



Mark Rutherford School  
SPECIALIST ARTS COLLEGE

# UCAS Booklet

## 2023-2024

**Your guide to a successful higher  
education application**



**Name:**

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**Tutor Group:**

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*It is important that you keep this booklet safe during your UCAS application process –  
this lasts until you accept your university place in 2024 or beyond.*

**Mark Rutherford School**

**UCAS Reference Number: 15522**

**Examination Centre Number: 15125**



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**Contact details**

When tracking your application or making contact with UCAS you will need to quote your reference number (this includes results day to either confirm your place or start the clearing process).

**Personal ID:**

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**Username (UCAS will give you a username when you register):**

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As you will be using 'UCAS Hub' for your UCAS application you will need a 'buzzword' to log into the system. This will link your application to the school so we can write your reference and send off your application. Once you have registered with UCAS Hub you will not need to use it again. This year's 'buzzword' is given below:

**Buzzword for school year 2023-2024:**  
2024Wentworth

**UCAS Fee**

The single application fee will no longer be available. The fee for all 2024 undergraduate applications will be £27.50 for five choices.

**Remember!**

Bring this booklet or your charged mobile with data on results day so we have all your UCAS contact details if we need to help you with your chosen institutions.

**Disclaimer**

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this booklet is accurate at the time of creation. However, the school cannot guarantee the completeness or accuracy of information contained and shall not be responsible for errors or inaccuracies.



## Why go to university?

Making a decision to continue with your education is an important one. You have significant decisions to make about your intended course/subject, institution and ultimately where this will lead you in the future. There are a number of advantages to entering higher education:

### ....better jobs, better prospects and life choices

Graduates are more likely to get a job. In 2022 the government reports that the employment rate for working-age graduates (those aged 16 - 64) was 87.3%, an increase of 0.6 percentage points on 2021 (86.6%). For working-age postgraduates, the employment rate was 89.3%, an increase of 1.1 percentage points on 2021 (88.2%). For working-age non-graduates, the employment rate was 69.6%, a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from 2021 (69.8%).

Many employers now expect, and require, their employees to have higher levels of education. Therefore, many non-graduates can only progress so far in their career, even if they do their job well. You are more likely to have a fulfilling job and be promoted.

### ....qualification requirements

☺ For some professions, e.g. architecture, accountancy, teaching or medicine, you must have the relevant degree qualification.

### ....higher salaries

☺ A graduate, on average, earns more than those people that don't. In June 2023, the UK government reported that the 2022 median nominal salary for graduates was £38,500. This was an increase of £2,500 from 2021. This is a premium of £11,500 over non-graduates. In real terms this equates to £26,500 and a premium of £8,000.

### ....develop a range of skills

- ☺ University enables you to develop a range of valuable learning skills, through combining tutorials, lectures and independent study.
- ☺ You will also gain a range of personal skills that will be good on your CV and attractive to potential employers, for example teamwork, problem solving, time management and presentation skills.
- ☺ University allows you to 'learn to learn'. You have the flexibility to adapt to the ever changing opportunities and requirements of employment.
- ☺ To develop an advanced level of skills and knowledge which are useful for your future employment and beyond.
- ☺ To develop a range of transferrable skills to support your success both professionally and socially, such as a proven readiness to work hard and communication skills.

### ....work placements

☺ Some courses enable you to spend a year in a placement company linked to your course; these are often paid. This gives you the opportunity to gain a valuable insight into industry and gain some experience too.



## Why go to university?

### ....study abroad

- ☺ You may be able to participate in an exchange programme with a university abroad. This is a common component of a languages degree but is often available in other subjects. The Turing Scheme enables British students to study abroad. Some European universities (for example in Sweden and Holland) teach in English so knowledge of another language isn't always necessary.

### ....a good time!

- ☺ The social element of university plays a big part of the experience and develops soft skills. Most universities have active sports and social scenes with a high number of clubs and societies to join. Examples are board games, baking and political campaigning.
- ☺ To mix with students from a range of backgrounds, cultures and beliefs from the UK and abroad.
- ☺ To increase your independence, confidence, decision making and social etiquette skills.

### ....everything on your doorstep

- ☺ Most universities have a range of facilities within easy access, for example, accommodation, banks, medical practices, shops and restaurants. In some cases, this will all be on campus meaning you have only a short distance to travel for anything you need.

### ....plenty of support

- ☺ There are lots of support mechanisms at university including advice centres, accommodation advice, chaplaincy, counselling services, financial aid, debt management and careers advice. Locally the Harpur Trust and Connolly Foundation can help fund your studies.

### ....a new experience

- ☺ To increase your independence, confidence, decision making and social etiquette skills.
- ☺ To have a unique learning experience.
- ☺ It's an opportunity for you to broaden your horizons and try something new.



## Choosing the right course

There are thousands of different courses at hundreds of different institutions as well as degree apprenticeships. You may already know what you would like to study or you may still have no idea. Careful research is very important and the earlier you start this, and the more effort you put in, the easier the decision-making process will be and the more confidence you will have in the choices you make. Before applying through UCAS you need to think very carefully about the following:

- ✓ The subjects you are interested in, enjoy and are successful at.
- ✓ The type of job you would like to have once you have finished university, and why.
- ✓ The skills you have and would like to improve further.
- ✓ The course options and how these vary between each institution.
- ✓ How long the course is and whether there are opportunities to gain experience through a work placement or international study.
- ✓ Whether you want to study a single subject or more than one.
- ✓ How the course is taught and the ratio between formal lectures, seminars and independent study.
- ✓ How the course is assessed and if you are better at assignments, coursework or examinations.
- ✓ If you are able to gain work experience directly relating to your course, have a year in industry or even study/work abroad for part of your course.
- ✓ The success rate of graduates and what they go on and do.
- ✓ Whether you would prefer to live in a city, town or a rural location.
- ✓ Whether you would prefer to study at a campus based university or if you are happy to travel to lectures or tutorials each day.
- ✓ The location, availability, standard and cost of living, both in halls of residence and in private rented accommodation.
- ✓ The range and facilities available, such as libraries, ICT or sporting clubs.
- ✓ The length of the teaching week. Some universities have reduced the week to help students to gain part-time employment.
- ✓ Term time employment opportunities.

When an admissions tutor reads your UCAS application form can tell if your courses have been selected carefully based on your academic abilities, interests and ambitions. It is important to remember that you are not only choosing an academic course, you are also choosing a university where you will be living for at least three years.

### **Remember!**

There is a lot of information available to help you: however your application is your responsibility and you must seek out the information you need as well as meet the deadlines given.



## Top Tips - Choosing the right course

In order to make sure you apply for the right course for you it is important that you invest time into the options available. It is inevitable that some people will change their mind about the course(s) they apply for, even after they have started. Below are some tips to guide you on how to ensure you choose the right course for you:

- ✓ Research into the courses/subjects that interest you and the specific programmes offered at a range of universities.
- ✓ Make sure you choose the right course for the right reasons – it must be one that suits you! Don't be mistaken by taking a degree that you think will lead to great pay but does not interest you. You have to enjoy three years of university.
- ✓ Look carefully at the entry requirements for the course, for example, the points and/or grades needed as well as any specific subjects that must have been studied at a particular level. There may also be an admissions test for either the course or the institution. It is important to consider how these match your predicted grades and academic performance to date.
- ✓ Research into the suitability of the course and institution for you, both at an academic and personal level.
- ✓ Look carefully at the institution's prospectus (these are available online or in the Space for Learning).
- ✓ Go to the 'open' days offered by institutions of interest. These will give you the opportunity to:
  - be shown around;
  - look at the facilities (of the course of interest and the institution as a whole);
  - ask any specific questions you may have;
  - meet current students;
  - see the work of existing students.
- ✓ Research on the internet, looking at:
  - UCAS institution guide;
  - institution websites;
  - Unistats (external reviews of institutions for the quality of teaching);
  - league tables, for example 'Times Online' and 'The Complete University Guide'.
  - 'Attend' a Gresham College lecture to find out more about your subject <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/>
- ✓ Look at the 'Entry Requirements' of courses where they are available. Check whether there are any changes to entry requirements because of your home address. Always check the detail!



## Important dates – UCAS

Outlined below are the main deadlines set by UCAS. Other deadlines can be found at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). **These deadlines differ from those set in school**, which are outlined on the next two pages.

<b>2 May 2023</b>	<b>UCAS search tool displays 2024 courses.</b>
<b>16 May 2023</b>	<b>Undergraduate applications open for 2024 entry.</b>
<b>12 July 2023</b>	<b>Conservatoires applications open for 2024 entry.</b>
<b>5 September 2023</b>	<b>Completed undergraduate applications can be submitted to UCAS.</b>
<b>2 October 2023</b>	<b>Closing date for conservatoires music applications.</b>
<b>16 October 2023</b>	<b>Applications for Oxford, Cambridge and most courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science should arrive at UCAS by 18:00 (UK time).</b>
<b>31 January 2024</b>	<b>Applications for the majority of undergraduate courses should arrive at UCAS by 18:00 (UK time) on the equal consideration date.</b>
	<b>Closing date for most conservatoires dance/drama/musical theatre applications.</b>
<b>15 August 2024</b>	<b>Results Day</b>

The sooner you complete your application the better, particularly if you are applying for a popular course. After 6pm 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 there is no guarantee that your chosen institutions will consider your application. You should also need to explain in your personal statement, why your application is late. The above deadlines also apply if you intend to defer and take a year out.

Some courses and institutions require an additional admissions test and / or further information for example in the school reference. You must check the course requirements carefully and should consider general guidance alongside any local information provided by universities and colleges. You must inform the school if this additional information is required.





Important dates – Mark Rutherford School

<b>Dates and Deadlines</b>	<b>Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine applicants</b>	<b>All other applicants</b>
Tutor time and private study time should be used to research into courses and institutions. Personal statements should be drafted and checked with your tutor and/or the Sixth Form Office as well as any other teacher you believe could give you a valuable input.	June-July 2023	June-July 2023
Register with UCAS Hub using the 'buzzword' provided and obtain your personal ID number and password.	from June 2023	from June 2023
Undertake any specific personal research including visits to institutions and organising attending open days for the autumn term.	School Summer Holidays 2023 and at other times by agreement with school	School Summer Holidays 2023 and at other times by agreement with school
Registration dates for UCAT – required for some medicine, dentistry and oral health courses. You must register yourself online for this and take the test at a Pearson Vue centre.	Booking will open on 20th June 2022 at 9 am. The UCAT registration deadline is <b>21st September 2023</b> (you can sit the exam until 29th September 2023).	Not required
Registration dates for LNAT – required for some Law courses only. You must register yourself online for this and take the test at an approved centre.	1 <sup>st</sup> August-2023. Oxford - Last booking 15 <sup>th</sup> September. Test before 15 <sup>th</sup> October.	1 <sup>st</sup> August-2023. Last booking 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2024



## Important dates – Mark Rutherford School

<b>Dates and Deadlines</b>	<b>Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine applicants</b>	<b>All other applicants</b>
Deadline for registering for BMAT (for some medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and biomedical science courses). School will do this for you – make sure the Exams Office is aware.	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 exam date 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 exam date 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Deadline for registering for admissions assessments required by Oxford and Cambridge Universities. School will do this for you – make sure the Exams Office is aware.	tbc	not required
All elements of your online application form should be complete, to include your personal details, employment and chosen courses/institutions.	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023
A final draft version of your personal statement should be with your tutor for checking.	19 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023
Your personal statement must be complete and agreed by the Sixth Form Office.	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
Your personal statement must be entered onto your UCAS application and you must 'pay/send' your application. The school will then have control and your reference can be added. Your application can be returned to you for changes until it is sent to UCAS.	3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2023	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2023



Dates and Deadlines	Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine applicants	All other applicants
Your application will be sent electronically by the Sixth Form Office to UCAS, <b>if you have met the deadlines on these pages.</b>	by 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	by 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Registration dates for STEP – for Maths and Maths-related courses at Cambridge, and some Maths and Maths-related courses at other Universities	TBC	TBC
STEP to be taken	TBC	TBC

## Finding information

There are lots of places to find the information you need about all elements of the UCAS application process, your chosen course/subject and your preferred institution. Here are a few just to get you started:

### General advice on Higher Education

<a href="http://www.ucas.com">www.ucas.com</a>	The administration service for students and institutions.
<a href="http://www.gov.uk/browse/education">www.gov.uk/browse/education</a>	For a range of advice and guidance for students aged 13-19.
<a href="http://www.unistats.com">www.unistats.com</a>	For statistical information about university and courses.
<a href="http://www.fasttomato.com">www.fasttomato.com</a>	Interactive careers and education guidance for teenagers.
<a href="http://www.brightknowledge.org">www.brightknowledge.org</a>	General guidance on careers, education and student life
<a href="http://www.opendays.com">www.opendays.com</a>	For information and dates about open days at institutions.
<a href="http://www.educationguardian.co.uk">www.educationguardian.co.uk</a>	To search league tables to compare UK universities and subjects as well as read articles on current affairs relating to Higher Education.
<a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk">www.qaa.ac.uk</a>	A quality assurance agency that reviews and reports on institutions to ensure they maintain academic standards.



<a href="http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk">www.thestudentroom.co.uk</a>	A chat forum with university guides written by students.
<a href="http://www.push.co.uk">www.push.co.uk</a>	University ratings by category, e.g. welfare.
<a href="http://www.hotcourses.com">www.hotcourses.com</a>	An online directory of courses available.
<a href="http://www.thebigchoice.com">www.thebigchoice.com</a>	Student and graduate jobs.
<a href="http://www.bestcourse4me.com">www.bestcourse4me.com</a>	Specific information on choosing the right course at the right university.

### Student finance

<a href="http://www.gov.uk/student-finance">www.gov.uk/student-finance</a>	For information and advice on student finance.
<a href="http://www.slc.co.uk">www.slc.co.uk</a>	For information on student loans.

Mark Rutherford School has a special relationship with the Connolly Foundation and Harpur Trust. Students from MRS can apply for Academic Excellence and Discretionary Awards from the Connolly Foundation through the Sixth Form Office. The Harpur Trust University Bursaries are based upon income and applications are made direct to the trust.

[www.harpurtrust.org.uk/grants/uni-bursary](http://www.harpurtrust.org.uk/grants/uni-bursary)  
[www.connollyfoundation.org.uk/student-awards](http://www.connollyfoundation.org.uk/student-awards)

## Finding information

### Other

<a href="http://www.nus.org.uk">www.nus.org.uk</a>	The official website of the National Union of Students.
<a href="http://www.turing-scheme.org.uk">www.turing-scheme.org.uk</a>	funding for international opportunities in education and training across the world.

There are lots of websites out there to help you; a simple search will provide you with the personal answers you may need. You could also try:

- Unifrog
- UCAS entry requirements (found on the UCAS website) to give you specific details about each course.
- Prospectuses produced by each institution where course/subject details can be found.
- Higher education fairs where most institutions will be represented.
- Newspaper guides (usually printed on a Sunday in a broadsheet).
- Publications and books – those published by Brian Heap are particularly useful.



## Application information

There is only one route to completing your UCAS application. This is as follows:

- ✓ All applications are made online via UCAS Hub. You can log on anywhere to access your application and make changes as required. It is important you remember to save any changes you make as necessary.
- ✓ All courses will recruit through the main application form. This is managed centrally by UCAS.
- ✓ You can choose up to five courses and institutions with no order of preference. You can enter them in any order but they will appear in alphabetical order.
- ✓ If you enter a course via UCAS Hub that may require an interview, audition, portfolio or other piece of work you will see the following on screen:  
*'if you apply for this course you may be invited to attend an interview or audition or provide a portfolio, essay or other piece of work.'*
- ✓ You will be required to enter all examination results, as well as the examination details of those you are yet to take; however you will need to state in your personal statement if you intend to take re-sit examinations and the reasons for this.

Please refer to the 'Applicant Flow Chart' on the back of the booklet for further information.



## Choosing a subject

It is likely that your subjects in the Sixth Form, whether these be A Levels, BTECs or a combination of the two, are as a result of your success at GCSE or because you have an interest in them. Selecting a subject for study at university will enable you to develop your interest further, try something related or even start something totally new. There are a number of things for you to think about:

- Do you want to study any of your current subjects at university level?
- Do you want to study a new, but related subject? For example if you have studied a mathematics you could study Actuarial Science or if you have studied biology you could study genetics.
- Do you want to study a degree which will allow you to enter a particular profession? For example, law, medicine, nursing or teaching.
- Do you want a completely new challenge?
- Could you combine your interests in a joint honours degree? For example business with languages or geography with environmental studies.
- Have you considered a modular degree whereby you can study a range of different topics to accumulate credits throughout the course?

There are various places where you can find information regarding subjects at university:

- ✓ The Common Room and SP4L have a good selection of prospectuses and many other useful guide books – they are there for reference only. You can send for your own too.
- ✓ Go to the UCAS website 'www.ucas.com'.
- ✓ Talk to your subject teachers, tutor, university student or someone who works in the job or career for which you are aiming.
- ✓ Attend higher education conferences to collect prospectuses, speak to subject specialists and question admission tutors.
- ✓ Use [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk) and/or 'Choosing Your Degree Course & University' by Brian Heap.
- ✓ UCAS
- ✓ Unifrog
- ✓ The Times newspaper publish the 'Good University Guide'.



## The course

Having researched and identified the subject(s) you want to study at university you now need to identify the course for you. Institutions organise their courses in many different ways. It is important that you make sure the university you choose has a course that interests you and that is structured to support your learning style. There are a number of things for you to think about:

- What is the course content? It is important that this is of interest to you as the same subject can cover a range of different topic areas.
- How much of the course is compulsory and how much can you choose? Are there core and/or optional modules?
- How do you prefer to learn? There are a range of teaching and learning strategies used at university including lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical or fieldwork activities.
- How do you prefer to be assessed? Do you like assignments, continuous assessment or end of semester/year exams?
- Does the course include an opportunity to undertake industrial experience or the chance to travel and study in another country?
- Are you able to defer your entry and take a gap year prior to embarking on undergraduate study?

There are a number of places where you can find information regarding choosing a course at university:

- ✓ Your tutor and subject teachers will be able to help you assess your preferred learning style and academic strengths.
- ✓ Request prospectuses from universities of interest.
- ✓ The Space for Learning has lots of resources – ask Mrs Unwin for help.
- ✓ Go to the UCAS website ‘[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)’ and look at the entry profiles for courses of interest. They provide details about the personal qualities they are looking for as well as what you will gain from a particular course.
- ✓ Unifrog



## Choosing an institution

Having undertaken thorough research into subject areas and possible courses you now need to identify an institution that is going to meet your needs. Each university has different characteristics and they vary widely from one to the next. The place you choose to study at will become 'home' for the duration of your course so it is important that you choose where you are going to be happy to live. There are a number of things for you to think about:

- Do you want to stay close to home or study somewhere new to you?
- Do you want a big city or would you prefer to be in or near to the countryside?
- Would you prefer the convenience of a campus university or the stimulation of a somewhere that is spread throughout the city?
- Would a large or smaller institution suit you better?
- What are the extra-curricular facilities like?
- What are the resources like to support independent study, for example the library or computer rooms?
- What is the accommodation like? Is there sufficient accommodation or will you have to find your own? What is the cost of the accommodation?
- How long are the academic terms? This can vary from 8 to 12 weeks.
- What are the staff to student ratios?
- How successful are the graduates for your course? What are their employment rates?
- What are student support and welfare services like?

There are a number of places where you can find information regarding choosing an institution:

- ✓ Prospectuses will give you valuable information.
- ✓ Visit universities of interest to look at their facilities and talk to present students.
- ✓ Make contact with people you may know at the university.
- ✓ Unifrog





## Entry requirements

Having chosen a number of suitable courses it is very important that you look carefully at the entry requirements. Many courses will require you to have GCSE passes of grade 4 or above in English Language and Maths. In some cases you may also need GCSE Science or a GCSE language even if you are not planning to study them. You may also need specific subjects and it is a waste of a course choice if you apply knowing that you do not have the course requirements. Do check these carefully.

Therefore, there are a number of questions you should answer before opting for a particular university course:

- Which subjects are needed?
- What grades/points are needed?
- What is the entrance policy about my AS Levels?
- Do I need to do a specific entry test, for example BMAT or LNAT?

Other factors, alongside academic achievement, are also important. If you are aiming for a particular profession or career, for example teaching, medicine or physiotherapy, then the course admissions tutor will be looking for the relevant work experience you have had to support your application. Voluntary work, hobbies and project work undertaken will also be a consideration. It is important that you do this as soon as possible so that you can include it and make specific reference to it in your application.

There are a number of other things you can do too:

- Make sure you know your predicted grades (these are not your target grades) from your tutor and subject teachers. This is to ensure you can compare them to the grades needed for the course you are applying for. It is important you are realistic when applying for a course.
- Maintain a consistent pace and work ethic to your studies. Leaving everything to the last minute is not going to get you the best grades. It is also important that you seek help from your tutor and/or subject teachers as soon as you need it.
- Undertake thorough research about the course to ensure you have any necessary work experience to support a successful application.
- Develop additional interests outside of school to demonstrate to the admissions tutors that you are a bright and interesting student who will contribute to university life as well as achieving academic success.



## Tariff table

Detailed below is the UCAS tariff table which explains the number of points available for the subjects you are studying. The tariff was new for 2017 entry but will not affect universities' entrance requirements.

GCE AS level	GCE A level	Tariff	BTEC Extended Diploma (QCF)	BTEC Diploma (QCF)	BTEC Subsidiary Diploma (QCF)	BTEC Certificate (QCF)
		<b>168</b>	D*D*D*			
		<b>160</b>	D*D*D			
		<b>152</b>	D*DD			
		<b>144</b>	DDD			
		<b>128</b>	DDM			
		<b>112</b>	DMM	D*D*		
		<b>104</b>		D*D		
		<b>96</b>	MMM	DD		
		<b>80</b>	MMP	DM		
		<b>64</b>	MPP	MM		
	A*	<b>56</b>			D*	
	A	<b>48</b>	PPP	MP	D	
	B	<b>40</b>				
	C	<b>32</b>		PP	M	
		<b>28</b>				D*
	D	<b>24</b>				D
A		<b>20</b>				
B	E	<b>16</b>			P	M
C		<b>12</b>				
D		<b>10</b>				
		<b>8</b>				P
E		<b>6</b>				

Many other qualifications gain UCAS points, including music theory, music practical and dance examinations (all at grade 6 and above). Refer to the UCAS website for details of these. You should check that your chosen institution will include your qualification in any offer.



## Predictions

It is important that you are realistic about your achievements in your chosen subjects in order for your chosen institutions to offer you a place on your chosen course.

Use the space below to record how you did in your Year 12 mocks:

Year 12		
Subjects	ALPs Prediction	Grade Awarded

Use the space below to record how you are predicted to do in your A Level and BTEC courses in Year 13:

Year 13	
Subjects	ALPs Prediction

Refer to the tariff to work out a points score, based on your predicted grades. This will help you ensure your course/subject research matches that of your ability.

Predicted Y13 grades	UCAS points score

**Total points score**



## Course research

Use the table below to make a list of the initial courses, subjects and institutions that you are interested in. This will help you focus the more detailed research required and identify those institutions you intend to investigate further and then apply to.

### Remember!

Detailed research is the key to you making a successful UCAS application and choosing the course that you are most likely to enjoy and succeed on.

Institution Name	Course Name/Code	Entry Requirements	Open Day(s)	Other Information (e.g. accommodation costs)					



## Using 'Apply'

'Apply' is the UCAS online application system. Use the guidance given below to help you with this process. You can do this from any computer at your convenience.

### Registering

- Go to the UCAS website 'www.ucas.com/students' 2022.
- Read the terms and conditions and then accept them.
- Register your initial details completing each section in turn.
- When asked 'How are you applying?' select 'through my school/college'.
- Fill in the 'buzzword' you have been given on page 3 of this booklet.
- Now follow each screen in turn in order to complete your application.

### Completing your application

You will be asked to complete sections on:

- Personal information
- Courses you are applying for (all at once or some later)
- Education completed to date, and the A levels you will be taking
- Employment
- Personal statement

You need to complete each section in turn but you do not need to do this all in one go. The screen will indicate the status of each section as either 'not started', 'in progress' or 'complete'.

Help with writing your personal statement is on the next four pages of this booklet. Also use Unifrog.

Once you have completed all the sections you can 'View All' to see your completed application. When you are ready, click 'pay/send'. You will be asked to pay with a credit or debit card online, or you can ask to bring a cheque in to school. Control of your application then passes to the school – you are not sending it to UCAS. At this stage print off or save a copy of your application for your own reference. Your application will be checked by the Sixth Form Office and once we feel it is to the best possible standard a reference request will be sent to your tutor. You can still make changes to your application, but only if control is returned to you by the Sixth Form Office.

Your tutor will use your application and other information, including your subject references, to support them in writing your reference. The reference will be read and checked by the Sixth Form Office, but you will not see it. Your application will then be approved and sent electronically to UCAS. From this point onwards no further changes can be made and UCAS takes over the process.



## Writing your personal statement

This is the most important part of your UCAS application. This allows admissions tutors to assess what sort of person you are and why you are likely to be suitable for the course. The admissions tutor for your selected course at your chosen institutions will receive hundreds of applications from students with similar grades as you. Although they will look at your GCSE grades, your A2 Level predictions and your reference, the most important thing they will consider is your personal statement. You are not always going to be interviewed so this is the only opportunity you will have to sell yourself and be offered a place. Therefore you need to make sure that what you write stands out from all of the other applicants. Do note that UCAS uses the Copycatch database to detect plagiarism. Since everyone is different there is no 'ideal' personal statement however, they are looking for the following:

- Activity:** What have you done? Relevant experience or interests relating to your chosen course are important.
- Benefit:** What skills has the 'activity' given you?
- Course:** Your reasons for applying for a particular course and how the 'activity' relates.

Use the guidance below to help you write a good personal statement:

- ✓ Always tell the truth – you may be asked about what you have written if you are interviewed.
- ✓ State why you have chosen the course – if you have chosen a joint honours course make sure you refer to both subjects. Make sure it is relevant to the course you have applied for.
- ✓ Look at the course details as they may tell you the criteria and the qualities they are specifically looking for in you. Use this to guide you with your overall personal statement.
- ✓ Aim to show enthusiasm for what you have applied to study.
- ✓ Refer to your personal interests and hobbies; then link them to the requirements of the course.
- ✓ Make your personal statement interesting, including specific information which is also relevant.
- ✓ Organise your personal statement and make sure your grammar, spelling and punctuation are correct.
- ✓ Keep your personal statement structured and ensure it is clear, concise and precise.
- ✓ Write naturally using language you understand and are comfortable with.
- ✓ Plan your time to meet the deadlines given. Leaving it to the last minute will not give you the best personal statement.
- ✓ Record/bullet point the ideas for your personal statement before you write in prose.
- ✓ Draft out your personal statement and be prepared to make the changes suggested by those who you ask to read it. Do it in stages rather than all in one go.



## Writing your personal statement

### Other Tips

- ✓ Do not start every paragraph or statement with 'I'.
- ✓ Avoid unnecessary padding and/or description.
- ✓ Vary your expression and write about your achievements broadly rather than re-stating your grades.
- ✓ Include enough information to get the reader gripped, however remember you may be interviewed so try not to give them all the answers. Leave some things to the imagination so they need to know a little bit more.
- ✓ Initially bullet point or draft your personal statement on the relevant pages of this booklet. Then you can prepare your statement offline, for example in a 'Word' document.
- ✓ Do not be too modest – ensure admissions tutors know your strengths without being boastful either.
- ✓ Ask a variety of people to check what you have written; most importantly this must include your tutor. They are responsible for advising you on this and they also have the best overall picture of your academic and other achievements. They will also know of any difficulties you may have overcome during your studies.
- ✓ Write your own personal statement. UCAS use a 'similarity detection system' to check that personal statements have not been taken from others, including those available on the internet.
- ✓ Remember that your personal statement is holistic – make sure it flows and all makes sense.
- ✓ Check your final draft will fit. You have 4000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines. Typing it up is a good way of checking this but 47 lines in Word does not necessarily fit on the UCAS form – you may still have some editing to do.
- ✓ Once you are happy with your statement, copy and paste it into the 'Apply' system. 'Preview' will tell you if it fits or not. Edit it online if necessary.



## Structuring your personal statement

You should structure your personal statement into three sections, as follows:

### Opening Section

This section opens your personal statement with:

- Why you have chosen to study the course.
- What attracted you to this course and why it interests you.
- How your A Level / BTEC studies relate to the course you have applied for.
- Any extra-curricular activities you have undertaken that support your interest in your chosen course.
- A demonstration that you are committed to the course, perhaps stating anything you have undertaken to broaden your knowledge of the course.

### Middle Section

This is the section in which you sell yourself and explain why your chosen institutions should offer you a place:

- Clearly state why you have chosen to go into the higher education system.
- Aim to include information about how your non-related A2 Level subjects support the course you have applied for.
- State how your A Level / BTEC subjects improve key skills, for example communication skills or essay writing.
- Identify any extra-curricular activities you have undertaken that support your interest in your chosen course. Briefly explain the activity stating what you have done in these activities, as well as what you have gained from them.
- Include information about any paid or voluntary work you have undertaken that may compliment what you have applied to study. State what you have gained from this, for example improving key skills, developing communication or team working.
- Write about any hobbies or interests you have to demonstrate that you have other skills and abilities to offer.
- Include any specific skills or achievements to date, for example Duke of Edinburgh, scouts, music examination/grades or sports.
- State any responsibilities you have had, for example school council, mentor or house captain.

### Final Section

This is where you complete your statement tying together all of the information that you have included in the first two sections:

- Briefly reiterate your interest in the course that you have applied for.
- Clearly state what you can offer the institution.





## Planning your personal statement

Use the space provided below and the guidance given on the previous pages to make notes on each section of your personal statement.

### **Opening Section**

### **Middle Section**

### **Final Section**



## What happens next?

Once UCAS has received your application, this is what happens:

- Your application is processed.
- You will receive a letter and/or email / text welcoming you to UCAS and confirming your personal details and chosen course. This letter will also include your personal ID number and your username. If you do not receive a letter within 14 days of your application being sent to UCAS, you are advised to contact them.
- Your selected institutions will receive a copy of your application and then decide whether they are going to make you an offer or not. Each University does not know which others you have applied to.
- You can follow your application through 'Track'. Each institution has their own way of working through the UCAS applications they receive – you may be contacted quite quickly or it could take some time before you hear anything. When an institution decides on your application they will inform UCAS and this will then be displayed on 'Track'.
- Remember that your application process may include:
  - ✓ an admissions test;
  - ✓ an interview;
  - ✓ an audition;
  - ✓ a portfolio of your work (for Art and Design courses).

You will be informed of this if an institution would like you to complete any of the above.

- When you receive offers, you do not have to accept anything until all your chosen institutions have made a decision about your application. Offers will be either conditional (where you need to get certain grades or points) or unconditional (if the institution thinks you have met the application criteria and therefore you can undertake the course).
- You must then select one 'firm' choice (this is the institution where you would most like to study) and an 'insurance' choice (this is your second choice if you do not meet the requirements of your firm choice). If you accept an unconditional offer then you cannot have an insurance choice. However, an unconditional offer can be an insurance choice if your firm choice is conditional.



## Extra

'Extra' is a service provided by UCAS if you do not get any offers from your chosen institutions during the initial application process, or if you decline all of the offers you have received. You can access 'Extra' from February/March until the end of June and this allows you to make another choice before any course vacancies are offered through clearing. You can look at the courses with vacancies online once UCAS have contacted you to say you are eligible to use this service.

You can only make one choice at a time and have to wait until an institution has made a decision before you can do anything else. If you decline the offer then you can make another application through 'Extra'. If however, you decide to accept an offer then you are committed to it and you can then not make any further applications for other courses.

If you don't receive any offers through 'Extra' then you will be eligible for 'Clearing'.



## Clearing

Clearing is the process available to you if you have completed the UCAS application process but have not secured a place on any of your chosen courses, usually because you have not got the grades expected or required. There is a good chance that you will find another course through clearing. You will be entered into this process automatically. Clearing will be available from 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Listed below are places that you can look at for courses being offered through the clearing process:

www.ucas.com

This will have the latest clearing vacancies. Many universities will also have clearing websites and you can often sign up for email alerts so you can be sent information on courses being offered through clearing as they become available.

You can look at the vacancies available and then contact the institutions directly. You can contact as many institutions as you like during the clearing process and do not have to accept the first offer you get. If an institution is considering your suitability for one of their courses they will contact UCAS directly for your application form. If you are successful and accepted on a course the institution will tell you and UCAS. Formal confirmation of your place will also then come from UCAS.

### Things to consider during clearing

- Get the help you think you need – talk to us at school, a Jobs Hub adviser and/or your parents.
- Research carefully the courses which have vacancies and write down the ones you are interested in. You are free to change your mind from your initial UCAS application – keep an open mind.
- Try to visit the institutions that you are interested in ASAP – it is best to telephone them. You are free to contact those institutions which declined you an offer to see if they will take you on the course you applied for, or any other you are interested in.
- Think about the offer(s) you are being made – you are going to be studying the course/subject for at least three years.
- Think carefully about whether the institution and course are what you want before you accept a place.

## Adjustment

Adjustment is no longer available. You now need to access Clearing Plus. If your results are better than expected and you now want to change universities, from 5 July 2023, if you are holding a firm unconditional place, you can release yourself into [Clearing](#), using the 'decline your place' button in your application.



## Student finance

The financial help you can get as a new full-time student in Higher Education depends on the course, where you live whilst you are studying and your individual circumstances.

Types of help for include:

- Tuition fee loans to cover the full cost of your education.
- Living cost loans to cover the cost of your living expenses.
- Living cost grants to cover the cost of your living expenses.
- Bursaries and/or scholarships from your chosen university.
- Extra help if you have children or adult dependants.
- Extra help if you have a disability or specific learning difficulty.

For the majority of students, the loan will be made up of two parts; the tuition fee loan and the living cost loan. The tuition fee loan is paid directly to your institution on your behalf. The living cost loan is payable to you in three parts, one at the start of each new term. These loans are combined into one for repayment purposes. The interest you will pay back is dependent upon your salary once you have graduated. The repayment of loans is via the tax system and you must be earning over £27,295 for repayments to start. If the loan is not repaid within 30 years then you won't need to make any further repayments.

The tuition fee loan is not financially assessed and meets the cost of the tuition fees at your chosen institution. The maximum amount for tuition fees is £9250.



## UCAS terms

The list below identifies some of the words and phrases you are likely to come across during the UCAS application process.

**Adjustment:**

This is no longer available and has been replaced by Clearing Plus.

**Apply:**

The online application system for applying for higher education courses.

**Clearing:**

A system used towards the end of the academic cycle. If you have not secured a place, it enables you to apply for course vacancies.

**Conditional offer:**

An offer made by a university or college, whereby you must fulfil certain criteria before you can be accepted on the relevant course.

**Confirmation:**

When conditional offers that you have accepted become unconditional or are declined. Confirmation is dependent on your qualification/exam results.

**Deferral:**

When you hold an offer until the following academic year.

**Entry profiles:**

Comprehensive information about individual courses and institutions, including statistics and entry requirements.

**Extra:**

The opportunity to apply for another course if you have used all five choices and not secured a place.

**Feedback:**

The right of an unsuccessful applicant to seek a reason why an institution has declined to make an offer – viewable through 'Track'.

**Firm offer:**

The offer that you have accepted as your first choice.

**Institution:**

A university or college offering higher education courses.

**Insurance offer:**

The offer that you have accepted as your second choice, in case you do not meet the requirements for your firm offer.

**Personal ID number:**

A 10-digit individual number assigned to you when you register to use 'Apply'. The number is displayed in the format 123-456-7890.

**Point of entry:**

Your year of entry to the course, for example, '2' refers to the second year of the course.

**Tariff points:**

A system used to report achievement for entry to Higher Education in a numerical format. It establishes agreed comparability between different types of qualifications and provides comparisons between applicants with different types and volumes of achievement.

**Track:**

A system where you can track the progress of your application online, reply to any offers received and make certain amendments, for example, change of address or email.

**Unconditional offer:**

An offer given to you by a university or college if you have satisfied the criteria and can attend the course.

**Unsuccessful:**

You have not been accepted by the university concerned.

**Withdrawal:**

Either you or a university cancels a choice before a decision has been made – a reason will be included if the withdrawal was issued by an institution.

## University jargon

The list below identifies some of the words and phrases you are likely to come across when looking at university information:

**Academic school:**

Departments linked to a subject at university. They may also be called faculties.

**Academic year:**

A year at university will usually run from September to June.

**Access courses:**

These are designed to prepare students for higher education and are usually run by local colleges.

**Admissions office:**

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

**AS/A Level:**

Some of the British qualifications required to enter university.

**Alumni:**

Graduates or former students from a university.

**Award:**

Degrees, diplomas, certificates and other qualifications.



## University jargon

**Bachelor's degree:**

The qualification you work towards at university whilst an undergraduate – also known as a first degree or an undergraduate degree. It usually takes three years to complete a Bachelor's degree but may take longer if part of the course requires study abroad or time in industry.

**BTEC:**

Can be taken as an alternative to an A Level and covers a range of vocational subjects. They can facilitate access to university.

**Bursary:**

Non-repayable financial support for eligible students at university.

**Campus:**

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

**Clearing:**

A period in August once exam results have been released.

**Combined/joint honours:**

A degree that combines two or more subjects that may or may not be related.

**Deferred entry:**

An application to university a year before you intend to start the course.

**Degree:**

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

**Dissertation:**

An extended essay or report on a specific subject or theme, written in the final year of an undergraduate honours degree.

**Entry requirements:**

Qualifications required for entry onto a university course.

**Foundation course:**

A course that is taken prior to degree level to bring students up to the required standard.

**Freshers:**

New university students. A freshers' week may be organised as an introduction to university life.

**Gap year:**

A year out between school and university, or between university and starting work.

**Graduate:**

Someone who has successfully completed their first degree.

**Halls (of residence):**

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

**Hons:**

A degree with honours – this is a full undergraduate degree requiring the completion of a dissertation or research project.

**Lecture:**

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





## University jargon

**Master's Degree:**

Sometimes a Master's Degree is completed in one year after you graduate with a Bachelor's Degree. There are also courses, particularly in the Sciences, where you study for four years (rather than the usual three) and complete a Master's and a Bachelor's degree all in one.

**Module:**

A unit or topic of study.

**Offer:**

An offer of a place on a course at university – this can be conditional or unconditional.

**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.

**Placement:**

A period of study involving professional or cultural experience as part of your course.

**Postgraduate study:**

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

**Prospectus:**

A guide to university with information on courses, facilities and student services.

**Sandwich course:**

An undergraduate degree that includes a work-placement year.

**Scholarship:**

A non-repayable grant awarded to a student based on a range of criteria. This varies between each institution. Scholarships are frequently awarded for merit.

**Semester/term:**

The university academic year is divided into either 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 course tutor.

**Single honours:**

An undergraduate degree focusing on one subject area.

**SU/NUS:**

This is a national organisation run for students by students. Every university has its own student union which can provide advice and guidance for students on many aspects of university life, as well as organising entertainment and social events.

**Tariff system:**

Designed to help students calculate whether they meet the course entry requirements. A tariff calculator is available on the UCAS website.

**UCAS:**

University and College Admissions Service – provides guidance and administers all full time higher education applications.

**Undergraduate:**

Someone studying for their first degree.

