

How to get to a Top University

Bulletin for ambitious students - February 2012

This is the second bulletin of the Academic Year and the pace of change across education shows no sign of slowing. In the previous bulletin I commented on the new fees and since this is so important I have repeated this part here. With tuition fees now up to £9000 per year, you could argue even more strongly that the value of a degree from a top university has never been higher, but confusion abounds – and the first article will help you to see through the myths and misunderstandings surrounding the new student fees.

Student Loans 2012 onwards (This is really important!!)

You may think that the increase in fees means that university is no longer affordable and that you will be stuck with a huge debt for many years. However, at Twynham we have been very fortunate in being involved in the making of a short video with Martin Lewis, (who is frequently seen on TV) to help students and parents better understand the new student loan system. There's a special section on our 6th Form Website and it really is worth a look since myths, panic and confusion about the 2012 English student finance changes are widespread. You (and your parents) really do need to understand the facts, rather than be guided by the myths. It's all here and there is also a link to Martin Lewis's moneysavingexpert website where there is a whole host of further advice

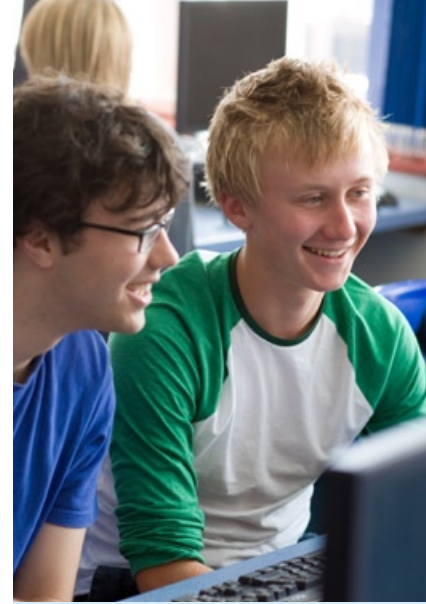
[Twynham6thform - Student Finance](#)

Graduate Starting Salaries to Rise – Good News!

The average starting salary for a graduate is predicted to increase by 4% to £26,000 this year, according to a poll of more than 200 blue chip employers. This is in stark contrast to what is happening to the vast majority of the population and just goes to show that the value of a degree is holding up well. It seems that whilst many companies are shedding jobs there are very few vacancies in mainstream roles and organisations are using graduate recruitment to bolster their talent pool. That degree from a top university could not only ensure that you are short-listed, but that you will be able to command the higher end of the starting salaries. BUT – please also read the next article.

[Guardian - Graduate Starting Salaries](#)





One in five firms prefer school leavers to graduates

One in five employers believes school-leavers make better workers than university graduates, according to new research. A survey among 1,000 firms by recruitment giant Adecco found that over half argued that university graduates had unrealistic expectations of working life and one in three believed that the education system was failing to equip young people with the skills required by British businesses. I would stress that making sure that you arrange high quality work experience could well give you the edge. Not only will you be in a better position to understand the workplace, but you will also grow the skills which employers need. My advice has always been to arrange good quality work experience in Year 10 and then again in Year 12 to help you with your university application. If you then follow this up whilst at University you will not find yourself in the position where this article suggests many students find themselves. Also – a word of advice – make sure your writing skills are up to scratch!

[🔗 One in five firms prefer school leavers to graduates - The Telegraph](#)

Universities “dropping science in favour of media studies” - but don’t be fooled!

Universities are axing courses in traditional academic disciplines such as science in favour of the performing arts, media studies and photography, according to research. Figures show a significant decline in the number of institutions offering degrees in the physical sciences, with chemistry courses dropping by a fifth and physics declining by almost a third since the mid-90s. The biggest increases were in the creative and performing arts, media studies, publishing, journalism, cinematics and photography. The number of universities offering media studies tripled while courses in journalism increased four-fold. Meanwhile, almost a third of major companies are struggling to fill vacancies, despite record numbers of graduates searching for jobs.

Whilst this might seem like good news, all the evidence shows that future jobs will go to those with degrees from top universities in more traditional subjects. If there are fewer degree courses available in subjects such as the sciences then these graduates will be all the more in demand. Choosing A-Levels carefully and aiming high will almost certainly mean that you will be in great demand if you graduate from one of these courses from a top university – providing you put in the work to prepare yourself for life in the work-place (see previous article).

- [🔗 Telegraph - Universities “dropping science in favour of media studies”](#)
- [🔗 Telegraph - Third of companies “struggling to recruit skilled graduates”](#)
- [🔗 Daily Mail - One in three top companies can’t fill graduate vacancies](#)

The number of overseas branch campuses set up by Universities has reached 200 with another 37 planned

The findings, from the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, coincide with the announcement of the University of Central Lancashire’s plans to open a campus in Thailand. This shows just how seriously our universities are taking the rise in undergraduate numbers from Asia and it is important that UK graduates understand the rise of this global competition. This could also give you the opportunity of travelling to study at other campuses whilst remaining at your university, so it’s worth asking about these opportunities.

- [🔗 Times Higher Education - Branch campuses spread East to meet Asian demand](#)



Hear what some of our students say about life at a top university

Our 6th Form website has a few short clips from just some of our students who have gone on to top universities. Hear what they have to say and perhaps this will spur you on to be ambitious and to aim high. This could be you in just a few years!

[🔗 Twynham 6th Form - Graduates Speak Out](#)

I hope that this latest Top Uni Bulletin is helpful in enabling you to keep up-to-date with the latest developments with respect to doing well at A-Level and gaining a place at one of the country's top universities. I also hope that the advice about tuition fees is equally useful. I will be producing the next bulletin around Easter and in the meantime I wish you all the very best as you are working towards your A-Levels.

Dr Terry Fish

Headteacher
Twynham School

