

**UCAS**  
**APPLICATION**  
**PROCEDURE e-GUIDE**

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## WHAT IS UCAS?



Unlike most countries the UK has a centralised system for applying for courses in Higher Education. UCAS is an acronym for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and it is the central organisation that processes applications for full-time undergraduate courses at UK universities and colleges. There are still a few specialist colleges that still require direct applications, such as music conservatoires. However, today even specialist course providers, such as nursing and midwifery, courses in Scotland and art and design courses have now all moved to the UCAS system.

Starting in 2006 all UCAS applications have to be made online using the Apply electronic system. Apply is a fully secure, password protected system that can be accessed through the UCAS website, ([www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)).

The advantages of the Apply system: -

- Apply is simple to use and there are easy-to-follow dropdown menus and on-screen help available.
- You have to register to use Apply and it is free to use.
- You can track the progress of your application online at any time.
- Students are in sole control of communications with UCAS and their chosen universities.
- Apply has an online database of nearly all full-time courses available.



## WHAT DO I NEED TO PUT ON THE FORM?

There are a number of screens on Apply that need to be completed such as details of your education, any jobs you may have undertaken as well as a student finance section for all UK applicants. However, the three most important types of information you supply are:

- **Examination results:** Information is required about examinations taken to date and those still to be taken. It is vital that you record accurately examinations still to be taken and there are drop-down menus to help you. As exam results are sent directly to UCAS they need to be able to match these against your application details and then send them on to universities so they can make their decisions. If you are taking the exams of a non-UK country you need to obtain the UK equivalent from NARIC, the National Academic Recognition Information Centre. ([www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk).)
- **Courses:** You need to have selected the courses you want to apply for before completing the form. The maximum number you can apply for is five, though you may apply for less. If you are applying for Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine you may only select four courses. Notice also the restriction regarding Oxford and Cambridge as you can only apply to one or the other. **The deadline for Oxbridge applications and for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine is 15<sup>th</sup> October. For all other courses the deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> January.**
- **Personal Statement:** This is a part of the form where the applicant has complete discretion about what to write. The value of the Personal Statement has increased as competition for places on popular courses has grown. It is now regarded by Admissions Tutors as the most important part of the application form because it enables an Admissions Tutor to identify potential beyond the grades. The Apply system has a strict limit of 4000 characters including spaces.

## WHAT DO I PUT IN MY PERSONAL STATEMENT?

- The reasons for choosing the subject you want to study.
- The experience and qualities you possess that are relevant to the subject.
- Any work experience and/or voluntary activity you have done, especially where this is related to your chosen subject.
- Link your sixth exam subjects and outside interests to the courses you are applying for.
- Your intended future career.
- Any achievements or other aspects of your life that may be of interest to Admissions Tutors.
- Be honest!



If there is an unusual aspect to your application then use the Personal Statement to explain it. This might be giving your reasons for deferring entry for a year or applying for courses that are in a different discipline to your examination subjects.

The Personal Statement is absolutely critical in differentiating your application from the thousands of others for the same course. This is the only place in your application where you can put in a personal bid to be considered.

Producing a strong Personal Statement takes a lot of effort and it can be particularly demanding for international students. Education Advisers has a team of experienced University consultants in the UK and their input can make all the difference.

You can obtain help by clicking on the section [Expert Advice](#) or call the Education Advisers office helpline on **01622 813870 / 01622 812852**.

## UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION TIMETABLE FOR 2017 – UCAS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**24<sup>th</sup> May 2016:** UCAS Undergraduate Apply for 2017 entry

**1<sup>st</sup> September 2016:** Applications can be submitted to UCAS

**15<sup>th</sup> October 2016:** Application deadline for applications to Oxford and Cambridge Universities and for most courses in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine.

**15<sup>th</sup> January 2017:** Application deadline for most undergraduate courses. After your application has been submitted, UCAS will send you by email, confirmation that they have received it together with a unique application number. In due course you will be notified of the decisions of the universities you have selected. The decisions given will be one of the following three possibilities:

1. **Unconditional offer (U).** You already have met all the entry requirements of the course and are offered a place without the need for further examination results.
2. **Conditional offer (C).** The university is prepared to offer you a place on the course subject to your meeting additional requirements, normally that your specified examination grades are achieved. This is the most common situation and universities are used to dealing with applications in this way.
3. **Rejection (R).** No offer is made, either because you do not meet the requirements of the course or there are other better qualified applicants.

You may be invited for an interview by the university before a decision is made, although this is less frequent than it used to be. For some universities (including Oxford and Cambridge) and some courses, (e.g. medicine), this is normal practice. If you decline to attend you will not be made an offer. Make sure you are prepared for your interview and be enthusiastic. The Education Advisers team are specialists in preparing students for interviews and also specialised course test papers, such as UKCAT and BMAT. Contact [Education Advisers](#) and talk to them about your requirements.

## **REMINDER – all applications need to have a completed reference**

**25<sup>th</sup> February 2017:** UCAS Extra opens. UCAS Extra is available if you have chosen five courses and have either been rejected or you are holding offers you do not want. You are able to choose one more subject and, if you are unsuccessful or decline the first offer you can choose a second course. You need to be patient because if you choose a second Extra course before you have a response for your first Extra choice, then the first choice is cancelled. If both Extra choices are unsuccessful then you can go into Clearing when results are published. About 50% of students making an application through Extra are successful.

**4<sup>th</sup> May 2017:** If you have received all your decisions by 31<sup>st</sup> March then you must reply or they will be cancelled.

**5<sup>th</sup> May 2017:** If you applied by the 15<sup>th</sup> January universities/colleges must give their decisions today. If you do not hear you have been unsuccessful.

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2017:** If you receive all decisions by 5<sup>th</sup> May you must reply by 8<sup>th</sup> June or they will be automatically declined.

**22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017:** If you receive all decisions by the 8<sup>th</sup> of June you must reply by 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

**30<sup>th</sup> June 2017:** Applications received by UCAS up until 6.00pm on 30<sup>th</sup> June will be forwarded to universities and colleges. Applications received after this date will automatically be entered into Clearing.

**4<sup>th</sup> July 2017:** This is the last date you can apply in UCAS Extra.

**5<sup>th</sup> July 2017:** International Baccalaureate (IB) results day. Also Clearing opens.

**13<sup>th</sup> July 2017:** Universities and colleges will let you know today if you submitted your applications by the 30<sup>th</sup> June.

**20<sup>th</sup> July 2017:** If you have received all your decisions by the 13<sup>th</sup> July you must respond by the 20<sup>th</sup> July otherwise they will be declined and you will automatically go into Clearing.

**17<sup>th</sup> July 2017:** A Level GCE and Advanced Diploma results day. All Clearing vacancies are published. Adjustment period begins.

**Adjustment:** If you're final grades turn out to be better than those requested by your first choice university then the Adjustment Period that was started in 2009 gives you an opportunity to apply to another institution while holding onto your original offer. Therefore, if you decide not to move your original offer will still be available. Oxford and Cambridge and certain other popular universities do not take part as they just do not have spaces. However, a number of students use the Adjustment Period (it runs until August 31<sup>st</sup>) to apply again to universities that originally rejected them.

**31<sup>st</sup> August 2017:** The final deadline for any offer conditions to be met and the end of Adjustment Period.

**20<sup>th</sup> September 2017:** This is the last date when you can submit applications for courses starting in 2017. UCAS have to receive your application by 6.00pm.

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2017:** UCAS will remove all Clearing vacancies from its sites.

**20<sup>th</sup> October 2017:** This is the last date when universities and colleges will accept Clearing applications.



## RESULTS DAY AND CLEARING



Results day is going to be stressful, no matter how you have done. No longer is it a matter of waiting for the postman and opening brown envelopes over breakfast. It is now all done by computers which will tell students whether or not they have won a place on a course of their choice. If you achieve the grades demanded in your conditional offer you can start organising the celebration party. If you have fallen short on the grades then you need to get in touch with your school or careers adviser and you could also ask for your exam papers to be remarked. You might also find that even if you have not got the grades for your offers the universities might still take you with a 'near miss', rather go into Clearing to recruit a replacement.

## UCAS CLEARING

If you are disappointed on results day you still have the option of going into the UCAS Clearing scheme. If you are not offered a place because of your grades then you will be automatically entered into Clearing. UCAS tells us that if a student has reasonable exam results and if they are willing to be flexible on course and location, then there is a good chance they will find a degree course that they are happy to accept. In 2015 it is estimated over 60,000 students were successful in Clearing.

It is important to be available and to act quickly if you are seeking a place in Clearing. There are vacancy lists updated daily at [www.clearing.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.clearing.telegraph.co.uk) and [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and you can contact the universities directly if you find a course that you like. If you do contact a university be prepared to have a telephone interview with Admissions staff and also you have the opportunity to ask questions about courses that look attractive but you are not sure what they contain. You may also find that if you have missed your first-choice university by a grade or two, it is still worth talking looking at other similar courses that might have a lower grade requirement.

Clearing is available from results day in August until the end of September. If you want to apply for a course in Clearing you should call the university and have your Clearing number

(available from the UCAS website) and your personal ID number. Universities also are keen to fill their vacancies on degree courses and they will run Clearing hotlines, however, do not take the first course that is offered just because you want to get into a university. Drop-out rates are high among students who rush during Clearing to get a place without do the necessary research on what the course is all about.

Finally, if your results are really much lower than expected and you can find nothing in Clearing you still have options.

- You can resit subjects although you need to be totally realistic about your chances of success, especially if the course is a competitive one, such as Medicine, when retake grades for admission are likely to be higher than the original grades.
- You could get some valuable work experience which might allow you to reapply as a mature student at a later date for a degree course.
- You could take a Gap Year, travel, learn a skill and perhaps regain your enthusiasm for studying. You may also have a much better idea of the sort of course you are seeking than you were when you originally applied.
- Alternatively you may decide that university is not for you and that you would be much better off learning a trade or profession.

The consultants at Education Advisers Limited are always available with help and advice whatever your situation. For a no-obligation discussion about your career and your degree prospects please contact – Education Advisers Limited



## What is the UCAS Tariff?

Conditional offers from universities are expressed as subjects and grades, subjects and points or just a total number of points. These points are based on the UCAS Tariff which is a system that allocates a numerical score to the wide range of UK qualifications now taken by applicants for university places. It is designed to establish an equivalence between the different qualifications and allow the scores to be aggregated.

Please be aware that for 2018 UK admissions there will be major changes to the UCAS tariff and it is important to check what these are before making an application. These will be shown on this website from September 2017.

**The scores for 2017 UK admissions qualifications are as follows:**

### GCE and VCE

GCE & AVCE Double Award	A level with additional AS (9 units)	GCE A level and AVCE	GCE AS Double Award	GCE AS & AS VCE	Tariff points
A*A*					280
A*A					260
AA					240
AB					220
BB	A*A				200
BC	AA				180
	AB				170
CC					160
	BB				150
CD	BC	A*			140
DD	CC	A	AA		120
	CD		AB		110
DE		B	BB		100
	DD		BC		90
EE	DE	C	CC		80
			CD		70
	EE	D	DD	A	60
			DE	B	50
		E	EE	C	40
				D	30
				E	20

## International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma

IB Diploma points	UCAS Tariff
45	720
44	698
43	676
42	654
41	632
40	611
39	589
38	567
37	545
36	523
35	501
34	479
33	457
32	435
31	413
30	392
29	370
28	348
27	326
26	304
25	282
24	260

## Cambridge Pre-U

Grade	Principal Subject	Global Perspectives and Research	Short Course
D1	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
D2	145	140	To be confirmed
D3	130	126	60
M1	115	112	53
M2	101	98	46
M3	87	84	39
P1	73	70	32
P2	59	56	26
P3	46	42	20

## How may I reply to offers?

If you have an unconditional offer, you can accept it as a confirmed acceptance. This means that you have a definite place at the university concerned and you are committed to that university.

By the end of the application process you can hold a maximum of two offers: a conditional offer as firm acceptance. This will be your first choice university among the offers you have been made, plus a second offer known as an 'insurance acceptance'. Usually this will be for a university that has made an offer with lower requirements.

If you are made an unconditional offer and you firmly accept it, the university is bound by the rules of UCAS to offer you a place. If you accept this unconditional offer, all your other offers must be declined.

However, if you hold conditional offers, you can keep one as a firm acceptance and a backup offer on lower grades as a provisional acceptance as 'insurance' until your examination results are known.

It is important that you reply to your offers. Failure to do so will result in UCAS deciding that you have 'declined by default' and your offers will be lost.

**For help and expert advice:**

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