

Introduction to UCAS

Apply 2023

UCAS

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Aims of the session...

- To understand the application process for higher education courses (university)
- To familiarise yourself with the UCAS website and other resources available to support you
- To know how to fill in, submit and track your application
- To identify key dates to remember

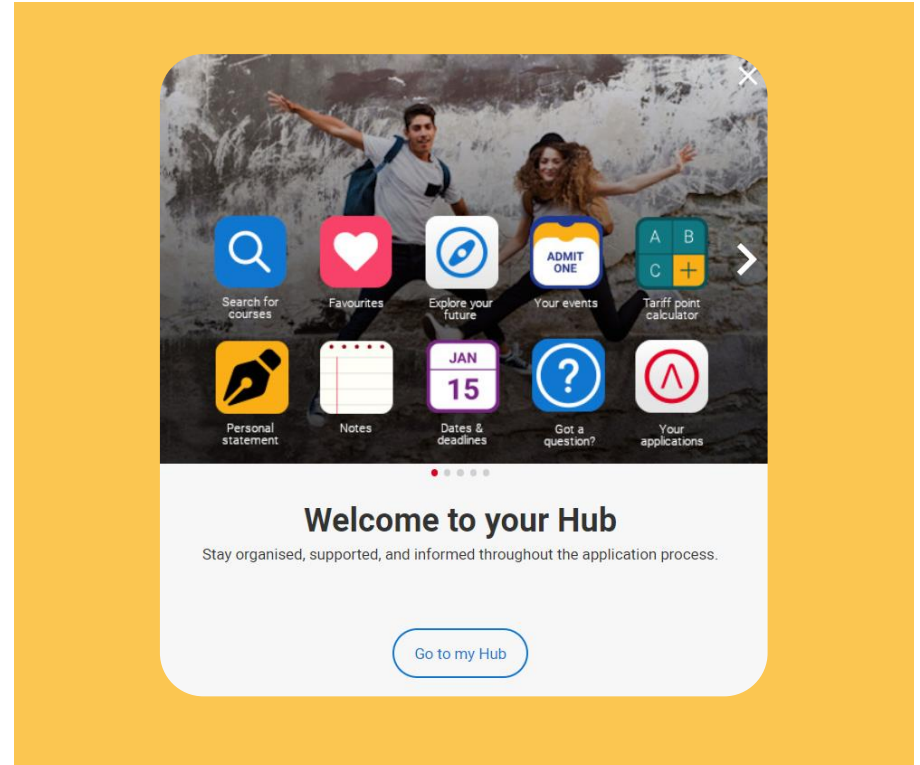
What is UCAS?

- UCAS stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
- They are the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK
- To apply to university, students must submit a single application online via the UCAS Hub
- UCAS provide a wide range of valuable information and tools for applicants on their website

Tools to help

Register with the UCAS Hub to:

- explore careers, subjects, places and apprenticeships
- find and favourite over 35,000 courses
- search for open days, online events and virtual tours
- turn predicted grades into UCAS Tariff points
- chat with current students using [Unibuddy](#)
- join [Hub live](#) sessions hosted by expert panels
- take the [UCAS Quiz](#) to find job and career ideas matched to your personality
- start an application for 2023 entry



Before you apply...

- You need to decide which course(s) you are applying for
- You can choose up to five courses – it is easier if all five of your choices are the same or similar
- Thoroughly research all your choices
- Open days and events are a great opportunity to gather more information about a university or college, experience the campus and meet current students and staff
- If you can't attend an open day or event in person, some universities and colleges offer virtual tours and opens days

Choosing the right course

- What does the course cover? – courses with the same title may be very different; look at the core course content and the range of optional modules available
- Does it interest you?
- Is it relevant to your career aspirations?
- Does the course offer any internship, placement, or study abroad opportunities?
- How is the course taught?
- How is the course assessed?
- Do you meet the entry requirements?

Choosing the right place to study

- Location – think about proximity to home and if you want to be in an urban or rural area, each offers a different experience
- Reputation – what are the teaching standards like? How does it rank for student satisfaction?
- Culture and facilities – Students' Union, clubs, societies, sport and other facilities
- What graduates do – all universities/colleges collect destination statistics; it can be interesting to find out the types of jobs or further study students go on to
- Tuition fees – can vary between course providers (maximum of £9,250); check if there are any scholarships or bursaries available
- Living costs – accommodation, transport, food etc.

Entry requirements

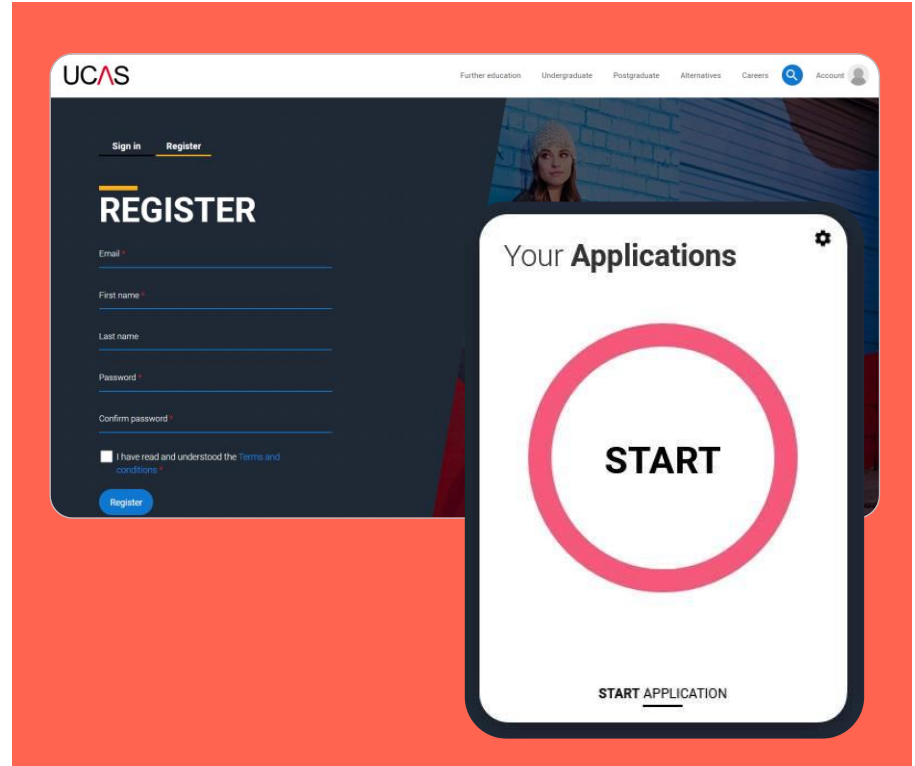
- Qualifications, subjects and grades – GCSEs, A-levels/Level 3, UCAS tariff points
- Suitability – course descriptions often mention skills, interests or experience that are essential or desirable
- Admissions test – check the registration deadline for the test, when you will sit it, and what it includes; some take place before the UCAS application deadline
- Interview – an interview, assessment centre, audition or you might be asked to provide examples of your work depending on the course
- Further requirements – Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), health check and/or relevant work or voluntary experience

UCAS tariff points

- UCAS tariff points only apply to Level 3 qualifications, not Level 2 qualifications such as GCSEs
- Not all Level 3 qualifications attract UCAS tariff points
- Not all universities and colleges use the UCAS tariff – many use qualifications and grades instead
- You can work out how many UCAS tariff points your qualifications are worth using the [tariff points calculator](#) on the UCAS website or in your Hub

Getting started

- To start an application you need a UCAS Hub account
- Go to ucas.com > Sign in > Register
- Complete the short form – use a personal email address and make sure your password is memorable
- Verify your email address
- Make sure you choose the correct year and level of study (2023 and Undergraduate)
- You'll then be taken to your UCAS Hub dashboard, where you'll see a tile called 'Your Applications'
- Click 'Start' to begin your application...



Linking to college

- Enter the buzzword to link your application to college
- Buzzword Apply 2023: **Bluebox23**
- By linking your application you're giving college permission to view and track your application
- It also means your tutor will be able to provide you with a reference, and we (Careers) will check your application before sending it to UCAS on your behalf

The image displays two screenshots of the UCAS application interface, set against a yellow background. The top screenshot shows a question: "Are you applying from a school, college, or centre?". Below the question are two large circular buttons: a teal one labeled "Yes" and a pink one labeled "No". The bottom screenshot shows the next step: "Enter the Buzzword from your school, college, or centre". Below this heading is a note: "Buzzwords are case-sensitive and will be given to you by your school, college or centre." There is a text input field with the placeholder "Enter Buzzword here:" and a blue "Save Buzzword" button on the left and a "Cancel" link on the right.

Filling in your application

Choices:

- You can add up to 5 choices to your application
- There is no preference order
- Applying costs £22.50 for 1 choice, or £27 for multiple choices

Profile:

- Personal details
- Contact and residency details
- Nationality details
- Supporting information
- English language skills
- Finance and funding
- Diversity and inclusion (for students with a UK home address)
- More about you

The screenshot displays the 'Profile' section of the UCAS application form, organized into a grid of sections. Each section has a title, a brief description, and a status indicator at the bottom.

Profile		
Personal details > Name, age, title, and gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Section complete	Contact & residency details > Address, email, telephone, and where you live <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section	Nationality details > Country and nationality details <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section
Supporting information > <input type="checkbox"/> Section in progress	English language skills > Is English your first language? <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section	Finance & funding > Tell us how you'll fund your study <input type="checkbox"/> Section in progress
Diversity & inclusion > Only shared with a provider once you have a place or your application is archived <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section	More about you > Tell us about any circumstances that you might need support for during your studies <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section	

Filling in your application

Experience:

- Education
- Employment
- Extra activities (for students with a UK home address)

Personal statement & reference:

- Personal statement
- Reference (not visible for students linked to college)

The screenshot displays the UCAS application interface with a teal background. It features two main sections: 'Experience' and 'Personal Statement'. The 'Experience' section is divided into three sub-sections: 'Education >', 'Employment >', and 'Extra activities >'. The 'Education' sub-section has a blue bar at the bottom with a white circle icon and the text 'Section in progress'. The 'Employment' sub-section has a green bar at the bottom with a white circle icon and the text 'Section complete'. The 'Extra activities' sub-section has a white bar at the bottom with a blue circle icon and the text 'Start this section'. The 'Personal Statement' section is located below the 'Experience' section and has a white bar at the bottom with a blue circle icon and the text 'Start this section'. Each sub-section contains a brief description of the section's content.

Experience

Education >
Your qualifications and periods of study
Section in progress

Employment >
Employment, paid or unpaid, or volunteer work
Section complete

Extra activities >
Activities you have attended in preparation for higher education
Start this section

Personal Statement

Personal statement >
Why do you want to study this subject?
Start this section

Personal statement

- The personal statement is an important part of your application – it's your chance to show admissions tutors why they should offer you a place
- You can only write one personal statement – it's the same for each course you apply for
- Length – a maximum of 4,000 characters or 47 lines of text, a minimum of 1,000 characters
- UCAS' similarity detection service – every personal statement is run through software to check for plagiarism

Personal statement

Preparation:

- You can only write one personal statement – it's the same for all your choices
- Check university and college websites to see what skills and qualities they'd like you to have
- Make a list of things you want to include
- Start drafting early

What to include:

- Why you're interested in subject/course
- How your current/previous studies relate to the course
- Relevant aspects of jobs, placements, work experience or volunteering
- Activities or hobbies that show your interest in the subject
- Demonstrate you're a great candidate and have skills and qualities they're looking for

How to write it:

- Introduction – start with an opening sentence that encourages the reader to read on
- Conclusion – reinforce your enthusiasm and skills suited to the course
- Write in an enthusiastic, concise, and natural style – nothing too complex
- Check your spelling and grammar
- Leave time to get feedback and redraft

Technical details:

- Length – up to 4,000 characters or 47 lines of text (including spaces and blank lines)
- Make sure you don't copy – UCAS software detects any similarities and this could jeopardise your application

Example structure

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- Why you are applying for your chosen course(s)

Paragraph 2: Relevant current and previous studies

- Subject knowledge and academic skills that show you are suitable for your chosen course(s)

Paragraph 3: Relevant work experience

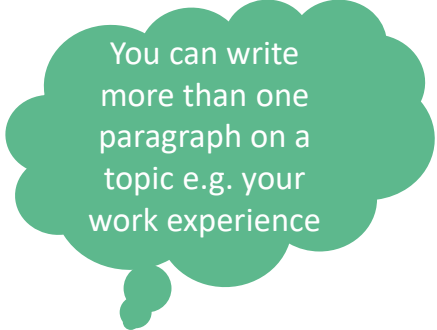
- Transferable skills that show you are suitable for your chosen course(s)/career

Paragraph 4: Interests, activities and achievements

- Extra-curricular activities, super-curricular activities, competitions/awards, volunteering

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

- Re-emphasise key skills, experiences and interests
- How your chosen course fits in to your career plans
- What you want to get from your university experience and how you will be an asset to your chosen university/college



You can write more than one paragraph on a topic e.g. your work experience

Decisions

Universities and colleges will review your:



personal statement



qualifications/grades



reference

They may also ask for:



admissions test



interview



portfolio/audition

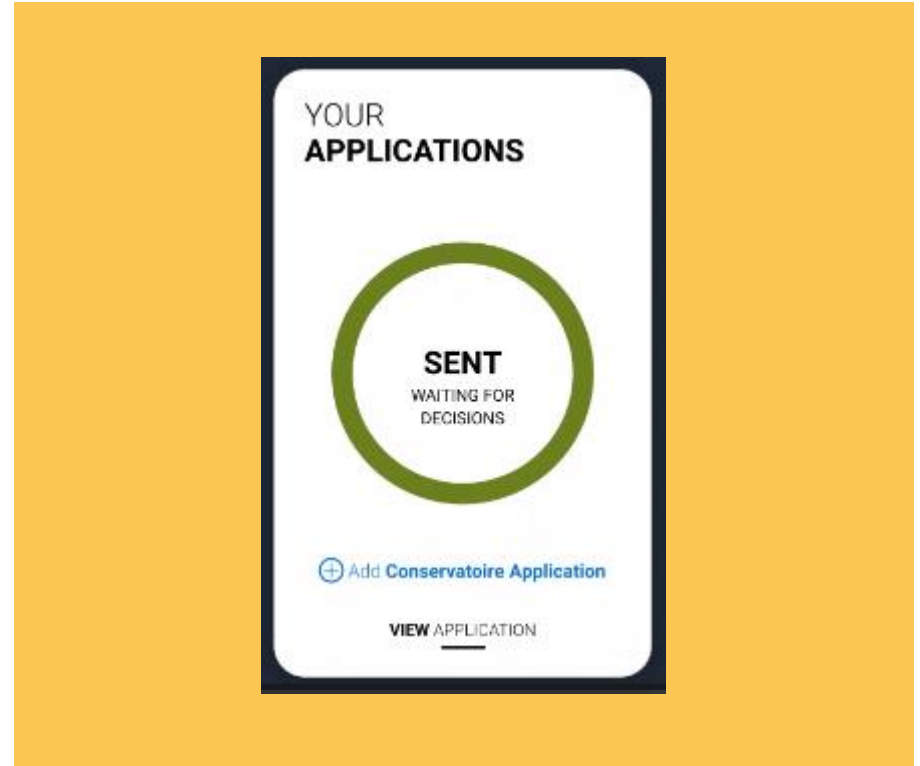
Tracking your application

After your application has been sent to UCAS, you will be able to track it in your UCAS Hub:

- follow your application's progress 24/7
- see your choices and personal information
- view your offers
- reply to offers online

You'll receive one of three decisions from your choices:

- unconditional offer
- conditional offer
- unsuccessful (or an alternative course)



Replying to your offers

- When you have decisions on all your choices, you have to choose which one(s) you want to accept – you can hold a maximum of two offers:
 - one as a ‘firm’ acceptance – your first choice
 - the other as an ‘insurance’ acceptance – a back-up if you do not get into your ‘firm’ choice
- You must decline all other offers
- Once all your decisions and replies have been made, if you are not holding an offer, you may be able to use Extra or Clearing to find available places

Other options

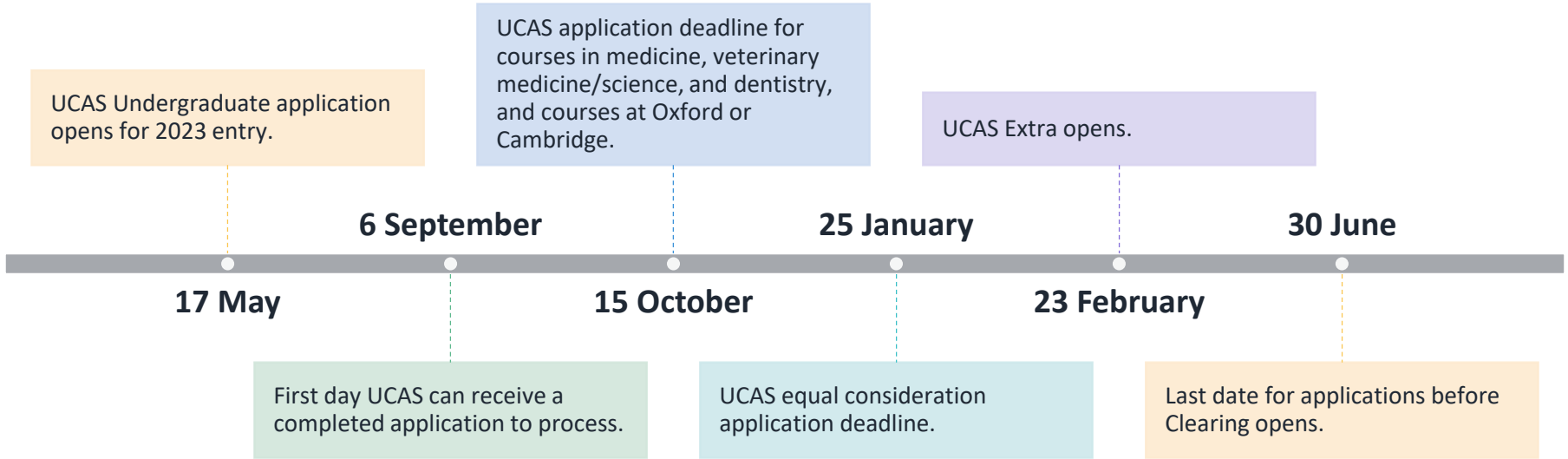
Extra (February – July)

- If you've used all five choices, and you're not holding any offers, you can add another choice using Extra
- Extra is another chance for you to gain a place at university or college. If you're eligible, during this period you'll be able to apply to additional universities, one at a time

Clearing (July – October)

- If you're applying after 30th June, received no offers, declined all your offers or did not meet the conditions of your offers, you can apply for a course using Clearing
- Clearing is how universities and colleges fill any places they still have on their courses. Vacancies are displayed in the UCAS search tool

Key dates



Internal deadline

Due to the volume of applications we receive, we will prioritise the sending of applications submitted before:

Friday 18th November 2022

Action plan

- Research courses and places to study
- Attend events such as open days
- Check entry requirements
- Let your Tutor know you are applying
- Produce a draft of your personal statement
- Contact the Careers team for further support



Contact us

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