

# ADVISER GUIDE 2027

FOR ENTRY TO UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE IN 2027

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 AND HOW TO CONTACT US

**This guide is for staff at schools, colleges, and other centres, such as careers offices and agencies, who advise potential applicants to undergraduate 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 we provide.

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](http://www.ucas.com/becomeacentre). Once we've reviewed your application and it's successful, we'll let you know when you can access the adviser portal.

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

## CONTACT US

If you need to contact us about any aspect of the application process, our dedicated Adviser Help 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<sup>1</sup>**
- ▶ Phone from outside the UK – **+44 330 333 0239** (international call rates apply)
- ▶ Email – **[adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk](mailto: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**



<sup>1</sup> Calls will be charged at your standard network rate.

# YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A UCAS REGISTERED CENTRE

This guide, together with the [adviser portal terms of service](#), form your agreement with UCAS to operate as a UCAS registered centre and use the adviser portal. It's essential that you read this, share with colleagues supporting the UCAS application process in your school, college or centre, and keep up-to-date with changes.

As staff change regularly within registered centres, the person setting up your organisation for each new cycle (for example, the UCAS registered centre correspondent) will confirm agreement to the adviser portal terms of service, which include this Adviser Guide, on behalf of your organisation. This is part of the annual set-up process for your organisation to be able to manage applications.

## Your key responsibilities as a UCAS registered centre user are as follows:

- ▶ Understand the UCAS Undergraduate application process, and associated UCAS business rules, such as results embargo 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. 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 equal consideration dates.
  - The October equal consideration date is for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as for courses in medicine, veterinary medicine / science and dentistry.
  - The January equal consideration date is the date by which students have to submit an application if they want guaranteed consideration by universities or colleges. Any application submitted after this date may not be considered.

## 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
- ▶ identify relevant referees for each applicant and approve references
- ▶ ensure predicted grades and a reference are added to every application
- ▶ provide agreement for students who have shared that they are or have been in receipt of Free School Meals in the last six years (UK applicants only)
- ▶ check qualifications entered by your students are as complete and accurate as possible
- ▶ set a shortlist of qualifications and keep this up-to-date – it will help your students enter the correct qualifications in the application

- ▶ set relevant permissions for your staff and colleagues to access the adviser portal / applications
- ▶ set appropriate application fee payment methods for your students and follow our payments and billing process

## Ensure you and all staff members comply with data protection and information security best practice, set out in the [UCAS adviser portal terms of service](#) and this guide, which includes:

- ▶ ensuring the named UCAS registered centre correspondent contact details are up-to-date. Please inform us as soon as possible if this key contact needs to change
- ▶ informing UCAS immediately if you become aware of a security incident at your centre which has, or is likely to, impact on UCAS systems
- ▶ ensuring each member of staff registers with an individual email address associated with the official domain of the school, college or centre
- ▶ reminding staff and colleagues they should not share sign in details. If a member of staff requires access to the system, they must be set up as a user in their own right

Please read our complete guidance in [Annex A](#) Data Protection and Information security.

Our [adviser portal](#) guidance will help you with the above.

## 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
- ▶ ensure the contact details supplied are of the applicant, ensure the applicant retains access to both the UCAS Hub and their application throughout the duration of the process
- ▶ ensure the applicant is aware of how to contact UCAS for support.

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. See Annex B for our best practice guidance for agents.

To support students effectively, advisers should familiarise themselves with the UCAS applicant declaration. Students are required to agree to the declaration before submitting their application: [UCAS Undergraduate declaration](#). Students confirm agreement in the Terms and Conditions section prior to submission.

# STAYING UP-TO-DATE WITH CHANGES

## 2027 CHANGES

- ▶ **January equal consideration date (ECD):**  
The January equal consideration date will be Wednesday 13 January 2027, keeping the mid-week scheduling to avoid conflicts with weekends. View all the key dates at [www.ucas.com/key-dates-timeline](http://www.ucas.com/key-dates-timeline).
- ▶ **A clear view in the adviser portal**  
New tools in the adviser portal dashboard give you an overview of each student's journey highlighting their interests and engagement, from subject tasters to virtual work experiences. With everything in one place, you can personalise guidance and recommend tailored next steps.
- ▶ **Expanding fee waiver support to care leavers**  
UCAS is expanding its application fee waiver initiative to cover care leavers. Building on the introduction of the free school meals fee waiver, this new support aims to make it easier for care leavers to apply, while supporting universities and colleges with earlier outreach in the admissions process.
- ▶ **Uploading supporting documents**  
This year, students will have the option to upload supporting documents to specific sections of the application. Read our [guide to uploading documents](#).
- ▶ **Updates to questions in the application**
  - A refreshed 'More about you' section will make it easier for students to share any relevant conditions, disabilities or learning differences, using terminology that has been reviewed and aligned with sector standards.

- Students will be asked to share their biological sex as it appears on their birth certificate, which will include the option to respond with 'Prefer not to say'. This is for equality monitoring and reporting purposes only. The existing separate question on gender identity will remain unchanged.

- ▶ **Internal deadlines**  
You will be able to set internal application deadlines in the adviser portal for your students to see in the Hub.
- ▶ **The application fee**  
The UCAS Undergraduate fee enables UCAS to reinvest in new and enhanced tools and services that help students make more informed decisions. [See the application fee for 2027 entry](#).

For full details of these 2027 application changes, please go to the 2027 adviser toolkit at [www.ucas.com/2027-cycle-toolkit](http://www.ucas.com/2027-cycle-toolkit).

UCAS works closely with universities and colleges to make sure admissions processes in the UK are consistent, transparent, and fair, so every student has the opportunity to find their best fit. To achieve this, we have developed admissions rules and principles which we would encourage you to view: [www.ucas.com/how-we-work-with-providers-to-ensure-fair-admissions](http://www.ucas.com/how-we-work-with-providers-to-ensure-fair-admissions).



## CONNECT WITH US

### ucas.com

We have a dedicated section for advisers on our website at [www.ucas.com/advisers](http://www.ucas.com/advisers). Here you'll find all our latest news, events, advice, and resources to help you through the whole application cycle. We also have our adviser newsfeed to give you timely updates:

[www.ucas.com/adviser-news](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-news).

### UCAS' social media channels

Active on X, Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok? Stay in the loop by connecting with us @ucas\_online. You can also follow us on LinkedIn: [UCAS for advisers](#).

### Newsletters

The main UCAS registered correspondent will automatically receive our monthly newsletter, which includes essential updates and key information. It's important this information is shared across teams supporting students to ensure everyone is informed.

Other colleagues can also sign up to receive our broader monthly newsletter by visiting [www.ucas.com/adviser-updates](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-updates).

Students and parents can also sign up for tailored updates at [www.ucas.com/get-updates-ucas](http://www.ucas.com/get-updates-ucas). They'll get all the latest information, reminders and events details, straight to their inboxes!

### Adviser Lives

Join us in our live online learning sessions, created to help you in your role. Take a look at our upcoming events and watch playbacks of any you've missed at:

[www.ucas.com/adviser-lives](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-lives).

### The UCAS widget

The UCAS widget has been designed to be hosted on your school or college's website or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), to link your students and their parents to key information. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/widget](http://www.ucas.com/widget).

## TRAINING AND CONFERENCES FOR ADVISERS

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

### Adviser Fundamentals

Our one-day, in person, Adviser Fundamentals course, is designed for teachers and advisers who are new to their role. Join us at UCAS Cheltenham HQ or at a selection of regional venues for a full day of expert support and practical guidance. For full details please see [www.ucas.com/advisers/training](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/training).

### Online training – Professional Development Portal

Boost your UCAS knowledge with our on-demand training courses. Learn at your own pace with bite-sized activities covering key UCAS tools and processes. Simply log in at [ucas.com](http://ucas.com), access the courses via the adviser portal, or go directly to <https://pdp.ucas.com>. Click the Adviser button and start your learning journey today.

### Need further support?

For centres that would benefit from more personalised support, we can explore tailored on-site and digital training options.

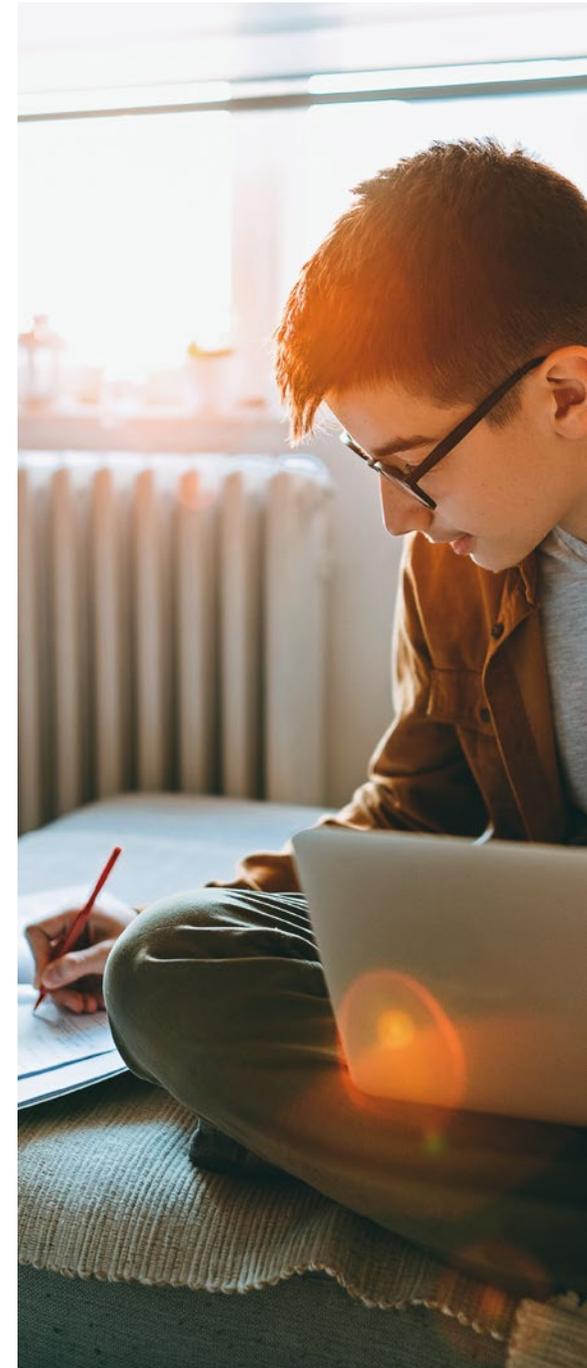
Visit [www.ucas.com/advisers/training](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/training) for the most up-to-date information.

### 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/ucas-events-advisers](http://www.ucas.com/ucas-events-advisers) for more information.





# 2027 ENTRY KEY DATES

<b>28 April 2026</b>	UCAS' search tool displays 2027 courses.
<b>5 May 2026</b>	The adviser portal opens for 2027 entry. From this date, you can set up your adviser portal ready for your students to link to your centre.
<b>12 May 2026</b>	Undergraduate applications open for 2027 entry. From this date, applicants can start their applications and send them to you for references and approval.
<b>9 July 2026</b>	Conservatoire applications open for 2027 entry. From this date, applicants can register, pay for, and send their applications to UCAS.
<b>1 September 2026</b>	Completed undergraduate applications can be submitted to UCAS.
<b>1 October 2026 18:00 (UK time)</b>	Application deadline for conservatoire music applications. Applications for dance, drama, and musical theatre courses may have a different deadline – check conservatoires' websites for information.
<b>15 October 2026 18:00 (UK time)</b>	Equal consideration date 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.
<b>13 January 2027 18:00 (UK time)</b>	Equal consideration date for applications for most undergraduate courses. The reference must be completed before the application can be sent to us.  Deadline for most conservatoire undergraduate dance, drama or musical theatre courses. Check on the specific course to be sure.
<b>25 February 2027</b>	Extra opens – applicants who have used all five choices and are not holding any offers may be able to add another choice in their application.
<b>31 March 2027</b>	UCAS provider advisory decision date – universities and colleges should aim to have sent all decisions on applications received at UCAS by 13 January.
<b>30 June 2027 18:00 (UK time)</b>	Applications received by this date will be sent to universities and colleges. After this time, applications are automatically entered into Clearing.
<b>1 July 2027</b>	Last date to add an Extra choice in their application.
<b>2 July 2027</b>	Clearing opens for eligible applicants, and vacancies are displayed in UCAS' search tool. Applicants can release themselves into Clearing.

View all the key dates you and your students need to know at [www.ucas.com/key-dates-timeline](https://www.ucas.com/key-dates-timeline).

# UCAS APPLICATION FEE WAIVERS

For the 2027 cycle, UCAS will waive the application fee for any student who:

- ▶ is / or has been in receipt of free school meals (FSM) at some point during the previous six years, up until the end of their final year at school or college. This is only applicable for students who are domiciled in the UK and applying through a UCAS registered centre
- ▶ is a care leaver. A care leaver is someone aged 16 - 24 (inclusive) who has been in the care of the local authority for a period of 13 weeks or more, spanning their 16th birthday. Only for students domiciled in the UK

## ACTION REQUIRED

It's essential that staff read the eligibility guidance and FAQs available to support both UCAS application fee waiver schemes.

## NEW CARE LEAVER APPLICATION FEE WAIVER

For the care leaver application fee waiver to be applied:

1. Students must answer 'yes' to the care experience question in the 'Diversity and inclusion' section of the application.
2. Eligible students will receive an email with instructions as to how to call UCAS to apply the waiver.
3. Students must complete all sections of the application and mark them complete, but must not submit their application yet.
4. Students must call UCAS to confirm their eligibility and UCAS will waive the fee.

Students can then accept the terms and conditions and submit their application to their UCAS registered centre with the fee waiver applied.

## FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM) APPLICATION FEE WAIVER

For the FSM application fee waiver to be applied:

1. Students must share they are in receipt of free school meals in the 'More about you' section of the application.
2. Students must choose the 'Apply with FSM fee waiver' option when they 'Pay and submit' their application.
3. UCAS registered centres must provide agreement via the adviser portal for the application fee to be waived.

### ACTION REQUIRED: CHECK YOUR 'APPLICATION FEE PAYMENT METHOD' IN THE ADVISER PORTAL

- ▶ To ensure eligible students do not miss out, you must enable the FSM waiver payment option in Centre management. This can be used alongside any other payment method option to suit your centre.
- ▶ The FSM waiver option will only be visible to students who have indicated their eligibility by selecting 'yes' to the FSM question in 'More about you'.
- ▶ Your centre will not be invoiced for eligible FSM students you provide agreement for in the adviser portal.

## HOW IS THIS INFORMATION USED BY UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES?

Student self-declared answers in the 'More about you' and 'Diversity and inclusion' section of the application are securely shared with those who are responsible for putting support in place at university or college, and this information is treated sensitively.

Adviser agreement of FSM status is not shared with universities and colleges and will only be used by UCAS to support the FSM fee waiver scheme.

Knowing about the applicant's circumstances may also help admissions staff take their achievements into account and gain a better understanding of their achievements and potential in context. They may be able to offer additional support during their studies (e.g. through a scholarship or bursary scheme), or events or activities to help them prepare for higher education.

Information about an applicant's circumstances is not used to decide whether to make them an offer, but some universities and colleges may use this to make them a contextual offer. For more information visit [www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/individual-needs/contextual-admissions](http://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/individual-needs/contextual-admissions).

The information an applicant provides in their UCAS application may also be used anonymously for monitoring purposes. This may inform and improve the support provided by universities and colleges to their students in the future. The data is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 – read our privacy policy at [www.ucas.com/privacy](http://www.ucas.com/privacy).

## UCAS APPLICATION FEE WAIVERS:



All you need to know to support your students:

[www.ucas.com/application-fee-waivers](http://www.ucas.com/application-fee-waivers)

Students who have been in receipt of FSM or are care leavers making a UCAS Conservatoires application will be emailed with further instructions when they declare they are in receipt of free school meals or are care experienced in the 'More about you' section of their application.

# SUMMARY OF PAYMENTS AND BILLING PROCESS

A payment is required for applications processed through UCAS. [See the application fee for 2027 entry](#). As a registered centre, you decide the payment method in the adviser portal, under 'Centre management'. This can be changed at any point during the cycle.

**The application fee payment options (that show to students) may be changed at any point during the cycle if the chosen payment method is not working for the centre or students.**

- ▶ **Invoice only** – UCAS' Finance department will issue an invoice\* at the end of each calendar month, for students whose applications you have submitted. It's at the discretion of the centre whether to recover costs directly from applicants, **but they must not send payments directly to UCAS. Your centre will not be invoiced for eligible FSM students who you provide agreement for in the adviser portal.**
- ▶ **Pay by card** – applicants will be presented with the option to pay online by credit or debit card. You can also combine this option with the free school meal application waiver. **Once a student (even if eligible) pays by card this cannot be reversed and an application fee waiver cannot be applied.**
- ▶ **Hybrid** – applicants will be presented with the option to pay by card or have the centre invoiced\*. This can be combined with the free school meal application fee waiver option. The centre is responsible for paying any invoice(s). Centres will not be invoiced for eligible FSM students if agreement is recorded in the adviser portal. Invoices\* will be issued monthly.

- ▶ **Free school meals (FSM) fee waiver – UK domiciled applicants only.** If enabled, this option will appear only to students who have identified 'yes' to the FSM question in their application. It will be shown alongside the payment option you've selected for your centre. For the application fee to be waived you must confirm agreement in the adviser portal. If you do not enable this option students will not have the fee waiver option when they reach 'Pay and submit'.

**\*Invoices are sent by email to the listed finance contact and copied to the registered centre correspondent. You have 30 days to pay.**

It's essential we have an up-to-date central finance contact e.g finance@payables.yourschool.ac.uk NOT a named individual. If you need to change this or have any queries relating to finance, please contact [receivables@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:receivables@ucas.ac.uk).

How to set your application fee payment method is outlined in our [adviser portal guidance](#) and our [FSM step-by-step guide](#) – please read this guidance.

**Please note:** The FSM waiver can only be applied to eligible applicants who share they are, or have been, in receipt of free school meals in the 'More about you' section and where agreement is provided in the adviser portal (UK applicants only).

## IMPORTANT:

Once a centre has sent an application to UCAS:

- ▶ the application cannot be returned to the student
- ▶ the payment option cannot be changed
- ▶ the fee waiver cannot be retrospectively waived
- ▶ students who pay by card accidentally cannot have the application fee waiver applied retrospectively.

Centre and reference details

Contacts

Centre linking (buzzword)

Qualification shortlist

Groups

**Application fee payment methods**

Referee contact details

Reference template

### Select an application fee payment option

Save Cancel

Payment is required for undergraduate applications. Choose how you would like students to pay for their application fee in the 'pay and review' section of the application:

Invoice only - UCAS will send your centre a monthly invoice for any submitted applications.

Card - Applicants will be presented with the option to pay online by credit or debit card. You can also combine this option with the free school meals fee waiver, below.

Hybrid - Applicants will be presented with the option to choose to pay by card or for the centre to receive an invoice. You can also combine this option with the free school meals fee waiver, below. The centre is responsible for payment of invoice(s) for any submitted applications.

The centre is responsible for payment of invoice(s). It's at the discretion of the centre if you decide to recover payment directly from applicants (applicants should not send payments directly to UCAS).

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**Free school meals fee waiver**

**UK domiciled applicants only**

This option will ONLY be presented to students who have identified 'yes' to the Free School Meals (FSM) question in the application. [Find out more about the free school meals fee waiver.](#)

This option will be presented to those students along with any of the options you've chosen above. You will need to provide agreement via the Adviser Portal for the application fee to be waived.

If you do not select this option, applicants will not be given the fee waiver option. UCAS will be waiving the undergraduate application fee for any student who is/has been in receipt of free school meals (FSM) at some point during the last six years, up until the end of their final year at school or college. This is only applicable for students who are domiciled in the UK.

Free school meals fee waiver

# SECTION 1: SUPPORTING STUDENT DISCOVERY



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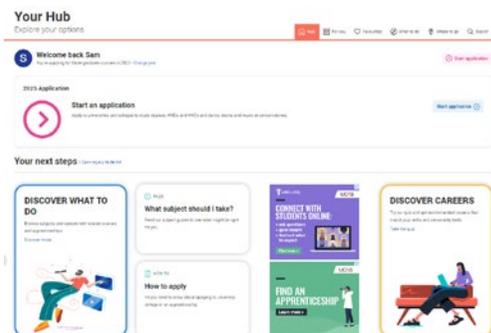
## 1.1 PREPARING STUDENTS

We have 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](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides) for more information.

### TOP TIP

Don't forget, the **2027 cycle toolkit** has everything you need to prepare – download your support materials today!

### The UCAS Hub



### Help your students plan their future with the UCAS Hub – before they apply!

The UCAS Hub brings everything together in one free place:

- ▶ explore subjects, apprenticeships, and careers
- ▶ try subject tasters and virtual work experiences
- ▶ take quizzes to shortlist ideas

Register now: [ucas.com/hub](http://ucas.com/hub)

### New and improved

Check out our enhanced reporting tools in the adviser portal. You can track student interests including subjects, industries, and universities, to monitor participation and cohort trends. Visit our guide for advisers to see what the Hub can offer your students: [ucas.com/hub-adviser](http://ucas.com/hub-adviser).

### Our search tool

Browse and shortlist from over 30,000 courses at approximately 350 UK providers and apprenticeships: [ucas.com/search](http://ucas.com/search).

### Subject Spotlights and Virtual Work Experiences

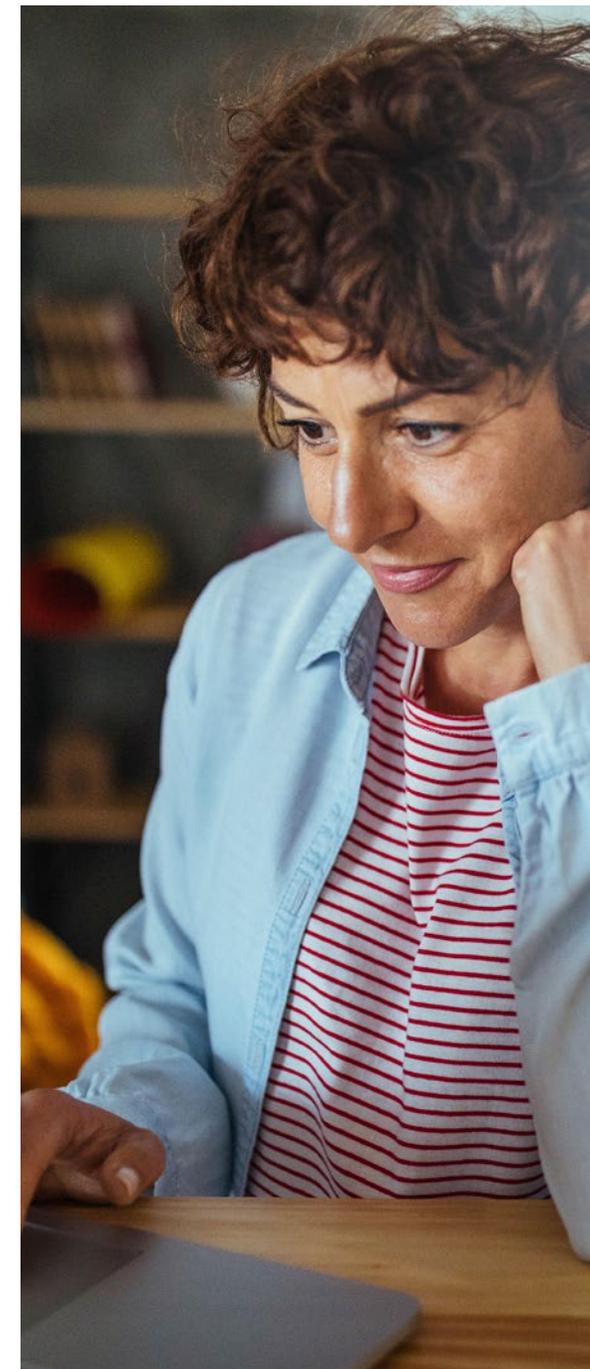
Subject Spotlights from Springpod offer interactive tasters for students to explore and sample before they apply.

Led by industry experts, Virtual Work Experiences offer career insights through virtual, on-demand programmes.

Find out more: [ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/springpod](http://ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/springpod).

### Chat to uni students

We've teamed up with Unibuddy to give your students the chance for peer-to-peer conversations, to find out first-hand about studying a particular course or life at uni: [ucas.com/chat-to-students](http://ucas.com/chat-to-students).





## UCAS DISCOVERY UK TOUR

Meet universities, colleges, and employers face-to-face. Attend Q&A sessions with industry experts, and get advice on applications and career choices. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/discovery](http://www.ucas.com/discovery). Check out dates now!

### 94% OF ATTENDEES

in 2025 found a university, college or employer they would be interested in applying to.

## GET OUT THERE - OPEN DAYS!

Open days give your students a chance to see it for real – to walk the campus, chat face-to-face, and picture what life could be like at their chosen college or university. They're perfect for asking questions and soaking up the atmosphere. Encourage your students to start planning and find upcoming events at [www.ucas.com/open-days](http://www.ucas.com/open-days).

But we know visiting in person isn't always easy – especially if they're weighing up lots of options or coming from overseas. That's where virtual tours step in. They're a brilliant way to kick-start research, offering a real sense of the facilities, layout, and vibe without leaving home. Check our list of virtual tours at [www.ucas.com/virtual-tours](http://www.ucas.com/virtual-tours).

### UCAS outreach connection service

Looking for ways to give your students extra support? The outreach connection service, in the adviser portal, makes it easy to link them to opportunities that can boost confidence and skills throughout their discovery journey.

Think **summer schools, mentoring programmes, academic support, and much more**, all designed to help students explore and succeed.

Find out more and start connecting at [www.ucas.com/advisers/outreach](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/outreach).

### Information for international students

- ▶ UCAS information and advice for international and EU students: [www.ucas.com/international](http://www.ucas.com/international).
- ▶ British Council: [study-uk.britishcouncil.org](http://study-uk.britishcouncil.org).

### Other useful resources and websites

- ▶ Information about higher and degree apprenticeships: [www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships](http://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships).
- ▶ National Careers Service (England): [nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk).
- ▶ My World of Work (Scotland): [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk).
- ▶ Careers Service (Northern Ireland): [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk).
- ▶ Careers Wales: [www.careerswales.com](http://www.careerswales.com).
- ▶ Prospects: [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://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](http://www.timeshighereducation.com), and Complete University Guide at [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk), are interactive sites. Users can highlight their requirements and create their own unique table.
- ▶ UCAS' Careers Quiz is to help your students find their ideal job matched to their personality, and a list of courses previous students studied to get there: [www.ucas.com/careers-quiz](http://www.ucas.com/careers-quiz)

## 1.2 RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The best place for parents and guardians to get the support they need is [www.ucas.com/parents](http://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 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](http://www.ucas.com/parents-signup).

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



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.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In the 'Personal details' section of the application, **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.



# SECTION 2: THE APPLICATION

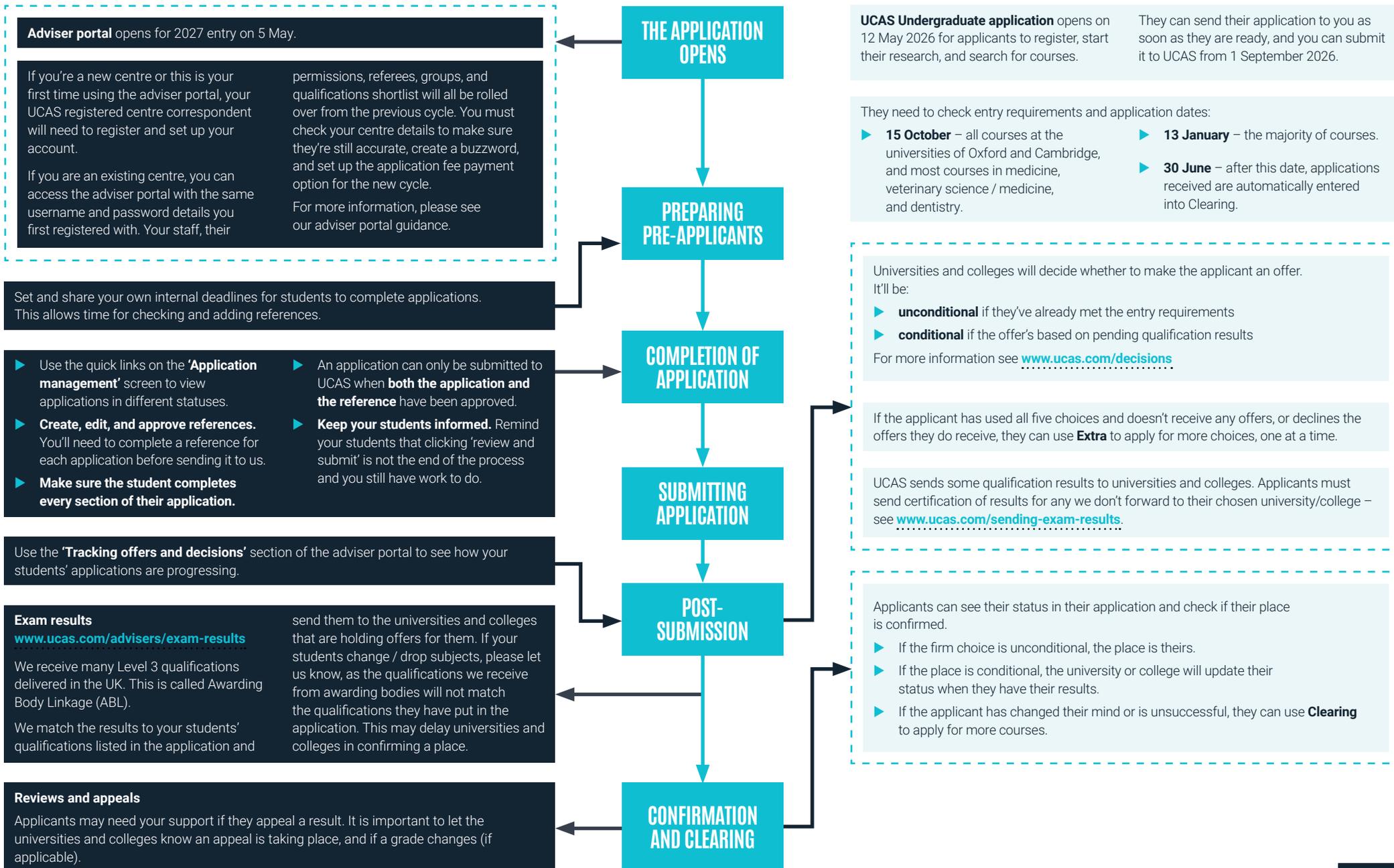


# SECTION 2: THE APPLICATION

## ADVISERS

## JOURNEY OF AN APPLICATION

## APPLICANTS



## 2.1 APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Once all the sections of the application have been marked as complete by a student, including payment, it is submitted to the centre to review, and add a reference and predicted grades. It can be returned to the student to amend, if required. Before it can be submitted to UCAS, both the status of the application and the status of the reference has to be approved by the centre.

### When to apply

Before looking in detail at the application, it's important to know when to apply. Applicants can submit their applications to you for approval from 12 May, and you can submit their applications to UCAS from 1 September.

There are three application deadlines to be aware of – please refer to **the key dates on page 7** for full details of these. You may want to set your own internal deadlines.

<b>15 October</b>	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.
<b>13 January</b>	Equal consideration date – applications submitted by this time must be considered equally by universities and colleges.
<b>30 June</b>	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 sent before students have completed their qualifications and received results. Offers from universities and colleges may be conditional, potentially based on qualification 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 relevant application date. They may consider applications received after this date if they still have vacancies, but they don't have to. They can also close courses after the relevant date 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](http://www.ucas.com/admissions-tests).



### International students

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

### Deferred entry

Students who take a gap year, including national service, can apply during the 2027 entry cycle, to start a course in 2028. This is called deferred entry.

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

- ▶ apply by the same application dates
- ▶ choose a start date of 2028 when they add their course choice
- ▶ meet the conditions of their offer by 1 September 2027, 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 only consider applicants who have not had a break in study.



## 2.2 FIRST STOP - THE APPLICATION SECTIONS

### How to apply

Your students need to register an account with UCAS. Once they've done this, they'll be able to begin completing the application from 12 May. On-screen help will guide them through it.

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

### KEY RESOURCE

Every year we produce a step-by-step guide to applying through UCAS – it's packed full of screenshots for you to copy and paste into your own materials to support your students. [Download](#) it now and save time!

### DOCUMENT UPLOAD

Applicants have the opportunity to upload supporting documents for name changes, care information, English Language qualifications, visa details, qualification transcripts, and passports, to help universities and colleges.

**UK students still in formal education are not expected to upload qualification documents for UK qualifications.**

View our guidance for advisers at:

[www.ucas.com/uploading-documents](http://www.ucas.com/uploading-documents)

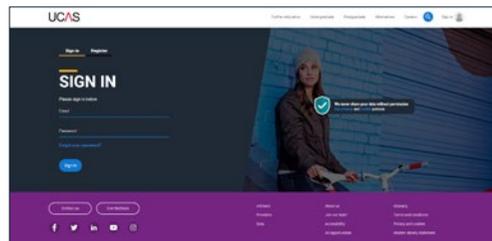
### TOP TIP

We recommend students use a personal email address so they can get updates from UCAS and their university and college choices all year round.



Students complete a profile, including the following sections:

- ▶ Personal details
- ▶ Nationality details
- ▶ Where you live
- ▶ Contact details
- ▶ Supporting information
- ▶ Finance & funding
- ▶ Diversity & inclusion
- ▶ More about you
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Extra activities (UK applicants only)
- ▶ Personal statement
- ▶ Choices



### UCAS buzzword

Students applying through a UCAS-registered centre must use a buzzword to automatically link their application to the centre. This buzzword is created in the adviser portal at the start of the cycle and can be updated at any time.

When entering the buzzword, students can also select a group if the centre has set these up. If no groups are set up, students will automatically appear in the centre's 'Default' group. Advisers can reassign students to other groups at anytime using the adviser portal.

If a student forgets to use the buzzword and begins an independent application, they can request to link to the centre via the 'Application status' section. These requests must be approved by the centre. See our [adviser portal guidance](#).

**Registered centre users should not sign in as applicants or ask applicants to share their password details. Advisers should only use the adviser portal to access applications.**

### Former students

Former students can apply independently and request only a reference from your centre using your buzzword. In this case, they won't be linked to the centre, you won't be able to track their progress, and it's the student's responsibility to submit the application – your role is simply to provide the reference.

If they want their full application linked to your centre, they'll also need your buzzword. Accepting this means you agree to approve their application, attach a reference, and submit it to UCAS once complete.

You can easily check requests in the adviser portal under 'Waiting to link to centre' – it shows if they're asking for a full link or reference only, so you can confirm before accepting.

Find out more about the full process to support former students at [www.ucas.com/linking-applications-your-centre-adviser-portal](http://www.ucas.com/linking-applications-your-centre-adviser-portal).

### TOP TIP

We recommend you create and name a group 'Former students' to easily identify them from your current students.



### PERSONAL STATEMENT TOOLKIT

Use our toolkit to help your students shine in their personal statement:

[www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/toolkits/personal-statement-toolkit](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/toolkits/personal-statement-toolkit)



### 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 centre has returned the application to the student for amendment
- ▶ the reference has been added to the application and it has been received at UCAS

We also send emails to applicants at various stages of their application journey.

### IMPORTANT

Contact details should be kept up-to-date, and **a personal email address used** rather than a school or college one, to make sure they receive important information.

### Number of choices

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

- ▶ no more than four choices to 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

### IMPORTANT

**Choices can be added to an application after it's been sent to UCAS.** If all five choices haven't been used, additional choices can be added later (if the applicant hasn't replied to their offers). Students should check the equal consideration date for the course. If a choice is added after the equal consideration date, it won't be guaranteed consideration.

### Invisibility of choices

Applications are sent to all chosen universities and colleges at the same time. Each university or college only has access to the information about its choice and they must not ask applicants or their nominees to reveal other choices – **this is called invisibility.**

Only after applicants have received all decisions and replied to offers will they be able to see the other choices. This ensures each university or college follows an independent decision-making process.

Confidentiality of course and provider choices must be maintained until offers are responded to, and advisers should ensure this is upheld.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Choices aren't sent in preference order** – we send an application to all universities and colleges at the same time. They don't know where else your student has applied, and the order choices are displayed in the application doesn't relate to a preference order.



## COMPLETING THE EDUCATION SECTION

Why is the education section so important? It's one of the most crucial – and often error-prone – parts of the process. While it might seem straightforward, inaccuracies here can have significant consequences for applicants.

The education section is often the starting point for universities and colleges when assessing applications. It provides key information about qualifications, helping them decide whether students meet their requirements. Errors in this section can lead to:

- ▶ applicants being made unsuccessful decisions unnecessarily
- ▶ offers being made that the applicant cannot meet

Accurate and complete information in this section is essential to avoid delays, confusion, or missed opportunities.

We've introduced the ability for applicants to upload qualifications documents to the Education section, to help support their application. This is optional and doesn't remove the necessity for them to include all their completed and pending qualifications. You'll be able to see if a student's added documents in the adviser portal, but won't be able to view the document and you're not expected to verify it.

**UK students still in formal education are not expected to upload qualification documents for UK qualifications.**

### Common challenges and how to overcome them

Students may not always have access to all the details of their qualifications (e.g. awarding

organisation, date, result). For teachers and advisers managing numerous applications, it can feel overwhelming to double-check everything. Here are some top tips to make the process smoother and reduce errors:

**1. Applicants should enter all achieved and pending qualifications on their application to provide a full academic history** – This should be from secondary education (or equivalent) onwards; whether they have the result (including any ungraded) or they are still awaiting results. This includes all GCSEs and Level 2 equivalent qualifications. While this can be tricky for students who have transferred from other schools, having qualification slips or certificates on hand can help ensure accuracy.

It's important that pending and previously sat (including re-sat) qualifications are entered accurately. Before universities and colleges have qualification results they will use pending qualifications to make decisions.

**2. Use a qualification shortlist in the adviser portal** – Creating a tailored qualification shortlist can help students select the correct qualifications when filling out their applications. This is useful if your school or college teaches qualifications which appear similar in name or title. Keep it accurate – work closely with your exams officer to review and update the shortlist annually. Find out more about setting up your shortlist at [www.ucas.com/new-registered-centres](http://www.ucas.com/new-registered-centres).

**3. Ensure names and dates of birth match official documents** – The name and date of birth entered in the application should match official documentation, such as a passport or exam board registration. Discrepancies can create issues with result matching, and later at enrolment.

**It's useful if students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland enter their Unique Learning Number (ULN) to help with matching of qualification results.**

**4. Focus on key fields** – When reviewing the education section, certain fields are critical for UCAS to match qualification results with applications. Pay close attention to the following for each qualification:

- ▶ Qualification name
- ▶ Subject
- ▶ Qualification level
- ▶ Awarding body

Errors in these fields can lead to mismatches and delays when applicants get their results. The full list of results we receive and forward to universities and colleges can be viewed at [www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results](http://www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results).

If any of your students' qualifications aren't listed, they will need to send their results on to their universities, colleges or conservatoires directly.

**5. Use the 'Qualifications checked' box**

If you've reviewed the accuracy of a student's education section, tick the 'qualifications checked' box in the adviser portal. This tick box is seen by universities and colleges as part of the reference. Learn more at [www.ucas.com/references-and-predicted-grades#checkingqualifications](http://www.ucas.com/references-and-predicted-grades#checkingqualifications).

### What to do if a mistake is found after sending to UCAS

If an error is discovered or a qualification changes after the application has been submitted to UCAS:

- 1. Complete a qualification amendment form:** This is essential to notify UCAS of changes.
- 2. Inform universities and colleges:** Contact the chosen universities and colleges directly to make them aware of the updated information.

Acting quickly is crucial to minimise potential disruptions. UCAS can make some changes – check what we can do on the qualification amendment form at [www.ucas.com/forms/request-amend-qualifications-listed-your-application](http://www.ucas.com/forms/request-amend-qualifications-listed-your-application).

### TOP TIP

We have guidance for international advisers on finding and entering qualifications at: [www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/guides-resources-and-training/international-advisers/qualifications-advice-for-international-advisers](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/guides-resources-and-training/international-advisers/qualifications-advice-for-international-advisers)



## 2.3 NEXT STOP - ADVISER PORTAL

Each UCAS registered centre will have a UCAS registered centre correspondent contact set up in the adviser portal with full permissions. This contact will be responsible for:

- ▶ annual setup of registered centre details, including creating a buzzword and setting application fee payment options
- ▶ reviewing staff access, adding new staff, setting their permissions, and assigning them to groups
- ▶ deleting staff who have left your centre or who are no longer involved with supporting your students through the application process
- ▶ creating and managing groups

### IMPORTANT

Review your qualification shortlist each year to make sure accurate qualifications display to applicants when completing their education section.

If you're an existing UCAS registered centre correspondent, your centre details will be rolled over from the previous cycle. Check they are up-to-date, create your buzzword, and set up the application fee payment option for the new cycle.

If this is your first year as the UCAS registered centre correspondent for your centre, please see our [adviser portal guidance](#) for more information.

### TOP TIP

When adding staff, it's important to use their work email address. 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. Both email addresses must match.



### Adviser portal dashboard

The UCAS registered centre correspondent will have full access to all the sections of the adviser portal.

### It is the registered centre correspondent's responsibility to manage staff and permissions for their centre on the portal.

Read full information on the portal and permissions at [ucas.com/our-adviser-portal](https://ucas.com/our-adviser-portal)

Access for all other staff is determined by their assigned permissions. Users should be granted access to the adviser portal according to the requirements of their role. This ensures staff can only view and manage the information necessary for their responsibilities, helping to protect student data and maintain security.

**It is important to regularly review all staff access and permissions, ensuring that users only retain access appropriate to their role. Any staff who have left the centre must have their permissions revoked and be removed from the adviser portal promptly to maintain data security.**

### TOP TIP

If you cannot see individual students, you may need to be added to specific groups within Centre Management. Please contact your UCAS registered centre correspondent to request access.



### Checking applications

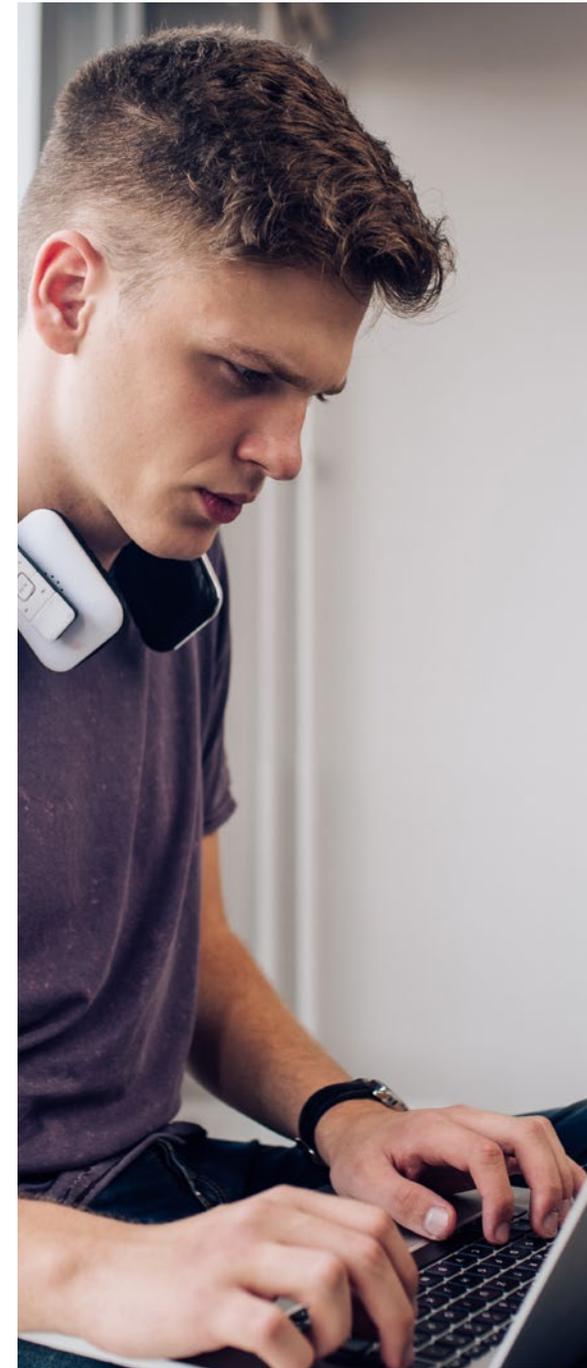
From your dashboard in the adviser portal, you can check to see the progress your students are making with their applications in the 'Application management' tile.

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.

### 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. See the [adviser portal guidance](#) for further information.



Once a student marks their application as complete, pays, and submits it, the centre can review the application, add predicted grades, and input the reference. At this stage, the student cannot make changes unless the application is returned to them.

It's important to carefully check all sections – **especially qualifications and course choices** – before sending it to UCAS.

If qualifications have been fully checked, you should tick the relevant box in the applicant's 'education' section in the adviser portal. This tick box is visible to universities and colleges as part of the reference.

## TOP TIP



If you return an application to a student for amendment, UCAS will email them to notify them to check their application.

Your message will appear in both the email and on the application when the student signs in. Record this message in your adviser notes so you can refer to it when the application is resubmitted.

Student progress		Adviser progress		Adviser notes
Personal details	✓	More about you	✓	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Nationality	✓	Education	○	
Where you live	✓	Employment	○	
Contact details	✓	Extra activities	○	
Supporting information	✓	Personal statement	○	
Finance & funding	✓	Choices	○	
Diversity & inclusion	✓			
		Application complete	○	
		Qualifications checked	✓	
		Predicted grades complete	○	
		Reference complete	✓	
		Reference approved	○	
		Application approved	○	
		Sent to UCAS	○	



## 2.4 REFERENCES

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

You can find full operational guidance for writing references at [www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/guides-resources-and-training/writing-references/ucas-registered-centre-linked-applications-undergraduate-references](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/guides-resources-and-training/writing-references/ucas-registered-centre-linked-applications-undergraduate-references).

If there are complex or sensitive circumstances – particularly those involving safeguarding – you should carefully consider whether it is appropriate to include specific details in the reference. In many cases, it may be better to indicate that extenuating circumstances exist in Section 2 of the reference and then provide further information directly to universities or colleges through a separate communication. Any personal information should only be shared with the student's explicit consent.

- ▶ Each university or college listed on the application will see your reference. They will not know where else the student has applied. Please do not refer to any of them in your reference otherwise you will effectively remove the 'invisibility' and could compromise the application.
- ▶ We recommend references are written outside the UCAS system, 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 will result in all unsaved text being lost.

- ▶ We advise, where possible, that a different member of staff (not the referee) approves the reference.
- ▶ 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.**
- ▶ For more information on how to save, mark as complete, and approve references, please see the [adviser portal guidance](#).

### Who should write the reference?

- ▶ The reference should be written or compiled by someone who knows the student's academic ability and circumstances well, usually from their current school or college. It doesn't have to be the head teacher or head of sixth form.
- ▶ The referee selected in the adviser portal is the name shown on the reference, even if another staff member writes it.
- ▶ The named referee may be contacted by universities or colleges, so provide accurate name and contact details.
- ▶ Use an individual email linked to the centre's official domain for all referee contact details entered in 'Centre management'.
- ▶ Universities and colleges can usually only communicate with advisers listed in the application or reference.



Enter a general statement about your school/college/centre.



If applicable, enter any information about extenuating circumstances which may have impacted the applicant's education and achievement.



Outline other supportive information specific to the applicant and relevant to the course(s) applied for that you think universities/colleges should be aware of.

## IMPORTANT

It's **essential** any adviser responsible for writing students' references reads our full information and guidance about what to include in it at [www.ucas.com/advisers/references](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/references)

Once the application is submitted to UCAS, predicted grades cannot be changed.

[Read more guidance and support for advisers when predicting grades.](#)

**Agents and agencies are required to review the Agent Annex for comprehensive guidance and detailed expectations regarding the operation of a registered centre.**

## PREDICTED GRADES

UCAS predicted grades are a key part of the application process, serving as an indicator of a student's potential. These grades are added by the registered centre for all pending qualifications listed by the student.

It is the grade of qualification an applicant's school or college believes they're likely to achieve in positive circumstances.

Typically, the school or college provides them, but if someone else has predicted the grades, this should be noted in the reference section.

These UCAS predicted grades are then used by universities and colleges, along with a range of other information, as part of the admissions process to help them understand an applicant's potential.

UCAS' historical grades on entry tool can help you and your students understand the range of attainment by universities and colleges for their courses.

It is essential that staff involved in predicted grades for UCAS read the full advice, guidance and principles at [www.ucas.com/advisers/predicted-grades](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/predicted-grades).

Different universities and colleges use UCAS predicted grades in different ways as part of the consideration and offer-making process.

## IMPORTANT

### 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.



# SECTION 3: POST-SUBMISSION



# SECTION 3: POST-SUBMISSION

## 3.1 AT UCAS

### What happens when we receive an application?

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.

### Fraud and verification checks

UCAS' dedicated Verification Team is tasked with the prevention and detection of fraud in applications, and potential similarity in personal statements. We investigate flagged applications and cancel those proven to be fraudulent.

#### Detecting fraud

Please make sure your students are aware of the following information about our verification team, and its work to identify fraudulent applications. More information and FAQs can be found at [www.ucas.com/fraud-similarity](http://www.ucas.com/fraud-similarity)

### 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, status, qualifications and grades, 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 similarity detection

Along with other verification checks, we carry out checks to verify personal statements are the applicant's own work. We run personal statements through similarity detection software, which flags any similarities to online personal statements, and those submitted by applicants in past cycles.

Following a check by the verification team, emails are sent to applicants and their choices to let them know when a similarity has been detected. The university or college decides whether to take any further action.

### Reference

It's important your reference provides individual contextual information about the applicant. If an application, including the reference, has any false or misleading information in it, this could lead to an unfair decision outcome. 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.

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

**We require students to confirm their agreement by checking a box in the Terms and Conditions section before submitting their application. By checking this box, they are acknowledging and accepting the terms outlined in the declaration. Find more information at [www.ucas.com/ucas-undergraduate-declaration](http://www.ucas.com/ucas-undergraduate-declaration).**



## 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
13 January 2027	12 May 2027
30 June 2027	14 July 2027

We have a provider advisory decision date of 31 March 2027, and ask universities and college to aim to have sent all decisions on applications received at UCAS by 13 January 2027.

To see the deadlines that universities and colleges must adhere by visit [www.ucas.com/key-dates](http://www.ucas.com/key-dates).

If we don't receive a decision from the university or college by the relevant decision deadline, we automatically make the application unsuccessful. This is explained to the applicant in their application, and in the adviser portal, under 'Tracking offers and decisions' you will see 'unsuccessful by default' (often referred to as a reject by default [RBD] by UCAS and universities and colleges).

### 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 an 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 relevant application fields in full. The contextual information submitted in an 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.
- ▶ Signpost students to the **individual needs** and **contextual admissions** advice.



## 3.3 WHAT APPLICANTS AND ADVISERS NEED TO KNOW

### Making changes to an application after applying

There are some changes an applicant can make to their application once it's been submitted, but for others they need to contact the universities and colleges, or UCAS. For more details, go to [www.ucas.com/makingchanges](http://www.ucas.com/makingchanges).

### Changes to qualification details applicants have entered

Please let us know straightaway via our [webform](#) if any of your students' qualification details change, and let their chosen universities and colleges know too.

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

Find out more about the exam results process at [www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results).

### Checking for decisions

Universities and colleges send decisions to us, which we update on applicants' accounts. We then notify applicants by email – they need to check their inbox regularly.

Some students may need to complete admissions tests, interviews, or submit portfolios before decisions are made. Invitations for these may come via UCAS or directly from the university or college. While we encourage universities and colleges to update UCAS with all offers and invitations, some may contact students directly.

### Interview invitations

Please remind students to reply to interview invitations as soon as possible. They can accept, decline, or request a new time or date – to change the date they must contact the university or college.

Frequent email checks are crucial during the application process.

### Offers

Students can view their offers in their application, and advisers can see real-time offers and decisions for their applicants in the adviser portal, under 'Tracking offers and decisions'. There are a number of quick links in this area to help you identify students who may need additional support, for example:

- ▶ Students with no offers
- ▶ Students with all offers received
- ▶ Students with unconditional offers

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. It will show details of the year and month the course starts, and the point of entry (for example, the second year of the course, rather than the first) will also be advised by the university or college.

**Conditional offer** – the offer has conditions. For example, the applicant has to achieve certain qualification results. Unless a different date is specified, the conditions must be met by 1 September (even if entry is deferred to the following year). 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.

The Fair Admissions Code of Practice published by Universities UK sets the behaviours for universities to improve fairness and transparency in the admissions system while maintaining high academic standards. Find out more at [www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/fair-admissions-code-practice](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/fair-admissions-code-practice).

## DID YOU KNOW?

One of UCAS' admissions 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'.

For more information we would encourage you to view: [www.ucas.com/how-we-work-with-providers-to-ensure-fair-admissions](http://www.ucas.com/how-we-work-with-providers-to-ensure-fair-admissions).

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 for a 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



## ADVISER PORTAL 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 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 their application.
- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **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.

### 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](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/making-right-decision).



## ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

The Applicant Status Report (ASR) and the Final Destination Report (FDR), which you can download via the adviser portal, use various abbreviations and codes. Please find below a list of codes you should find useful when interpreting your data.

### Decisions and replies

- ▶ **REF** – Sent to provider for consideration
- ▶ **FULL** – Course became full after application sent to provider for consideration
- ▶ **INV** – Invitation from provider to attend interview, audition, or send portfolio
- ▶ **U(UF)** – Unconditional offer (firmly accepted)
- ▶ **UI** – Unconditional offer (held as insurance)
- ▶ **U(D)** – Unconditional offer (declined)
- ▶ **C(CF)** – Conditional offer (firmly accepted)
- ▶ **C(CI)** – Conditional offer (held as insurance)
- ▶ **C(D)** – Conditional offer (declined)
- ▶ **REJ** – Unsuccessful
- ▶ **W** – Withdrawn (either at the request of the applicant or provider)
- ▶ **C(DBD)/U(DBD)** – Offer declined by UCAS. Reply not received from applicant by deadline given
- ▶ **UCC(F)** – Unconditional Changed Course offer (firmly accepted)
- ▶ **UCC(DBD)** – Changed Course offer declined by UCAS. Reply not received from applicant by deadline given
- ▶ **CLA** – Clearing Accept
- ▶ **DCF(F)** – Delayed Confirmation of CF choice
- ▶ **RBD** – Reject by default (decision not received from provider)

### Summary of conditions

Students will receive conditions which they will have to meet to secure their place at any of their choices. Universities and colleges abbreviate these conditions – below is a summary to help you understand what they mean.

- ▶ **M** – The offer is subject to satisfying the general entrance conditions of the provider.
- ▶ **A, B, C, D, E** – The offer shows the grades required in subjects at GCE Advanced level, or SQA Highers and Advanced Highers.
- ▶ **+** – The offer contains a GCE AS award requirement.
- ▶ **X** – The offer contains a GCSE / Standard Grade requirement.

- ▶ **F** – The offer contains a Foundation / Access course requirement.
- ▶ **G** – The offer includes a requirement for a financial guarantee.
- ▶ **H** – The offer also includes an alternative course / HND offer.
- ▶ **L** – The offer includes an English language qualification requirement.
- ▶ **T** – The offer is subject to industrial sponsorship being obtained.
- ▶ **J** – The offer contains an Edexcel Foundation / BTEC Scottish Qualifications Authority qualification required other than those covered by codes A – E above.
- ▶ **K** – The offer is based on other academic requirements, e.g. Irish Leaving Certificate or International Baccalaureate. You should refer to the applicant's offer letter.
- ▶ **N** – The offer includes non-academic conditions, e.g. satisfactory medical report or criminal record check.
- ▶ **Numeric e.g. 96** – The offer has been expressed in UCAS Tariff points. You can check Tariff points against grades at [www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator).



## STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Students' individual circumstances can have a significant impact on their decision-making, but there is lots of support to help them access higher education and to succeed when they are there.

To help you fully inform and prepare all your students, we've developed **practical toolkits for advisers**. We've also created **step-by-step guides** to share with other supporters who may be less familiar with the UCAS process.

Students can share a range of circumstances in the application, which is used to connect them to the right support. Where a university or college operates a contextualised admissions policy, this information may also be used when setting the conditions of an offer.

With the applicant's permission, you may use section 2 of the reference to explain if their circumstances have impacted their attainment, or disrupted their education, so this can be taken into account when offer conditions are set.

We strongly recommend students contact universities and colleges before applying to discuss their individual support needs. If their circumstances change after they have applied, they should contact their chosen universities or colleges immediately.

Some under-represented groups may be prioritised or targeted for outreach opportunities – use the filters in the **Outreach Connection Service** to explore what's available.

### Disabled students (SEND and ALN)

In higher education, 'disability' is used instead of SEND/ALN, and it covers physical disability, mental health conditions, learning differences, and long-term health conditions.

All universities and colleges must, under the Equality Act 2010, make reasonable adjustments to ensure students can access their courses. In the rare instance a university or college cannot meet an applicant's needs, this choice can be substituted.

Applicants may be concerned about sharing a disability so please reassure them that it will not affect their chances of receiving an offer – it is only used to ensure they receive the right support.

Resources to support you:

- ▶ **adviser toolkits to support disabled students and students with mental health conditions.**
- ▶ **supporters' toolkit to support disabled students (SEND/ALN)** – this toolkit does not assume background knowledge of UCAS and is ideal to share with SENCOs/ALNCOs, parents/carers and other supporters

### Care-experienced students

UK applicants can share if they have ever spent time in local authority care, including foster care, in a residential care home, under a home supervision or Special Guardianship order, or in kinship care.

This information helps connect students to the right support – such as year-round accommodation, financial help, and mental health and wellbeing support. In some cases, students may be eligible for contextual offers.

Resources to support you:

- ▶ **adviser toolkit** to support care-experienced students
- ▶ **supporters' toolkit to support care-experienced students** – this does not assume background knowledge of UCAS and is ideal to share with pastoral staff, virtual school heads, foster carers, and other supporters

- ▶ **Propel into Education** from Become Charity is a comprehensive guide to moving into higher education from care, and lists the support offered at universities and colleges across the UK.

### Students estranged from their parents

UK applicants can share if they are estranged from both parents due to an irreconcilable breakdown in their relationship – or if they are in the process of becoming estranged. Many universities and colleges offer support to estranged students aged 25 and under, such as year-round accommodation, financial help, and mental health and wellbeing support.

Read our **adviser toolkit for supporting estranged students** for practical advice and tips.

### 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 with caring or parenting responsibilities

UK applicants can share if they have parenting responsibilities, or if they provide unpaid care to a family member (e.g. due to disability, illness, a mental health condition or addiction). Many universities and colleges support students with practical or financial help to ensure they can access their course and succeed in their studies.

Resources to support you:

- ▶ **adviser toolkit** to support students with caring responsibilities
- ▶ **adviser toolkit** to support students with parenting responsibilities

### Displaced students (refugees, asylum seekers, and insecure statuses)

Depending on their specific immigration statuses, displaced applicants may experience significant challenges accessing higher education, particularly if they are not considered to be 'home' students or eligible for student finance.

Some universities and colleges offer scholarships and other practical support to displaced applicants but **it is essential students research their options carefully and speak to the admissions team before applying**. They should also inform the university or college immediately if there is any change to their status after applying.

Resources to support you:

- ▶ **adviser toolkit** to support displaced students
- ▶ the **Displaced Students Opportunities Portal** is a great starting point for researching support in higher education – including scholarships, bursaries, and other support

### Students from UK Armed Forces families (Service children)

Students whose parent(s)/carer(s) serves in the UK Armed Forces (or who served in the past) may experience very specific challenges in their education journey. Some universities offer targeted support for these students, and take this into account when setting the conditions of their offer.

Get practical tips on supporting students from UK Armed Forces families in [our adviser toolkit](#).

### UK Armed Forces veterans and Service leavers

If you are supporting someone who previously served in the UK Armed Forces, you may find their journey to HE is slightly different due to the alternative qualifications, training, and experience they may have.

Resources to support you:

- ▶ [adviser toolkit](#) to support UK Armed Forces veterans
- ▶ [Ministry of Defence's ELCAS website](#) has useful information for applicants

### TOP TIP

We strongly recommend students contact universities and colleges before applying, to discuss their individual circumstances and find out what support is available. If their circumstances change after they have applied, they should contact their chosen universities or colleges immediately. For more information, visit [www.ucas.com/undergraduate-individual-needs](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate-individual-needs).



## UCAS TARIFF POINTS

The UCAS Tariff allows universities and colleges to draw comparisons between the wide range of qualifications they see on applications. Applicants may receive a conditional offer based on achieving a certain number of UCAS Tariff points.

Students cannot 'double count' exams in the same subject: if they have achieved an AS and an A level, or a BTEC Certificate and a BTEC Diploma in the same subject. Typically it is only the higher of the two which will get the points.

**International students:** Universities and colleges can make an offer based on qualification grades. Contact them directly to check their entry requirements for international qualifications.

**Apprenticeships:** From September 2026 onwards, applicants holding a Level 3 / SCQF Level 6 apprenticeship also get Tariff points.

For more guidance on the UCAS Tariff, visit [www.ucas.com/advisers/tariff](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/tariff).

Our Tariff points calculator at [www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator) helps students 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
<b>Total Tariff points</b>			<b>116</b>

### DID YOU KNOW?

Tariff points are allocated to all Level 3 / SCQF Level 6 qualifications which have been UK-regulated. UCAS has not allocated Tariff points to international qualifications since 2021, with the exception of the Irish Leaving Certificate.



## 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	T Level	TARIFF POINTS	BTEC National Extended Diploma	BTEC National Diploma	BTEC National Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC National Certificate	IB Higher Diploma	IB Standard Diploma	IB Extended Essay/ Theory of Knowledge	Level 3/ SCQF L6 Apprenticeships
						D*	168	D*D*D*							
							160	D*D*D							
							152	D*DD							
						D	144	DDD							
							128	DDM							
						M	120								
							112	DMM	D*D*						36 months
							104		D*D						
						P (A*-C)	96	MMM	DD						24 months
							80	MMP	DM						
						P (D-E)	72								
							64	MPP	MM						18 months
	A	A*			A*		56			D*		H7			
	B	A			A		48	PPP	MP	D		H6			12 months
	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		
D							15								
			D	C			12					H3	S4	A	
				D			10							B	
			E				8				P			C	
				E			6						S3	D	
							4							E	

### 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 their application.**

- ▶ 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 remaining offers are automatically declined when the firm and insurance choice are selected.

**It's important that students carefully consider their options, as changing decisions later can be difficult.** Universities and colleges must provide clear course information under consumer protection laws and students should review this before accepting an offer. If they haven't received this information or have concerns, such as changes to their qualifications, they should contact the university or college directly. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/your-consumer-rights](http://www.ucas.com/your-consumer-rights).

If a student accepts an unconditional offer as their firm choice, they are committed to that place and cannot hold an insurance option.

**Students should only accept offers from universities and colleges they are prepared to attend.**

### 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.

**It's important that applicants reply by the date we give them in the application status section. 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
31 March 2027	5 May 2027*
12 May 2027	2 June 2027*
14 July 2027	21 July 2027**

\* unless using Extra to find a place

\*\* including Extra choices

You can see further key dates at [www.ucas.com/key-dates](http://www.ucas.com/key-dates).

Make sure your students are aware their reply date could be different from their friends.

### AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR YOUR STUDENTS



If they don't reply to their offers on or before their reply date, UCAS will decline them on their behalf (often referred to as declined by default [DBD]). 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.

If your students' choices have DBD'd but they know what replies they want to make, they can contact our Customer Experience Centre within 14 days.



### 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 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 February, search for courses with vacancies in the UCAS search tool at [www.ucas.com/search](http://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 a choice in the application.

Find out more at [www.ucas.com/extra](http://www.ucas.com/extra). See page 7 for the opening and closing dates of Extra.

### Qualification results and Confirmation

UCAS receives qualification results from many awarding bodies and sends them to the universities and colleges holding offers for applicants. Tracking offers and decisions in the adviser portal will show real-time data on SQA and JCQ (including A levels) results days (once the embargo periods have been lifted). Check which results we receive at [www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results](http://www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results).

### DID YOU KNOW?

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 require proof of qualifications entered in the application (e.g. GCSEs). Applicants can upload copies of qualification certificates to the education section of their application (e.g. transcripts). Universities and colleges may request additional copies to support their decision-making. Each university or college has its own policy – some request these immediately, while others ask after their initial assessment.

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 their place.

- ▶ If a university or college confirms a 'firmly accepted' offer, then the applicant is committed to that choice and the insurance choice, if they have one, is automatically declined. An applicant can use 'decline my place' if they want to give up their firm place and enter Clearing or choose an alternative pathway.
- ▶ If a university or college makes a confirmation rejection decision, the applicant might meet the conditions of their insurance choice, in which case the offer becomes 'firmly accepted' and they are committed to take that place.

If an applicant has made an insurance reply for one of their choices, they must be willing to take the place if they are not placed at their firmly accepted choice. If they end up committed to their insurance place and do not want it, they will have to release themselves into Clearing and use 'decline my place' if they want to pursue other options for entry in 2027, or withdraw their application if they don't want to enter HE this cycle.

If an applicant doesn't meet the conditions of either their firm or insurance choice, they may still have their place confirmed. This depends on a number of factors and is at the discretion of the university or college.

If an applicant isn't successful at their firm or insurance choices, they will be able to use Clearing, unless they are offered an alternative course.

### Change of course

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

- ▶ different course
- ▶ deferred entry place
- ▶ 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 will be explained in the offer on their application.

### Reason for Confirmation pending

Universities and colleges can give applicants a reason why a Confirmation decision hasn't been made, so they know why there is a delay (e.g. awaiting a DBS check). This can also be viewed in the adviser portal, to help you support students. If students haven't received any communication from the university or college, they should contact them directly to discuss their application.

### Delayed or late qualification results

Universities and colleges will wait until 1 September to receive 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 review and appeal services have no guarantee their offers will remain open. It's imperative to notify universities and colleges of a possible change of grade as soon as a review is logged with the awarding body. Although they are under no obligation to agree to wait for a review of marking 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](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results).

## 3.4 WHAT ABOUT CLEARING?

### What is Clearing?

Clearing is an opportunity for students who do not have a confirmed place to find a course using UCAS' search tool – the only official vacancy listing. Clearing is used by tens of thousands of applicants each year and runs from the beginning of July – see page 7 for this cycle's date.

### Who can use Clearing?

Applicants become eligible for Clearing at different points in the cycle, if they:

- ▶ do not hold a confirmed place after their qualification results are published
- ▶ have been unsuccessful at all their choices or have declined all offers when Clearing starts
- ▶ have declined or not replied to a confirmed offer of a changed course and, as a result, don't hold any offers
- ▶ submitted their application after 30 June
- ▶ have used 'decline my place' to enter Clearing

### How do applicants use Clearing?

- ▶ When Clearing opens, if an applicant is eligible, they'll see the option to add a Clearing choice in their application.
- ▶ Lists of courses with vacancies in Clearing are published from the beginning of July until late September in our [search tool](#).
- ▶ Your students should check the lists for suitable courses, then contact universities and colleges to find out more 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. 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 their application. If they don't, their application may be delayed.
- ▶ If an applicant wants to decline their place and go into Clearing, they can release themselves from their firmly accepted offer in their application.
- ▶ If a student has individual support needs, they should mention this in any Clearing conversation to arrange support they may need.

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.

For all your Confirmation and Clearing key dates, essentials, and resources head to [www.ucas.com/advisers/supporting-you-through-confirmation-and-clearing](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/supporting-you-through-confirmation-and-clearing).

### Decline my place

If an applicant is placed but no longer wants to go to this choice, they can use 'decline my place' in their application to release themselves into Clearing.

We have lots of support for students wishing to decline their place at: [www.ucas.com/applying/after-you-apply/clearing-and-results-day/results-day/declining-your-firm-place](http://www.ucas.com/applying/after-you-apply/clearing-and-results-day/results-day/declining-your-firm-place).

If an applicant uses this feature, their contract with the university or college will be cancelled, and they will lose their place. They should only use this 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 their application – alongside our search tool.

To find out more visit: [www.ucas.com/what-clearing-plus](http://www.ucas.com/what-clearing-plus).

## 3.5 THE RESULTS EMBARGO GUIDELINES QUALIFICATION RESULTS

### Confidentiality of results

Each year, UCAS and universities and colleges are under strict embargo arrangements, through signed results embargo agreements with both the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

The results embargo periods allow universities and colleges to prepare for the publication of qualification results, so as many potential students as possible can see confirmation decisions on their choices in their application by the official publication date.

The dates for these two embargo periods will be confirmed closer to results days and published on [ucas.com/advisers](https://ucas.com/advisers).

To safeguard the integrity of the results embargo and ensure we retain privileged early access to qualification results, we implement restricted access to many of our systems.

During the two results 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
- ▶ access to any information in the tracking offers and decisions section of the adviser portal is restricted. **Ensure you download any necessary information before the embargo periods e.g. Applicant Status Report (ASR)**

### Breaches and inferences

Some centres may also receive results ahead of publication day under a separate embargo arrangement from an awarding organisation.

### 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 results embargo is lifted, they could infer they have achieved AAA at A level.

If you become aware of a breach by a university or college, please contact [embargobreach@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:embargobreach@ucas.ac.uk) in the first instance.



## 3.6 REPORTS FOR ADVISERS

**In addition to accessing the free 'Tracking offers and decisions' section of the adviser portal, you can also download your Applicant Status Report and Final Destination Report.**

**Applicant Status Report (ASR)** – filter and sort your applicants, and then download this 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 Personal ID (PID), their group, choices, offers (in summary and in full), and predicted grades. 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 third 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.

### **Monthly key statistics report – £50**

This insight report is designed to save you time, by providing key statistical trends and analysis of your students. It's an easy way to keep colleagues and senior leadership teams informed of progress throughout the cycle.

### **Silver package – £200**

Providing more in-depth information about your students, helping you understand your current situation and how it compares to previous years. It's the ideal option for planning ahead and identifying areas for focus.

### **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.

- ▶ Monthly key statistics report
- ▶ Annual progression report
- ▶ Annual destination data map
- ▶ Annual competitor report

Visit [ucas.com/advisers-reports](https://ucas.com/advisers-reports) for more information on each package and to view sample reports.



# SECTION 4: UCAS TERMS EXPLAINED



# SECTION 4: UCAS TERMS EXPLAINED

**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.

**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 start an application.

**Cancellation** – an applicant can cancel an application within 14 days of the welcome email to receive a full refund.

**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.

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

**Decline by default (DBD)** – we decline an outstanding offer on the applicant's behalf if they haven't replied by their reply date.

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

**Entry requirements** – what the university or college recommends that you need to do / have to achieve 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.

**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.

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

**Fraud** – provision of false, incomplete, or misleading information by an applicant or their referee or agent.

**HE** – higher education.

**Historical entry grades** – now displayed in our search tool, this data shows the historic grade profiles of applicants accepted onto courses, alongside offer rates. It empowers students to make informed decisions about their future by understanding the actual grades of previous students accepted onto courses.

**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 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.

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

**Personal statement** – structured 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.

**Reject by default (RBD)** – we reject outstanding decisions not yet made by the provider by their relevant deadline.

**Search tool** – our online search tool for undergraduate and postgraduate courses at universities, colleges, conservatoires, and other HE course providers – [www.ucas.com/search](http://www.ucas.com/search).

**Similarity detection software** – used by UCAS on all applications, to identify personal statements containing content which has similarities with previously submitted personal statements, or with those held as a library resource.

**Status code** – every 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](http://www.ucas.com/student-banking).

**Subject Spotlights** – Subject Spotlights from Springpod give students the chance to try a university course before they apply: [www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/springpod](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/springpod).

**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.

**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: [www.ucas.com/chat-to-students](http://www.ucas.com/chat-to-students).

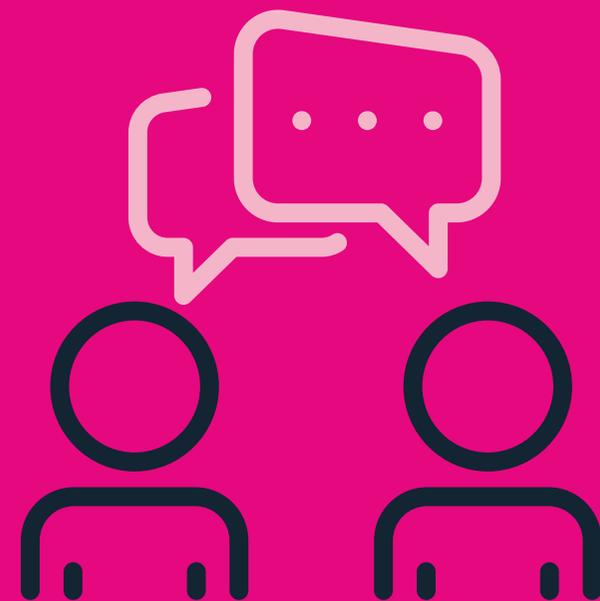
**Unsuccessful** – the university or college has not offered the applicant a place on the course.

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

**Withdrawal (application)** – If more than 14 days have passed since submission, an application can still be withdrawn, but no refund will be given. Once withdrawn, the application is completely removed, and universities and colleges will no longer be able to see it.



# SECTION 5: UCAS INFORMATION AND ADVICE



# SECTION 5: UCAS INFORMATION AND ADVICE

The **UCAS Hub** is designed to help your students explore all their options in one central place, but on [ucas.com](https://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 choices. Here is a quick guide to the information, advice, and resources on [ucas.com](https://ucas.com).

## Discovery

- ▶ [Careers Quiz](#)
- ▶ [UCAS events and exhibitions](#)
- ▶ [Universities and colleges](#)
- ▶ [Preparing for an open day](#)
- ▶ [Subject guides](#)
- ▶ [Subject tasters](#)
- ▶ [Choosing what to study](#)
- ▶ [Search for courses and apprenticeships](#)
- ▶ [Choosing where to study](#)
- ▶ [Location guides](#)
- ▶ [Study at a conservatoire](#)

## Applying

- ▶ [Dates and deadlines](#)
- ▶ [Applying to university](#)
- ▶ [Entry requirements](#)

- ▶ [Writing your personal statement](#)
- ▶ [Personal statement guides](#)
- ▶ [International students](#)
- ▶ [Students with individual support needs](#)
- ▶ [Interviews](#)
- ▶ [Conservatoire assessments](#)
- ▶ [Money and student life](#)
- ▶ [Accommodation advice](#)
- ▶ [Preparing for your studies](#)

## World of work

- ▶ [What is an apprenticeship?](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in the UK](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in Wales](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in Scotland](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in England](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeship and graduate job search](#)
- ▶ [Industry guides](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeship application guides](#)
- ▶ [How I got my apprenticeship](#)
- ▶ [Employers](#)
- ▶ [How to get into work](#)
- ▶ [What are employers looking for?](#)
- ▶ [Find career ideas](#)
- ▶ [Virtual Work Experiences](#)
- ▶ [Internships](#)
- ▶ [Explore jobs and careers](#)
- ▶ [Is work experience important?](#)
- ▶ [Applying for jobs – tips](#)
- ▶ [How to write a CV](#)
- ▶ [CV Builder](#)

- ▶ [Interviews](#)
- ▶ [How you get paid at work](#)
- ▶ [Working for yourself – self-employment and starting a business](#)
- ▶ [Gap years](#)

To help you support your students with their research, we've developed a number of classroom resources, lesson activities, and student packs for you to use and share with them. Download your copies at:

[www.ucas.com/guides-for-teachers](https://www.ucas.com/guides-for-teachers) and [www.ucas.com/advisers/lesson-activities](https://www.ucas.com/advisers/lesson-activities).



# ANNEX A: DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SECURITY



# ANNEX A: DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SECURITY

**During the application process, you will be processing your students' personal data, assuming the role of a data controller, and are responsible for the correct handling of this data, as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.**

## Looking after your 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. !£\$%#)

## UCAS cannot reset your password for you

You need to use the 'Forgotten password' link on the sign in screen.

You must use your organisation's email address and not your personal one. 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 this for them. Please contact the [Adviser Help Team](#) if you need help.

To support the security of yours and your students' data, UCAS uses multi-factor authentication (MFA) for all users. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/mfa](http://www.ucas.com/mfa).

Security Incidents involving your centre UCAS must be informed immediately when a centre becomes aware of a security incident which has, or is likely to, impact on UCAS systems. This includes (but is not limited to) the loss or theft of credentials used to access UCAS systems or any other security incident affecting centre IT systems which may cause a direct impact to UCAS.

UCAS will then assess the impact and any restrictions required (including whether it is necessary to temporarily suspend access to some or all of its systems) while the incident is managed, and will work with the customer to reinstate access as soon as practicably possible once assurances of system integrity have been provided and deemed acceptable by UCAS.

This will enable UCAS to ensure the safety and security of applicant data. If you become aware of a security incident, please email [adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk).

## 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

As a data controller, any further use of the applicant's information over and above UCAS admissions should be handled under your own processes in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.

## 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 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 not** allow others to see this data if they would not be able to access it via the system.
- ▶ **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** ensure it is confidentially destroyed when you have finished using it.

## 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 2018.

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

## Subject access requests (SAR)

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

UCAS regularly receives SARs from applicants requesting a copy of their UCAS application for personal reference. These requests are fulfilled in accordance with our data protection policy and includes the disclosure of any reference you may have provided as an adviser in support of their application.

# ANNEX B: AGENT BEST PRACTICE



# ANNEX B: AGENT BEST PRACTICE

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

Before completing an application on behalf of someone else, it is essential that an agent:

- ▶ has the necessary authority to complete and submit the application on behalf of the applicant and has understood the [UCAS Undergraduate declaration](#)
- ▶ ensures the applicant has sufficient time to read and understand the UCAS undergraduate declaration, our website terms and conditions, and our privacy policy
- ▶ ensures the contact details supplied are accurate
- ▶ ensures the applicant retains access to both the UCAS Hub tools and their application throughout the duration of the process
- ▶ ensures the applicant is aware of how to contact UCAS for support

Universities, colleges, and UCAS will want to communicate with the applicant directly to provide timely updates and offer information and advice to support their application.

**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.**

In addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined on [page 4](#) an agent / agency must follow:

## UCAS predicted grades and reference

- ▶ The applicant reference and predicted grades should be provided by the person who is best placed to comment on the student's academic suitability for the course of study.
- ▶ UCAS would encourage you to cooperate with the applicant's place of study to ensure the reference and predicted grades are a true and accurate reflection of their suitability for the course(s).
- ▶ You can either:
  - obtain a reference from the school or college referee and, with their permission, input it. If doing this, we encourage you to add the referee's specific contact details into 'Referee contact details' in staff management
  - add the applicant's referee as a member of staff at your centre, assigning them appropriate permissions to view and edit the applicant's reference. Ensure permissions are set appropriately for data protection

- ▶ For either option you must ensure:
  - you obtain consent from the referee to use their name and reference
  - you do not alter the reference or predicted grades
  - the referee's name, post/occupation, and contact details are correctly entered and reflect the details of the individual who provided the reference

It is essential that all staff supporting applications through UCAS read the [guidance on reference writing](#).

Predicted grades should be set following the [UCAS guidance on predicted grades](#).

Predicted grades should be set for all qualifications listed as pending by the applicant. We advise you to work cooperatively with the educational setting where the applicant is studying for these. Explanation and evidence of how predicted grades have been generated should also be included in section 1 of the academic reference.

- ▶ The person named on the reference may be contacted by the university/college wanting to discuss the applicant, reference or predicted grades.

- ▶ UCAS' Fraud and Verification Team carry out checks on applications where any false, missing and/or misleading information is highlighted to them by a student, parent, school or university and may also contact the referee to verify the reference. UCAS has the right to cancel an application without refunding an application fee if we determine (having carried out any necessary checks), or have reasonable belief, that the application contains false information or you have left out relevant information.

## Fees and billing

- ▶ UCAS is clear and transparent about the UCAS application fee on our website and in our communications to students and parents.
- ▶ We encourage you to be clear on the fees (if any) you are charging to applicants and what they cover.
- ▶ Any UCAS application fee waiver is to support UK applicants only.
- ▶ As a registered centre you are responsible for setting application fee payment methods for your students and must follow our payments and billing process.
- ▶ If you choose to be invoiced for UCAS applicants, UCAS' finance department will send you an invoice at the end of each calendar month, with details of applications you have submitted. Invoices are sent by email to a finance contact, and copied to the Registered Centre Correspondent at the centre. You have 30 days to pay.

## Qualifications

- ▶ To support applicants, in the adviser portal make a shortlist of common qualifications taken in your country, as well as general international qualifications like the IB and International A levels.
- ▶ Use our **international qualifications guide** to support with accurate input of the common global qualifications into the UCAS application.

## Training

- ▶ Our **professional development platform** gives you access to a series of free short digital training courses, designed to expand your understanding of the UCAS admissions service. We can discuss the development of **personalised online training** to support your centre.
- ▶ If we are visiting the country your organisation is located in, or has a branch in, we would be happy to connect with you at an event, a UCAS 101 training day where offered, or consider a visit to your office.
- ▶ We encourage all agent counsellors to complete the **UK counsellor training**, and agency owners to complete the agency management training, offered by the British Council as part of the UK's Agent Quality Framework (AQF).

## Student and parent support

- ▶ A key part of the role of an agent is to help applicants with their research journey. We would encourage you to use UCAS resources, both to inform your own practice, and to support students with their own understanding and knowledge about the options available to them.
- ▶ A dedicated **Parents' Guide** is available to share with families, including international specific information on funding, accommodation, and support for transitioning to life in the UK.
- ▶ In addition, **UCAS' international podcasts** are available for both parents and students, offering practical insight into studying in the UK and the international student experience.



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