

Access Academy Webinar Series:

## U.K. Universities in Depth

16<sup>th</sup> of June 2020

Hosts: *Aryan Aneja, Malin Bornemann*

Panellists: *Iso Deesomlert, Marie Colangelo, Oliver H. Haulund*



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# Agenda

**Introductions**

**Pre-University: Applications and Finances**

**Life at University: Teaching and Extracurriculars**

**Post-University: Job opportunities and further studies**

**Q&A**

# Mission to help untraditional students



Project Access is an **international non-profit** set up to provide **bright students from untraditional backgrounds** with personal mentors, who are currently university students at one of our target universities

*We have a network of*

**160+** team members

**3,500+** mentors

*We have supported*

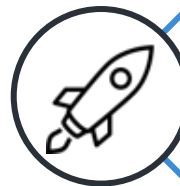
**3,000+** aspiring students!



Mentees come from untraditional backgrounds and need resources and guidance

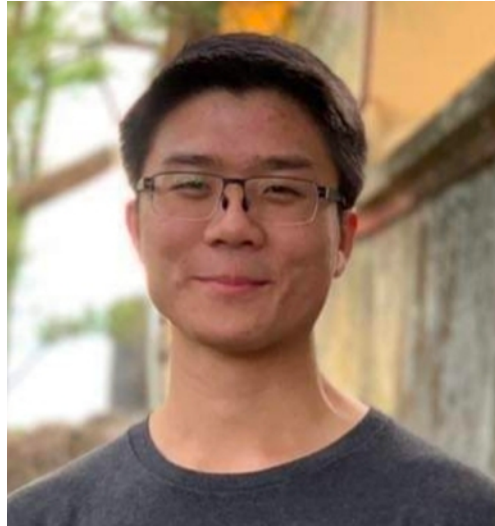


Mentors help students navigate the application process and offer 1:1 support



Once they receive an offer, mentees form part of our campus community

# Introductions



**Iso Deesomlert**

Incoming 2<sup>nd</sup> year  
"PPE"

**University of Oxford**



**Marie Colangelo**

Finalising 3<sup>rd</sup> year  
Politics

**King's College London**



**Oliver H. Haulund**

Incoming 2<sup>nd</sup> year  
Management

**University College  
London**



# Applying to the UK - Basics



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Your most important site is **UCAS**

1. Find a course you want to study
2. Search for the course on UCAS to find universities
3. Select up to 5 universities
4. Check which application deadline you need to meet
5. Write your personal statement
6. Fill out your UCAS application form
7. Get a reference from your teacher
8. Pay application fees and send in your application

# What Makes a Good UCAS Application?

1. **Personal Statement** – except for vocational courses, the main purpose is to show *your* academic interests and achievements
2. **References** – (1) extenuating circumstances, if any, and (2) academic potential not already covered in PS; the more objective and quantified the better. Talk to your reference writers
3. Be aware of (a) **earlier deadline** (15 October) for Oxbridge, vets, medics and dentists, as well as (b) application processes **beyond UCAS**, including English requirements, subject-specific tests, submitted works and interviews – read very carefully the specific requirements of each university *and college*

# How to Prepare Yourself for UK Applications?

## Three Pillars of Success:

1. **Solid Fundamentals** - attention to detail, great grades and references, *practice, practice and practice* for your tests and interviews!
2. **Intellectual Development** – (1) books, academic papers, articles and blogs – what do undergraduates or academics in your field read? and (2) super-curriculars, including academic competitions and discussion groups – practice structuring and arguing for your views with clarity, both in written and oral forms. It is never too early or too late!
3. **Thorough Research** – you only have five applications (plus clearing). Research, reflect and strategize. Apply if and only if you want to go

# UK Finances



Accommodation on average is £125 per week



Tuition can vary between £10,000 to £40,000



Living cost is approximately £60 per week



# UK Finances - Analysis

1. In general, funding support is more difficult in the UK, so do consider the US as well if your household qualifies as low-income
2. However, do a thorough research on scholarships, both provided by your country, the university or third parties (e.g. Jardine, Rhodes, Gates) – if still uncertain, just contact the universities!
3. Many funding supports come only if you have already secured a place – so likely worth applying regardless
4. More subtle disparities in cost of livings – between different geographies and between different Oxbridge colleges (generally, wealthier colleges = lower CoL) – research and ask your PA mentors
5. Some universities, like Oxford, do not allow part-time work during the term!

# Teaching in the UK



Teaching in the UK is divided between **lectures, seminars and tutorials** (but can also include labs and practicals according to the subject area you're studying).



The number of contact hours **depends on your course**— ex: Art & Humanities students often have between 8 and 12 hours of contact time per week.



In general, all students are allocated a **personal tutor** whose role is to offer support and guidance.

# Assessments in the UK



**Various assessment methods** in UK universities: exams, presentations, essays, reports.



Exam periods differ according to each university – but in general: one in **December/January** and one in **May** (at the end of the academic year)



Specific **grading system** in the UK:

Classification	Mark (in %)
First-class (1st)	70-100
Upper second-class (2.1)	60-69
Lower second-class (2.2)	50-59
Third-class (3rd)	40-49
Fail	0-39

# Extracurriculars in the UK



UK universities offer a **wide range of student-run societies and clubs** – ex: sport teams, cultural organizations, debating societies.



At the beginning of the year you will have the opportunity to discover all those societies at the **Freshers' Fair**.



Joining a club/society is the best way to **make new friends** and **get involved** in the campus life.



Also many **volunteering opportunities** both inside and outside university.

# Post-University at a glance



There are a multitude of career pathways for graduates in the UK, many going into **finance, law and consulting**, as well as **public services and non-profits**.



There are often **spring week** (week-long internships) opportunities in your first-year, **summer internships** in your second-year and **graduate schemes** when you finish your degree.

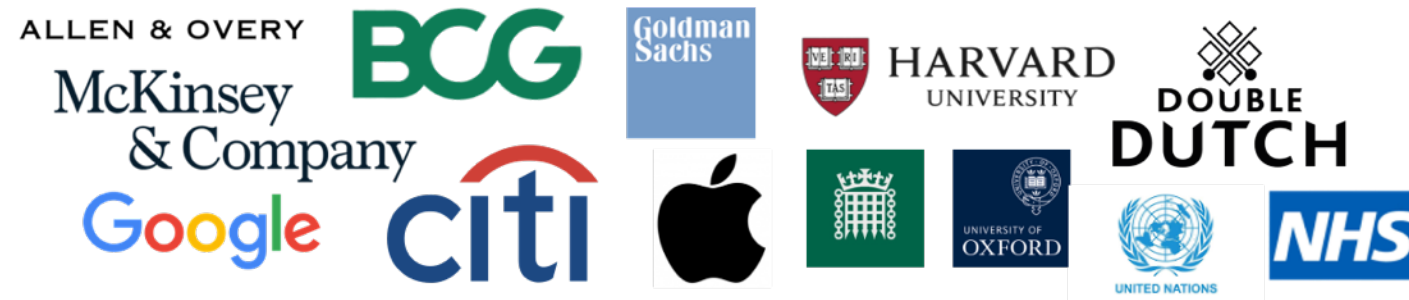


No matter where in the world you want to pursue further studies or employment, having studied in the U.K. provides a **global edge**. The magnitude of **the edge is different geographically**, however.

# Pathways in the U.K. and beyond

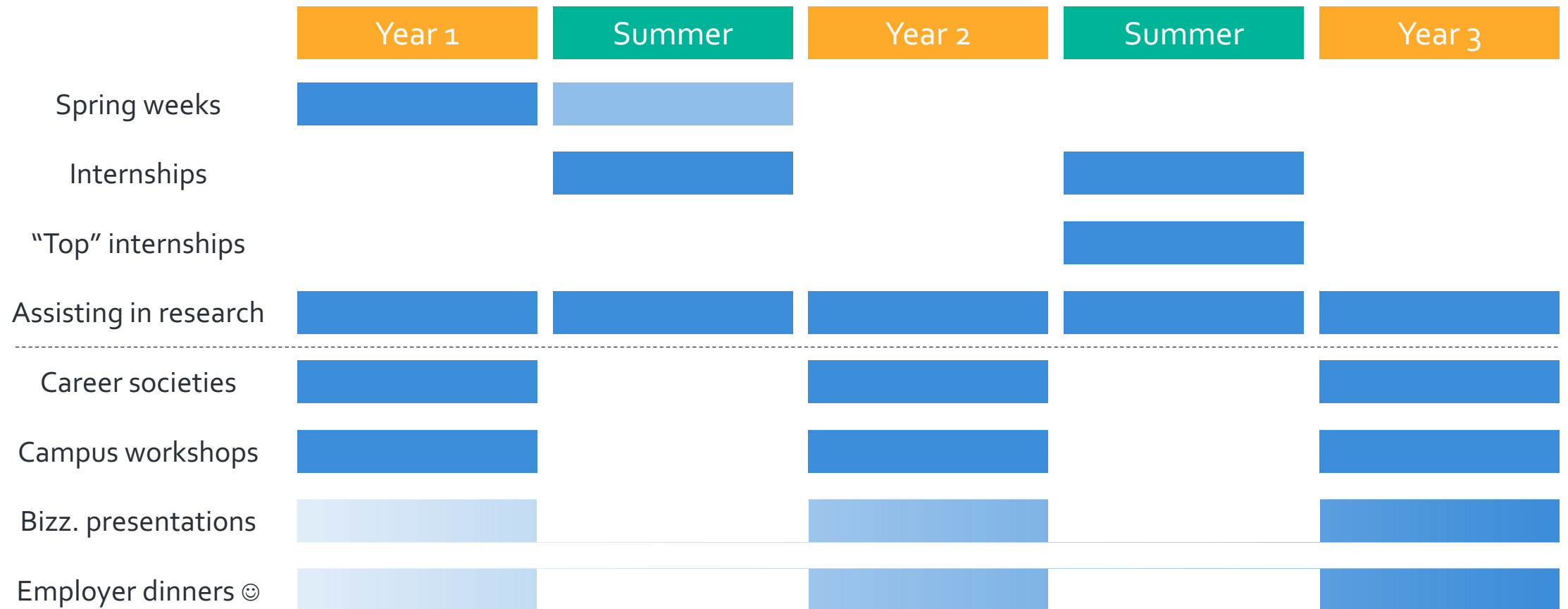


There is a **multitude of career pathways**, especially in London. What characterise the companies graduates go to is 1) being a place with lots of challenges, and 2) an international group of employees.



Attending one of our target universities is **no guarantee at all!**  
Spring weeks: 3 of ~75 | 203 of 9,044 | 50 of almost 1000  
But... it is an enabler for many things.

# Exposure to career opportunities



It is in everyone's interest that you find **your** career path, and the unis, employers and societies are there to help

# A global edge in applications



For further studies, attending one of our target universities provides an excellent profile. You have to be careful with limitations in opportunities to study further in your home country after your degree though.



Applying to companies **in the U.K.**, attending one of our target universities likewise provides an excellent profile. While Oxbridge was once a make it or break it, other unis are more in focus now too.



Applying to companies **outside the U.K.**, companies can sometimes have difficulties in interpreting your achievements. Attending one of our target unis will never (hopefully) hurt your chances.



# Q&A

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