



The Rise of Unconditional Offers

Over the past number of years there has been a significant increase in the number of unconditional offers being given to students applying to university. This has included an ever increasing presence of what is called “conditional unconditional” offers, whereby students are given an unconditional offer on the ‘condition’ they choose that institution as their firm choice. According to UCAS (as presented at the Aston HE Conference Jan 2019) there was a 32% increase in unconditional offers in 2018, bringing the total to 68,000. These are controversial, with many schools becoming increasingly concerned about the effect on examination results, and the Education Secretary Damien Hinds saying the news of an increase in unconditional offers as “disturbing” (BBC News 29 Nov 2018), But what can this rise be attributed to? Many people cite the rise in competitiveness of the HE sector, with a huge number of universities and departments competing for students relying much more heavily on the number of attendees for revenue streams, particularly since the huge overhaul in the way Higher Education is financed. When you combine this with the competition element universities are faced with the need to do whatever they can to get students to attend their university. Does that have to mean

UCAS



unconditional offers though? Not all universities think so. Aberystwyth University recently sent a personalised letter to one of our Walsall Academy students commenting on very specific points made in their personal statement in an attempt to demonstrate their commitment to her as a prospective undergraduate. Edge Hill University do not give out any unconditional offers. Simon Jenkins Head of Student Recruitment at Edge Hill said the following “In our view, students should select where they are going to spend the next three years on the basis of which university and course is right for them, rather than which university is prepared to make an offer unconditional if they choose them. We are very conscious that exam grades are not just about getting into university so we set what we believe are stretching entry requirements and we encourage applicants to work hard to achieve the very best grades they can”. It has to be said though the alternative perspective on this is the significantly positive impact it can have on young people’s mental health. The pressures of exams have arguably never been greater, and with the greater awareness of the importance of good mental health, knowing young people have their university place could help them by reducing stress and improving exam performance. More research needs to be done on the impact of these offers, but in the meantime if you want to discuss this with Careers please feel free to email or call.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Higher Education Finance Evening—Theatre—for students and their parents/carers who are applying for entry to university Autumn 2019— Wednesday 6 March 7pm**
- **Walsall Academy Higher Education Fair—Sports Hall—for all considering university as a pathway - Wednesday 20 March 5pm-8pm**
- **Year 10 Careers Discovery Evening—meeting in Restaurant—for students and parents/carers of all Year 10— Tuesday 14 May and Wednesday 22 May—4:15pm and 6:00pm**



An Audience with the Mayor

One of our Y12 Politics students had the opportunity to sit down with the Mayor on Wednesday 23 January to talk about politics and the role of Mayor of Walsall. Jacob conducted research and asked Cllr Marco Longhi a number of questions about local issues associated with policing, community life and transport. The Mayor talked about what steps were being taken by the council to improve Walsall in these areas, and discussed how these fitted into the wider political agenda across the Black Country and beyond.

Jacob also talked more generally about the nature of politics. This included the local council processes, with the Mayor being a representative of the whole of the local area and the council, with specific councillors and executive councillors putting in place specific plans to tackle the pressing issues in Walsall. This led to a brief discussion about the role of some of the national politicians including the Prime Minister and the oversight of the House of Commons activities by the Speaker of the House. Jacob also enquired about the challenges faced by the position of Mayor and the motivations that Cllr Longhi had in doing what he does, with the juggling of Mayoral responsibilities, work and family life being one of the big challenges but the passion to help the people of Walsall being a major driving factor in facing these challenges. Overall Jacob found the trip very interesting with a great insight into the local world of politics. Maybe the photo above is that of the current Mayor, and possibly a Mayor of the future!

What do I
do next?



There is a dedicated website to working in the civil service
www.civil-service-careers.org.uk
There's also a wide range of public sector vocations you could research like teaching, police and healthcare

Engineer a Great Career!

On Friday 8 February Craig Yarnall and colleagues from Ishida Europe came in to Walsall Academy to talk about apprenticeships and engineering. Ishida design, manufacture and install packing and weighing machines for customers such as McCain's and Walkers. The guests from Ishida started off talking about the company and what their roles are in the company. They carried on by giving various bits of advice and issues to consider when deciding on a possible career in engineering. They then talked more generally about the merits of choosing an apprenticeship after they finish school instead of university. Craig left Sixth Form in 2016 and is now in his 3rd year as a Manufacturing Operations Apprentice with Ishida Europe. At Sixth Form Craig studied Maths, Physics and Product Design, an ideal combination of subjects for those looking to study engineering.



Craig says of his choice to choose an apprenticeship “With the apprenticeship option I saw the opportunity to develop academically just as much as I could at Uni, to develop the interpersonal skills I would need for the rest of my life and to mature myself into an independent and self-supporting young person. This is all also helped by the fact that you are making money rather than losing it. The greatest compliment I can give it is that if I were in that position again, I would certainly choose this path again.” There was some discussion about choosing the right employer for your interests as well as thinking about the nature of engineering that students would like to focus on in their careers. Simon Cutler, who heads up training and apprentice recruitment at Ishida, talked about the differences between design engineering at one organisation, such as a car manufacturer, and design engineering at Ishida.



He talked about how the latter requires design for efficiency, functionality and technical capability for his customers. This contrasts with a car manufacturer who may want design engineers who can use skills to deliver

aesthetically pleasing products that perform in a way that a totally different customer requires.

What do I do next?



Visit the EEF website and/or go down to their technology centre at Perry Barr to find out more about careers in Engineering

Insight: Day in the life of an Ex-Student

Name: Emily Scott

Year left Walsall Academy: 2017

Level 3 Subjects studied: Double BTEC Travel and Tourism , History, Geography, AS Government and Politics

Destination after Walsall Academy: I chose the apprenticeship route.

What made you choose that option: Even after applying for University I still didn't know what I wanted to do so I applied for the apprenticeship I have now just to see if I would be capable of getting the job. When I got offered the job I knew that I would prefer to take that route as it would be 2 years work experience that had my education side of it paid for. I also got paid for doing the job which made it better as you 'earn while you learn'.



Current employer: High Speed Two (HS2) Limited

Describe what your role is: I work in Procurement and Supply Chain so it involves working with various stakeholders and suppliers to buy goods and services for the business. We buy everything that is not to do with Construction or Rolling Stock (the trains etc.) that helps the planning and implementation of the project run.

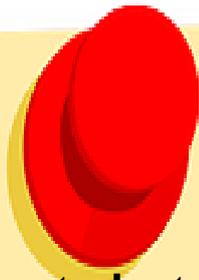
Describe a typical day in your role: No day is ever the same on the apprenticeship as we rotate round 4 different areas within the Procurement and Supply Chain division – I could be running a full procurement/tender to buy the services that particular parts of the business need, I could be managing the contracts that have been procured and awarded which means I have to ensure the contracts and supplier relationships are being managed efficiently, I could be ensuring processes and procedures are clear for people to follow and ensure that all tasks undertaken are compliant with relevant rules and standards or I could be engaging with suppliers at events and running market engagement conversations to see if suppliers are interested in what contracts we are hoping to run.

Give one top tip to young people who are currently in school: Don't limit yourself to the subjects in school and always keep your options open! For example procurement isn't a topic that many people are aware of however I really enjoy it as it was something new that I was able to get into and learn. I wouldn't of known about it if I hadn't of applied and kept my options open with both university and a job - there is something out there for everyone whether that is University or an Apprenticeship!

What do I do next?



Come and see us in Careers to talk about tools you can use to search all sorts of different future options. This will include online resources such as www.prospects.ac.uk, national careers service and also attending events like 'What Career Live' at NEC on 1 March and 2 March and Walsall Works on 21 March at Walsall College



NOTICES

- **Year 12—Work experience —students come to see us to discuss your placement and any updates you might want to talk about**
- **Year 13—Apprenticeships—now is the time you really need to be increasing your efforts in researching possible apprenticeships**
- **Year 13—UCAS —not sure what university to make your firm and insurance? Come and see us to discuss**
- **Year 8—you will be getting a careers session next half term to support you with your choices for KS4—come and speak to us for more information**
- **Year 11—need help with options and want to have your careers interview—contact us or ask your PT to and we will**

Next Term's Issue

Introducing.....

