

DEGREE COURSE APPLICATION GUIDES: **M E D I C A L**

Dentistry
Medicine
Midwifery
Nursing
Interview Guide
Personal Statement Guide


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Stephen Thomas

**STEP BY
STEP
GUIDE**

Degree Course Applications – Medical

A step-by-step guide 16-19

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Published 2016

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Published by Senior Press

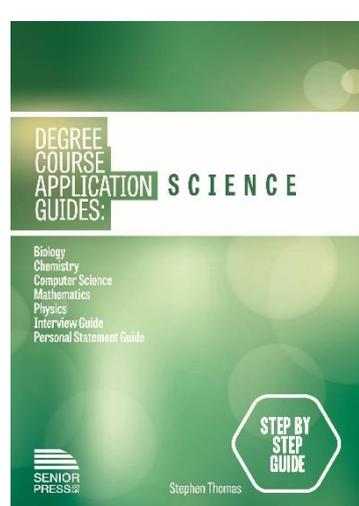
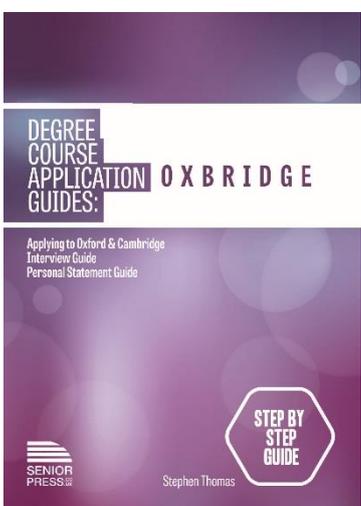
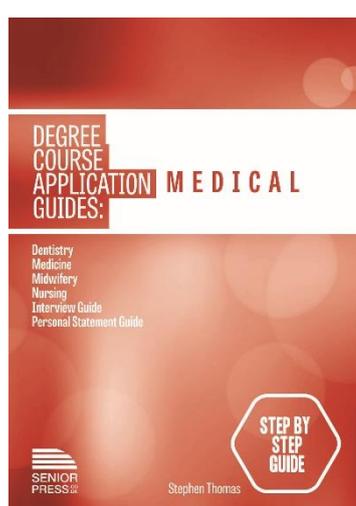
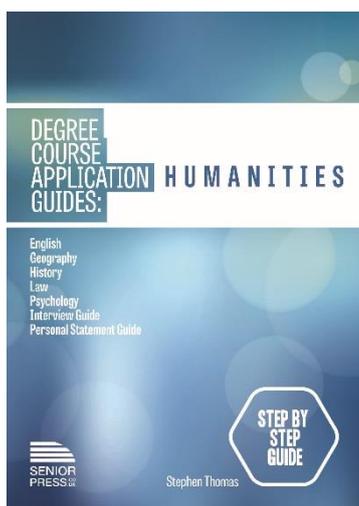
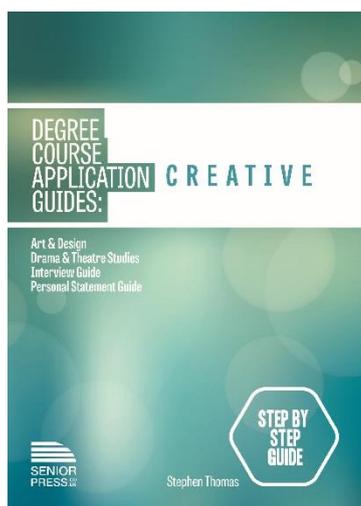
ISBN 9781905371433

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data. A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

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Degree Course Applications

A step-by-step guide 16-19



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APPLYING FOR DENTISTRY DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject Pointers

Length of Course: Typically training for dentistry takes 5 years which means five years of university fees

Grades Needed You will need at least three As depending on the dental school. There are only 16 dental schools and competition is very strong making dentistry one of the most competitive subjects. Oxford and Cambridge do not have dental schools.

Academic Ability Not Enough High academic ability is necessary but not sufficient. You will need evidence that you are caring and sensitive, that have team work and leadership skills and can communicate clearly and effectively.

Manual Dexterity Important Evidence of manual dexterity is very important for obvious reasons: model-making, handicrafts, musical ability, embroidery and you may need to take this evidence to the interview.

Aptitude Test You will need to take the UKCAT setest for most dental schools

Career Prospects If you want some re-assurance on this and to find out about careers prospects Dentistry graduates go to this link:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/dentist.aspx>

Get an Excellent Insight Into Dentistry Sheffield University have created a free online course which explores the dental profession and the impact dentistry has on our lives. It gives the chance to hear from, and interact with, experts from all corners of the dental professions to discover what dentistry is all about:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/discover-dentistry>

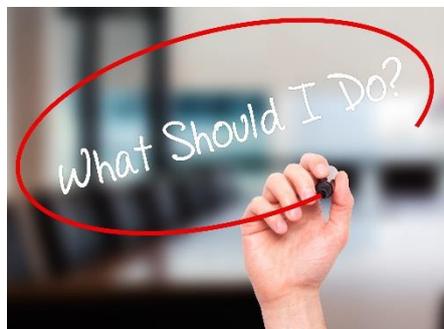
Video Profiles Go to this link to listen to students talking about Dentistry at university:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=dentistry%20undergraduates&sm=12

HE Course Profile

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/dentistry>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The Russell Group (most of the leading universities) advice on A level choices for Dentistry is as follows:

ESSENTIAL Chemistry and Biology for most courses, but some require Mathematics or Physics as well.

USEFUL Mathematics, Physics, Further Mathematics

What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

Early in Year 12



Begin to Gather Key Information

Visit www.ucas.com and begin to gather information about the sort of grades you will need to get to go to particular universities that attract you.

Work Experience It is very important to start work experience as early in Year 12 as you can. 3-4 weeks or more may be needed but you should look at the specific requirements of particular dental schools. It is crucial that when it comes to writing your Personal Statement or in an interview that you show what you have learnt from the experience. Use the PDF *Work experience in the NHS* which is on the NHS website to help you with your placements:

<http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-who-you-are/teachers-and-careers-advisers/work-experience/>

Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means it's harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record of observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Virtual Open Days Some medical schools, Warwick for example, also have virtual open days on their website. This does not mean you should not go on the actual open day.

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12: The Personal Statement

Start Early Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement early in Year 13 that you have something relevant and interesting to write about by this time in your A level career. See

enrichment activities below. At least 75% of your statement should be about Dentistry and related issues

Check Course Details Check the course requirements and selection criteria: This will give you a good idea of what is being looked for. Check the course details: many students do not do this and make false assumptions about what they will study on the courses they have chosen

Avoid Clichés Don't begin your personal statement with clichés. Ask yourself whether this is something anybody could have written. If so write something original.

Do Not List It is better to write about fewer things but in more depth

Area of Interest You may want to write about a particular area of interest. Make sure you have something to say about it if asked at interview.

Writing about your Work Experience It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience, and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Personal Statement Examples The Student Room website has useful advice on and examples of reviewed personal statements for Dentistry at:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/dentistry_personal_statement

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/personal_statement:dentistry_2

From July in Year 12: Selection Test



UKCAT Most dental schools will require you to take the UKCAT selection tests. Further information at and online practice:

<http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/>

Test Practice Make sure that you take every opportunity to practise this before you take them either online or by using one of the books that supports applicants with tests. A useful source of help and support is the book *Passing the UKCAT and BMAT: Advice, Guidance and Over 600 Questions for Revision and Practice*, by Rosalie Hutton, Glenn Hutton, Felicity Taylor.

Book Test Early Try and book your UKCAT test before you need to submit your UCAS form so that you have plenty of time to prepare and you know your score.

Test Prep Courses Kaplan Test Prep offer test preparation courses and some free resources both for UKCAT. These include a free UKCAT starter pack and sample question:

<http://www.kaptest.co.uk/>

October in Year 13:



UCAS Deadline A dental applications needs to be submitted by this date Make sure you have finished your application well before the 15 October so that your advisers can check it and write a reference.

October to March in Year 13: The Interview

Interview Advice Dental schools will interview. You will find very good advice and sample questions at these links:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/dentistry_interviews

<http://www.dentalnotebook.com/dental-interview-questions/>

Multi Mini Interviews (MMIs) Make sure you find out about multi-mini interviews which an increasing number of dental schools use as part of the selection process instead of traditional interviews. This link to St George's Medical School gives an insight into MMIs

<http://www.medical-interviews.co.uk/Multi-Mini-Interviews-MMI-St-Georges.aspx>

Ethical Issues Ethical issues in dental medicine frequently come up in interviews. Be ready to discuss ethical dilemmas that you observed on your work experience. The Ministry of Ethics website is excellent for video case material and support material on medical ethics issues which often come up in interviews:

<http://ministryofethics.co.uk/>

An extremely useful book is the excellent *Medical Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* by Tony Hope, Oxford University Press

Interview Prep courses These are offered at a price by PassDental:

<http://passdental.co.uk/index.php>

Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond



Work experience in a variety of dental settings is very important: general dental practice is necessary, together with settings such as private dentistry, orthodontics, hospital dentistry, a dental laboratory, oral and maxillofacial surgery and in a community dental practice. Experience in different socio-economic areas is also useful. Use the British Dental Association *Find a Dentist* webpage:

<http://www.bda-findadentist.org.uk/>

Good advice on work experience can be found at the Student Room website:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/dentistry_work_experience

Volunteering Experience You need to show evidence of sustained voluntary commitment, to helping and caring for people in settings other than dentistry itself, for example, in a home for old people

Record Your Observations Make sure that you are clear about what you have gained from your placements, ask intelligent questions, perhaps keep a log-book or diary to record insights and experiences so that you remember them when you write your personal statement or are called to interview.

Dental Careers It is advisable to find out as much as you can about the structure of dentistry profession and how dentists are trained at university and the routes and options after qualification.

Visit the British Dental Association Museum at 64 Wimpole Street in London:

<https://www.bda.org/museum/about-the-museum/visit-the-museum.aspx>

Useful Resource Use the British Dental Association *3D Mouth* resources on their website.

<http://www.3dmouth.org/>

What Should I be Reading?

- *Getting Into Dental School* by Adam Cross
- *Getting Into Dental School* by Steven Piumatti
- *Succeeding in your Application to Dental School: How to Prepare the Perfect UCAS Personal Statement* by Matt Green
- *Dental School Interview Guide* by Matthew Brutsche
- *Oxford Handbook of Applied Dental Sciences* by Crispian Scully
- *Standards for Dental Professionals and the First Five Years* PDF file on the General Dental Council website

Which websites will be useful?

- Keep in touch with the latest dentistry news on this website:
<http://www.dentistry.co.uk/>
- British Dental Health Association website:
<http://www.dentalhealth.org>
- General Dental Council website:
<http://www.gdc-uk.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- The British Dental Journal website:

<http://www.nature.com/bdj/index.html>

- NHS Careers website including *Starting a Career as a Dentist* web-pages:
<http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/dental-team/careers-in-the-dental-team/dentist/>
- The NHS also has a useful downloadable PDF booklet on *Work Experience in the NHS*
http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/media/1487492/Work_experience_in_the_NHS.pdf
- Volunteering England website:
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/>
- *SciCentral* collects breaking research news from reputable sources including health sciences:
<http://www.scicentral.com/H-02heal.html>
- The Dental Student is run by a student at Kings College London and offers useful insights into the realities of dentistry, dental issues and the application process:

<http://thedentalstudent.co.uk/>



Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful
- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

The icould website

<http://icould.com/>

has over a thousand videos of individuals talking about their careers with hundreds of supporting articles giving an insight into:

- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do

- what it is like
- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.



APPLYING FOR MEDICINE DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject Pointers

Limited Places Only 32 out of over a hundred universities have medical schools. There are currently only 8000 places available, 10% of which will be taken by post-graduates.

Length of Course: Typically training for medicine takes 5 years which means five years of university fees

Be Certain You need to be absolutely sure that you are in a strong position to apply for medicine and that you are being realistic about the exam grades you can achieve. It is one of the most competitive university courses. A significant proportion of students receive no offers at all even though predicted at least three A grades. You will need A*AA at A level for Oxford and A*A*A for Cambridge, for example and at least three As for other medical schools with an A* for many.

Chances of an Offer Around 60% of all applicants will get no offer in a typical year. At Oxford little more than 10% get an offer and around 15% at Cambridge.

More than Grades Needed Academic ability and getting the grades is not enough, however. You will need to demonstrate the ability to be sensitive and caring towards others, as well as other relevant qualities and provide evidence of this.

Aptitude Tests You may have to take either the BMAT or UKCAT selection test.

Can You Compete? Think very carefully about your application. Make sure you fulfil all the requirements in terms of GCSE grades expected, predicted grades and work experience so that you put yourself into a competitive position. Four of your five UCAS course choices will be for medicine (plus one other such as Biomedical Science or a straight science course, for example) You can easily end with four rejections if your application is unrealistic and over-ambitious. Read this useful article in The Daily Telegraph:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/10162238/Medical-school-applications-maximise-your-medical-mojo.html>

Qualities Needed Qualities needed to work in medicine will be: integrity, confidentiality, caring, compassion, commitment, responsibility, and a spirit of enquiry. Be able to provide evidence that you have these qualities.

GCSEs Check on the GCSE requirements for different courses which can be very specific, Birmingham, for example. You will almost certainly be required to get at least a grade B in English Language and Maths.

Med Course Structures Find out about the different ways in which medical courses are structured: the traditional course, problem based learning and integrated courses, to find which will suit you.

Be Realistic about Becoming a Doctor Start your research early to make sure that you are clear about the realities of being a doctor. A very useful website is the Leeds University *So You Want to be Doctor* site:

<http://www.wanttobeadoctor.co.uk/>

Are Foundation Courses a Way in? Some medical schools offer foundation medicine courses to widen access to medical school. These are aimed at people from particular socio-economic backgrounds or those without experience in studying science. Do not treat them as an insurance choice in case you do not get an offer for a mainstream medical course. You will probably get rejected if you do this. Make absolutely sure that you meet the course criteria for a foundation course. Further details and links at:

<http://www.getintomedicine.co.uk/medical-school-foundation.php>

HE Course Profile

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/medicine>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The Russell Group (most of the leading universities) advice on A level choices for medicine is as follows:

ESSENTIAL: If you do Chemistry, Biology and one from Mathematics or Physics you will keep all the medical schools open to you. If you do

Chemistry and Biology you will keep open the vast majority. If you do Chemistry and one from Mathematics and Physics you will limit your range of choices much more.

USEFUL: Further Mathematics or a contrasting (non-science) subject, Computing/Computer Science

Informed Choices Look at the document and video 'Informed Choices' on the Russell Group website which has some more very good advice on A level choices:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/188915625/Informed-Choices>

What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

Early in Year 12



Begin to Gather Key Information Visit www.ucas.com and write a list of all the universities offering medicine. Create a grid with the following headings and record the information found on the web site: GCSEs, A Levels, experiences outside the classroom, aptitude test.

Student Room Use the Student Room medicine stalker www.thestudentroom.com to note the selection test (BMAT/UKCAT) score which tends to be given an offer, so you know which universities to apply to based on your eventual score. Be careful this website is not always up to date.

Deadlines Remember your deadline is 15 October in Year 13 – so your key experiences need to have taken place by this time. Your school/college deadline for completing your application will often be around 20 September to give the centre time to process your form so that UCAS receive your form no later than the 15 October.

Early in Year 12:



Work Experience It is very important to start work experience as early in Year 12 as you can. 3-4 weeks or more may be needed but you should look at the specific requirements of particular medical schools. Use the PDF *Work experience in the NHS* which is on the NHS website to help you with your placements:

<http://www.nhs.uk/explore-by-who-you-are/teachers-and-careers-advisers/work-experience/>

Variety of Work Experience Get a variety of different experiences in variety of settings: hospital work, GP, socially different areas. Evidence of ‘sustained voluntary commitment’ is very important, for example,

Record Your Observations Make sure that you are clear about what you have gained from your placements, ask intelligent questions, perhaps keep a log-book or diary to record insights and experiences so that you remember them when you write your personal statement or are called to interview.

Work Experience Guide The Severn Faculty (Bristol Area) of the Royal College of General practitioners has produced an extremely useful 28 page guide to work experience including a work book to fill in at your placements.

There is also a work experience guide on the Student Room website:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/medicine_work_experience

From January of Year 12:



Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means its harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Virtual Open Days Some medical schools, Warwick for example, also have virtual open days on their website. This does not mean you should not go on the actual open day.

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12: The Personal Statement

Start Early Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement early in Year 13 that you have something relevant and interesting to write about by this time in your A level career. See enrichment activities below. At least 75% of your statement should be about medical related issues

Personal Statement Advice You will find some sound personal statement advice for Medicine at this link:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statement-advice-medicine-students>

Med School Expectations Check with the medical schools to which you are applying to see what they expect in the personal statement. Some will be quite specific about things they want you to write about and will expect to see it.

Avoid Clichés Don't begin your personal statement with clichés. Ask yourself whether this is something anybody could have written. If so write something original. Make it clear that you understand the realities and pressure of working as a doctor.

Do Not List When writing about work experience say how long you spent on each placement but also make clear what you got from the experiences you had. Don't just list what you did. The more interesting, original and perceptive your observations, the better.

Reading Similarly with books or articles you have read. Say what you found particularly interesting and why you found it interesting and how you have tried to explore the issue further.

Area of Interest You may want to write about a particular area of medicine that has grabbed your interest. Make sure you have something to say about it if asked at interview.

Writing about your Work Experience It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Online Advice MedSchools Online has very good advice and sample personal statements at:

<http://www.medschoolsonline.co.uk/?pageid=108>

The Student Room website has useful advice on medicine personal statements:

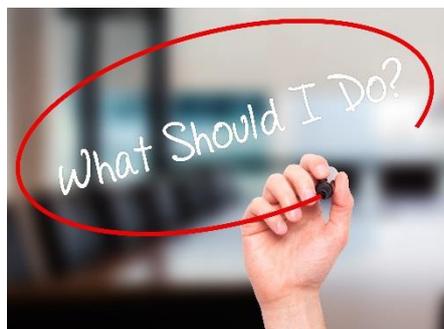
http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/advice_for_people_writing_their_medical_personal_statements

There is also very good personal statement advice on the Oxford Medical Sciences website including an anatomy of a personal statement:

<http://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/study/bms/statement>

<http://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/study/medicine/pre-clinical/applying/anatomy-of-ps>

From July in Year 12: Selection Tests



Practice Make sure that you take every opportunity to practise these before you take them either online or by using one of the books that supports applicants with tests

BMAT You will find further information together with useful videos discussing the BMAT test at:

<http://www.admissionstesting.org/our-services/medicine-and-healthcare/bmat/about-bmat/>

UKCAT:

www.ukcat.ac.uk

Selection Test Books

Get into Medical School. 400 BMAT Practice Questions .by Lydia Campbell and Olivier Picard

Preparing for the BMAT: The Official Guide to the Biomedical Admissions Test

Another useful source of help and support is the book Passing the UKCAT and BMAT: Advice, Guidance and Over 600 Questions for Revision and Practice, by Rosalie Hutton, Glenn Hutton , Felicity Taylor

How are Test Results Used? Different universities will use the results of selection in different ways. Check this with the universities to which you are applying

Book Test Early Try and book your UKCAT test before you need to submit your UCAS form so that you have plenty of time to prepare and you know your score.

The score can guide which medical school you apply to. Have a high score choice list and a lower score list ready.

<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=2420393>

Test Prep Courses Kaplan Test Prep offer test preparation courses and some free resources both for BMAT and UKCAT. These include a free UCKAT starter pack and sample questions for both tests:

<http://www.kaptest.co.uk/>

15 October in Year 13:



UCAS Deadline Make sure you have finished your application well before 15 October deadline for medical applications so that your advisers can check it and write a reference.

October to March in Year 13: The Interview

Interviews take place over an extended period and at different times for different medical schools, sometimes as late as March/April. The dates will depend on the medical schools you to which you have applied.

Science Knowledge Your science knowledge and ability will be tested in many medical interviews especially at Oxford and Cambridge where it will play a major part in the selection process.

Useful Website The ISCMedical website is good for interview training and resources:

<http://www.medical-interviews.co.uk/c-48-med-school-entry.aspx>



Seven Key Medicine Interview Tips

Know what it is like to be a doctor

See suggested reading for books about the realities of being a doctor

Read the BMA website Secret Doctor Blog

<http://bma.org.uk/news-views-analysis/the-secret-doctor?page=3>

Be able to show what you got from work experience

Know about the course and the structure of medical training at undergraduate and post-graduate levels

Be able to provide evidence of your ‘sustained voluntary commitment’

Think carefully about ethical issues

Prepare well thought through personal examples which demonstrate such things as your ability to take initiative, effective teams skills, leadership skills, caring attitude, ability to be sensitive, your awareness of ethical issues which arose on placements, ability to seek help when needed.

Be able to talk convincingly about your Personal Statement

Multi Mini Interviews (MMIs) Make sure you find out about multi-mini interviews which an increasing number of medical schools use as part of the selection process. This link to St George’s Medical School gives an insight into MMIs

<http://www.medical-interviews.co.uk/Multi-Mini-Interviews-MMI-St-Georges.aspx>

Ethical Issues Ethical issues in medicine frequently come up in interviews. Be ready to discuss ethical dilemmas that you observed on your work experience. The Ministry of Ethics website is excellent for video case material and support material on medical ethics issues which often come up in interviews:

<http://ministryofethics.co.uk/>

An extremely useful book is the excellent *Medical Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* by Tony Hope, Oxford University Press

GMC Website The General Medical Council website has excellent material on good medical practice which is aimed at doctors but is equally useful in helping medical applicants think about some important issues they may be asked about in interviews:

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/index.asp?WT.ac=WBHM130422>

In the *Decision Tools and Other Learning Materials* section of the GMC website, there are invaluable case studies which address confidentiality issues:

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/20473.asp>

The *Good Medical Practice in Action* section of the website provides excellent interactive case studies:

http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/case_studies.asp

How do Interviews Vary? The Student Room website has a guide to interviews at different medical schools, but be careful because it may not be up to date. Check with the individual university website:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/What_you_should_expect_at_a_medical_school_interview

Very Useful Books

- *Medical School Interviews: a Practical Guide to Help You Get That Place at Medical School (150 Questions Analysed)* by George Lee and Olivier Picard (Make sure you get the 2nd Edition)
- *Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI) for Medical School* by Dawn Sellars

Lists of Interview Questions You will find lists of medical school interview questions at the following links:

ISC Medical:

<http://www.medical-interviews.co.uk/interview-questions-medical-school-interviews.aspx>

Medschoolsonline:

<http://www.medschoolsonline.co.uk/index.php?pageid=85>

WAMS:

<http://www.wanttobeadoctor.co.uk/main.php?page=7#Practicequestions>

Video of Cambridge Mock Interview

<http://www.emma.cam.ac.uk/admissions/videos/interviews/?showvideo=46>

Oxford Sample Questions

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/applying_to_oxford/interviews/sample_questions.html#amedicine

Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond



Medical Conferences Attend one of the medicine student conferences courses at Nottingham University run by The Workshop for students interested in applying for medicine at university:

<http://www.workshop-uk.net/>

EPQ Consider doing an EPQ into an area of the subject that interests you.

Read Widely Get really involved in reading about aspects of medicine that interest you to show that you have made an effort to broaden your understanding.

This is especially important if a medical school you have applied to has suggested a reading list. Check on their website. Here are some suggested books:

The History of Medicine: A Very Short Introduction, by William Bynum Oxford University Press

Epidemiology: A Very Short Introduction by Rodolfo Saracci

Subscribe to the *Student British Medical Journal*

Direct Red: A Surgeon's Story by Gabriel Weston Vintage Press

Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery by Henry Marsh

Sick Notes: A Doctor's tales From the Front Line of Medicine by Dr Tony Copperfield

In Stitches: The Highs and Lows of Being an A&E Doctor by Dr Nick Edwards

Oxford University suggested reading list at:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/courses/suggested_reading.html

Cambridge University suggested reading list at:

<http://www.bio.cam.ac.uk/sbs/facbiol/mvst/keyconcepts.html>

Bad Science by Ben Goldacre (and accompanying website)

<http://www.badscience.net/>

Which websites will be useful?

- *The Big Project* has a comprehensive list of links to a large number of UK and international charitable organisations many of which give opportunities to volunteers:

http://www.thebigproject.co.uk/links_charities.htm

- BBC News website for health related issues website for topical news and issues:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health/>

More Useful Websites The following websites are very useful for broadening your knowledge and finding out about relevant medical research

- Medicine and Healthcare section of the *Bright Knowledge* website is very useful:

<http://www.brightknowledge.org/knowledge-bank/health>

- NHS Choices website:
- ACE Medicine: <http://www.acemedicine.com/>
<http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>
- **Meducation**, The,Medical Education Network, is intended for medical students and has a wealth of material and resources about medical issues as well as blogs which will give you a flavour of life at medical school:
<https://www.meducation.net/my/dashboard>
- Wellcome Trust website for the latest medical research:
<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Wellcome-Trust-websites/index.htm>
- *Royal College of General Practitioners* website:
<http://www.elearning.rcgp.org.uk/>
- *SciCentral* collects breaking research news from the most reputable and reliable sources including health sciences:
<http://www.scicentral.com/>



Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful
- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

The icould website

<http://icould.com/>

has over a thousand videos of individuals talking about their careers with hundreds of supporting articles giving an insight into:

- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do

- what it is like
- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.

APPLYING FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject Pointers

- A professional qualification is essential for jobs within nursing.
- Employers also look at your wider personal skills and abilities; the way you engage with people and a strong sense of professionalism, for example, are crucial.
- Nursing is now one of the most popular university subjects with 5 applications for each place
- Some courses will require Biology A level or another science. Most will ask for GCSE grade Cs in English, Maths and Science
- Apply for a particular type of nursing: adult nursing, mental health nursing, children's nursing, learning disability nursing
- Make sure you understand how the training and career structure of nursing is organised

A very useful website is:

<http://britainsnurses.co.uk/student-zone/studying-nursing>

HE Course Profile

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/nursing>

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/midwifery>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The Russell Group (most of the leading universities) advice on A level choices for Nursing and Midwifery is as follows:

ESSENTIAL Biology, CACHE, Sociology, Psychology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics.

USEFUL Biology, CACHE, Sociology, Psychology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics.

What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

Early in Year 12



Begin to Gather Key Information Visit www.ucas.com and begin to gather information about the sort of grades you will need to get to go to particular universities that attract you.

Early in Year 12:

Work experience is necessary for Nursing and Midwifery. These three websites are very useful:

<http://nursing.nhscareers.nhs.uk/skills/workexperience>

http://www.rcn.org.uk/nursing/work_in_health_care/get_work_experience

<http://www.gapmedics.co.uk/placements/nursing-work-experience/>

Keep a work experience notebook of insights you have gained and things you want to find out more about

From January of Year 12:



Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means it's harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12: The Personal Statement

Start Early Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement early in Year 13 that you have something relevant and interesting to write about by this time in your A level career. See enrichment activities below. At least 75% of your statement should be about Nursing/Midwifery related issues

- Check the course requirements and selection criteria: This will give you a good idea of what is being looked for

Check the course details: many students do not do this and make false assumptions about what they will study on the courses they have chosen

Avoid Clichés Don't begin your personal statement with clichés. Ask yourself whether this is something anybody could have written. If so write something original.

Do Not List It is better to write about fewer things but in more depth

Area of Interest You may want to write about a particular area of In interest in Physics. Make sure you have something to say about if asked at interview.

Writing about your Work Experience It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Personal statement Advice at:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statement-advice-nursing-students>

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statement-advice-midwifery-students>

Personal Statement Examples The Student Room website has useful advice on and examples of personal statements for Nursing and Midwifery at:

<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/content.php?r=16009-nursing-personal-statements>

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Category:Midwifery_Personal_Statements

October to March in Year 13: The Interview



The interview is extremely important for Nursing and Midwifery and it is essential you prepare carefully

Examples of Nursing interview questions can be found at:

<http://www.studential.com/interviews/nursing-questions>

<http://www.graduates.co.uk/nursing-interview-questions/>

<http://www.southwales.ac.uk/study/subjects/nursing-health-sciences/how-prepare-your-interview/>

Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond



Try to do a range of work experience:

- Supporting younger students in your school or college
- Voluntary work
- Working in a youth club
- Experience in helping older people is very important because a high proportion of the patients you will deal with will be old
- Charity work
- Working with the disabled

- If possible, some work experience in the NHS in a hospital, GP surgery or health centre
- Attend one of the Nursing student conferences courses at Nottingham University run by The Workshop for students interested in applying for Nursing at university:

<http://www.workshop-uk.net/>

What should I be reading?

- *Progression to Nursing, Healthcare and Social Work* UCAS Books
- *The History of Medicine: A Very Short Introduction*, by William Bynum. Oxford University Press
- *Epidemiology: A Very Short Introduction* by Rodolfo Saracci
- *Medical Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* by Tony Hope, Oxford University Press
- Subscribe to the *Student British Medical Journal*
- *Careers in Nursing* PDF booklet on NHS website
- Subscribe to the *Nursing Times* and use the website

Which websites will be useful?

- Royal College of Nursing especially *How to Become a Nurse of Midwife* pages
- Nursing and Midwifery Council: <http://www.nmc-uk.org/>
- NHS Careers website
- NHS choices to find out about health issues
- *Day in the Life* is an extremely useful website which gives invaluable advice on:
<http://www.dayinthelife.org.uk/>:

How the NHS Works webpages:

<http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-who-you-are/teachers-and-careers-advisers/how-the-nhs-works/>

- BBC Health News website
- Brightside Medicine and Healthcare web-pages
- *SciCentral* collects breaking research news from the most reputable and reliable sources including health sciences.
- Prospects.ac.uk website ‘Careers Advice’ link to find out more about careers and jobs in this area of work

Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

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- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.



APPLYING FOR VETERINARY DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject Pointers

Limited Places Veterinary degrees are probably the most competitive of all with a high number of applicants for very few places. Only 7 out of over a hundred universities have veterinary schools: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Royal Veterinary College London, Cambridge, Liverpool, Nottingham, Bristol. There is also a school in Dublin. There are far fewer places than there are for medicine which has 32 universities offering courses.

Length of Course: Typically training for a veterinary degree takes 5 years which means five years of university fees

University of Surrey Course The University of Surrey now have a five-year Veterinary Medicine and Science degree. However, to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the UK courses have to be approved by the RCVS Surrey say: ‘Our BVMSci course is not currently approved and this will be the case until 2019 at the earliest’.

Scottish Vet Schools Competition in Scotland will be especially fierce because Scottish students don’t have to pay fees and are more likely to apply to these schools.

Be Certain Because it is one of the most competitive university subjects, you need to be absolutely sure that you are in a strong position to apply for veterinary courses and that you are being realistic about the exam grades you can achieve. A significant proportion of students receive no offers at all even though predicted at least three A grades. You will need A*AA at A level for Oxford and A*A*A at Cambridge, for example and at least three As for other veterinary schools.

Long Training A vet training requires a long commitment of 5 years (6 years at Cambridge)

GCSEs At GCSE most of those getting offers from vet schools will have mainly As and A*s. Check with the vet schools to which you are thinking of applying to see what their expectations are.

Aptitude Test Cambridge and the RVC will ask you to take the BMAT selection test

More than Grades Needed Academic ability is necessary but not sufficient you will need to demonstrate that you are caring, have teamwork skills and leadership qualities and that you can communicate effectively. Go to this link to check that you have the right qualities to be a vet:

http://www.tobeavet.com/html/vet_personal.html

HE Course Profile

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/veterinary-medicine>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The advice from the Russell Group (most of the leading universities) for Veterinary degree courses is as follows:

ESSENTIAL: You should do Chemistry and Biology and one from Mathematics/Physics so that you have all universities open to you.

USEFUL: Further Mathematics

Look at Informed Choices Look at the document and video 'Informed Choices' on the Russell Group website which has some more very good advice on A level choices:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/188915625/Informed-Choices>

What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

Can You Compete? Think very carefully about your application. Make sure you fulfil all the requirements in terms of GCSE grades expected, predicted grades and work experience so that you put yourself into a competitive position. Four of your five UCAS choices will be for veterinary courses. You can easily end with four rejections if your application is unrealistic and over-ambitious.

RCVS Website Visit the RCVS I Want to be a Vet pages

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/education/i-want-to-be-a-vet/>

Work Experience Begin to get some work experience with practising vets. In this way you can find out what being a vet is really like.

Vet Science in the News Make sure that you keep up with veterinary related news stories. Use these links as a starting point:

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/articles/28/10/2013/141690/regional-round-up-of-key-veterinary-issues.htm>

http://www.bva.co.uk/activity_and_advice/Disease.aspx

From January of Year 12:



Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means its harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Virtual Open Days Some medical schools, Warwick for example, also have virtual open days on their website. This does not mean you should not go on the actual open day.

Work Experience

Why Work Experience? The most important reason for doing work experience is for you to find out what the job is like and to make sure that you know what you are letting yourself in for.

Expectations Work experience expectations vary with Bristol and the RVC asking for 2-6 weeks, Nottingham 6 weeks, Liverpool 10 weeks and no stipulated at Cambridge, Edinburgh or Glasgow. Check this carefully because these may change.

Variety The aim should be to get a variety of experience: time spent in a vet practice and in another setting: stables or livery, kennels, farm work, animal rescue centre, abattoir. Work with small and large animals. Different types of practice eg equine or small animals. Visit practices in different settings: rural, and urban. For Vet Science a research lab or DEFRA

What have you learnt? Essential to show in Personal Statement and interview what has been gained and that intelligent questions have been asked about the experience. Keep a diary or journal of your insights and observations. This will be very useful to refer to when you do your Personal Statement and at interview time.

References Keep any references you get after your work experiences placements because some Vet schools will allow you to submit them as part of your application

Some vet schools will ask for work experience references so check

Vet Science Work Experience For Vet Science courses try to get work experience in a research lab or DEFRA

Cambridge University Guide Cambridge University have a very useful guide to the science concepts they will expect you to understand if you are thinking about their course as well as some suggested reading. This may be useful to applicants to other vet courses

<http://www.biology.cam.ac.uk/undergrads/mvst/prospective/basic-science-concepts>

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12:

The Personal Statement

Make sure that you check to see if the universities you have applied to have any particular requirements for the Personal Statement. In most cases you should include the following:

How your interest in Vet Science developed. What you have done to develop your interest: reading, work experience etc. Are there any particular areas of Vet science that interest you and why.

Demonstrate that you have the required qualities. 'Self praise is no praise'. Praise is for the reference. Use evidence and examples

80% on commitment to course and profession: Why this career? Work experience and what was learnt from it. Knowledge of subject (journals books etc.) interest in relevant current affairs. 20% on demonstrating a well rounded individual: activities, responsibility, volunteering

Avoid Clichés Don't begin your personal statement with clichés. Ask yourself whether this is something anybody could have written. If so write something original. Make it clear that you understand the realities and pressure of working as a vet

Do Not List When writing about work experience say how long you spent on each placement but also make clear what you got from the experiences you had. Don't just list what you did. The more interesting, original and perceptive your observations, the better.

Reading Similarly with books or articles you have read. Say what you found particularly interesting and why you found it interesting and how you have tried to explore the issue further.

Area of Interest You may want to write about a particular area of vet science that has grabbed your interest. Make sure you have something to say about it if asked at interview.

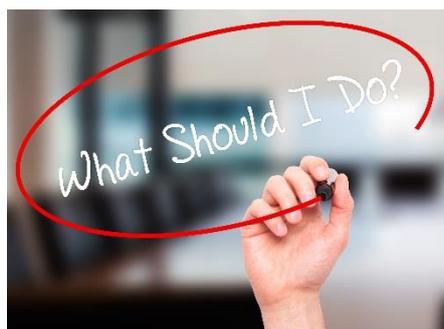
Writing about your Work Experience It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Useful Website There is a helpful personal statement writing frame as well as advice on the *So You Want to be a Vet* website:

http://www.tobeavet.com/documents/personal_statement.pdf

From July in Year 12: Selection Tests



BMAT Test Cambridge and the RVC will ask you to take the BMAT selection test

Practice Make sure that you take every opportunity to practise these before you take them either online or by using one of the books that supports applicants with tests

More Information You will find further information together with useful videos discussing the BMAT test at: <http://www.admissionstesting.org/our-services/medicine-and-healthcare/bmat/about-bmat/>

Useful Books

Preparing for the BMAT: The Official Guide to the Biomedical Admissions Test
Passing the UKCAT and BMAT: Advice, Guidance and Over 600 Questions for Revision and Practice, by Rosalie Hutton, Glenn Hutton , Felicity Taylor

How are Test Results Used? Different universities will use the results of selection in different ways. Check this with the universities to which you are applying

Test Prep Courses Kaplan Test Prep offer test preparation courses and some free resources both for BMAT:

<http://www.kaptest.co.uk/>

The Interview

Interviews Interviews take place over an extended periods and the dates will depend on the vet schools you to which you have applied.

Interview Format Find out what the format of the interview: one to one, a panel, a practical or Multi Mini Interviews (MMI)

What are Interviewers Looking For Interviewers are looking for enthusiasm, motivation, commitment and a sense of realism about what being a vet involves.

Science Knowledge Your science knowledge and ability will be tested in many medical interviews especially at Cambridge where it will play a major part in the selection process.

Typical Interview At a typical interview, at some point, you can expect questions on the Personal Statement, your motivation to become a vet, your knowledge of current issues, for example, swine flu, your work experience as well ethical issues

Personal Statement Read over your personal statement to check you are able to expand on all of the points you have included in it

Issues in the News Make sure you are well informed about the most current stories in the media involving veterinary medicine and public health

Multi Mini Interviews (MMIs) **Make sure** you find out about multi-mini interviews which an increasing number of vet schools use as part of the selection process. This link to St George's Medical School gives an insight into MMIs

<http://www.intohigher.com/uk/en-gb/our-centres/into-st-georges-university-of-london/admissions/interviews.aspx>

How do Interviews Vary? The Student Room website has collected applicant interview experiences at different vet schools, but be careful because it may not be up to date. Check with the individual university websites to see what to expect:

<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/forumdisplay.php?f=196>

Lists of Interview Questions Use these links to get some ideas of typical questions:

<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=70554>

Cambridge Vet School Mock Interview at

<http://www.emma.cam.ac.uk/admissions/videos/interviews/?showvideo=46>

What should I be doing: Subject enrichment activities in Year 12 and beyond

Conferences Attend one of the Veterinary student conferences courses at Nottingham University run by The Workshop for students interested in applying for Vet Science or Vet Medicine at university:

<http://www.workshop-uk.net/>

Cambridge University run the very successful. VetCam course for A level students:

<http://www.cam.ac.uk/news/vetcam-2014-course-opens-for-applications>

Consider doing an EPQ into an area of the subject that interests you.

Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond



- *Animal Rights: A Very Short Introduction* by David DeGrazia
- *Ethics and Animals* by Lori Gruen
- *Getting Into Veterinary School* by James Barton
- *Vet School: My Foot In The Door* by Christopher Shivelton Queen, Caroline Parkinson and Daniel Vardy
- *Introduction to Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology* by Victoria Aspinall and Melanie Cappello

Which websites will be useful?

- *Animal Health Trust*
<http://www.aht.org.uk/>
- *You Tube* videos on vet careers
http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=vet%20careers&sm=12
- *British Veterinary Association*
<http://www.bva.co.uk/>
- *RSPCA*
<http://www.rspca.org.uk/home>
- *PDSA*
<http://www.pdsa.org.uk/>

- *Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons*
<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/home/>
- *Vetsonline:*
<http://www.vetsonline.com/> News and publications for vets
- *DEFRA* The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website is very good for material on key issues and there is a link to the latest research on animal welfare

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/>
- BBC Farming Today website

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qj8q>
- *Embryo Veterinary School* for courses for A level students
<http://embryovets.com/>
- *So You Want to be a Vet* website for advice on work experience, applications, personal statement and interview

<http://www.tobeavet.com/>
- *SciCentral* collects breaking research news from reputable sources including health sciences.

<https://www.google.co.uk/#q=scicentral&safe=off>



Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

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- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.



PLANNING AND WRITING AN OUTSTANDING UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENT: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

HOW DO YOU WRITE A UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT?

Key



Pointers

How Important is it? The Personal Statement is a very important part of your university application which will be made in the first term of Year 13. Many courses do not interview so the Personal Statement may be your only chance to impress selectors. The London School of Economics (LSE) say: 'The Personal statement is the most important way we decide between applicants.'

Many universities will score you statement because they are looking for quite specific things.

How Much Do I have to Write? It is around an A4 side in length.(47 lines maximum, 4,000 characters maximum, 1,000 characters minimum, 12 point

Times New Roman font)) In most cases it will be written between July of Year 12 with a final version in September/ October of Year 13

What is it for? The Personal Statement gives you an opportunity to:

tell the universities and colleges why they should choose you

tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study.

demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd

Start Early If you get the big picture of the application process early and understand what will be needed for the Personal Statement you can begin to collect experiences, evidence of reading and other activities which can be written about when the time comes to write your statement? These are the things you need to start thinking about, doing and keeping on the back burner to make your eventual application a stronger one

Give Yourself an Edge It will give you a head start compared to many students who are applying nationally and will give you a competitive edge over other students who have left things till the last minute

In Year 11



Know Where You are Going? If you think you know where you are going with possible university course choices in Year 11 it will help if you to begin to collect experiences and engage in enrichment activities so that you have something significant to write about when the time comes.

Super-curricular activities are particularly important, things which show you have taken the initiative to find out more about and deepen your knowledge of subjects in which you have a particular interest or which are going to be important for your future course choices

From January of Year 12:



How can I show my commitment to a university subject I want to study?

The first priority is to be on top of the subjects you are studying at A level (or equivalent) because without achieving the required you will not get a place at university. You need to be:

- Up to date with assignments
- Cover the specification thoroughly
- Clear about the assessment criteria for each subject
- Have a good revision programme in place

The second priority is to enrich the A level subject you wish to study at university and any other related A levels by engaging in a range of activities to broaden and deepen your knowledge and to persuade university selectors of your commitment.

If the subject you want to study is not one of your current courses, Engineering or Vet Science for example, the same applies. Engage in activities to show that you have made a substantial effort to find out about the subject and that you have a genuine commitment to it.

Activities to Get Involved in

- Attend summer schools
- Work experience
- Public lectures
- Voluntary work
- Read (serious) newspapers
- Read journals (eg scientific)
- Enter academic competitions

Above All Read widely

- Textbooks quickly get out of date and have a narrow focus. Read more about topics you are studying and about other areas of the subject that interest you.
- Get a breadth of understanding beyond what is in the specification.
- Read subject magazines and journals to keep in touch with the latest developments.

- Philip Allen Updates subject review magazines are worth subscribing to and will keep you up to date with new research and ideas in your subject:
<http://magazines.philipallan.co.uk/>

Get relevant experience

- This will depend on the subject you want to study. Some university subjects like Medicine or Vet Science will require extensive work experience and it is also expected for subjects such as Nursing, Teaching or Social Work. Watch this video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-Fkrz8ms5w>
- For other subjects you should try to gain relevant experiences in the world outside school such as theatre visits for English, industrial and business experience for subject such as Economics, Business Studies and Engineering, voluntary work for caring careers
- A useful website is:
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers/Workexperienceandvolunteering>.

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

- You can now start thinking about the sort of things you will want to write about in your Personal Statement

July to September in Year 12:

You now need to begin to think about the Personal Statement in earnest and start writing preliminary drafts

What Should go into the Personal Statement?

Some of the best advice on the Personal Statement comes from UCAS who suggest that **at least two thirds of your personal statement should relate to the course you wish to study at university and your suitability for it.**

For a mind-map and worksheet to help you use the links:

<http://www.ucas.com/documents/statement/mindmap.pdf>

<http://www.ucas.com/documents/statement/worksheet.pdf>

UCAS also give the following important pointers about how you should include in your Personal Statement:

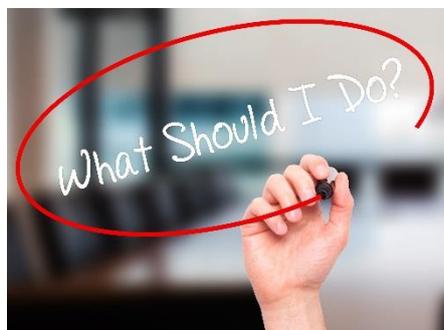
(1) Why you are applying for the course you have chosen?

- Why does the subject interest you?
- Include evidence that you understand what is required to study the course
- What got you interested in the subject?
- What have you learnt about the subject?
- Any activities that demonstrate your interest in the course(s)

(2) Why you are suitable for the course:

- Which skills and experience do you have that will help you succeed on the course.
- What have you done to develop your knowledge of the subject?
- What evidence is there that you have read, studied, gained experiences outside the confines of your A level courses?

From July in year 12



Important Things you Should Do

Make sure that you check to see if the universities you are thinking of applying to have any particular requirements for the Personal Statement.

Useful Personal Statement Advice

This section of the Which University website gives specific subject focused Personal Statement advice:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statement-subject-guides-admission-tutor-tips>

For £5 subscribe to Personal Statement Builder on the SACU website which guides you through each section of your Personal Statement. The final re-draft section automatically scans your statement for potential issues and reports back on items including: clichés, overuse of intensifier words (Amazing! Enthralled! Captivated! etc), number of sentences starting with I, american spelling errors, repetition, overall structure.

<http://sacu-student.com/?product=personal-statement-builder-student-license>

What Makes a Good Personal Statement Videos and Podcasts

These videos and podcasts from UCAS and different universities give very sound Advice:

UCAS: <http://www.ucas.tv/ucas/video/WXSch>

Birmingham: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6wGWIIOxpw>

Imperial College: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_mlyruYQ24

Leicester: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zESqEAXqX-Y>

Kings College: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtm2xtsqMLU>

Bangor: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nH_mAYnqn0I

Oxford:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/why_oxford/podcasts/t_hird_episode_the.html

Make Sure You Know about the Course You are Applying For

Look them up on university course websites

Use the UCAS entry profiles web-pages which you will find when you begin to search for courses

Redrafting is Essential

- First, start by looking at the Personal Statement Mind-map on the UCAS APPLY website :

<http://www.ucas.com/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement>

- Use it to help you construct a mind-map focused on your personal aims and aspirations
- Second, use the excellent four page Personal Statement worksheet on the UCAS APPLY website to plan your statement in detail:

<http://www.ucas.com/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement>

- The worksheet gives you very clear indications about how much to write for each section Remember: at least two thirds on the course
- Next write out your statement in full and read carefully what you have written and don't be satisfied until you have re-worked it several times
- Your Personal Statement will need **to go through many drafts** before it is right. Read it to others to see what it sounds like and get them to comment on it too.

Do Not Use Pretentious Language Write in a natural way using vocabulary you would normally use but don't be chatty either. You are not texting.

Avoid Cliché Opening Sentences

UCAS say the 10 most common opening sentences are such things as:

1. I am currently studying a BTEC National Diploma in...
2. From a young age I have always been interested in ...
3. From an early age I have always been interested in ...
4. Nursing is a very challenging and demanding career...
5. For as long as I can remember I have been fascinated with
6. Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only ...
7. Nursing is a profession I have always looked upon with ...
8. For as long as I can remember I have been interested in..
9. I am an International Academy student and have been studying since....
10. Academically, I have always been a very determined ...

Avoid Empty statements about Yourself

- I have been interested in philosophy all my life (all???)
- I feel global warming is a really important issue (which aspects?)
- I feel that genes are fundamental in shaping human behaviour (say something original about genetics)
- You need team work and communication skills and I have got them (where is the evidence?)

- Maths is important for helping us understand all sorts of things (give examples)

Avoid Mentioning Cliché Books

- Show that you have explored beyond the obvious in your reading and say something original about the books you do mention. Everyone will write about Fermat's Last Theorem' for Maths or 'A Brief History of Time' for Physics, for example
- Make sure they are books you can talk about if interviewed
- Anticipate the interview question: 'What have you read since you wrote your Personal Statement?'

Avoid Exaggerated Language

For example, Maths is.....

'amazing'

'incredible'

'fantastic'

'unbelievably interesting'

'captivating'

Say something more thoughtful

What Sort of Language should I use?

- Persuade them that you are like this don't just claim it?
- 'This shows that I am/can.....'
- Use evidence from work experience
- Use evidence from achievements
- Use evidence from voluntary activities BUT not, for example 'I am good at team work because I play in a team'.

Writing About your Work Experience

- Include details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work, particularly if it's relevant to your chosen course(s). Try to link any experience to skills or qualities related to the course
- Make it clear how long was spent on each placement

- Think about how they demonstrate your personality, skills and abilities. Try to link them to the skills and experience required for your course(s).
- UCAS give this example:

NOT

'I spent two weeks working at a department store. I enjoyed speaking to customers and helping them with their enquiries'

BUT

'I spent two weeks managing customer enquiries at a department store. I learnt how to interact with customers and handle complaints. The experience highlighted the importance of positive communication between a business and its customers, and taught me how to manage difficult enquiries effectively. I would like to develop this skill further by studying a degree in public relations.'

For some good advice on how to write about your work experience go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Skills you May Need to Write About

Depending on the nature of the course you may need to write about skills such as the following:

- Practical
- Problem solving
- Caring
- Enthusiastic
- Teamwork
- Good communicator
- Using own initiative
- Work under pressure
- Self motivated
- Working to deadlines
- Organisation
- Leadership
- Self-expression
- Scientifically literate
- Artistic/creative

Writing about Interests and Activities Relevant to the Course

The Assistant Registrar for Undergraduate Admissions from University of Warwick says that:

‘The strongest applicants are those who can link their extra-curricular activities to their proposed course of study. Your statement will be more convincing and personal if you write about why an experience, activity or interest makes you a good candidate for the course. Include enough additional information to make it interesting and to demonstrate your own interest.’

- Don't just list them
- Say what you got from the activity
- Use telling examples
- Be precise about time was spent on the activity
- Show how it helped to develop your thinking
- Emphasise skills and qualities you developed eg team work, commitment, caring
- Mention particular insights gained

The EPQ

- If you are involved in this mention it in your
- Personal Statement
- Show how it has helped you to develop intellectually with examples
- Show how it has helped you learn new study and research skills
- Show how you think it has helped you prepare for university

Applying for Multiple courses and Joint Degrees

- You only write one personal statement to all your choices. Try not to mention a university by name, even if you are applying to only one university - your personal statement cannot be changed if you apply to a different place later.
- If you're applying for a joint degree you will need to explain why you are interested in both aspects of this joint programme.
- If you're applying for different subjects or courses, you need to identify the common themes and skills that are relevant to your choices.

Do Not Plagiarise

One year 234 UCAS personal statements contained the following: ‘Ever since I accidentally burnt holes in my pyjamas after experimenting with a chemistry set on my eighth birthday, I have always had a passion for science.’

BEWARE UCAS Copycatch Plagiarism Software

- Your PS is checked against 1,500,000 statements past and present on the UCAS website, those on other websites and in books
- 30,000 students ‘caught’ in a typical year
- 10% were identical to other applicants personal statements or online examples eg Student Room
- Universities applied to informed so that they can take appropriate action
- Student told by email with details on Track
- Flagged up on Adviser Track for school staff as well

The Most Common Reasons for Unsuccessful Applications According to UCAS

- Your personal statement does not strongly support your desire to study your chosen degree.
- Your personal statement did not show sufficient understanding, relevance or knowledge about the course you are applying for.
- You failed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and interest in the subject in your personal statement.
- There is a lot of competition for places on this course and your personal statement and experience was not as strong as other applicants this year.
- Application form (including personal statement, reference and predicted grades) does not evidence accurate understanding of or motivation for subject.
- Not expressed a strong enough interest in the subject .

Using Example and ‘Model’ Personal Statements

- The danger of model answers is that you imitate them, risk plagiarism, sacrifice originality and get caught out
- There are similar issues with commercial websites which offer to ‘coach’ you It stops being your work.
- The Student Room website has a library of personal statements:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/personal_statement_library

- Be very careful with this website
- Uploaded by students some will be good some bad
- **No monitoring by Student Room** although some have been commented upon
- Not model statements
- Don’t copy. You will be caught!
- Best approach: use them to analyse with other students

- Most useful section of this website is the **Reviewed** Personal Statement Advice for different subjects section

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/category:reviewed_personal_statements

5 key Characteristics of an Excellent Personal Statement

- At least two thirds should be about the course(s) and your suitability for it.
- Make it personal and original
- Do not plagiarise
- Provide evidence and examples to back up claims you make about yourself
- When you write about things you have done show what skills you have gained and what they demonstrate about your character and/or personality

Applying to Oxford: Personal Statement Advice

- Remember that tutors will be most interested to read about your academic achievements and your commitment and motivation for your chosen degree course.
- Extra-curricular activities may help demonstrate how well you have managed your time, but they do not form part of the selection criteria in any subject.
- Do bear in mind that your UCAS personal statement will be seen by all the universities to which you are applying
- Extra-curricular is secondary
- Honesty is key! Anything included could be a talking point in the interview
- Read PS aloud.
- Students could read each other's statements in pairs
- Read the last paragraph first
- Starting early in Year 12 keep a notebook for anything relevant: books, programmes, lectures, conversations that inspired them about the subject.

Applying to Cambridge: Personal Statement Advice

- Students are advised to follow the UCAS advice Admissions decisions are based solely on academic criteria (ability, commitment and potential). We are looking for an applicant to:
 - explain their reasons for wanting to study the subject
 - demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment for chosen course
 - express any particular interests within the field
 - outline how they have pursued their interest in the subject in their own time
 - Such information is often used as a basis for discussion at interview.
 - Students are advised to follow the UCAS advice Admissions decisions are based solely on academic criteria (ability, commitment and potential).
 - Applicants can if they wish make additional comments particularly relevant to their Cambridge application on their Supplementary Application Questionnaire . This is an opportunity to highlight particular features of the Cambridge course that attracted them. This additional personal statement is optional.

<http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/saq.html>

- Applicants will not be disadvantaged if they add nothing to this section of the SAQ but should not to repeat information in their UCAS personal statement

Extra-Curricular Activities and Cambridge

- Participation (or not) in extra-curricular activities is not taken into account (unless relevant to the course) and does not affect the chances of an offer.
- We look at how extra-curricular activities demonstrate characteristics that will aid students' transition to life at university, such as the balance of academic and personal commitments, and the development of skills or qualities (perseverance, independence, leadership or team-working).
- However, other university may place more importance on extra-curricular activities.
- Cambridge are much more interested in **super-curricular activities** which show how you have deepened your knowledge and understanding of the subject you want to study.

Interviews and Personal Statements

- **Chances of Being Interviewed** You will not always be interviewed. More universities do not interview than do, so the Personal Statement is even more important if the university you are applying to does not interview.

Some universities will interview every serious applicant, others none. Some will interview borderline applicants only. Check when you are choosing your universities.

- If you are interviewed make sure to read through your personal statement before hand and that you can justify everything that you have written

Get Ahead Reading and Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond

Find out about the historical development and scope of the subject

- It helps to know how your subject has developed over time and how people approached it in the past. This will give you a better sense of what it is about and a clearer insight into how it has reached its current position.
- Understand that in all subjects there is not just one way of looking at things. There will be different perspectives, schools of thought, different views about how the subject should be studied. Be clear where you stand in relation to these debates.
- Oxford University Press (OUP) have a very useful series of books called *Very Short Introductions* which give you excellent background to academic subjects and topics within subjects.
- Wikipedia also has some useful articles on different academic subjects, their scope and historical background.

Be clear why the subject is important and worth studying

Think about what the subject has to offer.

- It may help to bring economic and technological benefits to society.
- It may help us to understand how humans behave.
- It may simply be worth studying in its own right

Understand the importance of argument and evidence

Serious academic debate revolves around argument or attempts to persuade others to your point of view using evidence and examples to support your case. It is important to:

- Ask yourself how convincing is the evidence you are using to support your views
- Ask others what evidence they have to support theirs and challenge it.

- Familiarise yourself with terms such, as argument and counter argument and be aware of the dangers of misrepresenting, insufficient or unrepresentative evidence
- Understand the common fallacies in argument that others might use such as correlation not causation or restricting the options.
- Be aware of the criteria we should use to decide whether sources of evidence are reliable.
- If you are not already studying Critical Thinking which deals with these issues, any Critical Thinking A level textbook will help you with all this or the website:
<http://www.criticalthinking.org.uk>

Use radio, television, newspapers and their websites productively

- Use the media to keep in touch with issues and debates relevant to your subject: news, documentaries, arts programmes, reviews.
- Radio and television programme and newspaper websites will have archives of programmes and articles which you can search for relevant material. Radio 4, for examples has extensive archives of broadcasts relevant to a wide rang of academic subjects.

Involve yourself in serious talk and debate

- Be enthusiastic about debating with and expressing your ideas to other students. It is only in discussion and debate with others that we really clarify what we think.
- Test your views against others.
- Do not be defensive and get used to being relaxed about having your views challenged by others.

Above all do not believe all that you are told: learn to be sceptical

- Constantly question views, theories and opinions that you are faced with.
- Test every idea to destruction so that you can tell which ones really stand up.
- Understand that what we currently think is only the best knowledge we have at the time.
- Don't be too easily persuaded
-

Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



If you are applying for vocational degree which prepare you for a specific job such as medicine , social work of teaching it is very important to show in your Personal Statement that you know what the job involves. Here are some websites which will help you to find out about the realities of work:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click ‘Careers advice’ link then click ‘Options with your subject’ link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful
- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

The icould website

<http://icould.com/>

has over a thousand videos of individuals talking about their careers with hundreds of supporting articles giving an insight into:

- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do
- what it is like
- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.

UNIVERSITY INTERVIEWS: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE



Key Pointers

Chances of an Interview More universities and university courses do not interview than do, so the **Personal Statement is even more important** if the university you are applying to does not interview. Some universities will interview every serious applicant, others none. Some will interview borderline applicants only. Check when you are choosing your universities.

Some Top Universities do not Interview In the case of two of the top universities, for example, LSE do not interview at all and Durham only interview for medicine and Education.

Who is More Likely to Interview? The following interview or are more likely to than not to interview **BUT this is not a definitive list:** Oxford and Cambridge, Medicine and medical professions, Vet Science/medicine, Dentistry, Teaching, Nursing and midwifery, Architecture, Classics, Computing, Drama and Theatre Studies, Engineering, Journalism, Music, Social work

Is a University Interview Always Selective? Interviews come in two main forms.

The 'selection' interview: A genuine attempt to assess suitability for a course: interviews for medicine and Oxbridge, teaching, nursing, midwifery are examples.

The 'recruitment' interview: The university has decided to make an offer and the interview is encouragement to accept. Interviews for less popular courses are examples of this. BUT be on your guard and present yourself as well as possible, it is not always as simple as this.

From January of Year 12:



General Interview Technique Find out as much as you can about what is good interview techniques. Look at these examples of a poor and a good economics interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snol9dIz6Ds>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzwxQ164FE0>

Begin to mull over the ways you would answer possible questions you might get asked in an interview and do this more systematically as the year goes on:

Typical General Questions

- Tell me about yourself?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Tell us about your current courses?
- What are you best at?
- What are your main interests?
- Do you have any weaknesses
- Prepare by thinking about:
 - Your key personality characteristics
 - Your general and study interests
 - Try and be relevant and talk about those personality qualities and interests that match the course

Questions about your motivation for the course and the university

- Why do you want to study for a degree?
- Why did you choose this course?

- What do you think university can offer you?
- What else, apart from study, interests you about this university?
- Why do you want to study at this university?
- Why do you want to study in this town/city?

Find out What to Expect at the Interview If you know what course you want to apply for find out as much as you can from university websites about how likely your are to be interviewed, the form the interview will take, what sort of questions are likely to be asked and whether or not some sort of test or challenge will be presented to you at the interview.

Oxford or Cambridge Interviews

Go to the Oxbridge Step by Step Guide

Medical Interviews

Go to the Medicine Step by Step Guide

Dentistry Interviews

Go to the Dentistry Step by Step Guide

Vet Science Interviews

Go to the Vet science Step by Step guide

Nursing Interviews

Go to the Nursing step by Step Guide

Teaching Interviews

Go to this link below especially the interactive interview tab on the left hand side.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/apply-for-teacher-training/help-with-your-interview>

Other Subject Focused University Interview Guidance Interview Preparation

Mental Rehearsal Mull over answers that you would give to questions that topically come up at interviews:

Subject related questions

- Why do you want to study this subject?
- What do you know about the course? (very important that you prepare for this)
- What attracts you to this course?
- Are there particular aspects of the course that attract you ? Why?
- What have you read recently that is relevant to your interest in this course?
- What experiences /work experience/ visits/ independent study have you done which is relevant to this course?

Topical questions Interviewers may ask your opinion on something topical, that is in the news or related to your subject.

- Prepare for the interview by looking in the media to see what is current
- You can reading the national serious newspapers online or in hard copy and pick out current stories that seem linked to your subject.
- Collect them in a folder and think about how you could respond to a question on these topics.
- Watch TV documentaries related to the subject

Hypothetical situation or problem solving questions

- Be prepared to have to think on your feet and do not over rehearse prepared answers
- Give me an example of a time when... you dealt with a problem, or overcame some obstacles, or worked in a team to achieve an outcome etc
- If you were asked to....do something creative aboutwhat would you do?

Course-related questions: Aston University encourage applicants to think about the following:

- What are the employment prospects for graduates?
- What is the content of the second year module x?
- Is the focus of the course more practical or theoretical?
- Is there preparatory reading I can do?
- How many contact hours per week should I expect?
- How much independent study is expected?
- How much choice do I have with module selection?

Video Look at this video about interview techniques

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMyD6c9Z3z8>

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12:

Look at the excellent advice on Interviews from UCAS:

- The when's and where's: Make sure you know where you need to be and when. Make any travel and accommodation arrangements in advance. Visit university website for maps and directions.
- Knowledge is power: Read the prospectus and look on the university's or college's website. Make a list of questions you'd like to ask, things the prospectus doesn't tell you.
- Know your application: This is all your interviewer knows about you so far.
- Be familiar with 'hot topics' in your subject area
- Practice: A mock interview is a good idea.
- Dress appropriately: Show you are taking things seriously by dressing smartly (smart trousers and shirt or blouse)
- Arrive in good time: Take contact numbers in case you get delayed.
- Body language: Don't slouch or yawn; sit up and look alert. Make sure you are giving off all the right signals.
- Stumped? Ask for question to be repeated.
- Expect the unexpected: A surprise test or exercise isn't unheard of so stay calm and think clearly.
- Ask questions: Use the interview as a chance to find out about things not on website or in prospectus.
- Sit up straight, and lean slightly forward in your chair to projecting interest and engagement. Aligning your body's position to that of the interviewer.
- Keep an interested expression. Nod and make positive gestures in moderation.
- Establish a comfortable personal space between you and the interviewer. Invading personal space (anything more than 20 inches) makes the interviewer uncomfortable.

If you have more than one person interviewing briefly address both with your gaze and return attention to the person who asked the question.

- If interruptions happen refrain from staring at your interviewer while they address their immediate business. Show willingness to leave if they need privacy.
- According to research at Harvard **striking an expansive posture** with open limbs rather than one with crossed arms and legs raises testosterone levels by an average of 20% and lowers cortisol, the stress hormone by a similar amount.

September in Year 12:



Look at this UCAS video about university interviews:

<http://www.ucas.tv/ucas/video/pwHtR>

Get a Mock Interview! with a member of staff who knows about the subject you are applying for. Explain to them what you can expect for the interviews you are going for because they may not know.

Get them to really challenge what you are saying with questions such as:

- What evidence is there for that?
- I disagree with that because.....?
- You are not taking account of?
- Doesn't that contradict what you said earlier.....?
- Wouldn't x's ideas/theories argue against that?
- Would you be able to apply that kind of thinking to.....?
- Can you explain how you came to that conclusion?
- On the other hand, couldn't you say that.....?
- The problem with what you are saying is.....?
- There are limitations to that argument aren't there.....?

Which websites will be useful?

The University of Kent Careers Service offer some very good general advice about different types of interviews. It is aimed at undergraduates but is still useful to those applying to university or for a variety of careers.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/applicn.htm>

Which University? There are some interview tips on this website:

<http://university.which.co.uk/search/advice?utf8=%E2%9C%93&a%5Bq%5D=interviews&commit=Go>

Sample Questions

This site has examples of interview questions and a discussion of answers

<http://www.studential.com/interviews>



READ MORE **DEGREE COURSE APPLICATION GUIDES**

