

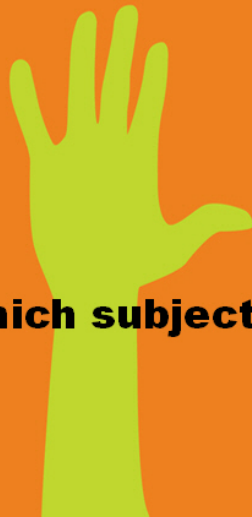


SHREWSBURY
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Unlocking potential...Shaping futures



Thinking of University?



Which subject?



Which university?



**How much will
it cost?**

Higher Education

Every year around 80% of our students apply to Higher Education. It is our aim to support these students in making the right choices, in terms of which subject to study and which university to apply to, as well as supporting them through the actual application process.

We have provided a copy of the timetable of activities on which students should be working over the next 15 months, to enable you as parents to support them through this time.

We are aware of the financial implications of attending university and this booklet will provide you with the basic information about the costs involved.

If you would like to obtain more information about Higher Education, you can visit the parent section on the UCAS website www.ucas.com/parents. This section provides information on a range of issues relating to Higher Education. You can sign up to receive bi-monthly emails and they also have a parents' blog at <http://ucasparentsblog.blogspot.com>.

Why choose Higher Education?

With so many issues surrounding applying to university and in the wake of the economic climate, it can be easy to lose sight of the many benefits that attending Higher Education can bring:-

- Many Higher Education courses provide a vocational programme of study directly related to particular work areas such as accountancy, business administration, sports science and teaching.
- A Higher Education qualification is an absolute must for initial entry to some careers – medicine, chartered engineering and architecture for example.
- Over a working life, the average graduate will earn between 20 and 25% more than his/her equivalent holding two or more A levels (PricewaterhouseCoopers Report LLP – February 2007).
- Higher Education develops important transferable skills such as numeracy, communication and information technology, which can give you an edge in the fast-changing world of employment.
- Students may be at a stage in life when they can study a subject for the sake of personal satisfaction.

Last but not least, Higher Education can also provide:

- New experiences – university provides a great opportunity to broaden horizons and try out new experiences. Whatever route they choose, students will gain confidence, knowledge and independence, and some friends and experiences they will never forget!

Thinking about University?

Did you know there are thousands of courses available at over 300 universities? How do you decide what to study and where to go?

Choosing a subject

If you know exactly what career you want to do, eg training as a doctor, then choosing the subject is relatively easy. However, what happens if, like most of our students, you have no idea about your future career? If this is the case, there are a number of things to consider.

What subjects do you enjoy the most at College?

At university you will be studying a subject in depth for up to 4 years and therefore you need to choose a subject that will interest you for the duration of the course. If you do not really enjoy it, then there is a good chance you will end up dropping out.

What about my future career?

Many students are concerned that by choosing a subject they enjoy this may affect their future careers. If you study English at university, what else can you do with it apart from teaching or journalism? Over 40% of all graduate jobs do not require a specific subject as many employers consider the skills you develop whilst studying for a degree more important than the actual subject content. An English degree could also lead to a career in accountancy, business or law!

Single/combined courses

You may want to study 1 subject in depth or a combination of 2 or 3 subjects; it doesn't mean double the work. You can study subjects that are similar or completely different, the choice is yours.

New subjects

You may not wish to continue with your A level subjects to a higher level. Don't worry as there are lots of subjects you can study at university without having studied them before, eg Business, Psychology, Law and Sports Science.

Choosing a Course

Students will need to consider the following options:

Degree	Usually 3 or 4 years in duration. May include a year abroad or on work experience. Minimum entry requirement of 2 A levels, although most institutions require 3 A levels. Entry grades/points will depend on the type of course and institutions you are applying to. Check individual prospectuses for more details. The grades for particular subjects will vary from one institution to another. This does not necessarily reflect the quality of the degree course offered, but may reflect the popularity of the university. Courses can be combined providing you with an opportunity to study for more than one subject.
HND	These are of 2 years (full-time) or 3 years (sandwich) duration. They require applicants to have studied two A level subjects and to have passed one of them. Realistically, entry requirements are higher. They usually have a vocational bias. It may be possible to transfer to a degree course.
Foundation Degree	These are of 2 years (full-time) or 3/4 years (part-time) duration. A work-related Higher Education qualification designed to meet skill shortages. It will provide the opportunity to progress to a degree course after a further 12-15 months full-time study.
Vocational Courses	These prepare students for a specific career, eg medicine, architecture. Students must research these areas carefully and preferably undertake work experience to ensure that they have chosen an appropriate subject.
Semi-Vocational Courses	These prepare students for entry to a broad career area rather than one specific career, eg Business Studies can lead to one of several business related areas such as accountancy, marketing and personnel.
Non-Vocational Subjects	These subjects, eg English Literature, History and Geography, do not prepare you for any particular career. The advantage of taking these subjects is that the student can continue to study subjects they are familiar with. It will also keep career options open – over 40% of all jobs for graduates are open to people with a degree in any subject.
New Subjects	Some subjects can be studied at degree level without any previous experience. However, students need to research these subjects carefully before committing themselves.

Are you still uncertain about your choice of subject?

- Discuss it with your tutor/subject teachers
- Arrange an interview with the College Student Guidance and Progression Manager or the Personal Adviser from Shropshire Youth Connexions.
- Take the Stamford Test, which helps to match you interests and abilities with possible subjects. This test can be found at www.ucas.com.

Choosing a University

Location

Students may decide that they wish to live at home and commute. This may have financial benefits but this will also restrict their choices and their independence! At the other end of the scale, St Andrew's may sound attractive but how much will it cost to get home?

Size

There are major variations in the size of universities. They can range from 4,000 to 15,000 full-time students.

Accommodation

Is accommodation guaranteed for all first years? How expensive is it? How near to the university is it?

Teaching Methods

This varies from course to course/institution to institution. Is teaching mainly via lectures, seminars or tutorials? Is the course assessed by end of year exams, or based on continuous assessment?

Status

Many students (and parents) are very concerned regarding the status of the university/institution they choose, especially with the publication of league tables etc. Generally speaking, the traditional universities have the best reputations, particularly amongst employers, and therefore demand the highest grades. They do not necessarily reflect quality.

One way of obtaining a more impartial viewpoint is to study the Quality Assessment Reports produced by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. They can be accessed via the QAA website at www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews.

Unistats is a website which enables potential students to compare subjects at Universities. It includes information on student data, destinations and the National Student Survey – www.unistats.com.

Admission Tests

Some universities and colleges require students to pass an admissions test as well as standard qualifications if they are applying for courses in certain subjects. You can find out more about these tests from: www.ucas.com/students/choosingcourses/admissions/.

Entry Requirements

Entry requirements can vary considerably and this needs to be taken into consideration when choosing a university. Universities that have very high entry requirements are usually very popular and therefore very competitive. If their entry requirements are AAB and your estimated grades are BBB, it is likely that you will be rejected. So be realistic, find out your estimated grades and then look at appropriate courses.

Open Days

Open Days are a great opportunity to find out more about the university and the course. Most Open Days are held in June/July or September/October. If you are unable to visit at this time, all students who are offered a place will be invited to attend at a later date. Information on Open Days is available from the university websites.

www.ucas.com

UCAS (University and Colleges Admissions Services)

This website has lots of useful information on Higher Education. You can use the data base to search for subjects. Go to course search, enter the subject you are interested in and it will list every course in the country with a hyperlink to university websites. There is a section specifically designed for students, including www.yougofurther.co.uk, which is a student-only networking site, and a section for parents.

UCAS Tariff

Universities will require either specific grades or points for entry to courses. Specific entry requirements are available from the universities direct via prospectuses or websites and it is also possible to obtain this on the UCAS website.

The UCAS website has a tariff calculator which is there to assist you in calculating a score for your qualifications.

A Levels/AVCE Single 6 unit	AS Levels 3 unit	Extended Project	Key Skills
A* = 140 points		A* = 70 points	Level 3 = 20 points per unit
A = 120 points	A = 60 points	A = 60 points	
B = 100 points	B = 50 points	B = 50 points	
C = 80 points	C = 40 points	C = 40 points	
D = 60 points	D = 30 points	D = 30 points	
E = 40 points	E = 20 points	E = 20 points	

When calculating your points' score you need to be aware that you only use the points generated from your estimated A levels. You should only include AS points for subjects not continued to A level, eg if you are studying –

A Level Law and estimated a grade B	= 100 points
A Level History and estimated a grade C	= 80 points
A Level Design and estimated a grade C	= 80 points
AS Biology and gained a grade B	= 50 points

Total number of points = 310 points

You may also be able to use points from Key Skills/General Studies/Music (grade 6 upwards) - check with individual prospectuses and the UCAS website.

Universities will make conditional offers to students based on their AS grades and predicted A level grades. Students need to make realistic choices in terms of their university choice – popular courses and institutions will demand high grades and admissions tutors are unlikely to be flexible. If there is a problem with grade requirements, students are advised to contact individual admissions tutors.

Applications for Higher Education Timetable for Action

Spring/Summer Term 2010

Information will be available through Tutorial and on Moodle on how to research courses and institutions and on how to apply. Students are encouraged to:

- Seek advice from the College Student Guidance and Progression Manager, the Personal Adviser from Shropshire Youth Connexions and their Form Tutors and Teachers.
- Access information on Moodle and the UCAS website.
- Order university prospectuses online or access them in the Careers library.
- Arrange appropriate work experience, especially if you are applying for a vocational course.
- Attend Open Days - we are aware that it is impossible to visit every institution.
- Attend Higher Education Fairs. The College will be organising a visit to the **Birmingham Higher Education Fair on Thursday 1 July 2010.**

Autumn Term 2010

UCAS will start to accept applications from **early September**. All students applying to UCAS will need to do so online via UCAS Apply, which can be accessed via any computer. Instructions on the UCAS Apply process will be distributed to the students.

The College deadlines for UCAS are:

<p>27 September 2010 Applications for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry</p> <p>8 November 2010 All other applications</p>

Each year the College processes in excess of 550 UCAS forms and therefore students need to be aware that, at peak times, it may take 3 weeks+ to process a form.

An early application is strongly advised as Universities start to make offers as soon as the forms arrive. They do not wait until the deadline.

Mock Interviews

If students are likely to be called for interview, eg if they are applying for teaching, medicine or veterinary science etc, they should strongly consider arranging a mock interview. These can be arranged in College or as part of a reciprocal arrangement with Shrewsbury School.

Spring Term 2011

Interviews/Offer/ Open Days

By April most Universities will have made their final decisions about their offer of places. Students will be able to accept two offers, one as their firm/first choice and one as insurance/second choice. Students, who either are not holding any offers or who have decided to reject their offers, will be given the opportunity to apply for an additional course through UCAS Extra.

Finance

The applications for student finance are made online and information is available from www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance. Students will be advised by College when they can start applying for finance.

Summer Term 2011

A/AS examinations

August 2011

- Exam results issued
- Confirmation of places for successful candidates

The majority of students successfully gain the grades required to enter the institution of their choice. However, students, who fail to meet their offer and who are rejected by both their first and second choice institution, will be able to enter the UCAS Clearing process, which seeks to match unsuccessful applicants to remaining vacancies. The Careers Department will be open to students in order to assist them with this process.

(It is very important that students are available when the results are published, in case they need to avail themselves of this service.)

Finally

Students are supported throughout the Higher Education application process by a range of people including Tutors, Careers Staff, Student Support Leaders, Student Services and Shropshire Youth Connexions. Last year 99% of all students who applied were made offers. The support we give to the students is also available to parents through the Careers Department.

Financial Variations (2011 Entry)

Living in Wales?

Students who normally live in Wales will need to apply to Student Finance Wales for financial support. Students can apply for loans to cover tuition fees and living costs and there is an Assembly Learning Grant (similar to the Maintenance Grant), which is dependent on household income. This fee grant is available regardless of family income. More information is available from www.studentfinancewales.co.uk (Tel 0845 602 8845).

NHS Bursaries

Income Assessed Bursaries are available to students applying for:- Audiology, Chiropody, Dental Hygiene, Dental Therapy, Dietetics, Midwifery (degree), Nursing (degree), Occupational Therapy, Orthoptics, Physiotherapy, Prosthetics, Radiology, Speech and Language Therapy.

The maximum in 2009/10 was: **£3,392** if studying in London
£2,810 if studying elsewhere
£2,346 if living at home

Students applying for income assessed bursaries may also be able to apply for financial assistance from Student Finance Direct.

Non-income assessed bursaries are available to students applying for Nursing (diploma), Midwifery (diploma) and the Diploma in Operating Department Practice.

The maximum in 2009/10 was: **£7,827** if studying in London
£6,701 if studying elsewhere
£6,701 if living at home

Students receiving a NHS Bursary will not have to contribute towards Tuition Fees. More information is available from www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk.

Social Work

Students studying for a degree leading to a social work qualification will be eligible to apply for a non-means tested bursary, which in 2009/10 was up to **£4,574** for students studying outside London. Students will have to pay tuition fees, but may be able to apply for financial assistance from Student Finance Direct. More information on NHS and Social Work Bursaries is available from www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/825.aspx.

Medical and Dental Degree Students

Pre-registration medical and dental students undertaking the 5/6 year undergraduate programme will be eligible for means-tested bursaries and help with tuition fees from their 5th year of study and above. In years 1-4 students will remain supported under the mainstream system.

Students with a disability

Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) provide extra help to students who have an impairment, health condition or specific learning disability. There is a range of help available including paying for specialist equipment or a non-medical helper such as a note taker. This financial assistance is non-repayable and not affected by household income. More detailed information is available in 'Bridging the Gap: A Guide to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) in Higher Education', which is available from www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance or by calling 0800 731 9133.

Higher Education – The Costs

Many students and parents are concerned about the financial implications of attending university and we have therefore included information about the costs and support available to students attending university in 2010. As you are probably aware, there is currently an independent review of Higher Education funding and Student Finance, which will report to the Government later this year. Any changes implemented following this review will come into effect in the academic year 2011/12 at the earliest. If there is a delay, it is likely that financial assistance will be broadly similar to what is outlined below. We will endeavour to keep you informed as soon as more details become available.

There are two major expenses to consider when applying to universities:

Tuition Fees

All universities can charge up to £3,290 per year for tuition fees and the majority charge the full amount. All students can apply for a loan to cover these fees, which is repayable upon graduation (please refer to section on 'Repaying the Student Loan').

Living Costs

This involves all other expenses such as accommodation, food and socialising! How much this will be does of course depend very much on the individual student, on where they go and what they spend their money on. Universities estimate these costs at anything from £6,000 to £10,000 per year. Students can apply for financial support and this is available in 3 ways:

1. Maintenance Loans – all students are entitled to a maintenance loan, but how much they actually receive will depend on household income. This will be repayable upon graduation (please refer to section on 'Repaying the Student Loan').
2. Maintenance Grant – this non-repayable loan is again dependent on household income. A quick guide to student and maintenance loans is available overleaf. For more information, use the Student Calculator at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinancecalculator.
3. University Bursaries – a student who receives the full maintenance grant and is charged the full tuition fees will also be eligible for a university bursary of at least £329. Amounts vary from university to university and some may give a bursary to every student regardless of their household income. It is worth researching bursaries either by accessing the university website or via university information on the UCAS website.

Repaying the Student Loan

The tuition fees and maintenance loan are repayable upon graduation and once the student is earning over £15,000 per year (before tax). The student will pay 9% of their earnings towards the repayment of this loan. The table below provides a guide to repayments.

Income per year	Monthly repayments
Up to £15,000	£0
£16,000	£7
£21,000	£45
£24,000	£67

Student Finance – A Quick Guide

2110/2011 New, full-time HE Entrants				
Students living in parental home:				
Household Income (repayable)	Maintenance Grant (non repayable)	Maintenance Loan (Repayable)	Total support available for Maintenance	Tuition Fee Loan
25,000 or less	2,906	2,385	5,291	Maximum Tuition fee an HEI can charge, and therefore the amount of Tuition Fee Loan a student can get for 2010/11 is: £3,290
30,000	1,906	2,885	4,791	
34,000	1,106	3,285	4,391	
40,000	711	3,483	4,194	
45,000	381	3,648	4,029	
50,020	50	3,813	3,863	
50,778	0	3,838	3,838	
55,000	0	2,994	2,994	
56,153	0	2,763	2,763	
60,000	0	2,763	2,763	
Students living away from home, outside London:				
25,000 or less	2,906	3,497	6,403	Maximum Tuition fee an HEI can charge, and therefore the amount of Tuition Fee Loan a student can get for 2010/11 is: £3,290
30,000	1,906	3,997	5,903	
34,000	1,106	4,397	5,503	
40,000	711	4,595	5,306	
45,000	381	4,760	5,141	
50,020	50	4,925	4,975	
50,778	0	4,950	4,950	
55,000	0	4,106	4,106	
57,708	0	3,564	3,564	
60,000	0	3,564	3,564	
Students living away from home and in London:				
25,000 or less	2,905	5,475	8,381	Maximum Tuition fee an HEI can charge, and therefore the amount of Tuition Fee Loan a student can get for 2010/11 is: £3,290
30,000	1,906	5,975	7,881	
34,000	1,106	6,375	7,481	
40,000	711	6,573	7,284	
45,000	381	6,738	7,119	
50,020	50	6,903	6,953	
50,778	0	6,928	6,928	
55,000	0	6,084	6,084	
60,000	0	5,084	5,084	
60,478	0	4,988	4,988	
65,000	0	4,988	4,988	

Useful Websites

www.ucas.com

www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews

www.unistats.com

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk

Important Dates

Birmingham Higher Education Fair
Thursday 1 July 2010

UCAS DEADLINES

27 September 2010

Applications for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry

8 November 2010

All other applications