

# Stowe School

## 2020-21

### The Careers Department Handbook

From September 2013 “schools” “in England and Wales have a statutory duty to ensure that all registered pupils, from year 8 to year 13, are provided with independent and impartial careers guidance.

‘Independent’ is defined as being from a source external to the school and ‘impartial’ as showing no bias towards a particular education, training or work option. Governing bodies must also ensure that the guidance provided includes information on the full range of education and training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways, and promotes the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given. This statutory duty is intended to expand advice and guidance for young people so they are inspired and motivated to fulfil their potential. Schools should help every pupil develop high aspirations and consider a broad and ambitious range of careers. Inspiring every pupil through more real-life contacts with the world of work can help them understand where different choices can take them in the future.”

#### [Careers guidance and inspiration in schools](#)

Ref: DFE-00366-2014

#### **Department Philosophy & Aims**

**Although Stowe is an Independent school it is important that we fulfil the statutory duties in addition to the careers programme provided internally.**

#### **Careers education defined:**

Every child should leave school prepared for life in modern Britain. This means ensuring academic rigour supported by excellent teaching, and developing in every young person the values, skills and behaviours they need to get on in life. High quality, independent careers guidance is also crucial in helping pupils emerge from school more fully rounded and ready for the world of work. Young people want and need to be well informed when making subject and career decisions. The provision of advice and guidance is intended to comprise a coherent programme of activities that inform, inspire and motivate Stoics, preparing them for work and helping them to understand where different education and training choices could take them in the future.

The predominant aim of Stowe School careers department is to provide a planned, progressive programme of learning activities that helps Stoics to:

- learn about the structures, systems and factors that guide, shape and influence people's careers prospects and career development
- explore how these could affect their future choices, why they need to consider them when making their own career decisions and plans and how they can do so
- develop and practice the self-help skills they need to progress their own career plans and development, including making discerning use of careers information, advice and guidance.

The Stowe Careers Department consciously works to prevent all forms of stereotyping in the advice and guidance we offer to ensure that girls and boys from all backgrounds and diversity groups consider the widest possible range of careers, including those that are often portrayed as primarily for one or other of the sexes.

In order to achieve this, three strands must be in place:

### **Careers information**

The provision of accurate, up-to-date and objective information on opportunities, progression routes, choices, where to find help and advice, and how to access it.

### **Careers advice**

The provision of advice through activities that help young people to gather, understand and interpret information and apply it to their own situation.

### **Careers guidance**

The provision of impartial guidance and specialist support to help young people understand themselves and their needs, confront barriers, resolve conflicts, develop new perspectives and make progress. There is access to both internal and external, independent sources of guidance.

### **Strategies adopted:**

#### **Current provision and plans at Stowe**

CEG is delivered to all year groups at Stowe via the Tutorial System in timetabled sessions (tutor periods), the Careers Department Area resources which are available during the school day and appointments with LGJ for individual advice. Access to all online resources is available both in school and at home via [StoweNet](#) on the VLE. In addition, impartial external advice is currently provided by My Future Choice. This helps Stoics to make informed choices about a broad range of careers, and will encourage them to fulfil their potential.

### **Careers information**

Housed in Room A002, the Careers Office is well-equipped to provide up-to-date information on both Careers in general and Higher Education.

#### **Careers advice via ICT: a basis for an individual progression file (2020-21)**

A great deal of emphasis has been placed upon the use annually of a range of career profiling software applications all of which can be accessed through the VLE ([Fast Tomato](#) and [My Future Choice](#)) which are "stand-alone" in nature.

- **Fast Tomato** was adopted as an online careers advice resource. Fast Tomato is an award-winning career planning and management tool designed to help all young people aged 13 - 19 years old with their career decisions. Through a series of questionnaires, the individual can explore themselves and their career ideas as well as different educational and work or training-based option choices.

Fast Tomato sessions start in the third form, allowing the students to be introduced to GCSE choices and potential careers through to A-level and UK and European higher education options.

The program has administrator overview so that information can be gathered about trends and interests in the student population, which the careers department uses to encourage students to attend extra-curricular events and employer visits.

- An initial introduction to the UCAS website is made in the fifth form. Stoics and their parents can then make A level choices in line with the demands of their preferred HE course, or in order to leave as many options open as possible. Advice will be available as to the 'best fit' between aspirations and ability. An 'Impact Analysis' exercise may be useful in testing A level combinations against HE course requirements.
- A-levels choices for all Stoics will be screened by the Head of Year in order to avoid difficulties which may occur in subject acceptability, perceived overlap and probable course requirements.
- The **My Future Choice** aptitude tests and careers selection programme take place for the fifth form during the Michaelmas term, followed by individual interviews.
- Fast Tomato and other web-based careers tools are used to support students to explore and select suitable higher education, apprenticeship and career trajectories.

### **Careers Advice via access to individual discussions (2020-21)**

The Careers Advisor (LGJ) is available for individual careers appointment four afternoons per week in term time. From Michaelmas term in the third form, students are introduced to the careers journey at Stowe School, where each tutor group, individually complete a careers induction with the Careers Advisor. They complete the Fast Tomato assessment, which helps inform GCSE choices and starts essential discussions regarding future careers.

Students are always welcome to make an appointment with LGJ to discuss their University or Career plans at a time convenient to them. In recent years this has proved very popular, with referrals via Tutors and by word of mouth. Stoics can book an appointment by emailing [lguntnerjones@stowe.co.uk](mailto:lguntnerjones@stowe.co.uk).

A list of possible courses is usually drawn up according to the student's academic profile and interests, resulting in a careers action plan which is designed to help students, parents and tutors track progress towards aims and goals. Follow up meetings with the Careers Advisor will normally follow within two weeks of the initial meeting, depending on the needs of the student. The Harvard scholar assists those looking to study at an American College; we have initiated external tutoring (via Greens) to help the increasing number of applicants with preparation for SAT's.

**Independent advice:** All 5<sup>th</sup> form Stoics are offered an individual interview, led by a trained Careers advisor from My Future Choice following the My Career Choices questionnaire and My Aptitude tests in the Michaelmas term. These meetings offer impartial advice, and make a useful starting point to A level choices and facilitate further discussion regarding the mandated 5<sup>th</sup> form summer work experience. A follow up interview, to ascertain the progress made regarding career research is then conducted by the fifth form tutor in the Lent term, supported by the Head of Careers.

The Bucks Connexions Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service is no longer available to Independent schools; it was previously used to advise those whose aspirations do not extend to higher education. To replace this Mrs Luciane Guntner-Jones and Dr Gordon West are available for additional individual appointments with Stoics and their parents on a needs must basis. Both Mrs Guntner-Jones and Dr West are qualified to level 6 in Careers Information and Guidance and are able to offer comprehensive advice and guidance on the changing world of apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships.

For the 'Gifted and Talented' cohort, individual advice and help in preparation for application to university and interview by selecting universities will be maintained from the third form onwards through the Headmasters Essay Society programme.

- Visting speakers regularly give Stoics an insight into their particular profession; a programme of careers seminars is offered primarily to lower sixth Stoics, although pupils from other year groups are always encouraged to attend if they have indicated an interest in a particular career. Many of the speakers are Old Stoics, all are prominent figures in their respective fields.

### **Careers/Work Experience (2020-21)**

Participation in the work experience programme at the end of the fifth form is strongly encouraged and generally takes place during the summer following GCSE examinations. The careers department is able to advise parents and pupils on the best ways to source work experience placements. In addition to the existing programme, an in-house portfolio of opportunities for 5<sup>th</sup> form Stoics has been organised for those who need help securing suitable placements within the Stowe Estate. On return to school at the start of the sixth form work experience is followed up using a [WORK PLACEMENT FOLLOW UP](#) questionnaire on the VLE.

Emphasis on Career related placements is made where relevant for HE courses, e.g. medicine, law, etc. A preliminary CV writing step is introduced to the 5<sup>th</sup> form in the Lent term using a template, which is provided by the Careers department through **the schools VLE**. Anna Semler and SPA (Parents Association) have also kindly offered to assist with the provision of contacts for work experience. We have decided not to provide free access to the database of contacts at this time because of child protection and health and safety issues, but will endeavour to assist with work placement issues informally, using our extensive list of contacts.

Anna Semler, who is in charge of the Old Stoics Association, also organises an annual **Careers Fair**, now in partnership with the careers department. This event takes place on a Saturday morning during the Michaelmas term and more than 30 Old Stoics, parents and

representatives from industry and higher education from a wide variety of professions are available to chat informally to 6<sup>th</sup> formers. This has proved to be a very popular and invaluable event over the past few years and often provides further work experience and internship contacts.

## **UCAS**

For the lower sixth during the summer term, preparation for University entrance begins in earnest. Stoics are encouraged to attend a couple of Open Days during this period and all must register their personal details on the UCAS website before the end of term. Visiting speakers from Universities are booked to give evening talks during the year to the sixth form. The administration of the UCAS process is overseen by Paul Floyd, with other senior managers checking the non-Old Stoic and non-Oxbridge applications. Jonathan Murnane and Julie Potter take overall responsibility for the Oxbridge candidates, with the assistance of the Jessica Reinhold overseeing Medicine and Veterinary Science candidates.

The application season is most intense during the first half of the Michaelmas Term of the U6th. Oxbridge and Medical applicants need to finish their forms by the end of September and other applicants need to complete by mid-October. Universities may start making conditional offers as early as October or November, and by March applicants will know the grades their universities require. The applicants' original choices (up to 5 in number) are whittled down to just two (a Firm choice and an Insurance Choice) in preparation for the receipt of the A level results in August.

The organisation of University prospectuses in the Careers Library allows students to see at a glance the University groupings, in order to plan their 5 applications over a range of institutions. In addition, our subscription to Fast Tomato allows Stoics access this remotely.

Workshops for new 6th form tutors are given by Paul Floyd and ongoing support is provided in the supervision of applications and use of the UCAS website. The Colloquium discussion group and Headmaster's Essay Society, predominantly for those aiming for Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities continues and the usual exchange of candidates with the Royal Latin School for Practice Interviews is organised annually.

## **CAREERS GUIDANCE**

The choice of a rewarding career rarely results from a single experience. A gradual process of increasing self-awareness, discussion and education leads to particular interests, which may then be pursued in Higher Education or employment. For some this happens naturally; for others uncertainty persists long after formal education is complete. At Stowe we aim to provide our students with a variety of opportunities, which allow them to make sound decisions leading to fulfilment. In addition, they benefit from the services of My Future Choice and a great number of distinguished Old Stoics who are prepared to give advice and mentoring, as it is needed.

The Careers department has a policy of continuous review of our programme in order to provide the best possible advice and information to students.

## **Careers Department**

### **Dr Gordon West**

Head of Careers & Deputy Head of Sixth Form

### **Luciane Guntner-Jones**

Careers Advisor

### **Paul Floyd**

Head of Sixth Form & UCAS

### **Jonathan Murnane, Julie Potter**

Oxbridge Co-ordinators

### **Jessica Reinhold**

Medics and Veterinary Science Applications

### **Stowe/Harvard Fellow -**

American University advice

### **Michael Righton**

Head of Gap Year

## **Third Form Year**

### *Michaelmas Term*

Fast Tomato Careers and GCSE profiling

Parents' Meeting with teachers at start of Michaelmas half term to review progress.

GCSE option choices.

Introduction to study skills.

### *Lent/Summer Terms*

Parents' Meeting with teachers at start of summer Exeat weekend to review progress and discuss academic progress.

## **Fourth Form Year**

### *Michaelmas Term*

Improvement of study skills.

Introduction to presentation skills.

### *Michaelmas/Lent Terms*

Fast Tomato Careers & Higher Education Profiling

### *Lent Term*

Parents' Meeting with teachers at start of Lent half term to review progress.

## **Fifth Form Year**

### *Michaelmas term*

My Future Choice aptitude tests and careers questionnaire.

My Future Choice Interviews with independent careers advisors.

### *Lent term*

Parents' Meeting with teachers, Fifth Form Tutors and Careers staff at start of Lent exeat weekend to discuss progress.

Stowe's Sixth Form Courses Guide provided to parents.

Research and planning of career-related work experience. CV writing.

Follow-up interview with Fifth Form Tutors or Head of Careers to discuss possible A-Level choices in the light of HE entry requirements.

*May/June*

Confirmation of career-related work experience arrangements.

GCSE examinations.

*Summer Holidays*

Career-related work experience.

GCSE results.

Finalise A Level choices with parents.

### **Lower Sixth Form Year**

*Michaelmas term*

Sixth Form induction with team building exercises.

A Level choices adjusted if necessary.

Career-related work experience follow-up with tutor.

*Late September/March*

Career-related seminar schedule.

Parents' Meeting with teachers and Careers staff at start of second Exeat weekend to discuss academic progress.

Fast Tomato update – Higher Education options

Higher Education/university entrance and Open Day briefing.

*January/April*

Tutors discuss Centigrade Report and Higher Education options with students. Preparation for UCAS Apply.

Regular use of university research programs and UCAS websites, plus Intranet and Internet facilities.

*Lent Term*

Higher Education and Gap Year Conference for parents and students.

Advice on writing the UCAS Personal Statement.

*June*

Registration on UCAS Apply.

### **Upper Sixth Form Year**

*September/December*

UCAS Applications (from mid September).

Linked online application for Student Finance.

Opportunities for LNAT (Law) and UKCAT (Medicine) aptitude tests at external centres.

Sponsorship/bursary for Higher Education discussed where relevant.

Gap Year planning and applications.

*October/November*

BMAT (Medicine) and Oxford aptitude tests (ELAT, HAT, & TSA)

Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine deadline (15 October).

*November/March*

Interviews at universities and provisional offers of places.

Practice interviews available for those called by universities.

*January*

Final UCAS deadline (15 January)

*May/June*

Tutorial advice on post A Level results strategy.

A Level results advice document provided.

A Level examinations.

Cambridge STEP examinations.

*August*

Assistance available from Stowe for post A Level results problems.

Author: Dr Gordon West, Head of Careers

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Next Review –1<sup>st</sup> August 2019