



THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL

**Post-18
Information Booklet**

Year 12, March 2026

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Post-18 Timeline

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Post-18 Information Evening:	Tuesday 3 March
Post-18 Research exploring careers, entry routes and requirements, courses, booking Open Day Visits, job searching, using Unifrog, completing applications	Wednesday 4 March onwards
Oxbridge Information Evening:	Tuesday 10 March, 7pm (register via link in presentation and here)
CV Preparation Tutorials:	Tuesday 24 Feb and 10 March
Post-18 Preparation Tutorial 1: What do I want to know from the Year 13s?	Tuesday 3 rd March
Post-18 Preparation Tutorial 2 Year 13 sharing their top tips	Tuesday 17 th March
CV Submission Deadline (in preparation for Business Professional Interview):	Monday 23 March
Student Life/Apprenticeships/Gap Year: Virtual sessions/speakers	TBA
Business Professional Interviews	Friday 24 April
UCAS Application/PS Workshop	Thursday 23 April
Personal Statement: 1st Draft to Tutors:	Friday 8 May
Year 12 Post-18 Gateway Exams	8–12 June
Year 12 Work Experience Week	15–19 June
UCAS APPLY Education	Tuesday 23 June
Personal Statement 2nd Draft to Tutors All students receive tutor feedback on two drafts by end of September	Friday 26 June –
All Open Days/visits completed; basic details entered in UCAS; long list of Universities:	End of Summer Term (Wednesday 22 July)
UCAS applications completed and 'sent' to Tutor	Early November (exact date TBA)
Final UCAS applications sent off:	Mid-November (exact date TBA)
Employment/Apprenticeship/Higher Education Applications:	Autumn Term 2026 onwards

Choices After TBSHS

You are faced with a huge amount of choice and there are any number of websites to help you with research into your possible post-18 options. Some links are listed below but please also check out the *Life beyond TBSHS* section of the school website for further documentation and useful links: <https://tbshs.org/a-really-useful-list-of-links/>

Career/Course Ideas

Unifrog:

- [Subject](#) and [Careers Libraries](#) – these tools allow you to explore careers and subjects with advice about routes into them, further reading, how to boost applications, sample personal statements and more.
- [Unifrog Psychometric Tests/Quizzes](#) – these tools are part of the Unifrog Careers Platform that underpins our Post-18 support programme. Complete all of them to get a comprehensive insight into possible careers/degree subjects. Links direct to Subject and Careers libraries.

<http://sacu-student.com/> - The Spartan Quiz ([Spartan Test - SACU](#)) is an excellent visual quiz that generates interactive careers, subject and apprenticeship clouds. Click on links within each cloud to get more information about each option. If you register, you can save your results and go back and refine your research.

[Buzz Quiz](#) is a very brief career wizard to generate ideas and also videos and articles of practitioners in various careers so you can find out more about the realities of the job.

www.prospects.ac.uk - a more detailed questionnaire to generate post-graduate career suggestions.

www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk – Careers advice and career planning tools – the Skills Assessment (nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/discover-your-skills-and-careers) is a set of quizzes and activities designed to help you explore your skills, interests and motivations.

Plus:

- Talk to teachers, family members and friends about their jobs and how they got into them
- Get involved in societies, activities, get a job, work experience or do some volunteering to find out more about what you are good at and what working life is like
- Look at blogs, documentaries, read the newspaper and relevant trade or subject magazines to open your mind to different subject areas, sectors and jobs

1. University

Reasons to go:

- Gain depth and breadth of understanding in your chosen area.
- Develop critical and analytical skills
- A sound investment:
 - Average starting salary for graduates: £28,000 p.a.
 - Average graduate earns 20%+ over a lifetime more than his/her equivalent with A levels only
- Graduate recruitment surged by 14.5% in 2022, then fell by 6.9% in 2023, followed by a major 14.6% drop in 2024, with vacancies decreasing slightly again in 2025 (-1.1%), before rising to over 25,000 expected vacancies in 2026, indicating early signs of recovery
- Develop independent life skills
- An enjoyable experience

Do Your Research:

- Unifrog (www.unifrog.org) is the first port of call for any research.
 - The school subscribes to this university and apprenticeship research, choice and selection tool. It provides a superb front-end and pulls together information from many of the key sites listed below but tailored to the user's particular interests and academic ability.
 - Shortlist summaries have direct links to Open Day pages, course details etc.
 - There is a '[Special Opportunities](#)' tool for contextual opportunities, scholarships and financial help.
 - Each Year 12 has received education on the system and is registered as a user. This will be fundamental to their university research.
- UCAS (University & Colleges Admission Service www.ucas.com) is what all university applicants will use to apply to university.
 - It also covers foundation degrees and other qualifications and includes a range of information including a course search tool.
 - There is lots of parental and student advice including guides and videos. It has increasing amounts of information about non-university options too.
 - They have descriptions of degree subjects at www.ucas.com/explore/subjects.
 - Register for a [UCAS HUB](#) account to personalise your research.

Other helpful websites:

- <http://sacu-student.com/> - use interactive subject cloud from Spartan test. Also has an A level subject checker – shows you courses followed by other people with your subject combination
- <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/> - provides Government detailed, unbiased comparative data university data. **Unifrog uses this data directly**
- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/ - extensive information and comparative tables about universities as well as information about graduate career prospects and salaries
- www.whatuni.com - has a course search tool which allows you to search on basis of your likely grades. Good open day information.
- www.opendays.com/ - centralised site for searching university open days. Use the [calendar version](#)
- www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance details about applying for student finance. Applications will not open until March of year of university entry. Full information and interactive resources and guides are available on their partner site of the
- www.thestudentroom.co.uk at [Prospective students - Resources - The Student Room](#)
- www.studentladder.co.uk/ – wealth of articles, advice and resources for university and jobs
- www.thescholarshipclub.org.uk/ - search for grants, bursaries, scholarships available from different universities

Graduate Career Choices/Salaries

- [High Fliers Graduate Market Report 2025-26](#) – this is [High Fliers](#) latest research into graduate vacancies and starting salaries at the UK's 100 best-known and most successful employers.
- [LEO Graduate Outcomes 2022-23](#) – Employment and earnings outcomes 1, 3, 5, and 10 years after graduation (**Unifrog** uses this for Labour Market information in its careers tools)
- [GLMS-2024](#)- Government's Graduate Labour Market Statistics 2024 (last updated in Dec 2025).
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/> whole variety of career resources and guides
- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/careers/ - includes variety of career guides including articles covering graduate starting salaries and graduate premiums (HESA 2019-20, published July 2022). Check out article [What do graduates do and earn?](#)
- Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) Research on the [Value of Degrees](#) (most recent research was published Feb 2020). It looks at earnings impact up to age 40 for graduates.

2. Apprenticeships/School Leaver Programmes

Reasons to apply:

- Work for a company, gain job specific experience and skills – 'Learn and Earn'
- Spend some time at a university/college completing various courses leading to a professional qualification
- Usually funded by the company and government
- Lots of variety – retail, business, engineering, leisure, construction, media, design, Intelligence Services, law, nursing, physiotherapy
- Increasing numbers available; major focus of £275 million government policy replacing the 2017 Apprenticeship Levy to the Youth Guarantee and Growth & Skills Levy. Students will benefit from more flexible, fully funded and faster pathways into work, with simplified assessments, shorter programmes where appropriate, new Foundation Apprenticeships, and expanded opportunities—especially for young people under 25 in small to medium companies.
- Extended range of Degree Level Apprenticeships being developed and introduced by over 100 major industries in conjunction with 50 plus universities as well as development of Apprenticeships standards through the Trailblazer programme
- Develop key work-based skills and experience
- No student debt

Do Your Research:

- **Unifrog:** The [Apprenticeship Tool](#) provides a front-end to pull together information from many of sites to allow exploration of different industry sectors together with labour market information. Links into the National Apprenticeships database of vacancies run by the government (see next item). Work experience activities in '[special opportunities](#)' tool
- www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships- national Government website for Apprenticeships where all apprenticeship providers are encouraged to register vacancies. Information and search facility at: www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
- www.studentladder.co.uk/ - information about School Leaver Programs, CVs, selection processes including on-line testing, work placements, summer internships
- www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/ – apprenticeship search facility
- www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk - wide range of vacancies and application guidance
- <http://sacu-student.com/> - use interactive cloud from Spartan test.
- <https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>

Plus search for School Leaver Programmes/Apprenticeships on company websites.

3. Vocational Qualifications

- HNCs (Higher National Certificates) and HNDs (Higher National Diplomas) are work-related (vocational) higher education qualifications
- Designed to give you the skills to put knowledge to effective use in a particular job
- Provided by over 400 universities and further education colleges

Information about Further Education qualifications:

- UCAS: www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications
- Harlow College: [Harlow College - Vocational Courses](http://www.harlowcollege.ac.uk/vocational-courses)
- Herts Regional College: www.hrc.ac.uk/courses
- Cambridge Regional College: www.camre.ac.uk/higher-education

4. Gap Year

- Well planned, structured and productive: could be a good option
- Employers will not look favourably on a poorly organised gap year with no focus or benefit to your development – do something meaningful
- Volunteer to help others and put your skills to the test, maybe discover a different culture and learn a new language
- Take a 12-month training course to gain professional experience and qualifications, e.g. [Investment20/20 Traineeships](http://www.investment2020.co.uk/traineeships)
- Increase maturity and develop self-awareness before committing to next step
- Gain relevant experiences in the area you wish to study/work
 - <https://notgoingtouni.co.uk/>
 - www.volunteerworld.com
 - www.yearoutgroup.org
 - www.independentgapadvice.org
 - www.projecttrust.org.uk

5. Straight into work

Reasons to do it;

- Earn money and gain work-related skills

Things to consider

- Is it going to challenge/develop you?
- Are you gaining any further qualifications?
- What prospects are there for you in the future – will you still be doing the same job?
- Unemployment levels are relatively high – will a more qualified or less qualified person be employed?

All the following allow you to search for jobs and contain CV and interview advice. There are also many structured activities in the TBSHS Post-18 Workbook.

- www.ukindeed.com
- www.cv-library.co.uk - UK's leading independent job board. Can apply directly to over 120,000 live vacancies from across the UK from over 70 different sectors.
- www.jobisjob.co.uk/
- www.totaljobs.com/
- www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/
- www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

Resources

Use the following sources of information to inform your choices:

- Unifrog University and Apprenticeship Tools and Know How Library
- Unifrog Careers/Psychometric Quizzes and Subjects and Careers Libraries
- Unifrog Special Opportunities, Webinars and Events
- Unifrog – Read, Watch, Listen
- UCAS and the UCAS Hub
- University Prospectuses (*on-line and in the school Library*)
- Careers Publications (*school Library*)
- Form tutor, subject staff and Sixth Form Management Team
- Post-18 Section of the School Website
- Post-18 Bulletins and Weekly Careers News
- Post-18 Workbook
- Post-18 Information Boards in Sixth Form Centre
- Websites – see links above plus also individual university/company websites
- Post-18 Convention
- University Open Days
- University Subject Taster Sessions
- Work Experience, Networking and Insight Events run by companies and organisations, e.g. Uptree
- On-line academic and trade journals, blogs
- Websites of relevant professional bodies (e.g. Chartered Surveyors, Accountants)
- Friends and Relatives
- Teaching Staff
- Former Students

Qualification Routes to Degree Level University

Choose your course first and then your university. Ask yourself the following questions to develop initial lists of possibilities:

Choosing the right course

Will the course keep your interest for at least three years and are you good at it?

You should certainly choose something which you can talk about at interview (if called) and show an interest in on your Personal Statement. You may decide to deepen your grasp of one of your A-Level subjects, you may decide to study a new subject or you may decide to study for Combined Honours degree.

Will a degree from this course be useful to you after university?

Is it actually required for your career choice? Does it provide good career opportunities? Does it keep doors open? Does it give you the chance for further study? Many departments can provide destination lists for former graduates.

Will you achieve the grades required to study the course?

Be optimistic but realistic.

Do you have the required subjects at GCSE and A Level?

Some universities consider some subjects as "soft" and favour more academically rigorous ones. They may have combinations they consider unacceptable. Search the Unifrog Subjects Library using your A levels/BTEC. Check detailed course entry requirements (via Unifrog) and look at <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/> from the Russell Group. Use A-Level course checker in [Match your A-levels to degree subjects - SACU - Career Cloud Quiz](#).

Other Considerations:

- Are you capable of being successful on the course?
- What reputation and resources does the department have?
- Do the first-year examination results count towards the degree?
- What is the proportion of examination and coursework?
- Is it a modular course with a flexible structure?
- How long is the course?
- Are there possibilities to study abroad for a year or to have one year's work experience?
- Is there the possibility of sponsorship?
There are a number of companies that offer 'Learn as you Earn' opportunities.
- Is this course available at your preferred university?
- You can study an array of subjects but cannot do all of them everywhere. Study course descriptions carefully, not all university courses on the same subject area are identical and might cover topics in which you are not so interested.

Choosing a University

Like courses, you have to choose somewhere where you think you will be happy for at least three years. You will be able to apply for up to five different university/course combinations and you should consider the following points when deciding on a university:

- Is it in the right area of the country?
Close to home / as far away as possible.
- Is the area expensive to live in?
London in particular can be expensive.
- What did you make of it when you went for the Open Day?
- Do you want to go to a campus or city university?

- **What are the academic facilities like?**
How many libraries are there? Are they open 24 hours a day? Are there plenty of computing facilities?
- **What is the quality/availability of accommodation (particularly in the first year)?**
How much does it cost? Can all first-year students be accommodated? How far is accommodation from place of study? Self-catering or meals provided?
- **Do they offer the extra-curricular activities you want and how good are their recreational facilities?**
- **What do former TBSHS students and other students think of it?**
- **Does it generally have a good academic reputation as well as being strong in your subject area?**
Are academic staff leaders in their field and active in research and publication? How much contact time will you get through lectures, seminars, tutorials and practicals.
- **Is it a 'Russell Group' University?**
*This is a group of 24 larger universities where membership is dependent on leadership in research and academic teaching. They tend to have a good reputation amongst employers but are by no means the only elite or good universities. Other groupings of universities exist with a particular mission such as the Million+ and the University Alliance who have a specific remit of business engagement.
The Russell Group universities are listed below:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 ○ London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 ○ University College London (UCL) ○ University of Warwick ○ University of York
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- **What are its Careers Advisory Service like and does it have good links with industry and employers?**
Do they focus on employability, providing guidance and development of transferable skills relevant to the workplace? Do they help you look for placements and internships and do they have any specific links with companies?

Student Finance – PLEASE SEE LINK [HERE](#) FOR 2027 AUTUMN ENTRY

Is university too expensive? (Most figures below based on 2025 entry)

Tuition Fees

- Students currently need to apply for finance from March 2027 for courses starting in September 2027.
- **HOWEVER Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) will replace Student Finance England (SFE)'s current higher education student loans system in 2027.** Details not yet finalised by the government (at time of writing March 2026)
 - Students apply for 2027 loans through a new LLE personal online account
 - Creates one single funding system for levels 4–6 (e.g., degrees, foundation years).
- **Tuition fees (based on credits)** are paid directly to the university by Student Finance.
 - Students get up to **£38,140** (equivalent to 4 years of study).
 - Can be used for **full courses** or **eligible 30-credit+ modules**. (Must study **at least 30 credits** in a year)
- **Maintenance Loan (for living costs)**. Details about how this will be paid are TBC. However they are:
 - Available for **in-person** courses/modules. [Not available for distance learning (except disability exemptions)]
 - Students receive their maintenance loan into their bank account.

- Repayment under the LLE system is still 9% of amount earned **above £25,000 annual salary** (monthly income threshold £2,083), based on the government tuition loan plan 5 (you took out a loan in England after September 2023)
 - e.g. if earning £30,000 annually (so approx. monthly income before tax £2,750) means repayments are based on around £417 of income above the threshold (£2,750 monthly income minus threshold £2,083), with 9% of £417 coming to around £37.50 a month.

Things to note (but they change under the new LLE system):

- Interest starts building from the moment your loan is paid out
- Your repayments will be taken out of your salary at the same time as tax and national insurance if you're an employee.
- The monthly repayment is not linked to the size of the debt
- For Plan 5, interest is typically higher while studying and is set at the Retail Prices Index (RPI) rate plus 3%
- Outstanding debt is written off after 40 years after the April you were first due to repay
- Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) data suggest that 8 out of 10 graduates are likely to get to end of their working lives having never paid off the loan with the taxpayer picking up the difference.

Scholarships, Bursaries and Grants:

- Search Unifrog Special Opportunities tool and www.thescholarshipclub.org.uk

Loans for Living Costs (Maintenance Loans). These costs may change under the 2027 LLE system

- Are available through Student Finance to help with costs of living while at university. Beware, even the full loan may not cover all your costs so you need to make sure that you other sources of funds either from parents/carers or paid work. Individual institutions offer Bursaries to help those from low-income families. There are also scholarships based on particular ability or achievement in academic or extra-curricular fields and grants that can be given for achievement, personal circumstance or financial need.
- Loans for living costs vary and depend on location and household income dependent (2025-2026 figures below) and may change under the new LLE system as they may be proportionate to credits used.

Rate of loan for students	Maximum loan	Minimum loan
Living at home	£8,877	£3,907
Living away from home and studying in London	£13,762	£6,853
Living away from home and studying outside London	£10,544	£4,915

Also look at (but these may change under the LLE system):

- <https://www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance>
- [Student Finance Maintenance Loans 2026 - Save the Student](#)
- <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/student-finance/>
- media.slc.co.uk/sfe/quickstartfinanceguide/index.html - Quick start Finance Guides

Budgeting Resources

UCAS has budgeting tips and resources on managing money:

- www.ucas.com/finance/managing-money/student-budgeting-tips
- www.ucas.com/money-and-student-life/money/managing-money

Universities provide sample budgets, e.g. this one from Bath University www.bath.ac.uk/publications/undergraduate-budget/.

Money Saving Expert has a Student Guide full of money saving tips:

www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-guide/

There are a side variety of apps to help you budget – moneytothemasses.com/the-best-budgeting-apps-in-the-uk is a review of some of the best ones

Study abroad

Another option, e.g. in the Netherlands, courses are taught in English and fees are lower than in the UK.

Scholarships are available at American universities.

- www.topuniversities.com (study abroad; useful guides a search tool in the Discover section)
- www.fulbright.org.uk (Study in the USA)
- www.thestudentworld.com (Study abroad)
- www.studyineurope.eu (Study in Europe)
- www.campusfrance.org/en (Study in France)

UCAS References

The School aims to give every student the best possible reference. It is often the first thing the university admissions tutor reads.

- **Provisional University Information to tutors**

Your form tutor will be monitoring and tracking your decision making through your use of Unifrog but will ask you to provide the information regarding your chosen universities, courses and their likely grade requirements towards the end of the summer term.

- **Subject staff provide subject references to tutors**

This information will be subject-specific feedback focussing on particular areas of strength and knowledge within each subject area. For example, subject teachers might mention powers of analysis or interpretation along the lines of “She can compare and weigh the factors affecting the rise of Communism (History)”. UCAS references focus on the positive.

- **Your tutor writes your UCAS reference**

Your form tutor will then compile a balanced UCAS reference citing the information provided by your subject teachers. It is vital that they have your completed UCAS form (on-line) to refer to when writing your reference

Predicted Grades

The School has to enter predicted grades for all your subjects on your UCAS application.

- **The Predicted Grades are ‘Best Possible’ Grades**

*We will state the ‘**best possible**’ grades i.e. the best that you are likely to achieve in the summer not necessarily the grades that you will achieve. These grades will therefore be the projections that you receive in July 2026 which in turn will be heavily influenced by your Post-18 Gateway Examinations results in the Autumn Term. It is therefore vital that these exams are treated very seriously by students as they will be the only real measure of likely performance in the A level (A2) and BTEC public examinations at the end of Year 13. These exams will also form part of the on-going assessment of your suitability for your chosen pathway.*

- **Predicted Grades Must influence Course/University Choices**

You must take note of the predicted grades when deciding upon a university course. If they are lower than the ones the university states for a particular course, then you are unlikely to receive an offer. Be mindful of the best possible nature of predicted grades and have a spread of entry requirements across your choices (see below).

Grade Requirements – Getting it Right!

It is important that within your final five choices (four for Medicine) you make sure that you have one course requiring grades that are below what you might be expecting and that it is a course that you would want to study. If you don't get the grades you want, then you will have somewhere you have chosen to study rather than going through clearing where you will have less choice.

Tariff Points Offers

Some universities make offers based on achieving a certain number of UCAS points rather than a set of grades. A vast range of qualifications are listed in the UCAS Tariff Tables and can be very confusing so the key ones taken at TBSHS are summarised in the table below.

- Universities normally give a points offer based **only on what is achieved in your A2s or BTEC** and do not count points from any other qualifications
- Universities that give a UCAS point offer may also specify a particular grade or number of points that you need in a subject
- There are also UCAS points associated with speech, drama and music awards (practical and theory) at grades 6, 7 and 8. You only count points for the highest grade that you have passed. Check the UCAS Tariff tables. Most universities **will not count** these towards the offer unless it is particularly relevant.

Calculating UCAS Points

Look up the point values of your predicted A2 grade for the subjects that you are taking through to A2 and/or your final BTEC predicted level. For example: a student is predicted History A, English B, Politics C for their A2s. From the A2 Level column, **Total Predicted UCAS Points = 48 + 40 + 32 = 120**

GCE A Level (A2)	UCAS Tariff Points	BTEC (Nationals) Diploma	UCAS Tariff Points	Extended Project (EPQ)	UCAS Tariff Points
A*	56	D*D*	112	A*	28
A	48	D*D	104	A	24
B	40	DD	96	B	20
C	32	DM	80	C	16
D	24	MM	64	D	12
E	16	MP	48	E	8
		PP	32		

- While the EPQ does have points associated with it, you need to check whether it can contribute towards the total points required. It generally will not if the points offer is based on 3 full A levels. However, it may gain you a reduced grade offer if you gain a particular grade in the EPQ.

Personal Statements (PS)

- This is the second most important part of your university application after your predicted grades.
- You will need to explain why you have chosen the subject, why you are well suited and the skills and experiences you have gained. This is where your wider reading, extracurricular involvement, subject and career research, visits to museums, work experience etc will all come into play. You should already be recording relevant activities within the *Activities* section of your Unifrog account as well as key skills you have developed in the *Skills* section, so forming a bank of material to draw on when developing your Personal Statement (PS).
- Your Form Tutor will guide you through the process and you will have an Application/PS Workshop on 24 or 28 April. There are number of resources on the school website, UCAS and other sites listed earlier.
- Individual university websites all give guidelines about what they will expect to see in a Personal Statement.
- It is one of the most difficult pieces of work that you will ever write and it will need many drafts to hone it, especially as it has to meet strict character (4,000 including blanks) and line limits (47 lines including blanks). Spelling and grammar need to be correct so rigorous proof-reading is essential.

Apprenticeship & Job Applications

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

Timelines

- Unlike for universities, there is no central controlling body for apprenticeship and job applications and therefore no set timeline. It requires you to be very proactive in ensuring you do continuing research, registering for alerts on www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship, using Unifrog, registering with companies before their programmes officially open, seeking out work experience opportunities (look at networking sites like Uptree - <https://uptree.co>, keep an eye on the Post-18 Bulletin) etc. It is a continual process that requires real commitment from you.
- Some of the larger companies, especially the professional services companies like EY, Deloitte, PwC will open their programmes in the **Autumn Term of Year 13**. Others will open in the Spring Term while smaller companies will not start advertising their vacancies until the summer term of Year 13 as they are aware that students are not available to start until after their exams.
- Degree apprenticeships, even where the education element is provided by a recognised university will have an application process controlled by the company offering the apprenticeship and not by the university under the normal UCAS process.
- We encourage all students to consider completing a UCAS application and then continuing to look at apprenticeship options so that they have the widest available range of options available to them on A Level Results Day in August 2026

CV Content Development

This is the essential document to support job applications.

- You will need to list personal details, your educational qualifications, work experience and your key skills, especially emphasising those transferrable and applicable to the work environment. Again, this is where your wider reading, extracurricular involvement, career research, voluntary or paid work, placements etc. will all come into play together with your extra-curricular interests.
- Use the *Activities and Skills* section of your Unifrog account to find out what skills employers value and to record things you have done as well as key skills you have developed. These will form a bank of material to draw on when updating your CV.

- Your Form Tutor will help you with it and you are in the process of having *CV Writing* guidance. There are a number of resources on the school website and other sites listed earlier.
- Always ensure that your CV is well-formatted and that both spelling and grammar are correct. Employers have to reduce large numbers of applicants to a short list and will be quick to discard an applicant whose CV is poorly presented.
- Use the [Unifrog Skills Quiz](#) to assess your current level of key employability skills

CV Tailoring

- It is absolutely vital that you tailor it as appropriate for particular job positions to show how you meet the job specification. List your skills in each company's order of importance; use their terminology, e.g. change teamwork to collaboration if that is what the firm calls it. AI-based selection is becoming more common and picking out key words will increase your CV chances getting through to interview stage
- Use the Hertfordshire Skills Framework to think about the key skills that employees look for: [The Hertfordshire Skills Framework](#). This is based on extensive industry research. You can rate yourself against these skills using: [Herts Skills Framework student self-evaluation](#)
- You would normally send your CV with a covering letter which summarises why you are a good candidate for the position.
- You need to regularly update your CV with new experiences and achievements
- Check out the activities in the [TBSHS Post-18 Workbook](#) about CVs

'Your CV needs more than just a brush-up. It needs to be completely re-worked and then carefully tailored for each and every job that you go for. If you send the same CV out for 10 different jobs, nine times out of 10 you will be sending the wrong CV.'

Deborah Meaden – Dragon's Den

Selection Processes

Companies will set their own application and selection processes which increasingly involve a number of on-line stages prior to any face-to-face contact. An application may involve some or all of the following with you facing rejection or progression at each stage:

- **Submission of CV and cover letter or completion of an on-line application form**
See the next section for more information on CVs. This is the stage where firms/agencies make the biggest cuts in initial applications just to get more manageable numbers. It is imperative you make sure there are no grammatical or spelling errors in your application, you can get rejected for making one spelling mistake! They are looking for sound applications as they are assessing your capability of being in a professional environment.
Tips:
 - Compose all application questions in Word, re-draft them and get people to check them
 - Tailor every CV/response to the specific company - you need to do your research

Completion of Online Tests

These tests can be either: Numerical, Reasoning, Verbal Reasoning or Inductive Reasoning. Sometimes companies ask you to complete a values/strengths test to see if you comply within their values so make sure you know what qualities the firm values. Tips:

- Move on - The tests are usually timed and give you around a minute to answer one question so you don't have time to dwell on questions, just make an educated guess and move on, you can always come back to it at the end.
- Read carefully - As it is timed it makes candidates rush so they can finish it, however, make sure you read the question very carefully and interpret it the right way, they're testing your ability to analyse questions.
- Feedback - Regardless of the outcome of the tests make sure you get feedback from the HR team!

- Practise - many companies use tests created by separate companies such as SHL and Saville so make sure you visit their sites beforehand to practise these tests. It's about technique as well as knowing the answers. Make sure you do these tests in isolation and on your own, it is a test of your ability!

Interview, Telephone Interview, Video Interview

Your first interview will be heavily competency based and may be face-to-face or via telephone or video depending on the company. It will usually be conducted by a manager or partner of the firm you are applying to along with a recruitment assessor or it they may use an agency. You need to research the company's values and have examples where you have modelled each of their values. You also need to prepare examples of when you have lead a team, been part of a team, had a disagreement in the team, demonstrated initiative and also commercial awareness. For the competency questions make sure you structure your answer round the STAR (Situation/Task/Action/Result) model.

- **Telephone interview** - some employers choose to do it this way to save time and money. It will be competency based and a bit on commercial awareness (so research the company, get a recent news story and form an opinion on it). As you are not face to face you are not able to read body language etc. so it is important to make sure you are polite and speak at a steady pace and very clearly. Make sure you provide your landline number because you do not want to lose signal during the call.
- **Video Interview** - some employers may decide to video interview you which again is due to efficiency. This is a very weird experience as you have to record yourself
- answering questions that appear on your computer screen while you have a certain time limit to answer each question which is recorded via your laptop camera.
- Tips:
 - Wear a suit. Even though you are doing it at home you need to look professional.
 - Don't look at the screen; look into or above the camera lens otherwise you may get distracted as it is a weird experience watching yourself

Assessment Centre

This could be a full or half day in the main offices of the company. Employers use assessment centres to get an impression of how candidates perform in simulated circumstances designed to replicate aspects of the real job, to gain a clearer picture of the sorts of qualities which were tested at interview and to see how you perform in comparison with your peers. The format of an assessment day can vary but common elements do still exist:

- **Group exercises** - candidates are divided into teams and asked to work on a problem, deliver a presentation and answer questions from a panel. This is very difficult to prepare for but it's definitely worth thinking about how you come across in a group, ways in which you can demonstrate your best traits. Also remember to brush up on your presentation skills.
- **Partner/Panel Interview** - preparing for this is crucial if you want to do well.

Through all the trials and tribulations of the day, employers will be watching your every move which can be nerve-racking. Just remember that you have been asked to attend because they see potential in you so let your personality shine through in the various tasks. If you fulfil the criteria and you have a great personality to match, it will be really hard for them to turn you down.

Some companies may have one final interview with a partner however these tend to be focused around you rather than competencies. The partner wants to get to know you - they think you have what it takes and now they are looking for passion from you.

Apprenticeship Offers

Usually they would call you, followed by a series of emails and then a hard copy of the contract in the post. It seems simple but you will probably have to go through a series of checks: Credit and Police, some do a counter terrorism check. You will have to fill out various medical questionnaires, scan and send copies of your passport and driving licence. Once this has been completed, they will then offer you a start date.

Check out:

- [Roadmap for Interview Success](#) –comprehensive guidance and sample questions in different skill areas for both employment and university interviews
- Activities in the [TBSHS Post-18 Workbook](#) about Selection Processes
- [Springpod Learn Lounge](#) - videos on how to deal with video interviews, strengths-based interviews e.g. [Top Tips for a virtual Assessment Centre](#)
- [HOP - getting-assessment-centre-ready](#)
- [Practice Apprenticeship Aptitude Tests](#)
- www.prospects.ac.uk/how-to-apply-for-an-apprenticeship
- [PWC Early-careers Employability-hub](#)