

**July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023**

**Dear Year 12 students, parents and carers,**

**RE: Destinations after Post 16**

Thank you for taking the time to read this somewhat lengthy letter, the aim of which is to give you an update on the information the year 12 students have been given regarding their choices of destinations after they complete their Post 16 studies.

It also signposts advice for you too, and suggests ways you can support students with their decisions.

For most students finishing Post 16, they will choose 1 of 3 pathways – higher education, normally at University, applying for an apprenticeship, or direct employment. Below is a summary of the information that students have been given about these three destinations.

**Non- University pathways: Apprenticeships and employment:**

For those students who do not want to apply for university, an apprenticeship/employment is often the most common alternative. All of year 12 have been introduced to the different types of apprenticeships and have spent time in their tutorial programme investigating a range of careers that may be available to them. Students have had guidance on how to write excellent CVs and have had access to feedback on these from their tutors.

All students who are considering applying for non-university pathways have had access to regular support from the Careers Mentor at Coombe Dean and the wider Post 16 team to discuss their options. They have also been invited to attend a Careers South West information session led by a Level 7 careers advisor to help support this process. Further opportunities for one-to-one careers advice meetings from Careers South West will continue to be available throughout year 13.

Students will not usually start applying for apprenticeships until the Spring term of year 13, however, we recommend that they continue to research apprenticeships that are currently available to see what may be available to them and to ensure their CV is updated. We recommend this website <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/> as a good starting point. In the autumn term of year 13 all students will be offered guidance with interview techniques in their tutorial sessions too.

**University route:**

Most students typically take this pathway, and can apply for up to 5 courses in their application. The **school deadline for completion of applications is 15<sup>th</sup> December 2024** in order to give us time to thoroughly check applications and ensure references are in place before UCAS's deadline in January.

They should now be in the process of selecting a course to study and considering which universities they wish to apply for. Students have had support in their study skills lessons and from Next Steps South West during their visit to Exeter University, and from a visiting speaker in school. Students should be using the Unifrog platform to research and record these choices.

Each individual university course has a series of **entry requirements that students MUST meet** if they are to apply for that particular course. For example, there will be a set of expected grades that students must achieve in order to be offered a place on each course. It is vital that students ensure they meet all of these requirements for any courses they are considering applying for. **Aspirational choices are encouraged, however, realistic backup choices need to be selected alongside these too.** Students have been advised to take into consideration their current working grades and year 12 mock results when making these choices too.

Some students may also qualify for contextual offers at individual universities too (slightly lower entry requirements). Again, this will vary between institution and therefore it is important students check their eligibility on the website/with the admissions team at each individual university they are applying for.

### **UCAS application 2024:**

All students should by now have completed their UCAS application profile for the 2024 entry (regardless of if they are thinking of deferring for a gap year first).

The UCAS website provides a detailed overview of this if you want to help them with this process, students have also been given a step-by-step PowerPoint to help them (this can be found on their ClassCharts account). <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university>

### **Personal statements:**

All students making a UCAS application will need to have written a personal statement. This is a **4,000 character document** which 'sells' them to their chosen universities. Students have again been given guidance on how to write these in their tutorial sessions, in their Forensic Reading lessons and in a year group assembly.

Universities will be offering places based on their predicted grades/points totals and the quality of this personal statement. It is therefore vital that the students dedicate enough time and effort to getting this right. The mantra we share with the students is 'are they **INTERESTED** and **INTERESTING** people?' A well-constructed personal statement will evidence and prove both of these things.

Students have access to guidance with writing personal statements on their Unifrog platforms and via ClassCharts. <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement>

### **3. Early entries:**

There are a few courses that require an early application- students who are applying for courses at Oxford, Cambridge, and to study medicine, veterinary science and dentistry courses. This is **16<sup>th</sup> October 2023**. We would hope by now that students who wish to apply for these courses have made their intentions to do so known to the Post 16 team. If not, they **MUST** do so before the end of the summer term.

Those applying for these courses **MUST** have a completed draft of their personal statement completed over the summer. More specific guidance for medicine students will be given in the last week of term.

### **3 Admissions tests:**

A small number of higher education courses require students to complete an admissions test in addition to the requirements outlined already, including law and medicine. Information about the admissions tests can be found here <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/admissions-tests>.

It is important that students research each individual university they are applying for to see if an admissions test is required. It is the student's responsibility to book these tests within the nationally set timescales. Students who need to complete an admissions test should now be downloading and practising these in preparation.

<https://lnat.ac.uk/> Information about the LNAT (law) course can be found here.

<https://www.ucat.ac.uk/> information about the UCAT test (medicine) can be found here.

Students applying for some creative courses may also need to submit a portfolio. Again, students will need to check this with individual universities.

#### **4. Student finance and funding:**

Finance is often the most daunting aspect of the process of applying for higher education. Students attended a thorough information session about this whilst at Exeter University (the PowerPoint from this session can found on our Post 16 UCAS page on the Coombe Dean website). Unfortunately, as individual circumstances are so varied, we cannot offer specific advice on finances and funding. However, there is a dedicated webpage for support and we recommend ringing the advisors if you cannot find answers to any of your questions on here <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/>.

We also highly recommend that students look at the bursaries and financial support schemes that are available at individual universities, there are often a number of support packages that many of our students may be eligible to apply for.

#### **What students need to be doing this summer, with your support please:**

1. Finalising their choices for courses and universities that they wish to apply for. Be mindful of the entry requirements- are they obtainable?
2. Attending any open days or virtual events at their chosen list of universities to support their choices.
3. Drafting a completed version of their personal statements.
4. Ensuring their application on the UCAS website is completed.
5. Researching, booking and then practising for any admissions tests they might need to complete.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the information in this letter please contact the tutor in the first instance, or please do send me an email at [vtwine@coombedean.co.uk](mailto:vtwine@coombedean.co.uk)

We will contact you in the Autumn term with details of a potential parent information evening to further support the students' decision-making process.

Thank you.

V Dunstan

Deputy Head of Post 16