

UCAS

CLEARING SOLUTIONS 2026

EMAIL GUIDELINES



THANK YOU

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO ADVERTISE WITH UCAS.

Please take the time to read the following email specification guidelines, before submitting your creative to us.

These guidelines contain the relevant information to help you build a suitable email creative.

All adverts and their content are subject to approval by UCAS.

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CLEARING EMAILS

Email type	Date of send	Records**
SQA results day	Tuesday 4 August	Up to 2,000
A-level results day	Thursday 13 August	Up to 10,000
Post-results Friday	Friday 14 August	Up to 14,475
Post-results weekend (sat-Mon)	Saturday 15, Sunday 16, Monday 17 August	Up to 9,000
Records vary based on subject choice		
Post-results weeks one (Tues-Fri)	Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19, Thursday 20 Friday 21 August	Up to 7,900
Post results week two (Tues-Fri) ***	Tuesday 25, Wednesday 26, Thursday 27, Friday 28 August	Up to 3,300
Records vary based on subject choice		

* Dynamic email content (beyond personalisation) is not included within the packages as standard, but may be possible to purchase at additional cost – please contact us if this is of interest.

** This is the maximum number of records your email can be sent to that are included as part of the package. It may be possible to purchase additional records (except for A-level results day) nearer the time – please contact us to find out more.

Email volumes are subject to a 5% send tolerance of the total volume. If the total number of available records for targeting within your package is significantly lower than the specified volume, we will collaborate with you to identify a suitable alternative service of equivalent value.

Options may include expanded targeting criteria, additional records in another email send within your package, leveraging AI optimisation for sends, or an extra email.

*** Emails cannot be sent on Bank Holiday Monday, 31 August.



LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

All creatives must comply with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements including (but not limited to the following):

- ▶ DMA and CAP Codes
- ▶ ASA Guidelines
- ▶ FCA regulations
- ▶ Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
- ▶ If the Customer is regulated by any other body (e.g. Food Standards Agency, Advertising Standards Agency, Health and Safety Executive) it is the responsibility of the Customer to ensure the creative complies with any regulations or guidance issued by the relevant body.

Where the creatives contain any regulated content, it shall be subject to additional checks by UCAS which may impact on the proposed send date and may require changes to your creative including additional footers.

UCAS will not accept advertisements:

- ▶ in relation to products which may not be in the best interests of students.
- ▶ which could in any way undermine or potentially damage UCAS' name or reputation as an official and trustworthy body and as a registered charity.
- ▶ from companies, businesses or organisations which are not able to demonstrate that they are established and reputable concerns and suitable to be associated with UCAS.
- ▶ which in any way could be misleading to students, or which make any representations which cannot be substantiated to the satisfaction of UCAS.
- ▶ containing messages or images that are (or could be perceived to be) offensive, or relating to sex, violence, drugs, gambling, and alcohol. UCAS will not distribute content that is deemed to be inappropriate for any reason (not limited to those listed) or is deemed to adversely affect UCAS.
- ▶ adverts which for any reason UCAS consider are inappropriate or unsuitable for its customer audience.



EMAIL SPECIFICATIONS

All creatives will be sent with our header and footer – this is a legal requirement. Responsive html emails will require you to build this in yourselves.

The use of tracking cookies on UCAS' websites or products is prohibited

SUPPLYING YOUR EMAIL HTML CREATIVE

Things to include:

- ▶ 600px wide creative
- ▶ Inline styling
- ▶ Fully hosted images (UCAS cannot host images on behalf of clients)
- ▶ An email address to send a test to
- ▶ A creative less than 75KB (incl. images)
- ▶ Please ensure all your click trackers are included in the code
- ▶ Ensure href attributes are contained within `<a> ` tags
- ▶ Subject line and pre-header

Things to avoid:

- ▶ Styling should all be inline (only use CSS for general style elements, e.g. fonts / colours)
- ▶ Any `<div></div>` tags
- ▶ JavaScript
- ▶ EMBED tags
- ▶ Attributes in the BODY tag
- ▶ Background images
- ▶ Mapping and coordinate style coding
- ▶ Hexadecimal links on URLs
- ▶ Video and PDF files
- ▶ Image only emails

Deadline

Please send your creative **21 full days** before the scheduled send.

Late / incomplete artwork may result in your send being delayed or cancelled.

Translations for creatives in a foreign language can take up to a week longer than usual so please send these **28 full days** before the scheduled send date.

Do not rely on external (`<link rel="stylesheet">`) or embedded style sheets (those contained within the `<style>` tag above the `<body>` tag). Many email services cut everything above the body tag, and disable external style sheets.



BUILDING MOBILE RESPONSIVE HTML CODE

If you are using media queries to build a mobile responsive HTML email, please build our standard UCAS header and footer into your HTML (download links below). Unfortunately, this is not something we can implement for you due to the risk of breaking your code.

Both header and footer need to be on a white background, and for the text to be left aligned. Please do not copy and paste your code into the template.

Generic Clearing header and footer

Applicant accommodation header and footer

Please contact your Customer Manager or contact services@ucas.ac.uk for more information before supplying creatives of this type.

74% OF STUDENTS

surveyed said they usually open UCAS emails on their mobile.



CAN'T PROVIDE HTML?

If you're unable to provide an HTML email, UCAS offers a choice of five mobile responsive templates (choices below). Please note, there is no flexibility to amend the layout, and these designs are fixed.

Please supply us with all the images, text and links (including tracking links) for us to build your email into one of the below templates.

All assets need to adhere to the template of your choosing – i.e. the images must be provided in the sizes specified below. Please ensure that header images contain your logo.

- ▶ **One column**
- ▶ **Two columns**
- ▶ **Two columns alternate**
- ▶ **Three columns**
- ▶ **Large hero template**

If you are using a UCAS Template build, you now have the following colour theme options. Please pick one per email.

slate #1f2834 blue #3b92d9 aqua #3bc0c7 green #5db88d purple #836cd8 coral #fb705b yellow #fbc652.

If you wish to provide us with your chosen HEX codes we can amend these templates to match your branding.

Where a colour is not specified, UCAS will apply the default colour of 'slate' or a colour that is felt to best compliment the campaign content.



LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Your creative will be sent from the relevant UCAS sender address.

OUR INTRODUCTION

We are legally required to state who we are sending the email on behalf of. Your company name will be added into our introduction – i.e. ‘This email comes from UCAS Media. We’re sending you this on behalf of [client name], because – based on what you told us about yourself – we think you might find it useful.’

OPT OUT SCRIPT

Our opt out message is linked to a UCAS suppression list. You are, therefore, not required to provide an opt out link of your own. We will actively remove this to avoid confusion for the recipient, and any breach of DMA guidelines.

*(Where the creatives contain any regulated content, it shall be subject to additional checks by UCAS which may impact on the proposed send date and may require changes to your creative including additional footers).



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We would not recommend the use of all-image creative, as these can be blocked and create a poor user experience. Images may also be blocked, which would impact the look of the email. Please be aware that spam filters may be triggered when specific words and phrases are used in the body or subject line.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO AVOID:

- ▶ 'Money back'
- ▶ 'Cards accepted'
- ▶ 'Removal instructions'
- ▶ 'Extra income'
- ▶ '000'
- ▶ '£'
- ▶ 'For free'
- ▶ Capitalised subject lines

Content must not contain messages or images that are (or could be perceived to be) offensive, or relating to sex, violence, drugs, gambling, and alcohol. UCAS will not distribute content that is deemed to be inappropriate for any reason (not limited to those listed), or is deemed to adversely affect the UCAS spam score, with the final decision at the discretion of UCAS.

Please note, translations for creatives in a foreign language can take up to a week longer than usual.



CHECKLIST

Please consider the following questions before submitting your creative:

- ▶ If your code is responsive, have you implemented **our header and footer**?
- ▶ Have you included a **subject line and a pre-header**?
- ▶ Is the creative appropriate?
- ▶ Are your images hosted and fully referenced in the HTML?
- ▶ Have tracking links been implemented?
- ▶ If we are **building your email**, tell us which template you want to use, your chosen colour, and make sure you send us all the assets (including links).
- ▶ Creative consultation is available – please speak to your Customer Success Director or contact **educationservices@ucas.ac.uk**
- ▶ Creatives should be clearly labelled and sent to **Services@ucas.ac.uk** quoting the job reference number. Where files are too large to email please contact **Services@ucas.ac.uk** who will set up a secure file transfer link - please note we do not accept WeTransfer files



Reporting will be delivered via our online **self serve portal** with results being viewable within 48 hours of your campaign deployment. A User account will be set up and emailed to you with details of how to use the service - your Customer Manager will be on hand to support you with this. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the results of your campaign, please contact your Customer Manager.

If you have any queries, please contact:
UCAS Customer Success Team
Services@ucas.ac.uk

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