



Achieving excellence through Curriculum and Culture



POST 18 CHOICES PARENTS' INFORMATION EVENING

Work Hard

Be Kind

Aim High

Our Ambition

*Is to **empower** our young people,
through education, to have the
knowledge and **skills** **you** need to
be successful in life and make a
positive difference to **your**
communities*

OUTLINE OF THE SESSION

- Apprenticeships
- The UCAS application process
- Studying abroad
- Gap Years



CHOICES



APPRENTICESHIPS



**HIGHER
EDUCATION**



**STUDYING
ABROAD**



**GAP
YEAR**



**GETTING A
JOB**

APPRENTICESHIPS



THE A-Z OF APPRENTICESHIPS

There are over 600 possible apprenticeship programmes which exist. It would be easier to name an industry that does not have them.

- Accounting and Taxation
- Architect
- Boat Builder
- Building Surveyors
- Civil Engineer
- Cyber Security Technician
- Data Analyst
- Doctor (from 2023)
- Early Years
- Ecologist
- Farrier
- Food Technologist
- Game Programmer
- Geospatial mapping
- Harbour Master
- Historic Environment Adviser
- Internal audit professional
- Intelligence analyst
- Journalist
- Junior 2D artist (visual effects)
- Knitted product manufacturing
- Laboratory scientist
- Licensed conveyor
- Midwife
- Marketing Manager
- Nuclear Scientist and Engineer
- Nursing
- Operational firefighter
- Orthodontic therapist
- Paralegal
- Physiotherapist
- Quality practitioner
- Rail engineer
- Research scientist
- Social worker
- Software Developer
- Teacher
- Town planning assistant
- Utilities engineering
- Veterinary nurse
- Vehicle damage assessor
- Water process technician
- Workplace pensions consultant
- Youth worker

www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/#

APPRENTICESHIP LEVELS

Level 2

Intermediate
Apprenticeship

Level 3

Advanced
Apprenticeship

Level 4-7

Higher
Apprenticeship

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Not one deadline
- Advertised throughout the year
- Large organisations with multiple application processes may recruit earlier than smaller local organisations
- Higher apprenticeships with a Sept/Oct start date tend to recruit in the Autumn term of Year 13

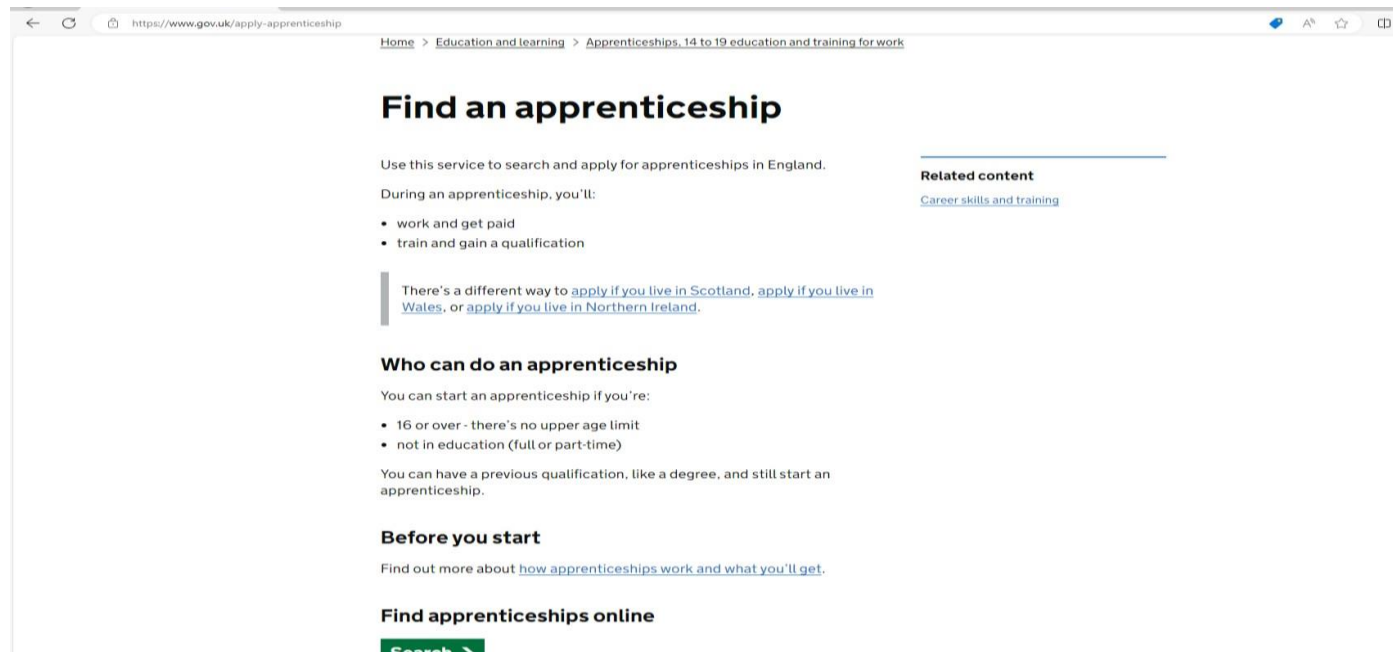
APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications are made directly through the company or the education provider.
- There is no limit on the number of applications students can make.
- The application process will vary across vacancies, students could be asked for:
 - ❖ CV and Covering Letter
 - ❖ Application Form
 - ❖ In App/Site application
- Students can apply for universities and apprenticeships at the same time!

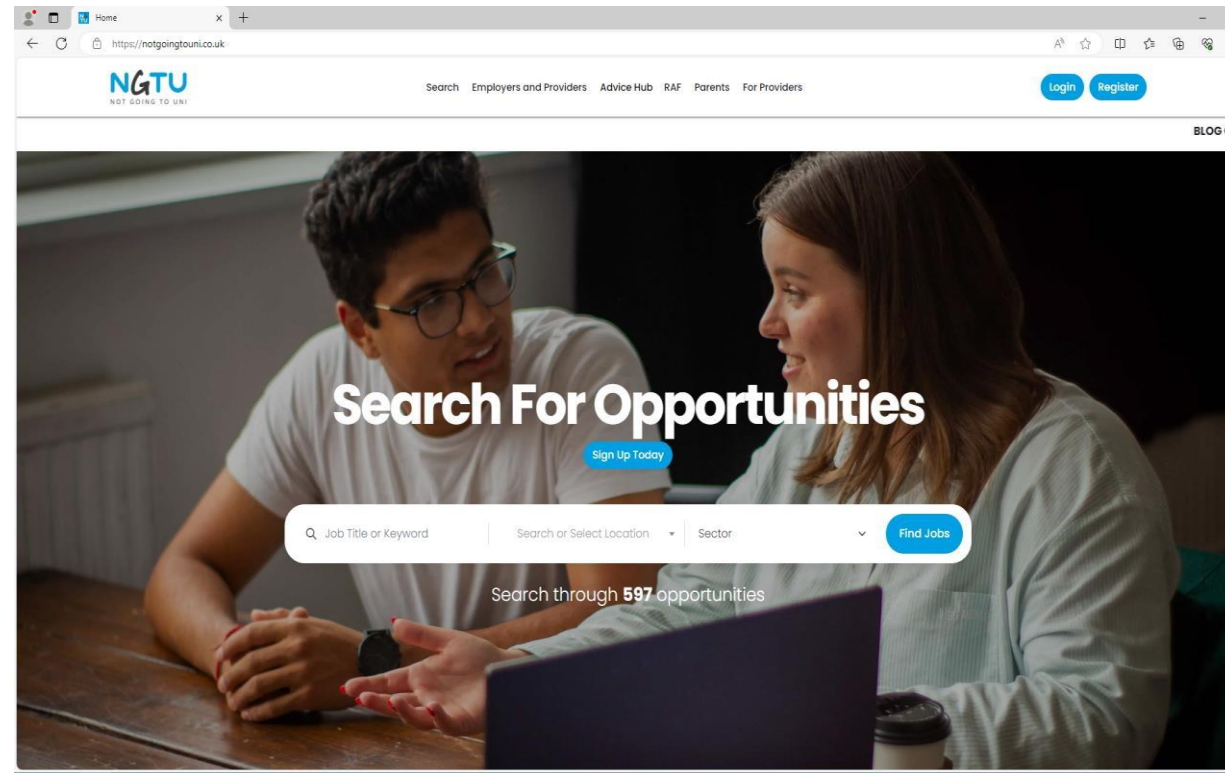
RESEARCHING APPRENTICESHIPS

- With the following websites students can easily explore apprenticeships; learn more information and see a live selection of apprenticeship vacancies.
- Set alerts to stay up to date.

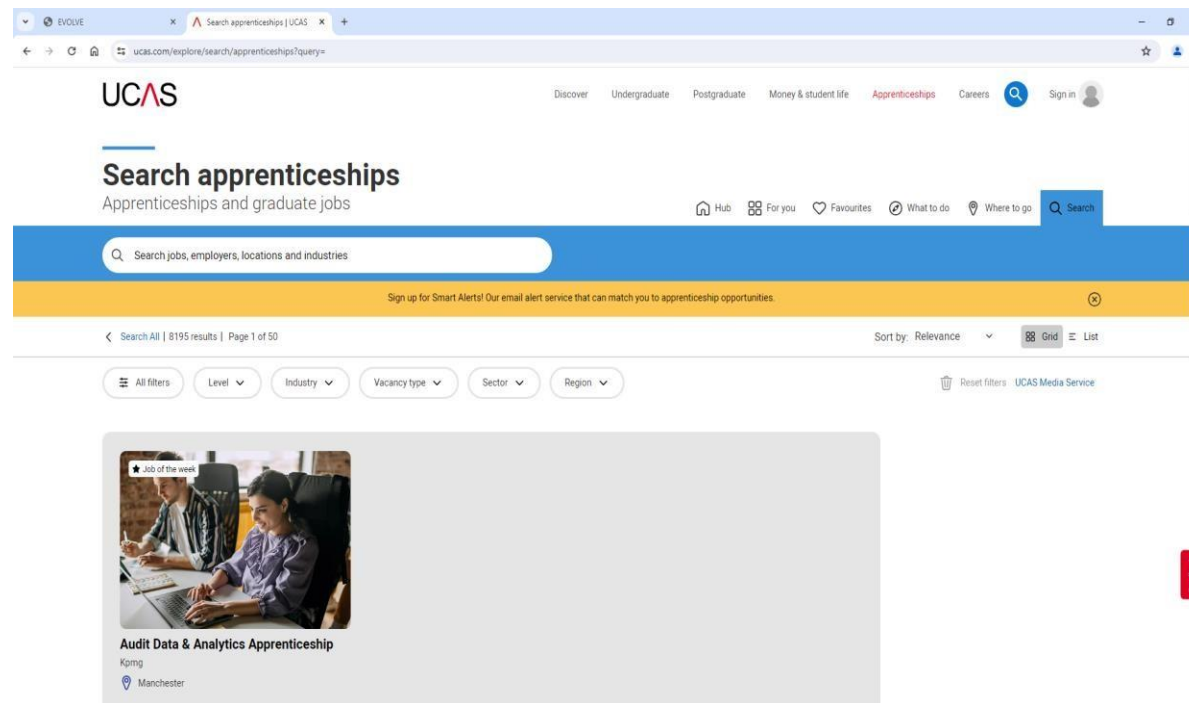
- [Find an apprenticeship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)



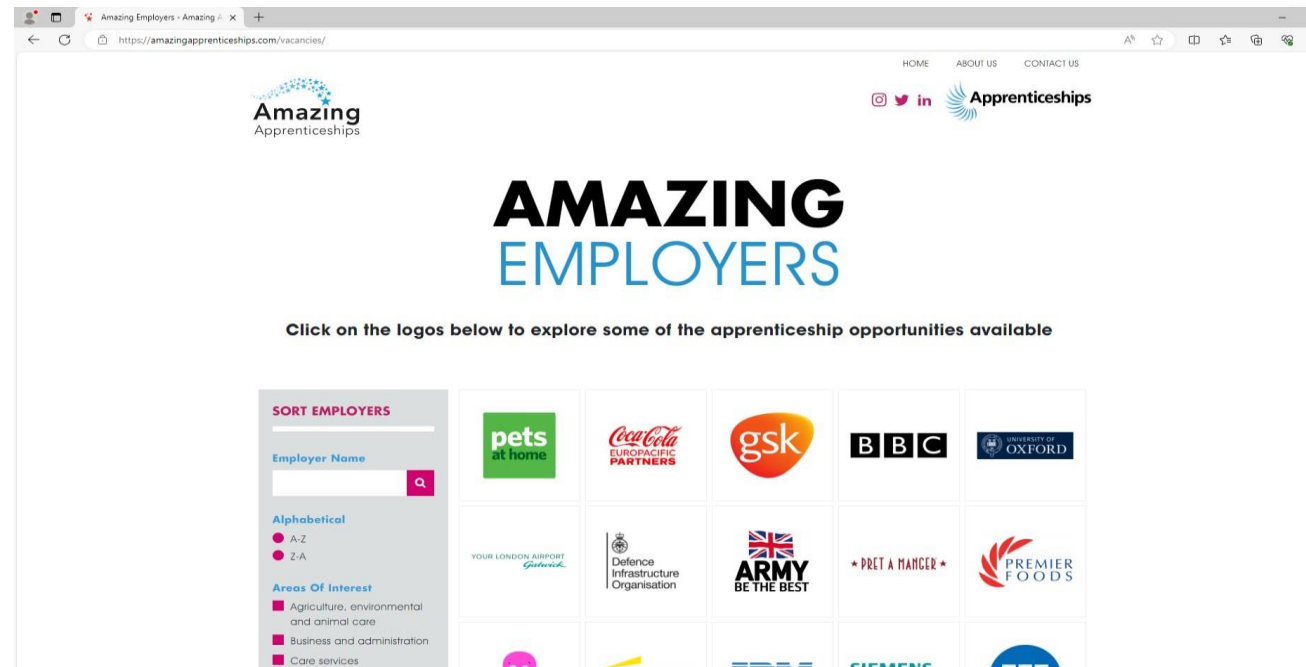
- [Home \(notgoingtouni.co.uk\)](https://notgoingtouni.co.uk)



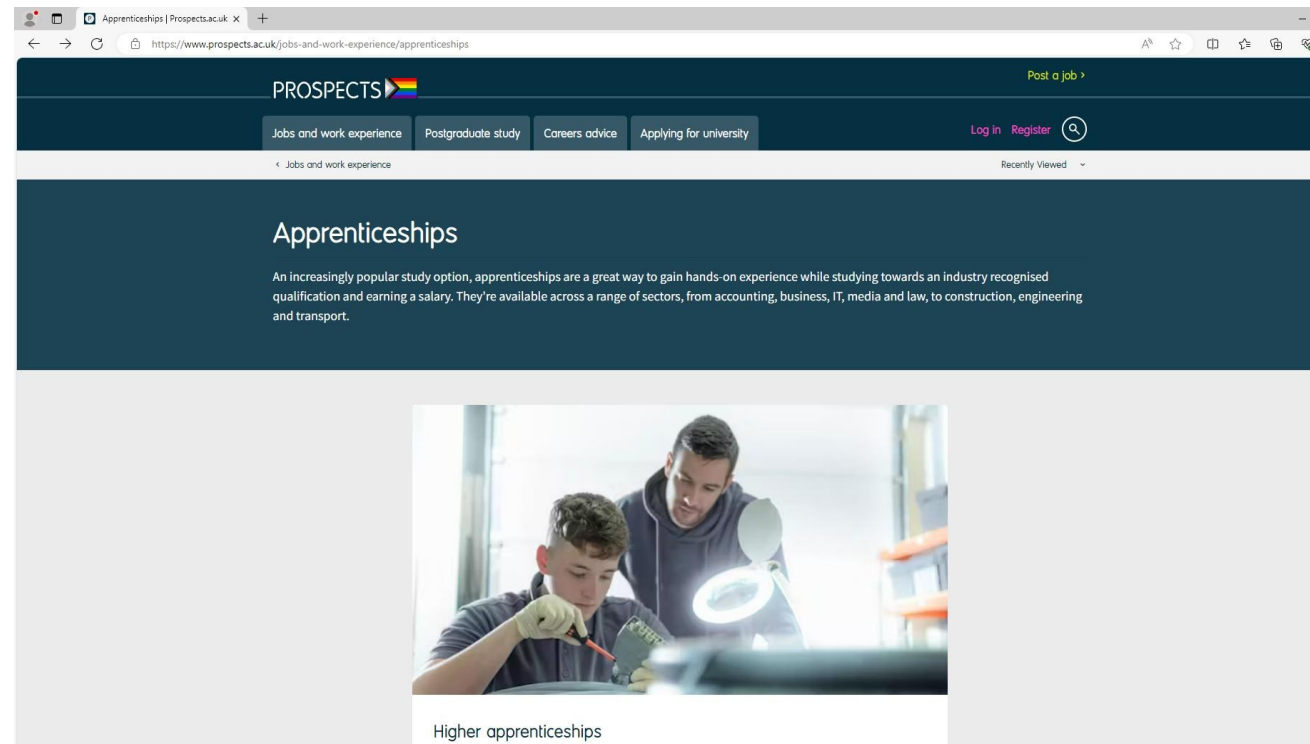
- <https://www.ucas.com/explore/search/apprenticeships?query=>



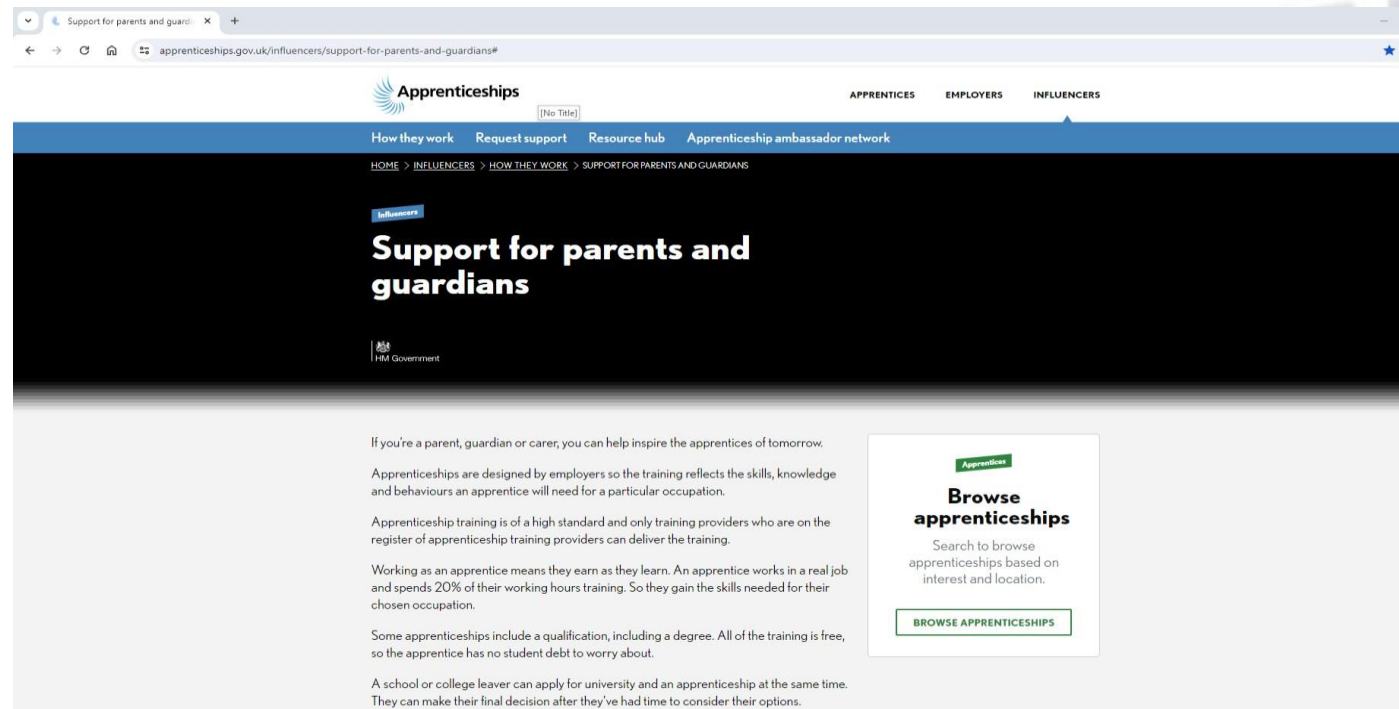
- Amazing Employers - Amazing Apprenticeships



- [Apprenticeships | Prospects.ac.uk](https://www.prospects.ac.uk)



- <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers>



UCAS



UCAS APPLICATION PROCESS



Student registers for a UCAS Hub account to carry out research and start application.



Student completes all sections of the application and send it to their school/college.



Teacher or adviser reviews the application and adds reference and predicted grades.



Applications are sent to UCAS by the school or college on behalf of the student.



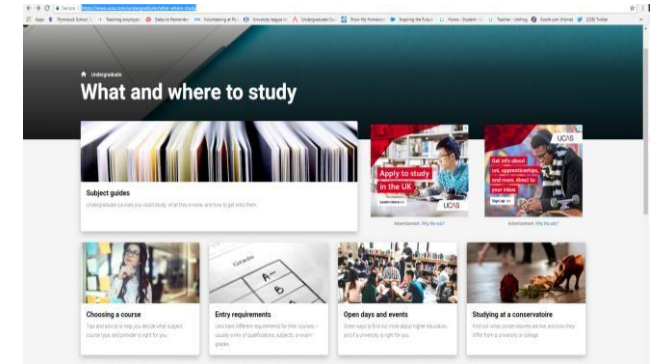
Universities and colleges make their decisions on the application.

TARIFF SYSTEM

Tariff Points	GCE AS	GCE A Level	BTEC (QCF) Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC (QCF) Certificate	OCR Cambridge Technical	Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
56		A*	D*		D*	
48		A	D		D	
40		B				
32		C	M		M	
28				D*		A*
24		D		D		A
20	A					B
16	B	E	P	M	P	C
12	C					D
10	D					
8				P		E
6	E					

RESEARCHING COURSES

- UCAS search tool www.ucas.com
- There is help for parents too.
www.ucasdigital.com/widgets/parents_tool/index.html#/home
- **League Tables:**
- <https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2024/sep/07/the-guardian-university-guide-2025-the-rankings>
- <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>
- <https://university.which.co.uk/>
- <https://www.whatuni.com/>



THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

- Graduate employment rates <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/graduate-labour-markets/2024> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/insights-and-analysis/what-did-graduates-do-after-higher-0>

Student satisfaction (value for money)
<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings?sortby=student-satisfaction>

- Teaching Excellence Framework <https://www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/guides-resources-and-training/tools-and-resources-to-help-you/a-guide-to>
- Finance – course fees, grants, travel and living costs
- Accommodation – university halls or private residences
- Extra curricular activities

VISIT, VISIT, VISIT

<https://www.ucas.com/applying/before-you-apply/what-and-where-to-study/university-open-days/virtual-tours>

<https://www.ucas.com/explore/search/events?query=>



KEY DATES

- **2 September 2025** First day for receipt of completed applications.
- **2 October 2025** Deadline for most UCAS Conservatoires music courses
- **15 October 2025*** Application deadline for courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/science, and dentistry, and courses at Oxford **or** Cambridge.
- **14 January 2026*** Equal consideration application deadline.

*6PM



KEY DATES

13 May 2025	UCAS Undergraduate Apply opens for 2026 entry. Conservatoire applications will open for 2026 entry on the 10 July 2025
2 September 2025	First day for receipt of completed applications.
2 October 2025	Deadline for most UCAS Conservatoires music courses. Check conservatoires websites for information.
15 October 2025*	Application deadline for courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/science, and dentistry, and courses at Oxford or Cambridge.
14 January 2026*	Equal consideration application deadline. Deadline for most conservatoire undergraduate dance, drama or musical theatre courses. You must check the specific course deadlines as these vary.
26 February 2026	Extra opens.
4 July 2026*	Last date for applications before Clearing.
5 July 2026	Clearing Opens

APPLICATION COST

- Students can apply for up to 5 courses.
- The fee is £28.50 in total.



THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

- The only section your son or daughter has control over
- Their chance to market themselves individually
- One personal statement for **all** choices*
- Maximum 4,000 characters
- Minimum 350 characters per question
- American spelling/grammar check – students are advised to put it into a word document before transferring it to UCAS.

* Sometimes universities will accept an additional personal statement.

HOW TO BEGIN: AREA OF INTEREST



SUPER-CURRICULAR

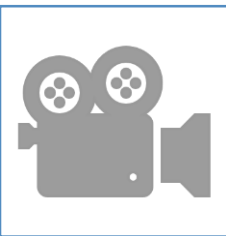


Reading

(books, articles, websites, journals...)

Listening

(podcasts, news programmes...)



Watching

(films, documentaries, TED Talks, YouTube...)



Writing

(EPQ, essays, articles, blog posts...)

Societies

(debating, politics, poetry, coding...)



Projects

(programming, robotics, host event...)

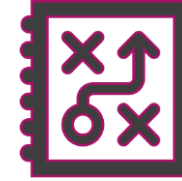


Plymstock School

Achieving Excellence through Curriculum and Culture



WESTCOUNTRY
SCHOOLS TRUST



Competitions

(Olympiad, CREST, Essay competitions...)

Trips

(museums, galleries, exhibitions, tours...)



Academic Courses

(MOOCs, lectures, seminars, webinars...)

Experiences

(work experience, summer school...)



Work Hard

Be Kind

Aim High

SUPER-CURRICULAR: DEVELOPMENT

What did you learn?

What did you think?

What surprised you?

What are you going to do to learn/discover more?

What can you do with this new knowledge?



What do you agree with?

What do you disagree with?

What impact has it had on you?

Question 1

- Why do you want to study this course or subject?
 - This paragraph is normally the hardest to write.
 - You don't have to start at the beginning.
- Some starting points:-
 - Reasons for wanting to study the subject – career aspirations
 - What sparked your interest in the subject
 - Wider reading

Question 2 – How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

- Choose 1 or 2 key areas of academic interest
- Build up links between areas of interest, super-curricular activities you have done and your own opinions
- Demonstrate development through creating clear links
- Mention what areas you are interested in within the subject
- Be specific
- What have you done to further this interest?

Question 3 – What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experience useful?

- What did you do?
- Why did you do it?
- What did you learn from that activity?
- Reflect on the skills and lessons you have learned not just what you have done
- Apply learning to experiences
- Give **specific evidence** and **examples** of areas of interest and achievement.

Tips

- Only include it if you have something worth mentioning
- You don't have to include every book you have read
- Make sure you explain what you learnt from the book or article
- Its your personal statement not that authors – don't use quotes unless explained
- You must include the author when referencing a book and full title

REFERENCES

- References are requested by Mrs Littler from subject teachers once students have completed a first draft of their personal statement and are showing progress.
- The reference has 3 sections:-
 - Contextual Information about the school;
 - Extenuating Circumstances (not applicable for all students);
 - Information about the students (focus on the subject they are applying for, their capabilities as a student, achievement to date, wider engagement with the subject, relevant work experience/volunteering, roles in the school).

PREDICTED GRADES

- Predicted grades will be based on current data and performance throughout Year 12 (and beginning of Year 13) and professional judgment.
- For UCAS we take a holistic view and teachers will use evidence gathered over year 12 and the beginning of year 13.

SCHOOL TIMELINE

- **Stage 1 (May onwards)**

Students begin completing the online application form and start drafting Personal Statement. Ongoing personal statement feedback will be provided.

- **Stage 2 (2 weeks)**

Once a student is nearing completion of their personal statement their teacher references will then be requested. Students will need to arrange their first meeting. Their application form and personal statement will be checked.

- **Stage 3 (2 weeks)**

Once the teachers have written their subject reference we will then compile the schools reference, incorporating the subject references.

- **Stage 4**

Whilst the reference is being finalised students will need to book their 'sending off' meeting with Mrs Littler. Students need to communicate effectively about their application. Students will need to pay the application fee prior to sending off their application (or alternatively bring a debit card with them to the appointment in order to pay the application fee). Students entitled to FSM are eligible to waive the UCAS fee.

- **Stage 5 (Final Stage)**

At the 'sending off' meeting, the schools reference and predicted grades will be input, the entire application will be checked again to ensure no mistakes and will be submitted to UCAS.

Students who are applying for the early deadline (15th October) will be given priority in September.

Students must be proactive, the sooner they are ready, the sooner their application can be sent.

HOW DO INSTITUTIONS MAKE A DECISION?

- Predicted grades and all entry requirements satisfied
- GCSE results
- Personal Statement
- Reference
- Interview
- Entrance exams: UCAT / LNAT/ MAT/ STEP etc.
- Contextual data



UNIVERSITY DECISIONS

Provider decisions:

- Unsuccessful
- Unconditional offer
- Conditional offer – qualifications and achievements and/or UCAS Tariff points

Once all decisions are received, students will select their final choices (the deadline for this is set by UCAS and depends on the date of receipt of the last university response):

- One as their **firm** choice
- One as their **insurance** choice (recommended)
- All other offers are declined

Track will show their **reply date** -this will be around June 2026.

IF NO OFFERS ARE RECEIVED...

Extra (Available from February to July)

- If all five choices have been used and they have no offers/rejected all offers.

Clearing (Available from end of June)

- If no offers have been received, or have applied after 30 June deadline.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT?

- Use the parents'/guardians' section of the UCAS website/Parent Guide publication – www.ucas.com/parents and sign up for the newsletter.
- Offer to attend open days (if you can), you may have a different perspective to offer.
- Don't book family holidays at key times (results day 2026).
- Make sure that everything that is sent to them is read carefully.
- Support their management of the application.
- Look at the finances with your them.

STUDENT FINANCE

studentfinance
england

TUITION FEE AND MAINTENANCE LOAN

- All students no matter what their household income are entitled to the full **tuition fee loan**.
- Maintenance support is available to help with living costs while in higher education through the **Maintenance Loan**.
- The Maintenance Loan is repayable.
- All students applying for University are entitled to receive some maintenance support.
- The amount of Maintenance Loan received depends on household income, and where you will be studying (inside or outside London).
- Maintenance support is broken down into three amounts which are paid directly into the student's bank account each term.

MAINTENANCE LOAN

Maintenance Loan Assessments are based on :-

The income of the parent(s) that the student lives with – including step-parents or new partners living in the household

Based on taxable income for the last complete tax year (Tax year ending April 2025 for student starting in Academic Year 2026/27)

Current Year Income Assessments option where income has dropped by at least 15% since the previous tax year (redundancy, retirement)

A guide is available for parents, explaining this process.

<https://media.slc.co.uk/sfe/currentyearincome/index.html>

ENTITLEMENT 2025/20 FIGURES – NON-MEANS TESTED

What you could get as a minimum

Student Finance England (SFE) provide a Maintenance Loan to help you with your living costs. All eligible students can get the basic non-income assessed minimum amount of Maintenance Loan to help with these costs. The minimum amount you can get is:

Living arrangements	2024 to 2025 academic year	2025 to 2026 academic year
Living with your parents	£3,790	£3,907
Living away from your parents, outside London	£4,767	£4,917
Living away from your parents, in London	£6,647	£6,855



ENTITLEMENT 2025/26 FIGURES – MEANS TESTED

The tables show some examples of what the difference is between the maximum Maintenance Loan and the amount you could get based on your [household income](#).

2025 to 2026 academic year

Living with your parents

Household Income	Maximum Maintenance Loan	Amount available to you	Difference from maximum
up to £25,000	£8,877	£8,877	£0
£45,000	£8,877	£5,897	£2,980
£58,349	£8,877	£3,907 (only eligible for minimum amount)	£4,970

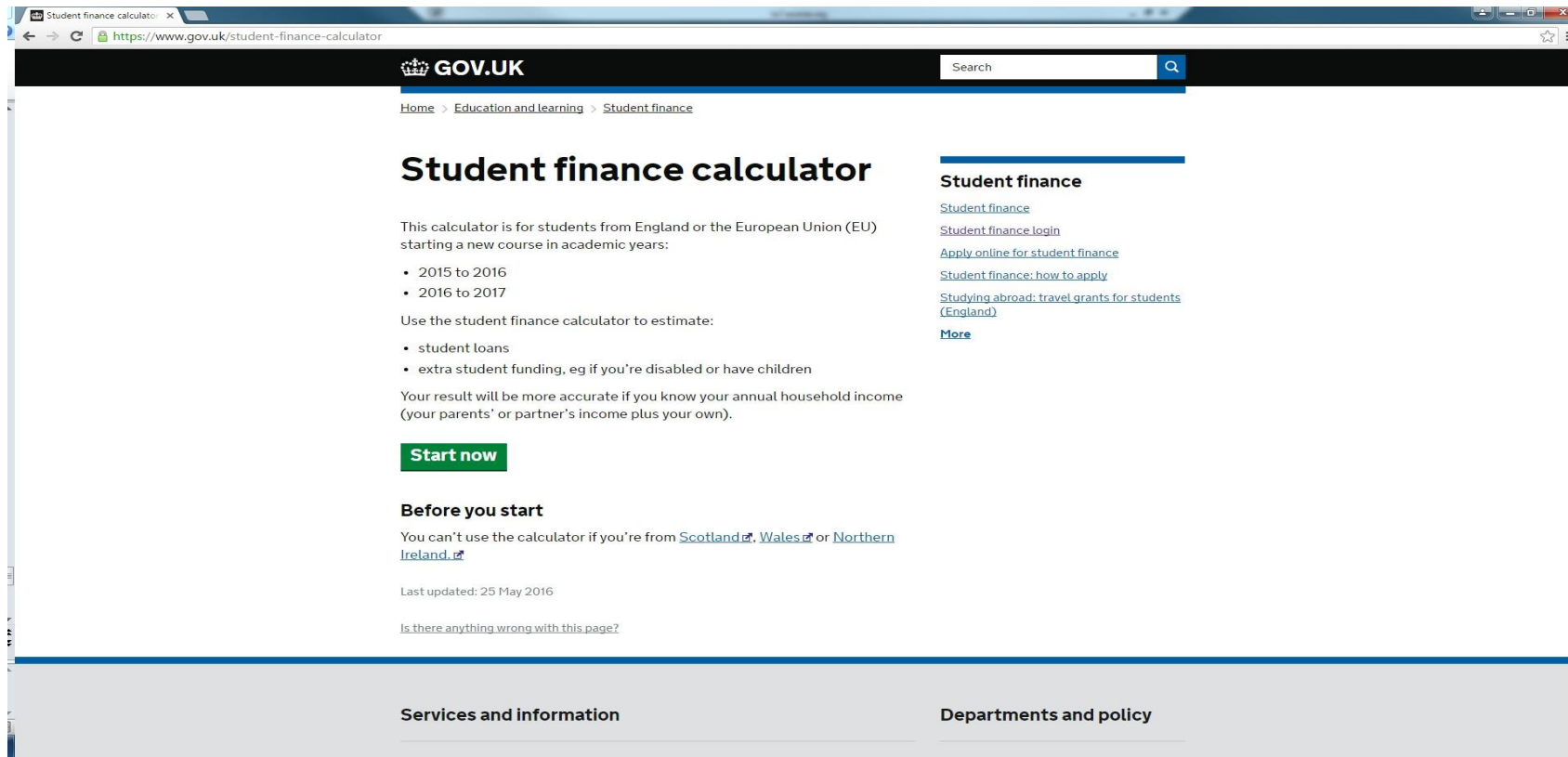
Living away from your parents, outside London

Household Income	Maximum Maintenance Loan	Amount available to you	Difference from maximum
up to £25,000	£10,544	£10,544	£0
£45,000	£10,544	£7,532	£3,012
£62,347	£10,544	£4,915 (only eligible for minimum amount)	£5,460



GET YOUR ESTIMATE

- www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website for the Student finance calculator. The page has a black header with the GOV.UK logo and a search bar. Below the header, the breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Education and learning > Student finance. The main heading is "Student finance calculator". The text explains that the calculator is for students from England or the European Union (EU) starting a new course in academic years: 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017. It instructs users to use the calculator to estimate student loans and extra student funding. A green "Start now" button is prominently displayed. Below this, a "Before you start" section notes that the calculator is not for students from Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland. A footer section contains links for "Services and information" and "Departments and policy".

Student finance calculator

GOV.UK

Home > Education and learning > Student finance

Student finance calculator

This calculator is for students from England or the European Union (EU) starting a new course in academic years:

- 2015 to 2016
- 2016 to 2017

Use the student finance calculator to estimate:

- student loans
- extra student funding, eg if you're disabled or have children

Your result will be more accurate if you know your annual household income (your parents' or partner's income plus your own).

Start now

Before you start

You can't use the calculator if you're from [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) or [Northern Ireland](#).

Last updated: 25 May 2016

[Is there anything wrong with this page?](#)

Student finance

- [Student finance](#)
- [Student finance login](#)
- [Apply online for student finance](#)
- [Student finance: how to apply](#)
- [Studying abroad: travel grants for students \(England\)](#)
- [More](#)

Services and information

Departments and policy

BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

It's important you spend some time looking into bursaries and scholarships offered and find out what's on offer and how/when to apply.

Where to find the information:-

- University and college websites – usually in the Fees & Funding sections.
- Other sites such as:-

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

https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/university-tuition-fees/other-financial-support/university-bursaries-and-scholarships/#Find_scholarships_and_bursaries

For students in the South West:-

<https://educational-grants.org/>

<http://www.dwyer-hartfoundation.co.uk/>



NHS LEARNING SUPPORT FUND

- Students starting and continuing their course from September 2020 can apply for the NHS Learning Support Fund (NHS LSF) if they are on one of the following pre-registration undergraduate or postgraduate courses:

- dental therapy/dental hygiene (level 5 and 6 courses)
- dietetics
- midwifery
- nursing (adult, child, mental health, learning disability, joint nursing/social work)
- occupational therapy
- operating department practitioner (level 5 and 6 courses)
- orthoptics
- orthotics and prosthetics
- paramedics (bachelors and masters courses are eligible, DipHE and FD courses are not eligible for NHS LSF)
- physiotherapy
- podiatry/chiropractic
- radiography (diagnostic and therapeutic)
- speech and language therapy

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-learning-support-fund>

REPAYMENT

- Students are liable to start repayments from the April after they finish the course (coinciding with the new tax year).
- Repayments are normally taken automatically from a graduate's salary with tax and National Insurance.
- Separate arrangements are in place with HMRC if a graduate is self-employed.
- If a student leaves their programme early they will still have to pay back the loan once they earn more than the income threshold.

REPAYMENT

- “To make the system fairer for students, the student loan interest rate will be set at RPI+0% for new borrowers starting courses from 2023-24, meaning that graduates will no longer repay more than they borrowed in real terms.
- To make the system fairer for taxpayers, the repayment threshold – the point at which graduates start repaying their student loan - for new borrowers starting courses from September 2023 will be set at £25,000 -this is being reviewed in 2027.
- This still means that graduates will not start repaying until they have reached well over the current median young non-graduate salary of £21,500.
- The student loan repayment term will also be extended to 40 years for new borrowers from September 2023, to ensure more students repay their loan in full, taking into account the fact that people are now working and earning for longer.”

REPAYMENT

- **You only repay when you earn over £25,000 a year.** The £25,000 threshold is frozen until 2027, when it is 'planned' to increase with inflation.
- **You repay 9% of everything earned above the threshold (currently £25,000) .** So the more you earn, the more you repay each month.

What you'll repay on a Plan 5 student loan	
Salary	What you'll repay each year
£24,000	You don't pay
£26,000	£90/year (9% of £1,000)
£35,000	£900/year (9% of £10,000)
£50,000	£2,250/year (9% of £25,000)
£100,000	£6,750/year (9% of £75,000)

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-loans-england-plan-5/>



STUDY ABROAD

- Studying abroad for example Europe, USA or Canada is another option.
- In Europe there is an increasing number of degree courses taught in English. It can give students the opportunity to improve their language skills and experience different cultures. Studying in Europe is a lot cheaper than the UK. There are some scholarships available.
- Studying in America is expensive however, there are a number of different types of scholarships you can apply for in particular sporting scholarships which can cover the majority of tuition fees.
- Studying in Canada is only slightly more expensive than studying in the UK. There are scholarships students can apply for.
- **You are not eligible to apply for student finance for any international universities however, there are scholarship programmes available to help with the cost.**
- For more information visit:-
<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/>
<http://www.eunicas.co.uk/index.php/eunicas/search.html>
<http://www.fulbright.org.uk/going-to-the-usa/undergraduate>



THINGS TO CONSIDER....

- Cost.
- What legal documentation is required (Visa, residence permit etc.)?
- Are students able to work to help fund their education?
- Are they entitled to free healthcare?
- Is there a specific language requirement?
- How do you apply? For some universities you apply directly to the institution or through their equivalent to UCAS – you need to check with each institution as it will vary.
- EUNICAS <http://www.eunicas.co.uk/index.php/apply/apply-to-eunicas.html> (Europe) <https://www.commonapp.org/> (USA) <http://www.ouac.on.ca/> (Canada)
- What scholarships are available?
- Are there any entry exams that you need to take alongside your A Levels (American universities require you to take either you SAT or ACT exams)?

GAP YEARS

- Internships
- Travel
- Volunteering
- Working



GAP YEARS

A gap year offers students a break to gain life experience, explore interests, and grow personally.

Benefits include increased maturity, improved self-confidence, and greater clarity about academic and career goals. It can also provide opportunities for travel, volunteering, internships, or earning money, which can enrich CVs and future university or job applications.

Students should research options and make a plan looking at the logistics of travelling and how much it will cost.

IDEAS

Gap Year Abroad with Volunteering

- <https://projecttrust.org.uk/>
- <https://jenza.com/uk/?ipredirect=true>

Gap Year

- <https://www.skifamille.co.uk/ski-jobs/>
- <https://coolskijobs.com/jobs/>
- <https://www.workaseason.com/>
- <https://www.interrail.eu/en/interrail-passes/choose-right-interrail-pass>
- <https://www.oysterworldwide.com/project/canada-whistler-blackcomb-ski-instructor-jobs/>
- <https://yearoutgroup.org/>

Volunteering

- https://www.realgap.co.uk/volunteering?#search_page_area_1
- <https://www.iwill.org.uk/young-people-are-still-waiting-to-be-heard/>
- https://www.yipiyap.co.uk/become-a-yipiyap?utm_source=ucas.com&utm_medium=webpage&utm_campaign=recruitment_summer_2023&utm_term=lifechanging_professionaldevelopment&utm_content=gapyearideas&utm_position=list

Internships

- <https://studentladder.co.uk/year-13/gap-year-placements/>
- <https://www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry>

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

- Drop in support every WEDNESDAY after school for all Post 18 routes
- Personal Statement Workshops Thursday and Friday lunchtimes.
- One-to-one appointments available upon request
- Every student who attended a Next Steps Meeting (which have been running since January) has been issued with a university and/or apprenticeship research booklet which contained areas of research and guidance