

Stamford College

LIFE AFTER COLLEGE: PARENTS' PACK

2021



Stamford
College

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WELCOME

This pack has been developed specially for the parents and guardians of our Year 12 and 13 students at Stamford College. We believe it is vitally important for student's families to have an input in to their childrens'/dependents' decisions and choices when selecting their future route to success. The information provided in this pack will give you ideas on how to support your child as they progress from Stamford College.

What does this pack contain?

- Basic overview of the four main options available to Stamford College leavers
- Detailed information on gap years
- Detailed Information on work-based Learning
- Detailed information on employment
- Detailed information on higher education
- Contact details for advice and guidance
- Links to useful websites and resources

Where to start?

By the time they reach Year 12 and 13, some students have already decided on a career and know the route they need to take to secure a job. However, it is not always that simple, many students find

the choices they have to make at this stage of their education very stressful, especially if they have no idea what they want to do as a career or what other routes are available to them when they finish college. It can help to reinforce that they do not have to make these decisions alone!

When faced with these decisions it can feel like there is pressure from all angles, paths to success can seem unclear and daunting. However, with enough time, research and support, we hope all our students can make a decision they are happy with and one that will kick start a successful career. It is our job to make the process as simple and stress-free as possible.

We recommend that students start thinking about what route they would like to take after college in Year 12 (A Level Year one or first year of other Level 3 qualifications). The college Careers and Higher Education support service supports this process along with student advisors that are allocated to each subject area. To help them along, we would also recommend you familiarise yourself with the options available and talk through them with your child. Thinking about an "Ultimate Goal" is often a good way to generate inspiration and gives an identified target for progression.

WHAT IS THEIR ULTIMATE GOAL?

Questions students should be asking themselves are:

- Where do I want to be in ten years time? (Personally and professionally)
- What subjects have I enjoyed / do I enjoy at school or college?
- What subjects have I been / am I best at?
- What interests me? Can I realistically make a viable career out of one of my hobbies?
- What salary do specific professions warrant? Does this fit in with or will it be sufficient for my personal future goals?
- In which location do I wish to work?

CAREER PROFILING TESTS

Career profiling tests can help give inspiration and ideas of possible jobs and careers suited to your child/dependant. If they are struggling to think what career they might like to follow, the following links will direct you to some great career profiling tests:

From our website you can also access Your **Careers Coach** which includes three shorter questionnaires that help your child to explore their interests

and preferences for the world of work.

www.stamford.ac.uk/college-life/careers-advice-service-ceiag

Start is also an excellent tool aimed at anyone from 11-18 but works well for any age. Start "My Profile" will help individuals to identify their interests and explore their career preferences. As your son/daughter works through their work preferences, interests, skills and qualities, jobs will be suggested along with typical duties, routes into and salaries.

<https://login.startprofile.com/login.aspx>

These tools will help your child to identify an ultimate goal and will reveal a clearer path to achieve the goal but they are not the "whole" story. They should be used in combination with discussions with yourself and / or a careers professional. Contact our Careers Advisors – see back page for details.

The next step is to 'plan their journey' from now until then using one or more of the options in this booklet.

GAP YEARS

A gap year is defined as "a period, typically an academic year, taken by a student as a break between school and university or college education."

The key to a successful gap year is making it relevant to a future career or higher education course. It is imperative to plan a gap year properly and fill it with constructive, structured and purposeful activities that can teach your child something and allow them to grow as a person. This will improve their chances of securing future employment or a place on their chosen University course. It is important to realise that a gap year is not just a chance to have time off from education, to relax and do nothing!

Gap years after college can be extremely helpful in a young person's development and are meant to positively challenge students and introduce them to new situations, allowing them to mature and improve their confidence.

If your child is considering a gap year they should consider the following:

Advantages:

- Good opportunity to have a year out with little responsibility before University and / or employment
- Discover new countries and learn about new cultures
- Meet new people
- Learn a lot about yourself and develop skills that can be used in the future

- Make a difference to people's lives (through voluntary work)
- 'Sample' different career options – help make decisions for the future
- Earn / Save money (if doing paid work)
- Gap year students are statistically less likely to 'drop out' of university
- A structured and worthwhile gap year can enhance your CV

Disadvantages:

- Friends may move to university or jobs straight after college, so a gap year will put you one year behind them
- After a year out of education, you may not want to return
- Gap years (especially those abroad) can be costly, saving and fundraising for a gap year can take lots of time and effort
- Without proper planning it will be hard to explain the benefits of your gap year to a prospective employer or university
- A gap year without proper planning could harm your future prospects.

IS MY CHILD READY FOR A GAP YEAR?

The answer to this question is ultimately up to your child. A good gap year programme can provide an ideal link between the

regimented lifestyle of school/college and the unstructured temptations of university.

If your child:

- Has no idea what to study at university
- Does not know what career they would like to pursue
- Is lacking in confidence and/or independence
- Feels like they would like to experience new things before settling in to a work or HE environment

Then they would probably benefit from a gap year.

It is up to them to decide what skills to develop on their gap year to make it worthwhile. For example, if a young person is lacking in direction, a variety of different work placements (in the UK or Abroad) or voluntary work could provide the inspiration to follow a particular job sector.

If a student is lacking in confidence, putting themselves in a challenging situation, one where they are required to think on their feet, solve problems and meet new people independently of current safe surroundings can really improve their outlook and allow them to learn a lot about their inner strengths. Travelling alone or with friends can broaden horizons and instil a sense of fulfilment that could be crucial to future success at University or in employment.

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

If your child would like to travel, volunteer or work abroad on their

gap year then they will need to consider how to fund their trip. It is often a good idea for them to take responsibility to raise their own funds for such an adventure.

Fundraising can be simpler than you think, especially if your son/daughter is going on a volunteering project abroad with a reputable company. Some gap year companies are also registered charities, so they have many ideas to raise money.

For example, The International Citizen Service (ICS) is a UK government-funded development programme that brings together 18 year olds from all backgrounds to fight poverty overseas and in UK communities. As a subsidised programme volunteers are required to raise a minimum of £800 for a 10 week placement <http://www.volunteerics.org>

Project Trust is a registered charity that provides volunteering opportunities on community projects abroad. They require their volunteers to raise between £5500 and £6200 to pay for eight to twelve months abroad. They then subsidise the rest of the costs themselves www.projecttrust.org.uk. There are plenty of ideas for fundraising on programme websites. This amount may seem like a lot, but with considerable effort and time, the funds can be raised from trusts, companies, sponsored events, students own earnings etc.

Also look at <https://www.gapyear.com/articles/travel-tips/a-to-z-of-fundraising-ideas> for some good ideas on fundraising.

TYPES OF GAP YEAR:

1 TRAVEL

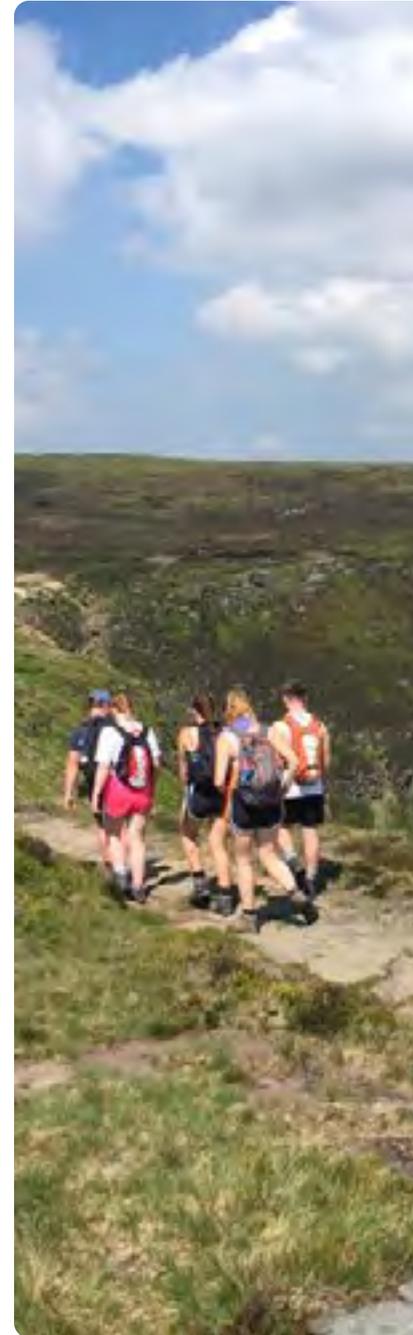
NB – All Gap Year providers will have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Look at individual provider websites to check on the current situation.

Travel is a popular option with young people but it is generally the most expensive! Gap year travel can range from one month to twelve months, it could be one country or a round the world trip! It really depends on where they want to go, what they want to do and how much money they have to dedicate to their trip. A gap year can combine one to six months travelling, with the rest of the time in a job to fund travels or volunteering in the UK. This way your son/daughter can get work experience as well as an amazing travelling experience.

Travel is a great idea but will involve some really focussed planning. The Gap Year website can help them with the planning process www.gapyear.com/plan Global Grad may also be worth a look www.globalgrad.com

VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteering is often a good way to gain experience when work experience or paid employment is not possible, especially when trying to enter competitive job sectors. It can provide your child with a foot



in the door or alternatively it can just be a rewarding activity or a way to develop their transferable skills. Please see the volunteering section of this booklet for further information.

PAID WORK

Your child may need to arrange a gap year in order to finance their higher education studies. Paid work prior to university/studies can also give them an insight into the world of work and inspire them to pursue a specific career.

Abroad:

If your child wants to travel and experience working in another country, there are many options of getting paid work abroad. It can be a great way of meeting friends whilst learning about a new culture. From bar/restaurant work to gaining a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate and teaching in China or Africa – the possibilities are endless!

Remember that travel to the EU is subject to new rules since the beginning of this year.

BUNAC is a reputable organisation that Stamford College has worked with in the past. They promote work abroad schemes in America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and will provide a package to help your child plan a year in work. USA Summer Schools are a popular option for those wanting a taste of teaching in another country.

UK:

Internships, part-time jobs or a full-time job in a relevant business will all add relevant experience and boost your son/daughter's university application or CV and covering letter.

Employment for students www.e4s.co.uk has a wide variety of full-time, part-time, internships and placement jobs across the UK. YINI (The Year in Industry) provide 9-12 month paid placement opportunities with hundreds of top UK employers in all areas of engineering, science, IT, e-commerce, business, marketing, finance and logistics www.yini.org.uk

Alternatively, looking on popular job search engines is recommended:

www.indeed.co.uk
www.gov.uk/jobsearch

If your child would like to travel on their gap year but have limited funds, they can mix up their gap year - spend six months in a paid job to save money, then the next six months travelling!

2 VOLUNTEERING

From community volunteering in England to wildlife and conservation volunteering in Africa, voluntary work can be a very rewarding activity. It also looks great on Personal Statements and CV's as it shows a motivation to help others.

Abroad:

Volunteering abroad can be a great way to cut travel costs. There are a variety of international volunteer programmes with various gap year providers. Options include; community volunteering, conservation or wildlife rehabilitation and work with a range of people and/or wildlife.

It is advisable for your son/daughter to book a volunteer placement abroad with a reputable gap year company as then they will join a group of similar aged "Gappers" and have all accommodation sorted for them.

Some reputable companies to look at are:

- **NHS Volunteering**
www.england.nhs.uk/participation/get-involved/volunteering
- **Project Trust**
www.projecttrust.org.uk/
- **International Citizen Service**
www.volunteerics.org
- **Projects Abroad**
www.projects-abroad.co.uk



- **Real Gap Experience**
www.realgap.co.uk/volunteering
- **The Leap**
www.theleap.co.uk/volunteer-abroad
- **BUNAC**
www.bunac.org/uk/volunteer-abroad

In the UK:

There are always plenty of volunteering opportunities closer to home. This is a great idea for students who would like to experience different careers and organisations. It can be an eye-opening experience that may lead them on to the job of their dreams! Voluntary work of any kind shows potential employers that they are motivated, trustworthy and compassionate.

There are hundreds of registered charities each with their own website. Check out the following advisory websites which cover a variety of voluntary opportunities locally and in the UK:

- **Do-it**
www.do-it.org.uk
- **Voluntary Centre Services**
www.voluntarycentreservices.org.uk
- **National Citizen Service**
www.ncsyas.co.uk
- **Voluntary Action Rutland**
www.varutland.org.uk
- **NHS Volunteering**
www.england.nhs.uk/participation/get-involved/volunteering



3 EMPLOYMENT

Your child may not want to go to university but instead prefer to start earning money straight away. They may not need a higher education qualification for their chosen career or be unsure of what to study. In order to secure a job they will need to know what career they are trying to pursue and what jobs they can get with their current qualifications. Under 18s need to choose work that offers the opportunity to train and keep learning (see work-based learning). Securing a good job straight after college is difficult and students must be prepared to start on a low wage and gain experience and skills before progressing. There are pros and cons of going straight in to employment which should be discussed with your child.

Advantages:

- You can start earning and increase your independence straight away.
- You can begin buying/saving towards big investments such as a first home or even early retirement
- By going straight into work you will develop valuable work and life experience increasing your future job prospects
- If you don't think university is for you but would like to gain a higher education qualification, there are options for part-time study whilst working (e.g. Open University, College HNCs...)

Disadvantages:

- Should you wish to return to education it can be more difficult once you have had a break
- You will probably start from the bottom rung of the ladder which means low wages, whereas graduates tend to demand a higher starting wage and probably earn more money during their career
- It may be difficult securing employment in the current economic climate
- You may feel you have missed out on university especially if your friends have gone

Well before leaving College, students should be researching and looking for work and thinking carefully about the type of work that they would like to do.

INCREASING THEIR CHANCES

Since the recession it has proved more difficult for school/college leavers and graduates to find work. Your child really needs to be able to sell themselves and make their application stand out for the right reasons. Whilst at College they can use their free time to gain valuable experience either work related or voluntary work, which will impress future employers.

An excellent curriculum vitae (CV) and good preparation for interviews is vital to successful job applications. The careers pages of the student Intranet have a great selection of

resources that can help students with writing their CV and give them lots of top tips for making a good impression in their interviews.

They can also find CV templates and workbooks on the intranet or ask for advice from the College's Careers, Further and Higher Education Team, who can provide tips on content, layout and grammar; or your child can send through their draft CV for personalised feedback.
Careers.Advisors@stamford.ac.uk



**Don't know where to start?
We are here to help!**

Stamford College is committed to improving student futures and will help in any way possible to give our students the tools they require to pursue a career with good progression opportunities.

Tim Silcock and the Careers Team provide support in the college's Careers and Higher Education Support Service. Based at the Information, Advice and Guidance

RESOURCES

Visit www.princes-trust.org.uk or call 0800 842 842 - Prince's Trust runs a variety of programmes for people aged 14-30 and aims to build confidence, motivation and team building skills.

Popular job search engines:

- www.indeed.co.uk
- <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch>

hub opposite reception, they are available to advise students on everything from gap years and employment, to university and are available for informal appointments. If your child would like to book an appointment, they can use the contact details below or drop in and speak to the team;

Careers.Advisors@stamford.ac.uk
01780 484 353

WORK-BASED LEARNING



Work-based learning basically means training while you work. It is a great choice for students who are worried about the financial costs associated with University or for those who would prefer to leave full-time education to experience life in the workplace. There are many different levels of qualification available within work place settings from Level 1 to Level 6 (the equivalent of a degree).

APPRENTICESHIPS

An apprenticeship is a work-based learning programme that combines working and learning. Apprentices typically spend four days of the week at the workplace, supplemented with an off-the-job training day at College. However, certain apprenticeships are delivered entirely in the workplace. Apprenticeships are comprised of industry specified components known collectively as the "framework", all components being mandatory to achieve full completion. New apprenticeship 'standards' are being developed by employers and these will be used by training providers as they become available.

- Competency Qualifications - providing practical skills in specific occupational areas
- Technical certificates -

vocationally related qualifications that provide the underpinning knowledge of the NVQ

- Key Skills qualifications – transferable work-related skills like IT and communication, numeracy, problem solving, teamwork and improving learning and performance.

Stamford College offers a wide range of Apprenticeships. Programmes normally last between two and three years and there are several levels:

Intermediate Apprenticeships

The apprentice is employed for at least 30 hours a week, and the training programme lasts for a minimum of 12 months. An advanced apprenticeship may be available as a progression route and full-time employment is offered to the majority of apprentices.

Advanced Apprenticeships

The Level 3 is often a progression route from the Level 2 Apprenticeship. However, it is possible to commence a Level 3 Apprenticeship straight away depending on prior qualifications such as GCSEs & experience

Higher/Degree Apprenticeships

Higher apprenticeships offer a work-based learning programme

and lead to a nationally recognised qualification at one of the following levels (your child will normally need a Level 3 qualification to get onto these programmes):

- Level 4 and 5 - equivalent to a higher education certificate, higher education diploma or a foundation degree
- Level 6 - equivalent to a bachelor degree

Advantages:

- An opportunity to learn and earn money at the same time.
- Your training fits your personal needs and is more likely to be practical
- Research shows that apprentices earn on average £100,000 more throughout their lifetime than other non-graduate employees. Your career does not have to end with the Advanced or Higher Apprenticeship. Many Higher Education Institutions will value the skills you have learnt and offer you a place on a higher education course.

Disadvantages:

- You are often given mundane tasks at work initially whilst you are training
- Some apprentices find that moving straight from College to the world of work a difficult adjustment to make

- It can sometimes be difficult securing an apprenticeship and for smaller industries may require a lot of ground work to identify contacts

Further Information

If you would like further information on apprenticeships, you can contact our apprenticeships team who will be happy to provide additional guidance. Email apprenticeships@stamford.ac.uk or call **01780 484311**

Further information on apprenticeships can be found at the Not Going to Uni website: www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/opportunities/apprenticeships apprenticeship jobs are advertised here too.

HOW TO APPLY FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

Anyone can apply for an apprenticeship at the '**Find an Apprenticeship**' service located on gov.uk. <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch> or you can search by provider if you are looking for apprenticeship provision in a specific location.

<https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/>

Further information on apprenticeships can be found at the Not Going to Uni website. Apprenticeship jobs are advertised here too. <https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/apprenticeships-223>

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information on apprenticeships, you can contact our apprenticeships team who will be happy to provide additional guidance:

Barbs Mehew
Hair, Barbering, Business Administration and Early Years
barbara.mehew@stamford.ac.uk
01780 484300 Ext: 390

Clair Harrison
Construction (including Plumbing and Electrical) and Automotive
clair.harrison@stamford.ac.uk
01780 484300 Ext: 390

Emma Owen
Health & Social Care
Emma.Owen@stamford.ac.uk
01780 484300 Ext: 392

Paul Ward
IT, Accounts, Catering/Hospitality, Sports and Supporting Teaching and Learning
Paul.Ward@stamford.ac.uk
01780 484300 Ext 416



25,000

**APPRENTICESHIP
VACANCIES ARE
AVAILABLE ONLINE
AT ANY ONE TIME**

90%

**OF APPRENTICES
GO INTO WORK OR
FURTHER TRAINING**

 **Apprenticeships**

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education consists of Level 4 and upwards qualifications including:

- Higher National Certificates (HNC) - vocational qualification equivalent to first year of a degree (Level 4)
- Higher National Diplomas (HND) - vocational qualification equivalent to two years of a degree (Level 5)
- Foundation Degrees (Fda) – taught qualification - equivalent to first two years of a degree (Level 5)
- Bachelors Degrees - Arts (BA) or Sciences (BSc) – usually taking three to four full-time years to complete (Level 6)
- Postgraduate options – Master of Arts (MA) or Science (MSc), Post Graduate Certificates / Diplomas / PGCEs – usually taking one year to complete (Level 7) or a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) – usually taking three years (Level 8).

As you can see, higher education is not just degrees. There are flexible options depending on how your child studies:

- **Full-time study**
This is the most popular option for younger students aged 18 – 21 which often includes moving to live near the university.

- **Part-time study**
Students can study for any higher education course part-time. This may be whilst your child is also in full-time employment. Some employers will even fund employees to take a HE qualification as part of their job.
- **Self-directed study**
Also known as distance learning, “perfect for people with other commitments that make it hard to go to a fixed place of learning. For most of these courses your son/daughter will not need any previous qualifications. They can take on as much study as they are comfortable with, so they can vary the pace according to circumstances, and even have time off if another part of their life gets busy.”– adapted from The Open University (www.open.ac.uk)

If your son or daughter is thinking about studying for a HE qualification they are likely to be considering the full-time university option. University can provide a strong foundation for future careers opportunities and is a natural step to build on their education at school or college.

UNIVERSITY

There are many different reasons why people choose to study at University. Whilst some may want to pursue a specific career, others may like the independence and social life that university can offer.

Although the social aspect is important for your child's development, it is worth reminding them to think back to the initial

question of their ultimate goal. Ask them to question whether they have selected the right course and place of study, and whether their chosen subject will allow them to achieve their goal. Doing this early can help the student maintain a sense of perspective whilst studying at university as they will have that ultimate finishing post in their minds, reducing the likelihood of dropping out.





IS HIGHER EDUCATION RIGHT FOR MY SON OR DAUGHTER?

Stamford College is equipped with specially designed facilities across the campus to replicate the working world in the classroom. This builds independence and social skills outside of the classroom so our students are prepared for employment. You can tour our amazing facilities at the open events we hold throughout the year.

To ascertain if higher education is the right step for your child, try asking them some of the following questions:

- 1 What is their ultimate goal? What career would they like to pursue? Your child should have thought about maintaining a link between learning and gaining the career of their dreams.
- 2 Are they happy to remain in education? They have got to be committed and enthusiastic. If your child is finding college tough, what are the reasons for this? Are they likely to find higher education more academic and demanding?

- 3 Some degree level courses examine one specific area in depth. Would they get bored focusing on just one area?
- 4 Some courses have no obvious link to careers. Have they thought about what they will do after they graduate? Would they be happy to study for a degree even if they end up working in a career that is not linked?
- 5 Their friends that go straight into work will start earning cash and will become independent adults while your child will continue to study and accumulate debts. Will they be patient enough to wait to reap the rewards of higher education?
- 6 Does your child feel confident enough to move away (if applicable) and live independently? Think about the reality of living in student accommodation with new people, budgeting for food, leaving their current friends behind etc.
- 7 Will they be able to cope with the emotional pressures of continuing to study? Discuss family support and contingency plans.

Discussing these questions with your son or daughter may encourage them to think in more depth about where a degree will take them and give a clearer idea of their reasons behind going.

Researching Universities and Courses

Researching courses and universities can be a lengthy and stressful process. There are over 300 Higher Education Institutions in the UK and around 51,000 courses to choose from. Your child is able to choose a maximum of 5 choices if applying through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). In this section we will look at how you, as parents, guardians or carers can support your child through these difficult decisions.

If your child would like to go to University but has no idea what course they want to do or where to go, it can be confusing knowing where to start! The next five sections of the booklet will provide tips on how to select a course and institution.

As a parent, guardian or carer, following these steps can also help you to support your child through the process by checking they have researched their choices thoroughly and thought realistically about how they will cope with studying a particular course or living in an unfamiliar city for three or four years. You should encourage your child to conduct a detailed review on the suitability of courses.

5 STEPS TO SHORTLISTING YOUR FINAL 5 CHOICES

1



Choose a Subject

2



Research Courses

3



Shortlist Institutions

4



Go to Open Days

5



Make Final 5 Choices

1 STEP 1: CHOOSE A SUBJECT

If your child is not sure what course to choose ask them the following questions:

- 1) What are your career aspirations?
- 2) Which of your A Level subjects do you enjoy? Or which area of your vocational course do you particularly like?
- 3) What are the entry requirements for that career?
- 4) Which courses match up best?

If they are still not sure, here are some good resources to use for inspiration:

UK Course Finder

Your child can visit <http://www.ukcoursefinder.com/> and register to take the study interests questionnaire. This will ask them various questions on their subject preferences, likes and dislikes and will provide a suggested list of suitable courses at the end.

Start Profile

www.startprofile.com - Start is an excellent tool aimed at anyone from 11-18 but works well for any age. Start "My Profile" will help individuals to identify their interests and explore their career preferences. As your child works through their work preferences, interests, skills and qualities, jobs will be suggested along with typical duties, routes into and salary.



Your Careers Coach

<https://www.stamford.ac.uk/college-life/careers-advice-service-ceiag>
From our website you can also access Your Careers Coach which includes three shorter questionnaires that help your child to explore their interests and preferences for the world of work.

NB – Discussion with a qualified Careers Advisor can be very helpful when looking at the outcomes from these tools. Contact: careers.advisors@stamford.ac.uk for help.

2 STEP 2: RESEARCH COURSES AVAILABLE

Once your child is decided on what course they would like to study, they need to find out which universities deliver it.

- 1) Go to www.ucas.com
- 2) Type in the name of the course you are looking for in the search bar
- 3) Click on undergraduate courses
- 4) Search the whole of the UK or narrow down by region or provider
- 5) Scroll through the universities and click on courses to see the Entry Profiles.

Entry Profiles

All universities and higher education institutions put the entry profiles for all their courses on

the UCAS website. These provide information on course content, entry requirements and much more to enable students to make an informed decision.

This step can take a lot of time but it is worth researching in depth. The process of reviewing various entry profiles will provide your child with an idea of how courses compare to allow them to start thinking about which courses suit them best. Using the next step in conjunction with this step will make the shortlisting process easier. Some students find it easier to look at what institutions they would like to go to before deciding on the actual courses. Using the websites identified in the next step will help narrow down the choices. Remember that courses with the same names can be different at different Universities and be assessed differently.

3 STEP 3: SHORTLIST INSTITUTIONS

Choosing where to study can be as difficult as choosing what to study! Discuss with your child the following factors to help them decide what qualities their future institution must have.

Location Do you want to study/live in a big city or a rural setting? Do you want to live at home or move away? Do you have commitments at home that mean you need to live in easy reach? Are you able to live independently and support yourself if you move away?

Size of the university If it is a big university would you worry about getting lost in the crowd? Do you like the idea of meeting lots of new people at a large university? Will class sizes be bigger at a larger university? Do the larger Universities offer more course choices?

University rankings Where does the University rank in terms of overall and subject performance? What are the graduate employment prospects? How did students rate their overall satisfaction (resources to find out this information are provided on the next page)? If the institution is popular it suggests previous students have been impressed by the facilities it has to offer. However, beware that some students just select institutions based on their location or what their friends are doing. Do not fall into this trap; - make sure you conduct thorough research and tailor your choices.

Entry requirements Be honest with yourself about your prospects at A Level and what you will achieve for your vocational qualification. It is better to face reality now than to be forced to change your plans several months down the line. Make sure you apply for at least one institution that is likely to give you a slightly lower offer as a safety net. Ask your tutors for a predicted grade

Financial support offered to students Does the university offer any bursaries and scholarships? (their website will tell you.)

Support and Facilities What support does the University offer its students? Does it have or offer; disability services, careers guidance, financial support, a student's union, good leisure facilities, IT rooms, placement and part-time job opportunities?

Accommodation Is there enough of it? Does it meet your requirements e.g. self-catering, en-suite facilities or single occupancy?

Living costs How much does a beer cost? Which supermarkets are local? Is there a well-stocked library? How much are travel passes?

Use the following resources to find out these factors. Writing up pros and cons for each institution can be a good way of comparing them.

- The Guardian University league tables <https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2020/sep/05/the-best-uk-universities-2021-league-table> (can be filtered by subject)
- QS worldwide University rankings www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings
- Discover Uni <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/> Provides an easy way to compare official data for undergraduate courses on up to three universities at a time, based on, satisfaction scores in the National Student Survey, jobs and salaries after study and other key information for prospective students.

- The Complete University Guide www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk Provides information on league tables, University profiles and advice, fees, University preparation and careers
- Push Website www.push.co.uk enables you to keep or discount universities that suit your particular preferences. Using the 'Uni Chooser' on the push website can allow you to specify a location radius, course, your predicted grades and preferences in terms of location, city, facilities etc. It will then give you a list of 'Unis to keep' and 'Unis to dump' allowing you to research deeper in to the ones that suit you best!
- The Uni Guide <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/> (Previously Which? University) the free and independent way to search and compare UK degree courses & universities. Find the best one for you, with insider tips from unis and free guides for parents and students. This website allows your son/daughter to search for courses based on their predicted tariff points.



4 STEP 4: GO TO OPEN DAYS

Attending open days is an important part of the decision-making process especially when your child is at the stage of shortlisting their final five. Seeing a university, its facilities and its surroundings can help get a better idea of what living there for three years will be like. Supporting your son or daughter through this step by attending Open Days with them will make the process less daunting and can also allow you, as their parent or guardian, to see where your child might be studying and living.

Stamford College recommends that students visit Open Days if possible for all of their shortlisted universities in the Summer holidays before they come back to college for their final year. This will enable students to be completely prepared for the start of the application process in September. The College also arranges a HE Fair for students in September where students can ask questions of around twenty Universities. If students are yet to think about the process they will be unable to make the most of the University's in attendance. This may be complicated by the current COVID restrictions but a lot of universities are using technology to create "virtual" open days. Look at their websites to find out more details.

Finding Open Days

- Each university's website will have the dates of their upcoming Open Days usually under the Undergraduate area.

- Open Days are often displayed on the UCAS Entry Profiles when searching for courses. Or type the university you are interested in attending into the UCAS open day search bar www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/explore-your-options/events-and-open-days
- www.opendays.com allows you to search open days by institution name or through the open day calendar

What to look for on Open Days

If you are attending an Open Day with your son or daughter, ask them these questions:

- 1) Is the institution too far from or too near to home?
- 2) Do you like the area and accommodation? Can you cope with being there for at least three years?
- 3) Is the university campus-based (confined in one area) or spread over a town?
- 4) Does the university/college have clubs and societies that suit your interests?
- 5) Does the university have sports facilities if this interests you, and can you see them?
- 6) Does the social life appeal to you?
- 7) Does the university have a good feel to it? Can you imagine yourself here?

5 STEP 5: CHOOSE THE FINAL 5!

Once your son or daughter have finished the four steps above, they should be in a position to cut down their short list to the final 4 or 5 choices they want to apply for.

Here are some tips for your son and daughter for deciding on the final 5:



DO

- Check the entry requirements of your courses on the UCAS website, the institution's prospectus and website or call their admissions staff to ensure that you have not misunderstood.
- Be realistic about the grades you are likely to achieve.
- Make sure you apply for at least one institution that is likely to give you a slightly lower grade as a safety net
- Make sure that the courses you have chosen have the content you want and the assessment methods best for you.
- Make sure your child is completely happy with their choices before they send their application form.



DON'T

- Apply to 5 institutions that all demand high grades
- Apply for courses that are very different from one another - UCAS applicants are required to write a personal statement and it will be difficult to justify your choice to the admissions tutors and that you have a genuine interest in the subject.



APPLYING THROUGH UCAS

All universities and higher education colleges in the UK now use UCAS for admissions and applications. UCAS is the University and Colleges Admissions Service. When students return to college in September for their 2nd year, they will begin registering and applying through UCAS through the Apply section of the UCAS website. Even if your child is not sure whether they wish to apply to university it is worthwhile registering anyway as they can always withdraw later.

They will be guided through the UCAS application process in tutorials by their Student Advisor and will also have ongoing support from the Careers, Further and Higher Education Team at the college who manage and track all UCAS applications sent through Stamford College.

Once registered, students must fill out 6 sections of the online form:

- Personal Details
- Additional Information
- Choices
- Education
- Employment
- Personal Statement

UCAS gives applicants a deadline to ensure that all applicants are given equal consideration if they apply before this date. The dates your child needs to be aware of for the 2022 cycle are:

15th October 2021

Cambridge, Oxford Universities and any university for Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry Courses UCAS application deadline!

1st November 2021

College deadline for detailed personal statement feedback. Your

son/daughter will need to write a 4000 character statement as part of their UCAS application. They should submit their personal statements for review and feedback to Careers.Advisors@stamford.ac.uk. After this deadline the statements will still be reviewed but complete UCAS applications will be processed and prioritised. There could be a long wait!

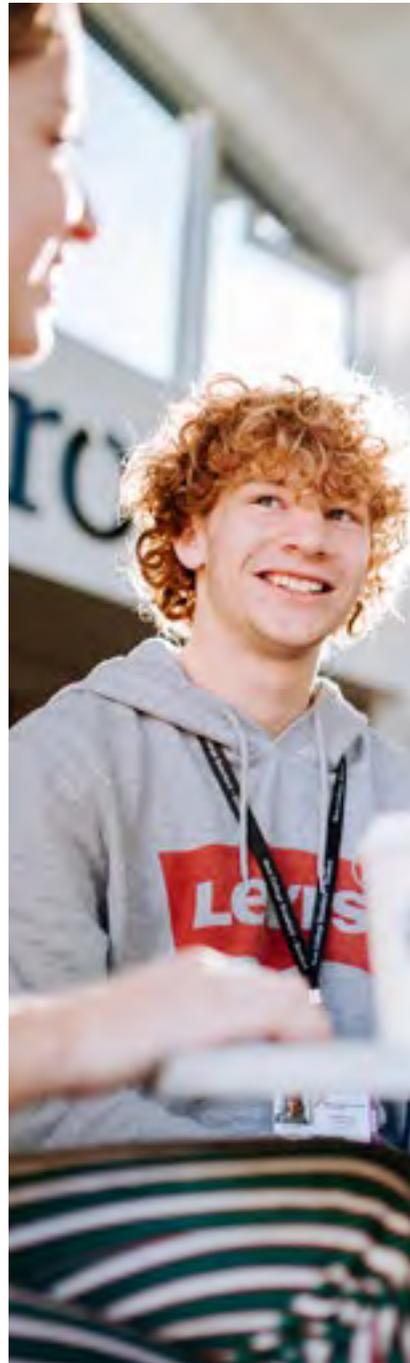
1st December 2021

College internal UCAS application deadline – Students should add the college buzzword to their application so that on completion the application can be checked and a reference added. This deadline is to allow all applications to be processed and checked for errors and for your child's academic reference to be added. If the college does not receive your child's application by this date there is no guarantee their application will be submitted to UCAS by the 15th January deadline.

2022 Entry Buzzword:
SCentry2022

15th January 2022

UCAS official deadline - Applications for the majority of courses should arrive at UCAS by 18:00. As long as your son or daughter has submitted their application to the College by the 1st December and regularly check their e-mails to ensure they make any required changes, the College will ensure their application is submitted by this date.



PERSONAL STATEMENTS

The Personal Statement is the section that generally takes the most time to get right and as a result is the section that most students worry about! As a parent or guardian, you can ease the burden on your child by helping to check their personal statement for content and errors. Use the structure below to check that enough detail is included.

Stamford College also supports its students throughout this process. Your child's student advisor will guide them through the process and read through initial drafts. The Careers and HE Team also provide a Personal Statement Check and Suggestion Service for students who email their personal statements to Careers.Advisors@stamford.ac.uk before the 1st November. We strongly recommend that ALL applicants do this.

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- What is your motivation for wanting to study this subject?
- Very briefly back up any reasons with facts or personal experiences e.g. explain what you are currently studying and how this is related or relevant to the course that you are applying for or how you've conducted work experience that is linked to the course
- Demonstrate that you are motivated and enthusiastic about the subject area

- Show that you understand what the course entails. Mention specific parts of the course structure that you are interested in (the university website and UCAS website can help you).

Paragraph 2: Describe your suitability

- Describe what you have learnt on your current course(s). Start with the most relevant study to the course to which you are applying, try to go in to as much detail as possible here, mention your current course / subjects and pick out particular topics/modules that you have studied
- Show how you fit the course entry profile – these can often be found on institution websites and are a bit like job specifications providing information on what academic qualifications and personal skills are needed, what the course involves and what careers it can lead to
- Don't list all your qualifications, as your UCAS form will already contain this information instead talk about what you've done on your course, the skills you've gained whilst at college and provide examples of work you've completed.

Paragraph 3: Work Experience and Objectives

- List any longer-term career objectives
- Explain how your course can lead you to your chosen career or a particular area you want to

work in

- Detail any work experience, placement or voluntary work. What skills did you learn e.g. time management or team working? Try to link it to your chosen course or explain how it will help you in the future.

Paragraph 4: The person behind the form

- Outline any academic/social achievements
- Demonstrate your ability to succeed
- Explain what positive impact you can bring to the course Describe yourself to the admissions tutors. What skills, strengths do you have? What kind of personality do you have? Use evidence to back up these statements e.g. "I am very organised because I combine my studies, with a part time job and many club activities. This will help me with the increased workload that I will face at university."

Final Sentence:

Don't tail off in the middle of nowhere. You need a strong concluding sentence to finish off your personal statement. Reinforce your passion for the subject and how it fits in to your future plan. Follow on from the previous paragraph and finish off by saying something such as: "College has been a challenge, improving my academic skills but it has been a valuable experience and hopefully

will prepare me for the demands and trials of a degree course. I look forward to it."

"I am confident this has all helped to prepare me for the next stage of my academic life."

"Through these activities I have learned the importance of good organisation and time management. I believe these skills will help me organise my time well at university and as a [job role] I will require these skills to carry out efficient field work and research."

Important things to note when checking Personal Statements are:

Statements are a maximum of 4,000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines.

KEEP
TO THE
WORD
LIMIT

They should be at least 75% focused on academic/work experience and transferable skills and 25% on interests and hobbies.

75%
ACADEMIC
25%
PERSONAL

It is important to minimise spelling and grammatical errors (bad spelling or poorly structured sentences can create a bad impression on Academic Tutors).

SPELLING
AND
GRAMMAR

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE UCAS APPLICATION HAS BEEN SENT?

Of course, the application process can be stressful and although we provide a lot of help for our students at College, nothing can substitute the support at home. Making sure you are aware of deadlines will allow you to gently encourage your child to be proactive in the application process and ensure they benefit from sending their application off as early as possible.

It is beneficial to send UCAS applications early as Universities will start to get busy around the official deadline. Admissions Tutors may not give as much consideration to applications towards the January deadline.

When students send off their UCAS application they enter the following process:

- The application goes to the Stamford College UCAS Coordinator who will check the application and add the

academic reference (this can take some time depending on the status of the application and the speed of response from students and lecturers).

- The application is approved and sent to UCAS
- Students receive an email from UCAS when their application has been received. The application is immediately sent to chosen universities.

That is why, at Stamford College, we specify an internal deadline (1st December 2021) for UCAS applications to be sent to us. This allows time for the application to be processed at the college before the official UCAS deadline (15th January 2022).

There are some important dates that students need to be aware of throughout the UCAS application process regarding deadlines, reply dates and dates for UCAS Extra and Clearing and these can be found on the UCAS website (www.ucas.ac.uk) under the Parents section.



UCAS EXTRA, CLEARING AND ADJUSTMENT

UCAS Extra and Clearing are processes that allow applicants who have not achieved any offers to have a second chance. UCAS Adjustment allows students who have met or exceeded their offer to upgrade their firm offer.

UCAS Extra

If your child has used all five choices on their UCAS application and are not holding any offers they might be able to apply through Extra for another course. Extra lets you apply for courses with vacancies between the end of February and the end of June. In Extra, you apply for one course at a time using the UCAS Track System.

To use Extra your child needs to have:

- already made five choices
- received decisions from all these choices
- either had no offers or declined all the offers they have received

If they decline their offers and add an Extra choice, they will not be able to accept any of their original choices later. Students can get an idea of what courses are still offering places through the extra filter on the UCAS search tool.

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/extra-choices>

UCAS Clearing

Clearing is a service that operates between mid-July and September. Your child can take part in Clearing if they have already applied through UCAS and are in one of the following categories.

- They have not received any offers
- They have declined all their offers or not responded by the due date
- Their offers have not been confirmed because they have not met the conditions (e.g. they have not achieved the required grades)
- They have declined a changed course, a changed date of entry and/or changed point of entry offer
- They applied for one course which has been unsuccessful and they have paid the full £24 fee
- UCAS received your application after 30 June 2020. If UCAS receive the application after this date, they will not send it to any universities and colleges and it will automatically be entered into Clearing. Your child should not fill in any choices on their application.

Course vacancies in Clearing are published on the UCAS site from mid-August until late-September. <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing>

UCAS Adjustment

Adjustment is for students who met or exceeded the conditions of their choices. Your child may be able to reconsider where they wish to study.

Adjustment is available 13–31 August. They only have five 24-hour periods (including weekends) within this time to use it, starting from when their conditional firm (CF) offer changes to unconditional firm (UF), or on A Level publication day – whichever is the latter.

They will see the option to register in Track. Their original UF choice

will be safe while they are looking for another – they will only lose it if they confirm they would like to go elsewhere and the new university/college adds themselves to their application.

If they try Adjustment but don't find anything they will still keep the course they gained on results day. <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/results/ucas-adjustment-if-youve-done-better-expected>

FURTHER SUPPORT

We hope this booklet has been useful. At Stamford College, we are passionate about the future of our students and are happy to help them with any issues or problems they encounter regarding transitions after College.

If your child would like to chat to our Careers, Further and Higher Education Team about anything from gap years to university, please get in touch;

Tim Silcock

Careers, Further and Higher Education Co-ordinator
Stamford College
01780 484 353
careers.advisors.stamford.ac.uk



Ask us a question!



enquiries@stamford.ac.uk



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