



RGS CAREERS  
**HIGHER EDUCATION  
EVENING**  
2016-2017



REIGATE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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This brief guide is designed to provide an introduction for both students and parents to the process of applying to university at Reigate Grammar School. We also offer advice on some of the choices available, and provide some links to websites for further information.

No guide can be comprehensive, and this one certainly isn't! It can only skim the surface of this vast topic, and we hope that it will enable students (and parents) to go on and complete their own research. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the talk which will be provided to both students and parents on Higher Education Day.

This guide covers Higher Education institutions that can be accessed via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). It does not include specialist colleges (e.g. Art College, Drama School or Music Conservatoires). For information on any of these, please contact the Careers Department, or the Heads of the relevant departments at school.



### Welcome to Reigate Grammar School's Higher Education Evening.

Throughout the year a range of events are arranged by the Careers Department including lunchtime talks, clinics and bigger evening events such as the recent Higher Education Convention.

These events rely on the work that goes on in the background to ensure they happen – all to help the students in our care and at other local establishments, to make informed decisions for their further education and careers. It is events such as this that led the **Independent Schools Inspectorate** to reach its recent conclusion that Reigate Grammar School is “**Exceptional**” in every way. However, do please let me know if there are any other events you would like us to consider - [headmaster@reigategrammar.org](mailto:headmaster@reigategrammar.org)

**Shaun Fenton**  
Headmaster

# APPLICATION TIMETABLE 2016-2018

## SEPTEMBER 2016

Students began completing their Personal Development Plan. This showed students the kinds of skills and experiences that they needed to develop over the year. This will help to ensure that they have plenty to refer to on their personal statements and application forms.

Careers and University preparation lessons began for students in September:

Students were introduced to **UNIFROG**, an online platform which connects students to every university course and apprenticeship in the UK.

Academic enrichment societies have run throughout the year, as well as a full careers programme of talks and events. Careers guides have also been produced for a number of career areas. All of this information is on <http://www.reigategrammar.org/school-life/academic/careers-university-entry/>

## FEBRUARY 6

**High Education Convention.** We hope that this event helped to clarify some of the thoughts that students were having about future careers and university options.

There has also been an **Engineering Evening**, **Medicine Evening** and **Law Evening** to add to the **Accounting and Finance Evening**, an **Art and Design Evening** and a **Digital Careers Evening** that ran last year.

## FEBRUARY-MARCH

**Centigrade Testing** should have helped students to be more clear about what they want to study and where. Students also had the option to have an interview with an external careers advisor. It is easy to do follow-up research on the Centigrade Report by going to [www.mycareersroom.co.uk](http://www.mycareersroom.co.uk) and using the log-in and password on the report. Amongst other things this web-site will give details of relevant university open days. The Careers Department are happy to go through this report at any time.

## MARCH – SEPTEMBER

It is very important for students to visit universities to which they are considering applying. Students should attend open days, which often need to be booked well in advance ([www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com) for information) but it is just as valuable to make visits to universities at weekends or in the holidays. This allows them to see the universities when they are not putting on a show. Many universities offer guided tours on a regular basis. The school arranges trips to popular universities such as Bath and Southampton.

Students should also be researching courses and universities. One of the Careers team will be in the Careers office every lunchtime from 1:30 pm-2:10pm to assist students. We are also available to help them at least two periods per day. These periods are listed in the Sixth Form Centre and in form rooms. We are very keen to help - they just need to ask. Parents should also feel free to call or email at any time.

## A LEVEL EXAMINATIONS

The school will make predicted A2 grades for each pupil. These predictions will be heavily influenced by the pupils' performance during the Lower Sixth year.

In June there will be several UCAS sessions, in which we will offer guidance on applying to university and filling out the UCAS form. There will also be an opportunity to question recent RGS leavers about their time at university.

Before the end of the Summer Term, all students should have accessed the UCAS website ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)) and registered on UCAS 'Apply'. Draft personal statements should have been completed. Ideally, each student will have prepared a short list of courses from which the final five choices will be made. Students should aim to return after the Summer break with their UCAS forms and personal statements ready to be sent.

During the summer holiday those who wish to study Medicine or Dentistry at university may well have to sit the UKCAT test. See page seven for details of this and other admissions tests.

## AUTUMN TERM 2017

### SEPTEMBER

UCAS forms to be completed by all Oxbridge applicants. Applicants for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science must also complete their forms by the end of September. All other applicants must complete them by early October (date to be finalised).

### OCTOBER

Evidence from previous years suggests that the earlier the application, the greater the likelihood of an offer. A large proportion of universities make offers as the applications come in, so a student who sends the UCAS form off late greatly reduces his/her chance of getting a place.

It is critical that students check the UCAS website or individual university websites to find out what grades universities are likely to demand if they make an offer. They must ensure that they pick several courses (out of their five choices) where they should still meet the grade requirements if their A Levels do not go quite as well as they hoped. Students are likely to miss out on going to their university of choice if they miss the grades. Consequently, they would be wise to be prudent.

### NOVEMBER 2017

An interviews evening will take place to help pupils to prepare for university interviews.

## SPRING TERM 2018

### JANUARY

Students should hear from universities directly, starting about three or four weeks after the UCAS form has been sent off. Some universities may not reply until the end of March though.

### FEBRUARY-MARCH

Many interviews take place. Pupils who have interviews should come to the Careers Department beforehand. We will offer guidance and we are happy to give practice interviews. Ask subject contacts for guidance too.

Student support application forms are available on-line by going to [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance) from the end of February. These should be completed as soon as possible by all students who are starting their course in 2018. Those who are taking a Gap Year should apply for financial support in 2019.

**UCAS EXTRA** opens at the end of February. This is a facility on the UCAS website which allows students who have either been rejected by all of their universities or who have declined all of their offers to choose another course.

### APRIL – MAY

Students send final decisions to UCAS. They do this via 'Track' on the UCAS website. One offer may be held firmly. One offer may be held as an insurance offer. The insurance offer should be one that the student can still meet if their A Levels do not go as well as planned. All others must be declined.

### AUGUST

**A LEVEL RESULTS** These are normally received by schools on the second or third Thursday in August. Students must be available to receive their results and deal with any problems. Careers staff will be in school to help, but nothing can be done if a student is away on holiday. Where contact with a university is necessary at this stage, it is essential that the student (NOT a parent or a teacher) telephones the relevant admissions tutor. Any student who is unsuccessful at this stage is automatically entered into the Clearing process and will be sent full details by UCAS.

Any student wishing to take a Gap Year would normally be advised to follow all of the above procedure exactly, but to indicate on the UCAS form that the application is for deferred entry in 2019; however, pupils can, if they wish, apply after they leave the school instead. We will still help them. Indeed, we will run a UCAS day on a Saturday specifically for former students.

It should be noted that any applicant for deferred entry should briefly outline their plan for the Year Out as part of the personal statement on the UCAS form. This suggests that some advanced planning is necessary.

# CHOOSING YOUR UNIVERSITY AND COURSE

The most difficult decision for most students is the choice of university and course. There is a bewildering array of options – campus universities, collegiate universities, English, Scottish, overseas, sandwich courses, combined honours, Degree Apprenticeships and so on – and students need to spend quite a lot of time and energy in narrowing down their choices. This section is intended to help students and parents to navigate through this tricky area.

## CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECT(S)

Firstly, the subject or subjects. For some students, this is fairly straightforward, because they have known for a long time what they want to do or be – a doctor, a vet, an engineer, or whatever. But for many, it is quite hard. The over-riding criterion should be that students **enjoy the subject they are going to study**. Despite the common perception, undergraduates do actually spend more time in the lab and the library than the bar; they do get out of bed in the mornings, and they do occasionally have to write an essay. None of this is going to be easy if they don't enjoy the subject matter.

Choosing a subject because they think it's trendy, or will get them into a lucrative career is not recommended. The few of our ex-students who drop out of their first year at university usually do so because they chose the wrong course, not the wrong university. Students need to make sure they really understand what the course is about, if necessary by talking to undergraduates already on the course, so that they avoid a nasty shock on arrival. Students can make contact with Reigatians, who are currently at university, by visiting The Foundation Office.

The choice of subjects is vast to say the least. Some students are tempted by what are called Dual Honours, in which they study two subjects such as History and English, or Music and Chinese. These can be a really good idea. Be aware that e.g. History AND Italian should be a fairly even split between the two, whereas History WITH Italian is likely to be mainly History with some Italian modules.

## CHOOSING YOUR UNIVERSITY

Having decided what subject(s) you wish to study, the next decision is – where?

Last year, the most popular destinations for RGS students were Exeter (14), Durham (9), Bath/Bristol (6), Warwick/Nottingham/Leicester (5), York/Edinburgh (4). These kinds of highly competitive universities are those that our students are most drawn to. For most students, choosing the right course should be the priority, and some may decide to choose a university which is less popular, but which has an excellent reputation in a particular area, or a particularly attractive course. Herriot-Watt, for example, is particularly well known for Actuarial Science.

Needless to say, students must be realistic in their choices. There really is nothing to be gained from applying for a course where the average offer is three As when they know they are working at B grades. We can and will, of course, advise them on this.

## PLAYING THE NUMBERS GAME

The numbers of students applying for university has fallen since the introduction of higher fees, but the competition to get into popular universities or onto popular courses is still intense.

A traditionally high demand course would be Engineering at Bristol. In 2014 there were 7.6 applicants per place and a large proportion of those candidates had straight A grade predictions and very strong GCSE results.

One of the most popular universities for applications is Southampton. They had 8 applicants per place overall across all subjects in 2012. However, this does not tell the whole story, because there were:

- Only 4 applicants per place for Creative Arts
- 6 applicants per place for Social Sciences
- 10 applicants per place for Business Studies
- 16 applicants per place for Medicine & Dentistry

The message here is that students need to do their research carefully, and try to be realistic in their approach. Students should certainly be ambitious and apply for very popular courses or universities, but balance these with some less competitive choices. Some extra research into slight variances in the area of study may pay dividends. For example, Imperial College require A-\*\*\*A for Chemical Engineering and 9.7 students apply for every place offered but for both 'Biomaterials and Tissue Engineering' and 'Materials Science and Engineering' the grades required are \*\*AA—\*\*A and the ratio of applications to places 4.9:1. That said, it is crucial that students study the subject(s) that they actually want to study!

Finally, it should go without saying that the students can give themselves the best chances of success by working hard and obtaining the highest grades of which they are capable. We will do our utmost to help them, both in this and in making their applications to university.

## WHO DOES WHAT?

### THE CAREERS DEPARTMENT

The Careers Department (Mr. Buzzacott, Miss Godbold, Miss Vaughan and Mr. Nicholson) is responsible for providing advice to students on courses and universities, and on the applications process. A member of the Careers Team will check each student's UCAS form, including their Personal Statement, and suggest changes that might be advisable. They will also ensure that students have entered information correctly e.g. GCSE grades.

### SUBJECT CONTACT

This is a member of the teaching staff, who has a particular expertise in a degree course subject. He/she will be the first port of call for students for advice on applying for their subject and for drafting their personal statement.

### SIXTH FORM TUTORS/HEAD AND DEPUTY HEADS OF SIXTH FORM

Each student's Reference is drafted by their Form Tutor, then passed to a Head/Deputy Head of Sixth Form, who will check it through.

### OXBRIDGE CO-ORDINATOR

Dr Carter is in charge of Oxbridge applications and will advise students on this. (See pages 8-9)

### MEDICAL APPLICATIONS

Mrs Bull (Chemistry Department) provides advice to students on medical, Vet Science and dental applications.

### APPLICATIONS FOR LAW

Mr. Chevalier provides advice to students on applications to read Law.

And finally ...

When the application, personal statement and reference are complete, Miss Godbold will check it one more time before sending it off.

# UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TESTS

As so many students apply to university with similar grades, universities are finding it harder to distinguish between the top students. Therefore, for better or for worse, a number of admissions tests have been introduced.

## 1. UKCAT (UK CLINICAL APTITUDE TEST)

This has to be taken by applicants for Medicine and Dentistry at most of the top universities. Cost: £65 if sat between 3 July and 31 August, but £80 if sat between 1 September and 3 October (the final testing date). NB You can only sit this test once each application cycle.

You register on-line at [www.ukcat.ac.uk](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk) from 2 May but before 19 September. It is advisable to register early, because test centres get booked up quickly and obviously you don't want to have to travel hundreds of miles to sit it! It is a computer-based test and the website gives information about where your closest test centre is. The test can be sat any time between 3 July and 3 October. It is an aptitude test and is not science based.

UKCAT claim it cannot be revised for. Students should, however, familiarise themselves with the format of the test. It is very time pressured and needs to be practised against the clock. There are books in the Careers Library to help with this, and there are practice papers on the UKCAT website. The school will run at least one practice test after AS exams.

## 2. BMAT (BIOMEDICAL ADMISSIONS TEST)

This has to be taken by those wishing to study Medicine or Veterinary Medicine at: Imperial College London, University College London, Brighton, Royal Veterinary College, Leeds, Cambridge or Oxford. It has also now been introduced for the Biomedical Science courses at Imperial and Oxford, as well as Dentistry at Leeds. Cost: £45

The school makes the entry for this exam on your behalf and it is sat in school on 1 November. It is a paper based exam. This exam is science based, although in theory the content is not beyond GCSE level (the application will be harder than this). Students interested in doing this exam will be given further details, as well as information about courses that may help them.

We have books in the Careers Department with practice papers and answers. There are also practice materials on the BMAT website at [www.admissionstestingservice.org](http://www.admissionstestingservice.org)

## 3. LNAT (NATIONAL ADMISSIONS TEST FOR LAW)

This test is for those looking to study Law at a number of the top universities - a list is available on the LNAT website. Details are yet to appear for this year, so this information is based on last year's information. Please, therefore, check the LNAT website carefully.

Students need to register for it online at [www.lnat.ac.uk](http://www.lnat.ac.uk) from 1 August. It is sat online between the beginning of September and mid-October. The website should give you directions to your nearest test centre. Last year's cost was £50.

The test is in two parts. Part A is a multiple choice test with questions based upon your ability to interpret the content of several articles. Part B is an essay. They are not particularly interested in the opinions that the student expresses in the essay, but are looking for his/her ability to defend a point of view.

A book of practice papers is available in the Careers Department and there are also some on the website. It is also a good idea to read a quality newspaper every day and try to analyse what you read. Consider and try to defend different points of view for each story. Students who are interested in studying Law at university should contact Mr. Buzzacott or Mr. Chevalier. The school will run a practice test prior to the test dates.

#### 4. ENTRANCE TESTS AT OXFORD, CAMBRIDGE AND IMPERIAL

Almost every course at Oxford and, from this year, Cambridge requires you to take some form of standardised admission test. Imperial College requires an aptitude test for Maths. With the exception of LNAT these tests are either taken at school at the beginning of November, or at interview. The tests can be challenging papers based on subject-specific A Level material, general assessments designed to test how you think, or a combination of the two. The school provides preparation sessions for all the tests, including a mock test sat under exam conditions. Details about the test required for each course are available from the university websites:

[www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/admissions-assessments](http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/admissions-assessments)

and [www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/tests?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/tests?wssl=1)

There is also a link on the UCAS website to further information about admissions tests, and when you submit your application the UCAS website will tell you if an admission test is required.

#### APPLICATIONS TO OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

##### HOW DO OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE DIFFER FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES?

There are two key differences that make these universities distinctive. Firstly teaching is based on the 'tutorial' or 'supervision' system - you will have weekly (or twice-weekly) academic tutorials in very small groups or individually. This level of personal, bespoke attention from a highly qualified, world-leading expert in your chosen field is unique to Oxbridge. The second difference is that the universities are based on a college system. When you join the university you become a member of a college which not only provides accommodation, food, sports and social events but also is responsible for your learning - although lectures and labs are provided by the university, your tutorials will be provided by the college. That said, the universities work very hard to ensure that your chance of getting in, and your experience once you have got in, does not vary significantly depending on your college.

##### HOW IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS DIFFERENT?

Entry to Oxford and Cambridge Universities is highly competitive and so the application process is slightly more complex than for most courses at other universities to allow them to select the best candidates:

- The UCAS application form must be submitted earlier (by 15th October);
- Examples of written work have to be submitted for many subjects;
- Written assessments are sat at the beginning of November or at interview for most subjects;
- Interviews form a key part of the selection process.

The most important decision for students thinking of applying is their choice of course and this should be fundamental to deciding to which of the two universities (if either) a student applies to. The main university open days take place at the end of June and beginning of July and the departmental websites provide detailed information about course content. The Oxbridge subject contacts at RGS will also provide advice about the courses.

#### WHAT ARE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE LOOKING FOR?

Oxford and Cambridge select students on the basis of academic potential. Whilst many successful applicants excel in other areas such as sport or music, extra-curricular activities that are not related to the course are not considered. Each course has its own specific entry criteria, but in general the Universities are looking for:

- Enthusiasm
- Spirit of enquiry
- Intellectual curiosity and flexibility
- Willingness to explore ideas outside the confines of syllabuses
- Independent work and thought
- Self discipline
- Ability to learn fast and absorb information
- Analytical ability and logical reasoning
- Clear expression of ideas

Successful RGS applicants have obtained, on average, over 8 A\* GCSEs, and 7 A\* should be considered the absolute minimum necessary for a credible application. Applicants should realistically expect to achieve at least 3 A\* grades at A2.

Competition for places at Oxford and Cambridge is increasingly strong each year. Globally about 20% of applications are successful. Although applicants from RGS have tended to have a better success rate than this it is essential that students who apply can cope with the prospect and reality of being unsuccessful. An application to Oxford or Cambridge requires students to be organised and capable of handling a substantial additional volume of work on top of their normal A Level activities, and can be a distraction from A2 study. We may therefore advise students whose academic records mean that they do not have a realistic prospect of success against applying to Oxford or Cambridge, or to apply after receiving their A Level results.

#### PREPARING TO APPLY

The Oxbridge Co-ordinator, Dr Carter, oversees the Oxbridge application process and coordinates the preparation of applicants for Science-related subjects, whilst Mr Chevalier coordinates the preparation of Humanities applicants. Each department has one or two Oxbridge subject contacts who will provide specific guidance but generally you should:

- **Read widely** Your personal statement needs to show that you have an interest in your subject that extends beyond the school curriculum, and you must be able to demonstrate this at interview;



- **Attend subject-specific Enrichment and Extension Activities** Activities such as journal clubs, discussion groups, subject societies and lecture series that are organised or advertised by subject departments, or that you attend independently, develop your interest and understanding beyond the syllabus. These sessions are usually not aimed solely at Oxbridge applicants but successful applicants are likely to have taken full advantage of them during the Lower Sixth Form;
- **Enter essay, poetry and science competitions** These are a great way to focus further reading and provide evidence of interest and ability. Mr Chevalier and your subject teachers can provide further information;
- **Take part in activities such as Model United Nations** Enrichment activities that are not subject specific, such as Model United Nations or The Academy, develop skills of oral presentation and argument and so help significantly with the interview aspect of an application in particular;
- **Attend Oxbridge-specific preparation sessions** These sessions are run by department and begin in the Summer term after AS exams, continuing in the Autumn term. These focus on the skills required for subject-specific tests and interviews as well as advising on written work for submission. Preparation for the Thinking Skills Assessment, which is required for a range of subjects, is organised by the Oxbridge Co-ordinator;
- **Talk to current undergraduates** Former RGS students return to talk to current students about their courses and about their interview experiences. In addition, Network R provides a means for students to contact RGS alumni studying particular subjects at Oxford and Cambridge or at particular colleges.
- **Visit the Universities** The school organises for potential applicants to attend an informative conference run by Oxford and Cambridge Universities, but students are strongly encouraged to also attend Department and College Open days independently.
- **Attend interview preparation sessions** Interview preparation sessions, including practice interviews with external experts, are provided in the Upper Sixth.

Aspiring Oxford and Cambridge applicants are expected to read with depth and breadth; to keep up-to-date with current thinking in their subject area; to visit relevant exhibitions and galleries; to gather appropriate work experience. Tens of thousands of very academically able students will be applying for a limited number of places. Students need to do all they can to prove that they are not merely an excellent student but an exceptional and outstanding one.

An Oxbridge Programme document is available from the Oxbridge Co-ordinator which gives more details of the preparation programme and lists the important events and deadlines.

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/)

[www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate\\_courses/index.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/index.html)

## APPLYING FOR COMPETITIVE COURSES - SOME TIPS

- **You must undertake thorough research into courses which interest you.** Consult university websites but look beyond the online prospectus at departmental information on the **content** of the course and details of applications and acceptances if available. e.g. Bristol University received 1367 applications for Economics in 2013; they had 169 places available for Economics in 2015 – this information should be easy to find on their website. If it isn't, ring and ask. It would be foolhardy to apply for the five most competitive/popular courses in your subject

based solely on league tables. You may receive fewer offers than you deserve and the offers you do receive are likely to be identical, thus leaving you with little choice.

- **You must check whether you meet the specification for the course.** Most universities publish entry profiles, which outline requirements in detail. **Do not ignore information which could be crucial e.g. GCSE requirements in addition to the A level entry grades.** This is particularly true of Medicine and Law but can also apply to oversubscribed courses, e.g. English, History, Psychology, Economics and Physiotherapy. Admissions Tutors often look for reasons to reject applicants so you must be sure that you do not fail to get through the first admissions sift through ignorance of the requirements. This information can be found on <http://search.ucas.com/>

If you feel that your GCSE grades were disappointing and do not reflect your true ability, due to genuine extenuating circumstances, then discuss this with your Tutor so that mention can be made in your reference.

- **You should visit the universities which interest you before applying.** This is essential when choosing a College at Oxford, Cambridge or Durham. Vital information is often provided on Open Days and many universities arrange them on Saturdays and out of term time. It is also usually possible to arrange visits and tours on days other than Open Days, especially if there is a group of you. Just ring. Also, contact former students via Network R to ask for information. This can be done by going to talk to staff in the Foundation office. If visiting a university is difficult then check if a virtual tour is available via the Internet. You should call the course leader and/or admissions tutor if you have additional questions. Remember, you are going to be spending a minimum of three years at university so time well spent in preparation will help to prevent disappointment later.
- **You should apply early.** If you are applying to Oxford or Cambridge or for Medicine or Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine, the UCAS deadline for receipt of your application is 15th October. If you are not applying for any of these it is essential that you should apply early if you want to receive an offer from a competitive university for an oversubscribed course. You should aim to be ready with your application by the start of the Autumn term.
- **You should check any additional tests which may be required for your subject.** The UKCAT, BMAT and LNAT tests have been introduced to help some universities (including Oxford and Cambridge) in selecting students for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Law respectively. Make sure that you download the practice tests and make yourself fully aware of the requirements. You MUST register to take LNAT and UKCAT so make sure that you meet any deadlines they impose. You will find further information on page 7 of this guide. The MAT test was introduced for 2014 entry for prospective Maths students at Imperial. There are also a plethora of tests for Oxbridge applicants.
- **If the course requires evidence of work experience, ensure you complete it before applying.** Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Professions allied to Medicine (e.g. Physiotherapy, Radiography) and Initial Teacher Training all require applicants to have evidence of work experience. You should keep a daily record of what you have observed and participated in so that you can reflect upon it in your personal statement. You should also ask for references from the placement provider so that you can send copies to the Admissions Tutors if they want them.

- **Consider applying for a joint or combined honours course which may be less competitive.** e.g. Economics at Bristol (2011) 1121 applicants for 27 places, Economics and Econometrics at Bristol (2011) 51 applicants for 12 places

If you are particularly keen to go to a specific university, e.g. you want to read History at Durham, then you may find that you increase your chance of success by applying for e.g. History and Archaeology. Be very careful about this though! You need to really ask yourself why going to that particular university is so important. The biggest single reason for pupils dropping out of university is getting the subject wrong.

- **Make yourself aware of what your referee is saying about you.** Your reference should complement, not duplicate your personal statement.
- **Your personal statement should 'hook' the reader from the start.** It is particularly important to grab the attention of the Admissions Tutor from the first paragraph of the statement. If you feel you have a 'unique selling point' then this is where it should be mentioned. BUT best to avoid jokes! Your sense of humour may be very different to that of the admissions tutor!
- **You can write to Admissions Tutors with additional information if necessary.** This is particularly important if you want to apply for different courses. You may choose to apply e.g. for four Geography courses and your fifth choice could be Avionics and Pilot Studies. You should target your personal statement at the Geography courses and write a separate letter to the Admissions Tutor for your fifth course outlining and emphasising your suitability. You should probably check that the Admissions tutor welcomes this first.

## HIGHER EDUCATION – USEFUL WEBSITES

Please do look on the Careers Site on Office 365 for lots of useful information about university application and courses

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) Plenty of useful information, including links to university websites.

<http://university.which.co.uk/> is useful because it orders courses in terms of grades required to get on to them.

[www.unistats.com](http://www.unistats.com) Includes information from The National Student Survey, which asks final year students to rate their course. The site also includes useful information on topics such as contact time and graduate employment.

[www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com) Lists all university open days, plus advice on what to ask and other useful general information.

[www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk](http://www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk) Up to date finance information and applying for support.

[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) Information on the graduate job market. It also includes information that might help with that taxing question: 'What am I going to do after studying 'x' subject at university?'

[www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide](http://www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide) Useful for league tables in individual subjects

[www.thestudentroom.co.uk](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk) A forum for university applicants. It includes useful help on tackling admissions tests and advice on student finance.

[www.rgsinfo.net/Taster%20Courses.pdf](http://www.rgsinfo.net/Taster%20Courses.pdf) Information about taster courses. It is updated on a weekly basis. Students really should try to get themselves on a taster course, many of which are free.

[www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk) There are a lot of options apart from studying Medicine! Many include free tuition! Take a look on this web-site

[www.mycareersroom.co.uk](http://www.mycareersroom.co.uk) This is a very useful web-site for following up the Centigrade report

<http://www.unifrog.org>

<http://careers.reigategrammar.org>

## ALTERNATIVES TO UNIVERSITY

[www.careersbox.co.uk](http://www.careersbox.co.uk) Contains lots of videos about various careers. It includes video information for those who might be looking at doing apprenticeships as an alternative to going to university.

[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk) This is an excellent web-site, which is constantly updated. It suggests a lot of alternatives to going to university and offers advice on how to go about applying. It also includes information on Sponsored degrees.

[www.directions.org.uk/](http://www.directions.org.uk/) This web-site gives details of the wealth of opportunities for school leavers (and also for graduates) in the financial sector.

# APPLYING ABROAD



This has not traditionally been a particularly popular option for RGS pupils. However, it may become a consideration over the next few years for several reasons:

1. Fees: The rise in university fees means that the gap has narrowed between the cost of applying to UK universities and those in other English speaking countries such as US or Australia (although the US in particular is still likely to be considerably more expensive). It may work out cheaper to study in Europe or in Ireland, however, as yet we are uncertain about the impact of Brexit upon fees and availability of loans for UK students studying in Europe;
2. UK companies tend to like students who can demonstrate that they are keen to be part of a global community. Studying abroad also shows that a student can stand on their own two feet;
3. It can be possible to get into overseas universities that are very high in the World University Rankings with grades that probably would not get them into top UK universities. Certainly, I have heard of students, who missed their grades on A Level results day, who have then applied to Australia and got into universities in the world's top fifty;
4. Many European universities, particularly in Holland, run courses in many subjects in English. The web-site [www.eunicas.ie](http://www.eunicas.ie) gives detail of university courses in Europe that can be studied in English.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. It is usually possible to study in England, but to spend a year of the course abroad. This is usually the case with Modern Languages; however, you can study abroad in most subjects, either because it is officially part of the course or because the university has a link with a university abroad through the Erasmus Scheme. If you are interested in having a year abroad as part of your degree, it is best to contact any universities that you are interested in to ask if it is possible.

## POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH DOING A DEGREE ABROAD

1. It may not be more expensive to study abroad, but it is far more difficult to obtain student loans. You would need to contact the university that you are planning to go to to find out more about this, or sometimes there is a general contact for students who are planning to study in a particular country;
2. Is the qualification worth the same as a UK qualification? Probably 'Yes'. There is meant to be equality between degrees in UK universities and those in Europe. If you are doing a vocational qualification though, check very carefully that the degree course is accredited in the UK and that it will allow you to practise in the UK.

## USEFUL WEB-SITES

### US

[www.fulbright.co.uk](http://www.fulbright.co.uk) for advice and for information days/evenings

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for booking SAT or ACT tests

### Australia and NZ

[www.studyoptions.com](http://www.studyoptions.com) for free advice

### Canada

[www.aucc.ca](http://www.aucc.ca)

### Ireland

[www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

### Holland

[www.nuffic.nl](http://www.nuffic.nl)

### France

[www.campusfrance.org/en](http://www.campusfrance.org/en)

## GENERAL ADVICE

[www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus](http://www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus) for advice on a year abroad within a degree

[www.eunicas.ie](http://www.eunicas.ie) for information about courses in European universities that are studied in English

## USING THE UCAS WEB-SITE

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

This is the most important and useful website when doing research, as it has links to all of the university websites, and because it will be kept far more up to date than any printed prospectus can be.

- To find out about the qualifications required for any subject, the link is <http://search.ucas.com/>
- Fill out the details and put in your subject(s) of interest (If you leave 'Provider' blank it will bring up all relevant courses): Click on the course that you are interested in: ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Look particularly at what grades are required at A Level and whether any specific subjects are required.

- Some students may want to look at the 'GETTING STARTED' section on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to help them to work out how to go about choosing a course.
- There are also links from the site to the main web-sites of the universities

## NETWORK R

Network Reigatian was launched in 2005 to help students and Old Reigatians with their university and career choices while they are at school and in future years. It is organised by the Foundation Office.

In the Sixth form we offer extra help to students making their university choices by putting them in contact with former pupils, who are currently at university. Most Reigatians have agreed to be contacts for students at the school. This means that they are quite happy to take questions from Lower Sixth students about their university course and their university.

This is a very useful opportunity because they can receive an unbiased opinion. Unsurprisingly, there will not be any negative comments about any courses in any university prospectuses; the sun will always be shining and all of the students will be smiling! Through Network R we have a very extensive list of contacts, covering a vast selection of courses and universities.

Students interested in finding out more should go to the Foundation Office to be put in touch with relevant Reigatians.

## AND FINALLY

Students and parents are very welcome to contact the Sixth Form team or the Careers Department at the school with any questions.

Please do follow the Careers Department on Twitter (@rgscareers). In addition, please do take a look at the Careers site on Office 365 and <http://careers.reigategrammar.org>.



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