



DISCOVER
BECKY HIGH

Sixth



SIXTH FORM

**UCAS AND FURTHER
EDUCATION GUIDE**

2026 - 2027

BEACONSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL SIXTH FORM

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1. Introduction and Purpose of This Guide

This guide is intended for parents and carers of students in Years 12 and 13 at Beaconsfield High School. The post-18 landscape has become increasingly complex, with a wide range of academic and vocational routes now available alongside traditional university study. Making informed decisions requires early planning, careful research and a clear understanding of application processes and deadlines.

While most students at selective schools continue to apply successfully to UK universities, it is important for families to be aware of the full range of options, including degree apprenticeships, sponsored degrees, studying abroad and structured school leaver programmes. Each pathway has different timelines, financial implications and entry requirements.

This guide explains the main post-18 routes available, outlines the UCAS application process, summarises key decision points, and clarifies the support provided by Beaconsfield High School throughout Years 12 and 13. It is designed to be read alongside information shared directly with students and parents during the school year.

2. Overview of Post-18 Options

Students leaving Sixth Form typically choose from the following routes:

- UK university via UCAS
- Degree apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships
- Studying abroad (USA, Europe and other English speaking countries)
- Employment, gap years or a combination of the above

Students are encouraged to explore options early in Year 12 so that decisions are based on careful research rather than deadlines.

3. School Timeline and Key Milestones

Year 12

Spring Term

- Careers guidance and individual advice
- University and futures information events

Summer Term

- End of year examinations
- Predicted grades issued
- UCAS registration and initial application preparation
- Early applicant drafting begins (Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science)
- Attendance at university open days encouraged

Year 13

Autumn Term

- Early applicant internal deadline: end of September
- Main UCAS internal deadline: beginning of December

Spring Term

- University offers received
- UCAS equal consideration deadline: mid January
- UCAS Extra opens (February)

Summer Term

- Firm and insurance choices confirmed (May)
- A Level examinations (June)
- Results Day and Clearing support (August)
- Exact dates are confirmed annually and shared directly with families.

4. Applying to University (UK)

UCAS Overview

UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) is the central application system for UK universities. Students may apply for up to five courses (four for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science) and can hold a maximum of two offers (firm and insurance). Successful applications depend on:

- Careful course and university research
- Realistic consideration of predicted grades
- Evidence of academic engagement beyond the curriculum

UCAS Conservatoire run a slightly separate process for some drama/music/theatre schools. Additionally some drama/theatre schools will accept direct applications.

5. Choosing a Subject

Your teachers, form tutor, and the Sixth Form Team are here to support students through this process, but students will still need to do a lot of their own individual research: no one can – or should - make these important decisions for you. Students typically choose their subject using one or more of the following approaches:

- **Subject led:** continuing an A Level subject they enjoy and excel in
- **Career led:** choosing a degree required for a specific profession (e.g. Medicine, Architecture)
- **Interest led:** selecting a subject aligned with a strong academic curiosity

Choosing the right subject is critical; changing subject once at university is possible but not common.

We encourage students to use the [Unifrog](#) and [UCAS](#) platforms to search for universities and courses.

6. Types of Degree Courses: Common undergraduate course structures include:

- **Single Honours** – one main subject
- **Joint or Dual Honours** – two subjects studied equally
- **Combined Honours** – multiple related subjects
- **Major/Minor** – uneven split between subjects
- **Integrated Master's** – undergraduate and postgraduate study combined (4–5 years)
- **Degrees with Placement or Study Abroad** – usually four years
- **Foundation Year** – additional preparatory year before a degree

Most UK universities operate a modular system, although some courses (e.g. Medicine and courses at Oxford and Cambridge) are more structured.

7. Choosing a Course

When comparing courses, students should consider:

- Course content and module choice
- Assessment methods (exams, coursework, practical work)
- Contact time and independent study expectations
- Length of the course
- Likelihood of meeting entry requirements

Courses with similar titles can vary significantly between universities.

8. Early Applicants and Competitive Courses

Some courses and universities require earlier applications, typically by **15 October**:

- Oxford and Cambridge
- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Veterinary Science

These applications often involve additional admissions tests and interviews. Early applicants must begin preparation in Year 12 and demonstrate strong academic engagement and, where relevant, appropriate work experience.

It is also worth remembering that **Oxbridge** usually requires candidates to have around eight GCSE grades scoring level 8/9. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford>
<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply>

9. Admissions Tests

Some courses require admissions or aptitude tests. Students must check:

- Registration deadlines
- Test dates and locations
- Test content

Most admissions tests happen between August and November the year before you're due to start your studies. Some have a registration deadline **before** you need to submit your UCAS application. It is the students' responsibility to be aware of test requirements.

10. Visits and Open Days

The best way to get a sense of what you might be looking for and a feel for different universities is to visit a few of them for Open Days. These are held in the Summer and again in the Autumn. However, we recommend that you visit generally in Year 12 when your workload is less than in Year 13.

At Open Days you will be able to attend talks on what different courses involve, visit halls of residence and find out about student finance and other information relating to student life.

11. Alternatives to University

Degree Apprenticeships

Degree apprenticeships combine paid employment with university study. Tuition fees are paid by the employer, and students graduate with both a degree and professional experience. They can be very competitive, so students must be fully committed.

For more information click on the following links:

[Watch Degree Apprenticeships programme](#)

[Apprenticeships explained](#)

Government apprenticeship website [here](#)

UCAS Degree apprenticeship site, click [here](#).

12. Studying Abroad

USA and Canada: Applications are made directly to institutions, often via the Common Application. Courses are typically broader, with specialisation later. Applications are time intensive and often require additional tests and multiple essays. Intensive and often require additional tests and multiple essays.

UK student loans are not available for overseas study. Tuition fees vary widely between institutions, particularly between public and private universities, and can be substantial. Families should research individual university costs carefully, along with the criteria and availability of scholarships. The best source of information is available through the [Fulbright Commission](#).

Europe: Some European universities offer courses taught in English. Fees and funding vary by country and institution, and students should research carefully.

Other English-Speaking Countries: Ireland, Australia and New Zealand are popular options with different application systems and timelines. Families should note that UK student loans are generally not available for overseas study.

13. Finance and Student Support (UK Study)

Tuition Fees: From 2026/27 Universities in England may charge up to **£9,790 per year** (subject to government review). Tuition fees are covered by a government loan paid directly to the institution.

Eligible students may apply to Student Finance England for a student loan to cover Tuition Fees and separately means tested **Maintenance Loans:** Maintenance loans help cover living costs. Amounts vary depending on household income and location of study.

Repayment: Loans are repaid after graduation once income exceeds the repayment threshold. Tuition and maintenance loans are combined into a single repayment.

14. Bursaries and Scholarships

Some universities offer bursaries and scholarships based on academic achievement, household income or specific criteria such as sport or music. Availability varies by institution and course. Early research is recommended

15. UCAS Application and Personal Statement

The personal statement is a key part of the UCAS application. It should demonstrate:

- Academic interest in the chosen subject
- Evidence of wider reading and engagement
- Reflection on relevant experiences

Students receive structured and extensive support with their personal statements. As part of the Year 12 programme, dedicated time is allocated during the UCAS Preparation Day in May for guidance on planning and drafting, including a talk from an experienced university admissions tutor. Students then develop their statements with support from subject staff, form tutors and the Sixth Form team. Full details of the process and timelines are shared during the UCAS preparation day in June.

Further reading: [How to Write a UCAS Undergraduate Personal Statement.](#)

16. Support from Beaconsfield High School

Students receive:

- Individual guidance and careers advice
- Structured UCAS Preparation Days
- Support with personal statements and references
- Results Day and Clearing support

Parents are encouraged to engage with the process and contact the Sixth Form team with any queries.

The **UCAS Preparation Day** in May provides students with dedicated time to set up their UCAS application, enter key information (including GCSE results), and receive guidance on completing each section accurately. Students already have access to Unifrog and are expected to use this platform to research courses, explore MOOCs ([Massive Open Online Courses](#)), and engage with wider reading recommended by universities, all of which help strengthen their application.

17. Enrichment

A key factor in a strong application is evidence of academic engagement beyond A Level study. Lectures attended, wider reading, MOOCs and academic talks can all be referenced in personal statements and interviews. Students are encouraged to record this activity on Unifrog, and subject staff provide guidance on recommended reading and enrichment opportunities. The school also offers a wide programme of talks and events through clubs and societies, supporting the development of the independent academic curiosity essential for success at university.

18. Further Information and Useful Links

The following websites provide reliable, up-to-date information for parents and students

UK University Applications

- UCAS (Parents): <https://www.ucas.com/parents>
- UCAS Course Search: <https://www.ucas.com/explore>

Student Finance (UK)

- Student Finance England: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

- Repayment Information: <https://www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan>

Apprenticeships and Alternatives

- Government Apprenticeships Portal: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk>
- UCAS Apprenticeships: <https://www.ucas.com/apprenticeships>

Studying Abroad

- Fulbright Commission (USA): <https://www.fulbright.org.uk>
- Study in Europe: <https://www.study.eu>
- British Council – Study Abroad: <https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org>

Careers and Research Tools

- Unifrog: <https://www.unifrog.org>
- Complete University Guide: <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk>

Parents are encouraged to consult these resources regularly, as details such as fees, funding and entry requirements may change annually.

19. UCAS Application Personal Checklist

The table below helps you identify some of the areas you should already be working on before starting your application.

Task	Completed
I have decided what subject I want to study	
I have researched courses related to it	
I have researched different universities	
I have checked the entry requirements for the courses I am interested in	
I have been to at least two university Open Days	
I have completed at least one MOOC	
I have read at least one book/article from this subject's wider reading list	
I have watched at least one talk/lecture/documentary relating to my subject	
I have read about/watched a video on how to write a personal statement	
I have completed work experience	