



**Applying to University
Guide
2018-19**

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Key Dates:

6 September – completed applications can be submitted to UCAS.

15 October (18:00 UK time) – deadline for Oxford or Cambridge, and most courses in medicine, dentistry, or veterinary science/medicine applications.

14 December - internal deadline: all Frome College applications completed

15 January (18:00 UK time) – deadline for the majority of undergraduate courses.

24 March (18:00 UK time) – deadline for some art and design courses.

30 June (18:00 UK time) – last date to submit an application before Clearing.

Thinking about your future

Applying to university is a big deal, it will affect the course of your life. Before taking the plunge it is worth spending some time reflecting on who you, as a person, are all about. If you don't take the time to do this you may end up making decisions you later regret. Keep the answers to these questions in mind when you come to decide your course and place of study.

1. If you could only take one subject what would it be and why?
2. What lessons or elements of study do you find easy?
3. What do you do with your spare time?
4. Describe an interesting lesson you had recently. Why was it interesting?
5. What jobs do you avoid doing, and why?
6. When does time fly? What are you doing?
7. When does time seem to drag or stop, what are you doing?
8. What job would you do for free?
9. Who do you look up to?
10. What would you try if you knew you couldn't fail?
11. What puts a smile on your face?
12. If you had the afternoon of to work at home, which piece of work would you choose to do?
13. When you have a lot of homework, which subject do you do first?
14. Describe a homework task you have recently left until the last minute or not done at all why?
15. What do you get obsessed about?
16. When you're with your friends, what do you want to talk about?
17. What stresses you out?
18. If you had half an hour off A level work and a laptop, what would you type into a search engine?
19. If you were given a small amount of money to start a company what would it be?
20. List five words you associate with 'happiness'

Types of Course

Bachelor degree courses

Bachelor degrees usually last either three or four years if studied full-time (although some courses are longer). You can concentrate on a single subject, combine two subjects in a single course (often called dual or joint honours courses), or choose several subjects (combined honours). Most courses have core modules which everyone studies, and many courses allow you to choose options or modules to make up a course that suits you.

Some bachelor degrees offer a sandwich year, involving an additional placement or year in industry, which forms part of the course. If you're an international student, you'll need to check you're eligible to work in the UK, or that your visa allows you to do a placement course. Most international students on a tier 4 visa will be eligible for a year in industry or work placements as part of their course, but there may be some conditions. Check with the university or college before making this choice in your application. You can find out more on the UKCISA website.

There are also courses which include postgraduate-level study, known as integrated master's. Integrated master's being at undergraduate level, then continue for an extra year (or more) so you're awarded a master's degree at the end. These are most common in engineering or science subjects. If you're interested in an integrated master's, you'll need to include the term 'master's' when using the UCAS search tool.

Foundation years

Some degrees offer a foundation or qualifying year as the first year, sometimes called 'year zero'. They are generally one year, full-time courses delivered at a university or college, and can be offered as a 'standalone' course, or as part of a degree. You'll still be treated as a full-time undergraduate student.

Foundation years are designed to develop the skills and subject-specific knowledge required to undertake a degree course, and specialise in a subject area.

If your grades weren't suitable, or you studied combinations of subjects at school or college that mean you don't meet the entry requirements for your chosen course, a foundation year could be perfect. Not all universities and colleges offer foundation years.

Most students who take a foundation year choose to stay at the same university or college to complete their full degree, but it may be possible to apply for a full-time degree course elsewhere if you complete the course successfully. You will need to check this with the individual universities and colleges concerned. You will also pay tuition fees for your foundation year.

Diploma in Foundation Studies (art and design)

This one-year qualification – often shortened to ‘Art Foundation’ – is widely recognised as a primary route to gain entry to some of the most prestigious art and design degree courses. The learning is tailored to a student’s specific area of art and design subject interest, so they can progress to study that area at degree level. For funding purposes, this course is classified as a further education course, so student loans (for tuition and living costs) are not available, even if you take the course at a university or college. However, UK/EU students under the age of 19 on 31 August of the year of entry will not be charged a tuition fee. As a result, many students choose to take this course straight after school or college, in their home town or city.

Foundation degrees.

Foundation degrees are usually two-year courses (longer if part-time), that are equivalent to the first two years of an undergraduate degree. They are not the same as a foundation year.

These can be a good destination for school leavers at 18, as they offer a qualification that can help gain degree entry. This route is a good option for students who need a course with lower entry requirements and fewer examinations, would prefer a vocational degree/to study while they work, or are not yet ready to commit to three years at university.

Foundation degrees often combine academic skills and knowledge with workplace performance and productivity. They may have been designed in partnership with employers, and therefore focus on a particular job role or profession, enabling you to gain professional and technical skills to further your career. They can be used as a standalone qualification for employment, but are more commonly used as the basis for progression to a final ‘top-up’ year, leading to a full bachelors degree. The final year may be taken at a different university or college.

Degree or graduate level apprenticeship.

This is a new type of higher level apprenticeship, which can lead to a bachelors degree as part of an apprenticeship. It is important to check the full details of a given job and apprenticeship with the employer and training provider. These courses are a good fit for students who want to gain work experience rather than studying full-time at university, but would like to achieve the same degree status.

Students need to be highly committed – competition can be fierce and entry qualifications can be high. If you’re considering this option, you may want to keep your options open by making an application to a full-time bachelors degree through UCAS at the same time.

HNCs, HNDs, and other incremental routes.

The Higher National Certificate (HNC), a one-year work-related course, is equivalent to the first year of a university degree programme. The Higher National Diploma (HND) is a two-year, work-related course, which is equivalent to the first two years of a bachelors degree. As with a foundation degree, it is possible to progress from these courses to complete a full bachelors degree at a university, either through a specific top-up course, or by directly entering a degree in year three.

If you wanted to study a degree in stages, or exit after one or two years of study, the following qualifications may also be suitable. They don't directly lead to a degree, but you may be able to go on and join the second or third year of a full degree (perhaps at the same university/college, or elsewhere) if you change your mind and want to graduate with a bachelors degree after all.

One year of a degree – a Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)

Two years of a degree – a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)

Looking to study performing arts?

As well as university and college courses, you can also choose to study at a UK conservatoire. Courses at conservatoires are more performance-based than you will find at a uni or college. Conservatoires offer courses in music, dance, drama, and musical theatre.

Where to study

Ancient Universities

For hundreds of years there were only a small handful of universities that were founded in England, Scotland and Ireland. The earliest was the University of Oxford in 1096 and the latest of the Ancient Universities was the University of Dublin in 1592.

[University of Oxford](#)

[University of Cambridge](#)

[University of St Andrews](#)

[University of Glasgow](#)

[University of Aberdeen](#)

[University of Edinburgh](#)

University of Dublin

Red Brick Universities

Red Brick originally referred to 6 Civic universities that were given charters in the late 19th Century in the big industrial cities of the UK. The term Red Brick referred to a building at the University of Liverpool which was built from Red Bricks, but the term also referred more generally to "new" buildings/institutions.

[University of Birmingham](#)

[University of Liverpool](#)

[University of Manchester](#)

[University of Leeds](#)

[University of Sheffield](#)

[University of Bristol](#)

The 6 original Red Brick institutions were then joined by a number of other universities as the definition was relaxed to include universities given a charter between 1900 and 1963.

[Aberystwyth University](#)

[Bangor University](#)

[Cardiff University](#)

[University of Dundee](#)

[University of Hull](#)

University of Wales Trinity St David

[University of Leicester](#)

[University of Newcastle Upon Tyne](#)

[University of Nottingham](#)

[Queen's University Belfast](#)

[University of Reading](#)

[University of Southampton](#)

[University of Swansea](#)

Plate Glass Universities

Plate Glass Universities were the next batch of universities to be given royal charter between 1963 and 1992.

[Aston University](#)

[University of Bath](#)

[University of Bradford](#)

Cranfield University

[University of East Anglia](#)

[University of Essex](#)

[Heriot-Watt University](#)

[Keele University](#)

[University of Kent](#)

[Lancaster University](#)

[Loughborough University](#)

[University of Stirling](#)

[University of Strathclyde](#)

[University of Surrey](#)

[University of Sussex](#)

[University of Warwick](#)

[University of Ulster](#)

[University of York](#)

The Rest

There are a group of universities that were previously called Polytechnics and then given university status; these institutions are referred to as "New Universities".

Recently a number of further education and teacher training colleges have been given university status and these are generally referred to as "Recently Created Universities".

Open Days

The majority of Open Days take place in June, July, August and September. Though most take place at weekends, many are on during the week. You are allowed to take time off school to attend these provided you fill out an absence form.

Questions to Ask at Open Days

Questions to ask about the course

- This should be your top priority line of questioning - after all the course should be the reason you're going to the uni!
- This could well be your chance to speak directly to the admissions tutor you'll later need to impress with your UCAS application. Make sure you ask any questions the university website doesn't answer.

Your qualifications

- What grades do you need – and can you still get a place if you don't quite get the grades?
- Which qualifications and combinations of qualifications do they accept/prefer?
- If they use the Ucas tariff, will they count all your qualifications?
- Is it worth applying for more than one course?
- How do they select which candidates to make offers to?

Your personal statement

- What do they look for in your application and personal statement?
- Can they recommend any reading or activities to inform your personal statement?

Your UCAS application

- Do they hold interviews or is selection based on your UCAS application?
- How do they feel about gap years and deferred entry applications?
- Is it an advantage to get your application in early?

What the course will be like when you're there

- What does the course cover?
- How many hours a week will I be in timetabled teaching?
- How much flexibility is there?
- What assessment methods are used?
- What demands will it make on you?
- How will you learn?
- What's the split between lectures, tutorials and self-directed study?
- What size are tutorial groups?

- What deadlines will you have to meet?
- Does it have the facilities you expect?
- What opportunities are there for you to broaden and deepen your understanding of the subject?
- Are placements or study abroad on offer, where are they, how are they organised, are they paid, how do they affect tuition fees?
- What are the pros and cons of taking a joint or combined course?

Your career prospects - what happens after

- How will the course make you more employable? Do they offer or arrange placements?
- What have previous students gone on to do after graduating?
- What proportion go on to postgraduate study? Do you need to a postgraduate course to get a job?
- Do they know what past students are doing two or three years later?
- What careers guidance facilities are there?
- Do they run job fairs?

Questions to ask about the accommodation

A lot of open days let you look around typical halls of residence. The likelihood is you'll probably be touring the best on offer, but it's a great time to do some fact-finding.

- Is a place in halls guaranteed? What accommodation is available off-campus?
- Would a place still be guaranteed if you made the uni your insurance choice?
- What does it cost – and what's included in that cost?
- Will you have to move in and out each term?
- What are the pros and cons of catered versus self-catered?
- How big are the rooms – are some bigger than others?
- How quiet are they?
- Can you put stuff on the walls?
- How secure is it?
- Do most students stay on campus at weekends?
- What happens in years two and three?
- How far will you have to travel to get into uni and around town? Can you bring a car?
- What are the options if I don't get into halls?

Starting your application

1. Go to <https://www.ucas.com/students>
2. Select 2019 Entry and Apply
3. Go to register
4. Fill in your details
5. Towards the end of the process you will be asked to set your password. Make a note of this!
6. Once you have set this up you will be asked to Login
7. Select that you are applying through a school or college
8. Our buzzword is **fromefutures**
9. Select your tutor group
10. Fill in your personal details, choices (this can be left until last), Education, Employment and Statement (further guidance on this later)

Course Choices

You can choose up to five courses (all now or some later). There's no preference order and your universities/colleges won't see where else you've applied until after you reply to any offers you get.

IMPORTANT:

Your choices should cover a range of entry requirements:

- One course that requires grade slightly higher than you think you might get.
- Three courses with entry requirements close to your predicted grades.
- One insurance option with entry requirements lower than your predicted grades.

Applying for medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science?

For these subjects you can only apply to a maximum of four courses in any one of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science.

You can add choices with a different deadline later, but don't forget you can only have five choices in total.

Applying to the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge?

Usually you can only apply to one course at either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge

Are you applying for deferred entry?

If you are, make sure you've checked that the university or college accepts deferred entry applications for the course.

They may not be offering the course the following year, may be changing it, or prefer students not to have a gap in study before they start their degree.

Writing your personal statement

Preamble

Whenever you are writing a letter of application, or making any statement about yourself, you should understand your target audience and know what they are looking for. When admissions tutors and subject tutors look at your personal statement, they are likely to ask two main questions:

- Do we want this student on this course?
- Do we want this student at this university?
- In order to answer this, they are likely to be asking themselves:
- Does the student have the necessary qualifications and predicted grades for this course?
- Do they have a genuine, evidence-based interest in the subject and a desire to learn more about it?
- Is the student conscientious and unlikely to drop out?
- Will the student cope with the demands of the course (Can they cope with pressure? Do they have self-discipline?).
- Does the student understand the nature and content of the course? Have they researched it well?
- What are their communication skills like?
- Is the student likely to adapt to university life?

Russell Group universities, Oxford and Cambridge particularly, stress the need to see evidence of reading. An analysis of read material is more important than quantity. Evidence of visits to galleries, museums, of travel etc. must be linked to the subject but show evidence of self-supported study beyond the classroom. Critical thinking skills are essential, so for example, respond to news items by thinking about counter arguments to develop flexible thinking.

Introduction

You need to provide a brief but convincing explanation as to why you want to study your subject at university. What was the 'personal trigger' that got you interested in the subject? It may have been book, a museum trip, a documentary, a childhood experience, a teacher, work experience, etc. Go on to develop this line of thought with why this subject is important and inspiring to you. Discuss what it is that motivates you personally to study this discipline. Talk about why this subject is significant to society, perhaps by relating it to current affairs. Be specific – don't just say you love English or Maths, say why, and never, never say 'I always wanted to study.....'. You could also outline what you hope to get out of your university degree.

Having given a broad account of why you love your subject, focus on specific areas of interest within it. So, having written about the significance of Physics in your life, go on to analyse how the module on Astrophysics inspired you and in what way you hope your degree course will develop your passion further.

What was my personal trigger?

How does my subject relate to society or current affairs?

Which aspect of my subject am I really looking forward to studying in more detail?
Why?

Academic work

Your A levels will have given you the opportunity to study the subject in some detail. Which aspects did you enjoy? Why did you enjoy them and how does it relate to the course you want to embark on? If you are studying a completely new course that you have not studied at 'A' level, think about the skills you are learning in your current studies that will be transferable to a degree course, such as essay writing, critical analysis, research skills or logical reasoning skills.

Here is a list of some academic skills developed during 'A' levels. There may be others. Select those you can show as being relevant to you.

- Observation
- Critical analysis
- Editing
- Extracting relevant information, discarding irrelevant information
- Identifying bias
- Conducting a scientific investigation/experiment/titration
- Hand to eye co-ordination
- Ability to raise questions, see alternative views, interrogate established thinking
- Using statistical tests/awareness of sources of error
- Applying models
- Seeing in 3 dimensions
- Understanding abstract ideas/theories
- Awareness of current affairs/political thinking
- Developing cogent arguments
- Structuring writing
- Computational accuracy
- Deductive/inductive reasoning
- Verbal communication/presentation
- Using a wide variety of research sources

There are other related skills, sought by employers as well as universities which may be applicable, having been reinforced through A level studies:

- Self-reliance/resourcefulness/willingness to learn/inquisitiveness
- Ambition/assertiveness/persistence
- Problem solving /diplomacy
- Organisation/time management/meeting deadlines/ability to prioritise
- IT skills

Now use the table overleaf to structure your reasons for enjoying the subject, and outline the academic skills you have developed.

Extra-curricular skills

Examples of activities: Wider reading, theatre trips, exhibitions, school clubs, clubs outside school, voluntary work, museum trips/historical visits, trips abroad, community activities, documentaries, hobbies, work experience, competitions, published work, workshops, summer school, activities related to your career aspirations.

Examples of wider skills: Communication, commitment, time management, teamwork, interpersonal skills, initiative, public speaking, sense of responsibility, adaptability, organisation, leadership.

Activity	Description	Why has it made you more suitable	Wider skills developed
Example: Outside reading	Regularly read The Economist	Improves understanding of economic concepts; keeps me up to date with new case studies	Ability to follow a line of argument Ability to compare arguments

Personal statement language

Try using these phrases to avoid repeating yourself. Try not to use personal pronouns too much e.g. "I have... I can... I like..."

'Furthermore..' 'has enabled me to...' 'In addition..'
'..used my initiative..' '..thrive under pressure...' ...'strengthen...'
'... explore my interests...' '...enhanced...' '...skills I have gained...'
'...the opportunity..' '.....participated in...' ...as well as...' '...I learned from....'
'...reinforced...' 'This has furthered my...' 'Moreover...'
'...commitment...' '...taking part in...' '...creatively..'
'...using my initiative...' 'I undertook....' 'In addition...'
'...responsibility...' '...efficiently...' '...conscientiously...'
'...benefit...' '...my pursuits...' '...broadening my interests...'
'I aspire to...' 'I particularly enjoyed...' 'This genuine interest in...'
'...rewarding...' 'I continue to develop...'
'Combining ... with has taught me...' 'Through attending...'
'This has expanded my knowledge of...' 'I have acquired skills which...'
'I was determined to...' 'Involvement with...' '...enriching...'
'...challenging...' '...verbal and non-verbal communication skills....'
'..confidence..' '...incorporated...'...motivation...' '...stimulating...'
'...potential...' '.....opened my eyes...'
'.. academic skills/intellectual capacity/entrepreneurial drive/curiosity/strengths..'

Your First Draft

Now look back at all the tables you have filled in – it might not look like it but this is your first draft! The next step is to select the most important elements to include and then start turning your notes into well-written prose. Your personal statement should be three paragraphs long. Broadly, 2/3 should be on academic matters, 1/3 on extra-curricular matters.

Paragraph 1 is your introduction. Paragraph 2 is your 'A' level skills table. Paragraph 3 is your extra-curricular skills table. Use the following notes as an overview to remind you of what to focus on.

Why this subject/course? You need to explain your interest in the subject and give evidence of this interest. What first caught your attention: a lesson, a topic, a t.v. programme? You may have read a book or article, seen something in the news or heard a radio programme about the subject. Analyse it, say what was interesting about it, what you learned. Try to choose something outside the curriculum to show that you have an interest beyond school. Never begin with ...'I have always wanted to..'. You should also avoid suggesting that you are following in your parents' footsteps.

Universities want you to demonstrate that you understand what is involved in the course and give evidence supporting why you are suitable for the course. If you have undertaken work shadowing or work experience, what did you learn? If you are applying for a subject not covered by A levels e.g. medicine, physiotherapy, media studies etc., you must demonstrate that you know what is involved in these careers/courses.

When making links, avoid saying, 'I think this shows I have the skills needed...'. This is a judgement for the admissions tutors to make; they can infer qualities from your statement. You can say 'I enjoyed developing my interpersonal/teamwork/time management skills...' and leave the admissions tutors to interpret this.

The commonest reasons universities quote for rejecting candidates is that they do not emphasise their interest in the course, or show sufficient intellectual curiosity about the subject, so this section must glow!

What have you learned from your A levels? You must refer to your A levels; why did you choose them? What interests you in particular, and how do the subjects link to the course being applied to? What academic skills have you acquired (such as research, use of ICT, teamwork, critical analysis, separating relevant from irrelevant, mathematical) and how will these be useful in the course(s) to which you have applied?

Extra-curricular interests and achievements outside the classroom should be outlined. Many of you are involved in multiple relevant and worthy activities outside

school so you may need to be a bit selective. Try to link learned skills (e.g. ICT, communication, organisational) or attributes (e.g. commitment) and experience to your chosen course. This can be from paid employment, sport or additional responsibilities undertaken in/out of school. The example below is from the UCAS website, where you can find further help. This advice is also on the school website (sixth form section).

'I enjoy badminton'

'I play badminton twice a week with a club that plays in local competitions and I play in both singles and doubles matches. Doubles matches require good team working, an ability to support your partner, to devise a game plan but be able to adapt it as required and fast reactions. I enjoy the social side of the club and take responsibility for organising the social activities and fundraising events. This gives me an opportunity to develop my organisational and planning skills. Fitting in all these activities while keeping up with my academic studies demands good time management and I think I do that very well.'

When you have made a first draft, give a copy to a subject specialist. When the academic section (paragraph 1 and perhaps paragraph 2) have been edited, give a copy to your tutor, asking their advice. Please don't expect them to correct your spelling and grammar.

Signing off your personal statement.

You should only upload your personal statement once it has been checked by

1. A subject specialist teacher
2. Your tutor
3. Mrs Wells

Interviews

Top Tips from students

Think about why that particular course

Read about the course, become familiar with what it is they will teach you and why the particular content and structure of the course attracted you.

Second Year Zoology Student | University Of Birmingham

Have questions at the ready - it shows you're keen

Research as much as you can about the course and if you have any questions about it, then ask. Initiative always looks good.

Third Year Psychology Student | University Of Aberdeen

Positive mental attitude...

It is important to be very enthusiastic and convinced of your own worth when going into the interview – don't convince yourself beforehand that you don't stand a chance. To calm yourself, look on it as a brilliant opportunity to gain an insight into the university and enjoy some challenges related to your area of interest.

First Year Philosophy Student | Durham University

Be prepared to elaborate on your personal statement

Make sure you know your personal statement inside out, and that anything you write in there is not exaggerated. If you say you've undertaken voluntary work, read a book or entered a competition, be prepared to talk about it!

Third Year Maths Student | University Of York

Research, research

I read the department's website thoroughly and got to know roughly who lectures in what field and what they research. When it came to the day of interview we were all given a list of lecturers and who would be interviewed by them. I felt relaxed and comfortable because from my research I knew what my interviewer looked like and what her area of expertise was. This made it much easier to ask her questions that were relevant and I think she was impressed by my knowledge of the department and her research.

Third Year Anthropology Student | University College London

Enthusiasm is key

I think the point of an interview is not so much as to find out how much you know about the chosen subject matter, but more to see how suited and committed to the

course you will be. Learn a few basic areas of the subject applied for, but just have a clear, concise reason as to why you want to study that particular course at that particular university – and really be able to demonstrate an enthusiasm for it.

Third Year Mechanical Engineering Student | University Of Liverpool

Offers and Rejections

Universities can make three types of decision:

- A **conditional offer** means you still need to meet the requirements – usually exam results.
- An **unconditional offer** means you've got a place, although there might still be a few things to arrange.
- An **unsuccessful or withdrawn** choice removes that option, but you could add more

If your application is successful you are most likely to be given a conditional offer.

The conditional offer can be expressed as grade requirements or UCAS Tariff points.

The higher the final grade the greater the number of tariff points accrued.

For A Levels these are:

Grade Tariff points A* 56 A 48 B 40 C 32 D 24 E 16

So Three B is equivalent to 120 UCAS points

Replying to Offers

Once you have heard back from all your choices you will need to reply to your offers.

According to UCAS these are the types of reply you can make.

1. Firm acceptance – this is your first choice.

If it's an unconditional offer, the place is yours! So that course provider will expect you as their student.

Or if it's conditional, the place is yours if you meet the offer conditions. So just in case you don't, you can pick a second offer as a backup – your insurance acceptance.

2. Insurance acceptance – the back-up choice to a conditional firm acceptance.

If you're choosing an insurance, go for something with lower offer conditions – make sure it's somewhere you'd still be happy to go to though.

That way, if your results are lower than expected, you might still meet the conditions at your insurance choice; then you'd have your place confirmed there.

Remember, you'll only attend your insurance choice course if you don't meet the conditions of your firm choice, but you do meet the conditions of your insurance. You

can't choose between your firm and insurance when you get your results, so make sure you're happy with which is your firm and which is your insurance before you reply.

3. Decline – you'll need to decline any other offers you get.

However, if you decide you don't want to accept any of the offers, you can decline them all and add more courses in our Extra service. Alternatively, you can see what courses still have vacancies later on in our Clearing service.

Please note: You can only accept one firm choice and one insurance choice (if you choose to have one). You must decline all other offers.

Results day

UCAS will be informed of your results before you.

From **0800 on results day** you will be able to log on to UCAS and find out if you have met your conditional offers.

Hopefully you'll get the exam grades you need, but if you just miss out, the university or college might accept you anyway.

You might get a place on either your firm or insurance choice, depending how well your exams go.

You might be offered an alternative by the university/college – a 'changed course offer' (which you'll need to accept or decline).

You might not get a place, but you can search through our [Clearing](#) service to see what courses still have vacancies

Clearing

In Clearing you can see which courses have places remaining. You can use Clearing if you:

- apply after 30 June
- didn't receive any offers (or none you wanted to accept)
- didn't meet the conditions of your offers

Use the Clearing service to find a new course

- It's available July to September each year.
- If you already have your exam results but you have no offers, you can use Clearing from July.
- If you had conditional offers but your exam results didn't go to plan, you can use Clearing from results day, when Clearing vacancies will be listed in our search tool.
- Clearing vacancies are updated regularly by universities and colleges. If you don't find the course you're looking for straight away, try again later.
- If your exam results are reasonable and you're flexible on subject/location, there's still a good chance you'll find another course.

How does Clearing work?

The idea is you identify courses (with vacancies) that interest you and contact the course providers directly to see if they will offer you a place.

If you're applying after 30 June, you still need to register and make an application. In Clearing you need to complete all the application as normal, including your personal statement, but you can't add course choices. When you submit your application you receive a welcome email to access the Track service where you'll find your Clearing Number. You then follow the steps below – ask for advice, search for vacancies in our search tool, and contact unis and colleges to try to find a place. Once you have permission from a uni you want to go to, you can add the course in Track.

You'll know you're in Clearing if your Track status says 'You are in Clearing' or 'Clearing has started'.

If Track doesn't say either of these yet, it might just be waiting for your results to update. Get in touch with the universities/colleges if it's taking a while – they might still be considering you, even if your results are a bit lower than required.

If you originally only applied for one course for the reduced fee of £13, you'll have to pay an additional £11 to enable you to apply for multiple courses.

1. Ask for Clearing advice

- Talk to an adviser at your school, college, centre or careers office – they can talk you through alternative courses/subjects.

2. See what courses are available

- We have the official vacancy list online.
- Consider different subjects – you don't have to stick with your original idea.
- The online list is updated regularly – you might not find the exact unis/colleges/courses you're looking for – some might be full, but some might get vacancies later on, so keep checking back.

3. Talk to any unis or colleges you're interested in

- Give them your UCAS Clearing number (located on the welcome and choices pages in Track), and your Personal ID number which will let them see your application online.
- Ask if they'd accept you – they might reconsider you (maybe for the same course) even if you applied to them earlier in the year.
- Get informal offers over the phone – maybe from a variety of universities and colleges – then decide which one you want to accept.
- Take a look around – if you have the time, it's the best way to see what a university/college is like – most will be happy to meet you and show you around.

4. Add a Clearing choice in Track

- Please only add a Clearing choice once you have permission from the university or college to do this.
- Click 'Add Clearing choice' and fill in the course details by the date the university/college gave you on the phone.
- This counts as you definitely accepting the offer, so if they confirm it'll show as an acceptance on the choices page of Track and we'll send you a Confirmation letter.
- You can only add one choice at a time, but if the university/college doesn't confirm your place, you'll be able to add another.

Direct contact service

This is an optional service, designed to help you find a university or college place, if you find yourself without one. If you sign up, universities and colleges can contact you during most of Clearing, from 5 July to mid-September, if they have places on courses that might be suitable for you