



WELCOME TO OUR INTRODUCTION TO POST 18 OPTIONS

15th April 2026
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**Mrs Clare Hamilton Post 18 Student Adviser
and Careers Lead**



AGENDA

Higher Education

The UCAS process

Degree and Higher Apprenticeships

Gap Year/Employment

Future Focus Fortnight

Any questions?



WHY HIGHER EDUCATION?

- **Essential for some career paths**
- **Develop new transferable skills and subject knowledge**
- **Increase your confidence and independence**
- **Broaden your experiences**
- **Show yourself what you can do**
- **Invest in your future**

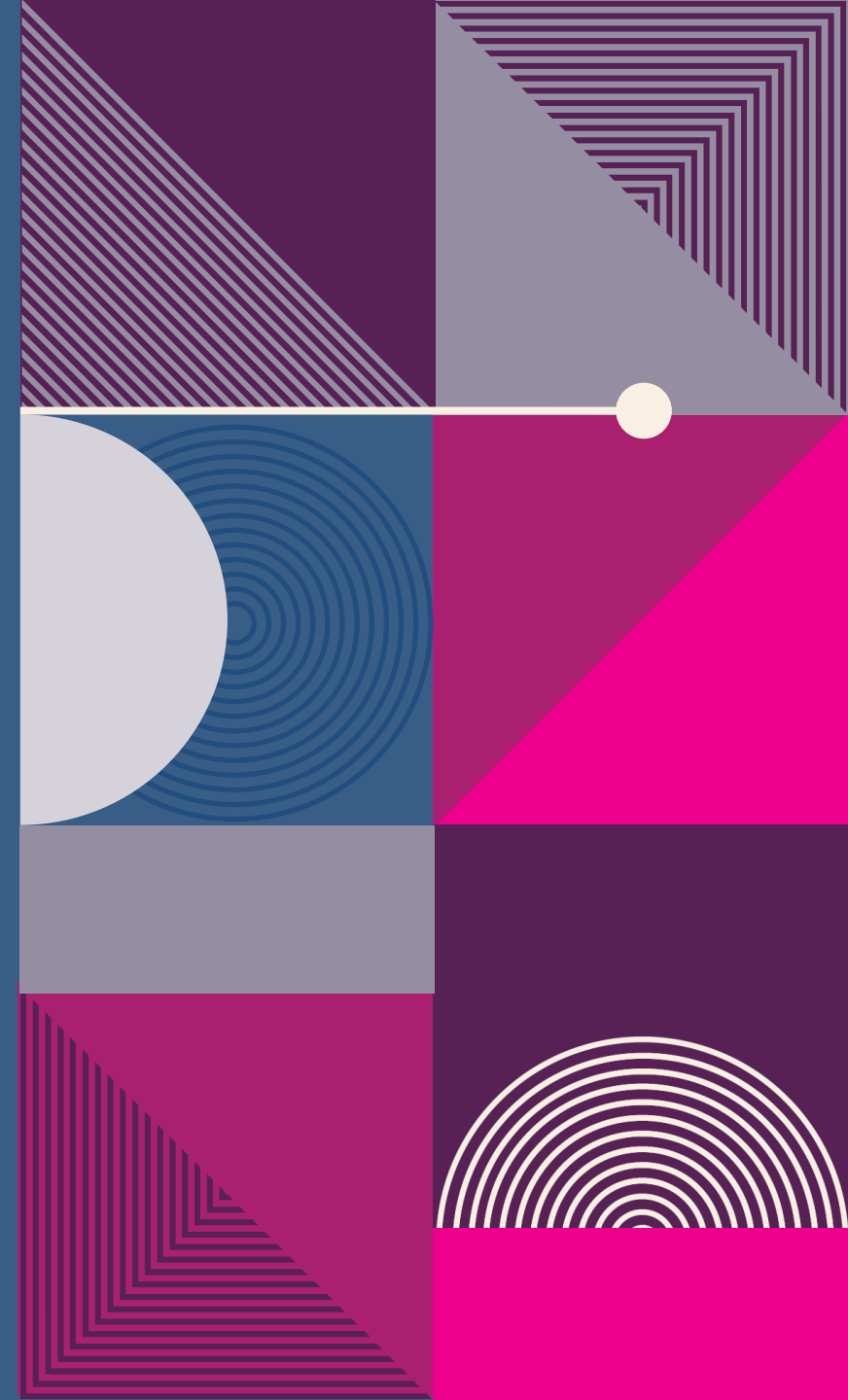


TYPES OF COURSES

- **Single - one subject**
- **Joint - 2 or more subjects**
- **Sandwich course - 4 years long with one year in industry or abroad**
- **Foundation - year long course to prepare students for a full degree**

STUDYING ABROAD

- **Every year we have students apply to study abroad**
- **This is something that needs a lot of research as funding is different in every country**
- **Scholarships may be available (eg sports scholarships)**
- **US University information can be found at the Fulbright Commission website**



CHOOSING A COURSE

Research is key; there are over 50,000 courses in the UK, you can only apply to 5!

- **Look at entry requirements - be realistic and use your predicted grades as a guideline. We would suggest you choose 2 aspirational, 2 solid and 1 safe choice.**
- **Look at course content at each university**
- **Think outside the traditional subjects - did you know you could study Zoology, Immunology, Footwear Design and even Brewing and Distilling at university!!!**

WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU?

THINGS TO CONSIDER - SUBJECT

- **Do you enjoy your subject enough to want to invest time, money and effort in studying for a further 3 years?**
- **Is the subject right for your career path? Check with employers.**
- **Have you looked at the course modules? Different universities offer different course content.**

THINGS TO CONSIDER - UNIVERSITY

- **Location- do you want a campus uni? A city uni? How far away do you want to be from home? Transport links?**
- **Extra curricular activities- what's on offer?**
- **Does their study style suit you?**
- **How easy is it to find accommodation/part time work?**
- **How expensive is it to live there?**





OPEN DAYS

- **Students are encouraged to attend open days and are allowed up to 3 authorised absences for this.**
- **They are a good opportunity to visit a campus and the local area.**
- **A fantastic way to see how the university “feels”.**
- **A chance to take part in subject lectures, hear speakers talk about university life, take tours of the university and accommodation and speak to current students.**
- **Find out when open days take place by visiting www.opendays.com and university websites.**

OXBRIDGE, MEDICINE, DENTAL, VETERINARY

**ITS NOT FOR EVERYONE-
CAREFUL REFLECTION AND
RESEARCH IS REQUIRED**

**A good candidate will have
academic ability and potential,
with the majority of their GCSEs
at grades 8 and 9 and A/A*
predicted A Level grades.**

**EARLY APPLICATION UCAS
DEADLINE IS**

15TH OCTOBER 2026

**A good candidate will have a
genuine interest in their subject, a
thirst for knowledge and be
prepared to see things differently.**

**MOST COURSES REQUIRE A PRE ADMISSION TEST
YOU NEED TO FIND OUT WHAT THESE ARE**

**A good candidate will be prepared to complete activities outside of
their curriculum learning, complete a mock interview and spend time
practising and preparing for pre-admission tests.**

RUSSELL GROUP OR NOT?

- **The Russell Group is made up of 24 world-class universities which receive the majority of the research funding in the UK. These institutions share a strong reputation for teaching and learning and attract staff and students from around the world.**
- **They are well-funded, have a high status and are often found at the top of league tables.**
- **For many students, a Russell Group institution will be the right option, but assuming that it is the only option worth considering can be limiting.**
- **Non-Russell groups often have better satisfaction ratings and there may be more emphasis on work experience and building industry contacts.**




THE UCAS PROCESS AT SHSB

- **Application is entirely online**
- **Maximum of five choices**
- **Some choice restrictions: medicine, veterinary medicine/science and dentistry have a maximum of four not five choices**
- **Oxford or Cambridge (not both)**
- **Application cost: £28.95**
- **'Invisibility' - universities cannot see where else you have applied**



THE UCAS PROCESS AT SHSB

- **All students will start their UCAS online application as part of the summer personal development programme in June 2026.**
 - **A draft personal statement should be completed by the end of the summer holidays.**
 - **Students will be issued their predicted grades after their April exams.**
 - **Online applications need to be completed (including a personal statement) and the "pay and send "button pressed by 4th December.**
 - **(2nd October for Early Entry students) to guarantee applications are processed before the UCAS deadline date.**
- 



THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

You have probably heard that the personal statement format changed in 2026. Students are now asked to answer 3 separate questions which will ensure you include exactly what universities want to see. The 3 questions are:

- 1. Why do you want to study this course?**
- 2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you prepares for this course?**
- 3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?**



THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

- You will have 4000 characters.
- It is still your chance to sell yourself to your universities.
- You can still talk about your extracurricular activities and you as a person.

What you can do to start preparing now:

- Engage in wider reading (including watching online lectures, listening to podcasts, taking short online courses-MOOCs).
- Relevant visits e.g. museums/exhibitions.
- Work experience (vital for vocational courses).
- Go beyond your current learning - is there something you are interested in that you would like to find out about? Then you should do it!
- Universities don't want a list of activities - they want to know what you have learnt from them.
- Record these activities on Unifrog so you don't forget them.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- **Students are encouraged to seek out work experience opportunities through networking, friends and family, contacting local companies.**
- **Year 12 students have been regularly offered the chance to apply for virtual work experience opportunities via organisations such as InvestIn, Springpod and Speakers for Schools.**
- **Aspiring medics have all been offered the chance to apply for the Southend Hospital work shadowing scheme.**
- **Year 12 students are able to add themselves to SHSB TEAMS groups which concentrate on different Post 18 pathways i.e. Oxbridge, Apprenticeships, Medicine, Careers in Engineering, Law, Business and Finance etc.**
- **Employers will need to complete our work experience placement form before we can authorise.**



UNIVERSITY DECISIONS

Before making a decision, universities will review:

- **Personal statement**
- **Academic reference**
- **Qualifications**
- **Contextual information**
- **Any admission tests, interview/audition performance**

This could take some time- they have until May 2027 to make final decisions which could be:

Conditional - you have a place if you meet the conditions

Unconditional - you have a place no matter your results

Unsuccessful - you have not been offered a place

YOUR REPLIES

Applicants should wait for all decisions from all choices, then they should choose 2 courses, one as their firm choice and one as their insurance choice:

- **Firm - if all conditions are met, this is where they will be placed.**
- **Insurance - usually lower conditions, in case firm conditions are not met.**
- **Any other offers must be declined.**
- **If a student firmly accepts an unconditional offer, they must decline any/all others.**
- **On results day you will be advised through UCAS where you have been placed.**





DEGREE AND HIGHER APPRENTICESHIPS

The past few years have seen a huge increase in the amount of apprenticeships available at many different levels. Students from SHSB have secured apprenticeship roles in a wide range of organisations, including:

Ford, BAE Systems, JP Morgan, BMW, Rolls Royce, Bank of England, Lloyds of London, BDO, Civil Service, Ipeco, Markel Insurance, WTW, PwC and EY.

APPRENTICESHIP LEVELS

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at grade 4-9 (A*-C)
Advanced	3	2 A Levels / Level 3 diploma / International Baccalaureate
Higher	4,5,6 & 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 & 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

RANGE OF APPRENTICESHIPS

Solicitor

Teacher

Aerospace Engineer

Paramedic

Quantity Surveyor

Project Manager

Insurance Underwriter

Architect

Police Officer

Software Developer

Cyber Intelligence Officer

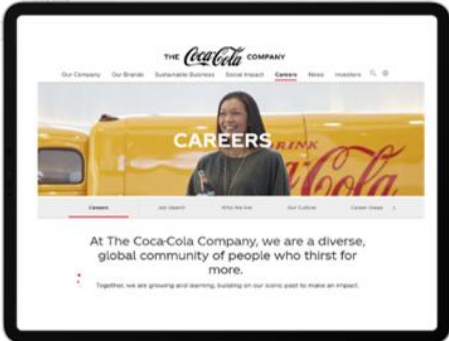
HOW DO I FIND APPRENTICESHIPS?



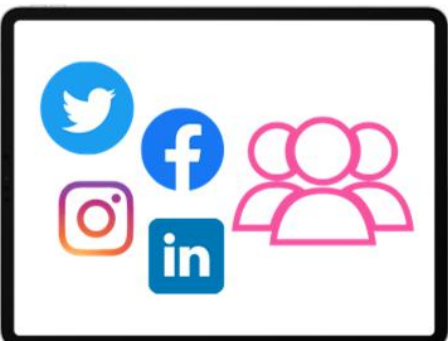
UCAS



Meet the Employer



Company Websites



Social Media, Friends & Family

- Find an Apprenticeship website
- Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Listing (from school)
- Not Going to Uni website
- Industry specific websites
- SHSB Apprenticeships TEAMS group
- Amazing Apprenticeships
- <https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/higher-and-degree-listing/>

APPRENTICESHIPS - TOP TIPS

- **They are by no means the easy option - applications can be very competitive.**
- **You apply to individual employers for apprenticeships, be aware that the application process for each employer can be fairly long.**
- **Applications can include psychometric tests, online interviews, assessment centres, presentations and face to face interviews- know what each stage involves.**
- **Always research the company you are applying to and tailor your application to their values/ethos/job description.**
- **Set up a spreadsheet where you can add details of companies you are interested in, the dates their schemes open and how you apply. You can then re-visit this spreadsheet to make sure you don't miss any important deadlines.**

GAP YEAR (RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT YEAR)

- **Make it count!**
- **Research future career paths**
- **Develop skills, employability and personal profile**
- **Arrange work experience/shadowing**
- **Volunteer**
- **Travel**
- **Study something you have always wanted to**



EMPLOYMENT

- **For those who wish to go out to work we offer Careers Advice and application support.**
- **Mrs Murphy, our careers adviser is on hand to support 6th form students.**
- **Research is vital.**
- **A comprehensive CV will be required.**
- **Use Unifrog to support your research.**
- **Sign up to email alerts of companies you are interested in.**
- **Take advantage of work shadowing/work experience opportunities.**



STUDENT PANEL

Current students:

Kwabena - Oxbridge

Sian - Uni/Apprenticeship

Emma - Apprenticeship

Former students:

Callum - completed a degree apprenticeship

Freddy - medical student

WHAT DO WE HAVE PLANNED?

- 20th-27th April Hall exams
- 28th April - 8th May - Future Focus Fortnight
- 11th May return to school
- A Level predicted grades published around May half term. Students will be offered the chance to drop down to 3 subjects after half term.
- All of Year 12 will attend UCAS Discovery in Colchester on 10th June (letter to follow).
- Rest of the term, a summer development plan will be followed by all of year 12 where they will look at various post 18 options, start an online UCAS application and hear from guests about how to make choices.
- Year 12 attend a presentation from Jane Marshall on the importance of personal statements and how to write them.
- Apprenticeship Awareness presentation (for all) and mock assessment centre (for students definitely pursuing an apprenticeship).
- 17th July End of term - please take some time through the holidays to start to draft your personal statement.

FUTURE FOCUS FORTNIGHT

28TH APRIL - 8TH MAY 2026

Work Experience- in person or virtual
OR
Read
Watch
Listen
Visit
Explore
Research



THE FUTURE STARTS NOW

If you have any questions/queries, please contact:

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