

## Sixth Form Information Evening

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My intention this evening is to talk about university entry here at Roedean; particularly what we do here to support your daughter's ambitions in progressing on to university education.

With the increase in tuition fees, making informed decisions has become even more important for young people, which is why the Careers Department runs a proactive programme throughout the Sixth Form to ensure that our girls end up choosing courses that they:

- will enjoy
- at which they will excel academically
- are likely to meet the entry requirements

A question that I will not have time to discuss in depth tonight, but that is, nevertheless, an important one to articulate, is **Is it still worth going to university?**

I still think that it makes intellectual, emotional and, ultimately, financial sense to get a university degree.

The office for national statistics recent number crunching revealed that degree holders earn significantly more than those without a degree, whose earnings peaked at the age of 34 at £19,400.

- In previous recessions, unemployment has continued to rise for some time after the end of the recession. This will happen for graduates – but not as badly as for those without degrees.
- In the longer term, the new fees regime will have unforeseen effects on the graduate employment market. Employers already expect salaries to have to increase.
- Increased demand for highly skilled, flexible and adaptable workforce – less skilled and adaptable workers will be more seriously disadvantaged

If girls are applying to university in the UK, they will submit their application at the beginning of their 62 year – the actual practical logistics of this are relatively straightforward: an online application form, on which girls choose up to 5 courses, fill in their personal details and their exam results and write 47 lines about why they want to study a particular course.

While the practicalities may be straightforward, arriving at a place in which your daughter can make these five choices is more complex and, as a result, 61 is spent exposing girls to different degree subjects and careers through individual advising, directed research and external information transmitted through our weekly speaker's programme. This year, we will be welcoming universities such as LSE, KCL, UCL, Imperial, Lancaster, Sussex, New College of the Humanities, Birmingham and representatives of Oxbridge to Roedean. Girls have a unique opportunity to ask our speakers questions directly, both during and after these Wednesday presentations.

Abra Reid  
Head of Careers  
8<sup>th</sup> November 2011

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We will also welcome speakers who are doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, architects, accountants, scientists, teachers, policewomen, musicians, people working in the hospitality industry, stylists and Old Roedeanians who come back to discuss their experiences at university and beyond. All of these people add to the information absorbed by your daughters over the course of the year, which will aid her in making important decisions. Each year, I attempt to vary the programme in order to take into account the particular interests of a year group.

In addition to a focus on university entry, pupils also receive professional training in writing CVs: work experience is crucial for successful application to some degree courses, so we give girls the requisite tools to apply for jobs.

To begin this journey, each Upper Five girl will be assigned a Careers Adviser: one of four of us in the department. This will take place after Miss Carragher's January 2012 one-to-one interviews and the Futurewise results. We have subject specialities, which means that if your daughter is, say, interested in a career in medicine, she will be assigned an adviser with specialist knowledge in this area.

This adviser will guide your daughter throughout the rest of Upper Five and the Sixth Form. Your daughter can make an appointment to see her adviser whenever she wishes.

In addition, I am in the Careers Centre from 8am to 4.30, and at the beginning of the year, I encouraged your daughters to drop in and see me, or make a formal appointment. Girls are also encouraged to make use of the research material available. I am pleased to say that since the beginning of term, there are plenty of Upper Five girls who have been doing this.

For those girls who are interested in applying to either Oxford or Cambridge, I interview girls following the November Assessments in 61 (which are our first formal indication of how your daughter is coping with the demands of her AS level courses) who have indicated interest in applying. I am very clear about the demands of going for Oxbridge: you need to have strings of A\*s at GCSE: I would say 7-8 is a minimum and you need to be heading towards 4 good A-grades at AS level and beyond. Oxbridge candidates are also given a second level of support through a subject-specific mentor.

GCSE and AS grades are critical to successful application to university. I have told your daughters about the importance of GCSEs at the beginning of the year. I will reiterate it again now: anyone who tells you that these grades don't have a significant impact on the ways in which universities select applicants is plain wrong. These grades are essential.

In the summer term of 61, after all of the information and one-to-one sessions with her careers adviser, your daughter ought to be in a position to begin making decisions about universities. We have an entire day off-timetable dedicated to filling in the application and writing personal statements. Over the summer of 2012, your daughters will be refining their personal statements: they are encouraged to stay in email contact with me throughout the summer in order to complete the drafting process before they return in September.

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Officially, Oxbridge applicants, medics, dentists and vets have to apply before October 15<sup>th</sup> 2013. Our girls will submit their applications by the end of September. Similarly, while the official deadline for everyone else is January 15<sup>th</sup> 2014, 2/3 of your daughters will have applied by the end of October 2013, with the other third submitting applications before the end of November. The reason for this is quite simple: the vast majority of universities operate on a first come first served basis: the earlier the application, the greater chance of success.

Our approach works: already, only a few weeks after submitting their applications, collectively our 2012 cohort girls have received 6 offers from Bristol, four for Warwick, Exeter and Edinburgh and three for UCL, Bath and Lancaster. Our girls submit superb personal statements, (typically the girls submit well over 10 drafts for revision by their careers' advisers) but their applications are also crucially supported by Roedean's teachers' references: crucial references which are able to demonstrate that we know our girls incredibly well and that we have followed their trajectory here at Roedean with care and interest.

If there is anything that really exemplifies the support that Roedean gives your daughter through the process of applying to university it is our knowledge of each individual girl. This knowledge allows us to manage expectations: not everyone is going to end up at UCL, but equally it's not right for everyone and it is part of our job to find that "best fit" for every girl here. The Careers' Departments' knowledge and understanding of the system, the institutions and our girls enables us to guide them in making positive and appropriate decisions about both universities and courses.

I know that you must all have a huge number of questions: for more straightforward queries, please ask me in the session that follows, but I would be delighted to meet you to discuss your daughter if you were able to make an appointment and I can be absolutely flexible if you are busy during the week. I know that the last three years at school are an incredibly important and often an anxious time: as a Department, I hope that we will be able to channel any anxiety (both your own and/or your daughter's) into realistic, thoughtful choices, which will lead ultimately, to your daughter's future success.

Abra Reid  
Head of Careers  
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