

This information is for current Year IV students who might be interested in applying to a UK university for Academic Year 2012/2013.

Websites

www.ucas.co.uk : Your actual application will be made online via this website. It has links to every university and every course in the UK. It is a good idea to sign in and get your password as soon as possible.

www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk : This website is especially useful for finding out which universities are best for the course you would like to study. Find this information in the 'league tables' section. There is also useful information on financial matters (tuition fees and student loans) and a section especially for international students.

Dates and Deadlines

These must be observed. Applications to Oxford or Cambridge University must be submitted through www.ucas.co.uk before October 15th 2011. Applications to all other UK universities must be made before January 15th, 2012.

How to Apply

This information is obviously available on the UCAS website. You apply to all universities online through UCAS, not through the universities themselves. UCAS require a lot of information, including :

1. Your top four choices, in descending order, of university and course. Obviously, it is necessary to do plenty of research beforehand in order to make the right choices!
2. Examination (Maturita) results already gained and predicted examination results in those subjects for which you have not taken Maturita yet. You must ask your subject teachers for these.
3. A personal statement, detailing your reasons for taking the course you are applying for, relevant experience and interests etc. This should be not more than 4,000 characters long, including gaps, and has to fit into the space available on the UCAS website. You will probably have to do a lot of editing!
4. A teacher's reference. I am very happy to write references for any student, provided the request for it is not made at the last minute! It might be better for students wanting to study something related to chemistry or biology to ask Phillip Merchant. The reference should also be not more than 4,000 characters long.

IELTS

Most UK universities require you to have the IELTS Academic certificate. Different universities require different scores, but most will not accept you with an overall score of less than 6.5. Some will also specify the minimum scores they require from individual parts of the test. 6.5 is C1 level, ie one level higher than the English Maturita. Every Year V student from our school taking IELTS in the last three years has gained an overall score of 6.5 or better but some students have gained less than 6.5 from one individual part of the test. Our best ever

overall score is 8.5, which is only 0.5 below the maximum possible and is near the top of level C2.

Maturita

Maturita is taken in the UK as equivalent to UK qualifications (ie A'level) so universities will accept you on the basis of it. Because you apply to UK universities so early, acceptance is conditional, which means they accept you IF you achieve certain Maturita grades.

Acceptance and Rejection

As said above, acceptance is conditional. If your first choice university accepts you, you can authorise UCAS to send your application to the second choice, and so on. It means that some students will have four acceptances by the end of the process. If a university rejects you, your application is automatically passed to the next one in your list of four. Some universities, including Oxford and Cambridge will invite you for an interview before they make their decision.

Money

Students studying in England and Wales have to pay tuition fees for their university education. In England, these are now set at a maximum of 9,000 pounds per year. UK and EU students are eligible for student loans from the UK government to pay these fees. The loan becomes repayable when the student starts to earn 15,000 pounds per year, ie after leaving university. Also, there are living costs, which will depend on many factors, including type of accommodation, part of the country etc. Students studying in Scotland do not pay tuition fees at all. Students studying in Wales may (it is not yet confirmed) pay lower fees than those studying in England. So think about Scotland and Wales, not just England!

Finally

If you have any questions or need any help relating to any of this, please come to the AJL office and ask. I will happily write a reference for any student provided I am given enough notice. I am also happy to read and make suggestions about personal statements. However, the personal statement must be personal and so should not be influenced too much by teachers or anybody else. It is a difficult thing to write so time and care must be taken over it.

In fact, now is not too early to start the application process by at least looking at universities and courses.

James Baxter