

This guide will provide you with all the information you need for applying to UCAS. The guide is full of useful information, resources and links to help you apply to university including writing personal statements and things you can do to improve your application.



ACADEMIC YEAR 2019

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What is UCAS?

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK. Not only do they process more than two million applications for full-time undergraduate courses every year, but they help you to find the right course for you.

To make things run as smoothly as possible they provide everything you need online: from making your application through to tracking your offers. You can search for courses and follow links to individual university and college websites, read information about finance, order a UCAS card and much more besides. www.ucas.com

A successful UCAS application is best achieved when student, school and agent/parents are all actively involved.

Step 1 – Planning, research, visits

Step 2 – Choosing courses: deciding what and where

Step 3 – Applying online through UCAS.com

Step 4 – Offers: check progress using Track at UCAS.com

Step 5 – Results

Step 6 – Confirmation of placement, or Clearing

Step 7 – Starting University or College

Six good reasons to go to university

- Graduate earnings are still greater than those of non-graduates, so choosing to do a degree is an investment worth making
- Graduates are 50% more likely to get a job and are more likely to receive training and promotion.
- Graduate employees are more likely to experience 'job satisfaction' (challenging jobs with responsibility and inherent rewards).
- A relevant degree is required for entry to some professions i.e. architecture, law, teaching, accountancy, medicine.
- A university education will develop you intellectually and personally leading to an enhanced quality of adult life.
- It is great fun! – a chance to spend three years with people the same age from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds.

It is probably the biggest decision of your life so far -get it wrong and you could end up losing money if you drop out, or spending three very unhappy years in education. You might fail to gain access to the occupation you had hoped for and have to retrain.

Choosing A Course

Becoming a student in higher education (HE) is a big step, and there are important questions you will need to consider.

There are over 50,000 higher education courses listed in the UCAS database, offered at over 300 universities and colleges. There are also a significant number of Further Education Colleges that offer higher education courses. With so many options available, choosing a course can be a difficult decision.

What are you looking for?

Is your intended profession dependent on a specific degree?

Do you want to study a particular subject or subject combination in greater depth; think about what you enjoy and can do well, both at school and outside. It doesn't even have to be a subject you studied at school: there is a far wider variety of subjects available than in the secondary education curriculum and work experience, a job or a hobby may have triggered an interest.

Use UCAS Course Search – a comprehensive online database of available courses which covers about 95% of all full-time HE undergraduate courses in the UK. For each course, there is information on fees, bursaries and financial support and many have supplementary details, such as course content, specific entry requirements and potential career paths. You can search for courses in your chosen subject and/or institution or UK region.

Single Honours -you study one main subject, usually with the option of taking up to 25% of your degree in another subject.

Joint Honours -where you study two subjects on a 50:50 basis.

Major/minor Honours -Occasionally you can do a major/minor Honours Degree where the majority of your study is in one subject and the minority in another, for example, Accounting & Finance with Computing.

Part-time study -you can take a full-time degree programme on a half-time basis, or do an Honours Degree by working your way through interim awards.

Honours degree with a foundation year. If, for whatever reason, you do not have appropriate qualifications for direct entry, some Honours degrees offer a foundation year.

Foundation degrees are interim higher education awards, which start at a point before Honours degree entry and end at a level significantly below an Honours degree. There are usually good progression routes on to a related Honours degree or a specific top-up Honours degree.

Higher National Diplomas are two year full time (or three year part time) courses which once completed can lead to entry on the final year of a degree course. HND courses are vocational in nature as they prepare you for careers in specific areas of industry. More 'learning by doing' and highly valued by employers, most HND courses require one A level for entry.

Top-up Honours degrees are one-year programmes designed to allow progression from foundation degrees or HNDs to bachelor Honours degree level.

How a course is structured?

- Are you able to diversify and acquire new skills by studying topics outside your main subject area?
- Taking a language normally includes a year of studying or working abroad
- Does a course include a sandwich year of working in industry?
- Science-based subjects can include full-day practical laboratory sessions
- What is the proportion of private study and reading to lectures and tutorials?

Is it the type of university or its location?

For example: a specialist institution for the creative arts, or somewhere renowned for research and development, or a tradition of academia; traditional or modern, city centre or rural town, large campus or small college, within a 3 hour drive of home or much further afield; does it have a wide and thriving extra-curricular programme with opportunities to continue your favourite hobbies, or introduce you to new ones.

Should you put your career choice first?

Before you apply for a particular course, think about the kind of career you would like it to lead to. Some professions require a specific degree i.e. if you want to be a scientist, lawyer, doctor or vet.

www.aimhigher.ac.uk is a website that can help you with planning and making decisions to put you on the right path for your future. If you want to find out more about different kinds of jobs you can compare careers online. Then, to find out what qualifications and training are required in each case, you can profile a profession. What you have studied so far will also influence your choice: you can match qualifications to degree types. Finally, you can also identify suitable career options for a particular qualification – or find out what qualifications you need for a particular career.

Future wise organise 'Careers Experience Events, Insight Visits and gap and volunteering shows'. See their website for details www.myfuturewise.org.uk

To help you make your choice

Discuss your options with lots of different people -friends, family, tutors, subject teachers, careers advisers, universities.

You can access loads of information to help you decide. An excellent starting point is the UCAS website – use the course database to search for particular subjects and courses.

Order and read University and department prospectuses. Search via the Web and examine the official (and unofficial student) sites.

Look at independent university guides such as Virgin Alternative Guide, Times Guide, Push Guide, Heap's 'Degree Course Offers' and 'Choosing Your Degree Course and University'.

League tables help you investigate which universities are best for particular courses:

www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide

www.timesonline.co.uk/education

www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

Unistats is the official website to help you make an informed choice when deciding which UK university to apply to. It includes the results of the latest National Student Survey. <https://unistats.ac.uk> enables you to:

- See the best universities for your subject
- See National Student Satisfaction results
- See job prospects
- Compare UCAS point.

Attending Open Days at universities is a great way to get a feel for the place and to find out more about the courses, accommodation, location and transport links and facilities. You will meet and ask questions of Admissions Tutors, faculty staff and chat to undergraduates for an insider's view.

St. Andrew's College Cambridge will have its own small university fair in October. Your tutors will make you aware of the dates. Final Year students will also visit two universities in the Autumn Term.

Go on Taster Courses -a number of offer short 'taster' courses, giving you academic and social life. Most of they vary in length from one day to a few summer courses available. You and tutorials and have the chance to share your academic interests. Demonstrating your commitment to a course will also look good in the personal statement on your UCAS application.

universities and colleges the chance to experience these courses are free and full week. There are also a would experience lectures mingle with students who

Attend subject specific conventions – the Year 12 visit to the UCAS convention is a great introduction but UCAS also hold others: 'Design your future' focuses on art and design courses, and 'Compose your future' provides a fantastic opportunity for those interested in performing arts, music, dance, drama, broadcasting, and multimedia production. 'Examine your future' covers medicine, healthcare and allied health professions

So how do you make the decision?

RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

Courses – Where to Find Information

- The UCAS website – www.ucas.com . The site has lists of courses offered by all the universities and colleges in the UCAS system. You can search for courses by subject or interest, and discover what is on offer and where: single or joint Honours (i.e. a combination of subjects), length of course, course code, qualification etc. You can refine searches by location and follow links to the providers' website.
- **'University Degree Course Offers' by Brian Heap.** This book gives information on entry requirements for different courses and examples of questions asked at interview. It is very easy to use. There are copies available to refer to on request in the school library.
- **The UCAS Big Guide.** This book lists courses in subject tables and gives information on entry requirements. It will not be as up to date as the UCAS website. Available in the school library.
- University Open Days. Heads of Faculties and departmental staff will be armed with information for you and are usually available to talk to. Visits are also essential to get a feel for the university, to view the campus and accommodation and find out what else is on offer for students in the way of clubs, societies, Students Union facilities, pastoral and health care etc. Visit www.opendays.com for dates of Open Days.
- The Push Guide – www.push.co.uk , this website gives an independent description of the facilities and campuses at different universities. It is very good for giving you a feel for what a place is like.
- The Guardian league tables – www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide - Use to search league tables to compare UK universities and subjects. Also articles on current affairs in education.
- Go to www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk – includes university league and subject tables in association with The Independent.
- Futurewise - www.myfuturewise.org.uk . Careers courses and events for students aged 16+.
- Also try www.careersosimple.com for simple careers information

Choosing a University

By deciding on a course you will have started to narrow down the choices of University. However, there may be many universities or colleges that offer a course that appeals to you, especially if you are considering a common subject such as English or History, so you will also want to think about other criteria.

Most students have some idea of the location they want to be in – whether it's in the south of England, by the sea, miles away from or close to home. Many people opt for somewhere that is far enough away from their families to be independent but not too far to get home in a crisis, usually two or three hours' drive away. When you've found five to ten universities that appeal to you, you will need to find out more about them.

How do I find out about universities?

University websites and prospectuses are a good place to start finding out more, but by far the best way to get a feel for a university is to visit. Before you fill in your UCAS form, visit as many universities as you can. Look out for open days, campus tours, taster sessions, summer courses and master classes. This will give you a taste of what the university is really like and current students are often on hand to answer your questions. Once you receive an offer from a university you may also be invited to an interview or visit day. It's important to visit your most likely choices before making a decision, particularly your firm and insurance choices.

Visit www.opendays.com for dates of Open Days.

More useful websites:

www.qaa.ac.uk – the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

<https://unistats.ac.uk> – see the best university for your subject.

<http://www.aimhigherwm.ac.uk/> -Information on what higher education can do for you, how to apply for a course, funding and student life.

www.scholarship-search.org.uk – another scholarship search site with student finance info.

www.beis.gov.uk – department for business, energy and industrial strategy. Up to date info on the government policies

For help with understanding qualifications required for a career go to <http://neuvoo.co.uk>

Points to Remember when Researching Universities

- ❖ Do you want to study at a campus or non-campus university?
- ❖ How far away from home do you want to be?
- ❖ Are the transport links good?
- ❖ What sort of location would you like to be in? For example, a country town or large city, or close to the coast.
- ❖ What is the local environment like? Do you like the area?
- ❖ Will you need to find part-time work? Does the university offer help to find part-time work?
- ❖ What is the university's reputation like? League tables published by national newspapers will give you an indication of teaching quality and graduate employability.
- ❖ What bursaries/scholarships do they offer?
- ❖ How many students attend the university? Is this important to you?
- ❖ Is your subject of interest within a large faculty? Will you feel well supported in your studies?
- ❖ How does the course compare with similar courses at other universities?
- ❖ What is the accommodation like?
- ❖ What are the study facilities like? For example, libraries and IT facilities.
- ❖ How good are the social and sporting facilities? Does the university offer the sport or society that you want?
- ❖ Are the support services good? For example, medical, financial and disability support. Will you need special help, such as dyslexia support?

You will be investing a great deal of time and money in your degree so make sure that you make an informed choice. Of the students who drop out of higher education in their first year, the majority do so because they have chosen the wrong course or the wrong university for them, so do your homework!

Jargon Busting

Admissions Office

The university department that processes applications and advises students on the suitability of their qualifications for degree courses.

Alumni

Graduates or former students of a university.

Bachelor's Degree

The qualification studied towards as an undergraduate, also known as a first degree or undergraduate degree. Can be a Bachelor of Arts or BA (generally associated with humanities, arts, language and social science subjects), a Bachelor of Science or BSc (for courses in science, technology and some business and social science subjects) a Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) or a Bachelor of Law (LLB).

Bursary

Non-repayable financial support for eligible students available from universities and organisations.

Campus

The buildings and grounds of a university or college including teaching, shops, accommodation, sports and entertainment facilities.

CATS (Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme)

All courses, or modules, are worth a number of CATS points once they are completed. This means if you change course, move to another institution, take a break from study or change from full to part-time, you can take the credits with you.

Clearing

A period in August (after A level exam results are released) when late applications can be submitted.

Combined/Joint Honours

A degree in which a student combines two different subjects.

DBS

Disclosure and Barring Service – most health, social care and education courses will require students to be assessed by the CRB.

Deferred Entry

Application for a university place (through UCAS) more than one year before you intend to start the course.

Degree

A qualification awarded by a university after satisfactory level has been achieved.

Dissertation/Research Project

An extended essay or report (8,000 to 12,000 words) on a specific subject area, written in the final year of an undergraduate Honours degree course.

Extended Degree

A degree that includes a one-year foundation stage leading directly to first stage of an Honours degree course.

Extras

Term referring to extra choices if no offers are received or if you change your mind or you are unsuccessful with your firm and insurance choices.

Faculties

Subject departments in a university. Sometimes known as Academic Schools.

FE (Further Education)

FE colleges run A levels, AVCEs, GCSEs, BTECs, HNCs, HNDs, foundation degrees, access and short courses.

Foundation Course

The course that is taken prior to degree-level study to bring students up to the required standard.

Freshers

What new university students are known as? A Fresher's Week may be organised as an introduction to university life. This can include social events, society fairs, and introductions to the library and computer resources.

Gap Year

Many students take a year out between school and university, often to travel, study or work to gain experience and save money for university.

Graduate

Someone who has successfully completed their first degree.

Halls (of residence)

University-owned accommodation that students often stay in during their first year.

HE (Higher Education)

Study beyond A level, including higher national certificates (HNC) and diplomas (HND), foundation degrees, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

HE Maintenance Grant

Non-repayable financial support from the Government available to eligible students to help with living costs at university.

HNC/HND (Higher National Certificates/Diplomas)

These are practical two year courses. Students who successfully complete courses may progress onto an appropriate undergraduate degree.

Hons (degree with Honours)

This is a full undergraduate degree – usually requiring the completion of a dissertation or research project.

Insurance Choice

Once you have received all your offers, you have to reduce the offers to two- Firm and insurance. Insurance offers will be typically a little less demanding academically in case you have a bad set of results.

Lecture

A formal presentation of ideas to a large number of students.

Master Class

This is a session designed to give a taste of studying a subject at university.

Open Days

Some universities have subject-specific open days, where students and their families can visit a university to find out more about the course they are interested in and the university.

Offer

An offer of a place on a course at university – this may be a conditional offer, dependent on A-level results, or an unconditional offer.

Oxbridge

Common term used for both Oxford and Cambridge universities – you can only apply to one

Postgraduate Study

A programme of study or research leading to a master's degree or PhD.

Russell Group

A term used to describe the 24 “good” universities in the UK, including Oxford and Cambridge. They are world renowned for their high academic standards and research. www.russellgroup.ac.uk

Sandwich Course

An undergraduate degree that includes a work-placement year, making it a 4 year course.

Scholarship

A non-repayable grant awarded to a student based on a range of criteria. This varies greatly between each institution. Scholarships are frequently awarded for merit. Regional scholarships are also being offered by some institutions to local schools/colleges.

Semester/Term

The university academic year is either divided into two semesters or three terms; this is dependent on the university.

Seminar

More interactive than a lecture. A group of students meet to discuss a subject with a tutor.

Single Honours

An undergraduate degree focusing on one subject area (or group of related subject areas).

SU (Students' Union)

NUS (National Union of Students) this is a national organisation run for students by students. Every university has its own SU which can provide advice and guidance for students on many aspects of university life including; finance, accommodation, employment and academic issues, as well as organising entertainment and social events.

Tariff System

Designed to help students calculate whether they meet course entry requirements.

Taster session

Gives a taste of a subject at the specific university it is held at.

Undergraduate

Someone studying for his or her first degree.

How to Get the Course you Want

All university Admissions Officers will require you to gain certain grades or tariff points in order to be admitted onto a course. Before you apply make sure that you have the right information:

- Research the course to make sure it is right for you . Read about what the university is looking for.
- Ask for help and talk to parents, your tutor, the Principal- don't rely on your friends alone.
- Make sure your predicted grades match those asked for by the course providers, not just overall grades but also subject specific grades
- Be realistic in your choices and include a range of courses with a range of entry requirements
- Visit the universities on Open Days to make sure that they are the right sort of place for you. No two universities are alike!
- Use your Personal Statement to promote yourself in the best possible way
- Apply early – some providers start to interview in October/November. Don't risk missing out on a place by applying late.

If you are applying for a course in Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary medicine or related courses, some universities will require you to take an additional test: BMAT, UCAT, LNAT. Details of these tests are on the following pages.

Mathematics courses at Cambridge will require the STEP test. English at Oxford require the ELAT. There are an increasing number of tests for different Oxbridge courses and you will also be asked to provide a sample of recent work – a marked essay for example.

Always check the course entry requirements on each university's website.

There are many organisations offering support for applications in these fields (interviews, tests, current topics etc.).

OXBRIDGE - Are you a Likely Candidate?

GCSE results – competition for places is strong and almost all applicants have all 9 and 8 grades at GCSE. Unless there are particular extenuating circumstances, we could not be optimistic about your chances of gaining a place at Oxford if you do not have a high percentage of 9 and 8 grades at GCSE. (i.e.100%)

GCE results -Following a review of A-level achievements, some degree courses at Oxford have changed their entrance requirements to include one or more A* grades. Conditional offers for students studying A-levels range between A*A*A and AAA, depending on the subject. Oxford University does not require its candidates to disclose information on unit grades but a candidate may choose to include this in their UCAS application. Conditional offers are made on the basis of final grades alone.

Full details are available on the Entrance Requirements tab of each course page at

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing>

For many Cambridge courses, prior knowledge of certain subjects is required, and all Colleges expect such subjects to be passed, normally with an A or A* grade at A Level. When assessing applicants for all courses they consider not only the individual A Level subjects being offered but also the combination of these. Beside your UCAS application, you will also need to complete a Supplementary Application Questionnaire and, depending on the course or college you apply to, you may be asked to complete either a subject specific test or a TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment) prior to or during the interview process.

Do you have the right GCE combination for your chosen degree course?

For Arts/Social Science there are few restrictions. For example, it is not essential to have studied History at A2 for a degree course, although you will need to have studied related subjects.

Sciences require Maths + at least 1 science subject at GCE.

Extended project, Critical Thinking and General Studies are not included as appropriate qualifications.

Admission tutors are not only interested in the appropriateness of A2 subjects, but are also interested in your success over all your subjects.

Do you have the right IELTS for your chosen degree course

Unless you have a currently an IELTS of 7 overall, with writing at a 7, and everything else at 6.5 or above it is unlikely you will be considered.

Consider whether Oxford or Cambridge is the best place for your chosen course. (You may apply to one or the other, not both.)

Open Days

Oxford open days are during June and July, Cambridge mainly during July and September, although different colleges have open days throughout the year. Book or register online in good time (during March & April). Visit even if they say it is full – all are welcome.

Extra-Curricular Activities -not Extra but SUPER Curricular Activities

On top of 3 A levels, your super curricular activities should be subject related, showing genuine, intellectual interest. For example:

- Summer schools
- Work experience
- Public lectures
- Voluntary work
- Competitions
- Read the broadsheets – but pick out relevant editorials and articles
- Read scientific journals
- Read books
- If you have won awards, put them into perspective: what for, why, national or local?

What Oxford considers when you apply

- Predicted A2 grades and subject combinations -if you are predicted less than 3 A grades, for good reason, then explain why i.e. illness, constant change of staff, close bereavement
- AS grades, modules – evidence of an upward trend
- GCSE grades
- IELTS
- Test results – BMAT, LNAT, ELAT, PAT, HAT, TSA etc.
- Written work – show a liberal view. You may submit a section of your extended project
- Personal Statement
- School reference
- Interview performance – tutors may ask questions based on details in your personal statement.

Personal Statement

- 75% should be devoted to the subject
- What have you particularly enjoyed studying? Why?
- Use specific examples, not general statements
- What have you read outside school? What did you think of it?
- Extra-curricular activities should focus on transferable skills
- Work experience
- Associated skills
- Make it personal but don't be quirky

Interviews (at Oxford)

- Why? Because interviews (as well as aptitude tests and submitted work) help to assess the appropriateness of subject and course choice, and show your potential for tutorial engagement.
- Interviews are conducted principally by your preference College.
- Applicants have 2 or 3 interviews, each lasting 20 – 45 minutes, at each College.
- 23% of successful applicants receive an offer from a College to which they did not directly apply.

What to expect?

- Interviews are an academic, subject-focused discussion in which lecturers hope to see applicants thinking problems through for themselves.
- Expect focused and challenging questions, typical of teaching and learning at Oxford.
- They are structured but relatively informal.
- There are no 'trick' questions or 'hurdles' to jump over.

Interviewers are looking for

- Enthusiasm for complex and challenging ideas
- Clarity of thought and analytical ability
- Intellectual flexibility

And After.....

- Almost 16,000 applications made applications for 2018 entry to Cambridge; 3,400 were accepted.
- Every year about 10,000 unsuccessful Oxbridge applicants go on to achieve three or more A*/A grades at A level
- Feedback
- Not receiving an offer is not the end of the world!

Contacts

Oxford Admissions Enquiries Centre

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate>

Cambridge Admissions Enquiries

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk>

or contact a College directly

UCAS Tariff Points System

What is the UCAS tariff?

It's the conversion of further education qualifications such as AS and A levels, BTECs, Diplomas etc. into one points system that universities can use to evaluate applications and make conditional offers.

How does it work?

Each qualification and grade is worth a number of points. All grades and qualifications are added together to give a total tariff point score.

Do all universities use tariff points to make offers?

No. Many universities ask for specific grades for entry and some subjects require qualifications in particular subjects. For example, a mathematics degree may require applicants to have a B grade at A level mathematics. An economics degree may require a higher grade in mathematics than in economics, and also include a specific GCSE Maths grade. It is essential to check carefully before deciding where to apply to.

Look on <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator> for a full list of the qualifications covered by the UCAS tariff, together with the allocation of points.

Points are also awarded for other skills, including: Advanced Extension Awards, LAMDA Speech and Drama examinations, grades 6-8, ABRSM, LCM, Trinity or Guildhall Music examinations, grades 6-8, COPE – Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, HSLA – Higher Sports Leadership Award, to name a few.

GCE AS level	Tariff Points	GCE A level
	56	A*
	48	A
	40	B
	32	C
	24	D
A	20	
B	16	E
C	12	
D	10	
E	6	

The Importance of IELTS

If you do not already have the correct IELTS / English language qualification to enter university it is imperative that you:

- Attend all of your IELTS lessons
- Speak, read , write and listen in English outside of your IELTS lessons
- Take your IELTS exam with plenty of time left on your course so that if you need to take it again you can.
- Speak to your tutor and your IELTS teacher about the best time to book your exam.
- An IELTS certificate only lasts for 2 years.

IELTS is as important if not more important than your academic qualifications because without the correct grade you will NOT go to your chosen university even if your academic qualifications are achieved or you will have to attend a pre-sessional IELTS course which is expensive and uses up your vacation you have just earned.

The better the university, the higher the IELTS requirements will be. An offer to study will almost always have an IELTS condition, both overall score and a minimum in certain modules. E.g. IELTS of 7.0 overall with a 7.0 in writing. Anything less than a 5.5 will require more tests or a pre-sessional.

The Biomedical Admissions Test (BMAT)

BMAT is a subject-specific admissions test taken by applicants to certain medicine, veterinary medicine and related courses at the institutions listed below. The BMAT is owned and administered by Cambridge Assessment, the new identity for UCLES, one of the world's largest assessment agencies. They are responsible for producing and marking the test.

You are strongly advised to study their website which offers preparation hints and practice tests and much more information than is given on this page www.bmat.org.uk

The test consists of the following three sections. The time allowances for Section 1 and 2 are critical – it is strongly advised that you do not attempt to sit the test without some preparation.

Aptitude and Skills	35 multiple choice or short answer	60 minutes
Scientific Knowledge and Application	27 multiple choice or short answer	30 minutes
Writing Task	1 essay question from a choice of 4	30 minutes

Key dates for applicants intending to apply in 2019 for admission in 2020 (October Test Cycle)

1st September 2019

BMAT October Registration Opens

Centres can start making candidate entries from this date

1st October 2019

Standard entry closing date Standard entry fees will apply until 5pm BST

15th October 2019

Last date for BMAT Entries

Late entry fees will apply until 5pm BST. Entries cannot be withdrawn after this date Candidates or centres who miss this deadline date should contact Cambridge Assessment.

Last date for requests for reimbursement of BMAT fees

Cambridge Assessment must receive all requests for reimbursement of BMAT fees by this date.

30th October 2019

BMAT takes place

BMAT results released

22nd November 2019

Please note that paper results are no longer issued. All results will be released via the Results Online system.

BMAT is required for the following courses:

University	Course
Brighton and Sussex Medical School	A100 Medicine
Imperial College London	A100 Medicine A109 Graduate Medicine (5 year course)

	B900 Biomedical Science (3 year course) B9N2 Biomedical Science with Management (4 year course)
Lancaster University	A100 Medicine
Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (Singapore)	Medicine: MBBS degree jointly awarded by Imperial College London and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Royal Veterinary College	D100 Veterinary Medicine (*) D101 Veterinary Medicine with Intercalated Year (*)
University College London	A100 Medicine
University of Cambridge	A100 Medicine D100 Veterinary Medicine
University of Leeds	A100 Medicine A200 Dentistry
University of Oxford	A100 Medicine A101 Graduate Medicine BC98 Biomedical Sciences
University of Keele	A100 Medicine (non-Uk/EU students only)

The University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)

UCAT is used in the selection process by most Medical and Dental Schools in the UK (see list below). The test helps universities to make more informed choices from amongst the many highly-qualified applicants who apply for their medical and dental degree programmes. It ensures that the candidates selected have the most appropriate mental abilities, attitudes and professional qualities required for new doctors and dentists to be successful in their clinical careers. The UCAT does not contain any curriculum or science content; nor can it be revised for. It focuses on exploring the cognitive powers of candidates and other attributes considered to be valuable for health care professionals. Web site: www.ucat.ac.uk has more details and practice tests – it is strongly advised that you do not attempt to sit the test without familiarising yourself with the style of questioning.

Key dates for candidates intending to apply in 2019 for entry to the participating universities in 2020 or for deferred entry in 2021:

UCAT registration opens:	01 May 2019
UCAT application deadline:	18 Sept 2019
UCAT Last Testing Date	2 Oct 2019

	University	UCAS Course Code
A20	University of Aberdeen	A100, A201
A60	Anglia Ruskin University	A100
A80	Aston University	A100
B32	University of Birmingham	A100, A101, A200
B78	University of Bristol	A100, A108, A206, A208
C15	Cardiff University	A100*, A104, A200, A204
D65	University of Dundee	A100, A104, A200, A204
E14	University of East Anglia	A100, A104
E42	Edge Hill University	A100, A110
E56	University of Edinburgh	A100
E84	University of Exeter	A100*
G28	University of Glasgow	A100, A200
H75	Hull York Medical School	A100, A101
K12	Keele University	A100*, A104*
K31	Kent and Medway Medical School	A100

K60	King's College London	A100, A101, A102, A202, A205, A206
L34	University of Leicester	A100, A199
L41	University of Liverpool	A100*, A200
M20	University of Manchester	A104, A106, A204, A206
N21	University of Newcastle	A100, A101, A206
N84	University of Nottingham	A100, A10L, A108, A18L
P60	Plymouth University	A100*, A206*
Q50	Queen Mary University of London	A100, A101, A110, A120, A130, A200
Q75	Queen's University Belfast	A100, A200*
S18	University of Sheffield	A100, A101, A200
S27	University of Southampton	A100, A101, A102
S36	University of St Andrews	A100, A990
S49	St George's, University of London	A100
S84	University of Sunderland	A100
W20	University of Warwick	A101

Source - <https://www.ucat.ac.uk/ucat/universities/> Accessed 5/7/19

The National Admissions Test for Law (LNAT)

LNAT is a test run by a consortium of UK universities (LNAT Consortium Ltd, see below). The test helps universities to make fairer choices among the many highly-qualified applicants who want to join their undergraduate law programmes. As well as taking the LNAT, you need to apply for your chosen programmes via UCAS in the normal way. Sitting the LNAT does not constitute an application to any universities.

There are three practice tests on the LNAT website www.lnat.ac.uk, two onscreen simulations and one paper-based test.

The LNAT is a 2¼ hour test in two sections: Section A consists of 42 multiple choice questions. The questions are based on 12 argumentative passages, with 3 or 4 multiple choice questions on each. Candidates are given 95 minutes to answer all of the questions. Candidates can review their answers at any time during the 95 minutes, but cannot return to the multiple choice section once they begin Section B. For Section B, candidates have 40 minutes to answer one of five essay questions on a range of subjects and demonstrate their ability to argue economically to a conclusion with a good command of written English.

Key Dates

LNAT registration begins 1 August 2019

UCAS registration begins 1 August 2019

LNAT test sittings from 1 September 2019

Deadlines if you are applying to Oxford (Cambridge no longer requires this test)

Register and book an LNAT test slot by 5 October 2019

Submit UCAS form by 15 October 2019

Sit the LNAT by 20 October 2019 at the very latest

Deadlines for applications to other LNAT universities if you want to guarantee that your application will be considered:

Register and book an LNAT test slot by 15 January 2020

Submit UCAS form by 15 January 2020

Sit the LNAT by 20 January 2020

Late application deadlines usually apply to international applicants only – it is your responsibility to check with your chosen university.

Book your LNAT test slot before or on 25 July 2020

Submit UCAS form between 16 January and 30 June 2020

Sit the LNAT before or on 31 July 2020

The LNAT must be taken by all applicants (UK, EU and overseas) to undergraduate law programmes



Course codes M100, MR11, MR12 and MR13



Course codes M101, M102



Course codes M114, M1R7, M1R1, M121, M1R2, M122, M1R3, M1M9, M1RR, M1R4, M123, MN11, MN12, MV13, ML11, MQ13, MQ15, ML17, MV11, MV15, ML12, MR17, M100, M9R1, M9R2, M9R3, M9R4, MN19, ML13, M1L1, MQ93, MQ95, MV91, MV95, ML92



Course codes LM21, M100, M121, M122, M190



Course code M100



Course codes M100, M101, M1R1, M1R2



Course codes M100, M190, M191, M192, M193, M194



Course codes M100 LLB and all other combinations including Law. M102 LLB Senior Status does not require the LNAT



Course codes M100, M101, M102, M141, M142, M144, M145, M146

Non-UK Universities

The following non-UK universities also rely on the LNAT under certain conditions. Please check with the universities directly for details.



English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT)

About the English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT)

The English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT) is a pre-interview admissions test for applicants to English undergraduate courses at the University of Oxford. It is one of the elements admissions tutors use to decide whether to invite a candidate for interview.

The ELAT is a paper-based test. The 90-minute test is designed to enable applicants to show their ability in the key skill of close reading. Candidates write one essay comparing two or three passages set for comment, focusing on elements such as:

- Language
- Imagery
- Allusion
- Syntax
- Form and structure.

Test format

Candidates are given six poems or passages from drama and/or prose (fiction or non-fiction), and are asked to carry out this single task:

Select two or three of the passages (a) to (f) and compare and contrast them in any ways that seem interesting to you, paying particular attention to distinctive features of structure, language and style. In your introduction, indicate briefly what you intend to explore or illustrate through close reading of your chosen passages.

There will be some sort of link between the six passages, which will be explained in the introduction. Answer sheets will be provided to candidates.

Section 1: Writing task

Section	What does it test?	Questions	Timing
Writing task	A candidate's close reading skill, and the ability to shape and articulate an informed response to unfamiliar literary material.	One essay question based on 2–3 passages of text.	90 minutes

Key dates for applicants intending to apply in 2019 for admission in 2020

1 September 2019	Entries Extranet Opens
30 September 2019	Last date for requests for modified question papers e.g. Braille or enlarged
15 October 2019	Last date for ELAT entries. Entries will be accepted until 5pm BST.
31 October 2019	ELAT takes place
14 January 2020	ELAT results released

All results will be released via the Results Online system.

Oxford: Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)

About the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) Oxford

The Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) Oxford is a 2-hour pre-interview test for applicants to undergraduate courses at the University of Oxford. It is designed to help tutors assess whether candidates have the skills and aptitudes needed to study the following courses:

- Economics and Management
- Experimental Psychology
- Geography
- Human Sciences
- Philosophy and Linguistics
- Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)
- Psychology and Linguistics
- Psychology and Philosophy.

Because these subjects require a range of abilities, and candidates come from a wide variety of subject backgrounds, admissions decisions are complex. TSA helps admissions tutors make an informed selection.

Test format

TSA Oxford is a pen-and-paper test. It consists of two sections:

- Section 1: Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)
- Section 2: Writing Task.

Section 1: Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)

Section	What does it test?	Questions	Timing
Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)	Problem-solving skills, including numerical and spatial reasoning. Critical thinking skills, including understanding argument and reasoning using everyday language.	50 multiple-choice questions	90 minutes

Section 2: Writing Task

Section	What does it test?	Questions	Timing
Writing Task	The ability to organise ideas in a clear and concise manner, and communicate them effectively in writing. Questions are not subject-specific.	Candidates must answer one essay question from a choice of four	30 minutes

Date	Event
1 September 2019	Entries Extranet Opens
15 October 2019	Last date for TSA entries. Entries will be accepted until 5pm BST.
31 October 2019	TSA takes place
14 January 2020	TSA results released All results will be released via the Results Online system.

History Aptitude Test (HAT) and Physics Aptitude Test (PAT)

About the History Aptitude Test (HAT)

In partnership with the University of Oxford

The Admissions Testing Service is working with the University of Oxford to assist in the administration of its History Aptitude Test (HAT).

The HAT is a paper-based test. It is a 2-hour, subject-specific admissions test for applicants to the University of

Oxford's undergraduate degree courses in History and its joint schools.

For general information about the test, including the test format and preparation, see the University of Oxford's Faculty of History website.

Delivery

The HAT takes place on 30th October 2019 at 09.00 GMT. The scheduled start times for international centres will vary, depending upon where they are in the world. Most candidates will sit the HAT at their own school or college. Other candidates can find an open centre.

Results

Test results are not published automatically, but candidates may request their test score as part of the usual University of Oxford feedback process.

Please note: we reserve the right to make changes to these dates.

1 September 2019

Entries Extranet opens

15 October 2019

Last date for HAT entries Entries will be accepted until 18.00 BST.

30 October 2019

HAT takes place

Important Deadlines



15 October 2019 - 18:00 (UK time) - application deadline for the receipt at UCAS of applications for all medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and veterinary science courses and for all courses at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

15 January 2020 - 18:00 (UK time) - application deadline for the receipt at UCAS of applications for all courses except those listed above with a 15 October deadline, and art and design courses with a 24 March deadline.

30 June 2020 - 18:00 (UK time)

Last date for the receipt of all other applications for immediate consideration. Those received after this date will be held for Clearing.

International applicants

If your applicants are applying from outside the UK or EU, many universities and colleges will consider their application as long as it is received at UCAS by 30 June 2020. This does not apply to applications for the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science. For all of these, applicants must apply by 15 October 2019.

Universities and colleges do not guarantee to consider applications they receive after 15 January 2020, and some popular courses may not have vacancies after that date. Advise your applicants to check with individual universities and colleges. They are advised to apply as early as possible.

Remind your applicants to allow enough time for entry clearance or immigration checks, and to make travel and accommodation arrangements, which can take longer during the summer when immigration departments are busy.

If you think they may be assessed as a 'home' student (UK or EU) for tuition fees, they should apply by 15 January 2020.

Your UCAS Application - The Online Process

- Registration
- Personal details (Your name needs to be the same as that shown in your passport)
- Additional information (UK applicants only)
- Choices
- Education
- Employment
- Personal statement
- Reference
- Declaration
- Pay and send
- Options

Your application does not have to be completed all at once. The system allows you to leave a section partially completed so you can return to it later and change any information you have entered. Full explanations and help text are available for each section.

- You first need to register to make an application for higher education through the online system. When you register, you provide certain personal details, including first names, surname, title, gender, date of birth, address, telephone numbers and email address. These details are transferred to your application and you will not be asked to enter them again. If any of these details change whilst you are completing your application, you will be able to amend them.
- Complete your application form following the instructions given on the following pages. Let your tutor know that you are working on your form and discuss your Personal Statement with them. Expect to review your Personal Statement several times – it is a very important aspect of your application and we are keen to help you make the most of it. Meanwhile, your tutor and teachers will be working on the Reference the school provides on you.
- When you have completed your form, follow the instructions to send to Referee. Remember to print it off and ensure you keep a copy for reference.
- As you go through the process your application will be checked by your tutor. He / She will make a final check, they will then complete the reference with input from your teachers and send your form to UCAS.
- UCAS payment will need to be made by credit card when your application form is ready to be sent.

This process takes time, especially as your tutor will be dealing with several forms at any one time.

Oxbridge, dentistry, veterinary and medical applications must reach UCAS by 15 October. Please allow plenty of time for us to process your application. Aim to send to referee before 1 October latest.

To log your UCAS sign on details, use the link below

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JIBg0-Nt-USfli0BcHXQWQ8gXAB6sX5FjfmjliKH9UM0E3SDRIMldYUzlyUU1ZMUpZMEpaRTE0Ui4u>

or scan the QR code



Registering for APPLY Instructions

Log onto the Internet and access www.ucas.com

Select APPLY on the left hand menu.

Click on Applicants Register/Log in to use Apply 2020. This also applies to students who wish to defer entry until 2021 and take a Gap Year in the meantime. Click on Register

Follow the online instructions to Register. This will take approximately 15 minutes (less if you have a UCAS card).

Entering an email address, you will be asked to enter an email address. Your email address will be seen by UCAS and the universities and colleges, so please make sure that it does not cause offence. It should be business like.

They need your email address (if you have a Chinese email please obtain one from Gmail or Apple) so that, once your application is processed, they can send emails alerting you to changes to the status of your application, including decisions made by your chosen colleges or universities. These emails will not list the actual changes or give any decisions; they will tell you to log in to the Track service to view any changes.

A word of warning – Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites can provide admissions officers an extra view of you and your character, habits, interests etc. If these are a dubious reflection of you - check your accessibility settings. What may seem cool to your friends may have an adverse influence on a decision to offer you a university place.

Choose a password, select four security questions and enter relevant answers.

Click next to complete the first part of your registration and to create a username.

Make a note of your username and password, you will need them to start your application and every time you log in. Write it down in a safe place – in your Planner/diary/phone etc. Take a picture of the screen on your phone. It is vital that you record this. You may also record it on the form on the previous page and hand it in to your tutor so that it can be stored in your student file.

Continue to Log in now to start work on your application form. If you want to continue with it another time, go to UCAS Homepage to exit or to explore the site.

You can also search for courses and follow links to universities to find out about entry requirements, open days, accommodation etc.

Remember, Apply is not only used by school leavers; mature students, returning students, transferring students use the same form so not all the questions will be relevant to you. If you are unsure, please ASK.

Completing your Application Form

Each time you want to access your application form you must go to the UCAS homepage and log into APPLY – Student Login 2020 Entry

You will now need to use the user name you have been given, and your password, in order to access the form.

Any changes you make to the form will be automatically saved when you LOG OUT.

There are some initial questions to complete:

How are you applying?

Through my school/college

BUZZWORD:

STAN2020

You are registering through your School. Is this correct?

Yes

Tutor/application group?

This will be given to you by your tutor

Welcome – your Personal ID is: *-***-******

Whatever it is – write it down and add it to the form on the previous page!

Verify your email address

follow the instructions

Students now have to **opt in** to share the progress of their application with their school on the declaration page. This allows advisers to see their students in adviser track and their Applicant Status Reports. Previously this was automatically ticked.



I agree to allow details of my application and its progress to be shared with my school/college/centre.

You now complete all the sections listed on the left of the screen. You will need to refer to your GCSE certificates, course codes etc. etc. You are extremely unlikely to complete the form in one session. You can dip in and out of sections, adding information as you go. It will tell you whether you have completed the section or not. If it will not let you complete the section, check back for any areas highlighted in red or green; these still require an answer. Remember to Log Out in order to save any changes you have made.

Completing the “Personal Details” section

Personal

Your personal information will be sent to your chosen universities and colleges your title, gender, name (needs to be the same as that shown in your passport) and address and date of birth will be filled in automatically with the details provided during registration.

You are asked for extra information so that the universities and colleges can decide what tuition fees you should be charged and what entitlements or special requirements you might be qualified to receive. They need to know your residential status, where/whether you will be looking for funding and/or sponsorship, and if you have any special needs or disabilities which they would need to consider.

Student support

This is about financial arrangements. We would recommend most international students use code 01 unless you qualify for Regional Health grants or other awards. 02 is appropriate if you are likely to apply for the tuition fees loan, the

maintenance loan or the maintenance grant. For more info, go to Student Finance England website. There is also a very helpful file in the Library – yellow lever arch named Student Finance, located on the bottom shelf of HE Prospectus's.

Mailings from UCAS

3 tick boxes – watch the last question!

Nominated access

If you are likely to be away at any time during the application period, for example on a gap year, you may wish to nominate someone who can make decisions on your behalf and discuss your application with us if necessary.

This section of your application is not compulsory -you do not have provide details if you do not wish to nominate anyone. If you do, you enter their name and their relationship to you.

Universities and colleges have their own policies for discussing applications with third parties.

Please put the following under this section:

Si-UK

Agent

Remember to tick box and save.

Any questions still requiring an answer will be flagged up in green type.

Completing the "Choices" section

You cannot complete this section unless you have chosen your courses and the institutions you want to apply to.

You can choose up to five courses, which Apply will arrange into alphabetical order. Each university and college will only see details of their course or courses for which you have applied. They will not see your other choices until you have received your final decision.

The combination of choices allowed depends upon your chosen course(s).

You can apply to a maximum of:

Four courses in any one of medicine/dentistry/veterinary medicine/veterinary science

One course at either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge

You can use your remaining choice(s) for any other subject. For example, if you have made four choices for medicine, you could still make one choice for veterinary medicine.

Specific courses and institutions have different entry dates -find out when to apply.

Additional requirements

Some courses require an admissions test. It is your responsibility to find out whether your chosen course(s) need you to take one, and to register by the relevant deadline. Visit the admissions test section to find out more.

If you are applying for medicine, dentistry, nursing, midwifery or certain other health courses, UK health authorities recommend you should be immunized against Hepatitis B before you start training. Universities and colleges may also ask you for certificates to show that you are not infected. If you are applying for one or more of these subjects, you should check the immunisation and certification requirements with the universities and colleges you have chosen.

Some courses in fields such as social work will require that you undergo a check through the Criminal Records Bureau and/or become a member of the Independent Safeguarding Authority or its Scottish equivalent. Check with the universities and colleges you have chosen for their requirements and advice on how to fulfil them.

For information on courses please check the Course Search section of the UCAS site.

- Institution Code
- Course Code
- Campus Code –this will default to the main site. If a university has several campuses in different towns offering similar courses or combinations of courses, other codes will be generated. Make sure you select the correct one.
- Start Date – choose either a current or deferred start date. If you intend to take a Gap Year and start HE in 2021/22 a place will be held for you on your chose course so long as you meet the entry requirements.
- Live at Home -Enter Y if you will be living at home and commuting to a university.
Enter N if you will be living away from home i.e. on campus or in lodgings.
- Point of Entry -leave blank, unless you are taking a Foundation Year in which case enter 0. See drop down help box for more info.

If you are happy that all is correct, tick box and save.

Completing the "Education" section

UCAS needs to know where you have studied and which qualifications you are taking/have taken. You fill in details of your schools or colleges, and then list your qualifications, one by one. You must include all schools, colleges and universities that you have attended since the age of 11, even if you withdrew from your course. There is space to enter up to 10 centres.

For each school and college, you must provide details of:

- all qualifications for which you have accepted certification from an awarding body, even if you are retaking all or part of the qualification
- all qualifications for which you are currently studying or for which you are awaiting results (results pending).

GCE qualifications (AS & A level, single & double award)

You must list all subjects that have been certificated (also known as 'claimed' or 'cashed in') at GCE AS level.

If you have any doubts about the certification of your AS subjects, ask.

You may include your unit grades for certificated qualifications. Giving this information is optional – disclosing good grades may improve your chances of being offered a place. Visa versa – disclosing poor grades may not do you any favours.

Foundation Course Qualifications

All our Foundation courses are level 3 qualifications, accredited by NCFE. You should include the subject modules that you are taking e.g. Business, Economics, Mathematics and International Relations. These are pending qualifications – you won't have the results until you finish the course and pass the exams.

English Requirements- IELTS

You need to list your most recent IELTS results including date taken, as well as showing IELTS as a pending qualification.

Music, dance, drama or speech qualifications

If you have music qualifications, such as ABRSM or equivalents, dance qualifications, such as RADA or equivalents, drama or speech qualifications, such as LAMDA, only enter each subject once with the highest grade you achieved.

Additional admissions tests

Some universities and colleges require applicants applying for certain subjects to sit additional admissions tests as part of the admissions process. View a list of admissions tests.

You should enter details for any admissions tests you have already taken with results and any you still need to take. (Please remember that all your chosen universities and colleges will see the qualifications you enter. Only certain universities and colleges require specific admissions tests for particular courses so when you provide details for an admissions test, you may give some indication of the universities, colleges and courses you have entered in the choices section of your application. The universities and colleges will not, however, have the details of any of the other institutions or courses you have chosen.)

You should not send any examination certificates or other papers to UCAS, or to your chosen universities or colleges, unless requested to do so.

Tips:

- If you have transferred to your School from another school since Year 7, add in the other school(s) and use the search facility to find the centre code. If your centre code is not listed then you will need to look on your examination results slip.
- Click save and you will see a summary of all the schools you have attended.
- Add awards such as LAMDA, music examinations, COPE, HSLA, Extended Project etc. Add qualifications – click on “add qualification type not in this list” and search the drop down list.
- You can go “back to summary” at any time. Look for red warnings of any incomplete entries. When you have checked all the details and are happy that every qualification is entered and correct, tick “section complete” and Save.

Completing the “Employment” section

This section is where you give brief details of up to five employers, including company name and address, a description of your job, and start and finish dates. You will also be asked to say whether you worked full-or part-time. This includes weekend and holiday jobs. This section is valuable as you can use it to demonstrate key skills – communication, resilience and leadership.

If your work experience has been unpaid, please include the details in your personal statement.

Completing the “Statement” section

Does it matter?

Some course tutors find personal statements crucial when making decisions, whereas others might not put as much emphasis on them. Since you do not know who will be looking at your statement, the safest thing is to do a good job. In many cases, applicants are not interviewed, so this may be your only chance to make the case for you to be offered a place. Remember that the person reading your statement is an expert in your chosen area of interest so they will want to know the reasons why you have chosen the subject.

Type or paste in your statement when you have had it finally checked and approved by your tutor Use the notes in the following section to help you write your P.S. You must remember to save your work as you go in this section. To edit it, click on Preview, and then click on Edit. You have 47 lines or 4000 characters to use (including spaces). If you log out without saving then all will be lost! When you are happy with your statement, go to Preview, tick “section complete” and Save.

WARNING -make sure that your personal statement is your own work. UCAS put all applications through similarity detection tests, which identify statements, or part off, that have been copied from another source. Do not be tempted to copy another person's application materials, or download your personal statement from a website. There could be serious consequences to using other people's work. If any part of your personal statement appears to have been copied, UCAS will inform all the universities and colleges to which you have applied. They will then take the action they consider to be appropriate. They will also contact you by email. Click on the similarity detection link to find out more.

Completing the "Pay/Send" section

Paying for your application

There is a fee for making an application for higher education. The amount depends upon how many courses, universities and colleges you apply to.

How much will it cost?

If you choose to apply to more than one course, university or college, the cost is £25. If you only apply to one course at one university or college, you pay £20. The UCAS welcome letter will explain how you can add more choices later (if you have paid only £20 and choose to add further choices, you will need to pay a further £20).

The application fee includes VAT.

How do I pay?

You will pay by using your Credit / Debit card.

Select the final section "View all details" and check the form over, paying attention to course codes, university codes, spelling, punctuation and grammar. If you spot any mistakes or want to make changes, go back to "edit", remembering to save when you have finished.

Print out a copy. Show this to your tutor, who will check it and advise you if any alterations need to be made.

Only "Send to Referee" when we have told you to.

Congratulations – you have now completed your part of the application!

Now we will add the school's reference.

Writing a Personal Statement

The Personal Statement section is one of the most important elements of your application. It is your chance to catch the university admissions officers' eye and the best opportunity to present yourself and stand out from the crowd. It is crucial that your statement reflects your personality, as well as showing your motivation and commitment to your chosen course. This is not the time for modesty!

It could make the difference between

- being selected for an offer or rejection
- being selected for an interview

Admissions Officers may use it

- to ask questions at interview
- if you are a 'borderline' case (i.e. course requires BBB, you are predicted BBC)
- if you miss the required grade in August, AOs may be influenced by your statement, if they have spare places to offer.

The Key Points Admissions Officers are looking for in a Personal Statement

- enthusiasm and motivation for the subject
- awareness of what you are applying to do
- the potential to succeed.
- What makes you different.

We suggest you structure your Personal Statement around the following sections:

Paragraph 1 -Writing about your choice of course

Show enthusiasm, be eye-catchingly different and say why you are interested and what sparked your interest? What specific topics do you enjoy? If you're applying for more than one course, try to identify common factors. Show you have researched your chosen course.

Reason	Explanation
Enjoy the subject	<i>State why</i>
Enjoy specific aspects of the subject	<i>State which aspects</i>
Look forward to studying in greater depth	<i>State specific interests</i>
Look forward to putting theory into practice	<i>Anything in particular?</i>
Post degree aims – particular career path	<i>How does the course fit?</i>
Any other reasons	<i>Explain</i>

Write about experiences you have had that relate to the course:

- Have you been on any study visits and attended any conferences?
- Write about any relevant books, articles, journals you have read.
- Are you a member of a relevant society?
- Have you spent time on any holiday/weekend courses or exchanges?
- Has a particular experience or event influenced your choice?
- How about holidays and hobbies – are they connected to your subject?

Paragraph 2 -Writing about Work Experience

This is of particular interest to the Admissions Officer if it tells him something about you i.e. was it an unusual placement, and/or does it relate to your chosen course?

Has work experience consolidated your interest? If so, state how and be specific about what you have learnt.

Mention what skills you have developed:

Communication	Listening, speaking
Problem solving	Using initiative
Diplomacy	Confidentiality
Team work	Working independently
Managing others	Leadership
Time management	Working to deadlines

Paragraph 3 -Writing about school life

Why did you choose your subjects? Show any links between your current studies and your intended course and career. Mention any relevant fieldwork, coursework or research you have undertaken.

What community activities have you enjoyed?

House Captain	Sixth Form Council	School Council
Sports events	Sports teams	Coaching/ CSLA
Drama performance	Behind the scenes	Directing/producing
Music concerts	Choir/Band/Orchestra	Teaching/rehearsing
Charitable events	Fundraising	Sponsorships
Subject Captain	Teaching assistant	Department helper
Pupil mentor	Tutor group helper	Paired reader
Open Evening guide	Year 8 Camp	Drama Festival
Club organizer	Event's organizer	House trips organizer
Millennium Volunteer	Duke of Edinburgh Award	Young Enterprise Scheme

Is there anything in particular that shows your personal qualities or personal development? Determination, perseverance, desire for challenge, sociability etc. etc.

Paragraph 4 -Writing about interests and experiences outside school

If you are planning a Gap Year, describe what you intend doing – voluntary work, paid employment, travel plans, working overseas etc. and whether it is relevant to your course and what you expect to gain from it. Write about interests and experiences outside school if you have something of interest to say. Talk about achievements of which you are most proud. Mention any sports you are involved in – success in competitions, county standards, club membership, position of responsibility. This will give the Admissions Officer a 'flavour' of you and how you are already a 'rounded' individual.

Paragraph 5 -Your concluding statement

This section should bring the reader's attention back to either your choice of degree or your ability to succeed at university. It should be a summary paragraph about your strengths, dedication, what you have to offer or why they should make you an offer.

To summarise:

The key points in presenting an effective personal statement that fulfils what Admissions Officers are looking for are:

- Interest in the course
- Free of spelling or grammatical mistakes
- Clearly written
- Motivation
- Ability to balance studies with non-academic life
- Interesting person

Top Tips from the Admissions Officers

- Get your application in as early as possible
- You'll need to write several drafts of your statement in order to get it right
- Use half the space to write about your chosen course and the other half about yourself
- Write in a positive style, using simple words and short sentences
- Be original but don't try to be funny – it can appear trite and undermining
- Be honest – you may be asked questions on your statement in an interview
- Only use 12 point font as the form is reduced in size when sent to the universities
- Don't rely on the spell checker. Proof read a hard copy. Ask other people to proof read for you too.
- Make sure all the details are correct – your address, email, qualifications and course code. Errors can delay your application.

What you should avoid.....

- Irrelevant material
- Starting with "I have always been interested in...."
- Using complicated wording or phrases
- Statements with no examples or evidence
- Very ordinary interests – going down the pub, babysitting, clubbing
- Making things up to sound impressive
- Becoming somebody you are not
- Copying other statements
- Rushing
- Thinking you can write it without advice

Gap Year – A Good Idea?

A growing number of our students organise a Gap Year between school and university. Most university departments approve of these if they are well organised and purposeful, and especially if there is some relevance to courses applied for. However, some departments have reservations (Maths for example) and it is best to ask university departments before making a decision.

- Is the university/course admissions officer happy? There is nothing to be lost in contacting them and discussing their views on a Gap Year. And it will put your mind at rest.
- You stand to gain the most from a gap year if it is planned in advance, is well structured, offers new experiences and widens your life skills.
- If you make your UCAS application and defer your entry, you will have a secure place waiting for you at the end of it (dependent on you meeting the entry requirements).
- It will give you a break from education; to re-charge your batteries and enthusiasm.

Prepare yourself:

- When deciding what to do, make sure you understand your reasons for a gap year, as this will point you in the right direction.
- Research the options so you make the right decisions – there are a lot of organisations which can give you gap year ideas and more information about what is involved.
- Gap year organisations can be helpful, but you don't have to use one. Make sure you shop around to find the best deal and the gap year that's right for you.
- Set yourself goals, so you know what you want to accomplish in your year out.
- Plan your finances, so you don't get into debt. Think about how much you need to earn and/or how much you will spend.

Useful websites

www.gapyear.com

www.yearoutgroup.org.uk

www.gapwork.com

www.i-to-i.com

www.projecttrust.org.uk

www.projects-abroad.co.uk

www.lattitude.org.uk

<http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk>

<https://frontier.ac.uk>

What Happens Next? – The FAQ's

Q. I have not heard back from all of my universities yet and it has been ages. Is there a problem?

A. Not at all. Universities work at different speeds. Some are slower than others. If in doubt ring the admissions officer at the University and make an enquiry. They won't mind and it will put your mind at rest. Not hearing back promptly does not mean they will not make you an offer.

Q. Brilliant! I have heard back from all of my Universities. What happens next?

A. You do nothing until you receive a letter from UCAS detailing all of the offers and asking you to make a decision about which offers to accept. If you feel you have been waiting for this for a while then give UCAS a phone call.

Q. Once I have got the letter from UCAS confirming my offers, what do I do then?

A. You need to choose the University you definitely want to go to. In the box alongside this University you write CF. You also have to choose an 'insurance' University and you write CI in the box alongside this. You have to reject all of the rest, so think carefully! The form explains what to do. You may have 3 or 4 weeks to make your mind up. If you haven't already visited your choices, try and do so now. Make sure you inform UCAS of your decision by the date they give you.

Q. What do they mean by an Insurance Offer?

A. Your insurance choice is a University where the entry requirements (grades) are lower than your first choice. This is just in case your results are not as you would want them to be. If your first choice is the lowest offer you do not need to make an insurance choice. Make sure your insurance choice is a University you are happy to study at.

Q. What do I do if I have not received any offers, only rejections?

Firstly, do not panic! You must come and see your tutor or the Principal straight away and they will explain UCAS Extra, which is a scheme that allows you to make extra applications. Extra operates from 25 February to the end of June. You will be notified by UCAS if you are eligible to use Extra. You can apply for several courses in Extra, but only one course at a time. Students who originally applied for high-demand courses could consider applying for courses in related or alternative subjects. Details of this are also on the UCAS website.

Q. What do I do about accommodation?

A. You do not have to anything at this stage. Once you have accepted an offer then the University of your choice will be in touch with you. Do not expect things to happen too quickly. If in doubt, just phone your chosen University.

Q. What do I do about Finance / Loans / Fees etc.?

A. Register online with Student Finance England in the first instance. Finance applications may be available via the UCAS website in the future.

Q. I have changed my mind about the whole thing and wish I had not applied. What should I do?

A. You can withdraw by phoning UCAS. Also, if you do not make a decision on a first and insurance choice of university by the given date (stated in your letter), UCAS will assume you have declined all your offers.

But, we would advise you to follow your application through as if you hadn't changed your mind. It is easy to pull out but difficult to apply again. Better to withdraw your application at the end of year in case you change your mind again. See us if in doubt.

Q. I did not apply by the deadline. Is there anything I can do?

A. Yes there is. UCAS will still accept your application and process it.

Q. What if I do not get the results for my first or insurance choice University?

A. First of all, think positively! The Principal will be available on Results Day and will make sure that you have all the information, advice and guidance that you need. There is a system called Clearing, which we will explain to you.