

Summary points – Prof Richard Harvey (UEA)

- Choose the course first, not the university. Ensure you really enjoy studying in depth and meet the criteria admissions are looking for. Choose what you love and are good at, but consider other courses you cannot take at A level.
- University choice – do you want a city centre, suburban or campus uni? Visit all three types. Make up your own scoring system.
- League tables may reflect the person devising them more than the qualities of the university. The Times and Guardian can have large variations between the same courses at the same university. Status and quality changes over time. The Russell Group has expanded and there are excellent non Russell Group universities and courses.
- Universities receive forms from September, the best applicants apply early and universities often make early offers, whilst some will wait until after 15th January for the 'gathered field'.
- Personal statements – urban myth - not true that they are not read. Many admissions staff check against the criteria they publish on the faculty website. Make it academic with a minor aspect on extra-curricular activities. Work experience/volunteering will be essential for some courses. Essay subjects want to hear about wider reading.
- Statement examples (see PowerPoint)
- UCAS form checks – some will be rejected immediately if grades are too far from those stated. BUT many faculties over state grade requirements so they can select those they want when some grades are missed. Unis HAVE to take a student if they are the firm choice and make the grade, so they fear being oversubscribed and not having the room or lab space.
- Attend open days - talk to admissions staff, go to statement and subject talks, view accommodation and visit the city centre – you will live there for 3 or more years. See www.opendays.com
- Results day – briefly mentioned – be available to talk to admissions if you miss the grades. Clearing, for those without a place, is to be avoided, though here are places at many universities. Not medicine or the most competitive unis. They may take 'near misses' rather than enter Clearing.
- Consider finance – scholarships and bursaries vary between universities and courses. Low income families will have bursary support.
- UEA offer £3000 EPQ scholarship as an incentive if the title matches an area of interest.
- Look for masterclasses, taster days and subject visit days – they can clarify whether or not you wish to study the subject and give material for the statement.