



POSITION STATEMENT REGARDING APPLICATION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

- We are in the fortunate position that, as a school with its own dedicated Careers Department, we have the opportunity to maintain and develop our excellent contacts and relationships with people at all levels within the HE sector.
- For quite a few years our general advice - particularly for high-tariff subjects - has been that students should not fill up their UCAS forms with applications solely to a combination of Oxbridge, London, Nottingham, Bristol, Durham, Edinburgh etc. This advice will continue.
- We do not see it as our job actively to promote, or to discourage students from, particular Universities. We aim to encourage sound research; to support and advise enthusiastically and - in the words of our Department Mission Statement - "to foster initiative in making informed choices in preparation for life and study beyond GWC".
- We are increasingly making the point to S6 pupils that good performances at Advanced Highers will be needed for entry to non-Scottish Universities, regardless of the level of success at Higher.
- We shall continue to urge all applicants to non-Scottish Universities to make contact with the appropriate Admissions Officer at an early stage in order to clarify how their Higher results are viewed and what may be expected from them in Sixth Year. We encourage our S6 pupils to take advantage of the flexibility of the GWC S6 curriculum subject to any requirements that may be imposed by Universities. The majority of informed non-Scottish Admissions Tutors support this and welcome applicants who have maintained breadth in their studies.
- Increasingly, the most telling factor in determining whether an offer is made is that the applicant demonstrates a genuine enthusiasm for the subject. This has been commented on many times - including in some high profile cases reported in the press - by Admissions Tutors. It is particularly interesting that some research suggests that applicants from independent schools all too often fill up their Personal Statements with descriptions of extra-curricular activities and say very little about why they want to study a particular subject. The applicant from a school and/or family background where the opportunity for extra-curricular activity has been limited is more likely to concentrate on love of the subject etc.
- We shall continue to emphasise the need for the Personal Statement to concentrate on the subject(s) being applied for. In the same way that we have made Oxbridge candidates more aware that interviews are now predominantly subject specific, we shall encourage applicants to focus on the subject in the Personal Statement.
- We shall continue, with the applicant's permission, to bring to the attention of Universities any particular circumstances, such as disruption to attendance at school, which may affect the outcome of the application. However, some Universities would now like to have information about factors such as whether the applicant's parents have a history of participation in Higher Education. We will almost certainly not have this information - nor should we - and therefore we are asked by Universities to encourage applicants to make reference to such matters in the Personal Statement and to give the appropriate information when requested on the UCAS application.

- To conclude, there are challenges ahead. We shall continue to seek advice and to retain and develop our contacts within Universities. We shall encourage our students to make their applications advisedly, as a result of thorough research, and with confidence.

R Mallinson
March 2008