

HIGHER EDUCATION

- **Why do you want to study?** Some students study for the love of a subject or for a career. Check that your course will meet your needs and that you have checked what other routes there are to your destination, whether via Higher Education or alternatives, such as School Leaver Schemes or Apprenticeships. Help with research can be found via your independent careers adviser, www.prospects.ac.uk & <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>.
 - Attend *Open Days, Events, Exhibitions, Open/Public Lectures and Performances* throughout Year 12 to research what courses and certain careers are like.
 - Many courses now also look for **work experience** so, organise this early in the academic year (you can apply for some schemes in October for a July placement).
 - Start to write a list of all the things you want from your education, based on your visits and reading: <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/courses/choosing-a-course/>
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- With over 37,000 different things to study in the UK, it is important you find the right option for you. Some courses are very exam based, some assessed by coursework or essays, others practical, whereas others are great for employability and others poor for graduate prospects.
 - Here are two strategies to choose from, to help you find the right course for you!

The Step by Step:

- Search all of <http://search.ucas.com/> (or search engine of your choice)
- Be creative in the word strings. *E.g. "Drama" & "Contemporary Performance"* will bring different results. Print off all your results.
- With a highlighter circle all the courses which interest, based on what you want from your choice. Use a marker pen to cross off all those you dislike the look of. Be prepared to discover options you hadn't heard of which, may appeal!

The Search Engines:

- Use more than one search engine and their filters to narrow down the search.
- www.push.co.uk , www.bestcourse4me.co.uk , www.ukcoursefinder.com
- <http://university.which.co.uk/> , <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/courses/search>

Now you have some courses you are interested in, research these in more depth. Find out how the courses are taught and how well the courses are rated for things like graduate job prospects, drop-out rate and quality of teaching.

- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide> – League tables
- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk – League tables
- www.unistats.com – Statistical comparison site
- www.whatuni.com – What do students think of their Universities
- www.thestudentroom.co.uk – Student chat about what University is like
- www.opendays.com and <https://www.ucas.com/events/exploring-university/find-open-day> and <http://mystudentevents.com/> – Open Days and Events

- Keep an eye on **application deadlines** and check entry criteria carefully as these BOTH vary from course to course.
- It is really important for you to match the entry requirements against your predicted grades. Most students apply for a range of courses so, if they don't quite get the grades they need for their first choice, they have enough for their insurance (second) choice.

- You can now apply for your top five courses (don't worry if you only have a top three, you can leave a couple of spaces to fill later with late applications if needed).
- If applying for Oxbridge, Music Conservatoires, medicine, dentistry, veterinary and some art & design courses it varies on how many you can apply for, and when – **double check deadlines** and details on UCAS! Some courses like Law, Medicine and Teaching have **entrance tests** that you will need to sit – check when these are and prepare.
- Check whether **work experience, portfolios or auditions** are a requirement and ensure you have a plan in place to achieve these starting in **Year 12** (Teaching, Nursing, Art and Physiotherapy courses each look for some of these).
- Apply for student finance as soon as you can, these links will help you with this:
<http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-loans-tuition-fees-changes> and
<https://www.gov.uk/contact-student-finance-england>