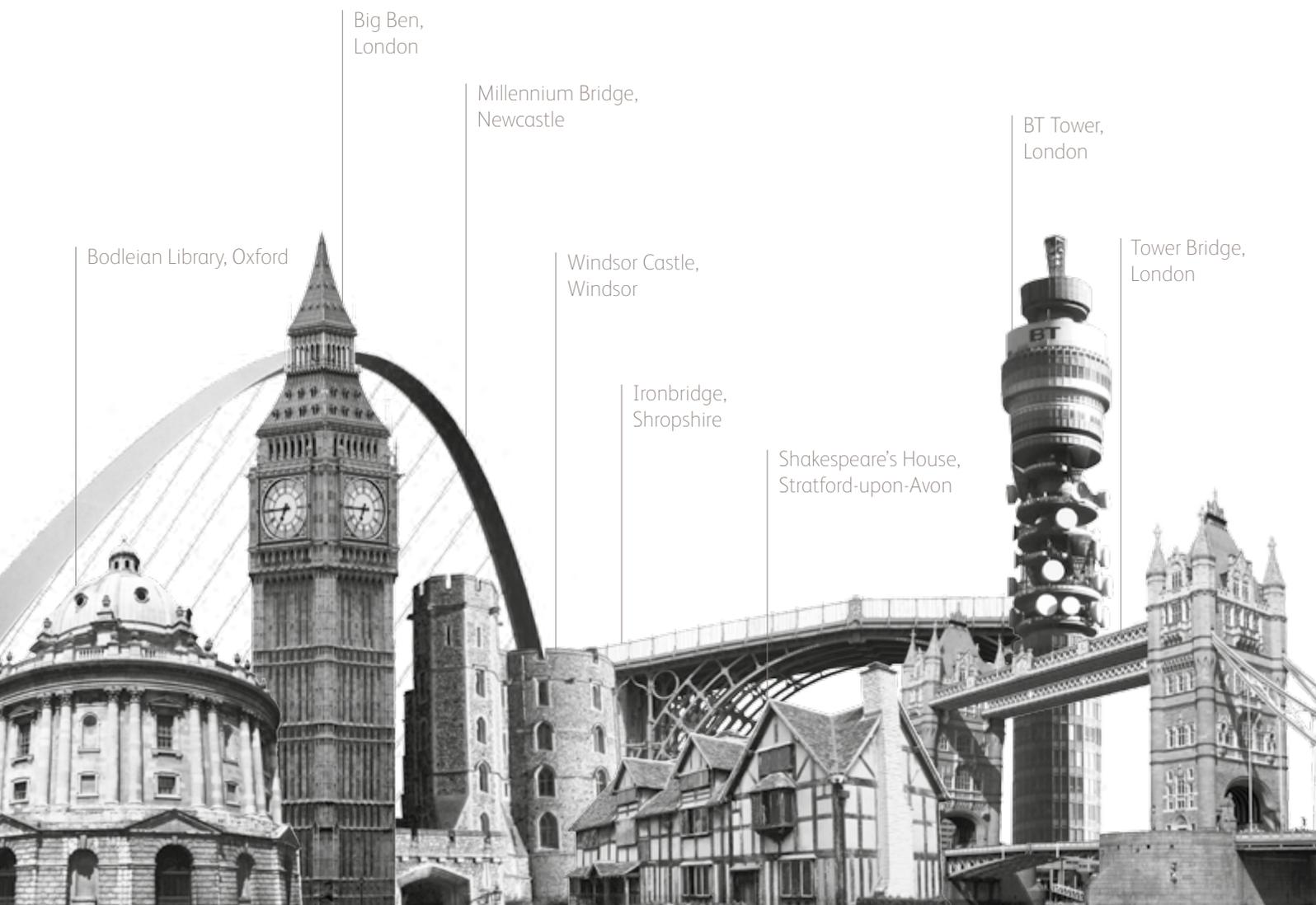


International undergraduate guide **Advisers**



Big Ben,
London

Millennium Bridge,
Newcastle

BT Tower,
London

Bodleian Library, Oxford

Windsor Castle,
Windsor

Tower Bridge,
London

Ironbridge,
Shropshire

Shakespeare's House,
Stratford-upon-Avon





UCAS is the organisation responsible for managing applications to universities and colleges in the UK

This guide will help advisers support international students applying to study in the UK. Advisers can also access a more in-depth annual adviser guide at www.ucas.com/advisers/guides.

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Who are we?

We are the official online admissions service for UK universities and colleges – we are a non-profit organisation and have registered charity status. We work on behalf of the universities, connecting people to higher education.

We process undergraduate applications to full-time courses at UK universities and colleges and some other European countries, and provide a central source of information and advice on higher education

Why choose the UK?

The UK has a long history of welcoming international students into diverse, creative, and multicultural universities and colleges. Here is what students can expect:

Choice and quality

- With over 370 universities and colleges offering more than 35,000 undergraduate courses, the UK has a course of study to suit everyone.
- UK degree courses are often very specialised, so students can focus on their chosen subject from their first day.
- The qualification awarded at the end of the course will be recognised and respected throughout the world because all UK degrees meet strict academic standards.

Value and improved career prospects

- Studying in the UK can be cheaper than in other countries, because many courses can be completed in three years instead of four.
- UK courses give students practical skills, preparing them for employment anywhere in the world.
- Studying in the UK will enhance students' English language skills, which can be an asset in the global employment marketplace.

Easy application process

- UCAS was created by UK universities and colleges to provide an easy and fair application process for everyone.
- Over 121,000 people from outside the UK apply through UCAS, the central admissions service, to study full-time undergraduate degree courses in the UK every year.
- One online application to UK universities and colleges through www.ucas.com. Students can apply for up to five courses at once, making the application process much quicker.

Explaining UK higher education

Descriptions for higher education vary around the world, so here is an explanation of some of the terms used in this guide.

Getting started

Higher education

The level of study where students, usually over the age of 18, can gain undergraduate (also known as 'degree' or 'bachelor degree' level) qualifications.

Course

The full programme of studies over three or four years that a student takes to gain an undergraduate degree qualification. A course is divided into shorter 'modules', which cover the different topic areas of the wider subject.

Who does what

Universities and colleges

Course providers that offer higher education courses. They set the entry requirements for all of their own courses, charge tuition fees for the course, and sponsor student visas, if applicable. They also evaluate students' applications to decide if they will be suitable for the course, and they send decisions and offers back to applicants through the UCAS online system.

Applicants

People who apply to study in the UK via UCAS' online system at www.ucas.com.

Advisers

Advisers can register as a **UCAS centre** to have access to the best advice, and to oversee student applications through UCAS' online system. UCAS centres are widely considered as a trusted source of applications by universities and colleges. See page 6 for more details on how to become a UCAS registered centre. Advisers can offer valuable support to students, but students can also apply independently.





Here are explanations of some of the terms used throughout this guide:

Acceptance

This means the applicant has met all the conditions set by the university or college and they have a place.

Apply

The UCAS online application system for applying for higher education courses in the UK.

Clearing

A service available between July and late October. It can help people without a university or college place to find suitable vacancies on higher education courses.

Conditional offer

The university or college will offer the applicant a place if they meet certain conditions, which are usually based on their exam results.

Extra

If the applicant has used all five choices on their application but has not been offered a place by any university or college, they can apply through Extra for another course. In Extra, they can apply for any course with vacancies. Extra is open between the end of February and early July.

Firm choice

The offer the applicant has accepted as their first choice.

Insurance choice

The offer the applicant has accepted as their second choice, in case they do not meet the requirements of their first choice.

Offer

When a university or college has considered an application they make one of two decisions: offer a place, or make the application unsuccessful.

Personal ID

Applicants will be given a 10-digit individual number when they register to use Apply. They will need to give this number if they contact us or the universities about their application.

Reference

A written recommendation on an applicant's application form from a teacher, adviser or professional.

Track

The online system where the applicant can track the progress of their application. They can use it to check if they've received any offers and make their replies.

UCAS search tool

An online search available at search.ucas.com where the applicant can find and compare courses based on subject, university and location.

Unconditional offer

The applicant has met all the requirements and the university is happy to accept them.

Undergraduate

The first level of study in higher education. Once a student has graduated from an undergraduate course, they can move on to postgraduate study.

Westminster Abbey, London





Becoming a UCAS centre

UCAS works with advisers through a network of registered UCAS centres. Schools, colleges, education advisers and agents who help students into UK higher education can register with UCAS to access free tools and advice, so they can provide the best service to their students. The benefits of becoming a UCAS centre are:

- It's free!
- There is a dedicated telephone line at UCAS, giving advisers reliable advice about applying to study in the UK.
- UCAS centres are widely considered to be a trusted source of information by students, universities and colleges.
- You will gain access to Apply for advisers (www.ucas.com/apply-advisers), which allows you to email your students with timely reminders, corrections and comments on their applications, directly from the system.
- You will receive monthly newsletters giving insight and up-to-date information about the application process to pass on to students.
- You will be able to purchase specialised tools, such as Adviser Track and Progression Reports, which let you track your students' applications and also receive monthly status reports.

FREE

Apply for advisers

Allows you to:

- monitor all the students applying through your centre in one place, up to the point of submitting the application
- tailor the application process to how your centre is set up – such as automatically assigning referees to students, shortlisting qualifications offered at the school or grouping students by class or subject
- set up user accounts for as many staff members at the centre as you require, and assign them different supervisory roles
- be invoiced for all student applications, removing the need for students to pay online (meaning students/agents can set up their own payment arrangements)

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

Adviser Track

Allows you to:

- follow the progress of your students' applications after they have been submitted to UCAS
- monitor which students have received offers and which haven't, and give special assistance where needed
- see who needs to reply to offers and prompt them so they don't miss deadlines
- access reports and analysis on where all students were ultimately placed – can help with marketing and improving internal processes
- get an annual subscription at a manageable fee of £46.67 + VAT (for Adviser Track 2015)

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

Progression reports

- A suite of reports that give you an in-depth analysis of where your students are placed, how they compare to global averages and to your own competitors.
- Available at a reduced fee if you subscribe to Adviser Track.

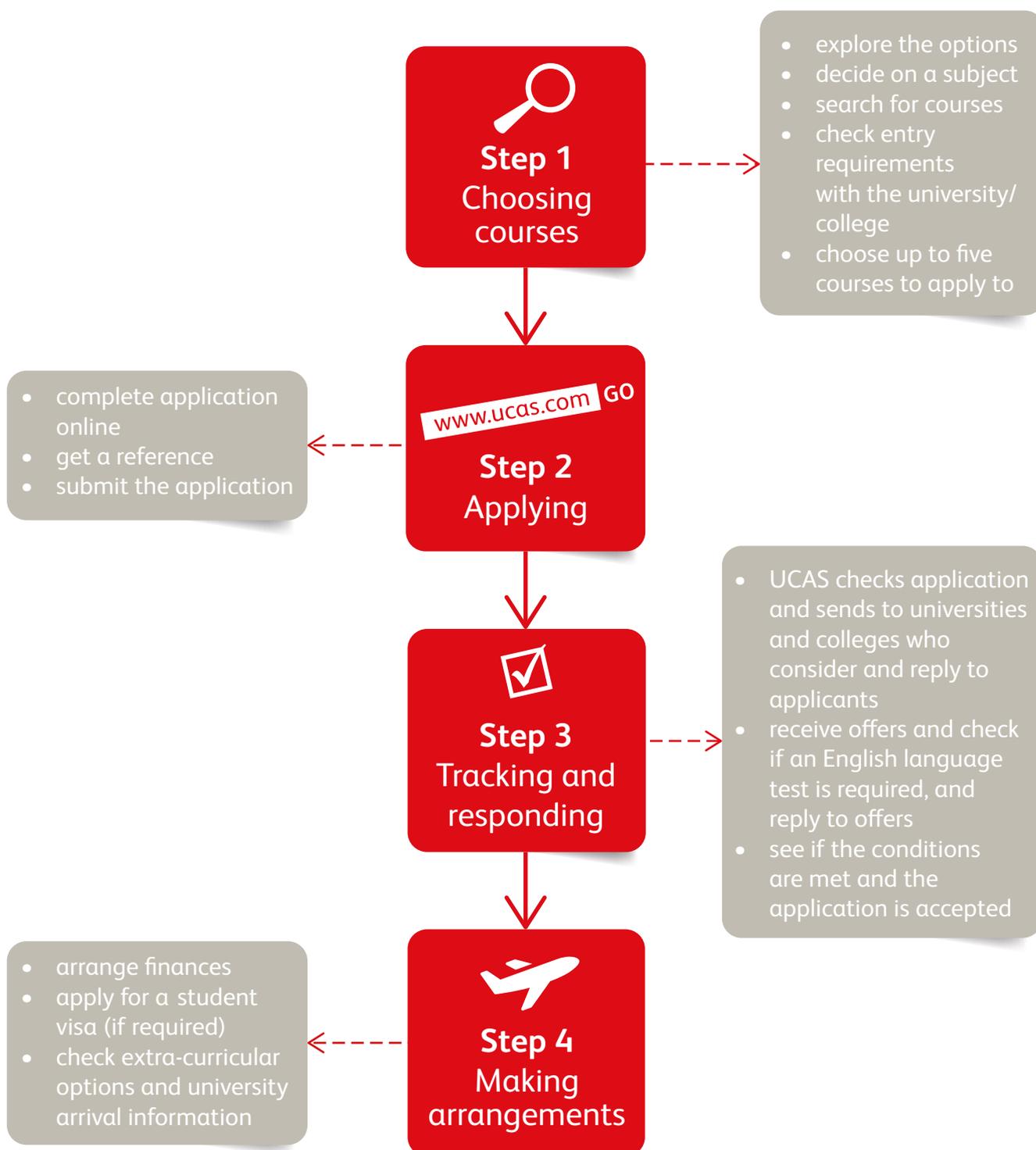
Find out more and register to become a centre at www.ucas.com/becomeacentre.

*Portland Bill Lighthouse,
Dorset, England*



How to apply

Students should apply to study in the UK through UCAS. Steps 1, 2 and 3 are completed through the UCAS website – www.ucas.com – which also has information on the arrangements students need to make for step 4.



The next few pages will provide more information about what students should do at each stage in the process.

1 – Choosing courses

If they wish, students can apply for up to five courses in their application to UK higher education. As there are over 35,000 undergraduate courses available at UK universities and colleges, we urge advisers to help students do research so they can choose the courses and the universities and colleges that are right for them.

Research courses at search.ucas.com

- **Students should choose a subject they are passionate about** – they can often receive conflicting advice from friends, parents and subject teachers, but the student will be the one studying the subject.
- **Students should have an understanding of the careers their courses can lead to** – they can explore job websites and contact companies for graduate opportunities to get an idea of this.
- **Courses with similar titles can have very different content and study styles** – students should ensure that courses cover the topics they want to study and are taught in a style that suits them. They might, for example, want to consider courses that include work placements or a year in another country.
- **All of this research takes time**, so making students aware of the application deadlines for the courses they are applying for is vital to ensure they don't rush. See page 13 for deadline details.

Research the right place to study

- **Visit university and college websites** – most have an online prospectus which will show what they offer.
- **Don't decide based on just rankings or league tables** – these can be useful, but different universities and colleges have strengths in different areas, so students should make sure the university or college is strong in the subject they want to study.
- **Attend open days** – if students are able to visit the UK before they apply, it is useful to attend university and college open days to see the facilities and ask questions about university life. Alternatively, use the virtual tours available online instead www.ucas.com/virtual-tours.
- **Attend a UCAS event** – UCAS attends a variety of events around the world, giving students and parents more information about studying in the UK. Find out more at www.ucas.com/internationalevents.

Check entry requirements

- **English language requirements** – universities and colleges can advise what standard of English students will need for the course. They may require students to take an English language test or provide some other proof of English proficiency.
- **Minimum entry requirements** – universities and colleges will set entry requirements as a guide to the kinds of school qualifications, subjects and exam grades needed. Find these using search.ucas.com, or on the university or college websites.

2 – Applying

When students have researched their courses, they can begin their application using Apply, the UCAS online application service at www.ucas.com/apply. Apply is available anywhere in the world at any time.

With the exception of the reference, the application should be completed entirely by the student, but can be overseen and supported by advisers.

- If the school, college or agency that the student is applying through is a UCAS registered centre, advisers will be able to monitor the status of the application.
- Students applying through a registered centre will have to enter a ‘buzzword’ – a unique password created by the centre – to link their application to the centre.
- For more information about becoming a UCAS centre, see page 6 or go to www.ucas.com/becomeacentre.

Contents of an application

Advisers wishing to see exactly what students will encounter during their application can fill out their own ‘dummy’ application. There are six sections to an application:

- **Personal details** – so UCAS can contact applicants. It is vital that the email address provided is the student’s own address and that they will have access to the account throughout the academic cycle (including school holidays).
- **Choices** – up to five different courses the student wants to apply for. There’s no preference order, and the course providers will not see the other choices.
- **Education** – a list of all current and pending qualifications. UCAS registered centres can set their own shortlist of qualifications to make selection easier for students.
- **Employment** – details of any full or part-time paid employment if applicable.
- **Personal statement** – a very important part of the application to show a course provider why students should be accepted on to the course.
- **Reference** – a letter of recommendation from an adviser, teacher or other appropriate person (not relative) who knows the student academically.





Personal statement

Universities and colleges read personal statements to assess a student's suitability for a course and decide whether to offer a place. A good personal statement shows a student's motivation for applying and why they are suitable for the course. Advisers should encourage students follow these tips:

- Start planning the personal statement early so there is plenty of time to write it.
- See advice about writing a personal statement at www.ucas.com/personalstatement – this page has resources that advisers can freely use in the classroom to help students structure their writing.
- Ask teachers, friends and parents to read and check the personal statement before it is submitted.
- Make sure it is all their own writing – all personal statements are checked against thousands of others for plagiarism, and students who are suspected of copying others will be reported to the universities and colleges they are applying to.

References

The reference is designed to show a student's academic potential and attitude to studying, and allows the course provider to see if the student is suitable for the course. The application cannot be submitted without a reference, so it is important that advisers submit the reference promptly to avoid causing delays.

Who writes the reference?

- The reference can be written by anyone who knows the student academically – this could be a subject teacher, form teacher or head of year. If the student is no longer in formal education, a professional reference from an employer is acceptable.
- The reference can be written by multiple teachers if required, but must be compiled by one person.
- UCAS registered centres can designate staff members who are automatically assigned to students as referees. Applicants applying individually must nominate a referee and enter their contact details – the referee will be sent instructions as to how to complete the reference.

What to include in the reference

1. The main elements of the student's academic programmes up to the present date.
2. The student's suitability for the chosen course of study.
3. Skills, extra-curricular activities and interests that are relevant to the course.
4. Comments on information provided elsewhere in the application; although it is not necessary to repeat content already given by the student.
5. The reference must be written in English.

Adding predicted grades

- Referees will be asked to add predicted grades or scores of any qualifications that students are currently studying for.
- This helps course providers to see if the student is expected to meet the entry requirements for the course and assess their academic potential.
- The referee should get the predicted grades from the subject teachers.

Agents and references

- Agents should not write the reference themselves unless they know the student academically.
- References for students applying through a UCAS centre can only be attached by that registered centre. Therefore, agents set up as UCAS centres should contact the student's referee directly to obtain the reference.
- Agents should ensure that the referee's contact details are included, because some course providers like to contact the referee directly.

Once all sections of the application are complete, the adviser has added the reference and the student has paid the application fee, then the application can be submitted to UCAS. We will then send the application to the student's chosen course providers who will decide whether to offer them a place.

We recommend that each student nominates a teacher, parent or agent as an alternative contact. This is called 'nominated access' and means that the person nominated can contact us on the student's behalf to discuss the application. Please note, our advisers will not discuss an application with anyone other than the student or their nominated contact.

When to apply

We recommend students apply as early as possible. There are four application deadlines to be aware of:

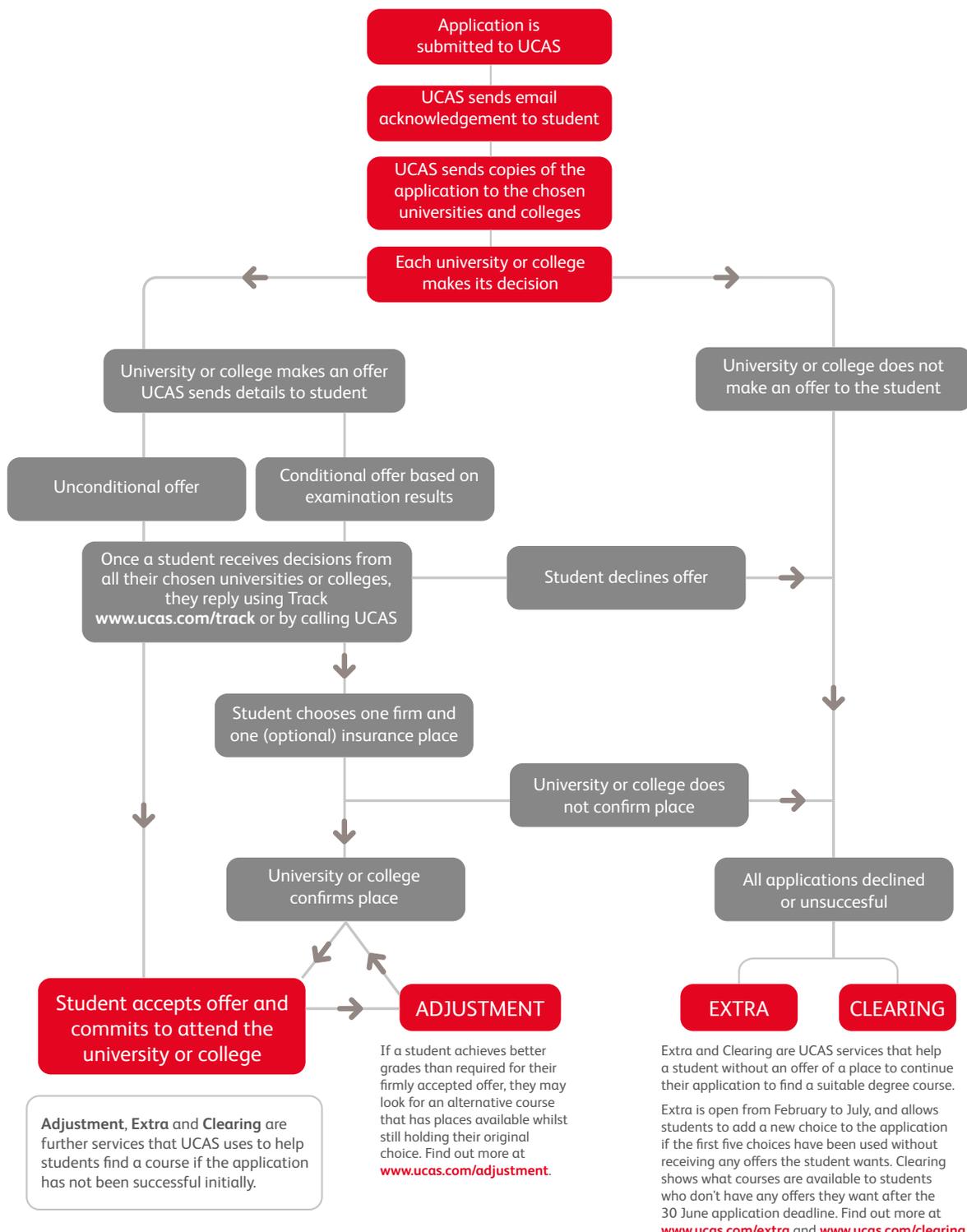
1. **15 October** the year before the course the student is applying for begins – application deadline for most medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and veterinary science courses, and for all courses at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.
2. **15 January** – application deadline for most courses except those listed above with a 15 October deadline, and art and design courses with a 24 March deadline. Some course providers do not guarantee to consider applications they receive after 15 January, and some popular courses may not have vacancies after that date. However we recommend checking with individual course providers to be sure.
3. **24 March** – application deadline for some art and design courses, except those listed with a 15 January deadline.
4. **30 June** – if students apply after 30 June, they will be entered into a process known as Clearing. Through Clearing, students need to contact universities and colleges directly to see if there are spaces remaining on courses. The courses will be listed on www.ucas.com from early July until late September. Find more information about Clearing at www.ucas.com/clearing.

For each of these deadlines, applications must be received by UCAS by **18:00 UK time**.

3 – Tracking and replying

Once students have submitted their applications, they have to wait for the universities and colleges to consider all the applications they receive. Students will be able to log in to the UCAS Track system to see how the application is progressing, and receive decisions from the universities and colleges they applied to. For a small annual fee, you can subscribe to Adviser Track and follow the progress of your students' applications after submission to UCAS. See page 7 for more details.

Depending on what the universities and colleges decide, the application will follow one of the routes below:





4 – Making arrangements

In order to study in the UK, students will need to make certain arrangements. These are the things they should be thinking about.

English language tests

- The UK Visas & Immigration website has a list of English language tests approved for immigration purposes – www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english.
- Individual universities and colleges might also have language requirements if English isn't a student's native language – these requirements may be part of a conditional offer to study. Contact the university or college for more details.
- For any students who are worried about the level of English language required, many universities and colleges offer language courses before the beginning of the main course to help students get to the right level. Contact the university or college for more details.

Visas

We don't advise on visas, but students may require one. Find out whether they need a visa at www.gov.uk/visas-immigration.

Living costs

For help in working out the full cost of studying in the UK:

- contact the international offices at UK universities and colleges
- contact your local British Council office – www.britishcouncil.org
- use the Brightside International Student Calculator at international.studentcalculator.org

Financial support

- For information about fee status and access to government support for EU students, see www.ukcisa.org.uk.
- Scholarship and bursary information can be found at the British Council's Education UK site – www.educationuk.org/global/articles/scholarships-financial-support.

Further help and support for you

In addition to this guide, we provide the following resources to support you through the application cycle:

- qualifications guides
- summary of international examination dates
- monthly newsletters
- online toolkits and presentations
- videos
- international events
- training
- reports for schools
- statistics
- marketing campaigns

Go to www.ucas.com/adviserresources for more details. Alternatively, you can phone us if you have any questions about the application process:

- Call us on **+44 330 3330 239*** to speak to one of our trained advisers between 08:30 –18:00 (UK time), Monday to Friday. Please note, this number is for advisers only – please do not share with parents or students who should call **+44 330 3330 230**.
- Find out about adviser training at www.ucas.com/training and the annual International Teachers and Advisers Conference at www.ucas.com/international-events.

Help and support for your students

There is a version of this guide for students that can be downloaded from www.ucas.com/internationalguides. Students can also follow us on social media and watch our 'How to' guides and other videos online:

- www.facebook.com/ucasonline
- www.twitter.com/ucas_online
- www.ucas.com/videos
- www.youtube.com/ucasonline

Other sources of information are also available from the British Council and the UK Council for International Student Affairs:

- British Council – www.educationuk.org
- UK Council for International Student Affairs – www.ukcisa.org.uk

*If you are calling from the UK, please use **0345 123 8001**.

UK AIRPORTS

Key	City	Airport
1	Aberdeen	Aberdeen Dyce
2	Belfast	Belfast International
3	Belfast	George Best Belfast City
4	Birmingham	Birmingham International
5	Blackpool	Blackpool International
6	Bournemouth	Bournemouth
7	Bristol	Bristol International
8	Cardiff	Cardiff International
9	Doncaster	Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield
10	Edinburgh	Edinburgh
11	Exeter	Exeter International
12	Glasgow	Glasgow International
13	Glasgow	Glasgow Prestwick
14	Inverness	Inverness
15	Leeds	Leeds Bradford
16	Liverpool	Liverpool John Lennon
17	London	London City
18	London	London Gatwick
19	London	London Heathrow
20	London	London Luton
21	London	London Stansted
22	Manchester	Manchester
23	Newcastle	Newcastle
24	Nottingham	East Midlands
25	Southampton	Southampton

*This is not a complete list of UK airports with international connections.



www.ucas.com

Rosehill
New Barn Lane
Cheltenham
GL52 3LZ
United Kingdom

UCAS

1641309