



UCAS

ADVISER GUIDE 2021

For entry to university or college in 2021

An operational guide for all teachers, advisers, and agents who help undergraduate students apply to study in the UK, as a UCAS registered centre.

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About this guide

This guide is for staff at schools, colleges, and other centres, such as careers offices and agencies, who advise potential undergraduate applicants to higher education (HE) courses in the UK.

It explains how to apply to UK universities and colleges, how UCAS processes applications, how you can manage your students' applications, and the support, training, guides, and resources we provide.

This guide, together with the [adviser portal terms of service](#), form your agreement with UCAS to use the adviser portal.

If there are changes to our information and advice, we will update this guide and let you know. Please bookmark the location of it, and then you will always have access to the latest version.

What is UCAS?

UCAS is an independent charity. We process applications to study full-time courses at universities and colleges in the UK, as well as some countries in Europe. We help advisers to help their students make informed choices, by guiding them through the entire higher education application process.

We also provide information, advice, and admissions services for UK conservatoires (UCAS Conservatoires), for Initial Teacher Training (UCAS Teacher Training), and for taught postgraduate courses (UCAS Postgraduate).

If your school or college has not had previous contact with us (for example, you are a newly created sixth form), you can find information about becoming a UCAS registered centre at www.ucas.com/becomeacentre. Once we have reviewed your application and it is successful, we will confirm setup, so you can access the adviser portal.

Other types of organisations, and independent advisers/counsellors outside of schools or colleges, can also apply to become a UCAS registered centre.

If you need to contact us about any aspect of the application process, our dedicated Schools Team for UCAS registered centres is here to help (Monday to Friday, 08:00 – 18:00 (UK time):

- > Phone from the UK – **0345 123 8001***
- > Phone from outside the UK – **+44 330 333 0239** (international call rates apply)
- > Email – adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk

If you have hearing difficulties, you can contact our Customer Experience Centre, using the text relay service:

- > Phone from the UK – **18001 0371 468 0 468***
- > Phone from outside the UK – **+44 151 494 1260** (text phone) and ask the operator to dial **0371 468 0 468**

*Calls will be charged at your standard network rate.

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Your responsibilities as a UCAS registered centre

- > Understand the UCAS Undergraduate application process, and associated UCAS business rules, such as results embargoes, dates and deadlines, and UCAS terminology outlined in this guide.
- > Signpost your students to advice and guidance about the UCAS process.
- > Keep up-to-date with changes and advances in UK higher education admissions policy, UCAS' developments, and operational updates – we'll send these to you by email, and engage with you through events. Please see our 'Stay up-to-date' section for information.
- > Manage your centre's undergraduate applications through the adviser portal.
- > Send completed applications to UCAS for processing by the appropriate deadline.
 - The 15 October deadline is for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as for courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/science, and dentistry.
 - The 15 January deadline is our equal consideration deadline, which means universities have to consider every application received by 18:00 on 15 January equally. Applications received after this time do not have to be considered, if courses are already full.

As part of managing your centre's undergraduate applications through the adviser portal, you will be required to:

- monitor, check, advise, and approve student applications linked to your centre
- ensure predicted grades and a reference are added to every application. Predicted grades must be as accurate as possible
- identify relevant referees for each applicant, and approve references
- tick the 'Qualifications checked' box if you have checked students' qualifications. Leave it blank if you have not checked them
- set up payment options for your students' application fees
- set a shortlist of qualifications – it will help your students enter the correct qualifications in Apply
- set relevant permissions for your staff and colleagues to access the adviser portal/applications
- ensure permissions are reviewed regularly, and staff who have left are removed from the system, to ensure data security – please see our guidance on data protection and security in Annex A for more information

Our [adviser portal guidance](#) is available to help you with the above.



Changes for 2021 entry

> Increase to the UCAS Undergraduate application fee for the 2021 admissions cycle

The decision to increase fees comes following a thorough review of the market, and the increasing costs of delivering an admissions service. The increase will ensure we're able to continue to meet our responsibilities in delivering value for money, and a fair and accessible admissions service for applicants and higher education providers.

Current fee (2020 cycle)	Single choice – £20 Multiple choices – £25
Increase	Single choice – £0 Multiple choices – £1
New fee (2021 cycle)	Single choice – £20 Multiple choices – £26

> Updates to our guidance on writing references and predicting grades

To help you support your 2021 applicants, we've made some changes to our guidance on writing references and predicting grades. Please visit www.ucas.com/advisers-2021-guidance to see what this includes, and to find out more about changes that have been introduced for this cycle.

> Applications in both the 2020 and 2021 cycles

A university or college can record a Delayed Confirmation decision (DCF) against a 2020 applicant – this means they can hold an offer open into the 2021 cycle. They may do this to keep applicants as conditional firm while they meet the conditions of their offer, for example those sitting autumn series exams.

Applicants who have a DCF decision, or an unconditional firm place deferred to 2021, can reapply with a 2021 application if they wish. In early 2021, we'll contact any applicants with both a live deferred 2020 entry and 2021 entry application and ask them to decide which they want to continue with. We'll then withdraw the application they don't want.

2021 entry key dates

2020

5 May 2020	UCAS' search tool will display 2021 courses.
12 May 2020	The adviser portal opens for 2021 entry. From this date, 2021 applicants are available for advisers to view and start managing.
19 May 2020	UCAS Undergraduate Apply opens for 2021 entry. From this date, applicants can access Apply to start their applications, and send them to you for references and approval.
16 July 2020	UCAS Conservatoire Apply opens for 2021 entry. From this date, applicants can register, pay, and send their UCAS Conservatoires applications.
8 September 2020	Completed applications can be submitted to UCAS.
1 October 2020 18:00 (UK time)	Application deadline for UCAS Conservatoires music applications. Applications for dance, drama, and musical theatre courses may have a different deadline – check conservatoires' websites for information.
15 October 2020 18:00 (UK time)	Deadline for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and for most courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science. The reference must be completed before the application can be sent to us.
15 January 2021 18:00 (UK time)	Equal consideration deadline for applications for most undergraduate courses. The reference must be completed before the application can be sent to us.
11 February 2021	Extra opens – applicants who have used all five choices and are not holding any offers, may be able to add another choice in Track.
30 June 2021 18:00 (UK time)	Applications received by this deadline will be sent to universities and colleges. After this time, applications are automatically entered into Clearing.
4 July 2021	Last date to add an Extra choice in Track.
5 July 2021	Clearing opens for eligible applicants, and vacancies are displayed in UCAS' search tool. International Baccalaureate (IB) results day.
10 August 2021	SQA results day.
24 August 2021	GCE A level results day. Adjustment opens for registration.
27 August 2021	GCSE results day.
21 September 2021 18:00 (UK time)	Last date to submit 2021 entry applications.

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Stay up-to-date

ucas.com

There's a dedicated section for advisers on our website at www.ucas.com/advisers. Here you'll find all our latest news, events, advice on things like managing applications and writing references, and a variety of guides and resources to help you through the whole application cycle. We also have an adviser timeline at the top of www.ucas.com/advisers, letting you know exactly what you need to do and when.

Newsletters

As a registered centre and user of our adviser portal, it's important you stay up-to-date with our latest developments and operational updates, as well as key changes and advances in the higher education sector. Our UCAS correspondent newsletters and operational emails will provide you with all the information you need, so whether you're an experienced or new adviser, it's important you take time to read them.

Your colleagues, students, and their parents can also sign up for tailored updates at www.ucas.com/sign-up. They'll get all the latest information, reminders, events, and training details, straight to their inboxes!

UCAS' social media channels

Active on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram? Stay in the loop by following us [@ucas_online](https://twitter.com/ucas_online).

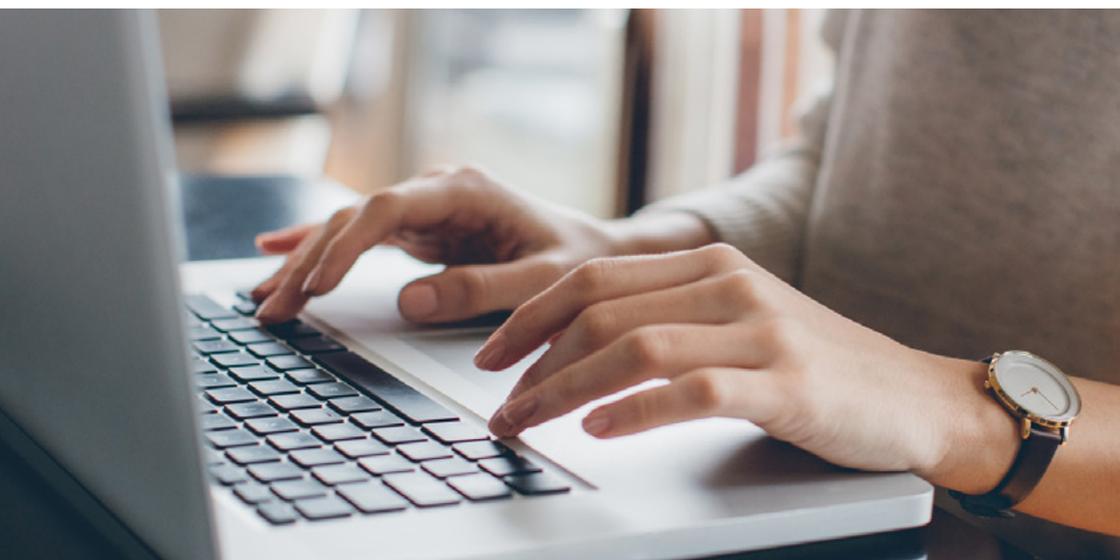
UCAS widget

Parents have told us they want UCAS information earlier. By hosting our widget on your school or college's website or virtual learning environment (VLE), you can help your students and their parents access important information about higher education and the UCAS application process.

For details and a step-by-step guide on how to embed the widget on your website or VLE, visit www.ucas.com/widget.

Adviser news

From updates on UCAS' products and services and useful resources, to sector news and top tips from experienced advisers and subject matter experts, our adviser newsfeed gives you timely, relevant updates to support you in your role. For the latest adviser news, visit www.ucas.com/adviser-news.



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SECTION 1: APPLY OPENS



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SECTION 1 – APPLY OPENS

The adviser portal will be available for 2021 entry from 12 May 2020.

If you are a new centre and this is your first time using the adviser portal, the UCAS correspondent for your centre will need to register and set up your account.

If you are an existing centre, you can access the adviser portal with the the same username and password details you first registered with, and your staff, their permissions, referees, groups, and qualifications shortlist will all be rolled over from the 2020 cycle. You'll just need to check your centre details to make sure they're still up-to-date, create a buzzword, and set up the application fee payment option for 2021.

For more information, please see [our adviser portal guidance](#).

From 19 May 2020, students can register and start their applications. Students and centres are linked by a buzzword, created by the UCAS correspondent in the adviser portal, and added by students when registering in Apply. All students linked to centres can be viewed in the adviser portal. **Further information can be found in section 2.2.**

1.1 Preparing students

Our adviser resource pack includes some great ideas and resources for classroom activities with your students – highlighting essential information, and helping them refine their choices to make informed decisions. Visit www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources for more information.

Get your students thinking about their future with the UCAS Hub

The UCAS Hub provides your students with all the tools and information they need to start thinking about their next steps. From exploring subjects, considering apprenticeships, shortlisting their final five, writing a killer personal statement or CV – it has everything they need in one place – for free.

And the best bit – each student will have their own dashboard which they can customise and tailor to their needs. Organise tools, remove the ones they don't need, and tick off their to do list. It's their space, and their future.

Students can sign up at www.ucas.com/hub.

Browse thousands of courses with our search tool

Our search tool has over 51,000 courses at over 395 providers in the UK. This mobile-friendly tool enables students to shortlist courses, save searches, and access all undergraduate, postgraduate, and conservatoire courses in one search tool. Visit www.ucas.com/search.

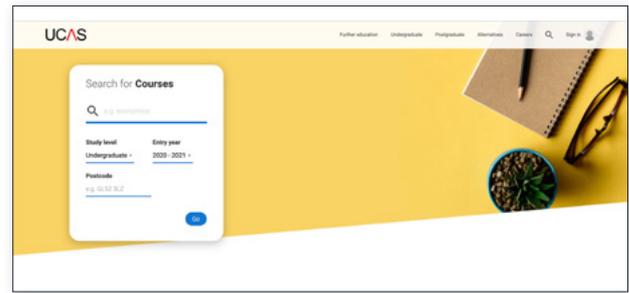


Fig. 1 – UCAS search tool

Watch our videos

Visit www.ucas.com/videos for a wide range of videos to help you, your students, and their parents and guardians, with all aspects of the application process, and much more.

Compare accommodation options with our new search

Our new accommodation search helps your students see what's available from both universities and colleges, and private providers. Understanding what options there are will help them to narrow down where they might want to study. Start searching at www.accommodation.ucas.com.

Read student blogs

For inspiration, insight into what university or college is really like, advice about applying, and student finance, your students can read our blogs at www.ucas.com/blogs.

Chat to uni students

We know the value peer-to-peer conversations have, so we've teamed up with Unibuddy to give your students the chance to talk to current undergraduates about their first-hand experiences. They can find out what studying a particular course and life at uni is really like at www.ucas.com/chat-to-students.

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UCAS virtual exhibitions

Our autumn 2020 face-to-face exhibitions have been cancelled, and instead we are hosting v the 'UCAS futures in...' series of virtual exhibitions.

These online events are dedicated to students' interests, and offer them the chance to explore courses they're interested in and speak to universities and colleges from around the

UK. By taking part, they can talk to subject and admissions experts, discover apprenticeships, get advice on applying through UCAS, and more.

Find out more and book places at www.ucas.com/ucas-futures

For bookings and queries, please contact us at events@ucas.ac.uk, or call 01242 544 808.

Attend virtual open days

Many universities and colleges are running virtual open days – they're the next best thing when it comes to getting a feel for what they have to offer. Students can see the campuses, find out about courses, and ask questions, all without leaving home.

Find virtual open days using our search tool at www.ucas.com/open-days.

Did you know?

As part of the virtual open day programme, many universities and colleges timetable in sessions just for parents and guardians, on key topics like student finance, staff / student contact hours, and accommodation.

Enrol on a taster course or summer school

Many universities and colleges offer short taster courses or summer schools, giving students experience of academic and social life in a higher education environment. Most are free, and they can last from one day to a week. Summer schools are designed to be as authentic as possible, with lectures and tutorials, and give students the chance to share their academic interests. Check with the universities and colleges to find out more about these for 2021

Our taster course and summer school search tool at www.ucas.com/taster-course has information about courses and how to book a place. They can be popular, so it's a good idea to book early.

UK applicants are asked if they've participated in such activities in the 'Activities in preparation for higher education' field of 'Additional information' in Apply. The location list in this section includes all universities and colleges. If the applicant doesn't know the 'sponsor' (organiser), they can choose 'Don't know'. If the organiser is the same provider, they can choose 'As location.'

One student commented:

'SUMMER SCHOOL WAS THE SOLE REASON I WENT TO UNI – IF I HADN'T GONE, I DEFINITELY WOULDN'T BE DOING MENTAL HEALTH NURSING NOW. IT GAVE ME A TASTE OF WHAT UNI IS LIKE. IT ALSO GAVE ME A CLEAR CAREER PLAN – I MADE SURE I REDID MY MATHS GCSE, SO I COULD GET IN, AND GET THE A LEVEL GRADES I NEEDED'.

Information for international students

- > UCAS information and advice for international and EU students: www.ucas.com/international.
- > British Council: study-uk.britishcouncil.org.

Other useful resources and websites

- > Information about higher and degree apprenticeships: www.ucas.com/apprenticeships.
- > National Careers Service (England): nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk.
- > My World of Work (Scotland): www.myworldofwork.co.uk.
- > Careers Service (Northern Ireland): www.nidirect.gov.uk.
- > Careers Wales: www.careerswales.com.
- > Prospects: www.prospects.ac.uk – what students can do with their degrees.
- > University league tables rank universities and colleges – it's important to check their weighting and methodology to understand their bias. The Times Online at www.timeshighereducation.com, and Complete University Guide at www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk, are interactive sites. Users can highlight their requirements and create their own unique table.
- > UCAS' Buzz quiz: a short quiz designed to help students identify what they like and what they could do. www.ucas.com/buzz-quiz

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1.2 Resources for your students'

parents and guardians

The best place for parents and guardians to get the support they need is www.ucas.com/parents. Here they'll have access to a wide range of guidance and resources, all designed to help them through the different stages of the application process:

- > **Parent Guide** – information covering the keys stages of the application process, and what they need to do when.
- > **Parent videos** – for advice, hints, and useful tips.
- > **Parent newsletters** – all the updates and information they need, along with timely explanations of the application process. Parents and guardians can sign up at www.ucas.com/parents-signup.

We'd encourage you to promote these resources through your parent portal, at school events, or on your website, to help your students' parents and guardians easily access the information they need.

We've also produced a presentation introducing the UCAS application process, for you to use at your parents' evenings – you can download this from www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/pre-application-toolkit.

One parent told us:

'I WASN'T SURE HOW TO HELP MY SON ACCESS AN APPLICATION TO UNIVERSITY, AND KNEW THAT UCAS HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT. WHEN I FOUND THE PARENT NEWSLETTER, IT WAS BRILLIANT, AND I SIGNED UP TO MAKE SURE I WAS HELPING HIM THE BEST WAY I COULD.'



Top tip – Our international toolkit has a number of useful resources for parents and guardians, including a guide to applying to study in the UK. Visit www.ucas.com/international-toolkit for more information.

Did you know?

In the 'Personal details' section of Apply, **applicants can nominate a parent, guardian, teacher, adviser, or carer to contact UCAS on their behalf**, if they can't phone themselves. Subject to security checks, we can then discuss an individual's application with their 'nominated access' named person.

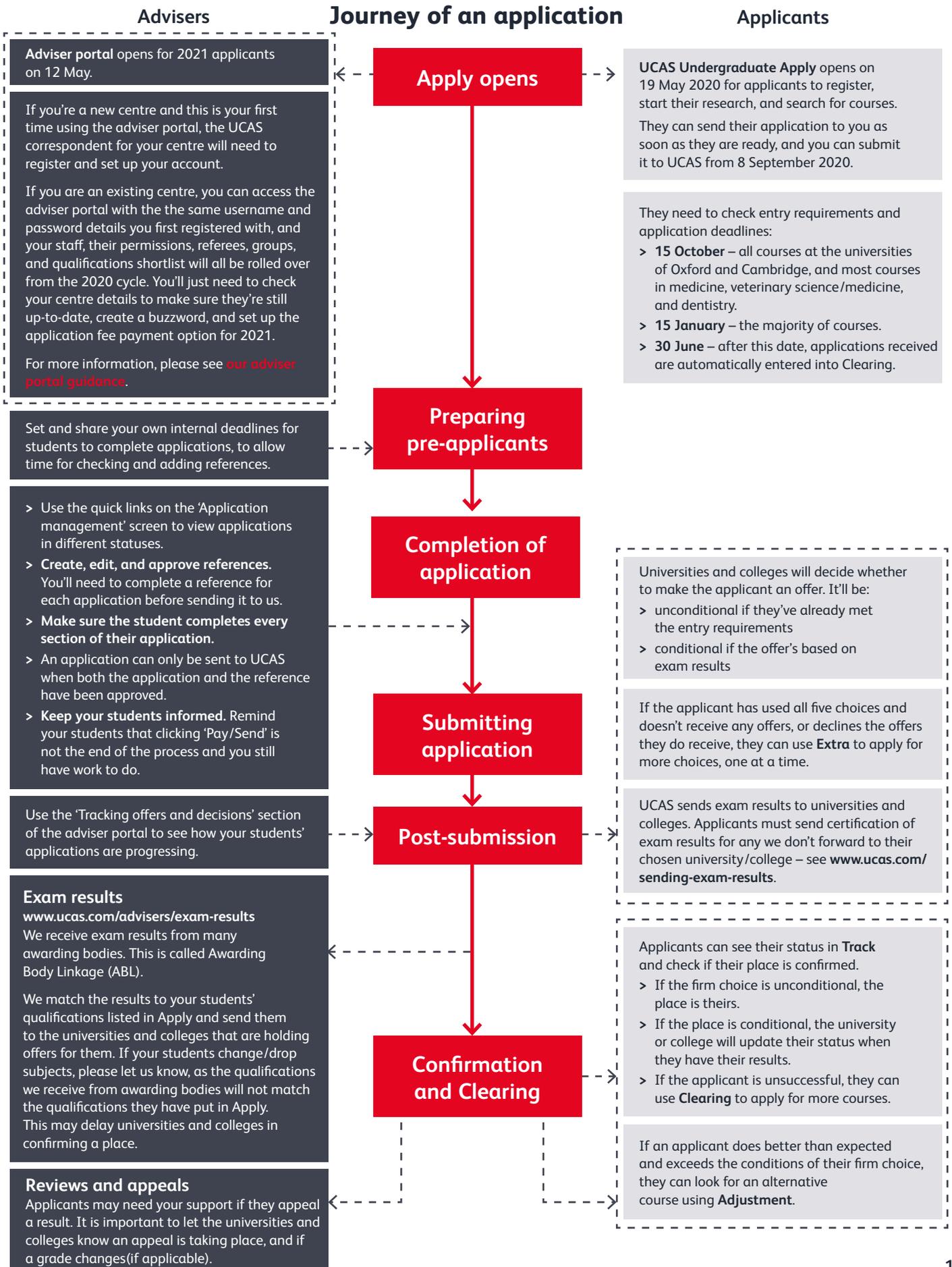
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SECTION 2: COMPLETING THE APPLICATION



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SECTION 2 – COMPLETING THE APPLICATION



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2.1 Application overview

The application has several sections for your students to complete, and a section for a referee to write their reference. Once all the sections have been completed by students and payment is authorised, it can be sent to centres to review, add a reference, and return to the student to amend if required. Before it can be submitted to UCAS by the centre, both the status of the application and the status of the reference has to be approved.

When to apply

Before looking in detail at the application, it's important to know when to apply. Applicants can send you applications for approval from 19 May, and you can submit their applications to UCAS from 8 September.

There are three application deadlines to be aware of – please refer to **the 2021 entry key dates on page 6** for full details of these. You may want to set your own internal deadlines.

15 October 2020 18:00 (UK time)	All applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge must be submitted by this date, as well as most applications to medicine, veterinary science/medicine, and dentistry courses.
15 January 2021 18:00 (UK time)	Equal consideration deadline – applications submitted by this time must be considered equally by universities and colleges.
30 June 2021 18:00 (UK time)	New applications must be submitted by this time – after this, applications are entered directly into Clearing.

If you aren't sure which deadline applies, you can find the deadline for each course in our [search tool](#).

Centres submit applications to UCAS on behalf of students linked to them. Applications can be submitted before students have completed their qualifications and received results. Offers from universities and colleges may be conditional, potentially based on exam results to be achieved. Referees are expected to provide predicted grades for the qualifications their students are studying, so universities and colleges have an idea of their expected result.

Late applications

Universities and colleges give equal consideration to all applications received by the main deadlines. They may consider late applications if they still have vacancies, but they don't have to. They can also close courses after the relevant deadline has passed, if they don't want to receive any more applications. A quick check in the UCAS search tool is the first step in choosing a course, to see if there are vacancies.



Top tip – Most admissions tests are sat at the start of the academic cycle, so applicants need to register as soon as possible. Find out more at www.ucas.com/admissions-tests.

International students

Applicants who submit their application by 18:00 (UK time) on the course deadline date are guaranteed equal consideration by universities and colleges. Many offer extended deadlines for international applicants – students should check with universities and colleges. It's important to remember that most UK students will make their applications well before the deadline, and some popular courses might not have places available after that date.

Taking a year out after school

Students who take a gap year, including national service, can apply in the 2021 entry cycle, to start a course in 2022. This is called deferred entry.

The 'rules' are the same as for applicants starting their courses in 2021, and they'll need to:

- > apply by the same application deadlines
- > choose a start date in 2022 when they add their course choice
- > meet the conditions of their offer by 31 August 2021, unless a different date is specified by the university or college

Before applying, students should contact universities or colleges to check they consider deferred applications. For some courses, they may not – for example, the course may not be offered the following year, or they may prefer there not to be a break in study.

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2.2 First step – the applicant sections

How to apply

Applications are made online using our secure, web-based application system, Apply (see Fig 2.). Its on-screen help text and videos guide users through the application. To access advice and the video guides on applying, visit www.ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication.

Students can use Apply anywhere that has internet access. They can change and save their application details as often as necessary, before submitting the final version to their linked centre. If your students are using Apply on a shared computer in a classroom, library, or IT suite, please remind them to sign out of their application, to avoid another user mistakenly signing in to the wrong application, or seeing personal data.

Top tip – If a student forgets their password, they can access a login reminder service, and reset their password from Apply. Centres can also reset applicant passwords in the adviser portal, depending on staff permissions.

Students complete up to seven sections:

- > Personal details
- > Additional information (UK applicants only)
- > Student finance
- > Choices
- > Education
- > Personal statement
- > Employment

As their application progresses to completion, they can see the status of each section.

- > Not started
- > In progress
- > Completed

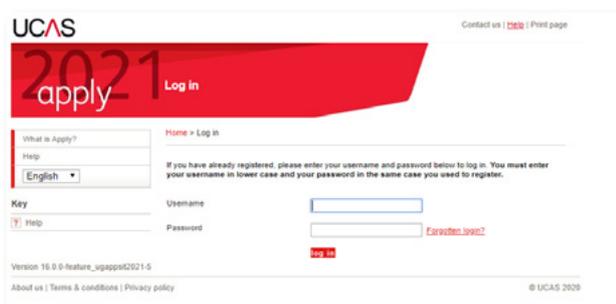


Fig. 2 – Sign in page for Apply 2021.

Applicants who apply through a UCAS registered centre need the buzzword to automatically link them to their centre. All students linked to centres can be viewed in the adviser portal. The buzzword is a unique word centres set up in the adviser portal at the start of the cycle (however, it can be changed at any time throughout the cycle). Students use the buzzword at the point of registration, and can also choose the group they are to be assigned to. If a student forgets to use the buzzword, and starts an independent application, they are able to change this in their 'Options' menu.

If groups have not been set up (by the UCAS correspondent), the student will automatically be listed in the centre's 'Default' group list. Students can be changed from one group to another – see the [our adviser portal guidance](#).

Registered centres should not sign in as applicants, or ask applicants to share their username and password details. Advisers should only use the adviser portal to access applications.

Former students can apply as independent applicants, and request a reference only from the centre. They won't be linked to your centre, and you will not be able to track and check the completion of their application – you'll just provide a reference.

While you're writing it, the student will see their 'Reference' section is in progress. When you have completed it, they will see a tick. They cannot view their reference in Apply, but once it's complete, we'll let them know. Then they can send the whole application to us, with their payment.

If a former student wishes to link their full application to your centre, they will need your buzzword. Accepting an applicant means you're agreeing to approve their application, write and attach a reference, and send their application to UCAS once all sections are complete.

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There is a quick link from the applications list in the 'Application management' screen ('Waiting to link to centre'), so you can easily see who is waiting to link. We recommend you create and name a group 'Former students' to easily identify them from your current students – see our [adviser portal guidance](#) for how to do this.

Acknowledgement emails

We send applicants an automated acknowledgement email after:

- > they have completed all sections of their application, and submitted it to their centre
- > the reference has been added to the application, and it has been received at UCAS

We also send a number of emails to applicants at various stages of their application journey. The templates of these are available to view on [our website](#).

Number of choices

Each student can make a maximum of five choices on their application, including:

- > no more than four choices in any one of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or veterinary science
- > no more than one course at either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge. The exception to this is if the applicant will be a graduate at the start of the course, and they're applying for graduate medicine at the University of Cambridge. In this case, they can also apply for medicine at Cambridge, in addition to being able to apply to graduate medicine at the University of Oxford. No other combinations are permitted

If they apply to fewer than five choices to begin with, they can add more later, if they have not replied to their offers. They should, however, remember to check the application deadline for the course – if a choice is added after the deadline, it will be considered as late.

Invisibility of choices

We send the application on to each of the chosen universities and colleges at the same time. Each university or college only has access to the information about its choice. They must not ask applicants, or the person the applicant has nominated to have access to their application, to reveal their other choices. This is what we call invisibility.

Only much later in the application cycle, when an applicant has received decisions on all their choices and replied to any offers, will each university or college be able to see details of the other choices. This ensures each university or college decides independently whether to offer a place, and what conditions, if any, to attach to an offer.

It's very important that confidentiality is maintained on course and university and college choices until each offer has been responded to by the applicant. Advisers must ensure this confidentiality is not broken.

Did you know?

Choices aren't sent in preference order – we send an application to all the universities and colleges at the same time. They don't know where else your student has applied, or what order the choices were placed in.

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Applicants should enter all achieved qualifications on their application

It is important that pending qualifications are entered accurately – UCAS will match awarded qualifications to the applicant, so universities and colleges can make Confirmation decisions, but before universities and colleges have these, they will use pending qualifications to make decisions.

Inputting qualifications awarded in summer 2020

We understand the context is different this year, however students will enter all achieved and pending qualifications in the same way they would have done previously – if a qualification has been certificated, then the student should include it in their application. This is the same for all students, and applies to the final grades they were ultimately awarded in summer 2020 – including Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) or calculated grades in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and overseas (where applicable), and estimations or moderated results in Scotland.

Students should continue to input any certificated AS qualifications. This includes the decoupled AS in England, the coupled AS in Wales and Northern Ireland, and AS levels offered by international awarding bodies.

Students taking autumn series exams in England will add the qualifications as 'pending' if they apply before they have the results – they aren't considered to be resits. If they received grades in summer 2020 that were certificated, they should add these also.

The full list of results we receive and forward to universities and colleges can be viewed at ucas.com/sending-exam-results. If any of your students' qualifications aren't listed, they will need to send their results on to their unis, colleges, or conservatoires.

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2.3 Next step – adviser portal

Each UCAS registered centre will have a UCAS correspondent contact set up on the adviser portal with full permissions.

This contact will be responsible for:

- > the setup of their centre details, including creating a buzzword and setting application fee payment options
- > adding new staff, setting their permissions, and assigning them to groups
- > creating and managing groups
- > creating or reviewing the shortlist of qualifications

If you're an existing UCAS correspondent, all of your staff, their permissions, groups, referees, and shortlisted qualifications will be rolled over from the 2020 cycle. You'll just need to check your centre details to make sure they're still up-to-date, create a buzzword, and set up the application fee payment option for 2021. Anyone already registered for the adviser portal can sign in using the username and password they currently use.

If this is your first year as the UCAS correspondent for your centre, you will need to register for the adviser portal before you can start the set up process. Please see our [adviser portal guidance](#) for more information.



Top tip – When adding staff, it's important to note that the email address used is their unique identifier. If the email address you input for a staff member is different to the one they registered with, they won't be able to access the adviser portal.

Adviser portal dashboard

The UCAS registered centre contact will see and have access to the following tiles on their adviser portal dashboard:

- > **Application management** – a list of students linked to your centre pre-submission.
- > **Tracking offers and decisions** – view offers and decisions of students linked to your centre post-submission to UCAS.
- > **Centre management** – set up your buzzword, payment options, referees, and groups.
- > **Staff management** – add staff and set their permissions.
- > **Data and reporting** – a link to see and order additional paid for products and services (available to all).

In addition, all staff will have access to information and advice quick links.

All other staff users will see the tiles based on their permissions.

Permissions

Users of the adviser portal can have the following permissions:

- > **Manage staff**
 - Staff with this permission should be reviewed regularly, and those who have left removed from the system to ensure security. If you wish to delegate this to another member of staff, you may give them this permission too.
- > **Manage centre details**
- > **Manage groups**
- > **View applications**
- > **Approve applications**
- > **Send to UCAS**
- > **Delete and undelete applications**
- > **View references**
- > **Edit references**
- > **Approve references**
- > **Tracking offers and decisions**

See the [adviser portal guidance](#) for more information on permissions.

Checking applications

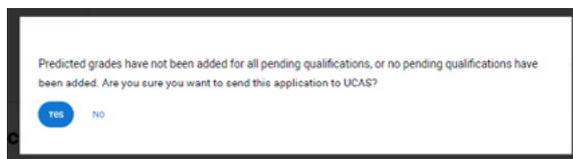
From your dashboard in the adviser portal, you can check to see the progress your students are making with their applications in the 'Application management' tile.

You can check the overall status of each of your students' applications with the 'Applicant status' column and can filter based on this. The 'Section progress' tab will show you at a glance, which applicant has completed each section – this can help you work out who needs more support, or a reminder. See the [adviser portal guidance](#) for further information.



Top tip – You can sort lists of students by name, group, or the status of their application. If you have a large number of students, listing by status is a convenient way of seeing who needs a reminder.

- > Once your students have registered, you can view individual applications at any stage by clicking their name in 'Application management' – you do not have to wait until they are complete.
- > When a student marks their application as complete and clicks 'Pay and send', it will be sent to the centre to check, add predicted grades, and input their reference. At this point, the student will not be able to make any changes to their application unless you return it to them for a correction. Please check the completed application carefully before submitting it to UCAS. The main areas to be checked are their qualifications and choices. If you fully check the qualifications, please tick the qualifications check box, which is located in the 'Applicants' education' section in the adviser portal. This tick box is seen by universities and colleges as part of the reference.



- > If a student decides to withdraw their application, or changes their mind on applying before you send it to UCAS, you can delete the record, and reinstate it too, providing you have the relevant permissions.



Top tip – If you return an application to be amended, the applicant will receive an email from UCAS to let them know they need to sign in to Apply and check their application.



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2.4 References

It is your responsibility as a UCAS registered centre to identify relevant referees and approve references.

Operational guidance for writing references

As an adviser, you may be responsible for writing your students' references.

Top tips

1. You can use up to 4,000 characters or 47 lines of text (including spaces and blank lines) – whichever comes first.
2. You can write the reference in advance, but you need to read what the student has written in their application before you finalise it. There's no need to repeat anything the student has already mentioned, unless you want to comment on it.
3. Each university or college listed on the application will see your reference. They will not, however, know where else the student has applied. If you refer to one of them in your reference, you effectively remove some of the 'invisibility', and could compromise the application.
4. For each student, choose their referee from the list created in the adviser portal. This name will appear on the reference, even if another member of staff writes it. A different member of staff (not the referee) often approves the reference.
5. The reference doesn't have to be written by the head teacher or head of sixth form – it's more important that it's written by someone who knows the student well enough to comment on their academic abilities and personal qualities, and has several contributions from tutors.
6. We recommend references are written in a word processor first, then copied and pasted into the application. If you type text directly into the space provided in the 'Reference' section of the adviser portal, it's important to save it regularly. Any interruption to the internet connection would result in all unsaved text being lost. Incomplete references can be saved in the adviser portal and finished later. Once finished, they can be marked as complete, which means they are ready for the final check by a staff member who has the 'Approve reference' permission.

Whichever method you use, always remember to save the reference before leaving the 'Reference' section in the adviser portal.

7. A reference can be changed after it has been marked as complete or approved. It cannot be changed once it has been sent to UCAS.



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What to include in your reference

Universities and colleges find it useful to have information about the centre where the student has studied, as well as your assessment of their suitability for the course they've chosen. Please try to include both of these in your reference.

Explaining the impact of COVID-19

As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020, most applicants in the 2021 cycle will have experienced some form of disruption to their formal education. While some of the impact will be felt equally across all students, some students may also have been affected to a greater degree due to their individual circumstances.

Visit www.ucas.com/advisers/references for the most up-to-date information on how to include details of this in your students' references.

For more information on how to save, mark as complete, and approve references, please see the [adviser portal guidance](#).

Copy references and the Data Protection Act

Under the Data Protection Act, students can request a copy of their application from us, including the reference, free of charge.

Students from outside the UK

The reference must be submitted in English. If you cannot write in English, it should be translated by someone other than the applicant or their family – possibly the students' English teacher, school guidance counsellor, or other staff member. In such cases, make it clear that another teacher has provided comments in support of the application. If the student's first language is not English, it's helpful to comment on their ability to write and speak English, and say which, if any, of their studies were taught in English.



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Detecting fraud

Please make sure your students are aware of the following information about our Verification Team, and its work to identify fraudulent applications.

False or misleading information

If we, or a university or college, believe an applicant has left out any relevant information, or has given false or misleading information, we may take steps to check whether the information given is complete and accurate. If you have any reason to believe information we have about the applicant is not complete or accurate, you must tell us. We reserve the right to cancel an application without refunding the application fee.

Provide more information

We, and the universities and colleges, may at any time ask the applicant, their referee, or their employer, to provide more information about the application (for example, proof of identity, status, qualifications, education, or employment history). If we do not receive that information by a set date, or if the information is not satisfactory, we reserve the right to cancel the application without refunding the application fee.

Personal statement

Along with other verification checks for identity and academic qualifications, we carry out checks to verify personal statements are the applicant's own work. If we have cause to question an application, we will contact the applicant, and at the same time, inform all the universities and colleges to which the applicant has applied, who will then take any action they consider appropriate.

Reference

It's important your reference is a realistic summary of the applicant's likely achievements in future exams, and their suitability for the courses for which they've applied. If an application, including the reference, has any relevant information missing (which might influence the decision of a university or college whether – and on what terms – to offer a place), or any false or misleading information (such as over-inflation of predicted grades), this could have a negative influence. In such circumstances, UCAS, and the universities and colleges, retain the right to cancel the application and withdraw any offers, without refunding the application fee.

2.5 Predicted grades

A predicted grade is the grade of qualification an applicant's school or college believes they're likely to achieve in positive circumstances. These predicted grades are then used by universities and colleges, as part of the admissions process, to help them understand an applicant's potential.

To help you when making predictions for your students' applications, we've developed some useful guidance, covering key principles, challenges for advisers, setting internal processes, and more – visit www.ucas.com/advisers/predicted-grades.

Predicted grades are part of the reference, and it's the responsibility of the registered centre to make sure they have been added to an application. Usually, the named referee predicts the grades – if this is not the case, please state who has predicted the grades in the 'Reference' section. More information on how to enter predicted grades can be found in the [adviser portal guidance](#).

2.6 Submitting applications

Sending applications

When all sections are complete, and the reference and application have been approved, an application is ready to be sent to UCAS. A quick link to identify applications 'Ready to send' is located in 'Application management'. It is important to do this in plenty of time, and not leave it to the day of the deadline. See [adviser portal guidance](#).



Top tip – In 2020, 62,640 applications were submitted on the day of the 15 January deadline – 58% of these were linked to centres. Those submitted after 18:00 (UK time) would have been considered late, and may not have been considered equally by universities and colleges.

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The following only applies to an individual or organisation ('agent') completing an application on behalf of someone else.

Before completing an application on behalf of someone else, an agent must:

- > have all necessary authority to complete and submit the application on behalf of the applicant
- > ensure the applicant has sufficient time to read and understand the applicant declaration, our website terms and conditions, and our privacy policy

We have the right to cancel an application if we determine (having carried out any necessary checks), or have reason to believe, that an agent has not fully complied with these requirements.

Payments and billing

For applications processed through UCAS, a payment is required. Applicants are charged £20 for a single choice application, and £26 for up to five choices. As a centre, you have the option to decide how these fees are paid. In the adviser portal, under 'Centre management', you must choose one of three options for application fee payments as outlined below – this can be changed at any point during the cycle.

- 1. UCAS will send your centre an invoice (applicants should not send payments directly to UCAS)**
If you choose this option, our Finance department will send you an invoice at the end of each calendar month, of all applicants who have completed their application. Invoices are sent by email, usually to a finance contact, and copied to the primary correspondent at the centre. You have 30 days to pay. If you need to change the contact, or have any queries, please contact receivables@ucas.ac.uk, or call 01242 544 923.
- 2. All your applicants will pay online by credit or debit card**
Please note, American Express is not currently accepted.
- 3. Some applicants will pay online by card, and UCAS will provide an invoice for remaining applicants (the invoice is to be paid by your centre)**
Invoices will be created at the end of each calendar month, and will contain the applicants who have submitted their applications, but have told us their centre will pay their fee.

How to set your application fee payment method is outlined in our [adviser portal guidance](#).

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SECTION 3: POST-SUBMISSION

3.1 At UCAS

What happens when we receive an application?

The built-in checks in Apply make sure most errors are dealt with before you send the application to us. Occasionally, we may need to query something with the applicant – if this happens, there may be a delay in sending the application to the universities and colleges.

UCAS' dedicated Verification Team is tasked with the prevention and detection of fraud in applications, and plagiarism in personal statements. We screen each application against a variety of markers to detect the level of risk – we then investigate flagged applications, and cancel those deemed to be fraudulent.

We also run personal statements through our Copycatch database, which flags any similarities to online personal statements, or those submitted by applicants in past cycles. We then automatically send emails to the applicants and their choices, to let them know a similarity has been detected, and the university or college can decide to take further action if they wish to do so.

Once an application has been processed through our databases, it's usually with the universities and colleges within two working days of being sent to us. They can see the whole application, but at this stage, they can't see the applicant's other choices of university and college.



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3.2 At the universities and colleges

What happens at the universities and colleges when they receive an application?

The universities and colleges begin their decision-making process. This differs between them, and even for different courses at the same university or college.

Applicants will hear about each of their choices at different times – sometimes they're contacted very quickly, or it may be several months before they hear anything.

Universities and colleges have deadlines by which they must make decisions on applications – this date depends on when the application was submitted to UCAS.

Application received at UCAS on or before	University or college must make a decision on or before
15 January 2021	20 May 2021
30 June 2021	13 July 2021

If we don't receive a decision from the university or college by their deadline, we automatically make the application unsuccessful. This is explained to the applicant in Track, and in the adviser portal, under 'Tracking offers and decisions' you will see 'unsuccessful by default'.

Qualification Information Profiles (QIPS)

Qualification Information Profiles (QIPs) provide objective, comparable information which universities and colleges can use to inform decisions about the admission of students. They provide information in a clear and consistent format across different qualifications, and include a range of information about a qualification, such as size, grading, assessment, structure, and content. Please see qips.ucas.com for more information.

Contextualised admissions – what this means for your students

Contextual information and data can be used by universities and colleges to assess an applicant's achievement and potential, considering their educational and socioeconomic background. The aim is to form a more complete picture of an applicant's characteristics.

As a teacher or adviser, it's important to be aware of this, so you can give the best advice to your students. Contextualised admissions encourage aspirational applications, and may also help explain why a student has received a certain offer.

What practical steps can I take to help?

- > Encourage your students to complete all the relevant application fields in full. The contextual information submitted on the UCAS application is critical to facilitating contextualised admissions.
- > Use the reference to indicate any further contextual information which might warrant special consideration. This could include individual circumstances – e.g. mature student, disability, widening participation activities, or information about your school which may affect performance, such as significant staff changes, or damage to buildings.

We've produced a factsheet in conjunction with the Fair Education Alliance (FEA), to explain what this might mean for your students' applications. You can download this at www.ucas.com/widening-participation.

3.3 What applicants and advisers need to know

Changes to exam details applicants have entered in Apply

After an application has been sent to us, please let us know straightaway via our webform if any of your students' exam details change, and let their chosen universities and colleges know too. That's anything from exam subjects, modules, or units, to awarding/examining bodies and centre numbers.

It's important to tell us, as it could delay the processing of exam results if we are not updated. If results can't be confirmed, your student might not get their place.

You can find out more about the exam results process at www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results.

Checking for decisions from choices

When universities and colleges have considered an application, they send us their decision, and we update Track. We email the applicant to let them know something has changed, so it's vital they check their emails regularly.

Sometimes, applicants are invited to undertake an assessment before the university or college can decide whether to make an offer. They may need to sit an admissions test or attend an interview, perhaps both, depending on the subject and popularity of the course. Art and design students usually need to present a portfolio of their work.

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Invitations to submit a portfolio, or attend an interview or audition, may be received in Track, or direct from the university or college. Please remind your students they must respond to invitations to interviews as soon as possible. They can accept, decline, or request a new time or date – if they want to change the date, they must contact the university or college.

While we encourage universities and colleges to record all offers and interview invitations on UCAS' system, so both advisers and students are kept up-to-date, it is not unusual for a university or college to make an offer, or an invitation to an interview, directly to the student. Therefore, it is important to remind students to check their emails during the application stage.

One of UCAS' admission principles for our universities and colleges states: 'Providers must not place undue pressure (i.e. that which is not in the applicant's best interests) to directly or indirectly influence an applicant's decision.'

All decisions are made by the universities and colleges. UCAS does not have any involvement in deciding whether to make an offer.

Offers

Students can view their offers in Track, and advisers can see offers and decisions for their applicants in the adviser portal, under 'Tracking offers and decisions'. Centres receive offers and decisions at the same time as students. There are a number of quick links in this area, for example, 'Students with no offers', 'Students with all offers received', and 'Students with unconditional offers', to help you identify students who may need additional support. To understand what has been updated since the last time you signed in, you can sort your applicants by the 'Last updated' column. See our [adviser portal guidance](#) for full functionality.

An offer will be either conditional or unconditional. In the UCAS system, it will show the year and month the course starts, and the point of entry (for example, the second year of the course, rather than the first).

Conditional offer – the offer has conditions. For example, the applicant has to achieve certain exam results. Unless a different date is specified, the conditions must be met by 31 August 2021 (even if entry is deferred to 2022). The conditions may include achievement of specific grades, possibly in named subjects, or a certain number of UCAS Tariff points.

Unconditional offer – this usually means the applicant has already met all the university or college's entry requirements for the course. They might still have to meet other requirements, such as financial or medical conditions.

Sometimes, universities and colleges make unconditional offers against predicted grades, GCSE results, work experience, or performance in an interview, audition, or admissions test. Please make sure your students understand the implications of accepting an unconditional offer. Applicants who accept an unconditional offer cannot make an insurance choice, and will not be eligible for Adjustment or Clearing. They should also be reminded of the importance of completing their qualifications, as this is likely to be something future employers will ask for.



Top tip – Before making any decisions, encourage your students to take a look at our advice on making informed choices – www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/making-right-decision.

Offers may also be for an alternative course. This option can be used, for example, if the applicant has changed the subject they are studying, or if the university or college wants to make an offer for its HND rather than degree. The university or college should discuss an offer for a different course with the applicant before formally making its offer.

There are two other decisions a university or college can make.

Unsuccessful – the university or college has not offered the applicant a place on the course.

Withdrawal – the application to the course has been withdrawn, because the applicant:

- > asked to withdraw
- > did not attend their interview, test, or audition
- > did not reply to letters from the university or college
- > has not chosen an alternative after the course has been withdrawn

Applicant statuses explained

Applicant statuses explained

- > **Ready to send to university/college** – applications that have been processed by UCAS, but not yet sent to the universities or colleges listed.
- > **Waiting for university/college to respond** – applications that have been sent to the universities and colleges, but decisions have not been received from all choices.
- > **Waiting for applicant's reply** – applicants have received decisions from their choices, and are now required to reply to their offers.
- > **Eligible for Extra/Clearing/new choice(s)** – applicants who are not holding any offers, and can apply for further choices through Extra, Clearing, or by adding a new choice to their application. Applicants will be displayed in one of the following categories, depending on their status and the time of year:
 - **Waiting for Extra** – Extra has not yet started. Applicant applied to five choices, and either received no offers, or declined any offers received.
 - **Eligible for Extra** – Extra is open. Applicant applied to five choices, and either received no offers, or declined any offers received.
 - **Waiting for Clearing** – Clearing has not yet started. Applicant applied to fewer than five choices, and declined any offers received.
 - **Eligible for Clearing** – Clearing is open. Applicant has either been unsuccessful, or declined any offers received.
 - **No offers, other options available** – Applicant applied to fewer than five choices, and has been unsuccessful at all choices. Applicant is now eligible to apply for new choices (up to the maximum of five), or applicant has applied to one choice and paid the single entry fee – they will need to pay the full fee before they can add choices, or be entered into Clearing.
- > **Has accepted offer(s)** – applicants who have accepted one of their offers (as their firm choice) or two of their offers (as their firm and insurance choices). Their firm choice will be conditional, for example, CF. Applicants with an **unconditional firm offer (UF)** are listed under **Final place accepted**.
- > **In Clearing** – applicants who apply after 30 June, and are eligible to apply through Clearing for a choice.
- > **University/college to make final decision** – applicants who are waiting for their university or college to confirm their conditional offer. The decision will be based on whether they meet the conditions of the offer.
- > **Applicant to reply to revised offer** – applicants who have received a changed course offer from their chosen university or college, e.g. a change of course, entry year, or campus. These applicants need to reply to the revised offer in Track.
- > **Final place accepted** – applicants who have firmly accepted an unconditional offer, received an unconditional offer after meeting their conditional offer requirements, or been given a place in Clearing, for example, UF. Applicants who choose to use Adjustment will be displayed in one of the categories below.
 - **Registered for Adjustment** – applicants who have registered in Track to use Adjustment.
 - **Placed through Adjustment** – applicants who have been accepted for an alternative place through Adjustment.
- > **Application cancelled** – there are several reasons why an application may be cancelled. It is usually because the applicant has chosen to cancel the application within 14 days of the date it was processed. If this is the case, the application fee is refunded, and the applicant is able to submit another application in the same academic year.
- > **Withdrawn from this year's cycle** – applications that have been completely withdrawn from UCAS for the current academic year, either by the applicant or by the university or college the applicant accepted as their unconditional firm choice. Applicants are not able to submit another application in the same academic year.

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Disabled students, mental health, learning differences and long-term illness

Every year, over 60,000 students with physical and/or mental health conditions, long-term illnesses, or learning differences apply through UCAS to study at a university or college in the UK, and access a wide range of support available to help with their studies, day-to-day activities, travel, or lifestyle.

Support will vary from one course provider to another, but all universities and colleges must, under the Equality Act 2010, make reasonable adjustments to ensure students are not disadvantaged. In the rare instance the university or college cannot meet the student's needs, their choice can be substituted with another.

All applicants have the opportunity to disclose a condition or impairment when they complete their application. There are a number of options to choose from, including 'No disability', and a free text box to enter further details about their support needs.

Universities and colleges will consider the application on the same academic criteria as any other. This information will be shared with those who are responsible for putting support in place ready for the student's arrival; the course provider may contact them for further information, and to talk about the support services they can offer. Information shared with UCAS is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

It is especially important for international students to contact the course provider in advance, as funding arrangements to support them can be different from UK students. They may be able to bring support funding from their home country to study in the UK, but they will need to arrange this with the university or college well in advance. More information can be found on the British Council website, at www.britishcouncil.org.

If an applicant is concerned about disclosing an impairment or condition on their application, please encourage them not to be. This information will not be used when making an academic judgement about their application – in fact, it would be unlawful to do so under the Equality Act 2010. This information is used to ensure the student is supported throughout their studies - even if they decide not to use the support, having it in place means it is ready in case their circumstances change.

It's a good idea for applicants to contact universities before they apply, to check what support is available and that it meets their needs – they can arrange to talk to the disability and/or mental health adviser. They will also be able to arrange any support needed to attend interviews and open days.

You can find more information at www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/disabled-students

Care experienced children

All applicants with a permanent home in the UK are asked if they have ever been in local authority care, including foster care, in a residential care home, under a home supervision order (Scotland), or kinship care.

Disclosing they have been in care means the university or college may be able to help with:

- > support for year-round accommodation, including during holidays
- > bursaries, scholarships, or access to hardship funds
- > financial advice, such a budgeting and applying for additional support
- > support services, such as counselling, childcare, disability, and careers guidance

Universities and colleges treat this information in confidence. They may contact a student to discuss if they need any extra resources or support during their course.

For further advice, see our 'Supporting care leavers toolkit' at www.ucas.com/supporting-care-leavers-toolkit.



Top tip – Visit the Propel website at propel.org.uk for information about moving into higher education from care, and specific details about the support individual universities and colleges across the UK offer.

Students who are estranged from their family

Do you have students planning to go to university or college who don't have the support and approval of their family network, due to a breakdown in their relationship (also known as being 'estranged')? Many universities can offer support with:

- > year-round accommodation, including during the holidays
- > financial help, including bursaries, and support with applying for student finance as an independent student
- > help with mental health and wellbeing support services, such as counselling, childcare, disability, and careers guidance

We recommend students contact universities and colleges before they apply, to check what support is available. We would also suggest that, with the student's permission, their circumstances are mentioned in their reference.

We've teamed up with the charity Stand Alone to provide estranged students with all the support and information they need to prepare for uni life. Visit www.ucas.com/estranged-students to find out more.

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Students with care or parenting responsibilities

Students who are parents, or provide regular care to a family member or friend with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or addiction, may be able to access additional support during their studies. This can include:

- > financial support, including bursaries
- > help with managing health and wellbeing
- > support services, such as counselling, childcare, disability, and careers guidance

We recommend students contact universities and colleges before they apply, to check what support is available. We would also suggest that, with the student's permission, their circumstances are mentioned in their reference.

We've produced a guide to help student carers write their personal statement – www.ucas.com/carers-your-personal-statement.

Students with care responsibilities may also find the charity Carers Trust website useful – carers.org.

Refugees and asylum seekers

The support available to students who are refugees and asylum seekers wanting to enter higher education depends on their status.

Students with **official refugee** status in the UK are entitled to apply for student finance, and will be considered a 'home' student for calculating tuition fees. This also applies to students with humanitarian protection, although the rules around eligibility depends on where in the UK you live. Visit www.ukcisa.org.uk for the latest information.

Asylum seekers are usually considered as 'overseas' students, and are therefore not eligible for student finance, and are subject to different tuition fees. However, some universities offer scholarships to students seeking asylum in the UK. This also applies to students with limited or discretionary leave to remain (ILR/DLR), and forced migrants.

At the age of 18, many young people will face a change of status. University admissions staff are aware of this complication, and will advise according to their policies. It's essential that any change of status is communicated to the universities immediately, as this may affect the student's fee status and the help they are eligible for. Any concerns or queries can be addressed with the university or college directly, or contact UKCISA or Coram Children's Legal Centre for further help.

We recommend students contact universities and colleges before they apply, to check what support is available. The following organisations can offer specialised information and advice for supporting displaced people who wish to go into higher education:

- > **Refugee Support Network** – offers support services and resources, such as the 'Thinking Ahead to Higher Education Toolkit' to help refugees and asylum seekers apply to university – www.refugeesupportnetwork.org.
- > **Student Action for Refugees (STAR)** – a student network, supporting refugees in the UK, which provides a list of all scholarships available in the UK – www.star-network.org.uk.
- > **Article 26** – a Helena Kennedy Foundation project, supporting asylum seekers, and offering bursaries – article26.hkf.org.uk.
- > **UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)** – information and advice about fee status, and issues related to immigration and education – www.ukcisa.org.uk.
- > **Coram Children's Legal Centre** – free legal information, advice, and representation for children, and their families or carers – www.childrenslegalcentre.com.

For more information, visit www.ucas.com/finance/additional-funding/student-finance-refugees-and-asylum-seekers.

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Service children

A ‘service child’ has at least one parent or carer who is serving in the armed forces, is a reservist, or has done so in the past. A number of universities and colleges work to support service children through their application and transition, including through outreach activities and events.

To help service children with their UCAS application, we have worked closely with the Service Children’s Progression (SCiP) Alliance to create some helpful resources.

For more information and resources, visit the SCiP Alliance website at www.scipalliance.org.



Top tip – We strongly recommend students contact universities and colleges prior to application, to discuss their individual circumstances, and find out what support is available. If there is any change to their status, they need to update their university or college immediately. For more information, visit www.ucas.com/undergraduate-individual-needs.

Widening participation

We support widening participation (widening access in Wales and Scotland), and work in partnership with charities and other sector organisations to provide practical and inspiring information, advice, and resources for underrepresented groups. We also produce reports to inform public debate, including our Progression Pathways report, which describes and explores pathways which give students the opportunity to progress to a bachelor’s degree in an incremental way – progressively securing qualifications at intermediate levels – and those which combine study with work.

Find out more at www.ucas.com/widening-participation.



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UCAS Tariff points

Some universities and colleges use Tariff points in their entry requirements. Applicants may receive an offer of a place that is conditional on achieving a certain number of UCAS Tariff points. Our Tariff points calculator at [ucas.com/tariff-calculator](https://www.ucas.com/tariff-calculator) can help students understand how many Tariff points their qualifications carry.

It's important to make sure your students understand they cannot 'double count' exams in the same subject. Points for GCE AS qualifications or SQA Highers cannot be included if an applicant has been assessed in the same subject at A level, or Advanced Higher.

For more guidance on the UCAS Tariff, visit www.ucas.com/advisers/tariff.

Here is an example of how an applicant would add up their Tariff points. Only the points shown in **bold** can be included in the total.

Subject	Level	Grade	Tariff points
History	GCE AS	C	12
English language	GCE AS	B	16
French	GCE AS	B	16
Health and social care	GCE A	C	32
English language	GCE A	B	40
French	GCE A	C	32
Total Tariff points			116

International students: A small number of international/non-UK qualifications are included on the Tariff for 2021 entry. At the time of publication, these are:

- > Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
- > International Baccalaureate
- > Irish Leaving Certificate
- > University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations
- > US and Canadian Advanced Placement Programme
- > Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību (Latvia)
- > Baccalauréat Général (France)
- > Gaokao (China)
- > Global Assessment Certificate (Australia)
- > Gymnasialer Maturitätsausweis/certificat de maturité gymnasiale/attestato di maturità liceale (Switzerland)

Please check www.ucas.com/tariff for the most up-to-date list of qualifications included on the Tariff.

If an international student's qualifications are not included on the Tariff, universities and colleges can make an offer based on exam grades. Contact universities to check their entry requirements for international qualifications.



Tariff points for some popular qualifications

Scottish Higher qualification and grade	Scottish Advanced Higher grade	Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate	Extended Project Qualification	AS level	A level	BTEC Extended Diploma	New Tariff points	BTEC Diploma	BTEC Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Certificate	IB Diploma Higher	IB Diploma Standard	IB Diploma Extended Essay / Theory of Knowledge
						D*D*D*	168						
						D*D*D	160						
						D*DD	152						
						DDD	144						
						DDM	128						
						DMM	112	D*D*					
							104	D*D					
						MMM	96	DD					
						MMP	80	DM					
						MPP	64	MM					
	A	A*			A*		56		D*		H7		
	B	A			A	PPP	48	MP	D		H6		
	C	B			B		40						
A							33						
	D	C			C		32	PP	M		H5		
			A*				28			D*		S7	
B							27						
		D	A		D		24			D	H4	S6	
C							21						
			B	A			20						
		E	C	B	E		16		P	M	S5	S5	
D							15						
			D	C			12				H3	S4	A
				D			10						B
			E				8			P			C
				E			6					S3	D
							4						E

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Replying to offers

When an applicant has decisions from all their choices, they need to decide which one(s) they want to accept. The date they must reply to their offers by is shown in Track.

- > They can accept one offer as their firm choice.
- > If that's a conditional offer, they can also accept a second offer as an insurance choice, if they want to, in case they don't meet the conditions of their firm choice.
- > Any other offers must be declined.

Choosing the right course and university or college is a very important decision – the student will be investing a lot of time, money, and effort, and it can be difficult to change if they're not satisfied. To help applicants make an informed decision about where to apply, what to study, and whether to accept an offer, the university or college is required to make information available under consumer protection legislation.

You should encourage the applicant to read and understand this information before making a decision. If they have not received this information, or they're unclear about anything, they should contact the university or college to ask for further advice.

You can find out more at www.ucas.com/your-consumer-rights.

If an applicant firmly accepts an unconditional offer, they are committing themselves to take up that place, and cannot hold an insurance choice.

Applicants need to think very carefully, and make sure they do not accept an offer from any university or college if they would not be prepared to study there.

Did you know?

Applicants don't have to hold an insurance choice. If they aren't sure any of their other offers are right for them, it might be better to wait and see what's available in Clearing. That way, they won't have to negotiate their way out of an offer they don't want.

It's important that applicants reply by the date we give them in Track.. This date depends on when they receive the last decision from their chosen universities and colleges.

Last decision from university or college received on or before	Applicants must reply on or before
20 May 2021	10 June 2021 (unless they are using Extra to find a place)
13 July 2021	14 July 2021 (including Extra choices)

Your students need to understand that their date could be different from their friends' deadlines – there is no single date for all applicants.

An important message for your students

If they don't reply to their offers in Track on or before their reply date, UCAS will decline them on their behalf. This means they will lose all their offers.

The UCAS application process complies with consumer law and the Competition and Markets Authority's advice. This means applicants have 14 days to change their mind after they accept an offer, which constitutes a contractual decision.

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Extra – a chance to apply to more universities and colleges

All is not lost if your students are not offered a place at any of their five choices, or they decline all their offers. You can encourage them to use Extra to apply to other universities and colleges that still have vacancies. It's a free service that gives applicants an opportunity to look for a place earlier, instead of waiting for Clearing. They can apply for several courses in Extra, but only one course at a time. There are four steps to using Extra:

1. From 11 February, search for courses with vacancies in the UCAS search tool at www.ucas.com/search.
2. Think about related and different subjects.
3. Get in touch with the university or college to check they can consider them. If they want to apply for a course different from their original choices, they can explain they've changed their mind, and offer to send a revised personal statement to support their application. However, they cannot change their original personal statement.
4. Add the course details in Track.

When applicants are eligible for Extra, they will have the status 'Waiting for Extra/Clearing/new choice(s)'. You can view this in the adviser portal under 'Tracking offers and decisions'.

The Extra process operates from 11 February until 4 July 2021.

Exam results and Confirmation

UCAS receives exam results from many awarding bodies, and sends them to the universities and colleges that are holding offers for applicants. Check which exam results we receive at www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results.

If your students are taking any other qualifications – in particular, non-UK qualifications – they must send their results to the universities and colleges themselves as soon as they receive them.

Universities and colleges will want proof of all qualifications entered in Apply (e.g. GCSEs).

International and EU students may have to send proof of their results to their chosen universities in certificates or transcripts. Different universities and colleges have different policies for how they want to receive them – some might ask for them as soon as they receive the application, while others might do their initial assessment of the application before asking to see proof of results.

When universities and colleges receive exam results, they decide whether the applicant has met the conditions of their offer. If they have, the university or college will confirm the place, and the applicant is placed.

This is called Confirmation.



Top tip – It's a bit of an urban myth that we update Track at midnight on results day – we don't! Your students need to wait until our published time in the morning to see if they're accepted, so they might as well get some sleep.

- > **If a university or college confirms a 'firmly accepted' offer**, the applicant is committed to taking up that place. The insurance choice, if they have one, becomes redundant.
- > **If a university or college does not confirm a 'firmly accepted' offer**, the applicant may meet the conditions of their insurance choice, in which case they are committed to take up that place.

If an applicant chooses an insurance choice, they must be willing to take up the place. If they end up committed to their insurance place and do not want it, they will have to withdraw their application altogether, or release themselves into Clearing. This can be done in Track.

If an applicant's results are better than expected, and they've met and exceeded the conditions of their firmly accepted offer, they have a short time to research and secure an alternative course in Adjustment, if they want to do this – see full details on page 35.

If an applicant doesn't meet the conditions of either their firm or insurance choice, they may still have their place confirmed. This is at the discretion of the university or college, and depends on a number of factors, such as how far off their results are from their offer, other students' exam results, and the popularity of the course. Once the results have been published, if no decision has been made, it's often worth the applicant calling the university or college to talk to them about their application.

If an applicant doesn't have their firm or insurance place confirmed, they will automatically be able to use Clearing, unless they are offered an alternative course. See 'Change of course' below to see how this works, and page 36 for information about Clearing.



Top tip – tracking offers and decisions in the adviser portal will show real-time data on SQA and A level results days (once the embargo periods have been lifted).

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Change of course

If an applicant doesn't meet the conditions of their offer, a university or college may offer them an alternative, such as:

- > a different course
- > a deferred entry place (2022 instead of 2021)
- > a different point of entry (a 'year zero' foundation year instead of year one of a degree course)

If this happens, applicants have five days to decide if they want to accept the alternative offered. All their options are explained in Track.

Delayed or late exam results

Universities will wait until 31 August to receive exam results, unless they specify a different date. If the results are not available until after this, they are not obliged to hold the place open. If you know of any results likely to be subject to delay, it's important the university or college is notified in good time.

Reviews and appeals

Applicants who use the reviews and appeals services have no guarantee their offers will remain open. It is imperative to notify universities of a possible change of grade as soon as a review is logged with the awarding body. Although universities and colleges are under no obligation to agree to wait for the re-mark or appeal, students should ask them if they are able to hold the offer open. For more information, go to www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results.

Results are better than expected – think about Adjustment

If an applicant both meets and exceeds the conditions of their firmly accepted offer, they have up to five calendar days from the time their place was confirmed, or A level results day – whichever is later – to reconsider where and what to study. This process is known as Adjustment.

Applicants register for Adjustment in Track. Although the option to register is visible for all applicants whose conditional firm (CF) place has been confirmed, only those who have met and exceeded their original CF offer are eligible. It's up to the universities and colleges to verify whether the applicant has met and exceeded their conditional firm offer. For examples of meeting and exceeding offers, please go to www.ucas.com/adjustment.

A summary of Adjustment

- > It is optional.
- > Applicants use Adjustment to look for an alternative course, without losing their secured place.
- > The Adjustment process runs from 19 August (A level results day, when Track opens) until 31 August 2021.
- > An applicant has five calendar days to use Adjustment, from 19 August, or the day their application status changes from CF to UF, whichever is later. If an offer is made UF less than five days before 31 August, the applicant will only have whatever time is left between then and 31 August.
- > If an applicant registers for Adjustment by mistake, please tell them not to worry, and not to take any further action. When the five-day period is over, their original place will remain unchanged.
- > There are no Adjustment vacancy lists. The applicant needs to contact a university or college to discuss the availability of an Adjustment place.
- > To secure an Adjustment place, the applicant must receive an alternative offer through UCAS before the five-day period ends.
- > If an applicant does not receive an alternative place, they remain accepted at their current university or college.
- > Single entry applicants need to pay an additional application fee of £6 to use Adjustment.

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3.4 What about Clearing?

What is Clearing?

UCAS operates a service called Clearing which is an opportunity for students who have not got a confirmed place to find a course using UCAS' search tool – the only official vacancy listing. Our Clearing service is used by tens of thousands of applicants each year and runs from 5 July 2021.

Who can use Clearing?

Applicants become eligible for Clearing at different times, for one of the following reasons:

- > Place is not confirmed after their exam results are published.
- > No offers received.
- > They declined or have not replied to a confirmed offer of a changed course and, as a result, don't hold any offers.
- > Application was made after 30 June 2021.
- > They have chosen to release themselves into Clearing.

If they only made one choice on their original application, and paid the single choice fee of £20, applicants can go through Clearing if they pay an extra £6.

How do applicants use Clearing?

- > From 5 July, if an applicant is eligible for Clearing, they can apply for a course in Track.
- > Lists of courses with vacancies in Clearing are published from 5 July until late September in our search tool – www.ucas.com/search.
- > Your students should check the lists for suitable courses, then contact universities and colleges to find out more about the course, and see if they will offer them a place. **They must do this themselves – admissions tutors want to speak to them, not their parents or teachers.**
- > Applicants can apply for any course that has places left. They don't have to keep to the same subjects they first applied for.
- > The applicant must have permission from the university or college before they add a Clearing choice in Track. If they don't, their application may be delayed.
- > If an applicant originally had an offer and wants to be released into Clearing, they can do this themselves in Track.

Once a Clearing choice has been added, the applicant cannot change it until the university or college has made a decision. If they're accepted, they are firmly committed to that course. If the applicant is unsuccessful, they can repeat the process.

Find out more at www.ucas.com/clearing.

Online self-release into Clearing

If an applicant is placed but no longer wants to go to their firm choice, they can use the 'decline your place' button in Track to release themselves into Clearing.

How does it work?

The process is simple, but incorporates a number of warnings to make sure applicants fully understand what they are doing.

1. The applicant signs in to Track, and clicks the 'Decline my place' button on their homepage.
2. They will be taken to a page which explains what they're about to do, and a drop-down question which they must complete, before confirming.
3. They will then receive an email to confirm they're in Clearing, and advising them to phone the university or college they declined, if they made a mistake.

If an applicant uses this feature their contract with the university or college will be cancelled, and they will lose their place – therefore, they should only use this button if they're sure they no longer want their place.

Clearing Plus

Unplaced students in Clearing can view a list of courses with vacancies which they've personally been matched to via Track – alongside our search tool which will still have 30,000 course options.

How will it work?

If your students find themselves unplaced, there are still plenty of universities and colleges looking for applicants just like them. Now with Clearing Plus, finding the right alternative has never been easier:

1. If applicants find themselves in Clearing, there will be a new button in Track called 'View matches'. If they click this, they can start browsing courses they've been matched to, based on their application and the students providers have told us they're looking for.
2. If they find a course they want to be considered for, they can click an 'I'm interested' button, and their details will be passed on to the uni.
3. If the uni still has places, they may contact the applicant to discuss things further, and make an offer.
4. If your students receive an offer, all that's left to do is add it as a Clearing choice – so their place can be confirmed.

Although Clearing Plus is designed to enhance the process of finding another place, it's important students remain proactive. With the reassurance that unis are looking for applicants like them, Clearing Plus gives your students the extra confidence they need to reach out to unis themselves.

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3.5 Reports for advisers

In addition to accessing the free ‘Tracking offers and decisions’ section of the adviser portal, you will also be able to download your Applicant Status Report and Final Destination Report.

Applicant Status Report (ASR) – filter and sort your applicants, and download an ASR with real-time data, provided in an Excel spreadsheet. This is a snapshot of your students’ statuses, which pulls through applicant data including their PID, their group, choices, offers (in summary and in full), and predicted grades. It is worth noting that staff who have access to tracking offers and decisions will only be able to see applicants in the groups they have permission to see.

Final Destination Report (available on the second tab in the spreadsheet) – applicants will only appear in this list when they have been placed, and therefore have their final destination confirmed.

More information on how to access, download, and interpret the data can be found in our [adviser portal guidance](#).

Upgrade your insight, with additional reports

We have a number of packages available to purchase, for all the insight you need to assist with reporting, planning, and progression monitoring. You can view these from the ‘Data and reporting’ tile in the adviser portal. Each is designed to offer a different level of insight, but all provide information in easily accessible, touch-of-a-button formats, and are accessible through our secure file transfer system.

Monthly key statistics report – £50

Designed to save you time, by providing in-cycle key statistical data about your students, their choices, and their offers. Presented in an infographic style, this gives a snapshot view of the status of your students, so you and your senior leadership team have complete oversight of their progress throughout the cycle.

Silver package – £200

This package provides more in-depth information about your students, and their route to higher education. Focused on better understanding your current situation, and how it compares to previous years, it’s the ideal option for planning ahead and identifying areas for focus.

You can use the new interactive destination map with your students, to show them where previous students went on to study. We also provide a PDF destination map showing the number of students and their destinations, for you to share with students and parents – the perfect aid to demonstrate outcomes.

- > **Monthly key statistics report**
- > **Annual progression report** – this end of cycle report shows which universities and subjects your students have progressed to and the offers they received, and compares your previous cohorts of us to five years. It’s available from mid-November, with CSV files for further analysis, and a key statistics infographic. It comes in two parts:
 - a. centre report
 - b. your centre measured against the sector (combined registered centres)
- > **Annual destination data map (new)** – showing where your students were placed in the previous cycle. This is a printable PDF poster, available from mid-November.

Gold package – £275

This package combines all the benefits of the silver package, with increased information to help you understand your performance against specific competitors – valuable insight to help with forward planning in highly competitive local markets. This report is delivered with CSV files for further analysis, and also has a key summary infographic.

- > **Monthly key statistics report**
- > **Annual progression report**
- > **Annual destination data map**
- > **Annual competitor report** – directly compare your centre against a group of five or more competitors, which you define. You can order two competitor reports, to understand any variations in where you sit between two groups. (e.g. local rankings against national rankings).

For more information, and to place an order, please visit ucas.com/data-and-reporting.

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SECTION 4: TRAINING AND CONFERENCES FOR ADVISERS



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SECTION 4: TRAINING AND CONFERENCES FOR ADVISERS

There are a number of dedicated events, conferences, webinars, and professional development sessions for teachers and advisers right across the year – everything needed to help you help your students.

Online training

Our training is now delivered digitally, which offers greater flexibility as it's available to you whenever and wherever suits you best. Our Professional Development Platform for advisers gives you access to a series of short modules, designed to expand your understanding of the UCAS admissions service, and includes quick 'how-to' guides on the adviser portal. We also offer training modules for those supporting international and EU applicants.

Visit www.ucas.com/training for the most up-to-date information.

To access our free online training, go to www.pdp.ucas.com.

'I'VE MADE SOME WONDERFUL CONTACTS, CONNECTED WITH COLLEAGUES, AND SHARED NOTES AND EXPERIENCES – JUST IN THE LAST WEEK.'

Conferences

Our popular UCAS adviser conferences run throughout the year, and provide a unique opportunity to:

- > speak with representatives from UK universities and other relevant organisations, to gain first-hand insight and advice on how you can help your students
- > hear from the education sector's leading experts – including admissions and student recruitment specialists
- > learn about upcoming changes to the education landscape, and the impact on students applying to university or college
- > discover how to best prepare your students for their next steps

Visit www.ucas.com/conferences for more information.

'THE ORGANISATION AND CONTENT EXCEEDED MY EXPECTATIONS.'

Adviser webinars and live Q&A sessions

We regularly host live webinars and Q&A sessions for you to join and get your questions answered. Often we are joined by expert panellists who share insight and advice to help you support your students.

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SECTION 5: UCAS TERMS EXPLAINED



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SECTION 5: UCAS TERMS EXPLAINED

Adjustment – an opportunity for applicants who have met and exceeded the conditions of their firm offer to research alternative courses, while remaining accepted at their original confirmed university or college place.

Admissions test – some universities and colleges require applicants to sit an admissions test for certain courses, in addition to making a UCAS application.

Adviser portal – the service UCAS registered centres use to manage and track the progress of their students' applications – before and after they have been sent to UCAS.

Applicant – a person who has started a UCAS application.

Apply – UCAS' online application system for applying for higher education courses.

ASR – the Applicant Status Report (ASR) is available from the adviser portal, and is a real-time snapshot listing all your students, their predicted grades, their choice of universities and colleges, their offers, full conditions, and replies – it's available anytime you want to download it.

Buzzword – a word or phrase, chosen by a school or college, which links its students to them when they register in Apply.

Cancellation – an applicant, university, or college cancels a choice before a decision has been made.

Centre – an organisation advising students applying to HE (in addition to schools and colleges, this includes the British Council and careers offices).

Changed course offer – applicants might get one of these if they haven't met their offer conditions, or if the university or college has made changes to the courses they run. It might involve a different start date or point of entry, or a different course altogether.

Clearing – the service used towards the end of the application cycle. If your students have not yet secured a place, they can apply for course vacancies.

Clearing plus – Unplaced students in Clearing can view a list of courses with vacancies that they've personally been matched to in Track.

Conditional offer – an offer made by a university or college, subject to certain conditions, usually related to exam results.

Confirmation – the outcome of a conditional offer which has been accepted by an applicant. If the applicant meets the conditions, the place will be confirmed – if not, the applicant may not be accepted.

Deferral – holding an offer to start in the following year.

Entry requirements – what the university or college recommends you need to do/have to get on the course – from qualifications and specific subjects or grades, to interviews, admissions tests, and medical requirements.

Extra – the opportunity to apply for another course, if an applicant has used all five choices and is not holding any offers. It runs from 11 February until the beginning of July.

FDR – the Final Destination Report (FDR) shows confirmation of your students' destinations, and is available to download from your 'Tracking offers and decisions' section, as and when applicants are placed.

FE – further education.

Firm offer – the offer an applicant has accepted as their first choice.

Fraud – provision of false, incomplete, or misleading information by an applicant.

HE – higher education.

UCAS Hub – an information and advice platform designed to provide students with all the tools and information they need to explore their options – in one place – and for free.

IAG – information, advice, and guidance offered by advisers about progression to higher education.

Insurance offer – the offer an applicant has accepted as their second choice (in case they don't meet the conditions of their firm offer).

Invitation – an invitation (shown in Track) from a university or college to attend an interview or audition, or to provide a portfolio, essay, or other piece of work.

Nominated access – applicants can supply details of a third party (usually a parent, guardian, or teacher) to act on their behalf in contacting UCAS.

Open days search tool – an online search tool at www.ucas.com/open-days to find university and college open days and virtual tours.

Personal ID – a ten-digit individual number assigned to an applicant when they register to use Apply. Applicants will be asked to provide this number if they contact our Customer Experience Centre.

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Personal statement – a piece of text applicants write to show why they’re applying, and why they’d be a great student for a university or college to accept.

Point of entry – year of entry to the course – for example, ‘2’ means they would start in the second year of the course.

Reports for registered centres – a range of UCAS reports designed to help advisers with reporting, IAG planning, and progression monitoring.

Search tool – our online search tool for undergraduate courses at universities, colleges, conservatoires, and other HE course providers – www.ucas.com/search.

Similarity detection software – used by UCAS on all applications, to identify personal statements containing plagiarised sentences or paragraphs.

Status code – every undergraduate applicant is assigned a status code. These can be used to quickly open a student bank account with a bank or building society. Find out more at www.ucas.com/student-banking.

UCAS Tariff – the UCAS Tariff is the system for allocating points to some qualifications used for entry to undergraduate higher education. Not all qualifications are included on the Tariff.

Track – our online tracking system, where applicants can see how their application is progressing. They can view university and college decisions, reply to offers, and change some details, such as email address, postal address, and telephone number.

Unconditional offer – an offer given to an applicant who has met all the academic requirements for the course – the place is theirs if they want it. The university or college might have other requirements, such as financial or medical conditions, which need to be met.

Unibuddy – an online platform giving students the chance to talk to current undergraduates about their experiences and get peer-to-peer advice.

Unsuccessful – the university or college has not offered the applicant a place on the course.

Withdrawal – before the decision has been made to make an offer or not, the applicant, or the university or college, can withdraw a choice.

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UCAS information and advice

The **UCAS hub** is designed to help your students explore all their post-18 options in one central place, but on ucas.com we also offer a range of information and advice about apprenticeships, taking a gap year, and going into employment, as well as resources to support students exploring and applying to higher education.

We're aware that many teachers and advisers are also keen to refresh their own knowledge of these options, so they can advise and support their students as they approach their post-18 choices. Here is a quick guide to the information, advice, and resources on ucas.com.

Higher education

- > [Thinking about higher education](#)
- > [Exploring university](#)
- > [Open day and event tips](#)
- > [Choosing what to study](#)
- > [Choosing where to study](#)
- > [Entry requirements](#)
- > [Personal statement](#)
- > [Search for courses](#)
- > [International students](#)
- > [Disabled students](#)
- > [Estranged students](#)
- > [Students with caring or parenting responsibilities](#)
- > [Care leavers](#)
- > [Applying](#)
- > [Interviews and auditions](#)
- > [Student fees and finance](#)
- > [Accommodation](#)
- > [Preparing to start](#)
- > [Study at a conservatoire](#)

Apprenticeships

- > [Apprenticeships in the UK](#)
- > [Apprenticeships in Wales](#)
- > [Apprenticeships in Scotland](#)
- > [Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland](#)
- > [Apprenticeships in England](#)
- > [Apprenticeship search tool](#)

Gap years

- > [Gap years](#)
- > [Videos about gap years](#)

Going to work

- > [How to get into work](#)
- > [What are employers looking for?](#)
- > [Tips on finding career ideas](#)
- > [Take UCAS' Buzz quiz](#)
- > [Explore jobs and careers](#)
- > [Is work experience important?](#)
- > [Applying for jobs – tips](#)
- > [How to write a CV](#)
- > [Working for yourself – self-employment and starting a business](#)
- > [How you get paid at work](#)

To help you support your students with their research, we've developed a number of classroom resources, lesson activities, and home work packs for you use and share with them. Download your copies at ucas.com/which-for-teachers.

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ANNEX A: **DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SECURITY**



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ANNEX A: DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SECURITY

During the application process, you will be processing your students' personal data. You are responsible for the correct handling of this data, as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018.

Looking after your adviser portal sign in details

To guarantee the security of your students' data, please ensure your password is unique but memorable, in line with our onscreen guidelines. Your password must be between eight and 30 characters long, and contain all the following:

- > uppercase letter
- > lowercase letter
- > number
- > special character (e.g. !£\$%#)

Please note, UCAS cannot reset your password for you. You must use the 'Forgotten password' link on the sign in screen.

Please do not share your sign in details. If another member of staff requires access to the system, those with staff management permissions can grant access for them. Please **contact the Schools Team** for help with this.

Setting up groups

Users should be given access to the appropriate level of data they need to conduct the duties of their role. Setting up the appropriate groupings in your centre's system will assist with this, making sure staff can only access the data of the students they are supporting.

Information sharing

The personal data stored in the system should not be shared with other centres. An individual's choice of where to apply should be confidential to them. The system should not be used to discuss this.

The personal data is gathered for the application process, and should not be used for any other purpose without the consent of the individual.

Hard copies

Please do not print personal data unless there is no other option. If you need to print any personal data from the system, you need to ensure the handling of this data is secure.

- > **Do not** leave the data in any open areas where it may be seen by third parties.
- > **Do not** take the data out of your centre if at all possible. This will ensure there are no issues of loss in transit.
- > **Do not** leave hard copy data in vehicles, or have it on view on public transport. If you do have to take it outside of the centre, please use a secure method of transportation, such as a locked briefcase.
- > **Do** store hard copy data securely. If this data is to be kept in hard copy form, it should be securely stored. We would advise a 'double lock' approach, whereby it is kept in a locked drawer, in a locked room.
- > **Do not** keep hard copy data for longer than it is needed. Please refer to your centre's retention policy, and ensure this is enforced.
- > **Do** ensure it is confidentially destroyed when you have finished using it.
- > **Do not** allow others to see this data if they would not be able to access it via the system.

Inappropriate use of the system

Accessing personal data, where you do not have a legitimate reason to do so, is a breach of the Data Protection Act (DPA).

Please do not look at students' details who you are not supporting. This includes students you are related to, or know in a non-professional capacity.

Subject access requests

If a student requests access to any of their personal data, you should action this in line with your own data protection policy and processes.

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ANNEX B: EMBARGO GUIDELINES



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ANNEX B: EMBARGO GUIDELINES

Examination results

Confidentiality of results

Each year, UCAS and universities and colleges are under strict embargo arrangements, through signed results embargo agreements with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The dates for 2021 will be confirmed closer to results days and published on ucas.com/advisers.

Each embargo period allows universities and colleges to prepare for the publication of examination results, so as many potential students as possible learn of their decisions by the official publication date through Track. This time also allows you, as teachers, advisers, and exam centres, to plan for the publication date.

During both embargo periods:

- > the adviser portal will not show updated/real-time information
- > universities and colleges cannot discuss any applicant's individual status with them, or with an adviser

Breaches and inferences

During both results embargo periods for **SQA** and **JCQ**, we are all responsible for adhering to the strict rules imposed on us to protect the release of results data until the published dates and times.

A breach not only includes disclosure of results, but also any indication as to the outcome of a student's application they may interpret as an inference of their results. For example, if a student is made an offer on the basis of AAA at A level, and they receive notification that they have been accepted before the embargo is lifted, they could infer that they have achieved AAA at A level.

It can be as stressful and confusing for applicants to hear an indication of the outcome of their application, as it is to hear of their actual results before publication day(s), particularly without the support network around them. It can also place unnecessary strain on other applicants who have not heard the outcome of their application and results.

Together, it is our responsibility to ensure all necessary steps are put in place to protect embargoed results information.

If you breach the embargo, please follow the steps as guided by either SQA or JCQ. If you become aware of a breach by a university or college, please contact awardingbodylinkage@ucas.ac.uk in the first instance.

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We have made all reasonable efforts to ensure the information in this publication was correct at time of publication. We will not, however, accept any liability for errors, omissions, or changes to information since publication. Wherever possible, any changes will be updated on the UCAS website (www.ucas.com).

Copies of this publication can be downloaded from www.ucas.com/adviserresources.

Terms of service for the adviser portal can be found at www.ucas.com/about-us/policies/terms-and-conditions/adviser-portal.

For further information and guidance about the UCAS application process for advisers, visit.

www.ucas.com/advisers