

A guide to higher education admissions through UCAS



There are six steps to follow when you're looking to get a university or college place through UCAS

Step one: applying for a place

You usually apply in the academic year before you plan to go to university. The earliest you can submit a finished application is the 1st September 2011.

Application deadlines

Oxbridge and Medicine, Dentistry and veterinary applications must be received **by 15th October**.

Teaching, Physiotherapy, Law and Pharmacy are also very competitive courses and an early application is advisable.

Bilborough College internal deadline **7th November**

Final application deadline 15 January.

Step two: interviews

Once you've applied to UCAS, your application gets passed to the institutions you've chosen.

Each university or college has its own application procedure. Some may ask you to come for interview and you may also be asked to take a test.

Others may offer you a place based on the information on your application.

Step three: getting an offer

If you submit your UCAS application by the 15 January deadline, you will usually receive offers from your universities by the end of March - although for popular courses, you may not hear until May.

If you get an offer from a place you haven't visited, an open day could help you decide whether you want to study there.

If you don't get an offer

If you don't get an offer from the universities or colleges on your list, or you turn down or cancel your choices, the UCAS' Extra 'service could give you a second chance to secure a place.

'Extra' operates from the end of February until the end of June. To be eligible, you must have already used all five of your choices. UCAS will let you know if the 'Extra' service is open to you.

If you don't get an offer through Extra, you can go through the Clearing system, where universities and colleges advertise late course vacancies.

Step Four: accepting an offer

Offers will either be conditional (dependent on getting certain grades on your current course) or unconditional (if you already have the qualifications required). If you haven't done your exams yet, you can accept one offer firmly and another as an 'insurance' back-up.

Step five: applying for financial help

Once you've made your firm and insurance choices, you can apply for financial help as soon as student finance applications open. Visit the Student Finance website to find out more www.studentfinance.direct.gov.uk/

Step six: getting your results

If you get the grades you need for a conditional offer, your university or college will confirm your place. UCAS will send you a formal letter of confirmation. If you don't get the grades you need for a conditional offer, your university or college may not be able to confirm your offer. If this happens, your insurance choice may accept you. If not, then you have another chance to get a place through the Clearing system.

Clearing

Most Clearing activity takes place after the A level results come out in August and goes on until mid-September. It's the time when universities and colleges advertise outstanding course vacancies in the national press and on the UCAS website.

UCAS will let you know if you are eligible for Clearing.

Completing your UCAS application



Applications for most full-time university or college places are made through UCAS. Make sure you know the relevant deadline - for some courses and colleges, it's earlier than others.

Registering your application

Applications to UCAS can only be made online. To register an application through college or you will need a 'buzzword'. After registering you will be given a username and asked to enter your own password.

Referees

Once you've completed all sections of your application, click 'Send to referee' so your tutor can check your details and add their reference. Once your tutor has added their reference the Senior Tutor will again check the form before it is sent to UCAS. This takes up to 10 working days or could be longer if your form is returned to you at any time for changes to be made.

UCAS application fee

It costs £22 to apply through UCAS, or £11 if you only apply for one course. You need to pay UCAS online with a credit or debit card. You pay this when you send your form to your referee.

Personal ID and password

Once UCAS has processed your application, you get a Personal ID. You can use this, in combination with your username and password, to track the progress of your application. You also get a welcome letter in the post.

Changing your UCAS application



Once you've applied for a place through UCAS, you can follow the progress of your application online. If your circumstances change or you change your mind about your course choices, let UCAS know within 14 days of receiving your welcome letter.

Checking your UCAS application details

Once you've submitted your UCAS application, you will get a welcome letter with the details of the courses you've applied to. Let UCAS know if the details are wrong.

The welcome letter gives you a Personal ID to access 'Track', a feature on the UCAS website that lets you follow the progress of your application. You will also need the username and password you used to apply to access Track.

You will be able to see online which universities have offered you places, and then accept or decline each offer online. If you submit your application in the first few months, you may be able to get an offer before December.

Updating your details

If you change your postal or email address, you can amend your details using Track. If there is any change in your exam subjects or examining board, write to UCAS with the details, as you can't make these changes online.

Changing your university or college

You can change your choices of universities and colleges up to 14 days after your application has been processed.

After that, it's not usually possible to change your choices, although exceptions are sometimes made for students with personal problems or changed family circumstances. If this is the case, we will write to UCAS to explain your situation. If you choose fewer than five universities or colleges on your application, it's possible to add further choices up until the end of June if you have not accepted offers elsewhere.

Changing your course

If you are unhappy with your choice you have 14 days to change your courses from the time you receive your confirmation of application letter.

Withdrawing your application

If you want to withdraw your application, phone UCAS. If you withdraw, you will not be able to make another application during the academic year, and you will not be eligible for the Clearing system.

If you withdraw due to personal problems and wish to re-submit an application for the same academic year, write to UCAS, giving full details of your situation. You can only re-submit an application in exceptional circumstances.

Getting an offer from a university or college



Once you receive your offers, you can then firmly accept, accept as an insurance, or decline the offers.

Tracking your offers online

If you submit your UCAS application by the 15 January deadline, you will usually receive offers from your universities by the end of March, although for popular courses, you may not hear until May. You can track the progress of your application through the Track service on the UCAS website. For this you need your Personal ID, username and password. You can also use this service to check for any offers and reply to them.

Conditional or unconditional

Conditional offers are tied to you achieving certain grades in your exams, or a certain number of points in the UCAS Tariff. If you don't secure high enough grades or don't score enough Tariff points, you may not be accepted. An unconditional offer means you have already satisfied entry requirements and can be accepted to study.

Replying to offers

Once you have received decisions from all your universities or colleges, and provided you have at least one offer, UCAS will send you an email asking you to look at your Replying to Offers letter on the Track service on the UCAS website. This letter will list the decisions and your reply date. If you don't reply to your offers by the deadline, you may lose them.

You reply to your offers online using the Track service. For each offer, you can choose one of three options:

- firm acceptance
- insurance acceptance
- decline

You can only accept two offers at the most - one firm acceptance, and one insurance acceptance. For their insurance acceptance, many people usually choose offers requiring lower grades than the firm acceptance. For full guidance on replying to offers, see the UCAS website.

Changing your mind

If you change your mind after you accept an offer, you may have to withdraw your application and will not be able to use Clearing to look for another course. Contact UCAS for advice.

If you don't get any offers

If you don't get an offer from your initial application, and you have already applied for five courses, you can use the UCAS Extra service from the end of February until the end of June.

If Extra does not produce a suitable offer, you can go through the Clearing system, where universities and colleges advertise - and fill - their last-minute places. Vacancies are advertised on the UCAS website and in the national press from mid-August.

UCAS Extra: your second chance to get a place



If you're applying for a full-time place through UCAS and you don't get any offers, you may have a second chance to get a place through UCAS Extra.

UCAS Extra is available from the end of February until the end of June

If you applied for five courses on your UCAS application and didn't manage to secure an offer (or turned down the ones you received), you have a second chance to apply for a place, using Extra. The service starts at the end of February and runs until the end of June. If you become eligible for Extra, a button will appear on your Track screen which you can use to apply for a course.

Finding a course

To find a course through Extra, look for course vacancies on the UCAS website, or contact universities and colleges direct.

You can only apply for one course at a time through Extra. Once you've made an Extra application (through your Track screen), UCAS forwards your application to the university or college you've chosen.

If you change your mind, every 21 days the Track system allows you to refer your application elsewhere - as long as you're not holding an offer.

Get in touch with the place considering your application direct to let them know you no longer want to be considered before referring yourself to another university or college.

Getting an offer

As soon as you accept an offer, whether it's conditional or unconditional, you are committed to the course and cannot apply for any more courses through Extra. If you turn down an offer, or the university or college turns you down, you can apply for another course - as long as you have enough time to do so. If you don't get an offer, you need to wait until you get your exam results and then look for a place through the Clearing system. Clearing is when universities and colleges advertise - and fill - last-minute course vacancies.

Clearing: last-minute places at university or college



If you don't get the grades you need for your first or insurance choices, you have another chance to secure a place at institutions with last-minute vacancies during 'Clearing'.

Clearing runs from mid-July until mid-September

UCAS supplies exam results to universities and colleges, so they can check whether you have achieved the grades you needed. If you've missed your grades by a small margin, you may still get your place confirmed by your first choice university or college. You may find you've been turned down by your first choice but accepted by your insurance choice. If you're not keen on taking up your insurance choice, you could consider withdrawing your application and reapplying next year.

How Clearing works

If your first choice and insurance institutions turn you down, you can use 'Clearing' to find another place. If you're eligible, you'll see your Clearing Number on your Track screen. If you have not yet submitted a UCAS application, you will need to do so before you can enter Clearing.

Looking for a course through Clearing

From the day the A level results come out in August, course vacancies are advertised on the UCAS website and in the national press. After looking at vacancies, you should talk to the admissions staff at any universities and colleges with places available on courses you're interested in. You should let them have your Clearing Number, so they know that you are in Clearing. Staff at the university will be able to tell you whether they are prepared to offer you a place.

GOOD LUCK!!

**Remember staff at college are available to advise you.
Don't leave everything until the last minute**