

13 October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

### UCAS Applications – Apply 2024

We are delighted with how Year 13 have settled into the new school year, I have no doubt they have felt this has been a step up from Year 12, but they seem to have taken this in their stride. Much of the first few weeks has been spent encouraging those applying to university to complete their UCAS applications and my purpose of this letter is to outline the timescales for these applications, to explain how UCAS predicted grades are formulated and to explain how applications are processed in school and by universities. I hope you find this useful.

Before the summer, we supported students in the completion of their UCAS forms, leaving only the personal statement and their course choices to be finalised over their holidays. Since returning in September, your child should have now met with their referee, shown them a draft of their personal statement and be finalising which courses / universities they wish to apply to. We expect most students to pay and send their applications as soon as we return after the October half term. We appreciate some may still have open days to visit shortly after half term, but we do ask for forms to be sent as soon as possible so we can check these carefully before sending. Please note, when a student presses 'pay and send' the application comes to the school, we will only send this once we have checked all details with the student, they will sign a paper copy of their application form to show they give their permission for this to be sent. There has been a great deal of support during form time regarding the completion of these online forms, but if your child is in anyway unsure, please ask them to see their form tutor or a member of the sixth form team as soon as possible.

You may be aware that the official UCAS deadline is Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024, meaning students need not rush to make decisions they may later regret. For most of our students, who know which courses they wish to apply to, there is no reason to delay sending their applications off. We do find that universities will start to make offers as soon as applications are received which students find particularly motivating!

Your child will have received their UCAS predicted grades via email this week, please do discuss these with them as these will inform the choice of universities, they are able to apply to. It is important to bear in mind that UCAS predicted grades tend to be an optimistic view of what we think students could achieve in their final exams, based on all available assessment data (including Year 12 mock exams) and teachers' professional judgement. This does not mean that they are the grades we feel students are working at right now, or even the grades we think they are most likely to get; rather, they are our best guess of the grades a student could realistically achieve providing they work hard all year, revise thoroughly and everything goes their way in the final examinations. Put another way, we tend to operate with 'benefit of the doubt' with UCAS grades and err on the high side where we are unsure. The UCAS predicted grades differ from their emerging grades stated on their progress reports, with the latter intended to indicate the grade a teacher thinks a student is most likely to be achieved. Either way, parents and students should be aware that making accurate predictions, especially this early in Year 13, is very difficult – nobody can predict performance in exams with absolute certainty, even much closer to time. See [here](#) for some helpful guidance from UCAS regarding predicted grades.

**For these reasons, it is really important that students choose courses with a range of entry requirements, so they have a safety net to fall back on, in case they do not secure these grades in the summer.**

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Applying the benefit of the doubt like this supports students seeking offers from universities of their choice. However, it can cause problems if students are not careful. In particular, it is very important that when choosing courses to apply to, students remain acutely aware that there should be at least two courses which have lower grade requirements than their predicted grades. Before we send off any applications, we will discuss the spread of these grades with your child, we encourage you to do so too.

Once the UCAS application has been sent, universities will reply with one of the following decisions –  
**Conditional offer** – students will have to meet the conditions of this offer to secure their place in the summer. Please read the conditions of this offer carefully.  
**Unconditional offer** – students will have a place, regardless of their summer results. Please check the details of this carefully as there may be some additional requirements in place.  
**Rejection** – student has been declined a place.

Once students have received decisions from all 5 of their choices, they are able to reply to these decisions to make their firm and insurance choices. All other offers will then be declined. It is worth noting that universities do have until May to make their decisions, so students may find they are left waiting for some time. Students can only reply to their offers once they have received a decision from each institution, at which point they must decide on their firm and insurance choices. In the event that a student does not receive any offers from their choices, they will be able to go through UCAS Extra, further information about this will be shared with students next term, you can find out more about this [here](#).

When replying to their offers, a student's firm choice university is their first-choice university, if they accept a conditional offer and meet the conditions, they'll have a confirmed place there. The insurance choice is the choice they'd want if they didn't meet the conditions of their firm choice. If this is a conditional offer, they'll need to meet the conditions for their place to be confirmed. If a student does not get placed at either of these in the summer, they will be automatically placed in clearing. We will provide all students with information of the clearing process before result day. You can however find further information [here](#).

The deadline dates for making these decisions are as follows -

Last decision from universities by	Students' reply date is
16 May 2024	6 June 2024 (except if using Extra)
17 July 2024	24 July 2024 (including Extra)

If you have any further specific queries relating to your child's UCAS Application, please email Mrs Hughes in the first instance on [lhughes@lymmhigh.org.uk](mailto:lhughes@lymmhigh.org.uk). Further information about replying to offers can also be found [here](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional support; we look forward to supporting you and your child over the coming months.

Yours faithfully,



**H JENNINGS (Mrs)**  
Assistant Headteacher, Head of Sixth Form

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