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**University applications**

For most UK-based universities we apply through UCAS, the exceptions are some foundation courses, art, music and performing arts courses.

You have up to **five** choices, but medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science you choose only four with your fifth choice being another course (eg biomedical sciences).

The UCAS application fee for 2025 will be £28.50

**Choosing the right course for you**

Once you have decided what subject you want to study you need to decide which course will suit you. All universities and college structure their courses differently, and the way the course is run could be the difference between you loving or hating your degree, and in some cases leave one university and reapplying.

* Subjects: What exactly does the course cover?
* How much time is spent on each module?
* What is the pattern of a typical teaching week?
* Most course will be taught through a mixture of lectures, seminars, and tutorials.
* Course Structure: How much time will be spent in lectures, seminars, personal study, and assignments?
* How big are the class sizes?
* Are lectures back in person or are some still online?
* Many degree courses last 3 or 4 years. A four-year course may include a period of time spent abroad or in industry. Many degrees (MAs) from Scottish based university will be 4 years in length.
* Course assessment: How is the course assessed – is it by final examination, continuous assessment or a bit of both? Which does it focus on, and which are you better at? Do they match? Modular courses are increasingly common, with units of teaching attracting a specified number of credits. Some modules may be compulsory, others will be optional, and it may be possible for you to make up your own study programme.
* Study in Europe as part of the course: You may wish to consider applying to one of the universities which offer your chosen course within the new Turing scheme, whereby you can spend between 4 – 12 months of your course in another country.
* Work placements: Does the course include work experience? If it does, how is this organised? Will you have to find a placement or is it organised for you? Will it be a sandwich course – e.g., will you have to take a full year out of your study to work?

Grade requirements: Find out what the required grades are. These may be worked on a UCAS points system. More and more courses are making candidates obtain a particular grade in a subject, for example, an A\* in Mathematics to read Economics at LSE.

Many universities will accept native language A Level (e.g. Chinese), but some will not. You should contact universities directly and ask them.

**UCAS points**



**UCAS Grades**

You will receive your UCAS grades after your end of Year examinations. UCAS grades are informed by your end of year examinations but should be aspirational but achievable. Your UCAS grades are informed by the work you have done throughout Year 12. If you wish to appeal you UCAS grade, you should speak with the Head of Department of that subject. They will then discuss with you their requirements with regards to work you would need to submit in order for a change to be considered.

**Choosing a university**

* To be able to assist you in choosing the right university/ college for you, you will need to consider the following:
* Style: Traditional universities that have a focus on subject-based courses and research, to modern universities with a greater focus on vocational courses.
* Location: Some are based in large cities, other in smaller towns, a major influence on the environment and lifestyle.
* Size: Large universities can have more than 20,000 students whereas some of the smallest have only a few thousand.
* Culture & facilities: What equipment and resources does the course and university/ college have? Look at the IT and the library facilities. What is the staff – student ration? What facilities exist to undertake visit or research outside the formal provision? Look at diversity of students who attend.

Destination list: Find out what the previous students on the course did after graduation. The association of Graduate Recruiters publishes an annual report called ‘What Do Graduates Do?’ This provides information about the destinations and employment rates by academic subject/ discipline.

Tuition fees: These can vary between universities/ colleges. Also check if there are any scholarships or bursaries available.

Living cost: Check out the different types of accommodations available, cost of transport to and from your chosen university/ college and price of food. All of these can vary enormously.

Questions to ask yourself:

▪ Do you want to live at home or move away?

 ▪ How far away?

▪ Do you prefer a city, town, campus-based university?

 ▪ How good are the transport links?

 ▪ What sort of accommodation is offered to first year students?

 ▪ How expensive is it to live in the places that you are considering?

 ▪ What do the places you are considering offer – good shops, nightlife, sports facilities, extra-curricular activities, student support, access to countryside, other factors for you?

 ▪ What is the local economy like? Are you likely to be able to find part-time work? ▪ Does the SU have a good reputation? Is this important to you?

▪ Are your friends also applying here? This could be a good or not so good thing.

Do make sure you visit the universities you are applying for – you can find open days here [Search | Open days and events | UCAS](https://www.ucas.com/explore/search/events?query=)

**Oxbridge, Medicine and Testing**

Applicants for Oxford or Cambridge, and most courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/ science: deadline for applications is ***15th October 2025.***

 Applicants for medical/ dental school and veterinary science, you will need to be aware that you may have to **sit additional tests**, such as the UCAT and BMAT (see additional information) Applicants for law may select to sit the **LNAT** examination. There are also tests for some engineering courses and courses at Oxford and Cambridge*. (See Appendix 1 for details)*

Deferred Applications: the same closing dates apply for deferred applications. Before choosing to defer an application, you should contact individual universities or colleges direct to check that they would be willing to consider a deferred application. In some cases, for examples, the course may not be offered in the following year.

During UCAS lessons and registration activities, you will need to have registered on the UCAS Hub and completed all the following section before the summer: ▪ Personal details ▪ Contact & residency ▪ Nationality ▪ Supporting information ▪ English language skills ▪ Finance & Funding ▪ Diversity & inclusion ▪ More about me ▪ Education ▪ Employment ▪ Extra activities This will leave you to complete the Choices and Personal Statement sections in September. Before the end of the summer term, you should have a draft of your personal statement and a shortlist of your chosen universities/ courses.

Once you have completed the application form paid and sent, your application will be sent to the Mrs Bailey to check your application. If there is anything incorrect with your application, this will be sent back to you to rectify and send again once the necessary changes have been made. Do not worry you will not be asked to pay again. References will be written by your subject teachers and your form tutor, this takes time. Once your application has been checked, references and predicted grades added, your application will then be sent off to UCAS. At this point you will receive notification from UCAS that they have received it. It is then automatically forwarded to your selected universities. From this point onwards, university admissions tutors will be in contact with you directly (not the school or your parents).

**Personal Statement**

Hints for Writing Your Personal Statement The personal statement gives you the opportunity to explain to Admissions Tutors why you are interested in their subject, what you already know about the subject and what you will be able to contribute to the University because of your academic skills, abilities, extra-curricular and other interests. Effectively you are writing an individual letter of application that will be read by several people as part of the recruitment process.

Remember it’s the ONLY piece of personal work the application team sees – if your personal statement is not well thought out, what guarantee do they have that your work once you join the course will be? There is plenty of advice and guidance available on the UCAS website, Unifrog, in books and on websites. So much, in fact that you can spend too much time searching for advice rather than concentrating on writing your own. KEEP IT SIMPLE – Remember you can only use 4000 characters (including punctuation and spaces)

 REMEMBER TO WRITE WELL – Admissions Tutors will judge your application on the quality of your writing, grammar, spelling, vocabulary and if your statement is interesting and easy to follow. Golden Rules Convince them of your commitment and motivation ⇒ Enthusiasm ⇒ Knowledge ⇒ Interests ⇒ Aspirations Academic Interests ⇒ Current and Past Studies (but no further back than GCSE) ⇒ Skills – what are your strengths For Vocational Degrees ⇒ Relevant work experience ⇒ Volunteering Wide interest range ⇒ Current affairs, cultural, technical or any other areas of interest, research on where the degree might take you. Ability to be trusted ⇒ Positions of responsibility inside and outside of school Non-academic personal achievements ⇒ Such as music, sport, drama, or anything else that you are proud of.

TELL THE TRUTH – Just remember you might be interviewed, but even if not, if you don’t tell truth the course might not suit you. If you end up leaving, you will still have the paid the course fees but have no qualification to show for this.

[2026 personal statement guides | Undergraduate | UCAS](https://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/writing-your-personal-statement/2026-personal-statement-guides)

Once you have identified all the points that you want to make in your Personal Statement, start writing! Don’t worry if it sounds a bit odd at first – no one likes writing about themselves and we sometimes find it hard to emphasize our own achievements, especially in writing. But this is what will get you an offer of a place on your favourite course, so just do it. Remember, it will take you several drafts before it is right. Once you have the first one completed – even if you think it’s not particularly good, show it to someone and ask them to comment. This can be a friend, family member or one of the form tutor or subject teacher. But don’t give it to too many people at once – everyone may have a different view and then you will be left confused as to what to do next. Do not be tempted to copy anyone else’s personal statement – even just a small section. UCAS check all applications using anti-plagiarism software and this will pick.

Once you have submitted your form and your application has been checked and sent to UCAS, you will start to receive offers from your chosen universities.

**Conditional offer**: ▪ This is good news! This means that the university has accepted you on to its course, subject to meeting the entry requirements of the offer. This usually means you will need to obtain certain grades in your current studies or achieve a minimum number of UCAS points. ▪ Think of it as the university saying to you: ‘there is a place with your name on it on our course, but you will need to prove yourself academically to take it up’. The vast majority of offers made to applicants by universities are conditional offers. ▪ Entry requirements for course depends on the qualifications you are taking. The university will tell you the exact terms of your offer when responding to you. Some examples of conditional offer: ▪ A Levels, grade AAB with ‘A’ in Chemistry and at least two other sciences or Mathematics. ▪ 120 UCAS points

**Unconditional offer**: ▪ You have met the terms or entry requirements for that course. While you still need to do a few things, such as provide paperwork to confirm your academic grades, you are pretty much in. ▪ Be aware that if you accept an unconditional offer as your firm, you are committing to go to that university. Therefore, you cannot select an insurance choice or enter Clearing (you would need to be formally ‘released’ by that university in order to do so). ▪ If you accept an unconditional offer, the pressure is effectively off when it comes to your exams in the summer, but you should still work hard as these grades will follow you around in the future.

**Unsuccessful applications** ▪ It is not good news unfortunately. This means the university has declined your application and has not offered you a place. ▪ The university may provide a reason for its decision on UCAS track or in further communication to you (or you can get in touch directly to learn why). You simple may not meet the entry requirements based on your predicted grades, or it could be a super-competitive course with applicants far outweighing the number of places. ▪ Receiving an unsuccessful offer can be undeniably tough, but don’t get too disheartened – learn from this and wait to hear from your other UCAS choices.

 **Withdrawn applications** ▪ Your application to a university may be withdrawn for a number of reasons. For example, you might not have responded to a university’s communications by a required date, or you may have missed an interview. You can learn why your application has been withdrawn on UCAS track. ▪ You can also withdraw your application yourself if you change your mind about applying to that course or university

You then need to select one course as Firm and one as Insurance. Your Insurance choice should be at least a grade below your Firm choice.

**UCAS Extra** If you find yourself in the position or either rejecting all your offers or receiving no offers, you will have the opportunity to make additional choices through UCAS extra. Extra is another chance for you to gain a place at university or college, from 26th February. If you used all five of your choices on your original application and you are not holding an offer, you will be able to add another choice using Extra. Who can use Extra? If you included five choices on your application, have received decisions from all five and were not accepted, or if you declined the offers you received, you will be able to use Extra. If you did not use all your choices in your initial application, you don’t need to use Extra, you can just sign into your application and add another choice, as long as it is before 30th June, and you have not accepted or declined any offers.

**Clearing** will open on 5th July – 17th October, you can apply for a course using Clearing if you are not already holding an offer from a university or college, and the course still has places. You can use Clearing if: You are applying after 30th June You did not receive any offers (or none you wanted to accept) You did not meet the conditions of your offers You have declined your firm place using the ‘decline my place’ button in your application.

**Additional UCAS points**

Do you play a musical instrument? If so, you’ll be pleased to learn that the exams you do will give you extra UCAS points from Grade 6 upwards. The points you can gain range from 5 UCAS points for a pass at Grade 6 to 75 points for a Distinction at Grade 8.

Just as you can earn UCAS points for graded musical instrument exams, so you can accumulate them by taking exams in speech and drama. Like the musical instrument exams, speech and drama exams earn UCAS points from Grade 6 upwards, with a maximum of 65 points for a distinction at Grade 8, or 90 for a PCertLAM (LAMDA Level 3 Certificate in Speech & Drama: Performance Studies). Suitable for aspiring actors and those who just enjoy performing, these qualifications develop your theatrical skills and enables you to get better at speaking clearly.

Graded dance qualifications, similar to the music exams, are offered by several organisations, including the British Ballet Organization, the British Theatre Dance Association, the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing and the Royal Academy of Dance. The maximum UCAS points you can gain this way is 65 points for a Distinction at Grade 8 (as with the music and drama exams, points are awarded from Grade 6 upwards).

Most admissions tests happen between August and November the year before you're due to start your studies. **Some have a registration deadline before you need to submit your UCAS application.**

**Admissions Tests – Appendix 1**

Some of the key admissions tests are listed below. You should check the [UCAS course search](https://digital.ucas.com/coursedisplay/results/courses) to check whether the course you are applying for requires an admissions test.

[**LNAT – National Admissions Test for Law**](http://www.lnat.ac.uk/)

* The Law National Aptitude test helps you understand if Law is the right career path for you, and it helps Universities check that you’ll be able to succeed on a law course. It is currently used for courses at the following universities:
* University of Bristol
* University of Cambridge
* Durham University
* University of Glasgow
* Kings College London
* London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)
* University of Oxford
* SOAS
* UCL

[**UCAT - University Clinical Aptitude Test**](https://www.ucat.ac.uk/)

The University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) is used by many universities to select applicants to their medical and dental degree programmes. It is currently used for courses at the following universities:

* University of Aberdeen
* Anglia Ruskin University
* Aston University
* Bangor University
* University of Birmingham
* Brighton and Sussex Medical School
* University of Bristol
* Brunel University London
* University of Cambridge
* Cardiff University
* University of Central Lancashire
* University of Chester
* University of Dundee
* University of East Anglia
* Edge Hill University
* University of Edinburgh
* University of Exeter
* University of Glasgow
* Hull York Medical School
* Imperial College London
* Keele University
* Kent and Medway Medical School
* King's College London
* Lancaster University
* University of Leeds
* University of Leicester
* University of Liverpool
* University of Manchester
* University of Newcastle
* University of Nottingham
* University of Oxford
* Plymouth University
* Queen Mary University of London
* Queen's University Belfast
* University of Sheffield
* University of Southampton
* University of St Andrews
* St George's, University of London
* University of Sunderland
* University of Surrey
* Swansea University
* University College London
* University of Warwick
* University of Worcester

[**ESAT - Engineering and Science Admissions test**](https://esat-tmua.ac.uk/about-the-tests/esat-test/)

ESAT is used by Imperial College London and the University of Cambridge for Engineering and Science based subjects.

* Imperial College London
* University of Cambridge

[**TMUA - Test of Mathematics for University Admission**](https://esat-tmua.ac.uk/about-the-tests/tmua-test/)

TMUA is used by several universities for Mathematics, Economics and Computer Science courses. It is currently used for courses at the following universities:

* Imperial College London
* University of Cambridge
* London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)
* University of Warwick
* Durham University

**Admissions tests at University of Cambridge**

University of Cambridge use a number of admissions tests, including UCAT, TMUA, ESAT, and LNAT, alongside a [University of Cambridge College admissions assessment](https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/after/college-assessments), which applies to most other courses and colleges at University of Cambridge. Applicants will also need to complete a [My Cambridge Application](https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/how/cambridge-application).

**Admissions tests at University of Oxford**

University of Oxford use a number of admissions tests, including UCAT, LNAT, and University of Oxford specific tests for the majority of their courses.

**New for 2026 entry: Admissions tests at University College London**

University College London is introducing a new admissions test for various mathematics and social science programmes for 2026 entry. UCL will require all applicants to sit the TARA (The Test of Academic Reasoning for Admissions) run by University Admissions Tests UK. TARA is a new test available from 2026.

**Student Finance**

Most students won’t have to pay for tuition fees up front – you can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan to pay your fees.

How much you can get depends on:

* how much your university or college charges
* whether you’re studying at a publicly or privately funded university or college
* when you started your course

You could get a Tuition Fee Loan of up to £9,535 if you're studying at an eligible uni or college. If you're studying an accelerated degree course, you could get up to £11,440.

For Foundation Years, you could get up to £5,760 or £9,535 depending on your course

Whether you can get student finance depends on your:

* personal circumstances
* course
* uni or college
* nationality or residency status

## What's available?

Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to apply for a [Maintenance Loan](https://www.ucas.com/student-finance-england/living-costs-full-time-students#loan). We’ll ask for information based on your household income if you apply for the maximum amount of Maintenance Loan.

**Student finance in your final year of study**

In your final year of uni or college, you'll get less [Maintenance Loan](https://www.ucas.com/student-finance-england/living-costs-full-time-students#loan) than you had in other years. This is because student finance usually covers the breaks between each year, but you're no longer entitled to it once your course has ended.

How much you can get depends on when you started your course, where you live, and your household income.

It’s important you let us know if there are any changes to your living arrangements as it will affect your student finance. This is so we can make sure you get the right amount of student finance. You can update any changes in your online account.



**Clearing**

The **UK clearing system** is a structured process that matches students to university places through a centralized system run by **UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service)**. It primarily helps applicants who:

* Didn't receive any offers.
* Didn't meet the conditions of their offers.
* Applied late (after 30 June).
* Want to change course or university.

**How UK Clearing Works (Step-by-Step):**

1. **Clearing Opens**:
	* Typically starts in **early July** and runs through **October**.
	* Becomes most active around **A-level results day** in mid-August.
2. **Eligibility**:
	* You become eligible for Clearing if you are not holding any university offer.
	* UCAS marks your application status as *"You are in Clearing"* in the UCAS Hub.
3. **Search for Courses**:
	* Students can search available courses using the **UCAS Clearing search tool**.
	* Universities list courses with vacancies that still have spots open.
4. **Contacting Universities**:
	* You contact universities directly to ask if they'll accept you.
	* Be prepared to share your UCAS ID, qualifications, and reasons for interest.
5. **Receiving a Verbal Offer**:
	* If a university is interested, they'll often give you a **verbal offer**.
	* You then add the course in the UCAS Hub under “Add a Clearing choice.”
6. **Confirmation**:
	* If the university confirms your place, it becomes official on your UCAS profile.