

*Our Reference: HMY/SB**

29th May 2020

Dear Year 12,

I hope you are well and managing despite ongoing circumstances.

The Sixth Form team and your tutors were delighted to speak to so many of you last week. We will continue to call you when we return from half term to ensure that we have spoken to you all. This will help us build a picture of your individual circumstances as we prepare for your potential return to school.

Over the next few weeks, we are planning for you to have face to face time with Mrs Mc Inerney, Mr McDonagh, your tutors and your subject teachers. This initial contact will be coordinated remotely with the aim of supporting your learning; ensuring that your work is up to date, ready for you to return and giving your teachers an opportunity to identify the gaps in your learning to support their planning. We are awaiting further guidance and confirmation from the government before we confirm our plans with you. It is important that you continue to check your school email account over the coming weeks so that we can organise these sessions for you.

Whilst there is considerable uncertainty for everyone right now, it is essential that you all continue engaging with the work teachers are setting for you online as well as other resources available to you.

Today, we aim to begin the process of support we offer all of our students entering their final year of Sixth Form – the UCAS application process.

UCAS is much more than a service students use to apply to Universities. UCAS also provides sound advice on higher apprenticeships, internships, gap year opportunities and studying abroad. Whether you plan to attend University or not, creating a UCAS profile will allow you to be in the best possible position to make decisions about your future.

The attached booklet will guide you through this process. Follow the programme as set out in the tracker and work your way through all of the activities. The goal is to ensure you are 'UCAS ready' by the time we return from our summer break in September.

We sincerely hope that you are able to take advantage of the opportunity that the next few months offers. Should you need any support with the UCAS process, please contact Mr Fitcher: pfitcher@raynespark.merton.sch.uk

We look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Stay safe and keep well,

H. Mc Inerney

Mrs H Mc Inerney
Assistant Headteacher

P. Fitcher

Mr P Fitcher
Head of Sixth Form



Year 12

Preparation for

Higher Education



Student name:

Form tutor:

As you near the completion of Year 12 it is time to start thinking about your progression beyond Sixth Form. Whether that is university, an apprenticeship or straight into employment, this booklet is designed to help you get there.

UCAS applications open in May and universities will start making offers from September. Universities are under no obligation to wait until all applications are in before they make offers. So, the moral of the story is get in early and secure a place. You have a great opportunity now to get ahead.

The goal is for you to be 'progression ready' before the summer holidays.

You have time now to start looking into course and universities. You also have time to complete enrichment programmes and educational online courses that will develop your passion for a subject and look excellent on a university or job application.

If you use the page titled 'Tracker' and follow the timeline to complete all the tasks, you will be in a great position when you return to school and will be well prepared for your next steps.

Tracker



P	Task	Deadline	Tick if completed	Checked by Tutor
5	Activity 1 – CV and CV reflection	5 th June 2020		
7	Activity 2 – Year 12 Reflection	5 th June 2020		
9	Activity 3 – Turning the spotlight on yourself	12 th June 2020		
16	Activity 4 – Key facts and language	12 th June 2020		
22	Activity 5– Creating your UCAS account (hub)	19 th June 2020		
24	Activity 6 – University Research	19 th June 2020		
32	Activity 7 – Choosing a University course	19 th June 2020		
35	Activity 8 - Student personal statements	26 th June 2020		
39	Activity 9 - What to expect when you get to university			
40	Activity 10 - Independent learning			

Key Dates

5 th May 2020	UCAS advertises 2021 university undergraduate courses.
12 th May 2020	Student can set up a profile on the UCAS 2021 application site. Link it to our school using the buzzword: raynespark2021
19 th May 2020	UCAS 2021 applications open – Students can register and start their application process.
8 th September 2020	First applications can be sent to UCAS and universities can start to offer places.
15 th October 2020	Deadline for Oxbridge, medicine, veterinary science and dentistry courses.
15 th January 2021	Deadline for all other undergraduate courses. Applications made before this deadline must be considered by a provider.
19 th August 2021	A-Level and BTEC results are published.

Activity 1 – to create (or modify) your CV

One way of preparing yourself for life beyond Sixth Form is to create (or update) your CV. Doing this task forces you to think about the qualifications you already possess, your strengths, skills and the things that make you unique.

Submit your CV to Mr McDonagh: amcdonagh@raynespark.merton.sch.uk

Once you have received feedback answer the following questions.

CV Reflection

What type of work interests you? What careers are you interested in?

What skills are required in the jobs/industries that interest you?

Do you need to go to University to move into this career?

If so, what would you need to study? What grades would you need?

Would you need a Masters' degree?

What additional training would be required in your choice of career?

Name 5 other careers you could do with that degree

1

2

3

4

5

When a prospective employer reads your CV they will form a mental picture of you. What will this be?

What one thing on your CV is particularly appealing to a prospective employer? What sets you apart?

What could you be doing now which you could later add to your CV to make you more attractive to a prospective employer? i.e. Volunteering, teaching yourself new skills, taking on an extra responsibility.

Do you have any contacts who could help you gather experience? If so how can you contact them? When will you?

Activity 2 - Year 12 Reflection

Subject	Target grade	Currently achieving	What grade would you like by your next data drop?	What grade would you like to achieve at end of Year 13?

Which subject have you achieved the best grade in and why?

Which subject have you enjoyed the most? Provide some specific examples of topics within that subject which you found particularly interesting? i.e. in Biology I particularly liked the topic on genetics

Describe how this interest has led to you completing work independently i.e. work not set by your teacher

What skills have you enjoyed developing and mastering this year?

How could you have improved in your performance in year 12?

What advice about Year 12 would you give if you were able to write to your Year 11 self?

Activity 3 – Turning the spotlight on yourself

How do you turn the spotlight on yourself? We all approach decision-making in different ways. This can be influenced by various factors, such as our personality, how those around us make decisions, how confident we feel, how independent we are, the pressure we're feeling, and the extent we feel destiny plays a part in life. Whichever is important to you, here are some steps you can take to help discover what's important to you and your future.



Where are you now?

This is a good starting point – it's about you, think carefully about it and note down your thoughts or ideas.

What are your interests? (this could be hobbies, activities, or subjects)	
What are your skills? (the sorts of things you're good at - use obvious skills such as working with numbers, as well as softer skills such as being a good listener)	
What do you value? (the things that are important to you, both in your social and study life. For example family, work, socialising, personal interests, being active, money, structure, flexibility)	
What motivates you? (the things you're enthusiastic about, or encourage you to take action and get involved)	
No idea at all? Have a go at the UCAS Buzz Quiz - https://www.ucas.com/careers/buzz-quiz – jot down what you're like or what you could do	

Where do you want to get to?

You may have a clear picture of what you want to do next, or what career you're aiming for, or you may feel you haven't got a clue and don't know where to start. Chances are, you're somewhere in between, so what ideas do you have?

<p>Are there any jobs or career areas you're interested in? Find career ideas: https://www.ucas.com/further-education/find-career-ideas</p>  <p>and explore jobs: https://www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs#js=on</p>  <p>as there are a huge variety of roles out there, many of which you might never have thought of or know about.</p>	
<p>Are there subjects you love or ones you wish you could study?</p>	
<p>Do you have hobbies or interests you'd like to take further?</p>	

What matters to you most in life?

A Flower Venn diagram – to help you blossom!

Corny? Yes... but don't dismiss it straightaway – it's a great way to figure out what matters to you most and where that fits. Finding the perfect balanced lifestyle is key to a happy and successful future.

Using what you've thought about so far, draw and fill in the five outer circles below.

Prompts:

Circle one: What you're good at

Be specific and don't think too hard. Use obvious skills such as working with numbers, as well as softer skills such as being a good listener.

Circle two: What you love

This one is simple – the things that make you happy.

Circle three: What motivates you?

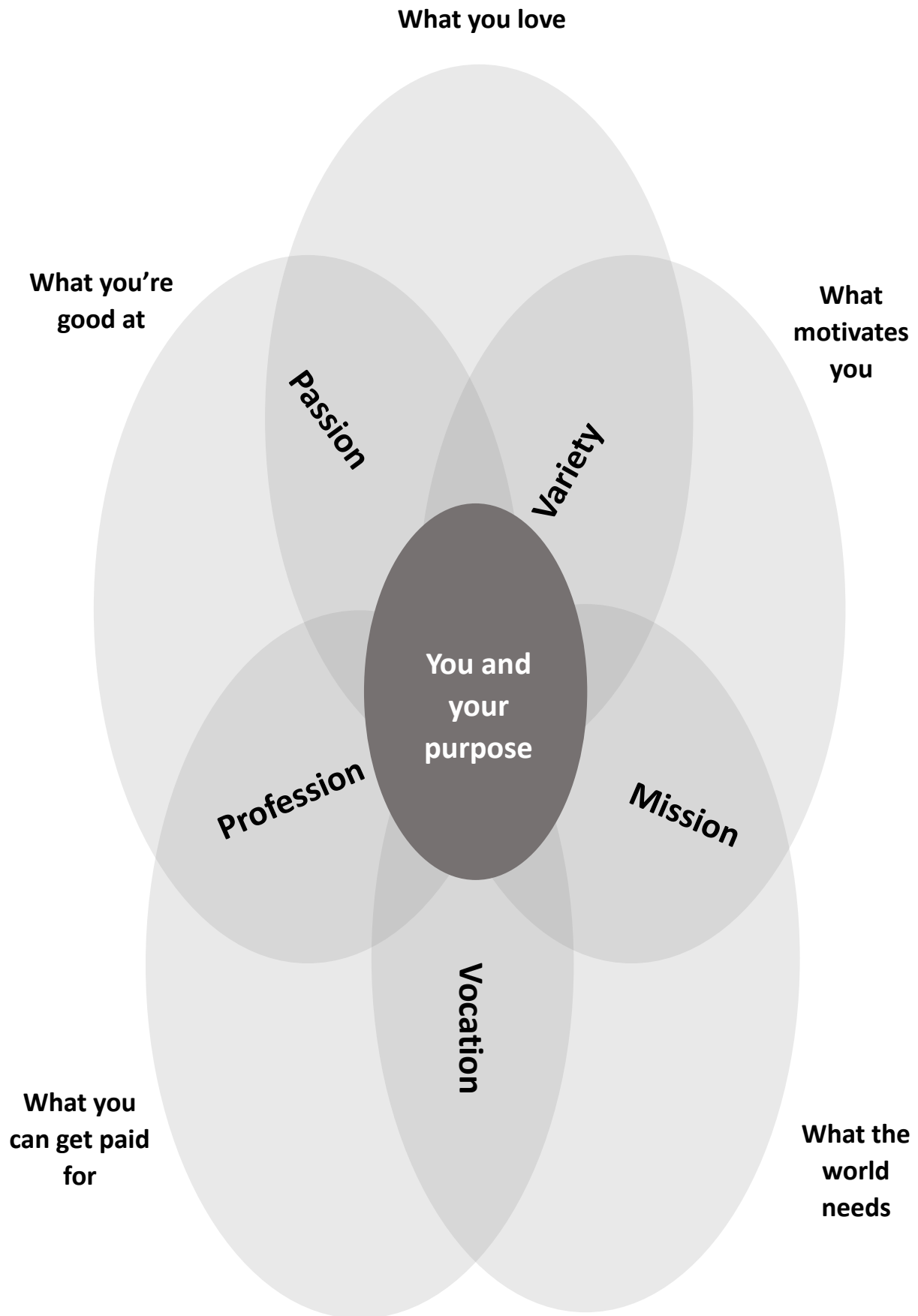
Consider what matters to you most in life – family, work, socialising, personal interests, being active, money, structure, flexibility?

Circle four: What the world needs

Think about how you fit into the bigger picture, and whether 'making a difference' in a wider sense is important to you.

Circle five: What you can get paid for

Write as many ideas as you can...



How are you going to get there?

Now you've explored a little of what's important to you and what you enjoy, you need to think about what options you have when you leave school or college. This is where you need to focus on the choices that you have. This activity is designed to get you thinking about which option might be the right pathway for you.

Consider and compare each of the post-18 options below, and what you've identified about yourself in the previous activities.

What are my options?: <https://www.ucas.com/what-are-my-options>

Use the UCAS website links below to familiarise yourself with what each option involves. Then compare them by asking yourself the questions below.

Going to university or college

<https://www.ucas.com/what-are-my-options/thinking-about-uni>



Doing an apprenticeship

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>



Doing an internship

<https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/internships>



Taking a gap year

<https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/gap-year/gap-years-ideas-and-things-think-about>



Entering the world of work

<https://www.ucas.com/what-are-my-options/employment>



Task	Going to uni. or college	Doing an apprenticeship	Doing an internship	Taking a gap year	Entering the world of work
Three things I found out which I didn't already know are...					
The things I like most about this option are...					
The things I dislike most about this option are...					
What following this option would mean for me over the short term (next year) & longer term (next five years).					
The likelihood of me considering this option, (Rank 1 – 10, with 10 being most likely).					

Activity 4 – Key facts and language

Good University Guide

The good university guide offers independent UK university rankings (league tables), course information and expert advice:

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



Use this website to complete the following tasks.

Name the top 20 universities according to overall score

1	11
2	12
3	13
4	14
5	15
6	16
7	17
8	18
9	19
10	20

Apart from 'overall score' what are the other metrics used on the complete university guide website to determine top universities.

- 1.** _____
- 2.** _____
- 3.** _____
- 4.** _____

Name the top 10 universities for student satisfaction

1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

Name the 10 universities that offer my course or something similar to my course

1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

What is a Russell Group University?

List the 24 Russell group Universities

What is a Cathedral Group University?

List the 15 Cathedral Group Universities

Connect the following key UCAS terms with their meaning

Each of the key terms (in bold) has a definition below. Match up the key term with the location of its definition. The first two have been done for you

Adjustment	Buzzword	Clearing	Conditional offer	Conservatoire
Deferral	Entry requirements	Extra	Fresher	Firm choice
	8			
Gap year	Graduate	Insurance choice	Invitation	League tables
			17	
Personal ID	Personal statement	Postgraduate	Providers	Referee
Sandwich course	Tariff	Track	Unconditional offer	Undergraduate

1	An offer of a place on a course with no conditions.
2	A service you can use to look for alternative courses in case you've met and exceeded your conditions and you'd like to see if you can get on a course with higher entry requirements – all while still holding your original confirmed place.
3	Someone who provides a reference for you.
4	The ten-digit number you get when you register to apply – displayed in 123-456-7890 format on every email we send you.
5	A service you can use to look for alternative courses if you didn't get a place on your firm or insurance choices (for courses that still have vacancies).
6	A university or college.
7	This is what you do if you'd like to carry an offer over to start it in the following academic year.
8	What the course provider recommends you need to do/have to get on the course – from grades, to interviews or admissions tests.
9	Slang term for students in their first year of university.
10	Used to link your application to your school.
11	The first level of study in higher education/university.

12	A year typically taken after Sixth Form. During this year, students often travel, volunteer, or complete work experience.
13	A year typically taken after Sixth Form. During this year, students often travel, volunteer, or complete work experience.
14	A student who has completed and graduated from an undergraduate course – they can now apply for postgraduate courses if they'd like to.
15	An offer you accept as your second choice – just in case you don't meet the conditions of your firm offer.
16	To be accepted on the course, you'll need to meet the conditions – usually related to your exam results.
17	An offer you accept as your first choice.
18	You may receive an invitation from a university or college asking you to attend an interview or audition, or to provide a portfolio, essay, or another piece of work.
19	A provider of performance-based music, dance, screen, and drama courses.
20	Rankings of course providers – these can be an overall ranking, or listed by reputation, courses, or departments.
21	A piece of text applicants write to show why they're applying and why they'd be a great student for a course provider to accept.
22	Higher education study for graduates who have already completed an undergraduate course.
23	A course with an additional year where you work in the profession you're studying for.
24	A service you can use to apply for alternative places if you do not hold an offer from your first five choices.
25	A system for allocating points to qualifications/grades you have achieved.
26	Where you can see how your application is progressing, reply to offers and make amendments

Thinking of trying for a university in the U.S.A?



The US-UK Fulbright Commission hosts both the Fulbright scholarship programme and the EducationUSA advising network for the UK. They focus on opportunities and exchanges between the USA and the UK, as part of a global programme. There are many reasons why students depart the UK for studies across the pond, including:

- For reputation and variety
- For academic flexibility
- For funding
- For employment opportunities
- For campus life



Click on the link to their website: <http://www.fulbright.org.uk/>

then click the link 'going to the USA, then the link 'undergraduate'.

Their online guides provide information on what?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Activity 5 – Creating your UCAS account (hub)

Now that you've worked out what your options might be, it's time to start researching in a little more detail. By creating a UCAS hub UCAS can guide you to the information you need. You can easily explore, filter, and favourite the things which matter to you most. The best bit is that you'll have your own dashboard, which you can customise and tailor to suit you, and you can organise the tools that help you most, remove the ones you don't need, make notes, and tick off things on your to do list.

So start by creating your **UCAS Hub**; <https://www.ucas.com/account/login?returnUrl=/dashboard%23%2F>



Before you register make sure you have the following information to hand

1. Your GCSE results and your A2/BTEC/CTEC subjects (AS if applicable)
2. You also need your ULN (Unique Learning Number)

Hints to overcome obstacles when registering:

- The name on your UCAS application must be the one that appears on your birth certificate or passport, even where it says given name – it must be your official one
- If your email address is silly, ask yourself if you want admissions tutors to see it. Now is the sensible time to create a new email address!
- After making an account by using your email address, click **dashboard**
- Click on the option that says **Apply** and then click on **Search for a course**
- You need to shortlist the courses you want by clicking on the **heart** next to the course information
- After clicking on the course, you need to click on the **Apply** option on the right-hand side of the screen
- You then select that you are looking for an undergraduate course
- Select the option **Sign in to Apply 2021**
- Then you need to register as a 2021 application
- Write your newly registered UCAS username, password and personal ID in the space below:

Username:

Password:

Personal ID:

When you get back to school give your username, password and personal ID to Mrs Liste. If you forget these it can take several weeks to get it back from UCAS. If we have it, it takes a couple of minutes!

- The buzzword is: **raynespark2021**
You need this buzzword to link to the Raynes Park UCAS portal. Doing this enables us support you with your personal statement as well as include in your profile the references your teachers write on your behalf, confirming your eligibility for the courses you want to apply for. The buzzword is all lower case and there are no spaces. Copy it out exactly.
- When you get to the section on fee code, select **"02 LA,SAAS, NIBd,EU,Chl,IoM"**. This means that you will be applying for a student loan to pay your tuition fees.
- When you get to the section on Student Support Arrangement: select the borough **you live in**. for most of you this will be Merton or Sutton.
- When you get to the section on criminal convictions you must complete this in full and you must be honest. If you do not declare this and you are entering a course for a profession i.e. Teaching or medicine you will not get a placement.
- When you get to the section on on disability/special needs read it carefully- if you have either of these and declare it there is potential for you to get more funding.
- When you get to the section on education you must put in every qualification you have, even U grades and resits. Universities check this!
- You can edit your details later if you make any mistakes

Activity 6 – University Research

There are lots of questions that you will need to think about before selecting your universities

1. Where do you want to go to university?

- ☐ In London
- ☐ In South East England
- ☐ In Southern England
- ☐ As far away from home as possible
- ☐ Scotland
- ☐ Ireland
- ☐ USA
- ☐ European university

Why have you chosen this location?

How confident would you feel going to a university in the following areas?

London

Scared  Confident

South East England

Scared  Confident

Southern England

Scared  Confident

Midlands

Scared  Confident

Scotland

Scared  Confident

Ireland

Scared  Confident

USA

Scared  Confident

2. How big a university do you want to go to?

- ☐ Small – less than 5000
- ☐ Medium – 5 – 10,000
- ☐ Large – 10-25,000
- ☐ Very large – over 25,000

3. What type of university do you want to go to?

You may need to research what they mean

- ☐ Red Brick or Civic Universities
- ☐ Plate Glass or 1960s Universities
- ☐ So called New Universities
- ☐ University of London Colleges
- ☐ Unique Institutions
- ☐ University Colleges
- ☐ Colleges of Higher Education, Music and Drama Schools and Art Schools

4. Do you want to go to a city or campus University?

- ☐ Campus university
- ☐ City University

5. As well as being a place to get a degree, you will develop the most as a person at university. It is also likely to be the first time that you have full control on what you do on a day to day basis. Taking that into consideration, what else would make a university a good choice for you?

- ☐ Superb sport facilities
- ☐ Societies available
- ☐ Lively nightlife and social scene
- ☐ Good LGBTQ+ community
- ☐ Price of accommodation
- ☐ Cost of living
- ☐ Structure and timings of assessments
- ☐ Including the option to change to a Masters Degree
- ☐ Transport links
- ☐ Course contact hours
- ☐ Availability of scholarships/loans/grants
- ☐ Links to foreign universities for exchange or semester placements
- ☐ Safety and reputation of local community/city
- ☐ Near a beach/area of natural beauty/national park

University life – what’s important to you?

The reality is no one university is ‘best’ for everyone. You need to consider what type of university you want to attend; the experience can vary enormously. Here are some things to consider.

Factor	Things to think about	What is important to you?
Style and size	<p>Universities can have a focus on subject-based courses and research, or a greater focus on vocational courses. Do you have a preference?</p> <p>Do you want to study at a campus university (all in one place) or one that is spread out across a town/city with different locations?</p> <p>Some larger universities can have more than 20,000 students, whereas some of the smallest have only a few thousand. What suits you?</p>	
Location	<p>Some are based in large cities, others in smaller towns. This can have a major influence on the environment and lifestyle on offer.</p> <p>Do you want to live at home? If not, how far away do you want to be?</p> <p>Is the local surrounding area important? What would you like to have access to? E.g. museums, nightlife, walks, parks etc.</p> <p>How will you travel around? Do you want to take a car? Will you need access to a train?</p>	
Culture and facilities	<p>This can be influenced by a range of factors, including the diversity of students who attend.</p> <p>What teams, clubs, or societies could you take part in? What would you like to access? e.g. library, sporting facilities, students union.</p> <p>Are there any specialist services you need access to?</p>	

<p>Graduate and career services</p>	<p>All universities collect destination statistics which is where students then go on to. It can be interesting to find out the types of jobs or further study students choose.</p> <p>Is it important that they offer comprehensive career services? E.g. interview training help with job applications.</p> <p>Do you want the opportunity to have a placement year or internship opportunity?</p> <p>What about the chance to study abroad?</p>	
<p>Costs</p>	<p>Tuition fees can vary between course providers. How might you pay for university? Would you be looking to try and access a scholarship or bursary?</p> <p>What type of accommodation would you like? Halls of residence? Off campus living? Shared? Think about longer term too not just for your first year when you might be in student halls.</p> <p>How will you travel to and from lectures? Would this influence the type of accommodation you would like?</p> <p>What transport options are there? Would you be able to take a car (if that's important to you)?</p> <p>Think about other costs you might have such as socialising, food, clothes, study materials. Different regions of the country will vary in cost.</p>	

So, what is university really like?

Hopefully you should now have a rough idea of what you might be interested in studying and what's important to you. The best way to explore the universities themselves is to visit – which is, of course, a little trickier right now. But don't worry; there are still plenty of ways to find out what university life is really like. So, complete the tasks below to find out more and help you make your decisions. Remember to use what you have identified as important to you as a guide.

- A) Unibuddy:** A great way to learn more about what life is really like. You can choose a uni, degree subject, or select by their home country. Ask the ambassadors anything, and learn more about why they chose to do their specific course at that specific university.
- B) Virtual tours:** Take a virtual tour on ucas.com so you can see what it's like on campus and what facilities are available. Now is the time to really do your research, you aren't limited to the number of tours you can take, so spend some time exploring as many as possible. If the University/College you're interested in isn't listed, then take a look at their website or YouTube channel instead, or see if they're on Unibuddy.com.
- C) Virtual open day:** UCAS are listing University and College virtual and digital events, to help you learn more about what they're like. They will involve different things such as live chats, virtual subject booths, virtual taster days, webinars, and more. It's a great opportunity to visit as many universities and colleges as you can without having to do all the travel. So, book onto a couple to find out generally what university might be like.
- D) Social media:** Check out the Uni's social feeds. Many are promoting live chats, and extra info to help students find out more.

University Research

Having completed your initial university research, you should now be able to select your top 6 university choices.

University 1

University Name:	
Chosen course:	
Grades required:	
Campus or City University:	
University Location:	
Length of time to get there from home:	
Nearest train or bus station:	
Cost to travel to that University:	
Nearest cities:	
Ranking in The Complete University Guide:	
Additional features of the university that interest you:	

University 2

University Name:	
Chosen course:	
Grades required:	
Campus or City University:	
University Location:	
Length of time to get there from home:	
Nearest train or bus station:	
Cost to travel to that University:	
Nearest cities:	
Ranking in The Complete University Guide:	
Additional features of the university that interest you:	

University 3

University Name:	
Chosen course:	
Grades required:	
Campus or City University:	
University Location:	
Length of time to get there from home:	
Nearest train or bus station:	
Cost to travel to that University:	
Nearest cities:	
Ranking in The Complete University Guide:	
Additional features of the university that interest you:	

University 4

University Name:	
Chosen course:	
Grades required:	
Campus or City University:	
University Location:	
Length of time to get there from home:	
Nearest train or bus station:	
Cost to travel to that University:	
Nearest cities:	
Ranking in The Complete University Guide:	
Additional features of the university that interest you:	

University 5

University Name:	
Chosen course:	
Grades required:	
Campus or City University:	
University Location:	
Length of time to get there from home:	
Nearest train or bus station:	
Cost to travel to that University:	
Nearest cities:	
Ranking in The Complete University Guide:	
Additional features of the university that interest you:	

University 6

University Name:	
Chosen course:	
Grades required:	
Campus or City University:	
University Location:	
Length of time to get there from home:	
Nearest train or bus station:	
Cost to travel to that University:	
Nearest cities:	
Ranking in The Complete University Guide:	
Additional features of the university that interest you:	

Activity 7 – Choosing a University course

Explore, explore, explore

Think about your favourite subject or the fact you might find something entirely new. You might have a specific career goal in mind. Or you might still be unsure. The best place to start – is with an open mind. To help you understand if what you’re studying might be a good fit, and to check if you need any specific subjects or qualifications for your career goals – sign in to your UCAS Hub and get started.

Explore: Use the ‘Explore’ tool to search our detailed subject guides.

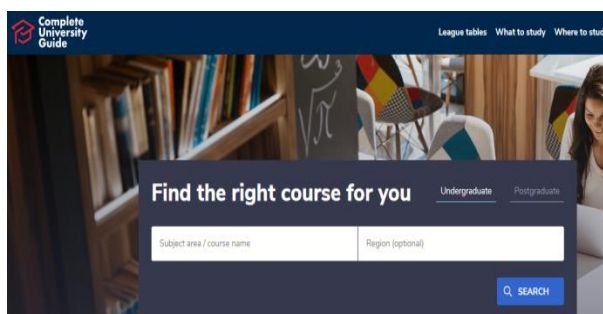
Explore subject guide:	
Who studies this subject at University?	
Graduate Destinations	
What courses are available?	
Entry requirements?	
Key areas of employment?	
Related careers?	

Remember to 'favourite' anything you find by clicking on the heart; that way you can come back to it easily at any time. You can also pin any page from ucas.com to your dashboard this way too.

Explore subject guide:	
Who studies this subject at university?	
Graduate Destinations	
What courses are available?	
Entry requirements?	
Key areas of employment?	
Related careers?	

Explore subject guide:	
Who studies this subject at university?	
Graduate Destinations	
What courses are available?	
Entry requirements?	
Key areas of employment?	
Related careers?	

Other web sources: If you're looking for other sources to help you with your search, the complete university guide is a popular choice: <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/courses>



Activity 8 – Student personal statements

This is a great time to start planning and writing your personal statement but are you unsure where to begin? Here are the five ingredients you need to include to develop a great first draft. You'll get plenty of advice from all sorts of people, but these pointers are universal. If you tick them all off, you'll have something that's in excellent shape for your teachers and tutors to help you polish.

Make It Personal

It's called a personal statement for a reason - it's personal. Every great personal statement explains why the applicant wants to study his or her chosen course, and most applicants open with this essential information.

Look out: if you can replace your name or the course title with something different and your opening paragraph still makes sense, then it's not personal enough. Change it quick!

The Pareto Principle

This is the posh term for the 80/20 rule, and it applies to the best personal statements. Really, admissions tutors accept applicants onto courses not into universities, they want students who love their subjects. Plan ahead: you should start with a list of course-related achievements (e.g. exam results, and books you've read) and make sure it's longer than your list of other achievements before you even start.

What Have You Read?

If you're applying for a subject in the arts (e.g. English, History of Art, and Philosophy), admissions tutors want to know both what you've read and your thoughts about it. After all, a huge amount of any arts course involves reading. Beware: no one wants to read a bibliography! It's more important to include some key examples of interesting things you've read and your reflections on them than a lengthy reading list

What Have You Done?

If you're applying for a vocational subject (e.g. engineering, law, and medicine), admissions tutors want to know if you've done any work experience - it's a great way to separate yourself from the herd. Craft a story: you could use your reflections on any work experience you've done to open your personal statement - some great personal statements hook their readers in just this way.

Put Your Teacher to Work!

Every minute your teacher or tutor spends correcting your spelling, punctuation and grammar is a minute they're not helping to improve the content of your personal statement - and, contrary to popular opinion, they're very busy. Top tip: get a friend or family member to proof read your personal statement before it goes anywhere near a teacher - your teacher will thank you for it, and you'll get more meaningful feedback.

Dos and don'ts when writing a personal statement!

Do

- Brainstorm your ideas on paper before you begin
- Ensure you use your best English
- Be enthusiastic. You may have the best grades but admissions tutors want to read about your passion
- Aim to use about 5 paragraphs, making sure they flow in a logical way
- Stick to the word limit – 4000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines

Don't

- Try to be funny – admissions tutors may not share your sense of humour
- Feel that you must use fancy language
- Lie
- Copy someone else's personal statement or borrow 'chunks'. UCAS inform your Universities if your personal statement fails their detection software

Remember that you only get to write one personal statement for all your choices, so try to be consistent in your course choices and don't mention specific Universities (it doesn't go down well with your 4 other course providers!)

A structure that might work for you

There is no set structure however writing in the following way may help your 'flow'.

Section	Content	Size
1	Grab the admission tutor's attention. Set out your reasons for applying. Describe your passion. Explain where this enthusiasm came from. All admissions tutors are passionate about their subjects – try to form a connection.	Around 75 % of your PS
2	Prove your interest in the course. What is your most relevant subject for this course? What within that subject have you found particularly interesting? Be specific. Describe how an interesting topic within a lesson led you to further, independent study.	
3	What other subjects are you studying? What connections can you make between those subjects and your course? Try to form clear links.	
4	Use this space for 'super'-curricular and extra- curricular. This includes things like jobs, leadership roles and member ship of teams. For each activity describe what you have gained.	Around 20 %
5	Where do you want this course to lead? How do you hope to use the skills and knowledge gained? What do you want to do with your undergraduate degree? Are you looking forward to getting started?	A few lines

Stop thinking, start writing!

The best way to get started is start throwing words at the page. Write down anything that comes to mind. Use the space below. What do you want to say?



Personal statement – first draft

Use the space below to draft each section of your personal statement. Once you are happy, open a new word document and bring the sections together as one, fluent piece.

Send this draft to Mr McDonagh who will be able to provide you with feedback:

amcdonagh@raynespark.merton.sch.uk

Course:

Section	Content	Size
1		Around 75 % of your PS
2		

3		
4		Around 20 %
5		A few lines

Activity 9 - What to expect when you get to University

When you first arrive at university it can be overwhelming. If you decide to live away from home you will be getting used to new accommodation and living with new people from completely different and varied backgrounds. The first few weeks as a Fresher can be a little unsettling; they can also be some of the most fun!

Let us hear from some of our former students and find out how they got on when they first got to university...

University is definitely a completely different experience from sixth form. It's like walking into a new world where everyone is in the same boat: all trying to get a degree, making the best memories and trying to be on time to lectures. The amount of freedom and independence you get with your work is such a big jump from the work you do in sixth form, especially with the difference in contact hours you get. But don't worry, you're not alone! You can get support from so many different people, not just with work but with financial problems, housing issues or just if you need someone to talk to. The community vibe is great, except in the 9 am lectures where everyone is always half asleep. So always get enough sleep and don't stress too much about the workload! Best of Luck

EA – University of Surrey

My top tips for starting University

1. Go to as many Freshers events as possible
2. Force yourself out of your comfort zone
3. Make a budgeting list when you get your maintenance loan (It may seem like a lot of money but it has to last you for a couple of months)
4. Do all assignments - even formative ones (they don't count towards your actual grade but it is a really good opportunity to practice your writing style for assignments which actually count towards your grade)
5. Remember that nothing is permanent if you don't like your course you can change it, there is usually a "cooling off period" in first year
6. Join societies

SM – University of Nottingham

I have absolutely loved my first year at Uni. It was a little daunting at the start, but I decided early on that I was going to throw myself in and try to make the most of it. On Freshers week I signed up to a load of different societies (mainly for the free stuff they were handing out when you signed up) and I got to meet so many new people who were friendly and outgoing. I found the academic research and the chance to use state-of-the-art facilities very stimulating, but I probably didn't do enough independent reading for tutorials, don't make that mistake. Enjoy your time, it's great.

PB – Loughborough University

Activity 10 – Independent Study

You currently have the longest period of your life without formal education. Do not waste this. You will rarely have the opportunity to drive your own learning and become impassioned with something that you didn't think you would. There are also a huge number of free resources that you should take advantage of.

Audible is currently offering free audiobooks for students – this is an amazing opportunity.

Preparing for Career Success at University

Website	https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/career-success
Fee	Free
Course Outline	<p>Choosing the right degree and university may feel daunting enough, without worrying about what you're going to do after graduation. But with the graduate job market becoming increasingly competitive, it's vital to start thinking about your long-term career and employability now.</p> <p>This free online course will show you how to make the most of the time you'll spend in higher education, with the ultimate aim of improving your prospects when you graduate.</p>
Duration	Three weeks

Website	https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/preparing-for-uni
Fee	Free
Course Outline	In this course you will explore some key skills needed for success at university. You will hear what university lecturers have to say about skills their students excel at, or struggle with, from undergraduates about areas they have found difficult and some top tips for coping with the university learning environment.
Duration	6 Weeks (3 hours per week)

Subject Specific Studies

Website	https://www.gresham.ac.uk/ https://www.gresham.ac.uk/schools https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch/series/
Fee	Free
Course Outline	Gresham College was founded in 1597 and has been providing free lectures within the City of London for over 400 years. All lectures are streamed live and the website provides access to over 2000 of these. These range from one off shorts to series of lectures – all easily accessible and signposted on the website.
Duration	Each lecture lasts approximately 45 minutes.



Future skills for teenagers worldwide

To keep up with our rapidly changing world and stand out from the crowd, students need to be great communicators, great collaborators, adaptable, resilient and creative. EtonX delivers courses that bridge the gap between academic success and life in the real world.

We have teamed up with Eton College to offer you the opportunity to take one of Eton's online courses, focused on developing the skills you need to be successful in the work: 'Creative Problem Solving'.

From Eton College

EtonX's courses allow students globally to benefit from Eton's acclaimed expertise in developing well-rounded, high-achieving students. An Eton education values real-world skills alongside academic learning. Our courses draw on centuries of expertise from Eton College, preparing students with the skills they need to be leaders and be successful in the world's top universities.



How to sign up to your EtonX course:

1. Visit the EtonX website <https://signup.etonx.com/>
2. Choose **Sign up with Access Code**. Enter your Access Code (Each code expires *31st July 2020* and must be redeemed before this date).
3. Follow the on-screen instructions. Please sign up with your **school email address**.
4. Congratulations! You can now get started on your course.

Access Code: DDRZH7WB