

Sixth Form Higher Education Support Booklet



St Joseph's College

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How to log in to UCAS

Step 1

Firstly, go to this page:

<https://www.ucas.com/students>

UCAS

Step 2

Student sign in

Please select an education scheme.

Undergraduate

Applying for university and college degree courses

Conservatoires

Apply for performance-based courses at conservatoires

NOTE - you will need to register separately to apply for UCAS Conservatoires.

Step 3

Undergraduate

Applying for university and college degree courses

2020 entry

Use Track to check the progress of your submitted application.

Apply

Track

Hub

2021 entry

Apply now for 2021 entry. Please note, UCAS Track for 2021 entry will not be available until September 2020.

Get your UCAS Hub. Your place to discover your options and research your future.

Apply

Hub

Step 4

UCAS

Contact us | [Help](#) | [Print](#)

2021 apply

Register and log in

What is Apply?

Help

English

Key

Help

Home > Register and log in

Log in

If you have already registered, please enter your username and password below to log in. You must enter your username in lower case and your password in the same case you used to register.

Username

Password

log in

Register

If you have not registered for 2021 entry, please click the 'register' button to use this service. You only need to register once. If you apply more than once in a year, your application fee will not be refunded.

register

Completing the Application Process – UCAS

- Starting off on your journey before September is crucial
- It is **your future** so carry out lots of research to answer questions you have, attend virtual open days, and be realistic!
- Make sure you are researching possible courses.
- Start your application (you can save it as you go along!)

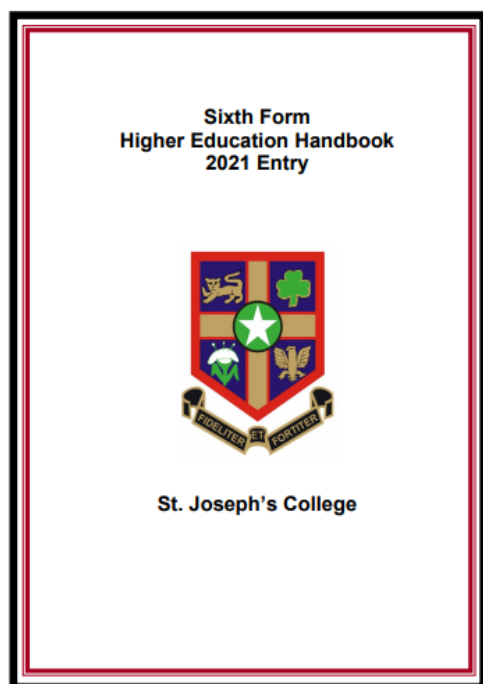
Use the following clips from the UCAS web site to help you get started:

- **How to use Apply 2021**
<https://www.ucas.com/connect/videos/ucas?v=/how-use-apply-2021-further-details>
- **How to search for / choose courses**
<https://www.ucas.com/connect/videos/ucas?v=/apply-2021-choices>

Your Sixth Form University Handbook Entry 2021

Please refer to the Sixth Form University Handbook for more information on looking into UCAS. It has **essential information** for applying online, including the buzzword St. Joseph's students need when signing in. Don't forget the handbook can be found on the school website (it has already been sent to parent mail):

<http://www.stjosephstrentvale.com/sixth-form/ucas/>



The **buzzword** and **other key information** can be found on page 10 of the Sixth Form University Handbook

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PROCESS - UCAS

Once you have registered on the UCAS website and have narrowed down your choices, the actual application process is quite simple.

YOU NEED TO BE ORGANISED, MOTIVATED AND COMMITTED.

- **MORE AND MORE OFFERS ARE BEING MADE PRIOR TO THE OFFICIAL CLOSING DATE PUTTING AN INCREASED IMPORTANCE ON EARLY APPLICATIONS.**
- **THE EARLIER YOU APPLY, THE BETTER!**

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR APPLYING ONLINE:

- UCAS website : <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/register>
- On the site there is a 'Parent Guide' plus parents can also register to receive Newsletters.
- Tick the box that you are applying through a school and you will then be asked for the buzzword.
- **Our Buzzword is: 'faithfulandstrong'**
- You will then be connected to St Joseph's College Edmund Rice.
- **Your user name** will be given to you automatically when you register. **MAKE A NOTE OF IT.**
- Put yourself in the correct **Group**: either Oxbridge/vets/medics/dentist OR MAIN

WHAT IS THE TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (TEF)?

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) has been introduced by the government in England to recognise and encourage excellent teaching in universities and colleges.

Why is it useful?

- It is intended to help students choose where to study, by providing clear information about teaching provision and student outcomes.
- It is a voluntary scheme with awards decided by an independent panel of experts.
- The decisions are based on several criteria, including continuation rates, student satisfaction, and employment outcomes for undergraduate students.

Awards

- **Gold** for delivering consistently outstanding teaching, learning, and outcomes for its students. It is of the highest quality found in the UK
- **Silver** for delivering high quality teaching, learning, and outcomes for its students. It consistently exceeds rigorous national quality requirements for UK higher education
- **Bronze** for delivering teaching, learning, and outcomes for its students that meet rigorous national quality requirements for UK higher education

HOW DO UNIVERSITIES DIFFER FROM ONE ANOTHER?

There are two key answers to this question: there are **academic differences** and **social differences**.

A common question from students:

“Are all universities the same as each other, apart from being in a different location?”

The simple answer is.... **No!**

Academic Differences

Entry requirements - Entry requirements say a lot about the academic standards expected by a university, so this at once shows you just how much universities can differ. For the top institutions you can expect a minimum of three As to get in; sometimes higher, with an A* thrown into the mix. Other universities may ask for Bs or even Cs as part of their minimum entry requirements.

Workload - You’d be amazed at how much your academic workload could vary according to what university you go to. At Oxford and Cambridge, for instance, you could expect to be writing two essays a week; many other universities, even other top institutions, expect no more than two essays a term from their students.

Academic facilities - Some are better equipped than others. Your priorities will differ, of course, depending on the subject for which you are applying. As a scientist, you will value state-of-the-art lab space and cutting-edge equipment; if you’re a historian, a well-stocked library with several copies of key texts will be essential for you to do well in your degree.

Teaching quality - Universities can have very different expectations of their students, and it shows in the style of teaching as well. It is not just about how much work you’re given – it’s about what actually happens during that catch-all term “contact time” cited on league tables.

Social Differences

Wealth - Universities differ in how much money they have, and that translates to the facilities they can provide for you and to the grants and bursaries that may be available to students from poorer backgrounds.

University structure - While most are campus-based – they have all their buildings on one site – a small number of universities are ‘collegiate’, which means that they are organised into colleges, spread out over a city, which all come under the umbrella of the overall university and have varying levels of independence.

Accommodation - In terms of the standard of accommodation, you might find that some universities are still using decades-old apartment blocks to house their students, with the decor looking a bit tired. But you might be lucky and find that the university you apply to has just invested a load of money in a plush new set of student accommodation, which is far more pleasant.

Social facilities - Some have extra features such as an on-site gym, restaurants or even an on-site dental practice or GP. Your own interests and priorities will dictate the importance you ascribe to various facilities

City experience - A big city is less personal and may seem overwhelming in the beginning, as you learn to find your way around. A small city is easier to get to know, and you’re more likely to bump into people you know; so you’ll probably feel at home more quickly

Ethos - The atmosphere and culture differs from one university to another. Different universities develop a reputation for certain things that attracts a certain kind of student. E.g. Oxford and Cambridge are described as scholarly and studious whereas Loughborough has a reputation for being sporty.

You need to consider which factors are **most** / **least** important to you.

UNIVERSITY RANKING

Institutions in higher education have been ranked on the basis of *various combinations of various factor*.

Here is a copy of the **Good University Guide 2020's** rankings based on the Guardian's top scoring universities.

2020 ✓	2019 ✓	Institution ✓	Guardian score/100 ✓	Satisfied with course ✓	Satisfied with teaching ✓	Satisfied with feedback ✓
1	1	Cambridge	100	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	3	St Andrews	97.9	93	93	80
3	2	Oxford	97.6	n/a	n/a	n/a
4	4	Loughborough	83.4	88	88	75
5	5	Durham	81.6	85	85	72
6	6	Bath	80	86	87	69
7	7	Imperial College	79.3	82	84	64
7	9	Lancaster	79.3	89	87	74
9	8	Warwick	73.9	86	86	70
10	14	Exeter	73.2	87	89	74
11	10	Leeds	71.8	88	90	73
12	16	Nottingham Trent	71.2	88	87	80
13	n/a	Uni for the Creative Arts	71.1	83	85	81
14	24	Glasgow	70.9	87	90	69
15	13	Coventry	70.6	87	89	74
16	19	Birmingham	69.8	86	88	69
17	22	Lincoln	69.2	89	88	75

Use this link below to explore this website:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2019/jun/07/university-league-tables-2020>

Don't just look at their overall ratings, look at the rating by course as well, they vary massively!

For example, these universities are the highest rated for Economics...

Pick a subject area Economics See what it would be like to study t

2020	Institution	Guardian score/100	Satisfied with course	Satisfied with teaching	Satisfied with feedback	Student
1	St Andrews	100	93	85.3	69.1	
2	Cambridge	95	n/a	n/a	n/a	
3	Oxford	93.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	
4	Hertfordshire	92	97	95.4	93.5	
5	Leeds	90.7	90	88.4	75	
6	Buckingham	89.7	93	94.4	82	
7	Nottingham Trent	88.7	93	89.3	86	
8	Stirling	88.3	85	93.3	70.8	
9	UEA	87.3	92.1	89	78.1	
10	King's College London	86.8	77.3	81.6	65.6	
11	Nottingham	84.2	88.9	86.3	72.8	

...whereas these universities are the highest rated for Psychology

Pick a subject area Psychology See what it would be like to stud

2020	Institution	Guardian score/100	Satisfied with course	Satisfied with teaching	Satisfied with feedback	Student
1	Oxford	100	97.5	96.8	86.2	
2	St Andrews	97.3	98	95	85.1	
3	Bath	95.2	87	91.4	80.4	
4	Cambridge	95.1	83.9	91.9	72.6	
5	UCL	92	86	86.6	72.6	
6	Lancaster	90.6	92.1	91.7	82.6	
7	York	86.1	91	93.7	79.5	
8	Cardiff	85.9	93	94.3	77.8	
9	Nottingham Trent	85.3	94	91.7	80.8	
10	Surrey	84.2	93.1	87.3	69.3	
11	King's College London	83.6	83.2	90.1	75	

1). CAREER PLANNING QUESTIONS – 1 of 2

- 1. What am I relatively good at? (consider both school subjects and other areas too!)**

- 2. What subjects / areas do I enjoy most?**

- 3. What am I relatively poor at? (again, this doesn't have to be just school subjects)**

- 4. What subjects / areas do I enjoy least?**

- 5. What do I want out of my job in the future?**

1). CAREER PLANNING QUESTIONS – 2 of 2

6. What jobs or career areas are 'possibles'?

7. What jobs or career areas are most likely for you at the moment?

8. Why choose this / these at the moment? If you know someone who does your chosen job(s), mention this here.

9. What qualifications and skills are needed for your most likely job(s)?

10. How difficult is it to get into your chosen job(s) and what is your back up plan?

FOR STUDENTS INTERESTED IN UNIVERSITY COURSES

COURSE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Do you prefer a course that leads directly to a job (e.g. Medicine, Accounting) or would you prefer a more general course (e.g. English, History)?

2. Would you prefer to study a single subject area (e.g. Maths) or more than one (e.g. Economics and Geography)?

3. Would you prefer a course with mostly exams, or one with more coursework?

4. What 'A' level grades are you likely to get? (use your mock results as a guide). You will need to choose courses that you are likely to get the grades for.

5. Would you prefer a course with work experience and/or a placement abroad?

6. What are your possible courses, and why?

Possible Course	Reason

UNIVERSITY CHOICE QUESTIONS

7. How far are you willing to travel?

8. Do you prefer to be in a city (like Manchester) or in the country (like Keele)?

9. What would attract you most to a university?

- Rank this list (adding your own priorities if you wish).

Cheap accommodation

Excellent social life

Good sports facilities

Good teaching

Good library facilities

Low student/teacher ratios

Good job prospects

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

10. What are your possible universities, and why?

Possible University / College	Reason

FOR STUDENTS INTERESTED IN APPRENTICESHIP COURSES

APPRENTICESHIP CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Review the listing of possible available apprenticeships – which ones appeal most and why?

2. Which apprenticeship level are you interested in applying for and why?

3. What 'A' level grades are you likely to get? (use your mock results as a guide). You will need to choose apprenticeships that you are likely to get the grades for.

4. Are you willing / interested in moving location during your apprenticeship (either in the UK or abroad) or are you looking for an apprenticeship which will be based in just one location?

3). APPRENTICESHIP CHOICE QUESTIONS

5. How far are you willing to travel, and how will you travel?

6. Do you prefer to be in a city (like Manchester / Derby) or smaller town (Crewe / Uttoxeter)?

7. What would attract you most to an apprenticeship?

Rank this list (adding your own priorities if you wish).

Earn whilst you learn

Relevant experience

Building contacts

Guidance and support

Direct route to job

No debt

Get a qualification

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

8. What are your possible apprenticeships and why?

Possible Apprenticeships	Reason

UCAS: PERSONAL STATEMENT SUPPORT

Writing your personal statement is probably the most important aspect of your UCAS application. Many students are competing for the same place and this is your opportunity to prove that you are different from the others; you have something special and unique to offer.

The process can be daunting but try to follow the bullet points below. Don't expect to have a perfect draft in one attempt. The best personal statements are re-drafted several times. Remember that, to start with, you don't have to write everything in the order it will appear on the final copy; you can always 'cut and paste' (literally!) if necessary.

- It must be no longer than **47 lines** and **4000 characters (including spaces)**
- Read some exemplars before you start writing.
- In your opening paragraph explain why you have chosen the course and what your plans are for the future.
- Most crucial is your interest in the subject you have chosen and why you have chosen it. Show the knowledge you have gained beyond the classroom through personal research. Think about your relevant strengths and then consider what examples you have to demonstrate these.
- Don't forget to explain the personal benefits you gain from everything you do, e.g. prefect duties and part-time jobs. Think about the skills developed by these activities. Don't tell them how good you are at something – let them deduce that for themselves!
- Be succinct! You have a limited number of characters and you don't want to bore anybody! Your final copy, however, must be coherent and the paragraphs must be linked.
- The final paragraph should relate back to the first if possible, summing up why you have chosen the course.

When you think you have finished, proofread very carefully, preferably aloud, checking punctuation, grammar and spelling as you go. Ask someone else to check it as well before giving it to your form tutor. Be prepared to make any edits advised by your form tutor. Then, sit back and wait for the offers to come pouring in!

PERSONAL STATEMENT WRITING FRAME

Why are you applying for your chosen course?

What is it about this subject that interests you? (show you know what the degree involves)

What skills and experience do you have that will help you succeed on this course?

How do your 'A' levels relate to your chosen course? (and what topics in your 'A' levels would you like to study in more depth)

What have you done beyond your 'A' level courses to show your interest in this course?

What are your achievements/positions of responsibility/interests? How might these help you succeed at university?

What work experience have you had that is relevant to this course and what did you gain from this experience?

If you know what you would like to do beyond university, how does your chosen course relate to this?

DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Degree apprenticeships are a credible alternative to going to university. If you're interested in gaining a degree but don't like the sound of having to pay for tuition fees then consider a degree apprenticeship. It offers a different pathway to learning which can help you to kick-start your career. Degree and higher apprenticeships are rapidly expanding. Degree apprenticeships extend alongside higher apprenticeships and come after advanced apprenticeships.

If you want to graduate with your cap and gown then degree apprenticeships give you the opportunity to do this. You'll also graduate with the equivalent of a BA(Hons) or BSc (Hons) degree. They enable you to gain a qualification level equal to your peers who follow the traditional full time university routes. If you're looking for a challenging and unique learning experience then this could be the route for you.

Debt-free degree apprenticeships

Degree level apprenticeships combine academic study with a part-time basis at university. The rest of the time will be spent with an employer in the workplace. You'll usually spend 20% of your time working towards your qualification in a university environment and the other 80% of the time will involve learning on the job.

Your study will normally take place at the institution (university or college), a training provider or learning mentor may come to visit you at your work environment or you may have online study. Degree apprenticeships typically take between three and six years to complete. This depends on the course level and the industry. A degree apprenticeship presents the opportunity to gain a full bachelor's degree (Level 6) or a master's degree (Level 7) while earning and learning.

Higher apprenticeships go from Level 4 to 7, the equivalent to a Foundation Degrees, Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND). Below is a chart to show what the educational level equivalent is:

Type of apprenticeship	Level	Level Equivalent
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes (grade A*-C or 9 - 4)
Advanced	3	2 A Level passes/ Level 3 Diploma/ International Baccalaureate
Higher	4/5/ 6/7	Foundation, Bachelor's or Master's degree
Degree	6/7	Bachelor's or Master's degree

How to be accepted onto a degree apprenticeship?

To be accepted onto a degree apprenticeship you will need formal qualifications at a minimum of a Level 3. This could be A Levels, an apprenticeship, NVQ or BTEC and it generally depends on the employer as to whether you need a higher qualification. However, this isn't always the case and if you possess little qualifications but heaps of experience you may also be accepted onto a degree apprenticeship programme. Again, this all depends on

What qualifications do you need for a degree apprenticeship?

The qualifications you need to be accepted onto a degree apprenticeship often vary depending on the employer, university and type of apprenticeships. However, in most cases, you will need a minimum of five GCSEs grades A* – C (9 – 4 on the new grading system), typically including maths and English. You will also need a Level 3 qualifications, including A levels, NVQs, apprenticeship or a BTEC. Some employers will also expect you to have subjects which are relevant to the degree apprenticeship you are keen to start. Always check the entry requirements in the job description when applying to one.

What are degree apprenticeships like?

Degree apprenticeships give you the opportunity to earn a salary while learning and also gaining a professional qualification! Not only will you gain a degree but you'll also develop your skills and gain real work experience. When you're at work you'll usually be assigned a designated mentor who will help and offer you support throughout your apprenticeship programme.

Important information to remember

The larger companies tend to recruit as early as **October** onwards. Once they get enough applications they can close the scheme – it's important for students to be aware that even if the closing date is February the employer can still close it early. Many students do get caught out by this! It is vital that you do not consider degree apprenticeships as a last minute option. Degree schemes tend to require high grades and the larger employers run assessment centres which are tough so you need to invest time in preparing for the application process.

For more information on Degree Apprenticeships, please use the link below:

<https://careemap.co.uk/degree-apprenticeships/>

UCAS USEFUL WEBSITES

- Five things you need to apply
<https://www.ucas.com/connect/videos?v=/five-things-you-need-apply-0>
- How to complete the education section
<https://www.ucas.com/connect/videos/ucas?v=/apply-2021-education-section>
- Personal statement
<https://www.ucas.com/connect/videos/ucas?v=/apply-2021-personal-statement>
- Getting your personal statement started
<https://www.ucas.com/connect/videos?v=/get-your-personal-statement-started>
- How to boost your personal statement
<https://www.ucas.com/connect/videos?v=/how-boost-your-personal-statement>
- Uni Guide
<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/courses>

ADDITIONAL USEFUL LINKS FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Secrets of Applying for University (UCAS)
 - *Slightly dated as from 2012 but still a useful insight from the admissions tutor*
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvqFG-C9RvY&feature=youtu.be>
- How to choose a university
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdypNNlx1SM>
- Some interesting perspectives on Firm and Conditional choices
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvvF7-5SIJ8>

PERSONAL STATEMENT GUIDANCE

- University of Leicester guidance (~ 8 mins)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zESqEAXqX-Y>
- University of Birmingham guidance (~ 4.5 mins)
 - Useful guide with feedback from a variety of department admission tutors
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6wGWIIQxpW>
- Guidance from a variety of University admission tutors on what to include.... And what not to include (~ 3 mins)
 - ‘Which?’ University detail
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPoJK8gFMiY>
- Imperial College Guidance (be warned – 37 minutes)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jQ3MJgdkJY>