

Welcome to our new TARGETcareers parents' newsletter. We'll be sending these once a term to share our careers expertise and let you know about resources that can help you as your child moves through school and on to university or work. This time, we're looking at the academic year ahead and key dates and decisions for students in Years 11–13 (S4–S6 in Scotland).

[If your child is in Year 11/S4](#) | [If your child is in Year 12/S5](#) | [If your child is in Year 13/S6](#)

If your child is in Year 11/S4

This academic year, your child will need to make choices about what to do after their GCSEs or National 5s. This might involve studying for A levels, Scottish Highers, a BTEC (typically at level 3) or the International Baccalaureate (IB), either at their current school or college or a new one. Or they may wish to consider an apprenticeship instead.

If your child is considering changing school for sixth form, be aware that open days and open evenings often fall in the autumn term of Year 11/S4, with some application deadlines following closely on behind. Whether or not they change school, provisional subject choices will be required well before students sit their GCSEs/National 5s. However, many schools and colleges give some leeway for students to change plans at a later stage, for example if they have second thoughts about their choice of A level subjects once they receive their GCSE results. Useful information on TARGETcareers includes:

- Help with [qualification and subject choices](#) for those continuing in full-time education, such as choosing between A levels, BTECs and the IB, A level subject choices, and whether to take four A levels if your child's school allows this.
- Apprenticeships and what they involve, with separate articles for [England](#), [Wales](#), [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).



If your child is in Year 12/S5

If your child is considering applying to study medicine or veterinary medicine, they need to start lining up relevant extracurricular activities as soon as possible. The deadline for these courses is in October of Year

13/S6 (earlier than for other subjects) and they need a considerable amount of experience to write about by the time they apply. [Veterinary medicine](#) courses can be very particular about their requirements – for example the University of Liverpool asks for five weeks' relevant work experience. Admissions staff for [medicine degree courses](#) expect to see some sort of experience in a caring role, such as regular volunteering at a care home.

All students can benefit from spending time in Year 12/S5 working out whether they want to go to university, what and where to study and what extracurricular activities or work experience would benefit their application. Most students have until January in Year 13/S6 to apply, though applicants for Oxford and Cambridge share the October deadline with medicine and veterinary medicine.

Quite a number of universities hold pre-application open days at the end of Year 12/S5 and start of Year 13/S6. These can be a good way for students to get a feel for where they want to apply before they have to submit their UCAS application.

The [choices about uni](#) and [degree subject guides](#) sections of TARGETcareers can help with decisions about what and where to study, including how to get the most out of university open days. Meanwhile the [work v. uni](#) section can help students who are unsure whether to go to university in the traditional way or pursue an alternative such as a degree apprenticeship.



If your child is in Year 13/S6

For university-bound students, Year 13/S6 is all about UCAS applications and offers – as well as the small matter of sitting A levels or equivalent, of course. Key deadlines include:

- 15 October (6.00 pm) – application deadline for applicants to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and also for those applying for medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine.
- 15 January (6.00 pm) – deadline for the majority of undergraduate courses.

Applicants for some subjects, such as law and medicine, may need to sit aptitude tests depending on which universities they are applying to. Universities that run their own tests will set their own deadlines; however, national deadlines include:

- 20 October – last date that Oxford applicants can sit the Law National Aptitude Test (LNAT).
- 30 October – test day for the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT), required by some universities for medicine applicants (NB there is an alternative test date each August for university entry the following calendar year).
- 15 January – LNAT registration deadline for non-Oxford applicants.

- 20 January – last date that non-Oxford applicants can sit the LNAT.

NB UKCAT testing (for medicine applicants to some universities) has already closed for 2020 entry.

Once students have their results, there's the opportunity to apply to different universities if they missed the grades they need or did better than expected, via Clearing and Adjustment respectively. A level results day in 2020 is 13 August; SQA results day is 4 August; International Baccalaurate results day is 6 July.

The [applying for uni](#) section of TARGETcareers contains help with different aspects of writing a UCAS personal statement, details of the admissions tests students may need to take for different subjects, details of how Clearing and Adjustment work, and advice on how to handle UCAS offers and university interviews.

Students who're not sure whether university is for them can benefit from our [work v. uni](#) section, which includes articles on topics such as [alternatives to university after A levels, Highers or the IB](#) and [when to apply for apprenticeships](#) (hint: some recruit as early as a year in advance; others are advertised for an immediate start). Our [applications and interviews](#) section can then help them successfully through the recruitment process.

