

# LANCASTER ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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S J Haigh Head of Sixth Form

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents,

During the recent parents' evening, a couple of families enquired about how we support pupils with their post 18 options and applications to university. In normal times, we would hold an information evening in conjunction with a colleague from Lancaster University to outline the process for parents. I thought you might find it helpful, given current restrictions, if I shared key information with you in letter format.

## **Fact-finding and research**

At this point in the Lower Sixth, we'd be expecting pupils to be actively researching potential universities, courses and apprenticeships, and to be developing a portfolio of experiences to help them with their decision making and future applications. These experiences are currently largely online / virtual. Your son or daughter has been receiving very regular emails from me about opportunities they could take part in. These opportunities include virtual work experience, online study days, university webinars, essay competitions and lecture series to name a few. We also encourage this through our PuP award – the Praesis ut Prosis award - which recognises, develops and enhances experience and achievement in a work-related environment through a variety of activities including work experience, volunteering, in-school service and careers workshops. We invite all Lower Sixth students to work towards achieving this at Bronze, Silver or Gold level. We have modified our requirements this year to take into account the lack of face to face work experience opportunities at the present time. This award promotes the importance of employability; it highlights the need for skills and experience (not just academic results) when preparing for life beyond school.

In addition to the independent opportunities that we encourage pupils to sign up for, we invite universities and apprenticeship providers into school to deliver talks about their courses and career routes. Many of these have now switched to pre-recorded online materials which are routinely shared with students, but we have also maintained links with a good range of providers to deliver live lunch-time talks and workshops over Teams, so far including BAE, Oxbridge, Leeds, St Andrew's, Southampton, Manchester Met and York. We recommend that pupils use websites like [ucas.com](http://ucas.com) to start shortlisting courses, universities and apprenticeships they are interested in. UCAS provides details of course requirements so students will know what predicted grades they should be aiming for.

## **Careers Adviser**

We are also lucky to have an independent careers adviser, Mrs Carol Hope, who works in school two days a week and who can help students with their university choices or with deciding which apprenticeships they may be interested in and how to apply. Students can request an appointment with Mrs Hope by emailing Mrs Gibbon ([dgibbon@lrqs.org.uk](mailto:dgibbon@lrqs.org.uk)) who manages Mrs Hope's calendar within school.

## **UCAS timeline**

In the summer term, we will work with the year group to deliver presentations about the UCAS application process and clarify how to write a strong personal statement. We will also continue to share opportunities and resources via email, and will use Teams files to upload helpful documentation. We expect all pupils applying to university to have submitted the first draft of their personal statement to their tutor before they break up for summer and to have started the online application form. This is quite a long process and students should not put it off. Personal statements often need multiple re-drafts after teacher feedback to make them as strong as possible. Clear instructions will be provided via email and saved on Teams to support students with their statements and with completing the long application form.

Predicted grades are largely influenced by summer assessments, meaning that students should

complete their Lower Sixth Year with a good idea of the courses / apprenticeships they can aspire to and the application process well underway. Predicted grades are not set in stone in the summer though; students will have opportunity in the Michaelmas term to demonstrate further progress if need be. Predicted grades aren't reported directly to parents as they can change, but your son or daughter will be informed via their teachers and / or form tutor.

Students applying for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry or to any course at Oxford or Cambridge will need to meet an early deadline. This means we expect them to have fully completed their part of the application by the middle of September. The final early deadline we work to is the 15<sup>th</sup> October. Many of these early deadline courses will require students to sit additional admissions assessments, for example, the BMAT or UCAT for Medicine. Students should ensure that they do their research about these assessments, that they practise using online exemplar material, and that they communicate well with the exams officer for those assessments organised at school.

The rest of the year group should aim to complete their applications as soon after October half-term as possible. Our internal deadlines are before the UCAS deadlines to give us the time needed to process all the applications – we check and finalise each application, and add our reference. The reference is compiled by collating subject comments, with the form tutor then adding additional relevant details to demonstrate suitability for the chosen course. We would really appreciate parental support in helping all students to meet the advertised deadlines as there is still a considerable amount of work to do at our end once they have completed their part.

### **Interviews**

For students applying to the most competitive courses needing interviews, we organise mock interviews around November time. We are fortunate to have former teachers, students, parents and friends of the school who volunteer to offer these interviews to support our students. If you would like to be involved in this process, please do contact our Sixth Form administrator, Mrs Carol Haywood, ([chaywood@lrgs.org.uk](mailto:chaywood@lrgs.org.uk)) to outline your subject specialism. The aim of these interviews is not to try to predict what students will be asked, but to encourage them to think on their feet, to push them to demonstrate their critical thinking skills and to practise their communication skills, all to a person unknown to them. In short, we believe that we offer our students a very full and supportive programme to ensure that they can make the most competitive applications possible.

Your son or daughter has some big decisions ahead. We work very hard with the year group to provide the necessary guidance and opportunities to make well-informed choices and to help them to proceed onto aspirational post-18 options, but students do need to recognise their own role in this process: they need to be actively involved, checking their emails on a daily basis and following up on suitable opportunities promptly. This is something you can support them with, for example, by regularly asking what has been advertised and what they are pursuing. We recommend that students keep an electronic record as evidence of anything they have been involved in that demonstrates an enthusiasm for their chosen course or career. It isn't just about keeping a list though; interviewers will want to see that students can reflect on their experiences and demonstrate their learning. In addition, we cannot reiterate enough the importance of wider reading. We have already communicated with you our tips about how students ought to be using their study periods, and reading is one of the most beneficial ways of spending their non-contact time, so please do encourage your son or daughter to read beyond the curriculum and to use their time productively to research and plan for their life beyond school.

We hope you have found this information helpful. Should you have any questions about this or anything else related to your son or daughter's education, please don't hesitate to get in touch with one of us.

Yours faithfully,

Miss S J Haigh  
Head of Sixth Form  
Sixth Form

Mr J Reynolds  
Deputy Head of Sixth Form

Mrs J K Marshall  
Deputy Head of