

**Bradford Grammar School**

## **Careers and Higher Education Guidance**

**This policy applies to the Senior School and is published to parents, pupils and employees.**

**Issued December 2016**

### **1. Introduction**

Bradford Grammar School (the "School") aims to enable pupils to make the right educational choices as they progress up the School, based on self-knowledge and an understanding of the opportunities open to them. The Higher Education and Careers Department plays an important part in making each pupil aware of the implications of their subject choices. The department also works closely with the Head of Personal Development and Head of Sixth Form Enrichment to ensure that the Personal Development programme enables pupils to make informed choices at key points in their educational career. This document outlines the commitment that the School makes in terms of provision to its pupils.

### **2. Information**

A wide range of information about Careers and Higher Education is provided through the School's VLE and Twitter account, as well as the School library. Areas of interest covered include: GCSE, AS and A level choices, university and degree options (including overseas), post-16 alternatives, apprenticeships, opportunities to gain relevant experience, student grants and loans, university open days, public lectures, careers fairs, GAP and other year-out schemes. Applications for Nuffield Research Placements, Arkwright Scholarships and similar schemes are also encouraged and supported.

Year 12 and 13 pupils have access to Unifrog, which allows them to search, filter, rank, select and locate detailed information on university courses. They are shown how to use Unifrog and encouraged to make good use of it. The site is accessed via a website so it is available both at home and at school. Form tutors receive emailed updates on the university choices pupils make whilst using Unifrog.

The School additionally offers a wide variety of Enrichment and Volunteering opportunities in which pupils are encouraged to get involved.

In Years 7 and 8, pupils use "The Real Game" as an introduction to the world of work. This contributes to pupils' learning portfolios (as required in the National Careers Education Framework 7 - 19 learning outcomes).

The game is designed to:

- promote effective learning in the areas of careers and PSHE;
- provide opportunities for links to other curriculum areas;
- provide links between the school and the wider community;
- illustrate the importance of adaptability; and
- introduce the concept of transferable skills.

In the Real Game, pupils role-play as single adults in occupational roles. They see how schoolwork relates to occupational choices and therefore to lifestyle and income. Within their job-role, pupils have the opportunity to explore adult realities, such as budgeting (taxes, mortgage or rent, other bills and transport), work-life balance, different sorts of work and family roles and career making decisions.

The job profiles included in the game reflect a broad range of employment opportunities and demonstrate that not all jobs are created equally and in the real world some people are stuck in jobs they do not like. Pupils learn that if they plan ahead and make the most of their school years they can avoid this eventuality. By the end of the Real Game, pupils realise that satisfaction in work is a priority issue in life and that it is an outcome that they can achieve by making the choices that are right for them.

Before Year 9 pupils choose their GCSE option subjects, they will have been introduced to KUDOS, a careers database that matches pupils' interests and skills with specific career pathways, and will have created their own personal profiles. In Year 9 KUDOS is used as a research tool to find out about different careers, relevant university courses and apprenticeship opportunities, with the A Level choices that would be required for these. In Year 10 KUDOS is revisited for further individual research, and to develop an action plan and personal statement. Pupils are encouraged to use KUDOS for their own personal research during Year 11 within the Year 12 Transition process.

### **3. Guidance**

- The School's careers guidance service is available to all pupils and Old Bradfordians, providing individual consultations, meetings and correspondence with parents, and liaison with subject teachers, Heads of Year and form tutors;
- In Years 8 – 11, guidance is given on subject choices and their implications for post-16 education, most importantly through Year 12 Transition Interviews<sup>1</sup>;
- In Years 12 and 13, assistance is given with all aspects of pupils' Higher Education applications; this complements the work of form tutors in writing UCAS testimonials, providing materials, documentation and advice<sup>2</sup>;
- The Higher Education and Careers Department offers advice and support to pupils planning to apply to Oxford or Cambridge;
- Support is given for employment applications as well as for further education;
- Use is made of the School's wider network, facilitated by maintaining contacts with organisations and employers through use of the School's Marketing Department and the Old Bradfordians' Association;
- Parents are involved at every level in their child's development and the choices they have to make via the Careers and Information Evenings and Higher Education talks; they may also consult the Head of Careers and Higher Education about particular areas of concern. Pupils receive a written action plan to support the Year 12 Transition Interviews in Year 11, which they are encouraged to share with their parents.
- Armed Forces Careers Advisers regularly visit the School.

### **4. Education**

- In Years 7 – 11, careers education takes place within the Form Period, co-ordinated as part of the Personal Development programme;
- A biennial Careers Evening is held every other autumn, with talks by selected professionals;
- Pupils in Year 11 and above may attend career-themed networking lunches;
- In Year 12, pupils are encouraged to take part in a work experience placement. Support in finding placements is given, if required, and contacts provided via the Old Bradfordians' Association.
- A post-AS Higher Education Session is run in the summer term to cover all aspects of university admissions, from researching courses and universities, to applying, accepting offers and beyond;

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 – *Year 12 Transition Interviews and Year 12 Transition Action Plan*

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2 – *BGS HE & Careers Department: A form tutor's guide*

- Departments are encouraged and supported in arranging visits to companies;
- Departments are encouraged to stimulate the exchange of ideas through talks, lectures and other activities (both curricular and co-curricular).

The School continuously evaluates the effectiveness of its careers and higher education provision through debriefings and feedback from pupils and parents, and through the annual Careers and Higher Education departmental review.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Year 12 Transition Interviews**

#### **1.1 Purpose**

To support pupils in making decisions over choices of course for their Sixth Form study. The consultations should ensure that:

- provisional subject choices by pupils are challenging, realistic and informed by careers guidance;
- pupils are aware of the importance of gaining relevant experience; and
- pupils are aware of sources of further information to support their decisions.

Guidance and information must be impartial. It is important to emphasise to the pupil that the consultation is a trigger for the pupil to conduct further research on their own. The Higher Education and Careers Department will guide and encourage the pupil to carry out this research and to support them in their own exploration of possible courses and careers.

#### **1.2 Outcome**

The pupil is at the centre of this process and it is their engagement which is the main factor in its success or failure. An action plan is to be produced by the teacher carrying out the consultation, but very much done with the pupil's input. This action plan must be shared with the pupil and their form tutor. The action plan must be saved within Shared Area\Higher Education and Careers. The *Year 12 Transition Action Plan* document is attached.

#### **1.3 Timetable of events**

- October – completion of pupil's Year 12 Transition Forms supported by form tutors.
- October – issue of Guide to Sixth Form Courses.
- November – 16+ information evening and careers evening (biennial).
- November, December and January – Year 12 Transition Interviews.
- January / February – provisional subject choices.
- February – mocks
- March/April - mock results and suitability of subject choices discussed with pupils.

#### **1.4 Sixth Form Courses**

Details of all courses are contained within the Guide to Sixth Form Courses.

#### **1.5 Preparation for the consultation**

It is recognised that the teachers carrying out the consultations are not trained careers experts. Teachers should ensure that they have read and are familiar with:

- Guide to Sixth Form Courses;
- Informed Choices (which brings together expert advice from careers advisors and admissions professionals at Russell Group universities);
- pupil's Year 12 Transition Forms (Shared Area\Higher Education and Careers); and
- pupil's latest assessment data (provided by the Head of Personal Development).

On an occasion when the consultation does not lead to production of an action plan, or essential paperwork has not been made available, the teacher performing the consultation should re-arrange it for another time.

## 1.6 Structure of the interview

There is no rigid structure, and teachers are encouraged to develop their own style and to adjust the format to the pupil concerned. Typically, 20 minutes should be allowed for the consultation. Discussion based on questioning of their enjoyment, ability and requirement for different subjects at A Level provides a sound framework. Two possible different approaches to the consultation are:

- **Top-Down (for the pupil who has a definite career path in mind e.g. wants to be a doctor).** Discuss why they want to follow this path. Check that they have thought about it carefully for themselves and suggest how/where they can research it further. Confirm that aspirations are realistic (show the pupil likely university entry requirements). Look at other similar jobs. Discuss possible degree courses and institutions. Check that the AS choices are acceptable for that university course (show the pupil how to do this themselves). Prompt the pupil to arrange relevant experience.
- **Bottom-up (for the pupil with no idea of career paths).** Discuss pupils' AS choices – why have they chosen those subjects? Do they have a favourite? Go through the Guide to Sixth Form Courses. Suggest that the pupil chooses subjects that they enjoy and are good at. Suggest possible degree courses that could be taken with those A-level subjects and which careers they may lead to. Show the pupil how to look for different degree courses ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and click on course search). Make the pupil aware of how their options may exclude them from a particular degree course/career. For example, a pupil who does not take maths cannot easily become an engineer. Prompt them to arrange some relevant experience.

## 1.7 Sources of information for the pupil

All pupils should have read the Guide to Sixth Form Courses and will have had the opportunity to attend the 16+ Information Evening. It is possible for all pupils to access the Kudos web-based software to assist their decision making. The passwords for this system are available from the Head of Personal Development, and will have been issued to form tutors. It is ideal for pupils who have no idea over future careers options and **should form part of their action plan if this is the case.** The library has an extensive careers section of reference and loan material. There is a careers and higher education advice section within the VLE. Pupils should be encouraged to access this information. It is also important to encourage pupils to speak to their subject teachers about their options decisions, as often teachers that know their academic strengths well will be best placed to provide advice.

## 1.8 Management of consultations

The Head of Personal Development will confirm which teachers are carrying out the consultations for each pupil. Teachers should not arrange the consultation until the Year 12 Transition Forms have been at least partially completed and until after the 16+ Information Evening.

Teachers should inform the pupil of the timing of the consultation via the form tutor. At least one week's notice is required so that the pupil can excuse themselves from lessons – the subject teacher does not have to let them go if their attendance in the lesson is essential.

Staff are both welcome and encouraged to use the Sixth Form Centre interview room for their consultations.

## 1.9 Relevant experience

The aim of gaining relevant experience is to give pupils a greater awareness of employment and higher education opportunities. Relevant experience can be obtained through work experience, residential courses, day courses and volunteering opportunities. Work experience has the additional benefit that it will also provide some practical experience of the world of work. Details of

opportunities are advertised on the notice boards, on the VLE and via Twitter @BGSCareers. Pupils can also obtain further advice from the Head of Higher Education and Careers.

Work experience is particularly important for pupils wishing to study vocational degree courses e.g. medicine, veterinary science and architecture. It is important that this is emphasised in the consultation, and that it is explained that the quality of their reflections on the experiences, articulated in their personal statement and at interview, can be critical in the success of their applications.

### **1.10 Feedback**

The process and structure of the consultations require on-going refinement. It is essential that those teachers involved provide feedback to the Head of Personal Development. Staff should provide honest feedback as it will be listened to and reflected upon.

## SIXTH FORM TRANSITION ACTION PLAN

NAME:

FORM :

DO YOU INTEND TO STAY AT BGS IN THE SIXTH FORM?      Yes/No

### LIKELY AS SUBJECTS:

Probable      1

2

3

4

Possible      5

6

### POTENTIAL HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES:

### CAREERS CONSIDERED:

### PLANNED WORK EXPERIENCE:

ACTIONS	WHO	DEADLINE	Yr 12 Follow-up
Make firm decisions about A Level choices			
Personal research using <a href="https://www.ucas.com/">https://www.ucas.com/</a> as well as university websites to inform course choice			
Look into work experience opportunities (perhaps discuss this with SJF)			

## **Appendix 2**

### **HIGHER EDUCATION - A FORM TUTOR'S GUIDE**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this guide is to advise teachers who are new to the post of Year 12 or 13 Form Tutor what their responsibilities are with regard to preparing and supporting pupils for education and employment beyond the School. Form Tutors have other duties too, but this document is concerned **exclusively** with the university and Higher Education aspects of their post.

#### **General responsibilities**

Form Tutors are vital to the success of the Higher Education (HE) system at the School. Nearly all communication with the pupils is passed through them. More important than this, however, is the role that they play in guiding, informing and encouraging their pupils in matters relating to further education.

#### **Specific responsibilities**

These have been classified by year group and further sub-divided by term so that it is relatively easy to get an overview of the whole process.

#### **Year 12 Form Tutors**

##### **Autumn term**

The tasks to be implemented here are less formal, since the primary purpose of the Form Tutor is to settle their pupils in, get them comfortable with the Sixth Form regime, and to start to encourage them to think seriously about their futures from day one.

- Get to know the pupils in their charge.
- Review the careers action plans of their pupils (the notes from the Year 12 Transition Interviews can be accessed via the shared area).
- Pupils new to the School in Year 12 should be sent by Form Tutors to the Careers & HE Department for a consultation within the first half term.
- Advise pupils of the need to be efficient and organised.
- Assist those who are disorganised to resolve their difficulties.
- Start to identify potential Oxbridge applicants.
- Start to identify potential applicants to overseas universities.
- Encourage pupils to make use of the Careers and HE facilities in the library.
- Assist pupils to identify suitable opportunities to gain relevant careers experience.
- Assist pupils with CVs and completion of application forms for work experience and residential courses; this is an on-going commitment.
- Encourage pupils to take advantage of the variety of Enrichment opportunities available to them.
- Encourage pupils to make good use of Unifrog.



## **Spring term**

The formal process of gathering and collating data on the pupils commences, along with talks about UCAS in general, university courses and the School HE system.

- Form Tutor should be having serious discussions with both the group and individuals about their choices and prospects.
- All prospective Oxbridge, medical, veterinary and dentistry applicants should have been identified by the end of this term and the HE and Careers Department should be informed. Finalise identification of potential applicants to overseas universities and inform the HE and Careers Department of these applicants.

## **Summer term**

The information gathering increases in tempo and the Form Tutor starts to have a more formal role in the process.

- A draft personal statement is written by the pupils and an electronic copy should be saved in the pupil's network account. This can also be done via the Unifrog system.
- Form Tutors complete the spreadsheet sent out by Head of HE and Careers to indicate the proposed degree course of each pupil in the form.
- The PATs (Pupil Assessment and Testimonial Request Forms) are issued and completed electronically in SIMS; the completed PAT forms will be published electronically as Word documents.
- Where appropriate, but without revealing specific comments, the Form Tutor should discuss the general tenor of the PATs with pupils (especially important for pupils who are underachieving or who have unrealistic aspirations).
- Form Tutors need to start thinking about writing references and ensure they have all relevant information required to make a start on this.

## **Year 13 Form Tutors**

Form Tutors play a vital role in giving guidance and encouragement to pupils, both in completing the UCAS application form (especially the finishing touches to the personal statement (originally started in Year 12)) and finalising the choice of course.

The School uses *Apply*, the online electronic application system. It is possible for Form Tutors to view online the progress of their pupils' application forms (<http://wwwucas.com/pupils/apply/>), thereby allowing greater oversight of the process. This is automatically set up for Sixth Form Tutors by the HE and Careers Department. Form Tutors who wish to have this explained to them in greater detail should contact the HE and Careers Department.

## **Autumn term**

The UCAS process starts in earnest.

- Form Tutors should check that they possess all the relevant information for their pupils.
- Form Tutors should ensure that they know who the Oxbridge, medics, dentists and vets are in their forms and pass this information to the HE and Careers Department.
- Identify pupils who are not considering a UCAS or other HE application and send them to the HE and Careers Department for a consultation.
- Email last year's subject teachers for an update of grade predictions or a further comment.

- Make sure that pupils are aware of School's internal UCAS deadlines and that the pupils stick to them.
- Write UCAS and, when necessary, other references for pupils using the PAT forms that can be accessed via the school intranet.
- Ensure that all pupils for whom it is necessary have at least two mock interviews; the interviewer should provide the Form Tutor with appropriate feedback.
- Monitor the application process for each pupil.
- Inform the Head of Year 13 once the UCAS form is complete and the reference added.

### Spring Term

Things start to slow down, although there is still much to do.

- Check that pupils have started the process of applying for financial assistance (the system goes live in March).
- Continue monitoring the applications using *Apply*.
- Advise pupils about their Firm and Insurance offers; send pupils to the HE and Careers Department if in doubt.
- Advise pupils who hold no offers about their prospects; send pupils to the HE and Careers Department if in doubt.

### Summer term

Relatively relaxed as far as HE is concerned.

- Continue to offer advice to pupils who need it, consulting where necessary with the HE and Careers Department.

### Post-summer term

- On rare occasions it may be necessary to write references for pupils who have decided to reapply through UCAS.

### Guidance

It is vital that the guidance that pupils are given is accurate and up to date. If a Form Tutor has any doubts at all about anything that a pupil asks them, they should refer the pupil to the HE and Careers Department, or ask the HE and Careers Department directly.

### The reference

This, more than anything else, is the end product of our UCAS process from a teacher's point of view. The reference is now open. This means that pupils are entitled to see it, **but only just before the reference is sent to UCAS**. The reference and the grades predicted are not negotiable with the pupil; the pupil will be allowed to check the reference for factual accuracy. It is School policy that the only input pupils have into the reference is their academic performance and extra-curricular/social activities whilst they are at School. The HE and Careers Department will invite pupils to see their references after these have been checked and approved by both the HE and Careers Department and the Head of Year 13.

Please note that the Form Tutor has 4000 characters (including spaces and punctuation) or 47 lines (whichever occurs first) for each reference.

The form tutor copies the reference into the reference section of the UCAS form. In brief, a reference should contain:

- at the top of the reference (NOT contained within the body of the reference) the A level/AS (where applicable) grade predictions;
- an outline of the pupil's school history leading up to GCSE;
- a comment upon how the pupil's performance at GCSE reflects their academic ability and potential;
- a list of the subjects taken at AS level, with general comments upon how well the pupil has done – full results or unit scores should not be quoted without a pupil's permission;
- a list of the subjects being taken at A level with full comment on performance in each;
- an assessment of the pupil's strengths and, where appropriate, weaknesses which the pupil is tackling (and hence these can be turned into a positive point), with particular reference to the proposed course;
- a significant comment upon the pupil as a person. This may be of particular importance to, for example, medics, where personal qualities are vital;
- a discussion of the pupil's extra-curricular involvement – include, if known, any activities undertaken outside School and any roles as prefect or mentor;
- Any bursary support provided by the School.

The School does not insist on a particular School style. The Form Tutor should arrange and write the reference as they see fit, but should try to ensure that they cover all the areas mentioned above. If the Form Tutor has any doubts or questions, they should see the HE and Careers Department for assistance.

It is excellent practice to show the first draft of a reference to other employees who know the pupil well. Another's opinion is highly valuable, even if the Form Tutor has known the pupil for many years. Form Tutors are urged to follow this procedure.

The Head of Year 13 reads the student's application and also reviews the reference. Changes and corrections can be made at this point. This is done to enhance the application. The HE and Careers Department then arrange a time to review the application and reference for a final factual check. We do not provide negotiated references.

### **Final remarks**

If the Form Tutor requires any assistance or clarification, they should not hesitate to contact the HE and Careers Department. The HE and Careers Department can arrange for the Form Tutor to see sample references, if they are new to the process of reference writing. If the Form Tutor does not understand any of the paperwork, they should arrange a time to see a member of the HE and Careers Department.