



STAFFORDSHIRE  
UNIVERSITY

help

# a journey



# starts

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**You're about to embark on a journey that will eventually lead you to university.** To gain the most from higher education, you need to choose a course and a university that suits your individual needs – and to get to that point, you need to do a bit of planning and research. **But it will be fun and worth it!**

**OK, so getting into uni isn't the easiest of processes.** But if you do your homework - ask lots of questions, take plenty of advice, read plenty of reference books - you'll get there. **Be positive and persistent and remember, this is about you and your life – your choice!**

> work hard  
plan ahead  
do your research  
hit the deadlines  
don't worry

To help you on your way, we've put together a calendar and given you a few things to think about. Good luck and if you need any help on your journey, we're here to help.

**when? where? who? what? why?**

# theucas calendar



## Year 12 / First Year College Students

### March - July

- Use the UCAS website to have a look at the type of courses that are on offer and where they are delivered. Remember to check their location, some courses require you to be in a specific area.
- Attend the local Higher Education Fair to back up what you have prepared. Ask relevant questions to the representative and make sure you know when their open days are.
- Ask your tutor if you will be having talks from universities about going into Higher Education and the processes involved.
- Start to go to Open Days. See page 15 for hints and tips.

### Summer Holidays

- Practice your Personal Statement. Remember you only have 47 lines to talk about yourself. Try to make yourself sound interesting, positive and committed. You have to make yourself stand out from the crowd. See page 8 for more help.

# Year 13 / Second Year College Students

## Autumn Term

Make sure your tutors inform you as soon as possible about the closing date the school imposes on the UCAS application form. This is because your tutor has to write an academic reference on you which is also read by the university tutor.

### **1st September - the application process begins.**

This means that UCAS start to receive applications from students who are wanting to go to university the following September.

**15th October** - the application closing date for students wanting to study at Cambridge, Oxford and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine/Science courses.

## Spring term

**15th January** - Closing date for UCAS applications to be given equal academic consideration - this does not mean you can't submit an application after this date but for popular courses it is advisable to have done so by now.

**31st March** - Universities aim to respond to students who have applied prior to the 15th January UCAS closing date.

## February - August

If you have applied to UCAS and used all six choices and have been unsuccessful or have declined the offers given to you, you can apply for a place on UCAS Extra. This means you do not have to wait until your results have been released until you apply through Clearing.

### **July - August - RESULTS DAY, depending on which qualifications you take**

This is it. When you get your results contact your chosen university for details of what to do next. Even if you don't quite get the results you were hoping for, you may still have been given a place on your chosen course. **Good Luck!**

**REMEMBER** - You can still apply through UCAS until September of the year you are going to university even if you miss the closing date in January



## ➤ Notes for Art and Design applicants

Applicants for art and design courses please take particular note. There are two routes available (A and B). You will need to decide which option is best for you, you may even need to follow both. Route A means that your application is sent to all the chosen universities simultaneously. Route B allows you to choose which three universities to send your application to and the order in which they will receive it. Route B, however, facilitates the building of a portfolio of work – **you will need a portfolio of work for both Route A and Route B.**

At Staffordshire University, the portfolio is considered to be of utmost importance as each applicant is interviewed and offers are made on the basis of the student's portfolio of work, as well as academic ability. The UCAS Directory indicates whether one or both routes are available to you for each art and design programme. Further details on the procedures for each route are given in the UCAS Directory and the Official UCAS Guide to University and College Entrance.

# personal statement

**UCAS** you are individual  
make **yourself** stand out

Filling in your personal statement on your UCAS application can seem a bit tricky. Here are some helpful tips from our Admissions Tutors to make your application **stand out**

### **Discuss your choice of course**

You need to explain why you wish to do the course(s) you have chosen. This may be a problem for those students who have opted for a diverse range of courses. However, admissions tutors advise that you give clear reasons to justify the range of different courses. Admissions tutors overwhelmingly suggest that they want students to enthuse about their course.

It is here that you might talk about your career aspirations. If you are applying for a deferred entry then you might try to explain what you intend to do in the year between finishing your course and entering university.

I am the admissions co-ordinator for Applied Sciences and Psychology and within these subject areas we deal with over 2000 applications each year.

Preparing your personal statement is just like preparing a CV or completing an application form for a job - you need to stand out. More than this you need to demonstrate that you understand what the course will involve and that you have an appropriate academic background. For example are you aware of the practical and experimental elements of our degrees? You will need to be able to work in the lab with precision, record and analyse your results and report your findings in a meaningful way. You will also need to convince us that you will be committed to further developing your skills during your three years as an undergraduate student on our dynamic university courses.

**Dr Pauline Gowland, Faculty of Health and Sciences**

### **Let your personality shine through**

Few people are incredibly outgoing, have travelled the world twice over, been captain of the hockey team and have completed a period of work experience in exactly the area suited to their degree/HND. Most of those applying for university are under 20 years of age, though increasing numbers of mature students are entering university. Show that you have seized opportunities that have arisen, however modest the experience. Be imaginative but honest about the experiences and how your interests or responsibilities may set you apart from other students. Try to be specific (e.g. provide detail or an example) rather than generalising about your interests and experience.

### **Show that you are somebody who will benefit from life at university**

Universities spend large sums of money providing opportunities for students ranging from sporting facilities to specialist clubs and societies, extra lectures and research opportunities as well as many social facilities e.g. bars, concerts and nightclubs. You might well show that you are somebody who already takes advantage of opportunities and will continue to do so. Remember, you are at university to study. Students have suffered when they haven't got the balance right between work and play.

It is useful to inform the admissions tutor that you enjoy your existing course by explaining which areas interest you most. You might also indicate which area of the degree/HND/Foundation degree interests you. If you have chosen a course which is vocational, (i.e. leads to a specific career) you might indicate why you wish to pursue such a career and what experiences have influenced your decision. Use the opportunity to discuss skills you have developed which will help you on the degree/HND/Foundation degree course e.g. note-taking or problem-solving.

### **Demonstrate that you have the skills suited to university life**

Show the admissions tutor that you have what it takes to survive university life and the rigours of a higher education course. You could mention your particular strengths and skills, which show that you are, for example; self disciplined, self-motivated, hard working, committed and sociable.

➤ For most Art and Design courses, you will be asked to present a portfolio of your current work at an interview.

The presentation of the portfolio has long been used to assess your ability and potential for the course – it also helps staff to understand how you think and develop your ideas.

So what are the tutors at Staffordshire University looking for? They want to see portfolios of work which demonstrate commitment to the subject. Certainly, they won't want to see portfolios containing just a few sheets of paper which give an incomplete view of your ability. You must be prepared to talk about your work at an interview.

# portfolio for art



# and design

## make an impression

**If you apply for Media Production, Multimedia Graphics or Design Management courses, you will need to produce work in a relevant format:**

- Video tapes for Media
- CDs for Multimedia
- A combination of written project work and art work for Design Management

Although an interview is a formal event, our staff will act informally to make you feel at ease.

For further information about our interview process, open days or the graduate design shows, please contact:

**t:** 01782 294565

**e:** [art&design@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:art&design@staffs.ac.uk)

## **Your portfolio**

- it should consist of at least 10-15 sheets of work
- careful thought should be given to the composition of the work chosen
- the work does not have to be mounted on card. It should include sketchbooks that contain visual information, which supports your project work
- it should show how you have developed your ideas with drawings and other manipulative skills
- work in progress is just as important as finished work, with examples of source materials used or visual research
- where appropriate and practical, bring examples of 3D work to the interview
- it is not always necessary to have previously studied the subject for which you have applied. However, it is very important to show a real interest by showing your abilities, using your portfolio and examples of research into existing objects or images.

## **The interview**

- be honest and objective about your own work
- be prepared to answer questions about your work
- remember, the tutors are genuinely interested in you and your work.

**Good luck** – we're looking forward to meeting you!

> Preparation  
Preparation  
Preparation

The key to a good interview is preparation.

# the interv

# iew

Before you go along to the interview, put yourself in the shoes of the interviewer:

What information would you like to know about the candidate? What questions would you ask if you were doing the interview?

List some questions that you think you might be asked and prepare some answers for them. This is not so that you can recite them parrot-fashion in the interview, but will help you to give some thought to what you might want to say and help to stop your mind going blank under the pressure of the interview.

**Make sure you mention any responsibilities you have had** – Sports Captain, Form representative, etc. This will show that you have a responsible attitude – something we are looking for. Are you able to work on your own initiative?

– A part-time job might provide the evidence that you have leadership qualities, are able to organise others, or simply that you are committed and hard working.

It is likely that you will be asked some simple questions about yourself – What you enjoy doing in your spare time? What subjects you are studying? Do you have a part-time job? At Staffordshire University, our Admissions tutors want to know whether you have any outside interests as this tells them a bit about your personality. They want to know whether you are interested in a particular course – so you need to give some evidence to prove that you are enthusiastic and keen. Say which subjects you enjoy and especially tell tutors about those subjects where you do well. You may wish to discuss the course you are applying for, so it would be appropriate to talk about any related subjects which you are studying.

**Dress smartly and try to look confident.** A firm handshake and a pleasant smile will create a good first impression. Be prepared to talk about yourself and why you want to come to university. If you sound enthusiastic and cheerful, then you have every chance of being successful. At Staffordshire University, tutors look for the best in you and will give you every opportunity to show your best.

open



# and friendly

- 
- innovative courses
  - affordable, quality accommodation
  - ideal location
  - excellent quality ratings
  - great career prospects
  - safe, supportive and friendly

## Good luck!

**Open Days** at Staffordshire University are the perfect opportunity to get a feel for the sort of place we are. Come and have a look around, talk to the tutors, talk to the students, take a tour, check out our impressive facilities. Really, just soak up the atmosphere.

Before the Open Day, make a list of the questions that you want to ask and the things you want to know. There's lots of common sense stuff but these might include:

- Will the module options, course content and exam structure suit me?
- What is the social life like?
- How good are the IT facilities?
- What are the libraries like?
- What sorts of jobs do the graduates get?
- How much does accommodation cost and is it close to the university?
- What is public transport like in the area?

**At the Open Day** ask as many questions as possible. Speak to both tutors and University students – they will all have something different and useful to tell you about life at the University.

Afterwards, ask yourself:

- Was the Open Day well organised?
- Did the University make an effort to welcome me?
- Were the talks or lectures interesting?
- Were the undergraduate students well motivated and positive?
- Can I see myself in that environment?
- How easy would it be to travel home?
- Do I want to spend the next three or four years of my life there?

**Your choice of university will help define your future.**

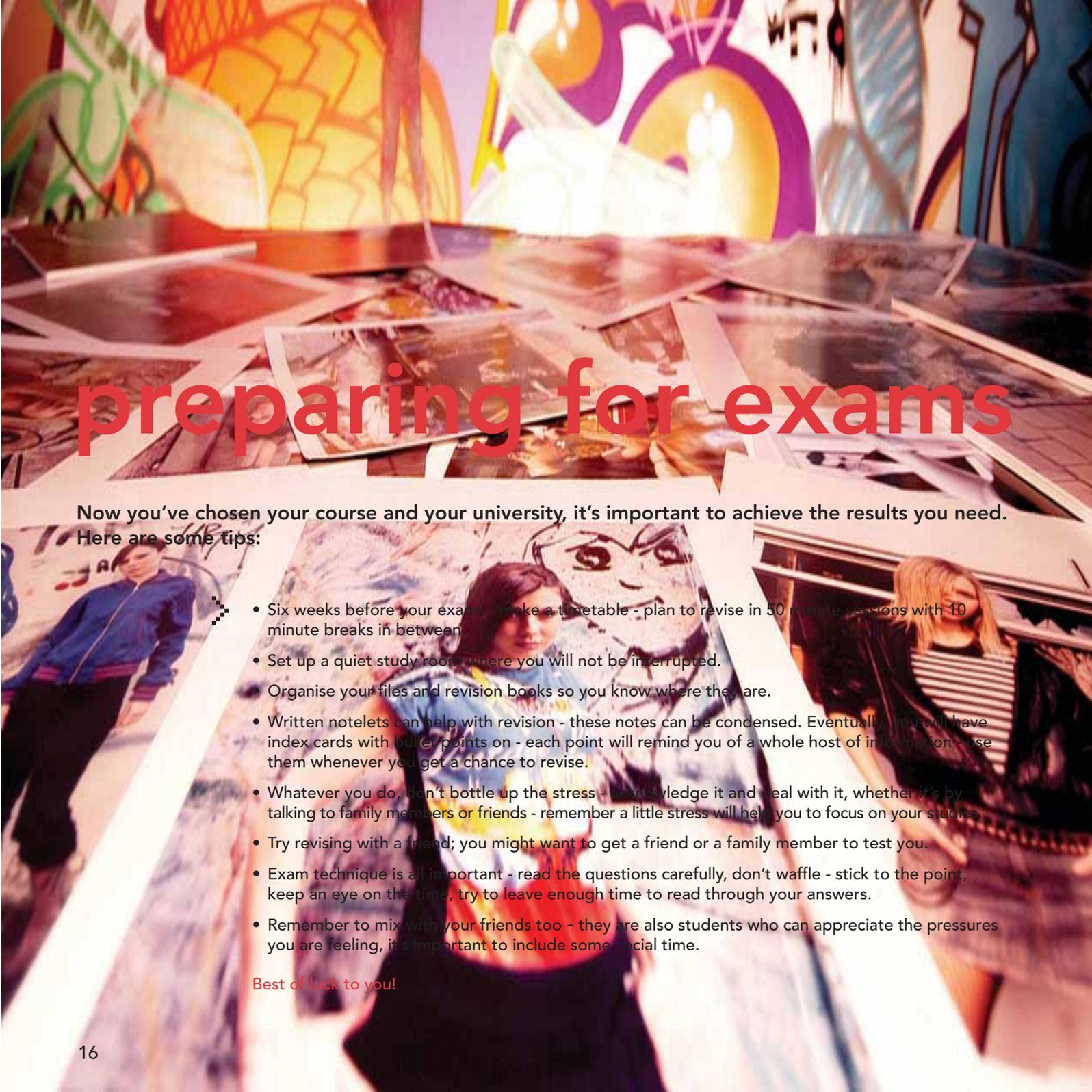
**For further information and dates of Staffordshire University Open Days, please contact:**

**Recruitment Liaison**

**t: 01782 292773**

**e: [scl@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:scl@staffs.ac.uk)**

**[www.staffs.ac.uk](http://www.staffs.ac.uk)**



# preparing for exams

Now you've chosen your course and your university, it's important to achieve the results you need. Here are some tips:

- Six weeks before your exams - make a timetable - plan to revise in 50 minute sessions with 10 minute breaks in between.
- Set up a quiet study room where you will not be interrupted.
- Organise your files and revision books so you know where they are.
- Written notelets can help with revision - these notes can be condensed. Eventually you will have index cards with bullet points on - each point will remind you of a whole host of information - use them whenever you get a chance to revise.
- Whatever you do, don't bottle up the stress - acknowledge it and deal with it, whether it's by talking to family members or friends - remember a little stress will help you to focus on your studies.
- Try revising with a friend; you might want to get a friend or a family member to test you.
- Exam technique is all important - read the questions carefully, don't waffle - stick to the point, keep an eye on the time, try to leave enough time to read through your answers.
- Remember to mix with your friends too - they are also students who can appreciate the pressures you are feeling, it's important to include some social time.

Best of luck to you!

# quality

**our teaching standards** are some of the very best in the University sector - Staffordshire University has recently been awarded the highest accolade an institution can receive - broad confidence - following a QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) institutional audit. The University has also been awarded 12 excellent/commendable teaching scores in a row by the QAA, we are also ranked in the top three with Oxford and Cambridge in the UK's secondary teacher training league tables.

- geography has more teaching strengths than any similar university department in the country. (QAA)
- The Law Society and QAA have given our Law School top marks in separate reviews. We are one of only six institutions to share this prestigious status
- we offer the most diverse range of media courses than any other University
- the University's computing provision ranked seventh in the UK in Computer Weekly magazine
- the biggest consortium of further education colleges in the UK work in partnership with Staffordshire University through our SURF network - giving people in the region access to higher education
- we have been awarded a top grade (1) by Ofsted for Management and Quality Assurance.

## About our Students

Our students come from a variety of academic and cultural backgrounds. Choose to study at Staffs and you will be following in the footsteps of thousands of students not only from the UK, but from over 100 countries around the world. Students with HNDs, and Access qualifications are encouraged to apply and we recognise the benefits of a full range of qualifications - Access, Advanced GCEs and Advanced VCEs, BTec, Highers as well as international qualifications.

## Geared for Success

The University's pioneering and innovative research is recognised internationally and makes a direct and relevant contribution to the world today. And by developing strong relationships with industry, we can equip our students with the relevant knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed in today's demanding workplace.



# why

- a massive 90% of our students found employment or went on to further study six months after graduating
- some of the most innovative courses in the sector including Sports Journalism, Forensic Science, Broadcast Media and Computer Games Design
- students study in a stimulating learning environment that reflects real world experiences
- over £3.5 million was invested in new buildings and facilities in 2004
- 85% of our students happily recommend their course. (Student Satisfaction Survey 2004)
- we are one of the country's friendliest universities - voted by the members of Friends Reunited
- we have a different attitude to higher education and challenge the way our students think - "Staffordshire has never been afraid to innovate" Sunday Times Good University Guide
- our students study in a stimulating learning environment that reflects real world experiences
- cutting edge facilities include professionally-equipped media centre, music, film TV and radio studios, a crime scene house, nature reserve, drama studio and mock courtroom
- modern, on-campus student accommodation
- inexpensive place to live and learn
- popular sport and recreational facilities
- large Student's Union (amongst the top three in the country)
- high-tech learning resources - all students have free access to email and the Internet
- excellent library and computing facilities
- dedicated student support services including support for disabled students, a health service, careers office, counselling, childcare and the chaplaincy
- central location in the heart of England with excellent communications by road, rail and air



STAFFORDSHIRE  
UNIVERSITY

At Staffordshire University, we believe you can do anything you want to do  
- be anything you want to be. We will do everything possible to get you there.

Stoke campus  
College Road  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST4 2DE

Stafford campus  
Beaconside  
Stafford  
Staffordshire  
ST18 0AD

Lichfield campus  
The Friary  
Lichfield  
Staffordshire  
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■ CREATE THE DIFFERENCE