



Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School



UCAS Application Guide

2019 to 2020

Name:.....

Tutor:.....

Keep this booklet in a safe place

INTRODUCTION

What is this guide for?

Our aim is to help you achieve your objective – to gain a place on a degree course you want to study, at a university you want to attend. The process of application is complex; it will involve much effort by you, your teachers and your tutor. In our experience, the most successful applications are those which are started early and completed within our deadlines. This guide will help you with the process, and remind you of the crucial deadlines.

The purpose of this guide is to offer a clear introduction to the world of Higher Education. Some sixth formers have definite plans; most need guidance. This guide can only present you with information and encourage further research; each student must decide for themselves which courses and institutions are most suitable for them. Research involves using facilities in the library, browsing on university websites, and also talking to as many people as possible. The Sixth Form Team and Mrs Bellingham, our Careers Officer, have expertise to support the UCAS process.

Applying to university has become more and more competitive and even the best candidates may receive disappointments. It is important to remember that admissions tutors are looking to offer places to students who demonstrate they have enthusiasm and interest in the degree subject as well as the academic ability. This is often seen through work experience undertaken in Year 12.

Types of universities

Higher Education has seen enormous changes in recent decades, with the former polytechnics acquiring university status, colleges of higher education being absorbed into universities or seeking independent university status, and the development of modular courses in many institutions. The three broad sectors of higher education – ‘old’ universities, ‘new’ universities and colleges of higher education – have their own distinctive features, although the distinctions between the first two have become increasingly blurred.

University education is the longest established form of higher education in this country. Its initial origins are almost poetic; gathering of scholars and students establishing colleges and places of learning, with no examinations or assessments. Today’s universities are no longer in that mode of course, but they do aim to offer a broad approach to personal development and learning. Teaching and lecture structures tend to assume that you will get on with the details yourself and are there to point you in the right direction.

Universities are places of research as well as teaching; this has always been so. Usually, you will be taught by people conducting their own research into your subject. Resources have been built up over decades; and where a university has been more recently chartered, comprehensive libraries have been set up and maintained.

Accommodation provision has also been built up over many years. Universities regard it as their duty to make sure you are not homeless when you begin your course, though you may well have to fend for yourself after the first year. With the growing influence of 'student satisfaction ratings', accommodation is one area which is being given special attention by many universities.

Until recently, the old university tradition that links with local industry has not been a priority: the links are now growing, and you will find some indication of this in the text of individual institutions.

Generally, the newer, 'technological' universities, which offer sandwich courses, have closer industry partnerships.

The more recently designated universities, previously polytechnics, came into being at the end of the sixties as a result of a government report on higher education. They were set up to respond to a major need in Britain and have evolved very quickly since then. Generally, new university courses orientated toward careers. Resources have grown around course needs and in many places much information is available in non-book form. In recent years, some of these new universities emerged as front runners in their own fields and rank very highly on quality and research funding leagues. Links with local industries are numerous and are a great strength in the life of the new university.

Factors to consider when making your choice of Higher Education

Subject

If you have a fair idea of your career plans, do you need to study a particular subject at degree level? Do you want to continue studying a school subject? Would you prefer to start a new subject? There are Science and Engineering specialisms from Marine Biology to Aeronautical Engineering, and many specialist courses in the areas of Electronics, Computing and Information Science. At most institutions, a final decision on which precise specialism to follow may be delayed until the end of a more general first year.

Almost all institutions now offer modular courses, where a large number of combinations of subjects are on offer, such as Law and Italian, or Physics and English. These may tempt those not keen to study a single subject for three or four years, but the courses are definitely not soft options. Courses with the

same name sometimes vary greatly: there may be differences in length, content, teaching methods and methods of assessment. It is essential to find out from the individual prospectuses, departmental websites and at Open Days what precisely is involved in a course. With a wealth of information available from all institutions, there is no excuse for not knowing what each course is offering.

Length of course

Most degree courses in England, Ireland and Wales have traditionally taken three years. Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry and Architecture always take longer, and all courses at Scottish universities take four years; an increasing number of science courses are becoming four year courses, or offering an optional fourth year to give a Master's Degree. Courses which include practical training (such as most Modern Language courses and sandwich courses everywhere) will also take four years. Buckingham University is now offering a two-year degree course.

Sandwich courses

In a sandwich course, usually lasting 4 years, teaching is interspersed with practical experience, often in the form of an attachment to a firm active in the field being studied. This is arranged either as a 'thin sandwich' of two separate six month placements, or a 'thick sandwich' of a whole year.

Course contents

Not all subjects are offered by all institutions. Some tend to concentrate on the more academic disciplines, others teach subjects more directly related to particular careers. A specialist college concentrates on one area, such as the performing arts or the visual arts. Where there is an overlap, often the different types of institution teach similar sounding subjects in significantly different ways. It is vital, therefore, that you check the content of a course thoroughly. The educational emphasis in the 'new' universities tends to be vocational, teaching the practical arts and skills needed in modern working life. This does not mean that in choosing a particular course you are necessarily choosing a particular career, although more students will consider their course as training relevant to their jobs than is the case at the 'old' universities.

Staff in the 'new' universities have traditionally concentrated more of their effort on teaching than their counterparts at the 'old' universities, but they also conduct research, often of an applied nature, often sponsored by industrial and research organisations and often of a very high quality.

Teaching methods

These will vary greatly from one institution to another. At Russell Group universities, a proportion of the teaching is done in tutorials, though lectures

and seminars form a significant element of most courses. At most other universities there is a combination of lectures and seminars.

In subjects such as Medicine and Engineering, a significant amount of time in all universities will be spent doing practical work. The (somewhat controversial) tendency, particularly in humanities courses, has been towards less formal teaching and more self-directed study, including 'reading weeks'. However, the debate over the increasing cost of fees has led to discussion of the quantity and quality of teaching provision in universities and the developing trend is for students to be more demanding about the amount of 'contact time' offered within each course.

Methods of assessment

All institutions have some sort of formal final assessment. Most have examinations at some point during the course but some rely more than others upon continually assessed coursework. It is worth considering which system will allow you to perform to your best advantage.

Location

Living in London will not suit or be desirable for all students. Some universities, set in the middle of large towns, gain from close contact with life there: the universities of Bristol, Dundee, Edinburgh, Manchester and Newcastle are in this situation. Some universities are on suburban campuses on the edge of a town, for example: Birmingham, Exeter, Kent, Nottingham, Reading, Southampton, Warwick and Oxford Brookes. The campus at Leeds University stretches across the town centre, dominating a large swathe of the city. Durham and St Andrews universities each occupy ancient buildings in a small city. Coventry University has expanded over the last few years and has received enormous investment in its central location.

Accommodation

At a very small number of universities, such as the collegiate universities of Cambridge, Durham and Oxford, students live in university accommodation for most of their three years. At most other universities, there are Halls of Residence for your first year, both to help you to get to know people and to ensure that you are adequately fed. You need to be careful if you apply to a course at university close to your home if there is pressure on accommodation. The accommodation officers can decide that you live close enough to live at home and can decline to offer you accommodation. Problems can also arise with accommodation if you arrive on a course late, perhaps through Clearing or because it was not your first choice. Students at their first choice of university can expect more desirable accommodation than those at their second or later choice. Universities allocate accommodation in different ways. In some cases, it pays to be quick off the mark in making a selection: as in all

other matters, careful research will enable an applicant to know how best to maximise the chances of a successful outcome.

Social

One of the main benefits of being at a university is to meet people from a wide range of backgrounds and parts of the country, and indeed from all parts of the world, and who have a variety of interests. However, at a few Scottish and Welsh institutions, and some English universities, most of the students come from nearby. A vital part of the university experience is widening your social as well as intellectual range.

UNIVERSITY OFFERS

Universities use a system of points when making offers to successful applicants. A new tariff points system was introduced in 2016-17. The table below will help you to calculate the offers in terms of grades.

A Level	BTEC Diploma	Points
A*	Distinction*	56
A	Distinction	48
B		40
C	Merit	32
D		24
E	Pass	16

AS Level	Points
A	20
B	16
C	12
D	10
E	6

Examples of total new tariff points for certain grade combinations:

Grade	Points
A*A*A*	168
A*A*A	160
A*AA	144
AAB	136
ABB	128
BBB	120
BBC	112
BCC	104
CCC	96
CCD	88
CDD	80
DDD	72

Deferred entry

Although application is usually made in the Autumn of the year preceding the proposed year of entry, admissions tutors may be prepared to consider an application made two years before entry, so that the applicant can perhaps gain work experience or spend a period abroad.

Policy on deferred entry may differ from department to department and applicants should consult departmental websites and/or admissions staff at the institutions themselves before making an application for deferred entry. It is important to check with the admissions tutor that a deferred entry application will receive the same consideration as a normal application.

Although it is more difficult to get offers for deferred entry, if you are certain that you will be taking a gap year, you have nothing to lose by a pre-A level application (you are not obliged to accept any offers you receive), as you will have a second chance post A level.

Application procedure for Art and Design courses

Candidates wishing to apply for any Art and Design course should ensure that they have visited the university of their choice before submitting an application.

It is essential to find out as much detail as possible about the course and facilities available; also check the application procedure and establish whether or not a portfolio of work is required. Most Art and Design degree courses prefer applicants to have undertaken a one-year Foundation Course (usually undertaken in their Local Education Authority area) and often will not consider direct entry from Sixth Form.

It is also important to note that universities will expect to see evidence of practical work that has been completed during a gap Year. Students should, therefore, try hard to strengthen their portfolio during that year in readiness for interview. All of this information can usually be obtained through a phone call to the Admission Officer of the university or college in question.

Overview of UCAS process and timetable

1. You produce your Personal Statement by **September 2019** and submit it to your tutor.
2. Your tutor will comment and ask you to redraft your statement – you will possibly need to make many improvements.
3. You can apply for a maximum of five courses.
4. Your tutor compiles the school reference from subject references written by teaching staff and your previous tutor.

5. You complete your full application on UCAS, pay the fee and the form will be sent to Mrs P Casey automatically. She will check your application, may send it back to you for improvement and, when complete, forward it to UCAS.
6. This must be completed by **Friday 18 October 2019**.
7. UCAS acknowledges receipt and sends you a personal log-in, application number and password so that you can track the progress of your application on the UCAS website. It is vital that you keep this information safe, as the school does not have access to them.
8. UCAS sends your details to each of the universities.
9. Each university considers your application and subsequently informs UCAS of its decision. Applicants may also hear unofficially from the institutions. There is considerable range in terms of how long different universities take to give their response.
10. UCAS notifies applicants of the institutions' decisions
11. You reply through UCAS to any offers made by the universities.
12. You do not have to reply to any university offers until you have received your last decision. If you know before then that you definitely want to accept firmly one of the offers, you can do so. However, it is not advisable to accept firmly an offer until you are absolutely sure that this is the university you want to commit yourself to attending.
13. You may decline any offer you receive before you have received all of your decisions in the UCAS scheme. However, you cannot change your mind later and accept that offer.
14. If you have received more than one university offer, UCAS will send you – with your last decision – a statement of all of your decisions in the scheme, a reply slip and an explanatory leaflet.
15. You will be asked to reply to your offers by a date supplied to you by UCAS but there will be a dispensation for you to delay replying to your offers if you have yet to attend an open day or group visit at one or more of the universities concerned. The final deadline by which you must inform UCAS of your decision is **May 2020** but you are advised to communicate this information earlier, if possible.
16. Once you have replied to your offers, UCAS will send you a final statement of your replies and all the decisions made.

Administration and preparation

1. Use a memory stick which you must ideally use solely for UCAS purposes.
2. Retain word processed files on your memory stick, as well as printout versions of the following documents:
 - Copies of UCAS final drafts of application form and personal 'further information' statements.
 - Any additional materials such as records of exam results, names of modules, exam boards, extra-curricular information etc.

USING UCAS APPLY

You can watch a short guide to completing your application at:

<http://www.ucas.com/apply>.

1. Registration

Use the web address <http://www.ucas.com/apply> for the Apply web page and select 'Register'. Type in the 'buzzword' given to you in your UCAS workshop session: Preparing for Higher Education. You will then be prompted to enter a password and answer security questions. **Clicking on 'send' completes the first part of registration and creates the username for you; please make a note of this as you will need these details to log on to Apply.**

2. Logging on

You can log on to Apply wherever you have access to the web. From the Apply webpage, enter your **username** and **password**. If you have attempted to log on unsuccessfully several times, your account will be locked. You will have to phone UCAS to unlock your account or you can try to log in again the next day. If you have accidentally shut down the browser rather than using log out, your account will be locked. If you attempt to log back in again, you will be presented with the following message: 'You are already logged in'. Please ensure this is your only active session. Click 'login' if you wish to proceed. By clicking 'login', this will automatically allow you back into your account. After an hour of inactivity, Apply will time out for security reasons. If you forget your password or 5 ID answers, phone UCAS to regain access. **THE SIXTH FORM OFFICE DOES NOT KNOW YOUR PASSWORD.**

3. Completing your application

To access any section, click on the section name in the header of the Apply main screen and follow the on screen instructions. It is possible to leave a section partially completed and return to it later, *as long as you have saved your work*. The status of sections is shown in the main screen as not started, in progress or complete. After completing a section you will need to select section 'finished?' to change the status of the section to complete. Any inaccurate or compulsory data left out will be highlighted in red to indicate that it needs completing.

Courses

Select courses by either institution code plus course code, or by institution name and course name and choose:

Year of entry (if applicable)

Defer entry?

Live at home?

Education

Enter qualifications passed (GCSE, AS, BTEC, Music etc) and pending (Advanced levels). This can be a difficult section to complete. Appendix 2 gives you details of exam boards; this information is also on your exam results sheets.

Employment

Enter details of any paid employment, past or present.

About you

Name, address, phone number(s), email address, Date of Birth, Fee Details, Special Needs Information, Criminal Convictions, Parental Occupation.

NB: make sure your email address is appropriate.

4. Completing your personal statement (see guidance on writing this on page 13 and examples in Appendix 1)

Draft your personal statement, save it, then check it with your tutor and a member of the Sixth Form Team. Next, using 'copy and paste', insert text that you have already prepared in your word processor (ie Word). This is by far the best option. To save what you have typed so far, click save. To check the length of what you have typed so far, click preview. When you have finished your statement and checked it is below the maximum number of lines (47 lines, 71 characters per line), click preview to see how it will appear, then click section finished.

5. Sending your application to your referee

Once all sections are complete, you can select a referee. Each applicant needs to have agreed to the UCAS declaration when registering. **The UCAS fee of £24 must be paid in the secure online area.**

6. Once your application is at your centre

You should aim to complete Apply by **18 October 2019**.

Your tutor will already have written a reference for you which will then be added to the application. In writing your reference, your tutor will include the estimated grades your teachers believe you will get in your A Levels. These are based on your performance at the end of Year 12 exams and are not negotiable. Tutors will also comment on your personal qualities, such as commitment to your studies, your participation in school life, your capacity for hard work, your reliability and, above all, the likelihood of you being successful in completing your chosen degree course. This is a confidential academic reference which is not shared with you.

The application will be passed to Mrs P Casey to check and authorise. Once she has approved it, it will be sent to UCAS. After that point, it is irretrievable. Information about the progress of your application will be displayed when you log on.

Our school aims to have all applications sent to UCAS by no later than October half term and students submitting applications after this time should be aware that they are at a serious disadvantage. Applications received by UCAS between 14 January 2020 and 26 June 2020 are 'late' applications. UCAS will forward copies of your application form to each of the institutions you have listed for consideration at their discretion, subject to suitable vacancies remaining.

7. Checking the status of your applications

At any stage you can view all, to preview or print a copy of your application to date. This is a user friendly format. All uncompleted sections will be highlighted in red. Once you have completed and sent your application to the staff section, you can still view all, even though no changes can be made.

The stages are:

- Application not checked
- Application checked
- Reference not yet started
- Reference in progress
- Reference awaiting approval
- Application sent to UCAS
- Your application number is allocated to you by UCAS.

8. Once the form is at UCAS

Once your application has been sent to UCAS, it will be processed overnight and normally an application number will be issued within one working day. This will be visible in the staff and applicant area of Apply, indicating that the application is at UCAS and is being processed. An AS2 Acknowledgement letter will be sent by post to your correspondence address, stating the application number and password for the applicant enquiry service on the UCAS website. You can use the applicant enquiry service to find out what decision universities or colleges have made about your application.

HINTS ON COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

Select courses with reasonably similar titles and/or content; diverging subject courses suggests that you may not be sure what you wish to study.

Insert the institution and course code numbers very carefully.

Include all the information required about your examination record. List even those subjects in which you obtained modest grades, since it indicates the breadth of your studies.

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is one of the most important sections of the form. Personal qualities are very significant in determining a student's success and the interests and activities mentioned here will help to give a more rounded picture of you. In essence, you must answer the question, 'Why do you want to study this course?' There are 47 lines and you should aim to use all of them. You should cover the following points:

- Mention the reasons for your choice of subject or course. Explain what you have gained through work experience, holiday jobs and family background. If so, give brief details.
- Describe which subject or parts of your current course have particularly interested you and if you have done any related private reading, travel, holiday work, writing, cultural activities, FutureLearn courses etc.
- Be reflective, describe any research projects, university visits, lectures or workshops attended, participation in Realising Opportunities Programme, HE+, Aspiring Professional, Pathways to Law etc.
- Include your social and sporting interests especially where they relate to the course. Indicate any activities that show your communications skills (eg debating, public speaking, acting, poetry or short story writing) and list your private interests, such as clubs or societies you belong to, including religious affiliations and practical hobbies.
- If you have lived or travelled abroad, give brief details, more especially if they relate to the course of study.
- List any useful skills, such as computer literacy, driving, organisational experience and languages.
- Conclude with reference to your career trajectory and your degree's place within it.

A quality Personal Statement is always recognised as can be seen in this comment from the Admissions Officer at the Oxford University.

- The student's application was strong; the personal statement was focused, engaging and wide ranging.
- The student's application was compelling; the personal statement was pertinent, fluent and well balanced.

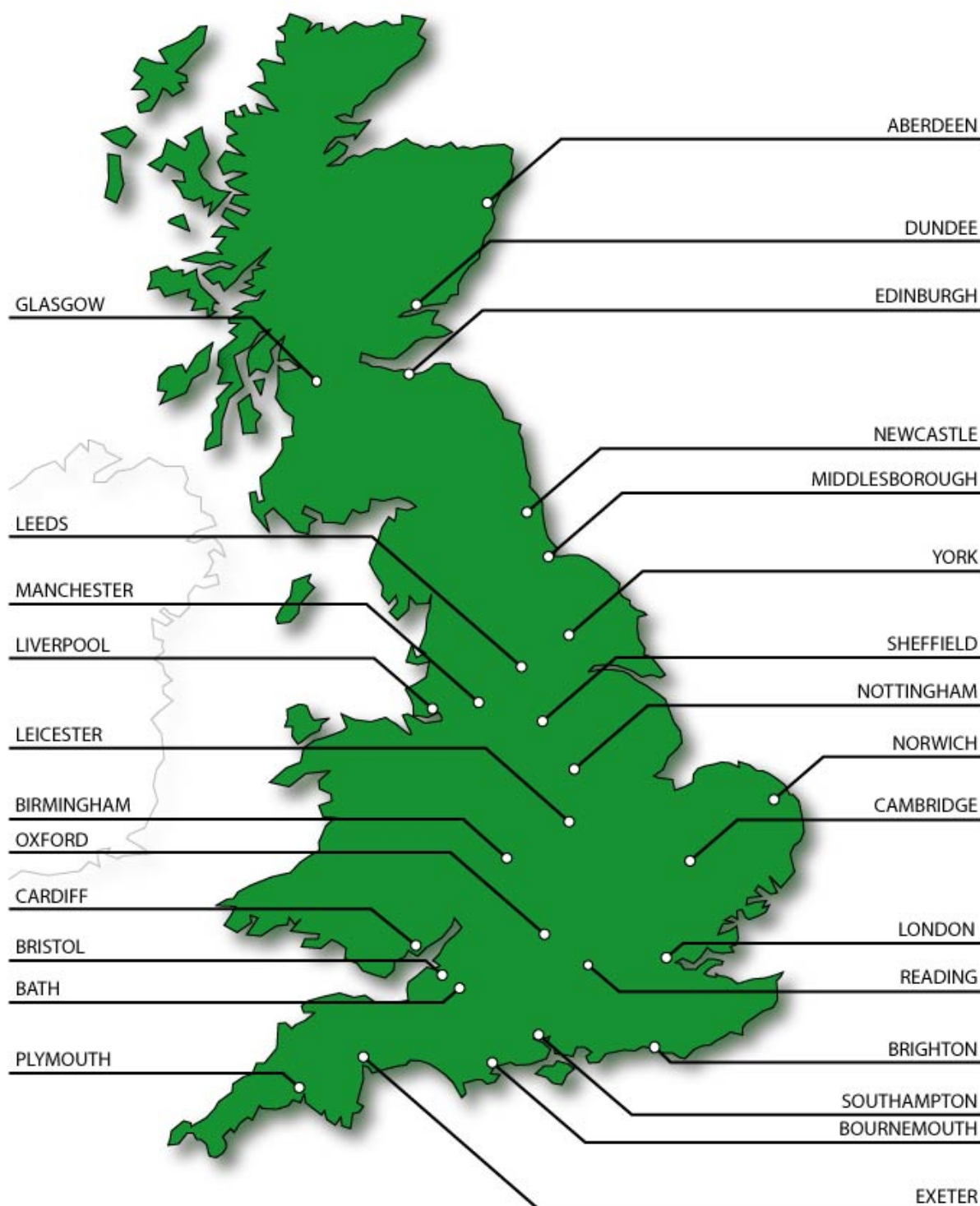
Admissions tutors can contact applicants and again students receive very positive feedback. This is illustrated in the excerpt from a letter to one of our students who applied to Essex University to study Politics:

My name is Rob Johns and I am Deputy Head of Department at the University of Essex. I just wanted to send a short note to thank you for applying and to let you know that we really like your application. Your personal statement indicates a strong interest in politics, whether it is recent developments in West Africa or the growth of dangerous ideologies. Together with your other interests, such as reading, it suggests that you are a well-rounded person who would feel very much at home in our department.

A selection of Personal Statements follow in **Appendix 1**. These can be used to inform your own statement but **MUST NOT** be copied. **Plagiarism** will result in your application not being approved.

Appendix 2 will give you the subject and module codes to use when filling in the Education section of the UCAS form.

Map of universities in the United Kingdom



This map can be accessed, and university information is detailed, at the following link <http://www.realuni.com/ukmap.htm>

Bishop Ullathorne students have chosen to study at the following Universities across the UK.

Subject	University
Accounting and Finance	Liverpool
Acting	University of Wales Trinity St David
Aerospace Engineering	Bristol
Ancient History	Manchester
Anthropology	University of Wales Trinity St David
Biological Sciences	Warwick/ Sussex
Bio-Medical Material Science	Glasgow
Civil Engineering	Imperial College London
Computer Games Technology	Leicester
Computing	Aston
Economics	Birmingham
Engineering	Brunel
English	Birmingham/ Reading/ York
English Literature with Creative Writing	Lancaster
Fashion Retail Management	Nottingham Trent
Film & TV Production	Buckinghamshire
Football and Business Management	Buckinghamshire
Geography	Cambridge/ Manchester
History and English	Oxford
Human Biology	Manchester Metropolitan
International Business with languages	Hertfordshire
International Relations	School of Oriental & African Studies
Law (LLB)	Nottingham/ Manchester
Marketing	Newcastle
Mathematics	Sussex
Mechanical Engineering	Liverpool
Media Production	Staffordshire
Medical Genetics	Queen Mary University London
Medicine	Cardiff/ Leicester
Midwifery	Birmingham
Music	Oxford
Paramedic Science	Coventry
Physics	Durham
Primary Teaching	Liverpool Hope
Psychology	Hull
Sports Exercise Science	Loughborough
Sports Journalism	Gloucestershire
Stage Management	Rose Bradford College
Zoology	Nottingham

Student Example 1 – International Relations and Sociology

Moving from Zimbabwe as a young child, I became very aware of my family's frustrations at the historical and political changes that the country had experienced since its Independence. This led to a deep curiosity as to why there were such variations of beliefs and ideals within different nations and how this would challenge negotiations with opposing countries. Having grown up in England with this awareness has led me to develop an immense appreciation for the democratic system as a means to maintain economic and social sustainability.

Personal research through articles such as William C. Wohlforth's 'The Stability of a Unipolar World' has given me an insight into the significance of political ties and the impact they have on future alliances; this is noticeably shown through the effects of the Cold War. It has enhanced my understanding of the continuous nature in which countries relationships evolve in order to meet both its needs and sustain its alliances; no more has this been made clearer to me than the recent EU referendum. The referendum further captured my desire to understand how the decision to leave the EU will possibly effect Britain's relationship with the other members, and how the consequences may shape the future of the EU within itself. In order to investigate this area from an academic perspective I enrolled in an online course run by The University of Edinburgh. It enabled me to learn the historical context and reasonings to which Britain entered the EU, as well as discussing the repercussions. I was able to recognise that regardless of the position which was held, one of the primary focuses for the government will be the improvement and maintenance of Britain's relationship with both EU members and other countries.

Studying A-level Sociology I am able to confidently apply my knowledge to current issues and events in order to investigate the varying perspectives that have contributed to the complexities of the modern world. This is particularly exemplified through the impact of Marxist Communism throughout the 20th century. By studying this topic I was able to enhance my ability to build a sustained argument and present it through various formats including debates and presentations.

Comprehending the reasons why a sustainable environment is vital to the development of society is also reflected in my extra-curricular activities. This was highlighted within my Bitesize Work Experience with the National Citizen Service. Having already been a participant on the program, the opportunity to work with them within the logistics department allowed me to gain better leadership, organisational and creative thinking skills. I co-ordinated the evaluation process of their work to find ways to improve the organisation. I have also enjoyed the Intercultural Communication Future learn course developed by the Shanghai International Studies University. It gave me an understanding of the complex cross-cultural identities and has helped me recognise the difference between individualism and collectivism as well as how this can impact the values of a society. I feel as though my knowledge of varying cultures and their formulation, has helped me appreciate alternative views and in turn made me more malleable to suit specific situations. This was particularly underlined as a key skill during my work experience with the local charity, 'The Highlife Centre' which specialises within the integration of minority groups; I was able to ensure users that were able to gain the necessary entrepreneurial skills needed to successfully engage with the wider society. The opportunity allowed me to recognise the importance of active dialogue both on a micro and macro scale.

My decision to study International Relations and Sociology is motivated by the prospect of building a wider global society, where culture is exchanged and celebrated for its vast diversity.

Student Example 2 – Law

What fascinates me about Law is the endless legal arguments that are used and how they can affect individual cases. The decision of a Judge and a Jury are often controversial; sometimes leading to appeal after appeal through the higher courts which may view one decision differently to another. Attending two lectures on a Cambridge Law Taster Day reinforced the controversy that can arise. The lecture on Constitutional Law by Dr Stark increased my awareness of civil liberties and human rights. Likewise Dr Williams' presentation on police negligence was thought provoking and raised questions about the behaviour of police which linked well to current issues in England and the US.

My work experience at Purcell Parker Criminal Law Solicitors in Birmingham, gave me an insight into the challenges and rewards of being a criminal barrister or solicitor. I was able to sit behind the barrister in the Queen Elizabeth Crown Courts and a solicitor in the Birmingham Magistrate Courts during the trials and hearings. It was really helpful to give me an understanding of the difference between the two. Before a hearing I was able to listen to the discussion between the legal professional and their client. I observed how to structure such an interview and give advice objectively. I became very aware of the financial barriers of Legal Aid. I shadowed Barrister Joseph Keating who praised my understanding of complex areas of Law and encouraged me to pursue my degree application. I undertook further research by visiting Leamington Crown Courts to become more familiar with the courtroom procedures and protocols. I would particularly look forward to being involved in moot courts at University to gain experience of participating in a simulated court case.

I have read the second edition of 'What About Law?' by Catherine Barnard, Janet O'Sullivan and Graham Virgo which introduced me to Contract Law. It motivated me to explore 'Learning the Law' by Glanville Williams 15th edition.

The Netflix Documentary 'Making a Murderer', gave me a view of the American Legal System. It illustrated how the police can be both negligent and possibly corrupt in some way but also however top lawyers do not always achieve their expected outcome.

A Level English Literature has developed my analytical skills in reviewing texts and constructing essays to convey a coherent balanced argument. Reading Khaled Hosseini's Kite Runner, presented a back drop to the civil liberties and basic human rights of the Afghanistan people during the abusive Taliban regime from 1996-2001. It made me question why some countries aren't protected in their struggle for Human Rights. Similarly studying American Civil Rights has given me a historical perspective of how the often flawed Constitution has hindered the progress of groups gaining their basic rights. The right to bear arms also continues to be a problem in endangering rather than protecting citizens. Comparing the USA to the UK highlights the fundamental differences between the American and British political systems. Participating in the HE+ programme has given me online resources and workshops to attend, which have helped me prepare for University study. Enrolling on the Future Learn course 'Law for non-Lawyers' by Monash University will give me further opportunities to consolidate my understanding of the 7 key areas of law.

As an active member of the school community I have enjoyed captaining the football team and managing younger year groups. Welcoming parents and prospective students to Open Days also gives me the opportunity to meet new people. As a member of the Sixth Form Leadership team I have taken responsibility for fundraising and social events which aim to make sixth form life less stressful. It is an honour for me to be a part of this team and know that I contribute to school life. My goal now is to achieve the qualifications to secure a place at university and become a successful undergraduate.

Student Example 3 – Engineering

Being a native of Coventry, I am very aware of its post war importance as a car manufacturing city which grew out of light engineering of the sewing machine and bicycle. My grandfather learnt his trade as an aircraft electrician working for British Aerospace and my father became an engineer at Jaguar Land Rover through an Apprenticeship. Growing up in such an environment made me very inquisitive and interested in the world of engineering. Studying maths and physics have helped me appreciate how integral they are in understanding many aspects of modern life.

My hard work in these subjects has led me to be awarded the 'Schools Physicist of the Year' award which was provided by the Ogden Trust. This was very special for me as it not only demonstrated my academic excellence within the subject, but also recognised my independent approach to undertake extra-curricular activities. One such event was the EDT skills camp at the Lloyds Bank Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre which gave me experience of a first class engineering training facility working on a project to research, design, build and present a prototype electric vehicle charging station. I could see the importance of project management and team work; working alongside other students from across the region developed my communication skills as we collaborated to complete our final design. Being assigned a mentor proved very useful in discussing their real-life engineering experiences and understanding the capabilities of high quality engineering tools. Through completing this course I was awarded with Industrial Cadet level 2 Silver Award.

During the summer I gained a week's work experience with Jaguar Land Rover at the Whitley Engineering Centre which accommodates top engineers to develop world-class innovations. It was fascinating to observe the design process and see how the engineer's expertise created elements of the engines to test. The application of mathematical precision while using CAD software gave me a deeper knowledge of its capability. I could also recognise the job-satisfaction and benefits of contributing to the automotive industry.

Reading the Professional Engineer has widened my perspective of engineering. I have enjoyed an article by Rachel Boagey about aerospace and was intrigued by the potential for UAV's to become an integral part in our lives soon. When I heard the term 'UAV' I automatically thought about warfare, until I read this article, which highlighted their importance in analysing the situation delivering aid in natural disasters such as Typhoon Haiyan. They are predicted to help prevent 10 million deaths per year by delivering much needed medical supplies to remote areas. Drones will revolutionise the world by allowing a quicker and complete analysis of a disaster, as well as a more effective way of getting critical aid to threatened communities.

An opportunity I gained through Coventry University was to participate in a 'Scrap Heap Challenge'. This included using everyday objects to build the most aero-dynamic car body possible and then have it put to the test in a wind tunnel. Listening to the University lecturer helped me understand the role of an engineer throughout the design period. My team's sound knowledge of aerodynamics and our great teamwork resulted in us finishing 1st out of the sixth form teams and 2nd out of the university teams.

Being able to study engineering at University level would allow me to express my full capability of applied maths and physics as it is a multi-disciplinary subject. I look forward to the challenge of exploring new concepts and acquire the skills to become a professional engineer.

Student Example 4 – Politics

During my lifetime the political landscape of Britain has been at its most diverse. The first coalition since the Callaghan Government and the Labour party domination after 18 years of Conservative rule provided me with the awareness of the uncertainty that is British politics. My passion for politics was conclusively proven after shadowing an MP in Parliament. Watching Prime Ministers Question Time live was a pivotal moment in my life, witnessing how legislation is broken down and scrutinised, made me realise how everything revolves around Parliament and affirmed my desire to study Politics.

Visiting Coventry City Council's open meetings gave me an insight into the importance of local politics, making crucial decisions that directly affect the immediate community. From this I became aware of the complexity of government at both a regional and national level and the balance of power needed for an effective government.

Reading 'Dirty Politics?' by Steven Kettell was a decisive kick start in my interest in modern political history. Growing up under the 'New Labour' government in Britain and vaguely remembering the events leading up to the Iraq war, proved fascinating to research, finding out the explicit detailing of the actions and the consequences that are still making headlines to this day. The effect of reading such literature has showed me the long term effects that a political decision has on a country and the extent to which it affects the population. My subject choices have allowed me to further explore my interest in political theory, especially history which incorporated the Cold War and the United States foreign policies during such events as the Vietnam War. I have been taught the crucial skill of being able to evaluate decisions and their consequences. History has also helped with my ability to view different interpretations and so helped me to be objective in my writing. The study has increased my skill of deploying relevant evidence, for it is paramount to producing evaluative arguments. This political theory has been further developed in my A2 course looking at the Federal Government's actions regarding Civil Rights. This has broadened my understanding of the American political system granting me the ability to assess their legislation. Studying Philosophy and Ethics introduced me to compelling philosophical questions, allowing me to expand my capacity as an independent thinker, looking into the ethical dilemmas. I have also refined my research skills to be succinct which helps with the learning of new material, reducing intricate theories down into vital components. One area of particular interest has been the Just War Theory, looking into the validity of conflicts with set criteria. This was of particular interest to me as it combined politics with ethics and looked at our moral response during times of combat.

The study of English and the choice of literature has provided me with knowledge on how politics affects lives. 'The Kite Runner' by Khaled Hosseini gave me a more empathetic view of the effects conflict has on the individual as the text focused on the Taliban's 1980 Afghanistan coup.

Outside of school, I have a real interest in satirical literature, helping my understanding of political jargon. Satire opens up politics to a wider audience and was one of the reasons my interest began. My interests also extend to that of acting, taking AS drama and being a long time member of the National Youth Theatre, I have developed communication and public speaking skills. These are vital as a connection with the public is required in any strand of politics. Joining the school debating club has also developed my evaluative skills and helped me to discuss controversial matters. This encapsulates what politics is for me, an ideological battle that is the cornerstone of any society and something of which I am fully committed to studying and pursuing throughout my life.

Student Example 5 – History

It has been fascinating growing up in Coventry, originally a Saxon village, as I have been able to unravel its historical past. Visiting my Grandfather's house always provoked interesting accounts of the Second World War. A large black and white photo on the living room wall depicted the scorpion tanks being test driven down the Holyhead Road, took pride of place as it demonstrated the life my Grandad had led as an engineer at the Alvis factory, contributing to the war effort before the blitz. This reinforces my belief that history is most thrilling when studying the lives of those who lived through the great moments; from love letters from the trenches to accounts of air-raids and evacuations written by children. Anne Frank's Diary ignited my interest in first-hand accounts and subsequently, reading 'The Book Thief' helped me to contrast the extremely different lives of two young girls experiencing the same war, including the cultural aspects they were exposed to. The knowledge I have gained through my Psychology A-Level course has allowed me to formulate my own analysis of Adolf Hitler's personality based on Adorno's authoritarian personality and F-Scale. Milgram's study displays the obedience of Nazi soldiers and how legitimacy of authority led to the SS and SA carrying out various atrocities without question. My Cold War and American Civil Rights modules increased my understanding of World War 2 on new areas such as how African American and Trade Union rights were changed by desegregation of the US army and a war-time economy. Likewise, the Cold War affected international relations demonstrated by the British reluctance to help America contain Communism in Asia. My application to study for a history degree is motivated by my enthusiasm for the subject and my inquisitive nature to delve into the past. During my work experience at the University of Warwick's Modern Records Centre, I gained first-hand experience of working in the field of history. I was able to catalogue, digitize and retrieve documents as well as come into contact with primary material. I was highly interested in a collection of original photographs used to convict war criminals in the Vietnam War (a period which I was studying at the same time). This also gave me access to materials that I had not used before. Working alongside postgraduates and the academic staff cemented my determination to pursue my studies at university. Assisting in Year 7 history lessons has also given me a different perspective of working with history. I enjoyed being able to support children in their investigations and would definitely consider teaching history as a possible career pathway.

Taking part in the residential 'Year 12 Experience Warwick Summer School' gave me an insight of student life. I was able to stay in accommodation and attend lectures in Philosophy, Law and Politics. I was most captivated by Dr Kate Astbury's lecture on French History where I was able to study the flashpoint of the French Revolution by understanding the history of Bastille Day.

Enrichment activities throughout school have developed my scientific and mathematical problem solving skills; as a team member of the regional Big Biology Quiz at the University of Birmingham. I appreciated the need to work collaboratively in a very strict time frame. Participating in the UK Intermediate Mathematical Challenge in 2013, I was awarded a Silver Certificate, Best in Year and Best in School. Part-time work in the hospitality sector has given me the interpersonal skills to provide excellent customer service.

History never ceases to amaze me as one tries to make sense of current affairs; everything which is happening has been influenced by, or as a direct result of, that which preceded it. I am looking forward to the challenge of being a history undergraduate.

Student Example 6 – Criminology

As an A level student of Sociology, I developed an intense curiosity concerning the social dimensions of crime and deviance. It was fascinating to explore various frameworks that analyse the function of crime; ranging from Durkheim's functionalist perspective to Taylor's Marxist perspective. Crime therefore can be seen as a lens to further elucidate societal frictions, with these theories highlighting how fragile communities can be if exploited or marginalized. There is an intense debate in this course; is crime good for social cohesion? Do states use crime as a tool for creating norms? Much like the overzealous criminalisation of drugs, are these punitive measures politicized? It is in studying this course I will be able to challenge and contribute to these pertinent questions.

Sociology has inspired me to make a criminology degree application. I have gained an insight into the social factors that can contribute to the downfall of an individual's behaviour which diverts them to crime. The Marxist approach focuses on the economic infrastructure as the main reasoning for crime, however this ignores non-utilitarian crime, showing how complex the causes of crime are. Studying Philosophy and Ethics has broadened my horizons on many philosophical debates, such as whether crime is good? What is morality, and who controls morality? Is it the white people, who colonized three quarters of the world, responsible for outlining the basis, as their morality was seen as superior? From these debates I wanted to understand whether what is right or wrong is innate or is fed by society.

Studying the Civil Rights movement in History has given me another aspect of how injustice practice can occur despite a legal framework. As a Somali, I resonate with the discourse concerning high rates of crime disproportionately within black communities, and question why this is an issue in poor and black communities? From this I helped organize a 'Stop and Search' talk in an east London mosque, which mentioned police brutality and criminalization of blackness. I have also been active in handing out leaflets about knife crime, targeting communities which are most affected.

Participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award developed my leadership skills, allowing me to improve and adapt to circumstances outside of the classroom. This coupled with volunteering in the British Heart Foundation, has granted me great opportunity to build on my communicational abilities. I have also been active with Reprieve which is a charity organisation that helps criminals who have been falsely accused, by raising awareness via 'thudeclap' which is a coordinated social media strategy to try and bring these important issues to the forefront. Be it raising awareness for heart and circulatory diseases, or attending Warwick University Summer School, I have built my confidence by throwing myself into entirely unfamiliar surroundings and pushing myself to persevere. The Summer School was particularly helpful, as I attended lectures within the Social Science Faculty and conversed with undergraduates whose experiences cemented my own resolve to enter Higher Education. I have long wanted to be a criminologist; an interest being sparked by the infamous case of Charles Manson. This morbid fascination with dark and often distressing events in history precipitated greater academic exploration that strengthened my conviction to study this course. I am motivated to be active in seeking ways to relieve many underlying symptoms of crime such as economic inequality, racial discrimination and lack of accessible healthcare. I look forward to the challenge of undergraduate study.

Student Example 7 – Business

Helping my Grandad in India with his small electrical business made me realise how important trade links were, to ensure he was able to supply the local community with the goods they needed. He had to source his products from the HICs which have its challenges for him as a sole trader in a developing country. This experience initiated my interest in business. Being perceptive of current and ongoing affairs concerning the global economy I have read articles in the Financial Times such as 'The Global Debt' written by Larry Elliot, or the recent 'Flash Crash' of the British pound in the Asian market. These issues keep me aware of global corporations and the impacts they have on the world. Having immersed myself in the consequences of 'Brexit', I can see how complicated trade will be until the government has negotiated a working relationship with the EU countries.

My A Level subject choices largely offer transferable skills which have broadened my understanding of the business world. In Geography, I learnt how vital the roles of TNCs are as they dominate the business markets. They enhanced globalisation through trade links, introducing strong communication to countries which lack infrastructure. Studying Sociology has helped to develop my analytical thinking and capabilities. The subject allows me to analyse qualitative and quantitative data to determine the effects of a phenomena, applying sociological research methods. The theoretical perspectives have given me a deeper knowledge of how different business models affect the employee.

Studying Business has allowed me to see how much I not only enjoy the subject but wish to continue it at university. The reasoning behind my choice is due to the complex and intriguing nature of the subject. One important aspect would be the ethical policies that are necessary for business today and are fundamental for a company's reputation. This can be seen in the ongoing inquiry into Rolls-Royce alleged use of bribes to win contracts. For a global manufacturer their relationship with other countries is crucial.

I have widened my knowledge with Futurelearn programmes and found the course 'Importance of Money in a Business' by the Dean of Leeds Business School, Professor Moizer, very interesting. It gave me the opportunity to delve into the exciting world of business, discussing strategies for a growing business and having confidence in dealing with financial matters. I was also successfully selected to do work experience for a week at Jaguar Land Rover's engineering centre. I had the privilege of working with the HR managers in the company. I took part in various meetings which involved conference calls to the different key personnel across the world to establish their progress in meeting targets. The sensitive nature of the work gave me a taste for responsibility and the need to effectively monitor how they record their data. It confirmed my aspiration to study for an International Business degree.

Singing has played a big role in my life as it has molded my personality and it is the cornerstone of my confidence; the source of my ability to communicate. Participating in school shows and in community fairs have been very rewarding. I have always involved myself in fundraising for charities such as 'Catholic Agency for Overseas Development' and 'Children in Need' which has given me the ability to work as part of a team as well as using leadership skills where I pride myself in always delivering the best.

I am an aspiring entrepreneur who has the enthusiasm for International Business. I would find a placement within the degree course invaluable as I could apply learning to the business environment. As the first in my family to apply for university, I look forward to the challenge of undergraduate study.

Student Example 8 – Medicine

My desire to become a doctor developed whilst studying a GCSE History module, 'Medicine Through Time'. The advancements in medical knowledge and healthcare fascinate me, and my determination to accomplish something that could benefit future generations entices me further to this complex career. Paul Kalanithi's book, 'When Breath Becomes Air' has helped me to develop an understanding of what it really means to be a doctor, as well as appreciate how the nature of human wellbeing can be unpredictable. It has reinforced my aspiration to attain a medical degree.

Volunteering at a care home has led to part-time work, where I witness the daily needs of the residents. The staff display great care to ensure that everyone feels safe, and I have learnt from them how to communicate using different tones and gestures. I have built friendly relationships with the residents and also experienced having to cope with losing them. I am able to respond to unforeseeable situations, like a five hour long power cut which allowed me to review my ability to work as part of a team and under pressure. I realise higher life expectancies mean more people will be susceptible to illnesses linked with old age, placing additional strain on the NHS to provide further rehabilitation programmes and nursing care.

My discovery of William Harvey's work and exploring the structure of the heart through my Biology studies motivated me to secure a placement on a Cardiology Ward. This gave me the opportunity to shadow Consultants and view their interactions with patients; their confidence and empathy created a positive atmosphere and reassurance. I observed how critical thinking is necessary when dealing with difficult cases, such as aortic dissection, where the patient had to be monitored to ensure she did not sit up beyond 15 degrees. I witnessed the Consultant teaching a Junior Doctor about the severity of this condition using the patient's angiogram, which made me reflect on the importance of a doctor's continued professional development. It was clear that a doctor's daily life is very demanding; an issue explored further when I led my school's Medical Society debate on whether Junior Doctors should strike. I was intrigued by the technological aspects of Cardiology as one of the Consultants explained the various surgical procedures, like inserting a pacemaker. The uncertainty of work on the ward included the constant possibility of a cardiac arrest, a scenario covered on my St John Ambulance First Aid Course. After speaking with various medical professionals it became clear to me that the multidisciplinary nature of the NHS is reliant on teamwork and respect for others.

I attend a neighbouring Sixth Form Centre for Biology, which has enabled me to adjust to a new learning environment with confidence. The topic of DNA influenced my HE+ project that focused on the consequences of epigenetics. I worked collaboratively to research and produce a presentation, adopting a leadership role in coordinating meetings. Undertaking experiments in Chemistry has helped me to develop my analytical, organisational and time management skills. Studying History has broadened my ability to consider source material in order to strengthen contextual arguments and write structured essays. I take an active role in school life, for example, helping with the reading club which encourages children with learning disabilities to improve their skills. In my leisure time I enjoy reading, cross-stitch and sports, which includes partaking in the annual charity Swimathon.

I found Klaus-Dieter John's book 'I Have Seen God' enthralling and inspiring as I could see the prospective challenges that Medicine encompasses. This highlights the perseverance and enthusiasm required to pursue a vision to help others, qualities which I possess.

APPENDIX 2

A Level Subject	Date	Examination Board
H601 Art and Design / Fine Art Externally set task and written study	06/2020	OCR
7420 Biology 7420/1 Biological processes 7420/2 Biological diversity 7420/3 Unified Biology	06/2020	OCR
9B50 Business 9B50/1 Advanced paper 1 9B50/2 Advanced paper 2 9B50/3 Advanced paper 3	06/2020	Edexcel
7405 Chemistry 7405/1 Advanced paper 1 7405/2 Advanced paper 2 7405/3 Advanced paper 3	06/2020	AQA
7712B English Literature 7712/1 Advanced paper 1 7712/2B Advanced paper 2	06/2020	AQA
7136 Economics 7136/1 Advanced paper 1 7136/2 Advanced paper 2 7136/3 Advanced paper 3	06/2020	AQA
9GE0 Geography 9GE0/01 Advanced paper 1 9GE0/02 Advanced paper 2 9GE0/03 Advanced paper 3	06/2020	Edexcel
Y222 History Y106 England 1485–1558: the Early Tudors Y222/01 The Cold War in Asia 1945–1993 Y319/01 Civil Rights in the USA 1865–1992	06/2020	OCR
9MA0 Mathematics 9MA0/1 Pure Maths 1 9MA0/2 Pure Maths 2 9MA0/3 Statistics & Mechanics	06/2020	Edexcel
Religious Studies H273A/01 Philosophy H573A/02 Ethics H573A/03 Christian	06/2020	AQA
Physics 7408/1 Advanced paper 1 7408/2 Advanced paper 2 7408/3 Advanced paper 3	06/2020	AQA
7582 Physical Education 7582/1 Paper 1 7582/2 Paper 2	06/2020	AQA
7182 Psychology 7182/1 Advanced paper 1 7182/2 Advanced paper 2 7182/3 Advanced paper 3	06/2020	AQA
7192 Sociology 7192/1 Advanced paper 1 7192/2 Advanced paper 2 7192/3 Advanced paper 3	06/2020	AQA
7692T Spanish 7692/1 Advanced paper 1 7692/2 Advanced paper 2 7692/3T Advanced paper 3	06/2020	AQA

APPENDIX 2

AS Level Subjects	Date	Examination Board
7401 Biology 7401/01 Biology paper 1 7401/02 Biology paper 2	06/2019	AQA
8BS0 Business Studies 8BS0/01 Marketing and People 8BS0/02 Managing Business Activities	06/2019	Edexcel
7404 Chemistry 7404/1 Paper 1 7404/2 Paper 2	06/2019	Edexcel
7711 English Literature 7711/1 Paper 1 7711/2 Paper 2	06/2019	AQA
Geography 8GEO/01 Dynamic Landscapes 8GEO/02 Dynamic Place	06/2019	Edexcel
8MA0 Mathematics 8MA0/01 Pure Maths 8MA0/02 Statistics & Mechanics	06/2019	Edexcel
7407 Physics 7407/1 Paper 1 7407/2 Paper 2	06/2019	AQA
7181 Psychology 7181/01 Paper 1 7181/02 Paper 2	06/2019	AQA
H173A Religious Studies H173/01 Philosophy of Religion H173/02 Religion and Ethics H173/03 Development of Christian thought	06/2019	OCR
7191 Sociology 7191/1 Paper 1 7191/2 Paper 2	06/2019	AQA

Additional/Consortia subjects		
PLSH2 Polish PLSH2 Polish Unit 2	06/2019	AQA
360GLH BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care 90GHL Unit 1: Human lifespan development 120GLH Unit 2: Working in Health & Social Care 90GLH Unit 5: Meeting individual care and support needs	06/2019	Edexcel
7136 Economics 7136/1 Advanced paper 1 7136/2 Advanced paper 2 7136/3 Advanced paper 3	06/2019	AQA
7152 Politics 7152/1 Advanced paper 1 7152/2 Advanced paper 2 7152/3 Advanced paper 3	06/2019	AQA
7262 Theatre Studies	06/2020	AQA