential. An admissions tutor at Keble College, Oxford, described references to achievements in sport, music or drama as "dead air" — an Oxbridge applicant should spend as little time detailing these as possible. Instead, you should seek to emphasise your interest in, and aptitude for, your chosen subject.

When applying to Oxford and Cambridge, you apply not to the university but to a specific college. Colleges differ quite considerably in terms of age, size, architecture and character — your teachers will be happy to advise you with regards to college choice but we would also recommend that you visit the colleges in which you are interested, to enable yourself to make a more informed decision.

Anyone considering making an Oxbridge application should contact Mr Rothwell.

MEDICINE

Gaining a place to study Medicine at university is fiercely competitive and demands genuine commitment on the part of the applicant. You can expect to spend five or six years reading for your degree, followed by foundation years in hospitals. You need to be academically very strong (you should be realistically expecting to attain at least A*AA at A Level in Chemistry and, preferably, two from Biology, Mathematics and Physics) and, in your application, you will be expected to demonstrate evidence of sustained commitment to Medicine through work experience. This can be in hospitals, health centres, care homes or hospices.

A large number of medical schools in the UK also require their applicants to sit an admissions test; they have a large number of very highly qualified candidates and these admissions tests are used to identify the students who are most likely to be able to cope with the demands of a medical degree.

UK CLINICAL APTITUDE TEST (UKCAT)

The UKCAT is currently used by a large number of medical schools as part of their selection procedure. It focuses on identifying a broad range of qualities — both academic and behavioural — that are most desirable in a doctor.

BIOMEDICAL ADMISSIONS TEST (BMAT)

The BMAT is an academically challenging test used by some prestigious and competitive universities to discriminate between academically exceptional candidates. Institutions requiring the BMAT include: Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS), University of Cambridge, Imperial College London, Lancaster University, University of Leeds,

University of Oxford, Royal Veterinary College and University College London.

The website below offers a thorough introduction to anyone considering studying Medicine:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/career/studying-medicine/becoming-a-doctor>

WHERE DO CRANLEIGHANS GO?

In the last five years, nine Cranleighans have made successful applications to read Medicine at the following universities:

King's College London	(2)
University of Bristol	(2)
Brighton & Sussex Medical School	(1)
University College London	(1)
University of Edinburgh	(1)
University of Nottingham	(1)
University of Southampton	(1)

Anyone considering reading Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine should contact Mr Laughton.

STUDYING IN NORTH AMERICA

This is rapidly becoming a growth area in independent schools. Students interested in North America need to decide whether they wish to apply to the USA, to Canada or to both.

USA

If you are applying to the USA, you will apply to individual institutions, as opposed to UCAS through which you apply to five universities simultaneously. The platform you use for most American applications is the Common App, which you access through the following website:

<http://www.commonapp.org/>

SATS / ACTS

The large majority of American universities have traditionally expected students to offer SAT or ACT scores. These are both academic aptitude tests. In this particular climate, however, it is definitely worth checking whether universities are still requiring SAT or ACT scores; due to the pandemic, many of them have declared themselves either **test optional** (i.e. you have the option to declare test scores but they are not required) or **test blind** (i.e. test scores play no part in their admissions process).

For the SAT, there are a Reading and Writing Paper and a Mathematics Paper, both of which are multiple choice. You get a mark out of 800 for each paper, giving you a total out of 1600. There is also an optional essay paper. In addition to this, there are individual SAT subject papers available in Maths, Science, English, History and Languages; these are compulsory in some schools (though

by no means all) and can be a very useful way of showing a university that you have real strength in a specific area.

For the ACT, there are four sections: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science. It is worth noting that the Science test is more concerned with problem-solving skills than scientific knowledge and, as a result, differs considerably from what we could consider conventional science. Each section is individually scored out of 36 and an overall rounded average is taken, giving you a final mark out of 36.

In terms of choosing whether to take SATs or ACTs, the following distinction, in terms of learner profile, might prove instructive:

The ACT suits:

- All-rounders who are comfortable with both Maths and English
- Students who are able to process information quickly
- Students who are able to make good decisions under time pressure
- Students who are not as comfortable with Maths

The SAT suits:

- Students who are typically doing Maths or Further Maths A Level
- Students who are technical problem solvers who enjoy Maths and Algebra in particular
- Students who take longer to process information and work slowly but methodically
- Students who struggle with reading speed



CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

This can initially appear daunting — there are thousands of universities in the USA and distinguishing between them can seem very tricky. Our students have, in the last few years, secured places at the following: Brown, Colgate, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, George Washington, Harvard, Haverford College, Miami, Michigan, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, USC and Wake Forest. Theoretically, you can choose to apply to as many American universities as you like but we would recommend you compile a list of perhaps 6-12 schools in which you are interested. In terms of narrowing things down, this is a very useful filter:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>

Students are also strongly encouraged to arrange a meeting with Mr Neill, who will be able to help them find a range of universities which best suits their abilities, preferences and interests.

WHAT CAN I STUDY IN THE USA?

One of the appealing things about studying in the USA is the flexibility it offers. You do a pretty broad range of courses in your first year before you choose your Major (your primary academic focus) and your Minor (your secondary subject). In the UK, you are locked in to a specific subject when you go to university; in the USA, you have time to decide where your academic interests lie. It's worth noting, though, that Medicine and Law are both primarily post-graduate courses in the USA and are seldom offered to undergraduates.

APPLYING TO UNIVERSITIES IN THE USA

American universities will usually require a Counsellor's Letter (written by Mr Neill in conjunction with Tutors and HsMs) and either one or two teacher's recommendations, in addition to transcripts of exam results and school reports provided by the school. It is recommended that you contact the teachers whom you would like to write these recommendations as soon as possible

in your Upper Sixth year, to give them plenty of time to get them written. American universities also tend to view applications holistically — in other words, they like to get a sense of the whole person. Evidence of extra-curricular interests, service to others, leadership, etc. is highly prized by American admission tutors.

EARLY ACTION / DECISION

If you have your heart set on one specific American university, you can apply for an Early Decision. This is an application usually submitted in November of your Upper Sixth, before the regular deadline. If offered a place, it is binding — you must accept it. The benefit of that, of course, is that you hear early — in December — and, if you are successful, the whole process is out of the way. You can apply for Early Decision to **only one university** — it's a commitment, in essence. Not all universities offer it but many do, including many of the most prestigious ones.

There is also Early Action, in which you can apply early to a wider number of universities, who will then give you an early decision. Unlike Early Decision, Early Action is not binding and you can change your mind. There's a small group of very competitive schools (Boston College, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford and Yale) which have Restricted Early Action, which is like a combination of Early Action and Early Decision — if you apply for Restricted Early Action to any of those five, you can't apply early to anywhere else, but the offer is non-binding. If you choose not to pursue any of those paths, you can apply for Regular Decision to as many as you want.

CANADA

Canada has some extremely prestigious universities — primarily the University of British Columbia (UBC), McGill and the University of Toronto, all three of which are regularly ranked

amongst the top 50 universities in the world. Like American universities, Canadian universities have considerable flexibility and employ a very comparable major–minor system.

There are differences, however. Canadian universities don't generally require SATs — they are very familiar and comfortable with A Levels. There is also the fact that, out of all the major English-speaking countries, Canada has made a conscious decision to use university graduates to advance their economy in a way that is really quite far-seeing. Provided you successfully complete your degree, they make it easy for you to gain a three-year work permit. It's called the Post-graduation work permit. After that, you can apply for permanent residency, should you so choose, via a system called Express Entry — this is basically designed to enable graduates who have chosen to settle in Canada to live there permanently in as hassle-free a manner as possible. It's nowhere near as easy in America, where finding a job in the USA as an international student can be very tricky. Last, but not least, it is, in general, considerably less expensive to go to university in Canada.



WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

A personal statement is the part of the application in which you sell yourself to universities as the sort of student to whom they wish to offer a place. It can be no longer than 47 lines or 4000 characters, including spaces. This is not a lot of space and therefore you need to be succinct in expression and selective about what you include.

It is important to remember that this is an academic statement. The great majority of the personal statement (about 80% for the majority of universities, closer to 100% if you are applying for Oxbridge) should be focused on the subject that you want to study. You need to explain why you want to study the subject, including as much detail and as many specific examples as possible.

For instance, if you are applying for English, a weak personal statement might include something like this:

"I am keen to study English at university because I have always enjoyed reading, from a very young age. Whether it's poetry, novels or plays, I really enjoy getting to know new characters and new stories. In English lessons, I enjoy commenting on the material I have read and learning about new ways of reading the text. I also enjoy sharing my opinions with others and hearing other people's views about various authors. I am good at writing essays and pride myself on being able to write in clear, accurate English..."

A good personal statement, on the other hand, might read more like this:

"I am keen to study English at university because it will give me the opportunity to explore some of my favourite authors, genres and periods in much greater detail. Having read 'Ulysses' by James Joyce and 'To the Lighthouse' by Virginia Woolf, I was struck by how, in the early part of the twentieth century, authors started to experiment more and more with narrative form. There was clearly a shift from the Victorian use of the omniscient narrator to the unpredictable, unreliable narrators of the Modernist period and this is something I am keen to explore further at university..."

Show the admissions tutors why the subject appeals to you. What have you read? Have you attended lectures, followed a podcast or even written a blog on any aspect of your chosen subject? If so, make sure that you mention it in your personal statement. If you are intending to study one of your A Level subjects at degree level, explain which parts of the course have really interested you and motivated you to apply to study this subject.

It's also a good idea to explore the more overgrown paths. Admissions Tutors can get rather bored reading the same material again and again. Demonstrating a greater breadth of interest than your competitors can be really beneficial to your application.



FILLING IN YOUR APPLICATION FORM

The last 20% of your personal statement can detail what you are interested in and have achieved outside the classroom. Many universities like the idea of having students with a broad range of interests. At the same time, if you can ensure that your last sentence or two refer back to your chosen course, that is a very good way to conclude a personal statement.

Remember that all five universities read your personal statement — therefore, you should not mention a specific university or course.

This section will probably be most useful when you are actually filling in your UCAS form. There are a number of different sections to a UCAS form — key points and common mistakes are highlighted for each section. In the appendix at the conclusion of this booklet, there is a sample UCAS application so you can see how the final application should look.

1. Personal Details

Only type your first name — there is no need to declare your middle names.

2. Contact and Residency Details

It is best if you use a private e-mail address, as your school e-mail shuts down the year after you leave the School.

Your Nominated Access should be someone you trust to contact universities on your behalf. This should be either a member of your family, a Housemaster, a Tutor or Mr Neill.

3. Education

You **must** declare **all** your public examination results. Even if you got a 2 or a 3 in one of your GCSEs, everything must go in.

You **must** distinguish between your International GCSEs and your ordinary GCSEs.

If you can't remember the specific exam board for a specific GCSE subject, check your exam results on your Pupil Portal, where you will be able to find this information.

If you don't know which exam board a specific subject is using for A Level, ask the Head of Department in that subject — be careful here, as mistakes are time-consuming to rectify.

Remember to include your EPQ, if you are doing one.

For A Level and EPQ grades, make sure you enter 'Pending' — this will enable your Housemaster/ Housemistress to enter your predicted grades.

Don't forget to put 'Below honours degree level' where it says 'Please state the highest level of qualification you expect to have before you start your course.'

4. Employment

You are unlikely to have completed much relevant employment. It is fine to leave this section blank.

5. Nationality Details

If you have two passports, put 'British' as your nationality; it makes things a lot easier!

6. Supporting Information

If you have been diagnosed with a Special Educational Need, such as dyslexia, for which you are given special consideration in exams, you need to include this in your supporting information.

7. English Language Skills

If English is not your first language, please be aware that you will be expected to demonstrate a proficiency in English. It is, therefore, prudent for students in this situation to take an IELTS or TOFEL

English Proficiency Test in advance of making a UCAS application.

8. Finance and Funding

If you are from the United Kingdom, choose 'UK, CHI, IoM or EU student finance services'; do not choose 'Private Finance' unless you are an international student.

If you are from the United Kingdom, choose your Local Education Area from the drop-down list — this will be Surrey for those of you who live in the county.

9. Diversity and Inclusion

'Parental Education' is asking whether or not your parents have been to university. This is for the purpose of statistical research. The questions about whether you have been in care and your parents' occupational background are also primarily for UCAS's statistics. You should answer them but they don't play a part in whether or not universities offer you a place.

10. Personal Statement

See the separate section on writing a personal statement.

11. Adding Choices

You can make up to five choices. If you are applying for Medicine, you can only apply for four Medicine courses — your fifth course is usually BioMedical Sciences.

You can apply to more than one course at a single university, although it is important that they are pretty closely linked — otherwise, your personal statement will sound very odd. For instance, it would be perfectly OK to apply to the same university for courses in Physical Geography and Geography & Oceanography but it would be very strange to apply to the same university for courses

in, say, Physical Geography and International Business Management.

Universities don't know which other universities you are applying to — each application is judged entirely on its own merits.

Your choices are listed in alphabetical order — there is no way for you to put them in order of preference.

If you are definitely taking a gap year, you will need to apply for 2025 entry — in that case, you should put 'Yes' for deferred entry.



RECEIVING AND RESPONDING TO OFFERS

When you have submitted your UCAS application, your chosen universities will respond with one of three decisions – they might offer you an unconditional offer (pretty rare) or a conditional offer or they might inform you that your application has been unsuccessful. You will then have to make a decision.

WHEN TO REPLY TO OFFERS

You can only reply to offers once you have received all your decisions.

In the majority of cases, you should have heard back from all your universities by 18th May of your Upper Sixth year.

The final deadline for responding to universities is usually at some point in the first two weeks of June, in your Upper Sixth year. Please be aware, though, that the UCAS system often struggles to cope with the amount of users it has in the last couple of days. You are strongly encouraged to ensure that you have replied to universities by the end of Long Leave in the Summer Term of your Upper Sixth at the very latest; many students, of course, will have replied long before that.

HOW TO REPLY TO OFFERS

You choose one of your offers as your Firm Acceptance – this is your first choice. If you meet the conditions laid out in your offer, you will be going to that university.

You choose one of your offers as your Insurance Acceptance – this is, in essence, your back-up plan. Please try to ensure that your Insurance Acceptance offer is at least one grade lower than your Firm Acceptance. If all your offers are the same, speak to Mr Neill, who will be able to tell you which universities have traditionally been more flexible in terms of accepting students who haven't quite made their grade offers.

After choosing one Firm Acceptance and one Insurance Acceptance, you must decline all your other offers.

Please be aware that, if you fulfil the offer for your Firm Acceptance choice then, on Results Day, your Insurance choice automatically disappears. Do not, therefore, think that you can hedge your bets and decide whether you will attend your F or your I choice on Results Day, as this is not possible.

WHAT A COMPLETED APPLICATION LOOKS LIKE

* It should be stressed that this is a fictitious application – the personal statement is based in part on exemplar material provided by the University of Southampton.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title	Mr
First name	Thomas
Last Name	Pinch
Date of Birth	10 April 2006
Gender:	Male

CONTACT & RESIDENCY

Mobile Number	07721247839
Other Telephone Number	
Email Address	tepinch@hotmail.co.uk
Postal Address	42 Skimpole Road, Bramley, Surrey

Nominated Access

Do you want someone else to act, or speak on your behalf about your application?	Yes
Full name of nominee	Anna Pinch
Relationship to you	Mother

Residency details

Is your home address the same as your postal address?	Yes
Area of permanent residence	Surrey
Residential category	UK Citizen, England

EDUCATION

Cranleigh School, Cranleigh (64325, 09/2018 – 06/2023, FT)

Extended Project (Level 3)

EPQ	Pending	06/23	Edexcel
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GCE Advanced Level

Economics	Pending	06/23	AQA
English Literature	Pending	06/23	OCR
Mathematics	Pending	06/23	Edexcel

GCSE (Grade 9-1)

Geography	9	06/20	AQA
Latin	7	06/20	OCR
Spanish	7	06/20	AQA

International GCSE

Biology	7	06/20	Edexcel
Chemistry	7	06/20	Edexcel
English Language	8	06/20	Edexcel
English Literature	9	06/20	Edexcel
History	8	06/20	Edexcel
Mathematics	8	06/20	Edexcel
Physics	8	06/20	Edexcel

Please state the highest level of qualification you expect to have before you start your course.

Below honours degree level qualifications.

Employment

No employment details provided

Nationality

What is your country of birth?	United Kingdom
What is your nationality?	UK National
Dual Nationality	

Supporting Information

Have you ever lived or worked in the EU, EEA or Switzerland?	No
Do you have a parent, spouse or civil partner who is an EU, EEA or Swiss national?	No
Universities have a wide range of support to students with disabilities. Please select any disability you have from the list below.	Dyslexia

English Language Skills

Is English your first or primary language?	Yes
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Finance and Funding

What will be your main source of funding for your studies?	UK, ChI, IoM or EU student finance services
Student Support Arrangements	Surrey

Diversity and Inclusion

Equality Monitoring

Ethnic Origin	White
National Identity	English
Dual National Identity	

Care Support Information

Have you been in care?	No
Parental education	Yes
Occupational background	Lawyer

More About You

Every year, over 60,000 students with a physical and/or mental health condition, long-term illness, or learning difference apply through UCAS to study at a university or college in the UK, and access a range of support available to help with their studies, day-to-day activities, travel, or lifestyle.

Would you consider yourself as living with any of the following? Dyslexia

Would you consider yourself estranged from your parents (i.e. you're not in contact with and supported by your parents)? No

Do you have any caring responsibilities? No

Are you a parent or do you have parenting responsibilities? No

Do you have official refugee status or limited leave to remain, or are you seeking asylum? No

Do you have a parent or carer who currently serves in the UK Armed Forces, or who has done so in the past? No

Have you ever served in the UK Armed Forces? No

Are you currently receiving free school meals, or have you been in receipt of free school meals during your secondary education? No

Personal Statement

I believe that the three strands of Philosophy, Politics and Economics can combine to help to explain many of the events that take place in the world today. It is my wish to enhance my understanding of these events that has drawn me to this course. I am intrigued by the way in which this degree combines the sort of quantitative analysis and rigorous examination of ideology required in Economics and Politics respectively, with the less absolute conclusions of Philosophy; having read Thomas Nagel's 'What Does It All Mean?'; I came to appreciate the intellectual satisfaction that can be derived from considering a question whilst knowing that there can be no definitive answer. I enjoyed examining Nagel's arguments and trying to find ways of either validating or disproving them. I was particularly interested in the distinction between dualism and physicalism and this is something I would be keen to learn more about at university.

A political area that I am eager to explore in more detail is how Communist regimes developed around the world, in places such as the USSR and China. Although the Communist party is in power today in the latter, there is international opposition to its apparent abuse of human rights. It is also, however, one

of the emerging BRIC economies and it would be interesting to look into its economic policies, to see if this success might be attributed to Communism. JS Mill said in 'Principles of Political Economy' that Communism was just as valid a concept as Capitalism but that the success of either was dependent on their 'futuraity' — how they evolved as time went on. Economically, the USSR often stagnated, so the weakening or abandonment of Communist economic principles in China could mean that this was an aspect that needed to change in order to preserve the ideals of political Communism. I would be interested in looking in depth into the original Marxist theory, to see if alleged repression in countries such as Laos, China and Vietnam is influenced by it, while also looking at how Communism has developed over time and the extent to which, if at all, it has abandoned its original Marxist ideals.

The A Level subject I most enjoy is Economics; not just as a means of understanding global markets but also as a means of understanding England's social and cultural history. In a lecture on 'Why Study Economics at University?' by Dr Christian Soegaard, of the University of Warwick, I heard him refer to Economics as "the study of scarce resources" and this was a phrase which resonated with me when, in English, I was studying Victorian literature. It led me to explore the importance of Economics in the novels of Charles Dickens for an Extended Project Qualification; through looking at novels such as 'Hard Times', 'Little Dorrit' and 'Nicholas Nickleby'; I learned of the ruthlessness of self-serving Victorian capitalists such as Josiah Bounderby and Ralph Nickleby and how dire an effect the economic policies of the time had on the standard of living; sufficient money and adequate housing should surely not be "scarce resources".

Outside lessons, I am a keen rugby player and have represented the 2nd XV for the last two years. I also play water polo for the school and strongly believe that team sports teach us important life lessons about commitment and selflessness. On Wednesday afternoons, I have done voluntary work at a local school for students with special needs and have really enjoyed building a meaningful relationship with some of the children there. I have also completed Grade 6 in the trumpet and am a keen member of the school's Big Band.

During my A Level studies, it has become increasingly clear to me that I would love to take my rapidly evolving interest in Philosophy, Politics and Economics to a higher level. The prospect of focusing exclusively on these subjects and enhancing my understanding of how they link together is a very appealing one and I am really excited by the prospect of studying for this degree at university.

Choices

University of Exeter (E14)

Politics, Philosophy and Economics (LOV0)

Campus: Main Site (-)	Live at home while studying:	No
Start date: October 2023	Deferred entry?:	No
	Point of entry:	1

Lancaster University (L14)

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (LOV0)

Campus: Main Site (-)	Live at home while studying:	No
Start date: October 2023	Deferred entry?:	No
	Point of entry:	1

University of Leeds (L23)

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (1LV0)

Campus: Main Site (-)	Live at home while studying:	No
Start date: October 2023	Deferred entry?:	No
	Point of entry:	1

University of Southampton (S27)

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (LOV1)

Campus: Main Site (-)	Live at home while studying:	No
Start date: October 2023	Deferred entry?:	No
	Point of entry:	1

University of York (Y50)

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (LOV0)

Campus: Main Site (-)	Live at home while studying:	No
Start date: October 2023	Deferred entry?:	No
	Point of entry:	1

Predicted Grades

Cranleigh School, Cranleigh (64325, 09/2018 – 06/2023, FT)

Extended Project Qualification

A

GCE A Levels

Economics	A
English Literature	A
Mathematics	B

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