**INTRODUCTION**

Your son/daughter has indicated that he/she is considering leaving school at the end of Session 2017-2018, to take up a position at a Higher Education establishment. Throughout the UK there are literally thousands of courses to choose from and making a decision, let alone the ‘correct decision’ is a daunting task facing students and their parents/carers. It is hoped that the information in this booklet will help parents/carers to be well informed as to the choices facing young people and be aware as to where additional guidance can be obtained, in order that they can be as supportive as possible.

## Options Post-16

Before examining the situation with regard to Higher Education, it is worth pointing out that there are other options available to the well-qualified school leaver. These are:-

1. **Employment**: The range of opportunities open for the 3 Highers + candidate is fairly limited, mainly in the financial sector (banks, building societies, insurance companies). These jobs have associated part-time study leading towards professional qualifications. There are occasional professional apprenticeships in areas such as Quantity Surveying, General Practice Survey, Architecture, technician level opportunities in Construction, laboratories and hospital laboratories. These will involve extended part-time study in Further and Higher Education over a number of years.

The Civil Service has apprenticeship schemes for direct entry from school.

School leavers with 3 or more Highers may be able to access clerical/business opportunities, not many of which ‘legitimately’ require Highers.

1. **Modern Apprenticeships**: There is an increasing range of Modern apprenticeships which may be available to well qualified leavers. This combines training with a paid position.

1. **Further Education**: This may be an option for a pupil who is doubtful about Higher results: a National Certificate course, giving access to HNC/HND work is an alternative to resitting or upgrading for the marginal Higher candidate who is ready to make a vocational commitment.

1. **Year Out/Temporary Work**: This can be done in advance of a course or in preparation for a job. This is sometimes actively encouraged if the student is embarking on a vocational course OR a language course OR a sponsorship. Students need to weigh up the implications (positive and negative) of a break from study with the advantages of increasing life skills and maturity. They should also check with the institutions they which to apply to, to find out how they will view this.

1. **University**: Depending on what you study, courses are a mix of practical and vocational, and more academic, exploring a particular subject. There will be an expectation to study independently – less lectures and classes, but more reading in your own time. At the present day therefore there are 15 universities in Scotland.

**DEGREE OR HND**

Many students will have aspirations towards a degree course at University but it should be remembered that Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND) are another part of Further Education which could be considered as a route to Higher Education. HNCs or HNDs may be used as a qualification in their own right OR as a stepping-stone to a degree.

Some facts about a HND:-

1. The course will be of 2 years’ duration (3 if a sandwich year is included). The entry qualifications are generally lower than for degrees, but entry can be very competitive for some courses. Entry is generally in the region of 2/3 Highers, although a VERY small number of HNCs ask for 1 Higher. Possession of a recognised programme of National Certificates from a Further Education course will also gain entry.

1. The HND and HNC are more vocationally linked than many degree courses.

1. It can be possible to use HNC and HND as a step towards degree level study, allowing entry to a degree in some cases at the end of first or second years. (This has to be checked as the situation in different vocational areas can vary). An award of an HNC normally takes 1 year, the award of HND normally takes 2 years. As a general rule, the HNC is an exit point from the first year of the HND.

1. Funding for student support for an HNC and HND requires application to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), even though HNCs and HNDs may run at local Further Education Colleges.





**CHOOSING A COURSE**

Some students choose a course with a clear vocation in mind, others put off immediate consideration of employment prospects and, instead, commit themselves to subjects in which they have a strong interest. Inevitably some course choices imply a much greater amount of job direction than others. Business, Finance, Law and Engineering students are generally very clear on their employment directions. Philosophy undergraduates are rarely as certain. It should be stressed, however, that there is nothing wrong with going to University without a future job in mind.

The best advice has always been that the dominant reason for selecting a course should be the belief that the student will be happy and comfortable with the subject and the place for the years they will be there. There is still evidence that going on to higher education can help a young person find a job, with the unemployment rate for non-graduates aged 21 to 30 much higher than for graduates from ANY discipline.

A major difficulty for prospective candidates as they face the daunting array of possible courses is that the school may not have equipped them sufficiently to evaluate all subjects equally. Engineering courses are a case in point. The closest many school students come to these specialisms is Mathematics, Physics and perhaps Technological Studies. Students as a result can find that Engineering is radically different from what they had envisaged. All students are urged to research their proposed course choices as thoroughly as possible, perhaps even go as far as talk to a real engineer, or doctor or architect. It may be difficult to arrange but worth it in the end.

What preparation will Bannerman students get to assist them in making their choice(s)?

1. UCAS presentation by Pastoral Care, Skills Development Scotland and DHT.

1. Access to a range of internet sites e.g. myworldofwork, planitplus.
2. Access to University/College prospectuses and other resources of the Careers Section

 in the Library.

1. Support from Skills Development Scotland staff (the Careers Advisor).

1. Opportunity to attend University/College Open Days.

1. Consultation with Pastoral Care Staff/Depute Head Teacher.

9. Support in Personal Statement preparation.

**APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY**

Applications for almost all institutions are made through UCAS – the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. It organises the process of entry to degree courses in all British Universities. All applications must be made on the UCAS form (electronically). Although initially daunting, in terms of appearance, most of the information requested can be obtained relatively easily by reference to the appropriate sections of the UCAS website. The most ‘difficult’ sections are generally regarded as “Education”, “Choices” and “Personal Statement”.

In making course choices considerable care should be taken to ensure the correct institution and course codes are selected. Up to five selections can be made, but candidates are not obliged to use all five choices. Tactically students should not apply for too many different courses. If they put down two engineering, two medical and one law course their commitment to any of these very different subjects would be questioned. Students are constantly urged to be realistic about the grades they are likely to achieve. They should always have a ‘safety net’ in their application, that is, an institutional course that requires lower grades than they hope to achieve. It should be remembered that lower grades do not necessarily mean a lower standard course. Some subjects are more competitive than others.

With particular reference to those interested in pursuing a course in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science, candidates should apply to only four courses. The remaining choice for an applicant to medicine can be used to identify non-medical courses. If students are planning to study in Scotland only, Scottish institutions’ consistency is important. If interested in Medicine four Scottish Medical institutions should be chosen (*four from Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St. Andrews*). If interested in Dentistry, both Glasgow and Dundee should be chosen.

If interested in Physiotherapy, all three institutions should be chosen (Glasgow Caledonian, Robert Gordon and Queen Margaret University). Some medical schools do not accept mixing choices of Medicine with Dentistry or mixing choices of Medicine with Veterinary Medicine. Candidates should check this with the medical faculties. Medical schools usually advise candidates that their remaining choice should be of a scientific nature.

It is very rare for a medical school to accept an applicant from fifth year. They usually advise a sixth year to build personal maturity. Required grades must be obtained in fifth year normally, however. Applicants to all 4 Scottish Institutions for medicine and dentistry must complete a UKCAT test by 02 October 2017. Applicants to Glasgow University for Law must take a LNAT test. Testing opens from 1 September 2017 and applicants must check for institution specific test deadlines.

Choices are listed alphabetically by Apply and university admissions staff cannot see an applicant’s other choices.

Although applicants can apply to up to five choices they are only allowed to hold two conditional offers, one as a firm acceptance and another as an insurance place. **Normally the insurance would be a lower grade offer.** Applicants are advised to wait until they have received decisions on all choices before responding to offers. It is important in this context that candidates are fully familiar with information on likely offer levels for 2018 entry (see the UCAS website at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com/).)

**PERSONAL STATEMENT**

The personal statement is where the students ‘sell’ themselves on paper and most find this very difficult. Besides covering their choice of course, involvement in non-academic activities both inside and outside the school should be detailed; any positions of responsibility held; and information relating to future interests. Students should ensure that the statement is logical and coherent: it will seem surprising if application is made for a course that involves sport and no mention is made of sports in spare time activities.

Admissions tutors have a huge number of application forms to deal with. Every effort should be made to make the application interesting. It is worth remembering that each applicant is up against thousands of other hopefuls and the smallest interesting detail may tip the balance. The personal statement should have time spent on it with rough drafts circulated to parents/carers, friends and/or staff for comment before the final version is inserted on the application form. It should be remembered that if a student is invited to attend an interview at the University, it is likely that the personal statement will be a focus of the discussion. It should, therefore, be copied and most importantly, truthful.



<https://www.ucasdigital.com/widgets/personalstatement/index.html#/main>

### Application Procedures – Timescale

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| **DEADLINE** | **ACTION** |
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| **Week beginning** **3rd September 2017** | Personal Statement booklets issuedRegister online in the library - Ms Shah/Mr Colquhoun.  |
| **Friday 8th September 2017** | Introductory talk - Period 2 Workshop theatre - Ms Shah/Mr Colquhoun/SDS |
| **Friday 29th September 2017** | Completed forms sent for CUKAS Music students. |
| **Friday 13th October 2017**  | Final date for completed forms for Medicine, Dentistry, and Vet Medicine. |
| **Tuesday 24th October 2017** | Final draft of Personal Statement to Pastoral Care. |
| **Beginning of November 2017**  | Final date for submission of completed application forms online and payment. |
| **Beginning of December 2017** | Pastoral Care and Mr Colquhoun/Mrs McConnachie check forms.  |
| **December 2017** | APPLICATIONS SENT AND PROCESS COMPLETE.  |
| **January to April** | Offers of places, interviews, rejections |
| **April to May** | Acceptance/”fall back” preferences chosen |
| **August 2018** | SQA Results released |
| **August to September 2018** | “Clearing” – late availability of places  |

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**Other Clearing Organisations**

Application for nurse training should also be made through UCAS.

## **Art Schools**

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| Application is now made through UCAS | A maximum of 2 course choices per Art School. Applicants should check with individual Art Schools regarding the need for a portfolio. |
|   |   |
| Portfolios | Very important to have a portfolio, which is part of the selection procedure. Advice is available at Art School Open days on the content of the portfolio.  |
|   |   |
| Fee | £25 |
|   |   |
| February - April 2018 | Pupils are invited for interview at which their portfolio is discussed |

## **Royal Conservatoire (formerly RSAMD)**

Closing date for all courses in School of Music is **2 October 2017**.

Applications for all music and drama courses are made through CUKAS.

There will be individual auditions for both Music and Drama courses.

B.Ed Music – apply through CUKAS by **2 October 2017**.

School of Drama apply through CUKAS

Closing date for courses offered in School of Drama is **15 January 2018**.

Auditions are held as follows (*guidance only please check with each institution*):-

School of Music **November 2017**

B. Ed Music **February 2018**

School of Drama from December 2017 to May 2018.

Audition fee £45 per course approx (*check with institution*) + £25 CUKAS fee

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#### FINANCE FOR STUDY

## ../Screen%20Shot%202017-09-08%20at%2020.54.41.pngTuition Fees

Apply to SAAS to have these paid.

## Student Loans

These are awarded by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland. Maintenance grants have been completely abolished. Students will need to apply for a loan if financial support is required. A minimum loan is available which is not means-tested. Additional loan amounts are means tested. Loans begin to be repaid when graduates are earning £17,775 per annum.

SAAS application is made electronically.

The application procedure is usually available after Easter on the SAAS site www.saas.gov.uk.

## PASTORAL CARE STAFF



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Burns | Mrs L Peoples |
| Livingston | Mrs S Shah |
| Mackintosh | Mrs L Morton |
| Napier | Mr C Gardiner |
| Telford | Ms S Heeney |
| Wallace | Mrs R Guile |