



Year 13

Parents' Information Evening

Structure



Mr Gallagher (Principal) :

Introduction - AS/A level Pathway

Mrs McCarry

A Level Study

Mrs Guiney

Careers, UCAS Process

Mrs McCarry

Student Finance



Transition to 'A' Level

- A difficult step
- Increased content
- Degree of difficulty
- Independent Study is necessary

Phones/Devices



'A' Level Examination Routes



- Modular –

CCEA have retained modules, but only available in June.

- Linear –

English boards (OCR, EDEXCEL) have adopted linear model.

Year 13 AS Exams



- June 2027 – sit all units/modules in each subjects (See P.7&8)
- 12 August 2027– AS results
- June 2028 – only opportunity for AS re-sits

Year 14 A2 Exams



- June 2028 – sit all modules in all subjects
- August 2028 – A2 results

AS and A-level Structure



CCEA & Edexcel Year 13		CCEA & Edexcel Year 14	
AS1	AS grade	Total AS score 40%	Final A- Level Grade
AS2		A2-1 A2-2 60%	

‘A’ Level Equivalents



IT & Business Studies

- Level 3 Vocational qualifications
- OCR CTEC (Cambridge Technical)
- All portfolio/coursework based
- Rigorous & demanding

'A' Level Equivalents



A-level Grade	OCR Cambridge Technical Introductory Certificate Level 3
A	Distinctions in ALL 6 units
B	3 Distinctions & 3 Merits
C	Merits in ALL 6 units

- QUB will accept **ONE** vocational qualification AND **ONE** applied A-Level alongside an exam-based A-level.
- University of Ulster will accept up to **THREE** vocational courses.
- Not accepted for Medicine, Dentistry or Pharmacy degree course.
- CAO, ROI some universities will limit the number of applied A-Levels.

BTEC Structure



Year 13 - BTEC	Year 14 – BTEC
Unit 1 External Assessment	External Assessment
Unit 3 Sports / Unit 5 Construction Internal Assessments	Internal Assessment

*Please see
Student
Handbook for
BTEC for
further
information*

How to achieve an A*



Students must meet the following requirements:

80% UMS overall (i.e. the current requirements for an A).

90% UMS overall *in the A2 units*.

Students *do not* get an A* for 90% overall. **Only the A2 units (the units taken in Year 14) count towards the award of an A*.**

Can I get A* at AS level?

No, you can only get it at A2.



Importance of 'AS' Levels

- Platform/gateway for A2
- Predicted grades for UCAS
- University offers – GCSE and AS results will be listed
- Marks generally easier to obtain
- 4 AS = Choice / safety net; though some students prefer focusing on three.

Information Sources



www.qca.org.uk

www.jcq.org.uk

www.ccea.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

www.edexcel.org.uk

www.aqa.org.uk



Mrs McCarry
Vice Principal

A Level Study

Success in Year 13 depends on:



- Attitude
- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Consistency of effort
- Communication
- Support provided in school – page 2 of booklets
- Balance – e.g. extra-curricular; PT jobs



Study Skills

- Refer to Study Skills booklet – pages 7 and 8 – for listing of examinations.
- Ensure three hours (minimum) per night
- Provide a quiet environment conducive to effective study; organised – use diaries; resources
- Control of social media - monitor use of PC/mobile phones/gaming etc. at home.
- Check homework diary on a regular basis for deadlines etc.
- Google Classroom Codes – page 9
- *Driving lessons – not during class time*
- *Parking permits necessary if bringing a car to school.*

Practical Advice for Parents



- Encourage Independent study
- Support and encouragement – school events - parent's newsletter; website
- Awareness
 - subjects
 - study habits – not just homework!
 - examination times
 - module results
- Re-marks – be advised – student and parental decision – grades may go up but can also go down! **The grade / score awarded after a remark is what will remain on the candidates record.**



General points

- AS and A2 Units **may be repeated. In this case, the higher mark will be awarded.**
- The College covers all examination fees for a student's first entry.
- Student/parents pay for repeat examinations.
- Each module costs £20 -30 approx.
- **Avoid** re-sits for many reasons.
- Familiarise with specifications/past papers/ model answers/ examiners' reports/ examiners' advice.



- Y13 can be a difficult year – pages 4-6 gives guidelines on revision tips and stress management.
- We are a Take 5 school! Please encourage young people to have a good balance.



Dates for your diary p3

Thursday 17 September	Parents' Information Evening
Week beginning 28 September	Mid-term assessments: grades report issued
Tuesday 24 November – Friday 4 December	Christmas Exams
Thursday 10 December	Year 13 Parent Teacher Meeting (3.30pm - 6.30pm)
January 2027	Reports issued
Week beginning 1 March	Mid-Term Assessments
May 2027	Study leave for AS examinations
Week beginning 7 June	Careers Programme – Work Experience and UCAS applications
Thursday 12 August	AS Results Day



And finally...

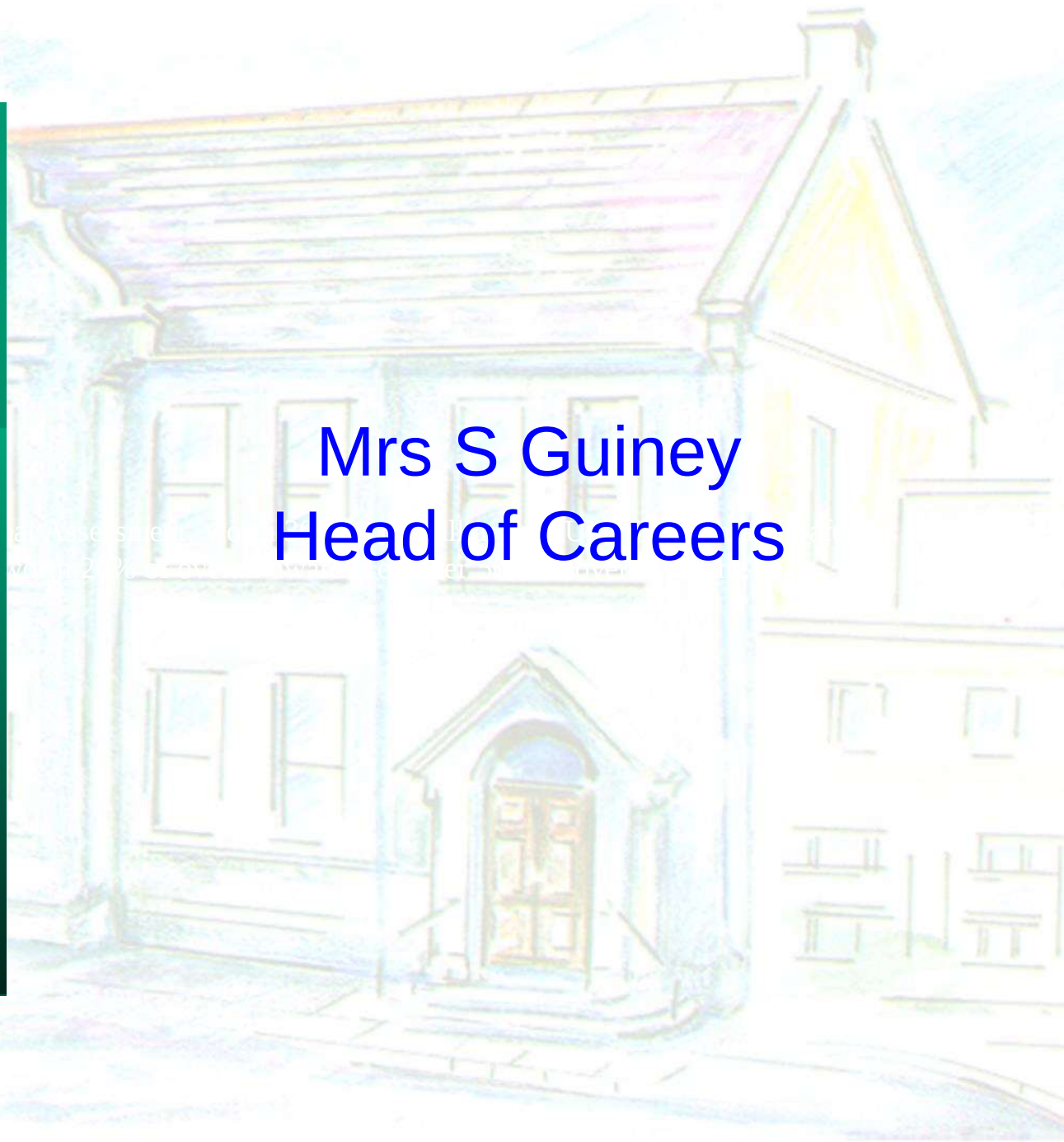
- The young person's first and most influential teacher is the parent.
- The effectiveness of home as a learning environment is critical to promoting long-term school success.
- Year 13 / 14 is also about developing independence, to prepare for the next move!



Careers
Education,
Information,
Advice and
Guidance

(CEIAG)

Mrs S Guiney
Head of Careers





PATHWAYS AFTER A LEVEL

- Higher Level Apprenticeships
- University/College
- Foundation Degree
- Higher National Certificate/Diploma
- Employment



YEARS 13 & 14 OVERVIEW

- Careers once a fortnight.
- Staff facilitate and offer guidance.
- Mrs West Careers Coordinator
Mrs Mullan
Mr Byrne
Mrs Guiney
Mrs Doorish Careers Advisor



Information
and
opportunities
through

- ❖ Google Classroom **Year 13 nqgepb**
- ❖ Email c2k
- ❖ Futures For All
- ❖ Unifrog
- ❖ Parents' Newsletter/text/email
- ❖ Drop-in lunchtime once a week
Careers Advisor
- ❖ Work Experience (Year 13)
- ❖ Trial Interviews October (Year 14)
- ❖ Student Finance (Year 14)
- ❖ Plans A-C (Year 14)
- ❖ CV (Year 14)



Years 13 & 14 overview



St Mary's
University College
Belfast
A College of Queen's University



STRANMILLIS
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast



Google Classroom

work+



unifrog

FUTURES
FOR ALL

CAUSEWAY
APPRENTICESHIPS



Year 13 Career Fortnight

- Starts 7th June:
 - Presentations from QUB; UU; CAFRE; ATU including the CAO process; Dpt. of Economy and Work plus
 - Work experience: From 10th – 18th June
Find an employer(s)
Details and indemnity forms through Mrs West
 - Commence UCAS registration process.



Points to note

Year 13

- Summer Schools - UU, Queens, Oxford, Employers offering Apprenticeships. Utilise organisation websites and social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok.
- **Early applicants' deadline mid-October 2027 need to inform Careers Dpt. in Year 13.**
- **Open Days June Year 13 and Autumn Year 14.**
QUB only a Saturday and UU all three campuses over 3 weekends. .
- **Grades and changes in entry requirements for some courses can occur.**

University and College Admissions Service: UCAS process:

Secure web-based system- 'ucasapply'

Easy and convenient.

Prevents simple errors.

Speeds up the processing of applications.

Current Fee £35, subject to change

Acts as intermediary between applicants and universities.

Fair for all.

Deadline for Firm and Insurance choices to be made by beginning of June Year 14.

UCAS process:

- ❖ Applicants have up to five choices initially.
Choices are automatically arranged in alphabetical order not in order of preference.
- ❖ If applying for medicine, dentistry or veterinary four of the five choices must be for these courses.
- ❖ Once all offers have been received, the five choices are reduced to two - a firm and an insurance choice.
- ❖ Timelines and deadlines will be available from UCAS at the start of each academic year.
- ❖ St Mary's University Belfast is not part of UCAS. A separate application is required, whilst Stranmillis University is.
- ❖ Apprenticeships separate and January of Year 14 and June are the two main launches. Some companies continuous.

Central Applications Office (cao.ie)

CAO process - Central Applications Office:

Applications open beginning of November Year 14.

Used to apply to Universities and Institutes of Technology in the South of Ireland.

Students can apply for up to 10 Degree courses and 10 Diploma courses. Subject qualification.

Courses **MUST** be listed in order of preference (unlike UCAS).

Closing date for applications beginning of February Year 14

FEE - €50

[Central Applications Office \(cao.ie\)](http://cao.ie)

Points conversion table			
Grade	Best 3 A-Levels	4th A level	AS Level/EPQ ¹
A*	192	24	24
A	165	24	24
B	142	20	20
C	120	18	18
D	100	16	16
E	67	14	14

Bonus points for mathematics:

25 additional points will be awarded for a grade E or better in A level Mathematics. This applies to only ONE mathematics subject of the following: Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Pure Mathematics, and only where that subject is used as one of the subjects for scoring purposes. NB Mathematics and Pure Mathematics cannot be counted separately for points purposes.

Notes:

Applicants are scored on a maximum of 4 different subject results at A and/or AS level/EPQ¹. For scoring purposes, the following combinations of A Levels and AS Levels are permitted:

1. The best 4 A level results in a single sitting. If 4 A-levels are presented, the lowest grade is scored at the lower rate.
 2. The best 3 A level results in a single sitting, plus the best AS level result from the previous or the same sitting.
 3. The best 2 A level subject results in a single sitting, plus the best 2 results at AS level from the previous or the same sitting.
 4. The best 1 A level subject result in a single sitting, plus the best 3 results at AS level from the previous or the same sitting.
- NB Grades in the same subject in A and AS level cannot be combined.

¹ Extended project (EPQ) is scored as an AS level (A* is available in this). Throughout this AS level can be read to mean AS level or EPQ.



USEFUL WEBSITES

Ucas.com - parent guidance available.

cao.ie

studentroom.com

studentfinanceneni.co.uk

completeuniversityguide.co.uk

esu.org/our-work/secondary-school-exchange

qub.ac.uk

Ulster.ac.uk

Workplus.com

Causeway Apprenticeships.com

Adam Shaw – BBC's Money Box

TheStudyCoach - **Tom Vorselen**

University?



Advantages

- Job prospects
- Opportunity to meet professionals
- Transferrable skills
- Socialising
- Life skills – independence
- Further study into an area of interest

Disadvantages

- Cost
- Not always guaranteed a job
- Might change your mind
- Could slow career progression
- Stress – one in four students may experience mental health issues

University or not?



□ Yes - **IF** you think it's the **right decision for you!**

If the dream job doesn't require a degree, then perhaps university isn't the right route. Learn through experience:

- Vocational Courses
- Apprenticeships
- Recruitment programs may run in some companies – e.g. internships.

*Similarly, struggling with making the leap to independent living and learning, might suggest university is not the path to go – **just yet!** Take time!*

□ **Gap year.**

A Degree Costs a lot of Money



Is it worth it?



... Usually!



- Graduates are more likely to be in continuous employment and earn more than non-graduates.
- Research shows that investing in a degree is usually a good investment
 - even on purely financial grounds.

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” – Benjamin Franklin

New analysis shows students who choose to learn more, earn more

Last updated on Tuesday 4 Mar 2025

□ “A university education continues to pay dividends, throughout an individual’s career. With exceptionally positive outcomes for students from less advantaged backgrounds, it is clear universities do provide an essential opportunity for individuals to reach their potential wherever you are in the country. We continue to call for an uplift in maintenance support, including grants for those who need them the most.

Vivienne Stern MBE

Chief Executive, Universities UK

- Graduates overtake those who chose not to go university within just a few years, **earning at least 20% more once they are in their mid-20s**. By age 31, graduates typically earn 37% more.
- Graduate earnings increase at a faster rate than those of non graduates. **Between the ages of 23 and 31 average earnings grow by 72% for graduates compared to 31% for non graduates.**
- Graduates aged over thirty are more likely to be in work, and far less likely to be claiming benefits, than those without a degree.

Universities UK 2024

The cost of university falls broadly into two categories:

□ Tuition Fees



□ Living costs (Maintenance)



Tuition Fees



Country of residence	Studying in Northern Ireland	Studying in England	Studying in Scotland	Studying in Wales	Studying in Republic of Ireland (ROI)
Northern Ireland 2026–2027	£4,985	up to £9,790	up to £9,790	up to £9,790	€2,500*



*Tuition fees are not charged in the ROI.
All students pay a contribution charge. For the academic year this is €2,500 IN 2026–27



Average student monthly costs...

- Groceries £101
- Going out £47
- Takeaways and eating out £41
- Transport £34
- Clothes and shopping £34
- Other £18
- Course materials £17
- Mobile phone £15
- Health and wellbeing £15
- Holidays and events £14
- Gifts and charity £13

TOTAL £349 x 8 (months) = **£2792**





Belfast Halls of Residence
Ensuite Room in a shared
Apartment – communal space
for kitchen and living room –
6 apartments

En Suite Bathroom / Bedroom

2025 PRICE

From £152/Week x 44
week contract = £6,688

- NI Tuition Fees: £4,985



NI Costs

- Accomodation: £6,688
- Tuition Fees: £4,985
- Costs: £2,792

Annual Expenses
£14,465X3 = £43,395

**NB Tuition Fees for
England. Scotland and
Wales - £9,790**



What support is available?



- **Government Funding**
 - Maintenance Grant for living costs
 - (NON-REPAYABLE)
 - Special Support Grant (NON-REPAYABLE)
 - Student loans for tuition fees and living costs (REPAYABLE)
- **University**
 - Bursaries (NON-REPAYABLE)
 - Scholarships (NON-REPAYABLE)
 - Hardship funding (NON-REPAYABLE)
- **Part-time Work**
- **Help from Family**

SUPPORT



Maintenance Grant



- **Non-repayable** grant for students from lower income households.
- Helps with everyday costs like food, travel or accommodation.
- Worth up to £3,569 a year – depending on household income.
- If your household income falls between £19,203 and £41,065 you may be eligible to receive a partial grant, depending on the level of your household income.



Special Support Grant

- A Special Support Grant is available to students who have an underlying eligibility to Income Support or Housing Executive Benefits (e.g. if you have a disability or a child) (Also £3,569)
- If your household income is more than £41,065 you will not be eligible to receive a Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant.



Student Loans

- The Maintenance Loan is a Student Loan provided by the government, and it's intended to help towards your living costs while attending university...rent, bills, food...
- You **apply for the Maintenance Loan** through the same process as **Tuition Fee Loans** and, eventually, you'll **make repayments** on the two as a joint sum.
- Students from England, Northern Ireland or Wales can all apply for a Maintenance Loan **online or by post**.
- However, the Maintenance Loan and the Tuition Fee Loan are technically two separate types of funding.



Maintenance Loans

All eligible full-time students can get a Maintenance Loan, but the exact amount you can borrow will depend on several factors, including

- your household income,
 - where you live while you're studying and
 - whether you're in the final year of your course.
- It's also affected by any help you get through the Maintenance Grant.



Maintenance Loan

- You can take out around 75 per cent of the maximum Maintenance Loan regardless of your household income - this is called the 'non income assessed' part of the loan.
- Whether you get the remaining 25 per cent - the 'income assessed' part of the loan - depends on your household income.



- Maintenance Loans are paid straight into your **student bank account** in three (almost) equal instalments throughout the year.
- **Tuition Fee Loans** are paid straight to your university.



Student Loans for Tuition Fees

- The majority of students take out a Student Loan for their total fees
- Paid directly to the college or university by The Student Loan Company
- No income assessment involved

Repaying Student Loans



- ❑ No matter where you're from in the UK, you only start repaying your Maintenance Loan from the [April after you've graduated](#). And even then you'll need to be earning over the repayment threshold for your type of loan.

The current repayment thresholds for UK graduates are:

- ❑ **Students from England and Wales** – £25,000 a year (£2,083 a month or £480 a week) before tax
- ❑ **Students from Northern Ireland** – £26,900 (£2,241 a month, £517 a week) before tax
- ❑ **Students from Scotland** – £33,795 (£2,816 a month, £649 a week) before tax.

Repayment of Loans



Income (pre tax)	Monthly Salary	Monthly Repayment
Up to £26,900	£2,241	£0
£28,000	£2,333	£8
£30,000	£2,500	£22
£35,000	£2,916	£60

Useful Websites



www.studentfinancenai.co.uk

www.ucas.ac.uk

www.studentfinance-yourfuture.direct.gov.uk

www.moneysavingexpert.com

www.student-support.co.uk

www.neelb.org.uk

www.slc.co.uk

www.delni.gov.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/education

Useful Websites



www.studentfinancenir.co.uk

The screenshot shows the Student Finance NI website. The header is blue with the 'studentfinance ni' logo and a 'Listen with BrowseAloud' button. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'home', 'faqs', 'contact', and 'feedback'. On the left side, there are links for 'Login', 'Register', 'Find out your login details', and a 'Search' box. Below these are sections for 'IMPORTANT SECURITY INFORMATION' (with a padlock icon) and 'EU STUDENTS' (with the European Union flag). At the bottom left is a link for 'About Us'. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail 'you are here... Home' and a 'Welcome to Student Finance ni' heading. It offers information on financial support for higher education students in Northern Ireland. A paragraph states: 'Whether you're thinking about going to university or already studying, we've got all you need to know about what you can get and how to get it.' Below this is a purple box with a list of links: 'I'm planning to go into higher education', 'I am a continuing student', 'I am the parent or partner of a student' (circled in yellow), 'I want to know about repayment', and 'What happens when you apply?'. At the bottom, there is a link for 'Applications for 2015/16'.