

#AimingHigh @HighdownSixthForm

A presentation for Year 11



Aims of this talk

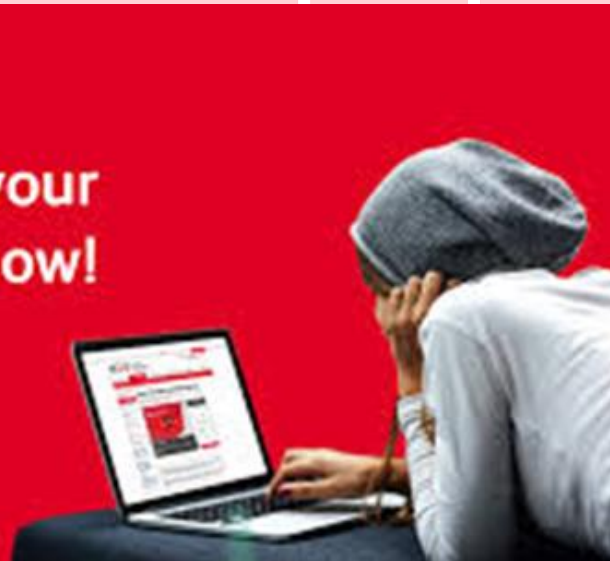
- To give you early advice on researching and applying for competitive university courses
- To give advice on choosing A-Level subjects
- To give advice on how to create an outstanding personal statement
- To explain the Aiming High programme at Highdown



Researching and applying for courses

UCAS Apply is
open – **start your
application now!**

UCAS



What is the significance of these numbers?

- 370
- 37,000
- 5
- 1



What is UCAS?

- For those who don't know, UCAS is the organization that deals with university applications in the UK.
- You don't apply to individual universities but choose up to 5 university courses on the online UCAS application form.
- UCAS really has 2 purposes for Sixth Form students
 - For Year 12 – it is a really useful tool for advice and research.
 - For Year 13 – it is the application portal. It is the only way to apply to UK universities.





What is the Russell Group?

- Formed in 1994 at a meeting convened in Russell Square.
- An association of 24 major research intensive universities committed to maintaining the highest standards of research, education and knowledge transfer.
- The purpose of The Russell Group is to provide thought leadership and strategic direction for its members.
- Representing just 12% of the higher education sector, the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise found that over 60% of the UK's very best ('world leading') research took place in Russell Group universities.



Last year, 40% of
Highdown UCAS
applicants went to
Russell Group
universities

The Russell Group

University of Birmingham

University of Bristol

University of Cambridge

Cardiff University

Durham University

University of Edinburgh

University of Exeter

University of Glasgow

Imperial College London

King's College London

University of Leeds

University of Liverpool

LSE (London School of
Economics & Political
Science)

University of Manchester

Newcastle University

University of Nottingham

University of Oxford

Queen Mary University of
London

Queen's University Belfast

University of Sheffield

University of Southampton

UCL (University College
London)

University of Warwick

University of York



What grades would I need?



- AAA-A*AA for Oxford with a few A*A*A requirements
- A*A*A and in some cases higher for Cambridge
- At least AAA in most cases for Medicine
- English at Sheffield AAB
- Chemistry at Durham A*AA
- Good GCSEs still important and some course will have specific requirements
 - eg some Medicine courses
- BUT there are many other degree courses which will require lower grades than this – and many offer a **CONTEXTUALISED OFFER** scheme



Choosing the right subjects



Facilitating Subjects? – See www.informedchoices.ac.uk

- Some A-level subjects are more frequently required than others – these used to be called ‘facilitating subjects’
- Maths and Further Maths; Physics; Biology; Chemistry; History;
- Geography; Modern and classical languages; English Literature.
- In **most** cases **3** facilitating subjects are **not required** for entry to a degree at a Russell Group university – but many courses do require you to have studied one or more facilitating subjects.
- But for some degrees only **one** facilitating subject is required and there are also courses with no specific requirements or where subjects are desirable but not an absolute requirement.



Some University Courses will Require Particular A Levels



- Generally, medical schools require Chemistry at A level and often ask for Biology as well.
- One other science subject is also often required, for example Physics or Maths.
- Dental schools require Chemistry at A level and often ask for Biology as well.
- Vet schools vary in their requirements but you will probably be expected to have Chemistry as an A level together with two from Biology, Physics or Maths.



Some University Courses will require particular A-levels

- Not surprisingly, many degree courses will require that the subject itself has been studied at A level
- eg Maths (or even Further Mathematics for some Maths Degrees)
- There are some courses at university for which studying that subject at A level is not necessary. Law and Psychology are examples of this

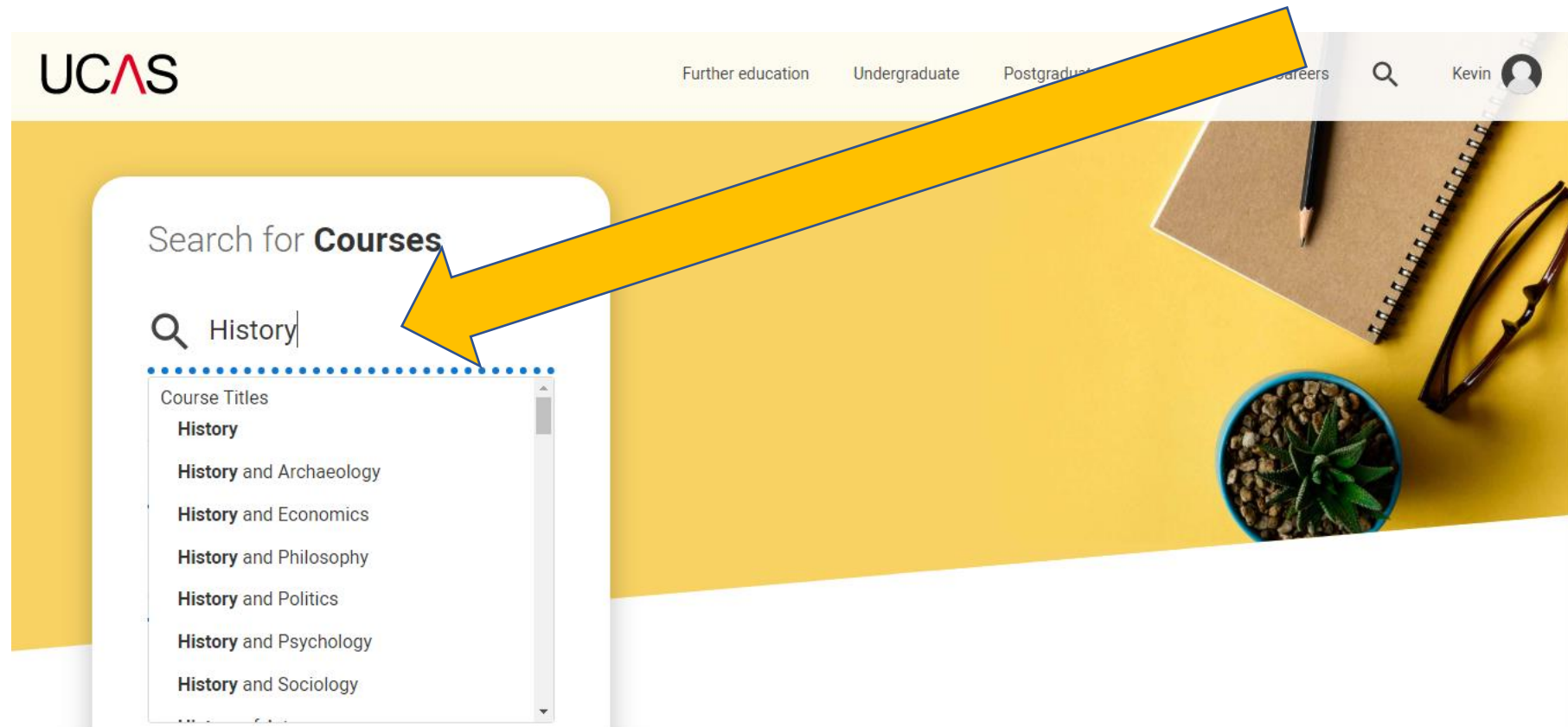


An Introduction to Course Search



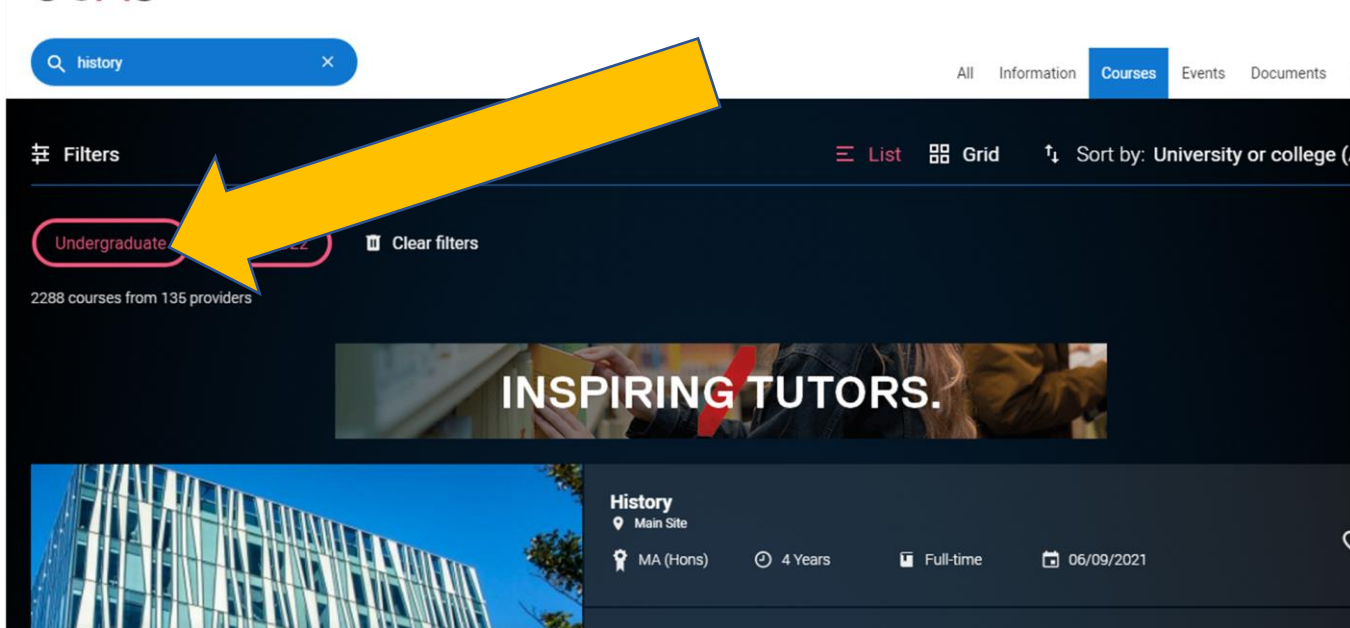
How to use UCAS Course Search

- First off – follow this link - <https://digital.ucas.com/search>
- Next – try typing the subject you are interested in here. Remember, you are interested in **Undergraduate Courses**



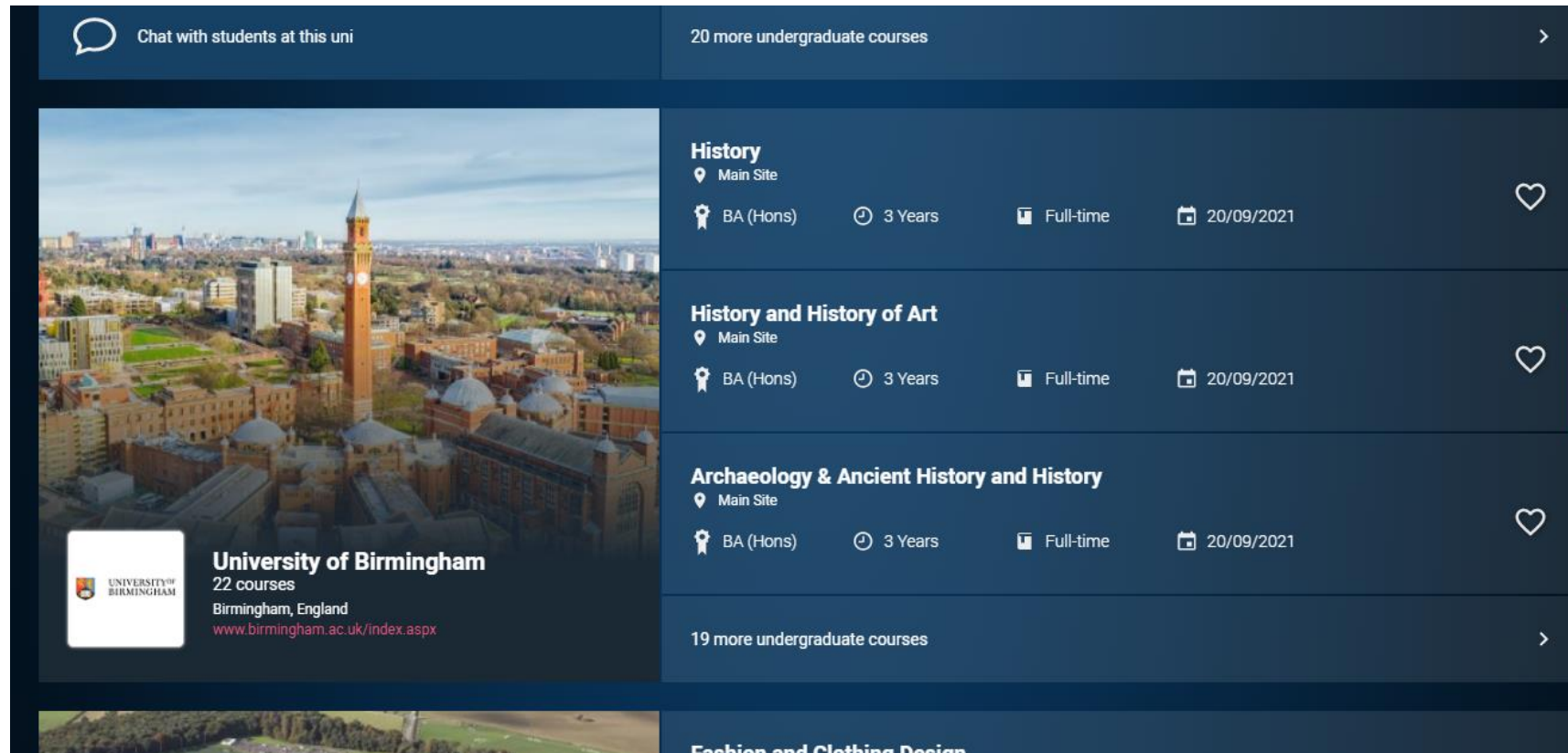
How to use UCAS Course Search

- Next, you will see a list of courses, usually organized by alphabetical list of universities – my simple search for ‘history’ came back with 2288 courses containing some element of history, at 135 different universities!



How to use UCAS Course Search

- If you click on one of the courses, you will get more detail on that course. Let's use Birmingham as an example



The screenshot displays the UCAS Course Search interface for the University of Birmingham. At the top, there is a dark blue header bar with a chat icon and the text "Chat with students at this uni" on the left, and "20 more undergraduate courses" with a right-pointing arrow on the right. Below the header, the main content area is divided into two columns. The left column features a large aerial photograph of the University of Birmingham campus, including the iconic clock tower. Overlaid on the bottom left of this image is the University of Birmingham logo and the text: "University of Birmingham", "22 courses", "Birmingham, England", and the website URL "www.birmingham.ac.uk/index.aspx". The right column lists three undergraduate courses, each with a heart icon for favoriting. The courses are: "History", "History and History of Art", and "Archaeology & Ancient History and History". Each course entry includes a location pin icon and the text "Main Site", a degree icon and "BA (Hons)", a clock icon and "3 Years", a book icon and "Full-time", and a calendar icon and "20/09/2021". At the bottom of the right column, there is a link to "19 more undergraduate courses" with a right-pointing arrow. The bottom of the screenshot shows the beginning of a fourth course entry, "Fashion and Clothing Design".

Chat with students at this uni

20 more undergraduate courses

History
Main Site
BA (Hons) 3 Years Full-time 20/09/2021

History and History of Art
Main Site
BA (Hons) 3 Years Full-time 20/09/2021

Archaeology & Ancient History and History
Main Site
BA (Hons) 3 Years Full-time 20/09/2021

19 more undergraduate courses

University of Birmingham
22 courses
Birmingham, England
www.birmingham.ac.uk/index.aspx

Fashion and Clothing Design

How to use UCAS Course Search

- You can see that you can find out about the course, the application process and the important entry requirements
- There are also links to 'virtual open days'

The screenshot shows the UCAS Course Search results for a Bachelor of Arts (with Honours) - BA (Hons) course at the University of Birmingham. The filter bar at the top includes: Qualification type (Bachelor of Arts (with Honours) - BA (Hons)), Location (Main Site), Start date (20 September 2021), Study mode (Full-time), and Duration (3 years). The course summary section features a TEF Gold award and text stating: "University of Birmingham has opted into the TEF and received a Gold award. Find out more about the TEF." The sidebar on the right lists open days for the University of Birmingham - Undergraduate Virtual Open Day - College of Life and Environmental Sciences (22 JUN) and the University of Birmingham - Undergraduate Virtual Open Day - College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (23 JUN). Arrows from the text on the left point to the following elements: "Course summary" (blue arrow), "How to apply" (orange arrow), "Entry requirements" (yellow arrow), "Fees and funding" (light blue arrow), "Provider information" (light blue arrow), and "virtual open days" (red arrow pointing to the sidebar).

Qualification type
Bachelor of Arts (with Honours) - BA (Hons)

Location
Main Site

Start date
20 September 2021

Study mode
Full-time

Duration
3 years

Apply

Course summary

TEF Gold

University of Birmingham has opted into the TEF and received a Gold award.
[Find out more about the TEF.](#)

Studying History is an exciting chance to investigate global unfamiliar territory and to question some of the myths, preconceptions and prejudices that surround the subject. We offer a wide choice of specialist courses taught by academic staff world-renowned for their teaching and research. The size and quality of the department enables us to offer you a wide range of options across

Open days

22 JUN University of Birmingham - Undergraduate Virtual Open Day - College of Life and Environmental Sciences
Undergraduate

23 JUN University of Birmingham - Undergraduate Virtual Open Day - College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
Undergraduate

[Feedback](#)

How to use UCAS Course Search

- Entry requirements are a vital part of research – here is an example of the grades you would *usually** need to study this course here

Entry requirements		
Qualification requirements		
UCAS Tariff	Not accepted	
A level	AAB	To include A level History, Medieval History or Ancient History at grade A.
Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma (first teaching from September 2016)	DDM	BTEC Extended Diploma: DDM, plus an A at A-level in the required subject/s mentioned above. BTEC Diploma: DD, plus an A at A-level in the required subject/s mentioned above. BTEC Subsidiary Diploma: D, plus AB at A-level, including an A in the required A-level subject/s mentioned above.
International Baccalaureate Diploma	32 points	6,6,5 in Higher Level subjects.

**more about this later!*

Creating an outstanding personal statement



Advising students on personal statements

- Statements can be a starting point for interview discussion
- They should focus on the chosen course(s)
- They should give evidence of serious and sustained engagement with the subject and its core skills
- Don't just list – explain and explore
- Care and attention to detail matter
- Beware Googled quotations: 'I have always...'; 'As Santayana once said....'
- They should be true!



Structuring the Personal Statement

- I want to study...

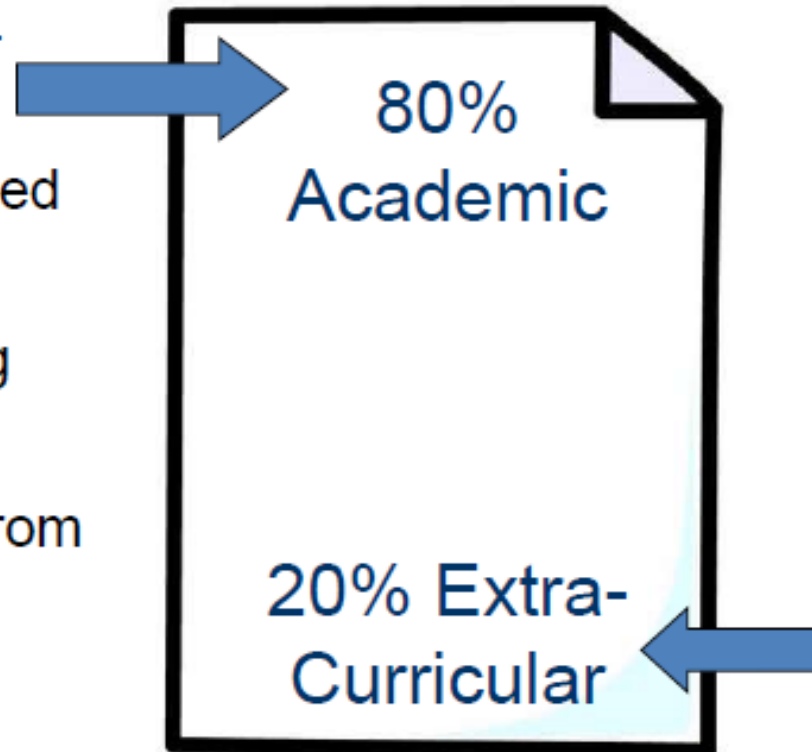
- I have read/watched/visited ...

- It was interesting because...

- What I learned from this was....

- What was challenging was...

- What I've done to develop my skills is...



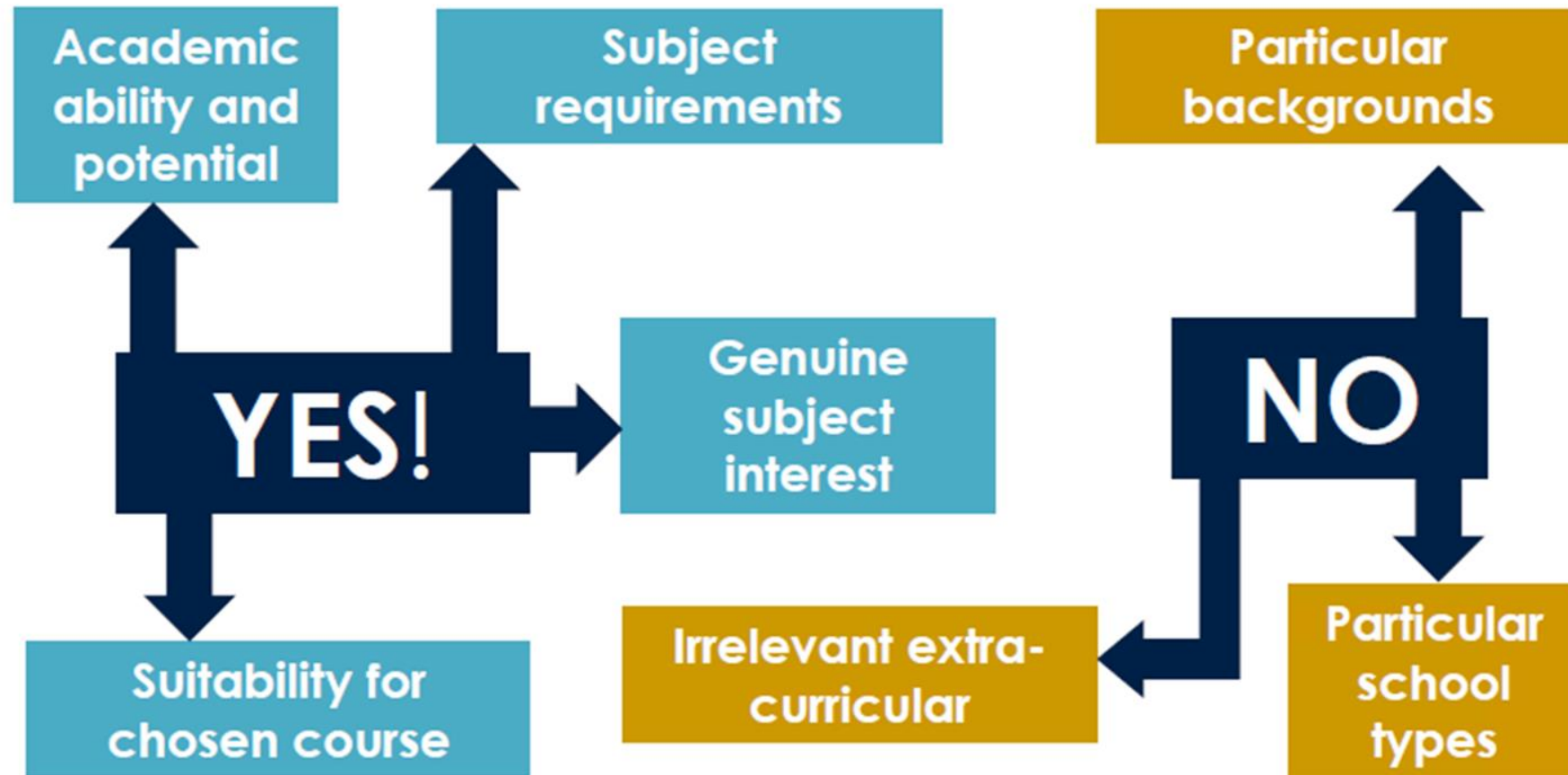
- In my spare time I play...

- I had some work experience at...

- And I'm so organised and conscientious...



What are Oxford tutors looking for?



Super-curricular activities

- Has anybody heard this phrase before?



Supercurricular activities

Activities that you do outside of school that are to do with your subject

- Summer Schools
- Work placements (esp. medicine, law, teaching)
- Public lectures
- Voluntary work
- Competitions
- Online courses
- Opportunities in the local area (and beyond)
- Reading!



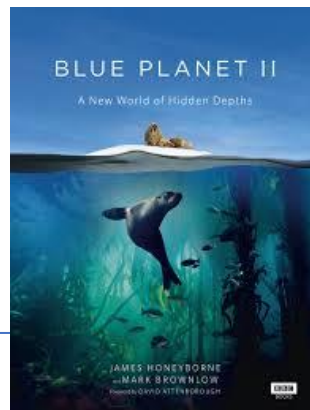
- Read magazines



- Listen to the radio / download podcasts / watch TED talks



- Watch more TV (the right kind of TV!)



- Subscribe to a MOOC – Massive Open Online Course (many are free!)



- Try a virtual museum visit



- Check out 'subject specific' societies (the chances are, most A-Level subjects have a 'society' that have free resources for Sixth Form students)



- Follow academics on social media (or be old-fashioned, and write to them!)





Sixth Form Applications - Now open

[APPLY HERE](#)

> [About Highdown](#)

> [Sixth Form](#)

> [Learning at Highdown](#)

> [Student and Parent Zone](#)





In this section

- > [Independent Learning Resources](#)
- > [Super-Curricular Learning](#)
- > [Wider Reading](#)

Study Skills

[Home](#) > [Sixth Form](#) > [Support & Guidance](#) > [Study Skills](#)

Use of the Library and Sixth Form Study Space

You are welcome to use the school library and the Sixth Form study space for a quiet place to study during school hours. You can borrow 4 library items at a time with a loan period of 2 weeks available from a large collection of A Level text books and other 16+ resources easily identified by a yellow spot on the spine. You can access your library account on the web-based system Eclipse to search for books in the catalogue, request, renew and review titles. The Librarian is available to help you. When there are no classes in the library, you can use the whole area and the PCs for quiet study. When classes are coming into the library as computers and rectangular tables may then be occupied.

If there is a lesson in the library, you should:

- Be a good role model to the younger students
 - Show respect to the teacher by not entering while they are talking and not wandering in and out mid-lesson.
- If you need to speak to a student in the library, wait

At all times:

- No eating or drinking anything other than water
- No answering your phone or letting it disturb others
- No MP3 players, games consoles or anything similar allowed



#AimingHigh at Highdown



Aiming High Group – Year 12

- Students initially identified using GCSE data, but also internal tracking
- Regular sessions on subjects like
 - What are Russell Group universities?
 - What are competitive subjects?
 - Super Curricular activities
 - Applying for UCAS
 - Researching Bursaries
 - Academic competitions



Aiming High Group – Year 12

- Support on applying for Summer Schools and Taster Days
 - Sutton Trust Summer Schools
 - UNIQ – Oxford Summer Schools
 - Social Mobility Foundation
 - Widening access to Medicine
- Guest speakers
 - Former students
 - University outreach teams

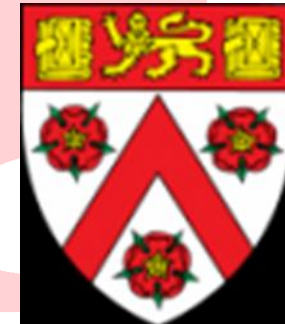
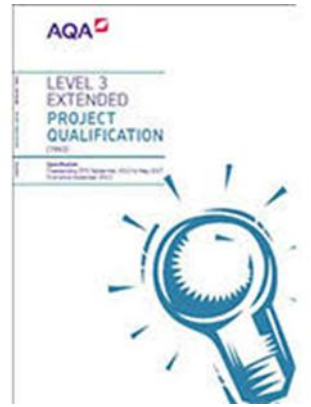


Social
Mobility
Foundation



Aiming High Group – Year 12

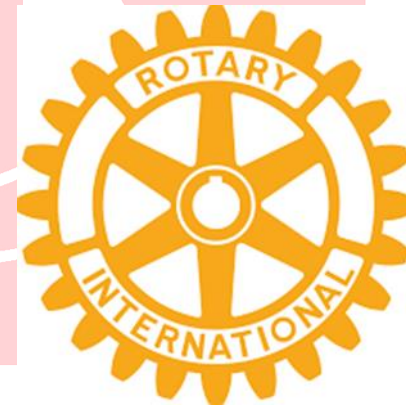
- Encouragement for students who take the EPQ qualification
- Links with University College, Oxford and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
- Trip to St Catherines, Oxford & University College, Oxford
- Participation in local cluster events



Aiming High Group – Year 13

- Small group seminars on UCAS course research and effective applications
- Participation in Reading Cluster Oxbridge interview support
- Reading Abbey Rotary Club Mock Interviews
- Use of local network to prepare students for Oxbridge and Medicine interviews





UCAS



Coming Soon....

- The Road to Sixth Form resources

- Induction Day – 27th June

HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE ON THE ROAD TO POST-16 STUDY			
CHEMISTRY			
 Read/Research	 Watch/Listen	 Revisit	 Other Tasks
<p>Required Textbook: You will need to purchase this textbook for September. You may choose to do this now and start looking at the course content.</p> <p>AQA Chemistry 2nd edition: A level Year1 and AS. Authors Ted Lister and Janet Rensaw. ISBN: 978-0-19-835181-8</p> <p>CPG Head start book. You can purchase a paper copy of this book or it is free to</p>	<p>It would be a great idea to watch any one of the TED talks found on this link: https://www.ted.com/talks?sort=relevance&topics%5B%5D=Science&q=chemistry</p> <p>Listen to episodes of the following podcasts on your usual podcast player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chemistry World Book Club• New Scientist Weekly	<p>In year 1 there are a number of A level topics that build on your GCSE knowledge. By fully understanding these GCSE topics you will be able to access the A level topics more easily. These topics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Atomic structure• Moles calculations• Bonding• Equilibria• Organic molecules <p>Maths skills: section 1 (1.1 - 1.15) https://en.calameo.com/read/000777721dc7bc9b4572e?authid=3XeN09XfQP12</p>	<p>Pick an article from The New Scientist or The Oxford Scientist that interests you. Then summarise the article in a few sentences.</p> <p>https://www.newscientist.com/ http://oxsci.org/category/news/chemistry/</p> <p>Completing and marking some of the tasks found on this link would put you into a really good place for when you start year 12: http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/oxed/secondary/science/Science_A_Level_Transition_Pack_Chemistry.pdf</p>



**HIGHDOWN SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE**

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