

The Sir John Colfox Academy



Inspiring Learning, Achieving Excellence

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Monday 1 June 2020

Dear Students and Parents,

I trust this letter finds you well, and that you are coping with the continuing lockdown. It's hard to believe that usually you would now be on study leave and finishing up exams!

It has been lovely to 'talk' to many of you, who have been in touch looking for advice with UCAS and next steps. As you know, I am unable to help with any queries to do with calculated grades, but I am happy to help with UCAS and other areas. Many of you are thinking about your future plans, and are taking in to account the changes that have been announced by UCAS over the past few weeks.

As I mentioned in previous letters, UCAS provide up to date information on changes made to the application process due to the pandemic. This is at <https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus-updates-hub>. Here, you will find information about offers and calculated grades, finance, your wellbeing and the chance to speak to current students to get more information. **I strongly recommend you visit this area of the UCAS website.**

Unconditional Offers:

The Government asked universities to stop making unconditional offers or amending existing offers until in April. This is because they're worried you'll feel pressured to accept these offers over others you might be better suited to.

My advice remains the same. If you have received an unconditional offer, consider carefully whether this is the right provider and course for you, before you make any decision.

Dates for replying to offers:

Different applicants will have different deadlines for accepting firm / insurance offers and rejecting offers. On the whole, the deadline of 18th June is when you need to have made a decision.

Clearing:

Clearing remains the second most popular way of getting to university, and this is likely to increase in popularity this year. Clearing can work in two ways. Firstly, if you don't achieve the grades you need to get in to you first or insurance choice, you can search for available courses to secure a place. Secondly, if you do better than expected in August, you can 'clear upwards' and search for a place that reflects your improved grades. More information about clearing will be made available nearer results in August.

Shall I Defer?

This is the most common question I am asked at the moment. I cannot advise you in any particular direction, but I would remind applicants of some important factors to bear in mind whilst making up your mind: firstly, have you contacted the university admissions office to talk to them? This is essential – discuss your situation with them and get their advice. Secondly, if you are seriously thinking of deferral, what do you plan to do for twelve months? The pandemic has effectively closed many travel options. Thirdly, are you worried about paying fees for a course that is likely to be mostly (or wholly) conducted remotely? If this is the case, again talk to the admissions office but also bear in mind that fees are likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future. You may be able to save some money on accommodation. A degree will cost you money – there is no escaping this fact. If you have continued to study independently (I know some of you are taking MOOCs), then a course that has some remote content might work well for you. Lastly, in my personal opinion, taking a year out only makes sense to me if a place in higher education has been secured for the following year. Therefore, decisions *still* need to be made at this stage.

UCAS Tutorial:

A virtual 'Teams' tutorial will take place on Tuesday 9th June at 10am, giving you the chance to talk to each other about your plans, ask questions about your next steps and get some advice. An invite will be coming to your school email address shortly – please do continue to check these email accounts.

Finally, **Oxford University Student Union** have made their podcasts available. This debating society is the largest student society in the world. Presidents Nixon, Carter, and Reagan; the leaders of the 'March for our Lives' movement; and the journalists who broke the Harvey Weinstein story have all engaged with the union. The podcasts play host to leading politicians, journalists, activists and actors, including Gina Miller, Ted Cruz, Katya Adler, Brian O'Driscoll, Loretta Lynch, Christina Lamb, Jeb Bush, the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Jane Goodall, and the Chief Scientist of WHO:

https://issuu.com/oxfordunion/docs/oxford_union_trinity_term_2020_termcard

These podcasts can be accessed on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and on Listen Notes, as below:

<https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/the-oxford-union-the-oxford-union-1gYqCadBjx7/>

<https://open.spotify.com/show/7MonkY3UKwabTuV2iFZVJn?si=5gVrDEUDQUml8Ti6cDWSUg>

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-oxford-union/id1509797794>

Again, I hope this letter finds you well and in productive, optimistic spirits. Rest assured, once things have settled, I plan to organise a prom for us all to attend to celebrate our achievements in an appropriate fashion.

I look forward to catching up with you all on the 9th June at 10am.

Yours faithfully,



Adam Teasdale
Head of Sixth Form, Asst. Headteacher,

