



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

FOCUS ON...

UCAS reference writing



UCAS reference writing

Good to know

Q. Who reads the reference?

A. At least two staff with responsibility for admissions decisions

Q. What really matters in a reference?

A. Just like the personal statement that the students write we are looking for relevance to the course. Predicted grades, relevant mitigating circumstances or contextual information are also key areas.

Extra tips

- Involve the student by creating a student and teacher checklist to ensure an effective seamless application without duplication across PS and reference (see over)
- It is not a school report so an attendance record has no place in a reference
- Don't be too brief or generic. It will look as though you are hiding a lack of knowledge of the student, or something worse!
- Talk to the student



Fundamentals

1

Who, when, how?

As a UCAS application co-ordinator, individual responsibility for providing references for UCAS applications can be daunting. Create a culture or policy that empowers all subject tutors play their part. This will ensure evidence of academic progress, exceptional achievements and additional skills and experiences can be gathered and enhanced during regular academic assessment. Don't leave this until the application stage, particularly if you have a large cohort to support, create a timetable to work to so staff are clear when the reference draft is needed. Support staff with some training; university staff may be able to offer this.

2

Predicted grades

For many courses this will be the single most important part of the reference, be honest clear and back up your predictions with evidence in the text of the reference where possible. Predicted grades can differ from previous achievement if you can evidence progress.

3

Extenuating circumstances

The impact of life challenges such as illness, bereavement, or other trauma may be inappropriate in a student's personal statement. With the students consent, sharing relevant extenuating circumstances in the reference will ensure universities give additional consideration to the applicant both at offer stage and potentially at confirmation if an offer is made. (Circumstances that directly impact on examination performance should also be notified to the exam boards promptly).

4

School context and curriculum links

The reference should be about the student not the school, but just as personal mitigating circumstances may be relevant, a school overview might include relevant details such as availability of academic routes, or social context. To save valuable space on the reference, use a link to a web statement on school context and curriculum if possible. Highlight any factors relevant to the application e.g. Further maths A level is not offered.

5

Exceptional achievements

For many applicants articulating suitability for their chosen degree is enough. To help a student stand out when applying for a competitive course tell us about any notable achievements. This could be highest academic grades, school responsibilities or impressive independent project work such as an EPQ.

About Bath

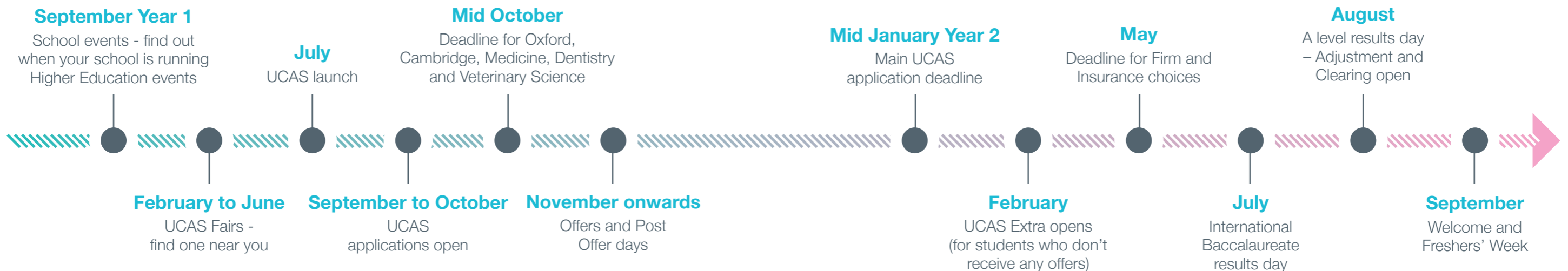
The University of Bath is a world class university in a world heritage city - a nurturing environment for enterprising minds.

Our courses are designed to provide both rigorous intellectual challenge and real-world relevance, giving our students the opportunity to study with researchers who are leaders in their field.

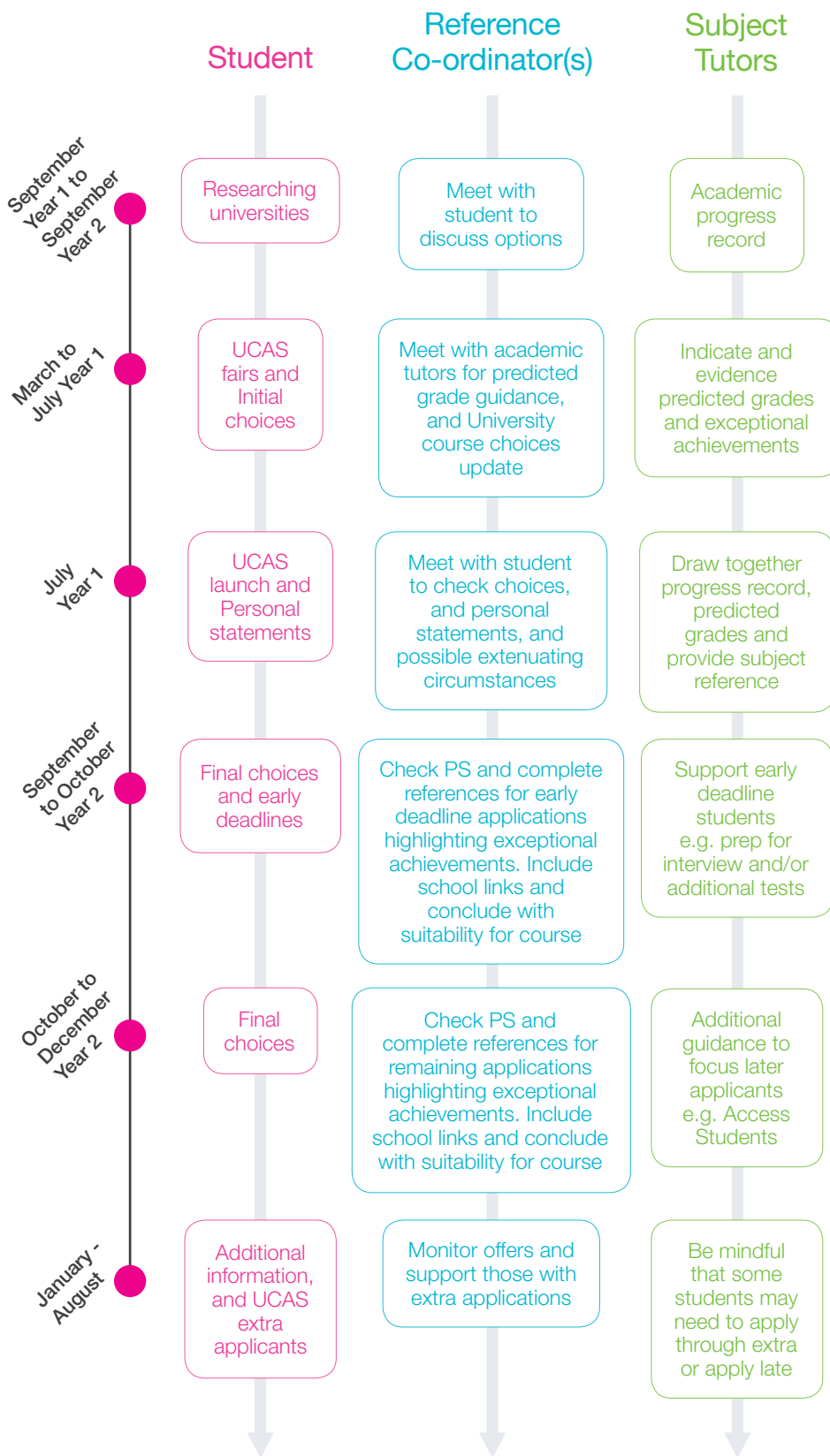
Our vibrant campus - and location right on the edge of Bath - provide our community of over 17,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students with superb sporting, social and cultural opportunities.

Join our close-knit, high achieving community to gain the knowledge, skills and experience you'll need to thrive in a world of global networks.

Application timeline



Teacher checklist



Don't forget!!!

Support additional project options such as EPQ

Ensure student has checked entry requirements and predicted grades are in harmony

Tap into universities personal statement sessions for students and/or reference writing for staff

Universities will generally allow a 2nd personal statement to be submitted separately if needed (e.g. medical 5th choice)

Be clear with students about the school deadline for UCAS submission to allow time for references to be collated and double checked for final submission

You can email the university where an offer has been made, with ensuing mitigating circumstances before results day to allow additional consideration



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