

CAREERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION GUIDANCE

The Universities and Careers Adviser is assisted by other members of staff who have specialist knowledge of particular careers, universities or subjects. The boys also receive considerable guidance from their Housemasters, who build up extensive experience and play a major part in shaping and directing boys' ideas about their futures.

The Universities and Careers Department is on the ground floor of the Smythe Library. There is a wide selection of literature on careers and all forms of higher and further education. The Tonbridge School Higher Education Guide can be found on Firefly.

THIRD YEAR

Although careers advice is given as boys are choosing their GCSEs, the main part of their careers and higher education advice starts in the 3rd Year.

Psychometric Testing: Traditionally most boys complete the Morrisby psychometric tests and interest questionnaires early in the Michaelmas term. After computer analysis a detailed personal report is produced, commenting on strengths, weaknesses, interests, and ambitions. Later in the Michaelmas term all those who took Morrisby Tests are interviewed individually by outside Careers Consultants and the test results are analysed and discussed. In addition to examining possible career options, Sixth Form choices are discussed to see that these would be appropriate. The full report is then sent to parents at the end of the Michaelmas term.

Sixth Form Choices: At the end of the Michaelmas Term of the 3rd Year, all boys and their parents receive a pamphlet describing the Sixth Form subjects available and giving advice on choice of subjects and combinations. A time is set aside at the beginning of the Lent term for boys to talk to members of staff and the University and Careers Adviser as to the appropriateness of their choices, both in terms of their academic ability and with reference to their university course choices. A few days later parents attend the 3rd Year parents' evening which allows for more exchange of ideas and guidance. This is followed by an exeat after which boys hand in their provisional Sixth Form choices, confirmed by their parents. A blocking scheme is then established by the Director of Studies and the boys and their parents then firm up their choices over the Easter holidays.

Compulsory Work Experience Week: All 3rd Year boys undertake a five day period of work experience at the end of GCSEs. Boys can arrange their own work experience (this is preferable, as long as it does not involve working with immediate family), or placements can be found through the School.

Careers Evenings: About five such evenings are arranged during the year, each focusing on one major Career area such as Law, Medicine, Engineering, The City etc. Aimed at the 3rd Year & Lower Sixth, all are invited to hear an admissions tutor and employer present career details, requirements and advice. We use recent Old Tonbridgians as well as more established members of the different careers areas. Parents are also invited to attend. The evening is led by the Universities and Careers Adviser, and other members of the Common Room with expertise in that area.

Lower Sixth Induction: Following the work experience week, and before the end of the Summer term there are three days of induction, in which boys are given an introduction to their Sixth Form course.

THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH YEARS (LOWER SIXTH AND UPPER SIXTH)

Overseas Universities Admissions: In the Michaelmas term, there is an 'Overseas Universities Evening' for boys who are or may be considering attending a non-UK university. The evening is open to boys and parents across all years. Following this, the University and Careers Adviser offers support and advice on applications throughout the year, including preparation for the SATs (American university admissions tests).

Oxbridge Evening: In the Lent Term there is an 'Oxbridge' evening for candidates and their parents who are considering an application to Oxford or Cambridge. The evening is comprised of visiting speakers from the universities and an opportunity to ask questions.

The UCAS Procedure: Beginning in the Lent term of the Lower Sixth the boys are introduced, through a series of seminars and talks, to the UCAS process. Advice is given on the procedures, and how to make an effective application. At the end of the Summer Term of the Lower Sixth there is an extensive programme covering student finance, personal statement writing, gap years and how to make a success of university life. As the boys move into the Upper Sixth they are given full support through the application process from filling in the UCAS form to accepting offers and attending university.

Universities Evening: There are two Universities Evenings to which all parents and boys in the relevant year group are invited.

The first of these is held for Third Year boys and parents, after GCSEs are over and just before the Sixth Form induction programme starts. It is introduced by the Director of Studies. There are short presentations from the Universities and Careers Adviser, the Oxbridge advisor and the American Universities Advisor, each of whom sets out the overall provision we offer to Sixth Formers and their parents.

The second evening is held in the summer term of the Lower Sixth. The Headmaster and the University and Careers Adviser give short talks, and there is further advice from invited Admissions Tutors and an Old Tonbridgian who is currently at university.

Work Experience: During the holidays Sixth Form boys are encouraged to spend time doing work experience. This plays an increasingly important part in university admissions and while it is a good idea to try to find a placement which is pertinent to your preferred university subject, it is by no means necessary. All work experience is valuable.

Interview Training: Each academic department offers 'Oxbridge' interview training, and there is also provision for additional (and more general) interview training by an outside agency.

Gap Years: Gap years are increasingly popular and opportunities and advice are offered to boys throughout the Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth. Opportunities for voluntary work, teaching, working and travelling are emailed to boys throughout their Upper Sixth year by the Universities and Careers Adviser. There is also a competitive in-house grant to help in the funding of worthwhile projects.

The Higher Education Guide: Full details of the Universities and Careers provision in the School can be found on the school's Higher Education Guide. This can be accessed through the Parents Portal by following 'Academic – Higher Education and Careers'.