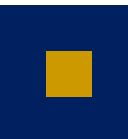




Ballakermeen Sixth Form

Applying to university for 2026

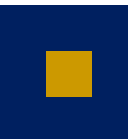
Mrs. Ali McMahon-Boyd





To cover

- Why go to university?
- Some common dilemmas
- What needs to be done in the next few months?
- The application process
- Cost and finance
- How to support your young person
- Applying to the UCM

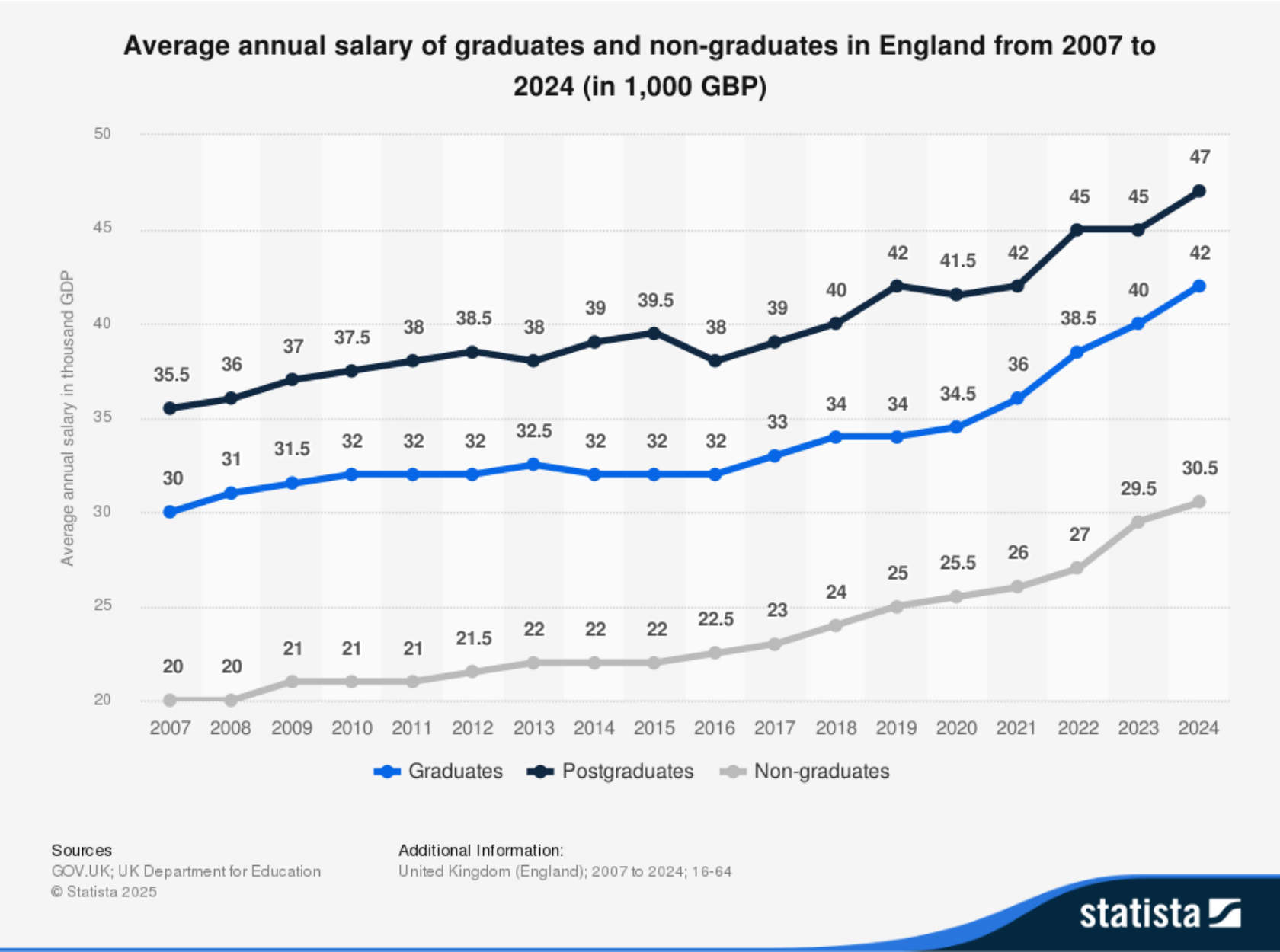


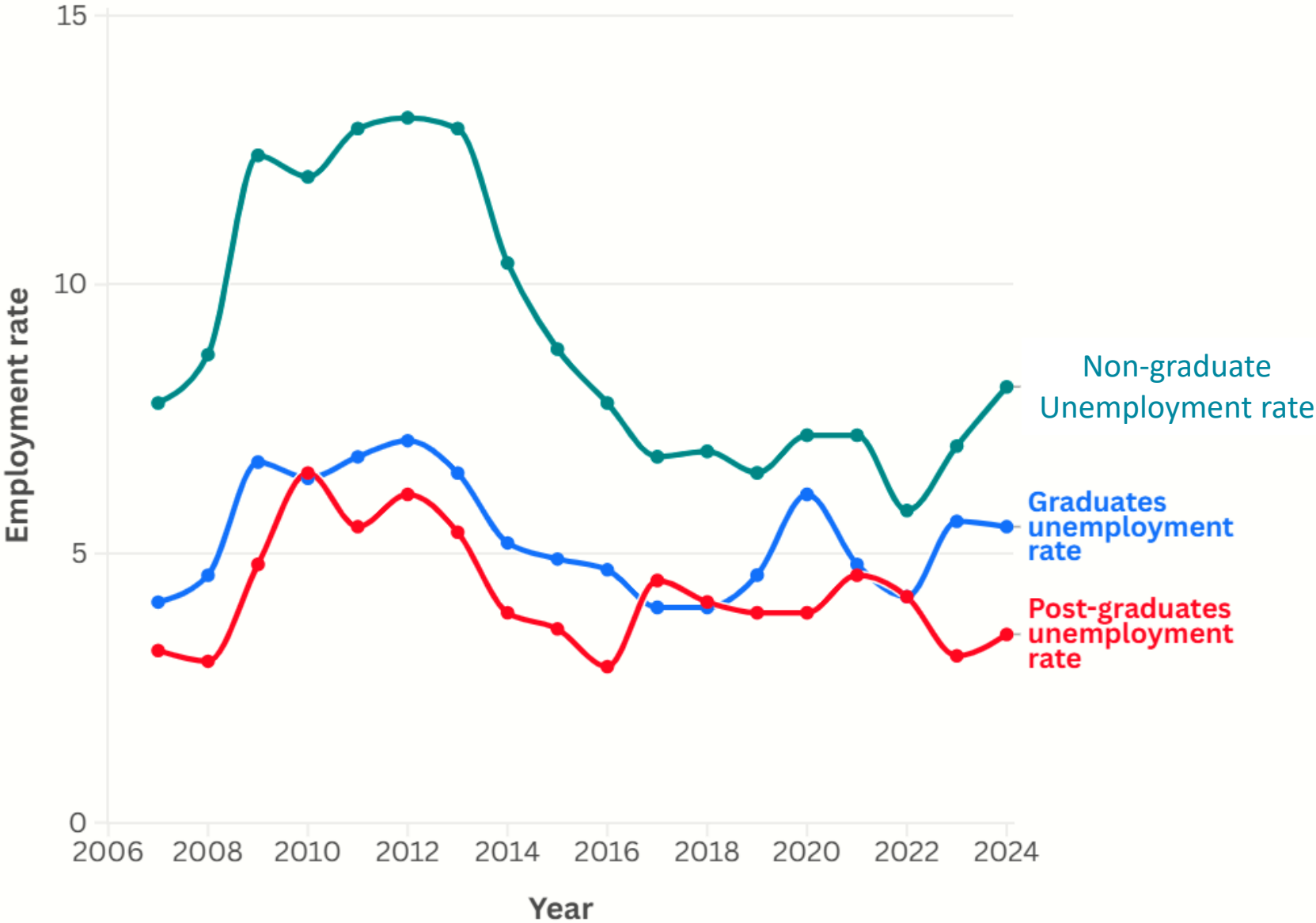


Why apply to university in 2026?

- Increase their knowledge
- Gain independence and freedom
- Gain an internationally recognised qualification
- Develop essential skills for career and working life
- Increased earning potential
- Improved employment opportunities







Source: Based on the Graduate Labour Market Statistics, 2025



Common dilemmas

And how to support your young person

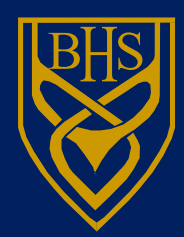




Do they want to go?

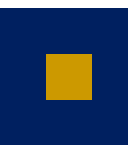
- They need to think seriously about whether to go at all.
- They have to be even more committed than they are to A-Levels.
- University is not the right choice for everyone, nor is it a necessity.
- Students could apply anyway
 - More difficult after equal consideration deadline: January 14th 2026 (6pm)
- Deferred entry – a good idea?





What should they study?

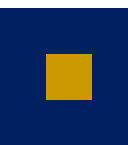
- There are a lot of courses and options. It can be overwhelming.
- Plan of action:
 1. Decide on the general subject area
 2. Start to look at the specifics of the courses
 3. Make sure they meet the entrance requirements





What about their future career?

- It is fine if they don't have this in mind
- Are they certain that university is for them?
- Again, consider the subjects they really like.
 - Think about joint-honours
- Is there an employment-related training route?
- They should not 'fall into' the idea of university

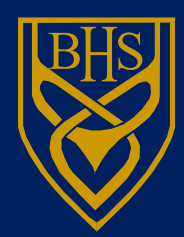




What about the different degree types?

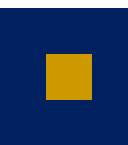
- Single Honours – one subject, possibly with a subsidiary/elective subject
- Joint Honours – two subjects, French and Spanish or French with Spanish
- Combined Honours – usually three subjects that becomes two in Year 2 – leads to Joint Honours.





More degree types

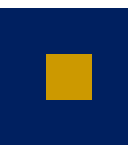
- BA – Bachelor of Arts
- BSc – Bachelor of Science (some courses can be both)
- BEng – Bachelor of Engineering
- BMus – Bachelor of Music
- LLB – Bachelor of Laws
- MSc
- Sandwich





Where should they study?

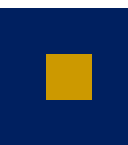
- Do they want to be close to home?
- City universities (Liverpool, LJMU, Hope Manchester, MMU, Leeds, Leeds Beckett)
- Campus universities (York, Keele)
- Smaller towns (Lancaster, Lincoln, Preston)
- Consider accommodation possibilities at each place
- They will know if it suits them when you get there – visit if possible





Where is the best university to go??

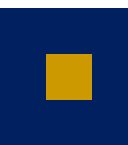
- There's no single answer.
- 'Russell Group' universities pay into a research group – this does not mean that they are the 'best'.
- Each young person will be looking for particular attributes in an institution – that is what matters.
- Perceptions of universities change yearly, and each university has its own strengths.
- Reframe: Where is the best university for them?





What to do, and by when...

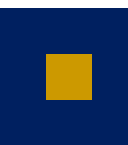
- **October 15th** for Oxbridge and Medicine/Dentistry/Vet. Sciences
- **December 19th** Internal deadline applications through school
- **January 14th**: equal consideration deadline
- ***September onwards: Receive offers (Conditional or Unconditional)***
 - *Go to Visit/Open Days or interviews*
- **April – June 2026:** Make two final choices: Conditional Firm and Conditional Insurance. It is essential that they discuss this with Mrs Boyd
- **April/May:** Student Awards talk for parents and students
- **13th August:** Results Day: places finalised.
 - Please do not be on holiday.





The application process

- Applications are made via UCAS, at a cost of £28.50 per applicant
- Students can apply for 5 courses (4 for medicine/dentistry, with an additional)
- We use UCAS Apply, students apply online and can work on the application from anywhere
- The form contains student's personal details and course choices
- There is also a personal statement.
- We then add a reference, giving predicted grades and our comments on the student's suitability for the course.





Predicted grades and the academic reference

Points to consider

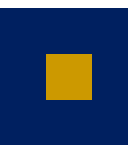




What is the academic reference?

Three sections:

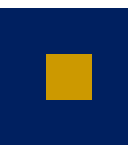
1. About the school
2. If applicable, enter any information about extenuating circumstances which may have impacted the applicant's education and achievement.
 - *Individual circumstances, Context, Factors affecting the study load, support suggestions to help students thrive at university*
3. Subject relevant material

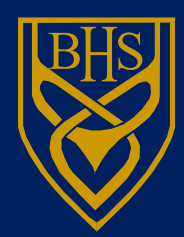




What are Predicted Grades?

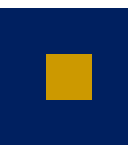
- The grade of qualification that Ballakermeen High School believes a student is likely to achieve in positive circumstances.
- Used by students to identify suitable courses and institution that they wish to apply to.
- Used by universities and colleges, as part of the admissions process, to help them understand an applicant's potential.
- **Professional judgement**
- **Data driven**
- **Objective**
- **Disregard external factors i.e. what a student 'needs' for a course**





Predicted grades – figures from UCAS

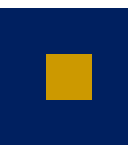
- More than 226,000 were accepted by their "firm" choice - 82% of all 18-year-olds with offers. (BBC)
- In 2024 just shy of 50 per cent of 18-year-old applicants in the UK were predicted to receive AAA and above. In reality, just 26 per cent of those accepted on to university and college courses last summer secured AAA and above. (TES)





Predicted grades – risks of 'appealing'

- An applicant may receive an offer(s) they are unlikely to meet, leading to disappointment on results day.
- Applicants might gain admission to a course which they cannot succeed in – choosing the right course is a very important decision as they will be investing a lot of time, money, and effort, and it can be difficult to change.
- If a university or college has reason to believe that a predicted grade is grossly inaccurate, they retain the right to withdraw any offers





Post application





How are offers made?

- In grades: 'Subject to achieving ABB at A Level'
- There may be a specification about a grade you must achieve in a certain subject e.g. 'including at least 40 points from A2 Biology'
- In 'UCAS points' (based upon potential A Level/BTEC results).
 - A*/D* = 56 points
 - A/D = 48 points
 - B = 40 points
 - C/M = 32 points
 - D = 24 points
 - E/P = 16 points
- AS grades have 40% of A Level value, the Extended Project Qualification has 50% of A Level value



Visiting Universities.....

- Open days
- Visit Days
- Visit if you are in the area, bearing in mind that you may not get the true flavour of the place if it is out of term time





Where to find information

- UCAS.com
- Universities' websites
- Prospectuses
- Virgin Alternative Guide, newspapers' 'League Tables'
- Brian Heap's 'Degree Course Offers'
- Sites such as 'unistats'
- Get in touch with admissions tutors by email or telephone

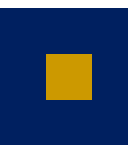




How much does it all cost?

All subject to change

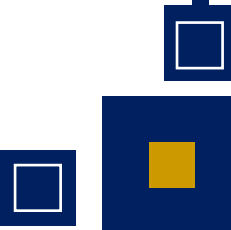
- Must get 80 UCAS tariff points
- Means tested maintenance grants available, but few qualify.
- Student borrows £2500 PA from the Government to pay towards fees.
- If parents'/carers' joint income is in excess of £112,000, you will pay an additional contribution towards your fees up to £6750 per student
- Look at accommodation costs
- Courses available on Island? Will you be restricted to studying here? – University of Chester year or transfer later?
- Part time jobs - SAVE MONEY NOW.

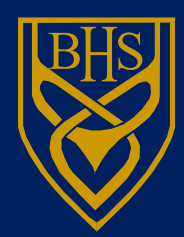




What will be paid for?

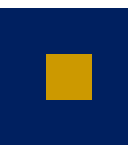
- Fees up to £9,250, at any UK public institution (bear in mind that fees are now £9535)
- Private institutions/institutions abroad at the DESC's discretion, up to £9,250
- Certain courses are eligible for higher awards
- studentawards@gov.im





How can you help us?

- Discuss the application but let your young person make the ultimate decisions about where and what.
- Please avoid judging the course or institution
- Teach them to cook simple meals and how to use a washing machine.
- Be prepared to deal with some homesickness.
- Support your young person in making appropriate selections of FIRM and INSURANCE institutions





The UCM application process



UCM applications: setting up a portal

- Go to <https://www.ucm.ac.im/>
- Scroll to the bottom of the homepage to find the Learner Portal:





UCM applications: Securing your place

- You have to get the grades
- You will need to upload results when you get them– you will not secure your place unless UCM have the evidence

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `prospect.ucm.ac.im/Page/LearnerQualifications`. The page header is orange with the UCM logo and the text "Qualifications". A left sidebar contains navigation links: Homepage, Complete Agreements & Declare Support Needs, Check Your Personal Details, Add/Check your Qualifications (if required) (highlighted with a blue arrow), Upload Results/Evidence, Review Communications, and Data Protection. The main content area is titled "Upload Results/Evidence" and contains the following text: "For courses with specific entry criteria, you will be expected to enter details of any qualifications you are studying for, or have completed. If you already have evidence/results of your grades, please upload either scanned copies or photos of these in the Upload Results/Evidence tab. If you make any mistakes after you have entered an Actual Grade below you will be unable to delete this qualification. In which case please contact us on 648200 or email mis@ucm.ac.im."

The form includes the following fields:

- * Subject: History
- Qualification: GCE Advanced Level
- Predicted Grade: [empty]
- Actual Grade: [empty]
- Year Achieved (Actual Grade Only): [empty]

Below the form is a table with the following headers: Subject, Qualification, Predicted Grade, Actual Grade, Year Achieved (Actual Grade Only). The table currently displays "No entries found". At the bottom of the table, it says "Showing 0 to 0 of 0 entries".



Questions?

Alison.McMahon-Boyd@sch.im

