STM Sixth Form Limitless

# Your child's university application

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# Session Aims

To equip parents with the knowledge of the UCAS application process so they can confidently support their child in making ambitious and competitive applications.

# Timeline

**March** – Students log into OSCAR – access to learning modules, personal statement writer and shortlist tool.

**June** – Students begin writing their personal statement following their end-of-year exams.

**July** – Students get feedback from their form tutors, work on their second draft over the summer using OSCAR.

**September** – Students work with their tutors to finalise their personal statement

**October** – Early Deadline for Oxford/Cambridge/Medicine/Veterinary Science courses

**February** – Students apply for Student Finance

# Understanding post-18 options

| University | Apprenticeship |
|---|---|
| For<br>• **Choice**! Over 130 universities in the UK offering 27,000 degrees. Choice of academic, creative and practical degrees<br>• **Employability**: Opportunity to continue other interests (clubs, societies) and gain work experience. Sandwich courses with a year abroad or year in industry<br>• **Salary**: Graduates earn significantly more than non-graduates – around 20% - 30% more (2024). Graduate mean salary is £42k v non-graduate £30k<br>• Don't be put off by starting salary – non-graduates earn more initially but are overtaken after a few years with earnings growing 72% between ages of 23 and 31<br>• **Postgraduate Options** – e.g. Law Conversion Course | For<br>• **Earn as you learn**<br>• **Prioritise employment-based skills** and knowledge development<br>• **Professional qualification** (up to degree level / Level 6 apprenticeship) |
| Against<br>• I don't love any subject enough to study for 3 years | Against<br>• Not ready to choose a career at 18 |

# Creating a course and university shortlist

Questions to consider:

- What do you enjoy?
- Home or away? Combination?
- Campus or city university?
- How is the subject taught?
- What modules are available?
- Research quality and reputation?

# Researching courses

- **UCAS Course Search** - The main UCAS search now includes a "how do you compare" function that shows the historical success rates of students with similar grades.
- **The Uni Guide** - Allows filtering by grades to match your predicted grades to suitable courses, along with a tool to explore which courses suit your specific A-level subjects.
- **Whatuni -** Provides course comparisons, student reviews, and research tools to filter based on entry requirements.
- **Prospects** - If you know what subject you enjoy but not sure which degree or careers they may lead to, the Prospects website lists every degree subject and links to job profiles of careers that degrees could lead to.

# League Tables

- **The Guardian's** league table favours universities that students rate as being good at teaching and assessing them. It also favours those that are good at helping students who haven't been academic high-fliers in the past.
- **The Times and the Complete University Guide** favour universities that combine research strength with student satisfaction. This is helpful if you want a broad picture of a university's success.
- **The QS World University Rankings** table focuses very heavily on universities' research and reputation. However, it doesn't include teaching quality or students' views on any other aspects of their courses.

# Top Third Universities

**Top UK Universities by Graduate Salary (Within 5 Years)**

London Business School: £69,000 (average)

University of Oxford: £49,000–£54,000

Warwick Business School: £53,000

Bayes Business School (formerly Cass): £51,921

University of Cambridge: £42,680–£52,500

London School of Economics (LSE): £50,000–£55,500

Imperial College London: £46,305–£47,000

University of Sheffield: £49,000

*Russell Group graduates typically earn 10–13% more than peers from other institutions with similar characteristics, with some male graduates earning up to 50% more five years post-graduation. They benefit from higher employability, with 80% in skilled employment 15 months after graduating*

*Source: IFS*

# Open Days

You should try to visit universities during their Open Days, though be aware that there may be limited opportunities for you to be released during term time, and requests must be made through your Head of Year.

See a calendar of Open Days below:

https://www.ukuniversitysearch.com/open-days

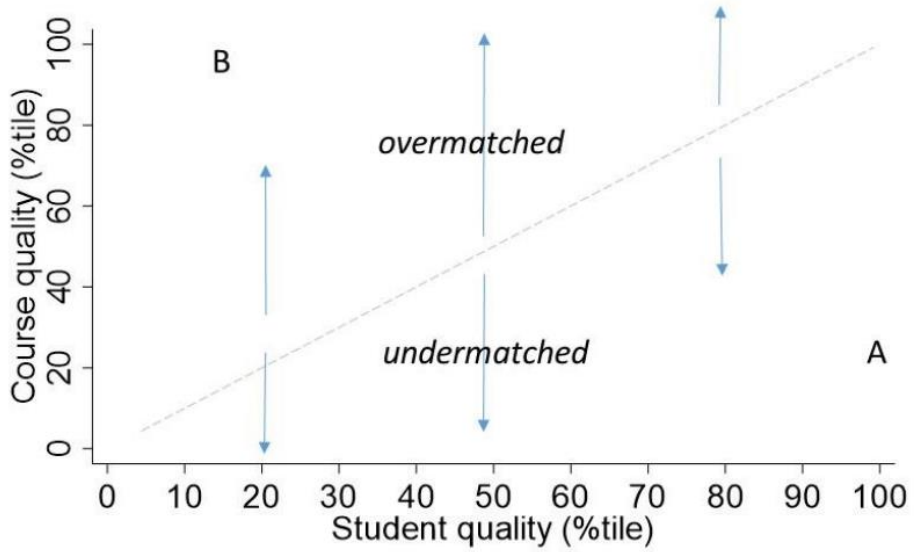
# Healthcare Degree

- Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary Science – **Wider reading of academic journals**
- A work experience where you **shadow the healthcare professional**
- A work experience where you can demonstrate **interpersonal skills** and link to the 6 Cs of Care the values of the NHS Constitution
- Further supplement with **virtual work experience** e.g. Brighton and Sussex Medical School

# Undermatch – Making ambitious choices

*"students attending courses that are less […] selective than might be expected given their academic attainment"*

**Mismatch in higher education: prevalence, drivers and outcomes**
Stuart Campbell, Lindsey Macmillan and Gill Wyness
December 2019



# Undermatch – Making ambitious choices

Research shows that state-school students, and girls in particular, are more likely to be **undermatched** – attending courses that are less selective than might be expected given their academic attainment

We want to support our students to make ambitious choices. An ambitious choice is an informed and considered choice which allows the individual to flourish and thrive in their chosen pathway.

Undermatched students are more likely to:

- Drop out of university
- Get a lower-class degree
- Earn less in the labour marker

# Undermatch – Making ambitious choices

Beth is predicted ABB and is reluctant to select any Russell Group universities. She is nervous that she won't secure her predicted grades.

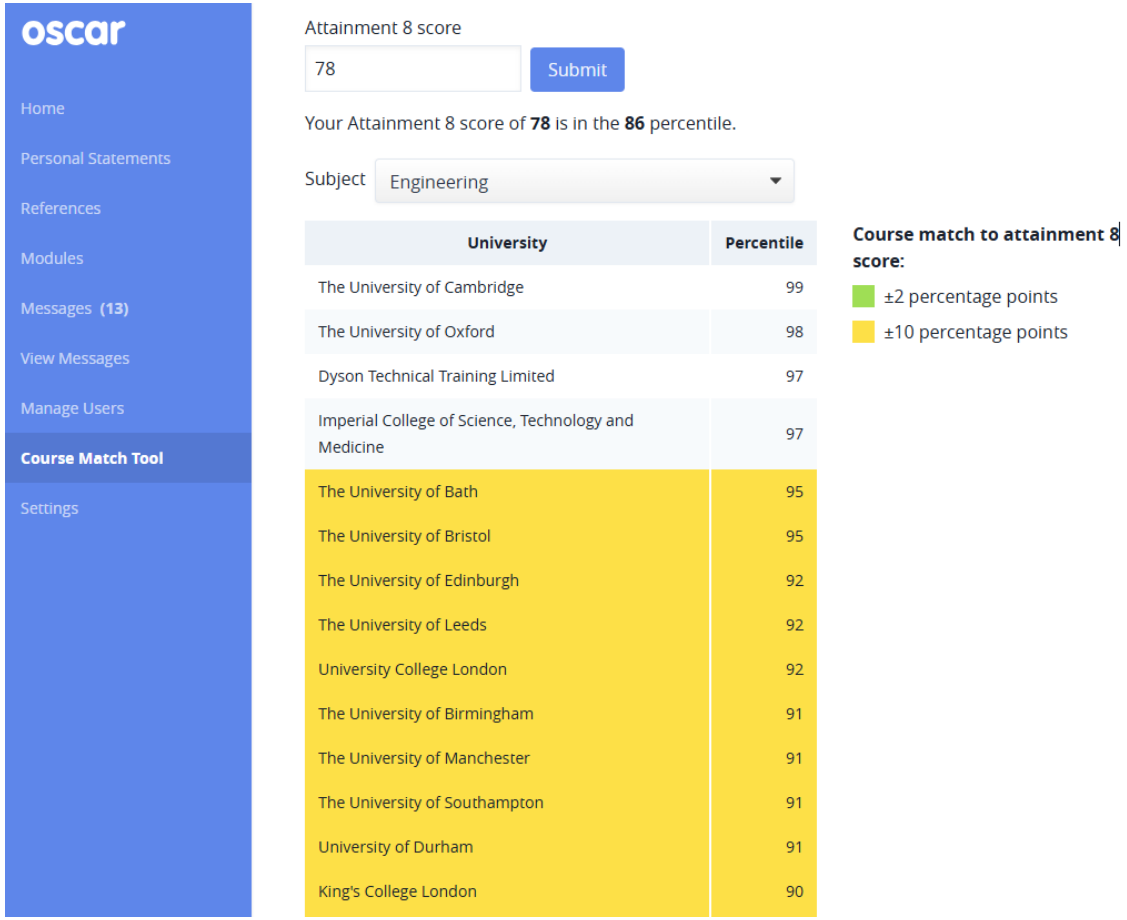
**Potential risk for Beth?**

Beth doesn’t select any Russell Group universities when sending her UCAS application. On Results Day, she achieves AAB and hopes to find a Russell Group university through Clearing. Unfortunately, her course isn't available in Clearing and so she has to stick with her original choices (which are an undermatch)

**How could Beth be supported to a better outcome?**

After guidance and a conversation with parents, Beth agrees to put a Russell Group university as her firm choice, with a realistic Insurance choice as buffer. On Results Day, she achieves the grades for her firm choice.

# Using the OSCAR course matching tool



# Understanding the Personal Statement

- Written to an academic admissions tutor
- Show passion, curiosity and knowledge
- Evidence relevant skills and potential
- Communicate genuine interest and a desire to learn more

‘We are academics. We want to know about a student’s academic suitability and enthusiasm for the course in question.’

Dr Sam Lucy
Director of Admissions for the Cambridge Colleges
Undergraduate Admissions Tutor

# Mistakes to avoid

| Avoid | Instead |
|---|---|
| Starting with a ‘lightbulb moment’ from childhood. | State two skills-based reasons for picking that subject to show your suitability for the course and support with evidence |
| Using overly formal language | Use clear and concise language |
| Over emphasising career aspiration | Focus on your suitability for the degree you are applying for |
| Not focussing on a specific case study that relates to your independent academic research into the subject | Discuss an academic article in an analytical way |
| Over emphasise non-course experiences e.g. Jack Petchey | Focus on experiences that relate to the course you are applying for |

# Who is the admissions tutor?

‘I especially enjoy reading War poetry as it offers subjective and emotive responses that are rarely found in historical accounts. To pursue this interest, I studied the pastoral idyll outside of the curriculum and explored the impact which the First World War had on ideas of rural land, particularly in Hardy's poem ‘In time of the “Breaking of Nations”’ (1915) and Edward Thomas's ‘As the Team's Head Brass’ (1916). … I feel that the interlinking of the war and the land makes the war seem “nearer” in Thomas’ poem, whereas in Hardy’s work the presence of war is distanced through the use of everyday imagery such as the "maid and her wight"’.

**A**

**This personal statement <u>strongly increases</u> the likelihood that the applicant would be offered a place.**

**“Good evidence of wider reading and critical ability.”**

**B**

**This personal statement <u>slightly decreases</u> the likelihood that the applicant would be offered a place.**

**“More language analysis than overview.”**

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‘While shadowing in GI surgery, I observed a patient in severe septic shock who required a pancreatectomy. Communication skills were crucial when conversing with relatives as the doctor had to pitch an explanation of the treatment suitably with regard to the 50% survival prognosis and the implication of diabetes. During the operation, a pseudocyst ruptured excreting 4000ml of pus; effective cooperation was paramount as the surgeon delegated roles to ensure minimal invasive damage was caused. Encountering both clinical and social challenges of the treatment prompted me to research alternatives including autologous pancreatic islet cell transplantation. Although APICT data boasts 69% of patients gain insulin independence, NICE predominantly recommends the “enforcement of life change programmes”, from this I realised the crucial role of primary care services in promoting healthy lifestyles to prevent the onset of disease.’

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**This personal statement slightly decreases the likelihood that the applicant would be offered a place.**

**“Too much medical information. The section is too long and impersonal.”**

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**This personal statement strongly increases the likelihood that the applicant would be offered a place.**

**“Excellent analysis of a complex case. The student shows their understanding of communication skills rather than simply stating how important they are. The reflection at the end shows their maturity.”**

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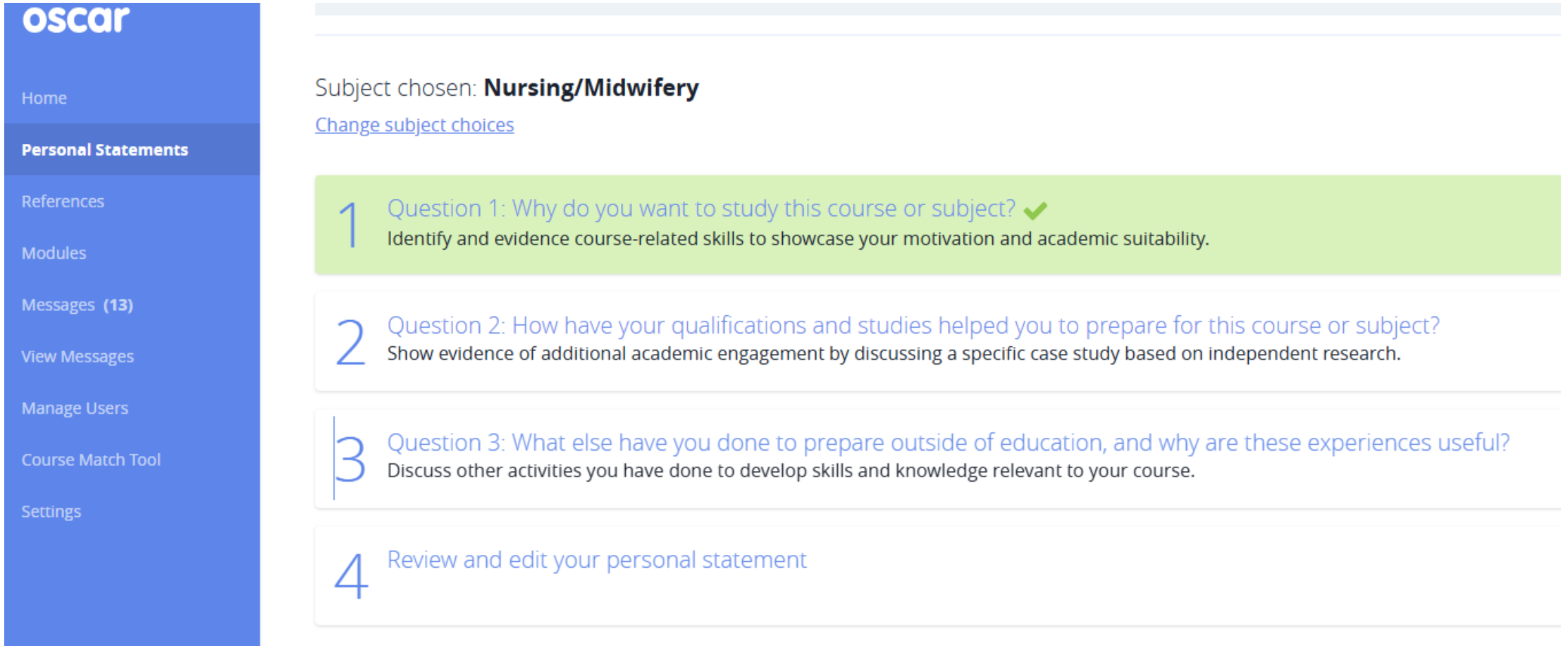
# OSCAR Personal Statement Tool



# Questions?

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