

UCAS END OF CYCLE REPORT 2019

CHAPTER 5: UNCONDITIONAL OFFER-MAKING

- > 37.7% of 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland, and Wales received an offer with an unconditional component.
- > Over a quarter of applicants received a conditional unconditional offer.
- > 8.5% of offers made were conditional unconditional.
- > Applicants from advantaged backgrounds remain more likely to receive a conditional unconditional offer than applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- > Arts applicants are most likely to receive a direct unconditional offer, as assessment of an applicant's portfolio can determine their suitability for their course.



UCAS

Explore all the end of cycle data in our interactive dashboard on ucas.com¹

Definitions of terms used in this report are given in the glossary².



This chapter is intended to be read alongside our ‘Unconditional offers – the applicant experience’³ insight report. This includes more details on the revised terminology used to describe the different types of unconditional offers. UCAS’ information and advice on unconditional offers for universities⁴, applicants⁵, and their advisers⁶ is regularly reviewed and updated.

Analysis presented in this chapter covers 18 year old applicants from England, Wales, and Northern Ireland applying to universities and colleges across the UK. This group typically apply with most of their Level 3 qualifications still pending and with predicted, rather than achieved results⁷. Unless otherwise specified in this analysis, ‘applicants’ refers specifically to this group.

37.7%
**OF APPLICANTS RECEIVED
AN OFFER WITH AN
UNCONDITIONAL COMPONENT**

Applicants receiving unconditional offers

In 2019, a record 37.7% of applicants received an offer with an unconditional component. This is an increase of 3.3 percentage points, continuing increases since 2013 (when reporting began). This means 97,125 applicants received an offer with an unconditional component this year – an increase of 9,465 on 2018.

Over a quarter of applicants (25.1%, 64,825 applicants) received a conditional unconditional offer, 11.5% (29,785 applicants) received a direct unconditional offer, and 7.6% (19,555 applicants) received an ‘other unconditional’ offer.

The proportion of applicants receiving a conditional unconditional offer increased by 4.2 percentage points in 2019, direct unconditional increased by 0.9 percentage points, while those receiving an other unconditional decreased by 0.3 percentage points. All these statistics, apart from those referring to other unconditional offers, are new records, although their rate of increase has marginally slowed this year.

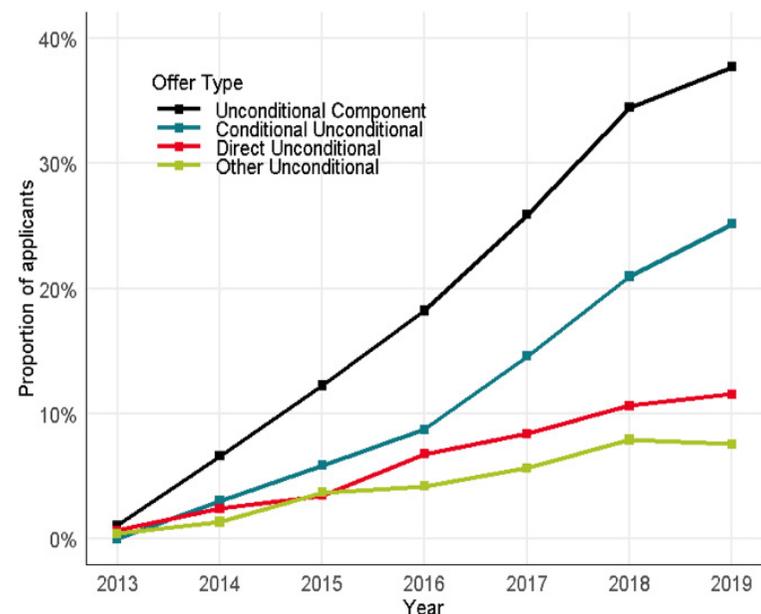


FIGURE 1: Proportion of applicants receiving an unconditional offer

¹ [www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resources-2019](https://ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resources-2019)

² www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-reports/2019-end-cycle-report

³ www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-reports/2019-end-cycle-report

⁴ www.ucas.com/providers/good-practice/unconditional-offers

⁵ www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/ucas-undergraduate-types-offer

⁶ www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/adviser-news/news/preparing-unconditional-offers

⁷ In Scotland, a substantial proportion of students aged 18 who apply through UCAS, have already attained SQA Highers and met the academic requirements to enter higher education. Therefore, applicants from Scotland are not included in this analysis of unconditional offers.

8.5%
OF ALL OFFERS WERE
CONDITIONAL UNCONDITIONAL

Number of unconditional offers made

Each applicant can make up to five choices through the main scheme, and therefore receive up to five offers.

A total of 137,805 offers containing an unconditional component were made to applicants, representing 14.2% of all offers made to this group. This is an increase of 20,680 offers, and a rise of 2.0 percentage points on the proportion of offers made from 2018.

82,560 conditional unconditional offers were made, which equates to 8.5% of all offers, and an increase of 17,145 from last year. Direct unconditional offers rose by 3,905 to reach 34,990 (3.6% of all offers), while other unconditional offers fell by 365 to 20,260 (2.1% of all offers).

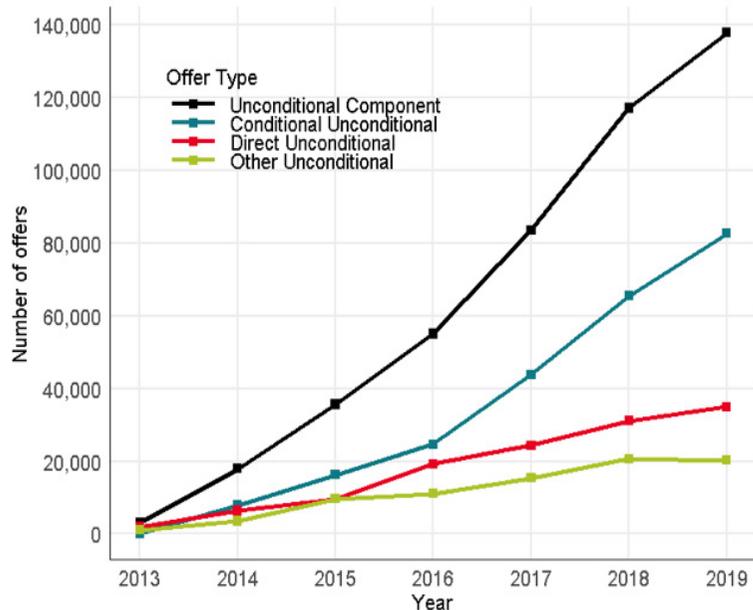


FIGURE 2: Number of unconditional offers made

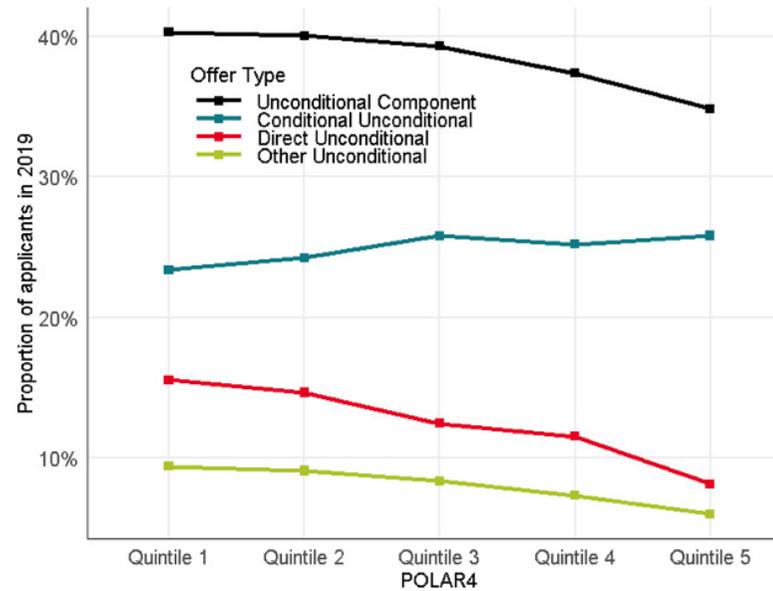


FIGURE 3: Proportion of applicants from each POLAR4 group receiving an unconditional offer

While the most disadvantaged applicants (POLAR4 quintile 1)⁸ are more likely to receive an offer with an unconditional component, direct unconditional offer or other unconditional offer than the most advantaged applicants (quintile 5), they are less likely to receive a conditional unconditional offer.

23.4% of quintile 1 applicants received a conditional unconditional offer in 2019 (an increase of 4.3 percentage points from 2018), compared to 25.8% of quintile 5 applicants (an increase of 3.8 percentage points).

⁸ www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area





Unconditional offers by subject

The subject group⁹ with the highest proportion of direct unconditional offers is creative arts and design (13% of offers made), which is unsurprising as assessment of an applicant’s portfolio often determines their suitability for the course.

Creative arts and design is followed by communications and media (6.7%), architecture, building and planning (5.7%), and computing (4.3%).

Communications and media has the highest proportion of conditional unconditional offers (15.5%), followed by humanities and liberal arts (13.6%), architecture, building and planning (12.8), and creative arts and design (12.2%).

With a reversal in the demographic shift – increasing UK 18 year old numbers from the 2021 cycle onwards – unconditional offer-making may decrease in scale and impact in the longer term.

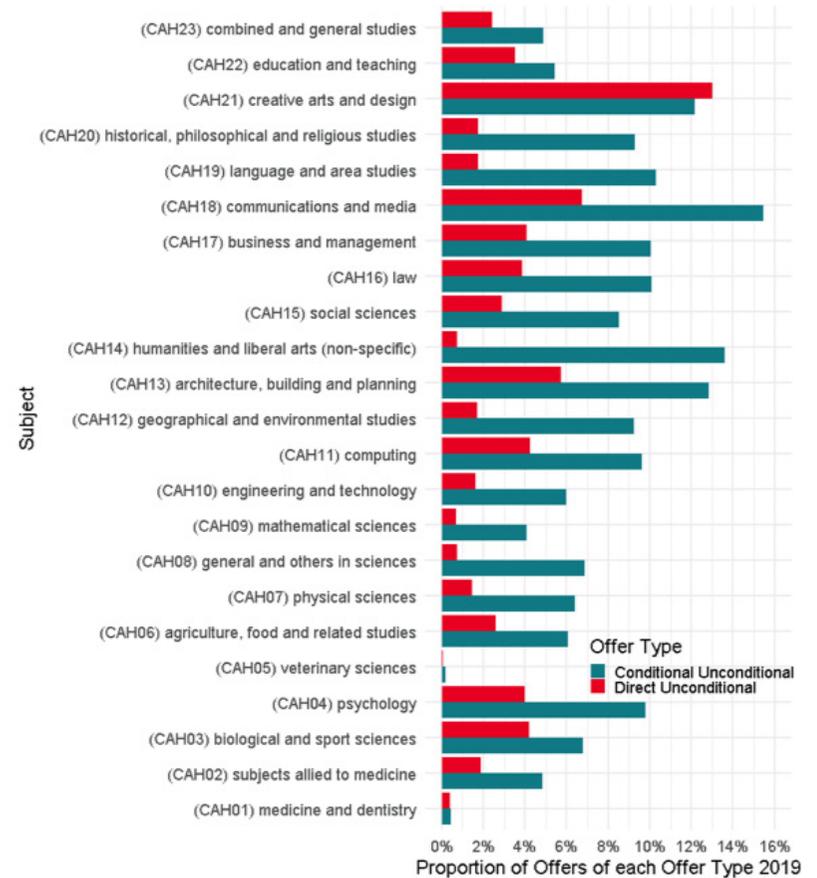


FIGURE 4: Proportion of unconditional offers made by subject

⁹ This analysis by subject group uses the Common Aggregation Hierarchy, which is applied across HECoS and JACS subject coding www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos



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