



**Hellesdon High School
& Sixth Form Centre**

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Post-18 Options Student Guide

May 2025

Pathway 1: **Higher Education – University**

Year 12 – 2025/26 UCAS Cycle for Applying to University

All applications to British universities are processed by UCAS.

The UCAS search tool displaying 2026 undergraduate courses and course requirements will go live shortly. From June 2025, you will be able to register and begin your UCAS application using Apply 2026.

You will receive further guidance on how to complete your UCAS application in June.

UCAS Conservatoires

If you are interested in studying at a Conservatoire, you will also need to submit an application to UCAS. As previously mentioned, Conservatoires Apply 2026 will open shortly. Help and advice to support you in applying to a Conservatoire can be found at www.ucas.com/conservatoires.

University Open Days

Universities are working hard to support Year 12 students who are planning their next steps after Sixth Form. Many universities have planned an innovative schedule of virtual tours, live chats, and helpful resources so you can still experience university life. Please keep looking at individual university websites as they are regularly updating the range of information on there to support potential applicants.

Some key dates for local universities:

UEA – 5th July, 6th September

University of Suffolk – 5th July, 4th October

Please see the Open Days list on the Y12 Conference classroom for the dates for other universities that previous Hellesdon students have considered.

UCAS Higher Education Exhibitions

This year, UCAS are planning on offering a virtual exhibition experience. This will enable students to register, and then chat with universities and colleges online, whilst accessing a range of content about subjects and the university experience. You'll be able to ask questions of admissions teams and subject specialists at universities. Some may also offer the chance to join in talks and seminars of their own.

This event will still have the wealth of universities and college exhibitors you'd expect, as well as a seminar programme that will cover all the major things to consider – such as the application process, student finance and subject specific information.

UCAS/Discovery - East of England will take place on the 10th June 2025. More details to follow.

UCAS Virtual Tours

UCAS virtual tours and videos from universities and colleges allow you to see what it's like on campus and what facilities are available at different universities. These can be viewed from <https://www.ucas.com/applying/you-apply/what-and-where-study/university-open-days/virtual-tours> This is an excellent resource.

UCAS Subject and City Guides

UCAS's Subject and City Guides offer a range of valuable insights to help you find the right subject, location, university and college for you. Visit <https://www.ucas.com/where-to-go>

UCAS Unibuddy

UCAS's Unibuddy gives you the chance to talk to current undergraduates to find out what life at university is really like www.ucas.com/chat-to-students

MOOCs

The Preparing for University MOOC will help equip you with the skills for university learning before you get there. It's relevant for anyone moving from level 3 study to university, whichever university they're planning to go to. To make use of this resource visit www.futurelearn.com/courses/preparing-for-university

Foundation Year courses

A foundation year can be seen as a stepping stone into the world of higher education, particularly if you don't have the right qualifications to go straight onto a degree programme. A variety of subjects can be studied on a foundation year, from social studies and business management to biological science and sports therapy.

Courses are broad enough to offer a good introduction to a subject, but they also provide enough depth for you to gain credible vocational skills from expert tutors.

A foundation year is also ideal if you're unsure whether you want to go to university. You can get an understanding of your field of interest before progressing to a full degree programme. As well as subject knowledge, you will get used to the higher education context and gain the skills needed for higher level study. If you successfully complete the foundation year, you can progress immediately into the first year of a degree.

Student finance is available.

A couple of particularly useful links:

University of Bristol – virtual resources page

The University of Bristol virtual resources page provides information and advice on Higher Education for Year 12 students and Year 13 students.

Over the coming months they will add additional subject specific tasters and lectures as well as HE information and guidance videos on themes such as the university application process and student life. These resources can be accessed

from www.bristol.ac.uk/study/outreach/virtual-resources-for-students/ Please note, that you will need to register your details to access this information.

University of East Anglia's webinar programme

UEA's programme of webinars for students and parents will continue for the foreseeable future. They cover a range of topics and they have already started to consider 2026 entry. The next webinar is a session on how to get ahead with your university application on Tuesday 10th June 2025 (4.30pm).

UEA is also working with the university's academics to bring you a range of subject-specific taster lectures so that you can learn more about studying your subject at degree level. Keep a lookout for this on UEA's website www.uea.ac.uk/study/webinars

Also, use the following link to access UEA's Resource Centre, which offers a fantastic set of videos on a number of topics including University Accommodation and Student Finance - www.everwondered.uea.ac.uk

Super-curricular activities:

Universities want to see that you are committed to the subject that you want to study. They want to know what you have done to support and further develop your interests. Taking part in a range of super-curricular activities is a good place to start. See this excellent list from the Whickham School for some ideas - <https://www.whickhamschool.org/sixth-form/beyond-the-classroom/supercurricular-activities/>

Applying for Oxbridge

Early UCAS deadline - 15th October 2026

Please make use of the information and resources that are available on their website. both
The University of Cambridge - www.cam.ac.uk/apply
The University of Oxford - www.ox.ac.uk/apply

Applying to Oxbridge

An introduction to Oxbridge, the application process and breaking down myths -
www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWVXvG0HaIA

Super-Curricular Suggestions

The University of Cambridge has compiled a list of super-curricular activity tips for students who are unsure about how they could explore their academic interests outside of the school curriculum. This is not a required reading list but a list of suggestions and can be accessed here - [New Super-Curricular Suggestions Document](#)

Oxford University's Digital Resource Hub

Oxford University has recently launched a new Digital Resource Hub with lots of different information for students, teachers and families -
www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/increasing-access/ug-digital-resources

Cambridge Open Days – 10th and 11th July 2025

For more information, subscribe to the mailing list at
www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events/cambridge-open-days

Oxford Open Days – 2nd and 3rd July and 19th September 2025

Further information for Oxford's Open Days can be found here www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/open-days-and-visits.
The University of Oxford also produces regular newsletters for prospective applicants that offer updates and insights into student life, as well as advice and guidance on making a competitive application. You can sign up to receive these newsletters here: newsletter.admin.ox.ac.uk/k/Ouc/undergraduate_admissions_and_outreach_news

Oxbridge Admissions Interviews

- University of Cambridge

For further information about interviews at Cambridge visit
www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/interviews

- University of Oxford

For further information about interviews at Oxford visit www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/interviews

Applying for Medicine, Dentistry & Veterinary Science

Medicine, Dentistry & Veterinary Sciences Admissions Tests

All UK medical schools will be using the UCAT. You will also be required to take the Science Admissions Test if you are applying to study Veterinary Medicine at Cambridge. Please check the requirements for each of your universities CAREFULLY in case there are any changes.

University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)

UCAT (formerly UKCAT) is an admissions test used by many Medical Schools to assess a student's suitability to study medicine. It is also used by Dental Schools for Dentistry programmes. Information about the testing schedule, testing format, sample papers, registration and booking, the bursary scheme and practice tests can be found on UCAT's website: www.ucat.ac.uk/

Medicine Virtual Work Experience

Work experience is very important for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science/Medicine course applications. Once everywhere starts to open up again this summer, make contact with relevant organisations about work experience to see whether there are any opportunities.

You may also be able to gain some virtual work experience or volunteering opportunities (see the links below):

1. Medical Schools Council

The Medical Schools Council issued a Work Experience in Covid-19 guidance document, which still contains some useful advice, and can be downloaded from here

www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2636/guidance-on-gaining-relevant-experience-for-studying-medicine-in-the-time-of-covid-19.pdf

2. Observe GP

Observe GP, is a free interactive video platform, created by the Royal College of General Practitioners for aspiring medics aged 16+. It provides insights into medicine through videos and activities. To find out more about Observe GP visit www.rcgp.org.uk/observegp

3. Brighton & Sussex Medical School Virtual Work Experience

Brighton & Sussex Medical School's virtual work experience course provides a 'virtual' work experience for those looking to apply to medical school. It is free to enrol on this course. Visit bsmsoutreach.thinkific.com/courses/VWE

Other useful resources:

Newcastle University – Medicine and Dentistry Resources

Newcastle University have resources available to support students who are preparing to apply for Medicine and Dentistry courses. They have resources available on their website to

support, including advice on how to write a strong personal statement, prepare for interviews and prepare for the UCAT. You can view the range of resources available at <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/medicine/engagement/schools/>

Future Learn – Free Healthcare and Medicine Courses

The Future Learn platform provides you with a range of free courses related to healthcare and medicine. With current difficulties in securing work experience to support applications to medicine, these short courses provide an excellent way for you to demonstrate your commitment to studying medicine and to developing your independent learning skills

www.futurelearn.com/subjects/healthcare-medicine-courses

Pathway 2: **Apprenticeships**

If you wish to progress into an apprenticeship, you need to consider the industry that they wish to work in and the current viability of that industry.

Apprenticeships in Norfolk currently cover a wide range of industries, from engineering and care to hospitality and education.

Some key websites:

Amazing Apprenticeships

The Amazing Apprenticeships website allows you to access a range of resources about the different apprenticeship opportunities. Visit their website at amazingapprenticeships.com/ You are also able to access live broadcasts (and recording of these broadcasts) at amazingapprenticeships.com/live-broadcasts/

All students who have chosen to apply for an apprenticeship will be invited to attend a workshop run by Amazing Apprenticeships in February or March 2026. Further opportunities will also be announced in due course.

Apprenticeships.gov.uk

The national Apprenticeships website provides general advice and information about apprenticeships. It also advertises current vacancies at www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

Apprenticeships New Anglia

Apprenticeships New Anglia supports young people to give them the best chance of securing an Apprenticeship. Visit their website for more information www.apprenticeshipsnewanglia.co.uk/

Career Map – Guide to Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

Higher and Degree apprenticeships are a fantastic career route if you're looking for a viable alternative to university. To find out more about how a Higher or Degree apprenticeship could help pave the way for your future career visit careermapping.co.uk/higher-apprenticeships-2/ and careermapping.co.uk/degree-apprenticeships/

Paragon Skills

Paragon Skills is a national apprenticeship training provider. There is some excellent advice on their website, including how to make your apprenticeship application standout! Visit www.paragonskills.co.uk for more information.

Pathway 3: **Employment**

General Careers Resources:

icanbea...

The www.icanbea.org.uk website is a great source of information and advice about the local labour market in Suffolk and Norfolk. It lets you explore potential career opportunities across the two counties, showing you how the organisations and job roles fit into wider career areas.

icould

icould uses the power of personal stories to inform and inspire young people's career choices. The site features over 1,000 videos of real people talking about their careers, explaining their role and what has shaped their career path. To find out more visit icould.com/

National Careers Service

The National Careers Service is the Government's hub for careers advice for people of all ages where you can find help with drafting letters, CVs, exploring your skills or seeking careers advice - nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/

Careers in Norwich:

Work in Norwich

This website gives you an insight into the various sectors and industries that you can work in in Norwich -

<https://www.workinnorwich.co.uk/sectors/#:~:text=Norwich%20is%20packed%20with%20a,Learn%20more>

Careers-Related Online Learning:

Barclays Lifeskills

The Barclays Lifeskills website will help you to continue to build your skills and to prepare for the future. They have a range of interactive tools, films and activities to help you prepare for the future workforce. To register and look at the resources available, visit barclayslifeskills.com/young-people/

MOOCs

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are free online courses that cover a range of subjects from international development to branding. To find out more visit www.mooc.org

Future Learn

Future Learn have a huge variety of FREE courses to suit students, which are ideal for A-level students at www.futurelearn.com. These courses can help you to continue learning, build your professional skills and connect with experts at Future Learn.

PwC Employability Hub

PwC have created this great Employability Hub. It's a fantastic virtual tool kit where learners can develop and explore their employability skills. There are many different resources from webpages, videos, e-learning tools through to podcasts. To explore these resources, visit www.pwc.co.uk/careers/student-careers/employability-hub.html

Pathway CTM

Pathway CTM's digital programme includes daily webinars, virtual employer events, access to workshops covering everything from How to Create a CV, to a LinkedIn Masterclass. If you are interested in accessing this, please have a look here: <https://pathwayctm.com/schools/>

Eton College

Eton College is making several online self-study courses from the EtonX Future Skills Programme available free of charge to students in the UK. Courses available are CV Writing, Creative Problem Solving, Interview Skills, Making an Impact, Resilience, Research Skills and Writing Skills. To sign up visit etonx.com/uk-schools/

Online Work-Related Experiences

icanbea...

icanbea... has recorded Virtual Tours with a number of key employers in Ipswich including Morgan Sindall, Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Building Society. These tours are available online via the icanbea... website. The Virtual Tours gives you an opportunity to learn about Labour Market information and local employers from your home. Here is the link - www.icanbea.org.uk/virtual-tours/

My Way In

My Way In shares stories and advice from people in work and employers across the UK. It includes tips to help you broaden your experience and the number of jobs that you have access to, as well as information about the industries which are likely to have vacancies in the future mywayin.campaign.gov.uk/

New Anglia LEP Careers Online Talks

Working with the Enterprise Advisers, Cornerstone Employers and other contacts, New Anglia LEP have produced a series of talks that are accessible here - www.youtube.com/channel/UCMQWgt6SdsGQF-KJc7JTwQ/featured

Careers & Enterprise Company's Career Talks

The CEC have developed a series of career talks connecting young people with stories from slightly older peers who have recently made that transition into the workplace from education, focusing on apprentices, trainees and graduates from different backgrounds and ways of life. Enjoy listening to Bejay, Mia and Callum's experiences.

Bejay www.youtube.com/watch?v=dT-juNybMOE

Mia www.youtube.com/watch?v=w71L8P0olH8&feature=youtu.be

Callum www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6HpylXtNeU&feature=youtu.be

Careers in Engineering

Success at School has put together this comprehensive guide to routes into the different types of engineering. To find out more about studying and working in this field, visit mailchi.mp/successatschool/careers-in-engineering-your-complete-guide-1277051

Pathway 4: **Gap Year**

Some students will decide to take a gap year between finishing their A-level programme and starting at university, or with an employer or on an apprenticeship programme. A gap year gives you the opportunity to focus on things that you wouldn't normally do and to develop your experience of the world.

It can be spent doing any number of things at home or abroad. Students will typically look to do any combination of the following things during a gap year:

- Paid employment
- Travel
- Volunteering/charity work
- Work experience
- Further learning

If you are thinking about taking a gap year, some of the ways in which you can prepare for this include:

- Researching the different options – this is key
- Researching the pros and cons of different options
- Thinking about what you will do in your gap year early on
- Preparing mentally and physically for any travels
- Planning how you will fund your gap year
- Acquiring the basic skills that you will need e.g. budgeting, food hygiene, safety tips

Universities generally value the maturity and focus of young people who have taken a gap year; these students are often more prepared for university than those who go straight there from Sixth Form. However, some universities are less keen for students to take a gap year prior to starting certain courses with them, so it is important that students check how individual universities view a gap year in relation to the course that they are intending to study.

Employers value the life skills such as initiative, communication and decision-making skills, character, confidence, financial planning and achievement of goals that students who have taken a gap year can show on their CVs.

Going to University after a Gap Year

If you are planning to go to university after a gap year, and if you know what you want to study at university, you should still put in a UCAS application in the Autumn Term of Year 13, applying for university with deferred entry. In many ways, this is the easiest option as it allows you to directly access information, advice and guidance on your UCAS application.

Volunteering/charity work

Volunteer Norfolk

Volunteer Norfolk has information about lots of different volunteering opportunities that you can apply for on their website www.voluntarynorfolk.org.uk.

Local Charities

Try contacting some local charities to see how they are still operating under the current conditions and ask whether they have any online volunteering opportunities that you could become involved with.

Camp America

Summer Camps in the USA are a big part of American culture and it's traditional for kids to go to camp each year. There are thousands of summer camps spread all throughout the United States. This is your chance to spend your summer doing something totally different, experiencing the real America with people from all over the world.

Visit - <https://www.campamerica.co.uk/>

You can already register for 2026 experiences.

Pathway 5: Further Education

Year 12 and Year 13 students have access to 3 years of funded Post-16 provision, so taking a one-year college course might be an alternative to employment, an Apprenticeship or a HE course.

Some useful, local websites are:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/adult-learning/courses>

<https://www.ccn.ac.uk/adults/>

<https://www.easton.ac.uk/courses/course-types/adult-learning/>