



ST JAMES

Senior Girls' School

Preparation for Higher Education Policy

St James Senior Girls' School

Contents

Preparation for Higher Education	1
Careers Guidance	1
Oxbridge Identification	1
Application to Higher Education (Year 12)	1
Preparation for Oxford and Cambridge/Medical Applicants	2
Application to Higher Education (Year 13)	3
Higher Education Funding	4
Summary Timetable for University Entrance	4

Preparation for Higher Education

Timetable of Procedure

Year 12

- UCAS Induction during the Induction Day
- Higher Education Meeting - January
- MyUniChoices psychometric test and individual careers interviews - Spring Term
- Preparation for Aptitude tests - Spring Term
- Oxbridge Programme for internal applicants - Spring Term
- Higher Education interviews to discuss choices - Summer Term
- UCAS Week during Activity Week in June
- Visits to open days and taster courses - Summer Term

Year 13

- Finalising of choice of courses and universities - Induction Day
- Assistance with Personal Statements - Autumn Term
- Writing and approval of references - Autumn Term
- Completion and dispatch of applications - Autumn Term
- Preparation for university interviews - Autumn Term
- Follow up advice on UCAS responses - Spring Term/early Summer Term
- Results day meetings and advice on Adjustment and Clearing - August

Careers Guidance

The Careers Guidance Programme starts in Year 9 and, by the beginning of the Sixth Form, most students will have discovered their natural interests and talents. The programme continues into the Sixth Form under the guidance of the Head of Careers. Year 12 register with Unifrog, the complete destinations platform which helps them manage their research and evidence in support of their application, on their Induction Day. In the Spring Term of Year 12 we also offer the MyUniChoices psychometric test, designed to match the students' interests, strengths and aptitudes to appropriate degree courses and institutions, followed by an individual hand-over interview by experienced careers advisers. In Year 13 we offer guidance and training for university interviews and the possibilities available in a gap year.

Oxbridge Identification

Potential Oxbridge candidates are identified in the Spring Term of Year 12 and invited to apply internally to join the Oxbridge group. Oxbridge applicants are interviewed by an internal panel and offered feedback and guidance for the next step.

Application to Higher Education: Year 12

University applications are overseen by the Head of Sixth Form, assisted by the Sixth Form Tutors.

Higher Education Meeting: A meeting is held for Year 12 in January - the Higher Education Meeting - to which parents and students are invited. At this meeting we outline the applicant's

journey and the school's internal process. Wider issues include application trends, apprenticeships and alternative routes, applying abroad, league tables, subject matters and student finance. A PowerPoint presentation and accompanying resources are provided, including information on our UCAS policy, Oxbridge Applications, Student Finance and further reading for HE applications.

Students hoping to apply for subjects which may require Aptitude tests are guided to the appropriate websites.

An invaluable resource for the present Sixth Form is the experience of past pupils, some of whom are invited to speak to the students about their university courses and careers. We also welcome speakers from universities and gap year companies.

Oxbridge and Medical candidates: Oxbridge and Medical candidates are invited to submit an expression of interest in Oxbridge/Medicine, including a short Personal Statement, to the Head of Sixth Form by the beginning of the Spring Term. This enables the Sixth Form team to manage the volume of early deadline applications and support aspiring applicants in the months leading up to the application deadline. Aspiring Oxbridge candidates are registered on the Oxford and Cambridge Student conference in March and are encouraged to attend an Oxbridge Interview Preparation day in November.

Visits to Open Days: Throughout the Spring and Summer Term, Year 12 students are encouraged to visit university open days and University of London taster courses. They are advised and encouraged to book themselves onto the open events, including opportunities to visit Oxbridge colleges and subject days. An average of three open events is encouraged as a guideline.

Higher Education Interviews: Each student is offered an individual HE interview with her tutor and is guided on specific research that she may need to undertake before her final list of choices is confirmed.

UCAS Week: During Activities Week in the Summer Term, the students receive training on how to write a Personal Statement, log on to the UCAS Hub and complete the first three sections of their UCAS Application. They also visit a university as a year group, and attend sessions on student finance and budgeting, interview preparation, First Aid and cooking. They visit an open day individually or in small groups, deliver a presentation on their open day to the rest of the year group and also receive individual feedback on the first draft personal statement. We also hold a session for those interested in alternative routes. The UCAS Week programme is usually followed by the residential trip to Auschwitz.

Resources: There is a well-stocked careers section in the Sixth Form Study Room and we welcome requests for updated publications by applicants in support of their preparation. In addition, there is a wealth of resources on the UCAS channel in the Sixth Form Team on Teams and a plethora of HE events, summer schools, lectures and taster courses are regularly posted on Teams for the students' information.

Preparation for Oxford and Cambridge/Medical Applicants

The subject teacher and relevant Head of Department take responsibility for the academic requirements of the applicant, assisted by the Head of Sixth Form.

If a student is asked to send a piece of marked work, she notifies the relevant Head of Department to ensure the rapid despatch of a suitable piece of work.

Interview preparation and practice takes place in the Autumn Term of Year 13. The school sponsors Oxbridge/Medical applicants to attend an intensive Interview Preparation Day run by Oxbridge Applications in late November. Students receive presentations by Oxbridge Admissions Tutors and four individual Mock Interviewers, followed by feedback.

Students who will be applying for Medicine are given extra teaching and support for the BMAT Admissions Test. This begins in the Spring Term of Year 12. External courses and resources are also advertised to candidates. Applicants are also offered an MMI preparation course by the Medic Portal, sponsored by the school.

Application to Higher Education Year 13

Induction Day: Year 13 receive a day's support on their application on the day prior to the beginning of the Autumn Term. During that day, students are guided in completing the Choices section of their UCAS application and are offered individual feedback on the second draft of their personal statement.

Personal Statements: When students return to school in September of Year 13, they are expected to have completed the first three sections of their application on UCAS and to have a firm second draft of their personal statement. Further work is done on the personal statement with the help of the Sixth Form tutor and Head of Sixth Form. All personal statements are checked by the Head of Sixth Form before the application is sent to UCAS.

UCAS Lockdown: UCAS applicants are required to submit their UCAS application to the Head of Sixth Form (UCAS coordinator) by the October Half Term. On the last full day before Half Term, all applicants who need further support to meet this deadline attend an after-school session to complete their application with the support of the Sixth Form Team.

References: Sixth Form Tutors obtain an academic report and predicted grade from each subject teacher. From these reports and their own personal knowledge of their tutees, they write a reference and submit it to the Head of Sixth Form. The Head of Sixth Form checks the reference on behalf of the Headmistress. The reference is proofread and approved by the Headmistress before the application is sent. The content of references is openly shared with applicants but copies of the reference cannot be held by the applicants. Applicants can always request a copy of the reference from UCAS after submission.

Predicted Grades: Predicted grades are determined after careful deliberation among all relevant subject teachers, Heads of Department, and Head of Sixth Form. It is the school's practice to share predictions with applicants, but the final decision rests with the school.

Replies to Offers: Careful advice is always given to our applicants when they receive their offers through UCAS. Applicants are advised to reply to universities after the mock examinations in February, when firmer data is available on grade predictions. Almost all students follow the advice given to them about their firm and insurance choices.

Survive and Thrive: Post-exams, Year 13 are invited back to school for a final day's preparation on Higher Education. They receive workshops on cooking nutritiously on a budget, careers,

confirmation, adjustment and clearing, student finance and budgeting, tax and mortgages, and First Aid.

A Level Results Day: All Heads of Department meet at 8.00am with the Head of Sixth Form, Deputy Head (Academic) and the Headmistress. Immediate attention is given to the A Level results and the Head of Sixth Form asks all Heads of Department to scrutinise their marks and indicate any concerns about the results received. Students who have missed their university places by 1 or 2 marks are considered for Priority remarks of the recommended papers. Year 13 know if they have been placed through UCAS from 8.30 am and receive their results from 8.30am by email and from 9.00 am in person. Those who have not attained the grades that they need for their university place are supported through Clearing by a member of staff.

Higher Education Funding

Booklets from SFE are made available to parents at the **Higher Education Meeting**. The updated booklet is given to Year 12 students during UCAS Week.

Summary Timetable for University Entrance

Autumn Term Year 12

1. UCAS Induction

Spring Term Year 12

1. Higher Education Meeting in January
2. Potential Oxbridge and Medical applicants are identified and invited to apply internally
3. Taster Courses
4. MyUniChoices Careers Interviews
5. Internal Oxbridge Programme
6. Visiting University speakers and careers professionals

Summer Term Year 12

1. Visits to university open days
2. Visits to a local university (University of Surrey)
3. UCAS week in June where students register with the UCAS Hub and receive training in completing the application and writing the Personal Statement
4. Individual interviews with the Sixth Form Tutor to consider each student's future studies and research
5. Student finance and budgeting session, interview preparation session, alternative routes session

Autumn Term Year 13

1. Completion of UCAS applications by:
 - a) 15th October for Oxford and Cambridge and medical/veterinary courses (internal deadline by end of September).

- b) 26th January for other universities and courses (internal deadline by October Half Term).

Please note however, our internal deadlines are earlier as follows:

- Oxbridge and Medical applications by the last Friday of September.
- All other applications by the last Friday before the Autumn Half Term.

Applicants often receive offers straight away but must be prepared to wait until the end of March for subjects which are heavily subscribed, depending on university policy.

2. Registration for BMAT, UCAT, LNAT etc: interview guidance given and practice interviews when needed. Candidates need to inform us if an Aptitude Test is required by their course.
3. Interviews at universities for some applicants.
4. Offers will be received from universities. These are conditional upon achieving particular A Level grades or tariff points.

If universities use the UCAS tariff point system they may specify certain grade requirements in particular subjects.

5. The Applicant Status Report is available to the school on the UCAS Advisers' Portal.
6. A summary of all the offers held is received by the applicant when all the universities have replied.
7. A further opportunity is available called UCAS Extra. If an applicant is rejected by all her choices or declines all her offers then she can make further applications, one at a time, by the 30th June.

Summer Term Year 13

1. Acceptances must be sent by the given date stated on their summary form (usually in the first week of May, but post-pandemic by the end of June): "firm" acceptance to one university, "insurance" (i.e. second choice) acceptance for another.
2. Before they leave, Year 13 are given an explanation of the events that take place on Results Day, so that they are well prepared.
3. Applicants are entered into the Clearing System when no offers are held. This may be because no offers were received or because the applicant has declined the offers made.
4. The Adjustment option has also been used by applicants in the past.

N.B. We strongly advise all UCAS applicants to collect their results in person on the day and that they should not arrange to go away from home for a week after the results come out. This ensures that confirmation of offers can take place and that the clearing procedure can be followed up if necessary.

The school will support post-qualification applicants provided that they make timely contact with the Head of Sixth Form and follow the timeline for PQA applications. All PQA applicants must 'pay and send' their UCAS application by the end of November, allowing Sixth Form staff sufficient time to add the school reference and process the application before the UCAS deadline.

Signed by:	Hugh Venables Chair of Governors
Date of adoption of this policy	January 2022
Date of last review of this policy	Autumn 2021
Date for next review of this policy	Autumn 2022
Policy owner (SMT)	Head of Sixth Form