

Where Next 2026-27

Options for
Level 3 Students



BMet
Inspiring futures, realising dreams.

MAKING CHOICES

This booklet has been written to give you information and advice about your options after your current course, and to explain what you need to do to achieve your goals.

There are times when a decision must be taken which will affect the direction of your life, deciding what to do after college is one such decision. If you plan to go to university, a careful, informed choice will lay the foundations of your career, setting in place the knowledge and skills that you need for future success and giving you a great experience in the process. Overall, people with university degrees are better paid and have higher level jobs than those without. If you fail to do the necessary consideration and planning, a poor decision could lead to you dropping out of your course in debt. Advice and guidance on how to choose a course and apply to university, forms the first part of Where Next?

A Step-by-Step Guide to Applying to University	Pages 2-11
UCAS Points Tariff	Pages 12-13
College application process and deadlines	Pages 14-19
Guidance for Personal Statements	Pages 20-22
A Guide to Higher Education Finance	Page 23-24
A Year Out	Page 25
Employment Opportunities	Pages 26-27
Careers Team	Page 28
Notes for your Research	Page 29
UCAS College H.E Destination Map	Page 30

However, not all students will want to go to university. There are some good employment opportunities for people with 'A' levels or level 3 vocational qualifications. Just like planning a university application, looking for a good job requires thought and preparation. **Pages, 26-27** of this booklet gives you some tips to follow.

Help and Guidance

There are many issues to consider at this time of your life and it can help to talk them through with someone who knows about them. The Careers team is here to help you with this. Our contact details are on **page 28** of this booklet.

Applying to University

Doing Research

Step 1 - Develop your course ideas.

Timescale: Start in May/June (first year of your course)

Whatever you decide to study, you need to be enthusiastic enough about it to sustain your interest for three years or more. You could consider:

- Continuing with one of your present subjects
- Combining two or more of your current subjects
- Combining an existing subject with a new one
- Taking a completely new subject or subjects
- Taking a general vocational course linked to a broad occupational area e.g., Business Studies, Art and Design, Engineering, ICT
- Choosing a job-related course, e.g., Medicine, Physiotherapy, Social Work, nursing or teaching.

Information about the different kinds of courses available in higher education can be found at www.ucas.com/search

HOWEVER: you should not apply for a variety of different courses with little relationship to each other, as you will need to write a personal statement justifying your choices. If you apply to, for example, Engineering, English and Animation, you are telling the University Admissions Tutor that you are not wholly committed to their subject, and this will affect your chances of getting offers. If you can't decide, talk to your tutor, or one of the college Careers Advisers.

Still don't know what you want to study at university? Try the Xello careers program.

Your intended career may dictate or influence your choice of degree. To generate careers ideas, you can use BMet's computer software program called **Xello**.

1. To access Xello, go to BMet's Learner Landing Page, scroll down to the Student Experience section and click on the blue Careers box. Click on the Xello Careers Programme box and then select **Click Here**.
2. Once logged on, you will be able to view your dashboard and you can start by answering the questions in Matchmaker in About Me, at the end of the questions there will be a list of career opportunities that have been matched to your interests.

You can also access Careers Coach a careers platform by going to your student Learner Landing Page, selecting Careers button under Student Experience and clicking onto Careers Coach, follow the instructions to match your interests to real career ideas.

You can take a short quiz to find out your possible career options that suit your skills or a longer Careers Assessment test for accurate job matching.

Purlos Outcore's Alex AI Careers Tool is a new careers platform that students can access. The AI assistant provides career support offering quick answers to help learners navigate their paths with confidence. With fast response times and reliable information, it empowers learners to ask questions and explore careers options. To access Purlos go to BMet's Learner Landing Page scroll down to apps and click onto Purlos AI Careers Tool and then logon or sign up if you are a new student.

Still confused?

Speak to your college Career Adviser, see **page 28** for contact details.

Step 2 - Start your research.

Timescale: June – August (first year of your course)

Once you have generated a list of possible course ideas, you will need to research them in detail. Make a note of the places which offer your chosen course. Note the subjects needed, grades/points required and the length of the course. You should also:

- Attend open days at universities you are considering, see university websites, and www.opendays.com.
- Organize any work experience that might be necessary - for example, any students that are going to apply for a Primary Teaching, Radiography, Physiotherapy, Social Worker, Nursing and Midwifery degrees must have recent, relevant experience. A Careers Adviser can give you guidance on whether this is necessary or desirable for what you want to do.
- Check whether you need to sit an additional admissions test; for example, for Medicine or Dentistry, look at www.ucat.ac.uk, and for Law look at www.lnat.ac.uk. <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/admissions-tests> also has details of all admissions tests.

Online Information

You will find lots of useful information on-line. The following sites should help with your research:

- www.ucas.com UCAS is the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. This website provides information on all courses recruiting through UCAS. An interactive course search will help you find suitable courses and institutions (check out the entry profiles for entry requirements, etc) and it also links to more than 200 university and college websites.
- Check out the **websites of individual universities and colleges**. Many provide their prospectus on-line, facts and figures about the institution, the opportunity to e-mail admissions tutors and destination statistics of graduates. Some will also give departmental links, giving you access to lecture notes, reading lists, details of lecturers and previous exam papers. Some local examples are:
- [What can I do with my degree? | Prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) - The Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU) provides information on what you can do with your degree or HND (by subject area).
- <https://www.push.co.uk/uni-life.html> - This site about student life is based on information and opinions of students and recent graduates.
- <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/people-disabilities/learning-and-education> - Government Services website providing information and advice about applying to higher education for students with disabilities.

- www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide – See 'University Guide' for university league tables.
- www.thestudentroom.co.uk - Where GCSE, A Level and university students share academic and social knowledge: from study help, to choosing a university, careers, and student life.

Paper Resources

Copies of these can be found in the Careers Section of your college library.

- **Choosing Your Degree Course and University by Brian Heap** includes degree subjects available and universities that offer them including a description of what the degree entails.
- **Prospectuses:** - University and college prospectuses provide useful information about the institution, including a brief introduction to course content, entry requirements, career prospects and the accommodation available. Bear in mind though, that they are written by the university to encourage you to apply to them. Make sure you check the financial help individual universities are offering, as they are all different. Alternative prospectuses, written by students at the institution, may also be available from the students' union.
- **What Do Graduates Do?** Published by HECSU. This book enables you to check out, by subject area, the destinations of recent graduates.

WHICH PARTICULAR COURSES?

Details of all courses are available UCAS Search tool, www.ucas.com/search . There can be huge differences between the same course subjects at different universities. Here are some points to consider:

- **Course content and structure** can vary a great deal. In English, for example, you might be concentrating on either ancient or modern literature. You might have a set curriculum you have to follow, or some compulsory units and some optional.
- **Assessment methods.** One course might be assessed totally by exams; another might have a big coursework component.
- **Sandwich degrees.** For some 'vocational' courses like business and engineering, you have a year of paid work experience as part of your degree, which often improves your employment prospects after your degree.
- **Professional Exemption:** The course might give you exemption from professional exams you might take after your degree e.g. accountancy.
- **Professional Recognition:** You may need to check that your course is approved by the professional body for that particular field, e.g. by the BPS for Psychology.

You need to consider **which universities** you would like to go to. Do you want to live at home or go away? If you go away from home, how far do you want to go? A city or campus-based university? How highly is the university rated in the quality ratings? What is its rating in the subject you want to study?

And, crucially, what are the **entry requirements?** The more popular a course or university, the higher qualifications you will need; if you apply for a course that usually requires qualifications above those that your tutors predict you will get, you may well be rejected. Entry requirements are published in university prospectuses and websites, and HE reference books etc. They can be expressed in different ways, as a series of grades per subject; sometimes with particular subjects specified, or as a point score (look out for GCSE and work experience requirements too.) For an explanation of the point's tariff, **see pages 12 - 13.**

Step 3 - Finalise your course ideas

Timescale: By the end of August (first year of course)

When carrying out your research you need to ensure that your chosen courses and institutions meet your requirements and needs. Use the resources listed earlier to find the information you need.

Remember, for most subjects, you can apply for FIVE courses on your UCAS form. The exceptions are as follows:

Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine/Science: FOUR CHOICES ONLY.

Carrying out the research in steps 1 to 3 should help you to choose courses to suit you.

Remember to look out for Careers announcements including those for our Higher Education Fairs to be held at all our main campuses, as well as personal statements support sessions and the University Finance week advertised on your Learner Landing Page, Facebook and X (Twitter).

Contextual Offers

Entry requirements are not always set in stone. Find out how contextual admissions could affect your university application

When you're choosing courses for your university application, you're sure to have entry requirements front of mind. These requirements spell out the grades you need to have (or be predicted) to have a chance of getting an offer. But entry requirements can sometimes be adjusted. Apply to a university that has contextual admissions and you might get a contextual offer. It's something that could open the door to courses you thought were out of reach. So, what exactly are contextual offers? How do they work and, most importantly, how do you know if you might be eligible for one?

What is a contextual offer?

Contextual offers are intended to make university education more accessible to students who may historically have been less likely to go. With the standard admissions process, universities will focus on certain key elements of your application such as your predicted grades and personal statement. Contextual admissions add in a range of other factors. Elements such as the area in which you grew up and where you went to school could determine whether you're eligible for a contextual offer.

Contextual offers are largely made to students from underrepresented groups," "For instance, areas with lower progression to higher education or schools and colleges where fewer students move into higher-paid jobs or employment." The best way to work out if you might be eligible for a contextual offer is to check the websites of the universities that interest you.

Access to Birmingham (A2B)

The Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme is designed to help students from families and communities in the West Midlands who have little, or no experience of Higher Education find out about what studying at university involves. To be entitled to the Pathways to Birmingham offer, students must complete the A2B programme. The programme is designed to help students make the transition from school to university and consists of three elements. A Launch Day which will help you understand what you need to do to pass the A2B programme. Skills4Uni (an online study support module) to help you identify and build the skills you need to be a successful university student. A2B Academic Activity - a lecture and small group discussion in the subject you have applied for led by an academic tutor, followed by a short-written reflection.

You will also be invited to an enhanced induction event before starting university where you'll get information, advice, and guidance in preparation for your first term.

A successful A2B applicant will receive two offers from the University of Birmingham, the standard one and an alternative A2B offer. The A2B offer is typically a reduction of up to two A level grades (e.g., BBB rather than AAB). The two-grade reduction in the offer from the University is not guaranteed for all subjects, but the successful completion of the A2B programme will be taken into account when A2B offers are made. Application is on-line only via University of Birmingham's website. For further details on the A2B and how to apply to the scheme go to: [Access to Birmingham - University of Birmingham](#)

A Special Message for Access Students

This section is here to help you choose full time university level education courses and apply to college or university. It is particularly for students on Access courses, but any adults considering university level courses may find it useful.

Where will your study lead?

You may have chosen your career but if you are undecided you will find excellent on line careers advice specifically for adults at nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk.

The Skills Health Check, self-assessment program is an interactive exercise. It can help you check if you are making the right choices go to <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/skills-health-check/home> . If you want to study a specific subject but you are not sure what career it will lead to, visit, <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree>

You can also talk to your College Careers Adviser or visit a specialist website such as:

- › Accountancy, banking and finance
www.insidecareers.co.uk
- › Engineering
[Explore by job sector | National Careers Service](#)
- › Information Technology
<http://www.bcs.org/category/1>
- › Law
www.lawcareers.net
- › Nursing and all health related professions
[Explore roles | Health Careers](#)
- › Psychology
www.bps.org.uk/careers/
- › Science
[View all careers | National Careers Service](#)
- › Sport
www.careers-in-sport.co.uk
- › Social Care
www.skillsforcare.org.uk
- › Social Work
www.basw.co.uk
- › Teaching
<https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/>

Which Course?

Your career choice may determine your choice of degree course. But you need to be aware that courses with the same title may vary greatly in content and methods of teaching. Most degree courses last three years. Foundation Degrees and Higher National Diplomas are for two years but you can “top up” to a full degree with extra study.

You can choose one subject combine two or take a modular course covering a number of subjects. Universities will give you as much information as they can about their courses. They want you to make the right choice. Use all the information they provide including:

University prospectus: free brochures describing all the university courses. Universities will send you copies on request. Every main college careers library will have reference copies.

University websites: more up to date and often more in-depth information. You can search for all university websites using, www.ucas.com and then the course search.

University Open Days: all universities will have open days two or three times a year. They offer a chance to see the university, attend talks about specific courses and talk to admissions staff. Look on their website or visit www.opendays.com.

Entry Requirements

These vary widely and you need to check them carefully. Courses in nursing and other professional health vocations, teaching and social work will ask for relevant experience. You will be at a disadvantage if you cannot talk about it in your personal statement. These courses are training you for a specific job so universities need to be sure that you fully understand the career you are choosing. Contact the university if the entry requirements are not clear. You can search for voluntary work at <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer>

Which University?

Many mature students want to stay close to home and in Birmingham there is a good choice open to you. But no two universities are the same. Some are much more selective than others and this will be reflected in their entry requirements.

Not all of them offer the same subjects; some have particular specialisms; they vary considerably in size. If you intend living away from home, check the accommodation when you visit.

Make sure this is a place where you will want to spend three years. Use [For students - Office for Students](#) to find out how universities are ranked and rated by their students.

Study University Courses at BMet

Students studying degree courses at colleges are often better prepared for industry. According to the Office for Students (OfS), 69% of college-based students feel industry-ready, compared to 50% of university graduates.

Many students begin with a HNC (Higher National Certificate), which is equivalent to the first year of a degree. They can then progress to a HND, (Higher National Diploma), equivalent to the second year, before moving on to a university top-up year to complete their degree. **This pathway can save you over £6,500.**

BMet offers a university-level experience that combines strong academic teaching with practical benefits you won't find elsewhere. You can achieve the same qualifications as a traditional university student, while saving on tuition fees and living costs. To help with the cost of living, **BMet also provides a £1,000 bursary and free meals on all Pearson courses.**

You may already know our supportive environment and dedicated teaching approach. Now imagine continuing your studies with us at a higher level, gaining university qualifications delivered in partnership with respected institutions like Birmingham City University, Worcester University and Pearson.

The BMet Difference

Our university-level courses provide all the academic rigour and recognised qualifications you'd expect, but with benefits that many students find invaluable:

- **Reduced financial burden** with many courses with 30% lower fees than university options, you also receive a £1,000 Bursary and free meals.
- **Familiar surroundings** where you are already comfortable, allowing you to focus entirely on your studies rather than adjusting to an entirely new environment.
- **Significantly smaller class sizes** than traditional universities, ensuring personalised attention and support throughout your course.
- **Enhanced access to tutors** who know you by name and are deeply invested in your success. You will study in well-equipped practical workshops, giving you the skills employers are actively seeking

Many of our graduates tell us that these advantages were crucial to their success, providing the confidence and support they needed to excel in higher education.

Whether you are considering a Foundation Degree, HND, or full Honours degree, BMet offers a pathway that can accommodate your ambitions while providing a more personalised learning journey.

Contact our Higher Education team today to discuss your options and discover how a BMet university-level qualification could be your gateway to an exciting future. Drop an e-mail to HE@BMet.ac.uk or call us on 0121 446 4545.

All our H.E courses can be found at <https://www.bmet.ac.uk/our-courses/university-level-courses-apprenticeships/>

UCAS Tariff Points System for Entry to Higher Education 2027

Tariff Points for 'A' Level, T-Level, Pearson BTEC National and UAL qualifications

Grade						Grade			
AS Level	A Level	T-Level	Tariff Points	Pearson BTEC National Extended Diploma	Pearson BTEC National Diploma	Pearson BTEC National Extended Certificate	UAL Extended Diploma	UAL Diploma	UAL Foundation Diploma
		D*	168	D*D*D*			D		
			160	D*D*D					
			152	D*DD					
		D	144	DDD					
			128	DDM					
		M	120				M		
			112	DMM	D*D*				D
			104		D*D				
		P(A*-C)	96	MMM	DD				M
			84					D	
			80	MMP	DM				P
		P(D-E)	72				P		
			70						
			64	MPP	MM				
			60					M	
	A*		56			D*			
	A		48	PPP	MP	D			
	B		40						
			36					P	
	C		32		PP	M			
	D		24						
A			20						
B	E		16			P			
C			12						
D			10						
E			6						

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (Development Technical Knowledge)

Grade	Tariff points
D	72
M	48
P	24

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (Development Technical Knowledge)

Grade	Tariff points
D	144
M	96
P	48

1. **Just because a qualification is on the Tariff, doesn't mean a university will accept it.** Therefore, it's important to check the entry requirements for the course you're interested in.
2. **There are only a certain number of qualifications on the Tariff.** A university may accept a qualification even if it isn't on the Tariff, so it's best to check with them to see if they will accept your qualification. Remember, not all universities use Tariff points.

UCAS Tariff Calculator:

If the course you're interested in refers to Tariff points in its entry requirements, you can use the UCAS Tariff calculator at www.ucas.com/tariff-calculator to find out how many points your qualifications and grades are allocated. Not all qualifications are on the Tariff – don't worry if you can't find your qualification, as a university may still accept it. Make sure you read the guidance notes on the calculator to ensure you understand how the Tariff works.

How to apply to university through UCAS

Making your application

From **5th May 2026**, once you have chosen the courses you want to apply to, and had your personal statement approved by a member of staff (see below), you can start your online application. **2027 entry applications can be submitted by BMet to UCAS from 1st September 2026.**

STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING TO UCAS – 2027 ENTRY

- a) Decide on the courses you would like to apply to (maximum 5).
- b) Get your personal statement checked and approved by your tutor.

NOW START TO FILL IN THE FORM ONLINE:

1. To start an application, you need a UCAS Hub account. Go to www.ucas.com, click on **Sign-in** and select student from the drop-down menu.
2. Choose **'register'** if you are going in for the first time. Complete the short form. Set up a **password** make sure it is **memorable**, write it down or save it in your phone. Use a **personal email address** so you always have access to updates. Accept terms and conditions and click on register.
3. UCAS will email to you a **code** to **verify** your email address. Type in the code and click on verify.
4. Complete the registration questions – make sure you choose the correct study year, **2027** if you want to start next year. Choose the correct level of study, it's **Undergraduate** if you are still at school/college. **Click on next.**
5. Once you have answered all the questions scroll right to the bottom of the page to **Create account.**
6. You'll then be taken to your UCAS Hub dashboard, where you'll see a red tile called **'Start your application'**. Simply click on the red cross to get started.
7. It will ask you if you're applying with the help of your school, college, or centre, select **Yes** and enter the College buzzword, **2027progression** and confirm the details are correct.
8. Once your application has been linked, you can then select a **group** (your personal tutor) from the drop-down list.
9. You can leave and return to your form as many times as you like, and you can do it anywhere with internet access, using your password. **HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE LEAVING YOUR FORM FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME, LOG OUT, OR YOU WILL BE "LOCKED OUT".**
10. Then work through the sections. **NB** always use drop down menus. Mark sections as complete when you are finished.

Most of the information required on the application is straightforward. Please read the following to avoid making errors on your application:

Nationality details

Nationality – If you are a UK citizen, choose UK national. If you were born in the UK but have a different nationality, you will be asked additional questions. The information you provide will help universities and colleges in determining your eligibility and allow them to assist you with the visa application process, if required.

The ‘More about you’ section in the application gives you the opportunity to share a range of circumstances and support needs – one of these is your eligibility for free school meals. If you have received UK government funded free school meals at any point during your secondary education, select ‘yes’.

Choices:

Enter between 1 and 5 university course choices (Maximum 4 choices only for Medicine, Vet and Dentistry and only one choice of Oxford or Cambridge not both).

Note: you will only be asked to declare any relevant criminal convictions if you apply for certain courses, for example those that involve work with children and vulnerable adults, such as medicine, teaching, or social work. Please read the information provided to avoid ticking the box in error.

Each university will only be able to see your applications to their courses. If you apply to several courses at the same university, they will be able to see all these. Choices are not sent in preference order. UCAS sends an application to all the universities at the same time and they don't know where else you have applied.

Education

Start by clicking **Add place of education**. Type the name of your secondary school and college. If you are linked to a centre, when you click on ‘Add place of education’ you'll be asked if you would like to add it. Select **yes** or **no**. If you've attended another centre, type the name of where you've studied. Once you find your centre, click on the name and the **Exam centre number** will automatically populate. If an exam centre number doesn't appear that's ok, type in the appropriate exam centre number for the college at which you are studying.

Exam centre numbers are 20313 for Sutton Coldfield College, 20051 for James Watt College and 20183 for Matthew Boulton College. Add when you started and finished, and if you're a current student add August as the end date.

Enter all your qualifications regardless of grade achieved, and what you are doing now with **completion**, not start dates.

- ‘A’ level is GCE Advanced level. ‘AS’ level is GCE Advanced Subsidiary level. Adding unit grades for AS subjects is optional. There is no need to put in an AS result where you have completed the ‘A’ level.
“Access” is “Access to HE Diploma”
- BTEC students will need to enter a BTEC registration number which your tutor can supply you with.
- 2027 examinations, mark results as “*pending*”.

Employment

Only enter paid work here, so not everyone will have something to enter here. It's up to you whether you create an employment record here or not, for employer name, put the name of the company. Any work experience or volunteering should be covered in your personal statement. **Remember to mark the section as complete!**

Extra Activities

Please add any activity you have taken part in to prepare for higher education. These include national or regional schemes, university run programmes, summer schools, master classes and taster courses. Open days are not to be listed.

If you haven't attended any such activity, please leave this section blank. **Remember to mark the section as complete!**

Submit and Pay

As you complete the fields, mark each section as completed. When you have finished, **check that there are no error messages**. These are highlighted in colour. When you have completed all sections of the application form, go to the top of your UCAS Hub page in Application Status, **click on review and submit**. At the bottom of the application, click **Accept** and **proceed**. Follow the instructions on the screen.

To submit and pay click **pay now**. Then pay by credit/debit card (you can use someone else's with permission) - £34.50 for 1-5 choices.

Free School Meal fee waiver. On the 'Submit and Pay' section of the application, select 'Apply with waiver' option, under 'Free School Meals Waiver', to submit your application to your school/college.

Your teacher/adviser will have the option to agree your government-funded free school meals eligibility when reviewing your application. (Your school/college must be able to agree you have been in receipt of free school meals for UCAS to waive the application fee.

Your application will then be checked by your tutor and will be returned to you if there are errors. If there are no errors, it will be approved, and the reference added, ready for your application to be sent to UCAS.

For the 2027 cycle, eligible care leavers will not have to pay the UCAS application fee.

To be eligible for the fee waiver, you will be a care leaver – someone who has been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning your 16th birthday. If you are applying from England, Wales or Northern Ireland the fee waiver can be applied up until your 25th birthday, or your 26th birthday if you're applying from Scotland.

The process for eligible care leaver students

1. You must answer 'yes' to the care experience question in the 'Diversity and inclusion' section of the application
2. You must upload supporting information, using document upload. Find out more in our [guide to uploading documents](#).
3. You will receive an email with instructions to contact UCAS to apply for the waiver.
4. You must complete all sections of the application and mark them complete, but do not submit your application yet.
5. You will contact UCAS to confirm your eligibility and UCAS will waive the fee.
6. You can then accept the terms and conditions and submit your application.

The **college** sets deadlines for you to complete your application:

- For applicants to Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Vet. Science:
Friday 2nd October 2026.
- College deadline for all 16 – 19 and adult Access applications:
Friday 27th November 2026.

After this date we are unable to guarantee that your application will reach UCAS by the deadline for your chosen course.

If you meet your deadline, the college has time to check your application, write your reference and send the application to **UCAS by their deadlines: 15th October** for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science, and **13th January** for all other institutions/courses. The earlier it is sent, the better; universities make decisions as soon as they receive applications, and popular courses may fill up early. Miss the college deadline, and you may miss the UCAS deadline, and not be considered at all by some institutions.

Applicants to practise-based music courses at UK Conservatoires apply through UCAS Conservatoires. Further details on the conservatoire application process and how to apply are available at: <https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires/how-apply-through-ucas-conservatoires>.

After you have applied

Head to your UCAS Hub to track your application. Click your application to: see your choices and personal information, view and reply to your offers. You may also receive letters directly from individual universities.

UCAS forwards your application to your chosen universities. The universities then either offer you a place (telling you what you need to achieve), declining you (usually if you have applied unrealistically or to a very high demand university/subject), or invite you for interview. Universities which are offering you a place will ask you to attend a special Open day just for that course. Go, if you possibly can.

Interviews: Usually, you will be interviewed if you are applying for Oxford or Cambridge or for medicine, veterinary science, nursing, or other health related courses, teaching or social work at any university. The Careers team can provide help and advice regarding interview preparation for Academic interviews.

When all the universities have replied, in your UCAS Hub you should select a Firm (first) choice and may select an insurance choice as well (a lower offer which you would take if you did not get your firm choice). All other outstanding offers must then be declined.

If you do not receive any offers, you will be able to make a supplementary application from the 25th February 2027 until the 1st July. This is called **UCAS Extra** and you apply for one course at a time through UCAS Hub. For more information go to www.ucas.com/extra

Be available when your results come out. If you get what you need for your firm choice, you have that place. If you just miss, you should check to see if they have accepted you anyway. If not, if you have the grades for your second choice, then you have that place. If you've done better than you needed to, you may be able to apply for a different course. If you do not have a place, you will be eligible to apply for a course through **Clearing**, for any course that has vacancies. Staff will be available during this period to advise you about the process.

GUIDANCE FOR PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Your personal statement is your opportunity to 'sell yourself' to the universities/colleges that you are applying to. It can make the difference between being offered a place on a course, and being rejected, so it must be as good as possible. It should be around 47 lines in length or 4000 characters, including spaces. Do not use borders, headers or footers.

Extra reading/research around your chosen degree subject is recommended to boost successful personal statements especially for competitive courses. www.studential.com and <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk> provides examples of personal statements in degree choices and information regarding academic interview preparation.

The UCAS personal statement builder can be very useful if you are having difficulty in getting started – [Writing your personal statement | UCAS](#)

New format – 3 questions

Question 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?

This is your opportunity to showcase your passion and knowledge of your chosen subject area and to demonstrate to universities and colleges why it's a good fit for you and your future ambitions.

Examples of what you might talk about here are:

- **Your motivations for studying this course(s)**

Have you been inspired by a key role model or moment in your life? Maybe it's a subject you love and want to pursue further. We're all driven by something and it's important to talk about how yours has led you to this course or subject area.

- **Your knowledge of this subject area and interests**

Perhaps there's a particular subject area you've researched and can't wait to learn more about. A book or subject expert doing great things that have sparked your interest? Universities and colleges want to see you have done your research so they can be confident this is something you will enjoy and excel in. This is a great place to highlight super-curricular activities as evidence of curiosity and interest in the subject outside of the classroom.

- **Your future plans and why this is a good fit for you**

If you already have a particular profession in mind you could talk about how you'll use this to launch your career. If you don't, think about what's important to you and your future, and how the knowledge gained from your chosen course(s) will help you achieve this.

Question 2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject

This is your chance to shout about the relevant or transferable skills you've gained from your formal education and highlight your understanding of how they will help you succeed in this subject area.

Examples of what you might talk about here are:

- **How your studies or training relate to your chosen course(s) or subject area**
This could be current or previous studies within a school, college, training provider, or even a short online university course – any form of formal education. The main thing here is to focus on what's most recent and relevant to your chosen course(s). If you are no longer in full-time education, use section three to talk about your experiences since leaving.
- **What relevant or transferable skills you have that make you a great candidate**
Maybe there are a couple of subjects that have helped you develop a core set of skills required for your chosen course(s). Or, a particular module that helped you understand where your interests and strengths lie.
- **Any relevant educational achievements**
Universities and colleges will see your grades elsewhere on your application so don't waste time talking about these. Consider accomplishments like winning a school or national competition, serving as a student ambassador or team captain, or landing the lead role in a play.

Question 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

This is your chance to talk about any other activities you have undertaken outside of your formal education or personal experiences which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section is likely to be highly personal to you and anything you do include should reflect on why you're including it.

Examples of what you might talk about here are:

- **Work experience, employment, or volunteering**
Whether it's in-person work experience at your local school or virtual work experience through [Springpod](#), or volunteering at a dog shelter, the key thing here is for you to reflect on your experiences and the skills gained relevant to your chosen course.
- **Personal life experiences or responsibilities**
Is there a situation you've personally overcome that has influenced your decision? Are there responsibilities such as caring for a family member that has helped you develop essential qualities for the course like resilience and empathy?
- **Hobbies and any extracurricular or outreach activities**
Think sports, reading, community work, summer schools – any activities outside of your studies that help further showcase why you'd make a great student.
- **Achievements outside of school or college**
This could be a position of responsibility such as captain for your local club, a musical

achievement, competition you won, or a qualification you've attained outside of the classroom.

- **Post-education activities**

If you're no longer in full-time education, it's a good idea to detail what you've been doing since and how this has equipped you with the skills and qualities for your desired course(s).

Important points to note:

DO NOT:

- Restate information already on the application form.
- Include statements about yourself without giving examples.
- Provide information more appropriate in a reference provided by your tutor (e.g. about your strengths as a student).

Common mistakes:

- Omission of above points.
- Poor grammar and spelling (do a spell check!).
- Negative comments.

SAVE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT IN 'WORD' AND THEN PASTE IT INTO YOUR APPLICATION

Please Note that all personal statements received in support of an application are subject to checks for plagiarism by UCAS. Any statements showing a potential level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service. Applicants and their chosen universities will be notified that the UCAS Similarity Detection service has identified their personal statement as potentially plagiarised. The decision about what action, if any, to take regarding notified cases will be made by individual admissions tutors.

Generating (and then copying, pasting and submitting) all or a large part of your personal statement from an AI tool such as ChatGPT, and presenting it as your own words, **could be considered cheating by universities and colleges** and could affect your chances of an offer. When you complete your application, you must declare that your personal statement hasn't been copied or provided from another source, including **artificial intelligence software**.

Look out for special support sessions from local universities to help you with your personal statement, organised by your Careers team throughout the year.

A GUIDE TO HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

Universities providing higher education can charge up to £9,790 a year for their courses. Colleges and private institutions providing higher education can charge up to £6,525 a year for their courses. If you're studying an accelerated degree course, you could get up to £11,750. Universities charging the maximum must meet strict criteria to make sure that all eligible students, regardless of background, can access those courses. Please contact the relevant university or college for further information. You won't have to pay your tuition fees upfront.

Student finance is changing from 2027. If your course starts before 1st January 2027 you should apply for the current student finance. If your course starts on or after 1st January 2027 and you need student finance, you could apply for the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE).

Government loans are available from Student Finance England to cover your tuition fees and help towards your living costs. You don't pay anything back until you've left university or college and your income is over £25,000 per year. *** All HE Finance figures are correct as of April 2026.**

For more information about the financial support available for students going to university in September 2027 go to [SFE - Lifelong Learning Entitlement \(LLE\)](https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk) (studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk)

Scholarships, bursaries and grants are available at different universities; for further details go to <https://www.ucas.com/finance/additional-funding> or view individual university websites. There are extra sources of financial support available in the form of scholarships, bursaries, and grants. Unlike student loans, you don't have to pay these back – they're essentially free money.

Scholarships, bursaries, and grants are offered by lots of different providers, and all work a little differently. Some course providers offer their own bursaries to help students progress in their studies. These might be offered if you're involved in particular projects, certain subject areas, or specialisms.

Some students might receive funding based on their academic attainment, while others may be eligible because of their personal circumstances.

Students in higher education can apply for money directly from their university or college on top of any other student finance. You do not have to pay this money back.

Each university or college has their own rules about bursaries, scholarships and awards, for example:

- who qualifies
- how much you can get
- how to apply

Any money you get is paid directly to you by your university or college.

Some companies will give **sponsorships** to students while they are at university, most often for courses in engineering, I.T or business; you will usually work for them during university holidays, and sometimes after you have completed your degree. Start researching during the summer term of your first year. Further details from www.scholarship-search.org.uk and

If you are studying for a degree in **Social Work**, you may be entitled to receive a non-repayable bursary only available from your **second year of study**. For further information see <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students/4860.aspx>

Students studying Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health subjects as a second degree may be able to apply for a student finance loan to cover part or all of the tuition fee.

NHS Learning Support Fund – additional funding support available to healthcare students.

This includes:

- a non-repayable training grant of £5,000 per year (for new and continuing students)
- If you have at least one dependent child under 15 years old (or under 17 if registered with special educational needs) you can also receive Parental Support. This is a grant of £2,000 per academic year or a pro-rata amount for part-time students.
- additional payments for students in specialisms or regions struggling to recruit.
- help towards additional travel and accommodation costs to clinical placements over your normal daily travel costs.
- an exceptional hardship fund of up to £3,000 per student per academic year.

For further information visit: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-learning-support-fund>

A YEAR OUT

Many students choose to delay their entry into higher education, opting to take out a year to do paid or voluntary work in the UK or overseas. There are a lot of exciting opportunities open to 'gap year' students. Most higher education courses accept – or indeed welcome – deferred entry as long as you convince them that you will spend the year productively. The advantages include having new experiences, travelling, becoming more independent, thinking further about your plans, gaining work experience, having a break from study and earning money. On the other hand, certain skills, for example related to Maths or Science, can become rusty.

Your options include **paid work**. You could perhaps continue with a part-time job, or, more ambitiously, go for a special gap year programme. For example, the 'Year in Industry' scheme - <https://www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry> - organises high level industrial placements with support and training, and there are agencies which organise au pairing work in America and Canada. You could try **voluntary work**, at home, for instance doing some kind of social work, or abroad, for example teaching English, or doing archaeological or environmental work. With voluntary work, expenses and 'pocket money' are usually paid. Again, you do not always have to find this work yourself, you can apply to agencies that exist for this purpose. Sometimes if you want to work abroad, you will have to raise some money to pay for your air fare. Voluntary opportunities are available from exhibitors at our Volunteer Fairs held annually, look out for details advertising these events on your Learning Landing Page, X (Twitter) and Facebook.

To find out more:

See websites such as:

- www.campamerica.co.uk
- <https://www.campleaders.com/gb/>
- www.cityyear.org.uk
- www.bunac.org/
- www.yearoutgroup.org
- <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer>
- www.gapforce.org
- www.raleighinternational.org/

If you know that you want to take a year out when you do your UCAS application, you can indicate this on the application form, or leave your application until the following year (if you do this, bear in mind that you will need to apply in the Autumn). If you decide after you have applied, you can ask your first choice, university to defer your entry.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This page informs you about the kind of employment opportunities available to Advanced level students and how to gain access to these.

What opportunities are available?

As an Advanced level student, you should be looking to build upon the qualifications you will have gained at college. Many employment opportunities aimed at Advanced level students and those with GCSEs at A-C/4-9, will offer you the chance to gain work-based qualifications which will help you progress in your career. For example, some companies run their own management training schemes which qualify you to manage in their own organisations. Others will offer you the choice to do Higher National Diplomas or Certificates (HNDs or HNCs,) Foundation Degrees or other professional qualifications. 'Apprenticeships' offer training to Diploma Level 2 and 3, in many kinds of work and some employers now offer higher apprenticeships enabling you to study Foundation degree or degree level qualifications.

Where do I look?

notgoingtouni is a website that has information for school and college leavers to help them make informed decisions about their future by showing the opportunities that exist outside of traditional university such as apprenticeships, sponsored degrees, diplomas, gap years, distance learning and jobs go to <http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk>

Apprenticeships

If you are interested in starting work and you are keen to learn some skills and gain qualifications, then an Apprenticeship could be the right option for you. On an Apprenticeship you study for qualifications while working and you learn the skills you need for the job you are doing. Apprentices are taken on directly by employers and work alongside other employees. Training takes place while you work, and you'll also spend some time at a college or work-based learning provider.

Apprenticeships are available across a wide range of different job sectors, including animal care, media, business, construction, health, ICT, travel and Retail. For some job areas an Apprenticeship is one of the main ways to start a career. The most popular job areas to take an Apprenticeship in are Business, Administration and Finance, Hair and Beauty, Travel and Tourism, Health and Care, Hospitality and Engineering.

For further information regarding Higher and Degree Apprenticeships and to search for apprenticeship vacancies you can visit the following websites:

<https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>

For current apprenticeship vacancies through Birmingham Metropolitan view our website, [Apprenticeships - BMet College](#), click onto Apprenticeship Vacancies.

Many household names, e.g., Jaguar Land Rover, Tesco, BMW, KPMG and PWC recruit well in advance of college leaving dates, so if you intend to gain employment after your course, you should be looking at their websites to keep up to date with current vacancies. The Evening Mail publishes hundreds of vacancies every Thursday. You can also contact employers directly.

What do I need to do?

- Prepare your CV:
- Fill in application forms carefully.
- Get advice on how to approach interviews.
- Check websites regularly, e.g. <http://www.fish4.co.uk/jobs/west-midlands/all>
- www.reed.co.uk, www.indeed.co.uk and www.monster.co.uk
- Consult Jobcentreplus for local vacancies at your local Job Centre or look on-line at [Find a job \(dwp.gov.uk\)](http://Find a job (dwp.gov.uk))

What help can I get?

There are computer programs such as **Xello** which can help suggest career ideas. A lot of information is available - ask if you cannot find what you want. **See page 4 for details on how to login to use Xello.**

Help with all the above is available from your Careers Adviser see page 28 for contact details.

Who we are and how to contact the Careers team:

Sutton Coldfield College

Careers Advisor: Francis Page

Room SC146

Telephone: 0121 503 8559

Email: Francis.Page@bmet.ac.uk

Matthew Boulton College

Careers Advisor: Donna Woodley

Room MB307

Telephone: 0121 362 1707

Email: Donna.Woodley@bmet.ac.uk

James Watt College

Careers Advisor: Marcia Roberts-Grey

Room: JW013

Telephone: 0121 325 2224

Email: Marcia.Roberts-Grey@bmet.ac.uk

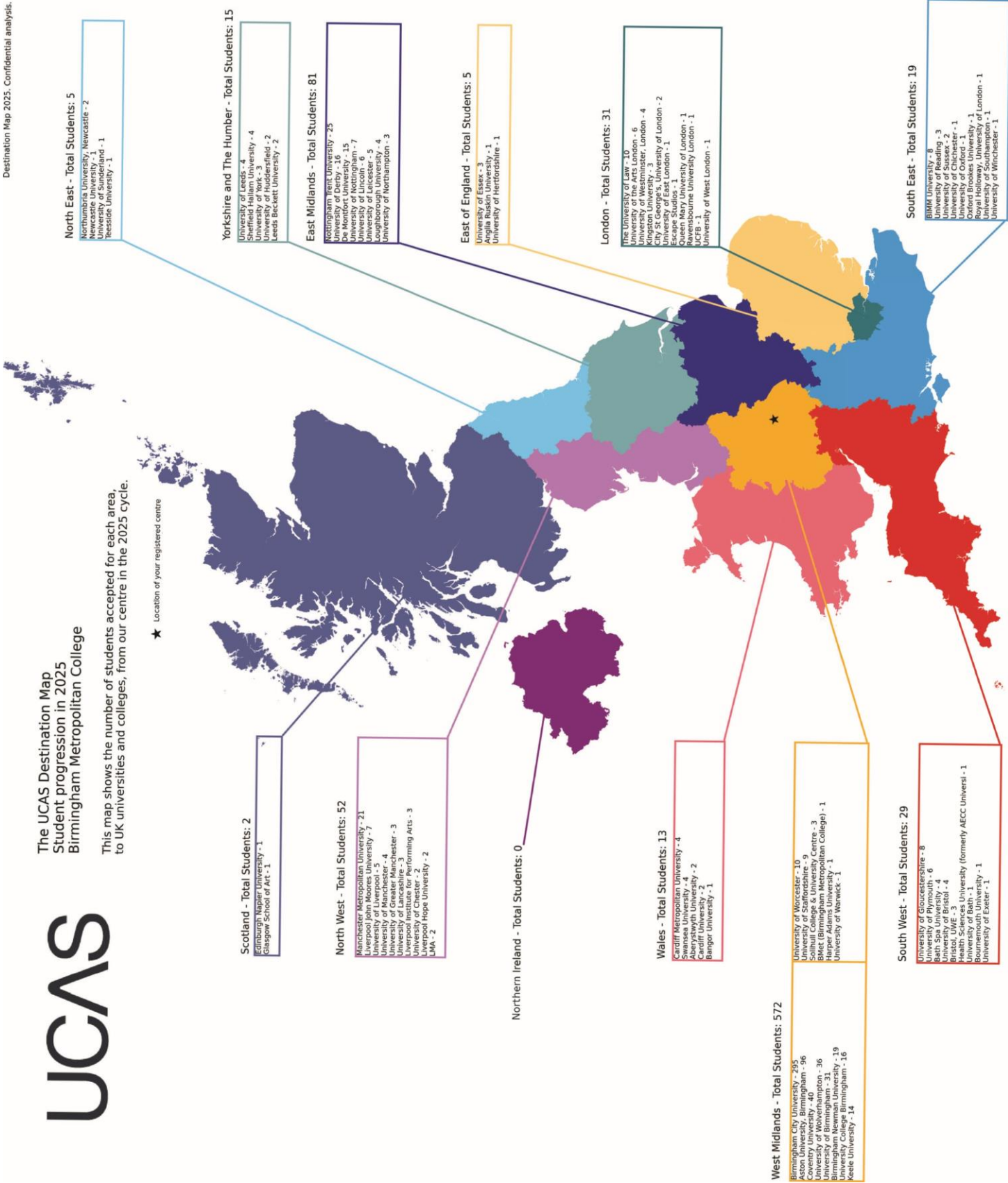
Careers Team Leader – Dawn Killeen

Telephone: 0121 325 2286

Email: Dawn.Killeen@bmet.ac.uk

Careers Team Email: Careers@bmet.ac.uk

NOTES FOR YOUR RESEARCH



Erdington Skills Centre

Edwards Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B24 9EW

t: 0121 446 4545

James Watt College

Aldridge Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B44 8NE

t: 0121 446 4545

Matthew Boulton College

Jennens Road, Birmingham, B4 7PS

t: 0121 446 4545

Sutton Coldfield College

Lichfield Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2NW

t: 0121 446 4545

 BMet  @BMetC  BMetCollege