

# UCAS Handout

## Overview

### Our Approach

- To help individual students achieve their full potential.
- The best preparation for being a strong applicant is to do well and engage in their subjects and other activities at Latymer and beyond.
- We have a lead assembly on an aspect of the application and then follow up with tutorials and individual work with referees and others.
- There is a focus on enabling students to make their own decisions and staff guide and facilitate that. Staff have not got all the answers or information, and they will not make decisions for students or complete research for them.
- We recognise it is stressful for students but also exciting/empowering to be making such big decisions.
- Advice is based on Latymer evidence and experience.
- Long term view for the benefit of all Latymer students this year and subsequent years.
- School support is available if students apply once they have left Latymer. However, we advise students to prepare this year and participate in sessions and collect relevant information.
- We email a lot of materials. It is essential that students check emails and save relevant materials.
- Over 230 Latymer applications each year.
- Approx 20 who apply/re-apply after leaving.
- Approx 100 early applicants (deadline end of Sept of Year 13) – Oxbridge/Medics/Vets/Dentists/Music Scholarships)
- The courses that the majority of Latymer students apply for are very competitive.
- It is essential that students meet the school deadlines so that we have time to meet the university deadlines.

### Update

- All school-work and super-curricular (anything beyond what is taught) activities provides long term preparation for competitive applications, e.g. presenting at academic societies, reading, lectures, essay competitions and writing articles for the school magazines.
- At this stage they have been encouraged to explore/research options.
- We have advertised a lot of things by directly emailing students: Master classes, Taster Courses, Open Days, lectures at London Universities, essay competitions, online presentations by universities.
- **Students need to regularly check their emails.**
- Students should consider which subjects or aspects of subjects that they enjoy as this gives them a focus to make degree choices. However, we also encourage them to explore beyond the obvious – subjects not taught at A Level and joint courses.
- Some students are in the fortunate position of knowing their chosen degree and even their universities, but some are completely uncertain and will take longer to arrive at a decision. That is fine, and we support all students, but they all need to engage in the process this year – do not wait until they have decided on a course.
- UCAS website / University websites / other websites are useful sources for research
- Assemblies and materials on the different aspects of the application. eg Personal Statements
- Latymer Students: Yr 13 and ex-students address subject specific groups. eg Economics Society, Maths Department, Med Society
- **Corpus Christi College have presented to students on Cambridge applications, and they also covered Oxford. They will be doing an online presentation for parents/carers on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm. Log on details will be emailed in advance close to the date.**
- Careers library and Careers interview.
- Be careful of private companies charging high prices to provide information that is available free on the internet.
- Summer schools/taster courses.
- Online lectures
- All subjects have reading lists.

### UCAS

- Universities & Colleges Admissions Service
- A centralised system: One application to UCAS and they pass it on to the 5 choices.
- Students can monitor progress using “Track”
- <http://www.ucas.com>
- They also offer an early clearing at the end of Feb called “Extra” (if not holding any offers after all decisions) and a later one after A2 results.
- “Conservatoire” tab for Music, Dance and Drama courses at 8 UK conservatoires.

## What the most competitive Universities are looking for

- Genuine interest in their chosen subject.
- Appropriateness of their chosen course.
- Strong exams record.
- Motivation, commitment and organisation.
- Enthusiasm for complex and challenging ideas.
- Clarity of thought and analytical ability.
- Intellectual flexibility.
- Vocational or professional commitment (where appropriate). Eg Medics/Law.

## Selection Criteria

- GCSE grades.
- Year 12 grades.
- Predictions.
- A Level subject combinations.
- School reference.
- Personal Statement.
- Submitted essays.
- Test results.
- Interview performance.
- Oxford feedback: "We're not seeking simply to identify those who will meet our offers; we're looking for the most promising students from among those who will do so. Above all, we're looking for clear evidence of **very high academic achievement** (preferably in subjects broadly relevant to the candidate's chosen degree), but we also want to see how seriously a candidate has developed his or her **academic interests outside the school curriculum**. Your reference, the candidate's **personal statement**, and **submitted written work** (if requested) are all very important in identifying the seriousness of a candidate's interests. Our courses are demanding and so our students need to be **very able, ambitious, and independent in their learning.**"

## Action Needed by Students

### Subject references

- Email the relevant Year 12 subject teachers with a request and attach a subject reference form with the following information in the bullet points below. This needs to be done before Study Leave. So late April/early May.
- Proposed Courses. If uncertain, state this with options they are considering.
- Reminder to the subject teacher of good work. Be specific e.g. presentations, essays, research etc.
- State if you are an early applicant: Oxbridge, Medics, Vets, Music Scholarships.

### Choices

- Choose the courses before the university.
- 5 choices: Individual universities do not see the other choices. 4 Med/Vet/Dentistry schools + 1 other course.
- Data on employment and student satisfaction and entry grades: <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>
- Student Research – websites.
- League Tables.
- Online Open Days
- Open Days – allowed 3 days off school.
- Summer schools/taster courses.
- Year 13 students.
- Admissions criteria: required/preferred subject combinations
- Additional tests and sent work.
- Be sensible and strike a balance between risks and returns: Have some insurance in your choices. 5 from Oxford, Cambridge, LSE, UCL, Imperial, Bristol, Durham, Edinburgh could be risky.
- There is not a selected Oxbridge group – students make that choice themselves. We also do not allocate colleges to students if applying for Cambridge or Oxford. For reasons of confidentiality, we cannot intervene if two students wish to apply for the same course at the same college.

### Categories

- **Ancient:** 5 oldest UK universities are Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

- **Russell Group:** Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Imperial College, King's College, Leeds, Liverpool, LSE, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oxford, Queen Mary, Queen's Belfast, Sheffield, Southampton, UCL, Warwick and York.
- **New universities/"plate glass"/"Red brick" etc:** Aston, Bath, Bradford, Brunel, City, Heriot-Watt, East Anglia, Essex, Keele, Kent, Lancaster, Loughborough, Salford, Sterling Strathclyde, Surrey, Sussex, Ulster, Warwick and York,

### Alternatives

#### Higher Apprenticeships Examples

- **KPMG:** Business & Administrative Studies at Durham and Birmingham.
- **PWC:** Business & Administrative Studies at Newcastle, Reading or Nottingham.
- **Airbus:** Engineering, Finance and Manufacturing at 4 different universities
- **Barclays:** Business and Administrative Studies at Anglia Ruskin.
- **Capgemini:** IT Degree Apprenticeship Programme at Aston
- **CGI:** IT/Computing career and another in Business Management at Winchester.
- **Experian:** offers a BA(Hons) in Management and Leadership at Nottingham Trent.
- **A consortium including Bosch, Eaton-Cooper Industries, GSK, Johnson Matthey, Moog, Nestlé.** Engineering at Loughborough.
- **MBDA:** Business & Administrative Studies at Bolton or Hertfordshire.
- **Morrisons:** Business & Administrative Studies at Bradford.
- **Nestle:** Business & Administrative Studies at Sheffield Hallam.

#### Overseas

- USA: <http://www.fulbright.co.uk/study-in-the-us>
- 2/3 students apply to USA each year
- We use the information collected for UCAS and adapt this for an overseas application.
- Courses taught in English also offered in Holland, Denmark, Hungary, Czech Republic, Latvia etc

#### Part time

- Birkbeck College, University of London: Evening classes <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/>
- Open University: <http://www.open-university.co.uk/>

#### Personal Statement

- We will be giving guidance on the new format in the summer term but the advice below still applies.
- Keep a record of the super-curricular activities you have completed and write something analytical about them.
- There is only one personal statement that goes to all universities.
- It is like a letter of application for a job.
- Focus on a personal statement for a degree and not a specific university.
- If applying for a joint degree, students need to cover both subjects.
- Focus on academic interests and involvement
- Medics/Vets and Dentists need to comment on relevant work experience and voluntary work and therefore 50/50.
- Looking for genuine interest in course – need evidence, e.g. extra reading etc.
- Base it on research on the course/university: what are they looking for? But need to consider all 5 choices.
- Issue of joint degrees, inter-disciplinary degrees (PPE). Makes it more difficult to write, but possible. The same applies if applying for different courses – a good idea if they are related.
- Cambridge use an additional Supplementary Application Questionnaire after you have applied giving the opportunity to do a Cambridge specific personal statement.

- Be honest – Pyjamas on fire..... A university showed a good example including this story and the next year over 500 statements had the same story in it.
- A strong draft should be completed by the end of the summer term and emailed to referee.
- Be analytical and evaluative, not descriptive: Use their A Level skills.
- Show not tell. Evidence not assertion.
- Mr Wakefield gives a presentation in the summer term, and provides examples for a range of subjects. Students make a start in form periods and can also see Mr Wakefield for advice from the summer term. Referees will also offer support.

### Work Experience

- Not many courses require work experience.
- Medics/dentists/Vets essential to show that you have some insight into that career. Obviously, this can be difficult to secure, but they need to think creatively; make contact with Health professionals, seek out any online presentations, check emails as we will send on anything we get, read books and professional journals, watch the news and documentaries.
- For the above courses voluntary work is very important to show people skills, e.g. mentoring, working with children and the elderly, charity work etc.
- Also, team and leadership skills – sport, music, acting, charity work, house activities etc,
- If you cannot get a placement, encourage students to at least interview a Doctor etc.
- Others would be helpful, e.g. Law, Media, Engineering, Architects.
- Think widely: e.g. Visit the Law courts, visit buildings, bridges,
- <http://www.accessprofessions.com/>

### Electronic Application

- The Sixth Form Administrator, issues a step by step guide in the summer term of Year 12. Students will be encouraged to complete their application form during the summer term.
- They will check the application in the Autumn Term of Year 13 once they have completed their part of the form. Students independently enter themselves for Additional Entry Tests...
- They will check that all sections have been completed properly, but –  
***It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all information is entered accurately and truthfully.***
- The school reference is then added, and the application is submitted to UCAS – There will be a time lag of a few days, possibly longer at the busy times. **We have such large numbers applying it is essential that students stick to the school deadlines so that they are all sent off on time.**

### Essays

- Some universities/colleges ask for written work to be sent in. Students need to check carefully if this applies to them but obviously it will only be on the essay-based subjects.
- Essays completed for school-work can be used.
- Essay competitions.
- Magazine articles
- Set your own
- Prepare in advance.
- They will be marked as normal when the work is set, but not after being re-written when work is requested by universities.
- Feedback on impressive essays:
- “They valued precision of thought and concision of expression. The strongest essays were distinguished by sustained sensitivity to literary language and occasion, and to ways in which alternate meaning could interact. Much of the better work communicated real passion and integrity, with ideas clearly springing from a close personal engagement with the material. Wide research was often impressively in evidence. Likewise the spark of real independent thinking (very different from unsubstantiated assertiveness)”

### Tests

- Cambridge: "to assess skills (such as comprehension and thinking skills) and, where appropriate, levels of current knowledge and understanding relevant to the course applied for."
- Oxford: “Our admissions tests are timed, written exams which are designed to show us how a student thinks in relation to their subject: how they analyse and solve difficult questions; how they apply knowledge to texts or problems which they haven't encountered before. These tests provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their analytical strength and thus their suitability for their chosen course. “
- Check websites for details of tests, where they are sat and download/complete practice tests.
- <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests>

- Requirements are continually changing so students need to check the websites for updates.
- The majority of tests are relevant to the early applicants (Oxford, Cambridge, Medics, Dentists, Vets) so they will be entered when they make their application. However, for some the deadline to enter for the test is before the deadline for applying, e.g. a student applying to Imperial for Maths but not Oxford or Cambridge had to enter for the MAT before their application.
- The school will deliver presentations on the different tests in the summer term of Year 12. It is essential that any students applying to universities requiring tests attend these sessions. These presentations give an outline of the test and direct students to relevant resources. We do not have the resources to offer lessons in these tests.

### Interviews

- The guidance is focused on supporting students in what will be an unfamiliar and stressful situation and not to guess questions and prepare them for that.
- Students are offered 1 mock interview if they need it. The potential medics and dentists have online support, provided free by an organisation with a Lатыmer connection
- Other help: Yr 13 feedback, tutorial work, Oxbridge presentations, filmed interviews on university websites.
- Practice: “structured academic conversations”. Looking for potential.
- Prepare as if doing an exam: Read relevant subject notes, know your personal statement, pair work and family practice.
- Students are encouraged to take advantage of all opportunities to participate in discussions: In lessons, at the societies and activities outside school.
- “I don’t know but I think that...” – the interviewer wants to see your thought process, think through the answer aloud.
- Interview Example: English at Oxford:
  - 2 separate 25 min interviews. 30 mins before each interview given a piece of poetry or prose to read, followed by questions.
  - Looking for: sensitivity to language, narrative voice, perspective, an awareness of genre and historical context.
  - Interested in inferences, especially about things they didn’t know.
  - Not testing knowledge but the ability to think, to make connections, to imagine possibilities.
  - Then asked about information supplied on their UCAS forms: A Level studies, reading beyond the syllabus, reasons for wanting to study Literature.
  - The best candidates: “communicated their deep-seated commitment, intellectual hunger, were unafraid of taking on challenges and thinking beyond their previous assumptions”.
  - “We were looking for individuals who were at once independent, imaginative thinkers and clearly open and teachable”.
- *Cambridge feedback: “Interviews are always academic in focus and are driven by the consideration of academic problems. For instance, a candidate for Engineering might be asked to work through a theoretical or practical problem in Maths or Physics. A candidate for English might be asked to discuss critically a pair of short unseen poems. In both cases we’re looking for serious, sensible, in-depth academic engagement rather than specific prior knowledge. Put simply, strong candidates can think their way through new academic problems by drawing on their experience of thinking through other more familiar problems. University study is, after all, about tackling new academic problems on a daily basis, and so interviews can help us to choose between similarly well-qualified candidates on grounds of analytical ability. Interviews can also help us to identify potential in candidates who might be highly able but are less well prepared. I should stress that we don’t necessarily expect a flawless, confident performance at interview. We simply look for some signs of clear ability, engagement, and analytical focus. In saying this, I would emphasize that whilst interviews can do much to qualify our reading of a candidate’s academic record to-date, they tend not to have a transformative impact on our reading of that record. Interviews aren’t the be-all and end-all of admissions.*

### Prepare to meet the admissions criteria

- Know what you have to do and prepare in advance.
- Tests, Essays, Interviews.
- Do not wait until you are given a date.
- Check the relevant websites and use the practice materials.

### Feedback from Oxford:

1) *It is very important that students choose to study appropriate subjects at sixth-form so that they have both a suitable knowledge base and adequate experience of relevant analytical approaches and techniques. Achieving excellent results in a sensible combination of subjects is key to any university application, because for academically ambitious students their sixth-form studies are essential training for university. Students need to focus and put in the hard yards.*

2) Students really must explore their subject outside the classroom. For many students this will involve a range of ambitious reading (and thinking!), or working through a body of relevant material which might include, say, Maths text books and past papers which are different from those used at school. A lack of appropriate engagement outside the classroom can hold back even well-qualified candidates. Remember, it's not just about knowledge, it's about relevant analytical skills and flexibility, and these take time and practice to develop. How do you get better at literary analysis? Do more literary analysis! How do you get better at Maths? Do more Maths! For some useful resources prepared by Univ and by the University of Oxford, please visit <https://www.univ.ox.ac.uk/applying-to-univ/staircase12/> and <https://explore.org>.

3) Excessive preparation for interviews is often unhelpful, and those students who are determined to present a polished 'set piece' can underperform. Our interviews aren't job interviews, they're academic discussions. The best things a student can do to prepare for interviews are firstly to explore their subject as described above and secondly to make opportunities to discuss academic subjects with another person, perhaps another interested student, a teacher, or a family friend. These discussions can be informal, but they should be focused. Students who are determined to impress with a prepared presentation often find that our interviewers spot this quickly and so pursue a different line of discussion. We want to see students thinking on their feet!

### School Action

#### Subject References

- Positive but honest. Not a school report and therefore no reference to "areas for improvement". Shown below are some of the things that we will comment on.
- Written assignments.
- Research.
- Independent learning: reading / lectures.
- Presentations.
- Contribution to discussions.
- Practical work / Teamwork.
- Contribution to relevant academic society.

#### Predicted Grades

- Year 12 teachers decide predicted grades after the Year 12 internal exams the UCAS Exams – one prediction per subject being continued at A2. The predictions are not adjusted (up or down) for grades achieved in any subsequent assessments.
- Predicted grades cannot be negotiated upwards – it is a judgement by the teachers in each subject.
- Predicted grades are based on evidence: Exam grades and scores. The UCAS prediction will be at least equal to the UCAS exam grade. The predictions are not adjusted (up or down) for grades achieved in any subsequent assessments.
- The school data suggests that overall, they are generous but justifiable because they are evidence based, and therefore help our students make realistic and achievable applications.
- UCAS exam grades are included on the UCAS form alongside predictions. We do not offer a retake opportunity for any of the exams.
- Students are issued with a written copy of all predictions in September – before they make their choices. They will already have the guide of their UCAS exam grades and teachers will have given verbal feedback on what the prediction will be following the UCAS exams in the summer term of Year 12. There is not an opportunity to re-sit any of the UCAS exams.
- Therefore, combined with the UCAS exam grades students can apply for appropriate courses.
- In recent years universities seem more likely to make offers even if the predicted grades are below the advertised offer grade.
- The predictions procedures will be shared with students and parents prior to the Year 12 Exams.

#### The School Reference

- Referees allocated in the Summer Term.
- Year 12 exam grades are used on the reference.
- It is an academic reference focusing on ability and performance. It is a collation of the relevant subject references.
- There is only one reference that goes to all the 5 choices.
- It is written confidentially.
- It includes a link to information about our Sixth Form Programme and predictions process.
- The reference is written by the school, and we cannot use material written by outside agencies or students and parents. Clearly that would be unethical.

#### Right combination of A Levels and preferred subjects

- We deliver a presentation to Yr 11 students before option choices and this was also available on our external website for new students.
- We advise students to check with potential university choices before dropping anything. If they do not continue with a subject in the summer term they will not be allowed to re-join in the light of results.
- Informed Choices (The Russell Group): <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices.aspx>

#### **Dates (exact dates will be confirmed nearer the time)**

- Summer Year 12: Referees allocated, potential medics sit the UCAT exam, LNAT (Law) tests, UCAS online instructions send subject references to teachers, send personal details form to referees.
- Summer Year 12: UCAS Exam results
- August: AS results and A Level Maths results (for the FM students).
- Early October (late September for those doing BMAT due to entry deadline): Early applicants deadline (Oxbridge, Medics, Dentists and Vets)
- Early November: University entrance tests (BMAT Medics and Oxbridge tests)
- Nov/Dec onwards: Interviews and sending work
- Early December: Deadline for all other applicants
- Oct onwards: Offers
- March: Extra – an early clearing if not holding any offers
- March onwards: Offer decision. 1 firm and 1 insurance
- Mid August: A Level Results / Clearing/Adjustment Period.

#### **Useful Websites**

##### **Choices**

[www.ucas.co.uk](http://www.ucas.co.uk)

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

[www.universityadvice.co.uk/UKAdvice.aspx](http://www.universityadvice.co.uk/UKAdvice.aspx)

##### **Parents**

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

[www.parentcentre.gov.uk](http://www.parentcentre.gov.uk)

[www.universityadvice.co.uk/ParentConcerns.aspx](http://www.universityadvice.co.uk/ParentConcerns.aspx)

##### **Finance**

[www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)

[www.universityadvice.co.uk](http://www.universityadvice.co.uk)

[www.slc.co.uk](http://www.slc.co.uk)

[www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)

[www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk](http://www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk)

[www.scholarship-search.org.uk](http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk)

##### **Gap years and summer placements**

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

[www.gap.org.uk](http://www.gap.org.uk)

[www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk)

<http://www.deloitte.co.uk/scholars/>

[http://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/Home\\_\(1\).aspx](http://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/Home_(1).aspx)

<http://www.gapyear365.com/company/deutsche-bank>

<http://www-05.ibm.com/employment/uk/>

<http://careers.accenture.com/Microsites/uk-graduate-joiners-consulting/Pages/index.aspx>

<http://www.bankofenglandjobs.co.uk/opportunities/gap-year-internships/>

<http://www.yini.org.uk/>

<http://www.metaswitch.com/careers/internships/pre-university/rachel-tocknell.aspx>

<http://www.futurereach.org.uk/>

##### **Students**

[www.uni4me.com](http://www.uni4me.com)

[www.thestudentroom.co.uk](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk)

[www.ucas.ac.uk/yougo](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/yougo)

##### **Tests**

<http://www.ucas.ac.uk/students/choosingcourses/admissions/>

[www.lnat.ac.uk](http://www.lnat.ac.uk)  
[www.bmat.org.uk](http://www.bmat.org.uk)  
[www.ukcat.ac.uk](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk)  
[www.history.ox.ac.uk](http://www.history.ox.ac.uk)  
[www.elat.org.uk](http://www.elat.org.uk)  
[www.tsa.uct.ac.uk](http://www.tsa.uct.ac.uk)  
[www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers](http://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers)

### **Oxbridge**

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

### **Super-Curricular activities**

[http://www.myheplus.com/?utm\\_source=Heads+of+6th&utm\\_campaign=c35587e3c8-29+October+newsletter+COPY+02&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_36c44588b4-c35587e3c8-116051773](http://www.myheplus.com/?utm_source=Heads+of+6th&utm_campaign=c35587e3c8-29+October+newsletter+COPY+02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_36c44588b4-c35587e3c8-116051773)

### **Cambridge Interview questions**

<http://www.cambridgeinterviewquestions.com/>

### **Oxford Interview questions**

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/interviews>

## **FAQs**

### **What advice do you provide about Gap Years?**

- We provide web links to gap year opportunities, but we do not have a list of jobs to offer students.
- If a student hasn't got the right grades in Year 12 and they may be considering applying for entry after they have left Latymer then a gap year may be appropriate.
- Past students who haven't got the offers that they wanted have then explored gap year opportunities. But could be a bit late by then.
- It's best to apply for the schemes in the Autumn Term of Yr 13 as some schemes have deadlines in that period of time. Eg Financial companies. Start researching in the summer term of yr 12.
- Maths Admissions Tutors are particularly concerned about gap years (maths skills lost over a year) so it is best to check with individual universities about their views.
- Some admissions tutors like students to do something "worthwhile", e.g. work experience, charity work, further study, travel.

### **What advice do you give for students who have no idea what to apply for?**

- The initial stage of the UCAS process at Latymer for all students involves research. All students are encouraged to explore different subjects and different universities.
- Students should explore which subjects/topics within subjects/ they enjoy and the skills they have developed and how does this link to university courses. Create a long list.
- The university websites offer detailed descriptions of the courses.
- Some students consider careers that they are considering and then work backwards – what is a useful degree to secure such a career.
- They are encouraged to explore the content of non A Level degree courses, e.g. PPE etc
- We advertise taster courses, summer schools and lectures at London universities and societies. Yr 13 students do presentations on their university applications.
- Past Latymer students, now at university, also present and describe their courses
- Sixth form staff are available for individual consultations.
- Some students are not ready to apply in Yr 13 and opt to take a gap year and apply the following year or after.

### **How do I find out about scholarships and bursaries?**

- The universities run these schemes and the information is available on their websites.
- [www.scholarship-search.org.uk](http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk) might be a useful starting point

### **What does deferred entry mean?**

- Most students will be applying in Autumn of Year 13 for entry in September after leaving school, but some will apply in Year 13 for entry a full year after leaving. This is a deferred entry. They are intending to have a Gap Year.
- We advise that students contact university departments directly and see if this is acceptable. They do not encourage it for Maths students as it is felt that they can become de-skilled, therefore, students need to show evidence that they will avoid this by continuing with maths activities.
- It is important that students continue to develop their academic interests by extra reading for example.
- Some students apply after they have left Latymer and they still receive the same level of support. It is important that subject references are requested at the same time as other students otherwise it will be impossible to write a reference when they need one.

### **How do we allocate referees?**

- In March of Year 12 the students indicate the degree subject(s) they are intending to apply for.
- Once teaching timetables have been allocated, we will know which staff are available to write school references.
- We use the information about degree intentions to allocate staff with some expertise in that area. Form tutors will also be given an allocation. Some staff are able to write references for a range of degrees, beyond the subject they teach.
- All the allocated referees are trained each year in writing school references.
- The references are based on the subject references, which are written by staff who know the students very well. The referee's role is to collate this into one document, and it is not essential for them to have known the student previously. It is an academic reference.
- Students send the "Personal Details Form" to their referee and this information helps them to write the reference. They also meet with them at a mutually convenient time.

### **What if their UCAS grades and associated predictions are lower than expected/ desired?**

- Eg wanted to apply for a course requiring A\*AA but achieved CCC in the UCAS exams.
- Either –
  - apply for entry in the September but for courses in line with those grades. Aim to perform better in final exams, hopefully achieving the desired grades. If the grades are now good enough to apply for more competitive universities using the "Adjustment period". If no suitable courses left, then withdraw from entry for that year and apply again for entry the following year. (There is no penalty for doing this.) So plan for a Gap Year just in case. If grades have not improved, then you can decide to accept any offers being held.
  - Or apply in the Autumn, after leaving, for entry the following academic year, once the desired grades are in place. Obviously plan for a gap year.

### **Why do we only allow 3 days for open days?**

- We are keen to minimise the number of missed lessons as this will have a negative impact on grades.
- Students are welcome to visit as many universities as they want but we only allow 3 days off school as we are keen that they are in school to keep up with their studies and therefore achieve their full potential
- Some Open Days are at weekends.
- All the information about courses is available on the university websites.
- Often students are visiting a university to decide if they would enjoy living in an area rather than to find out the information mentioned above, so this can be done at a weekend even if there is not an open day.
- Some universities invite students to an open day after application and it is a quasi interview. i.e. come and we will make an offer. We allow attendance at those in addition to the 3.

### **What are the procedures for UCAS predictions?**

1. Predictions will be completed by the departments based on the internal Year 12 UCAS exams sat in the summer term. The predictions are not adjusted (up or down) for grades achieved in any subsequent assessments. There is not an opportunity to re-sit any of the UCAS exams.
2. Predicted grades will be in the range A\* to C. There are only a very small number of final A Level grades below a C, hence the decision not to predict D or E. However, we reserve the right to predict below a C if a student does not meet expectations regarding work and attendance.
3. Teachers have been asked to be generous, but the predictions are evidence based.
4. There will be one prediction per subject being taken at full A Level.

5. UCAS predictions will not be below the achieved UCAS exam grade. However, they will not necessarily be one grade above that grade. That depends on the mark achieved in the exam.
6. Students may approach teachers and politely request to discuss their predicted grade, but staff will not improve predictions based on pleading. For example, "I need an A\* to apply for", "I will work harder next year", "I didn't work last year but will this year", "I was ill during the exams". The last point would have been covered by special exam consideration. If a genuine mistake has been made (e.g. wrong data input) the teacher will contact Mr Wakefield asap. The prediction is a judgement of the subject teachers and not something to be negotiated. However, these discussions are only facilitated in the summer term. We are very busy supporting students in the Autumn Term and it is unfair if that support is reduced because others are taking up a lot of time pushing for a higher prediction.
7. Students will be given a printout of predicted grades in September and this information will go on the UCAS form. However, once the UCAS exams have been marked departments will inform students of the indicative prediction in the summer term. This gives a period of time to sort out any administrative errors and allows students to consider the range of universities to apply for. If any changes are made due to inputting errors, please do not rely on word of mouth – If it is not changed on the master spreadsheet (check with Mr Wakefield) then assume it's not been changed.
8. Most students will have elected to drop a subject and therefore they will have got an external AS grade award in that subject. Some may subsequently change their mind and decide to continue to study that subject at A2. In those cases, the prediction will be based on the AS grade and points 1 to 7 above will apply.
9. The students doing Further Maths will have been given a full Maths A Level grade and their predictions for Maths and Further Maths will be based on that grade. Points 1 to 7 above will also apply.
10. Parents should not contact individual subject teachers about predictions if they feel there has been an error. They should contact Mr Wakefield by email [wke@latymer.co.uk](mailto:wke@latymer.co.uk). He will look into it and reply to the email, but it will not be possible to organise a meeting for parents to negotiate a higher prediction. At this time of year, we are very busy with supporting the entire year group with their university applications, and a significant number who have already left. All students need time to be individually supported, and it would be wrong to reduce that time.

#### **Unifrog (a helpful website for researching university information)**

- <https://www.unifrog.org/>
- Click: "Been given a form code? Signing in for the first time"
- Form code: LATNparents
- Complete details including email and your own password
- Use every time to sign in.
- Students have been sent their log in details