

The Little Guide

to higher education

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www.ucas.com



2015



Thinking of higher education?

Chances are that when you come to read this you'll have completed nearly 12 years of formal education. Think about it – that's probably three quarters of your life to date!

So, what next? You might be asking yourself: why go to uni? Higher education gives you an edge – whatever career path you choose. It makes you more independent, both emotionally and intellectually. An enlightening and stimulating environment that empowers you to learn.



LONDON
metropolitan
university



It's time to plan your next step

So we'd better make sure you've got the **right plan**

At London Metropolitan University we believe that everyone and everything should have a plan. It's our commitment to you as an individual to help you develop the right one.

We host open days, campus tours, UCAS application clinics and funding workshops. These will give you every opportunity to talk to us about the right plan for your future.

It all starts with a simple step, visit:

londonmet.ac.uk/theplan

No.1 for graduate starting salaries among modern universities*

* Telegraph 2013





But don't just take our word for it...

“ Does uni inspire your mind? Yes, absolutely. It gives you a passion to aspire to greater things, nurtures your soul and allows you to partake in incredible opportunities.”

Rachel Boydell, The Times/UCAS Writing Competition entrant, University of Central Lancashire

Sure, it's expensive, but it's a worthwhile investment, and there's financial help available. Those that go to uni often find lifelong friendships, and many students tell us it's one of the best and most unique experiences of their lives.

Most importantly, the decision you make needs to be right for you.

Choose wisely...



Your brilliant career starts here



Career focused university degrees

- ✔ Business Management • Economics • Finance
Computer Science • Law • Oil and Gas Management
- ✔ High-quality degrees awarded by Plymouth University, one of the top ten modern universities in the UK
- ✔ Three-year and accelerated two-year degrees available
- ✔ London based - Greenford and Greenwich campuses

Come and meet us at a fair near you

✔ See gsm.org.uk/meetgsm for a list of fairs

✉ outreach.services@gsm.org

☎ 020 8515 0282

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Higher education... where shall I go? What shall I do?!

So you're set on going to uni.
Great – you've made an excellent decision.
But, there are more big decisions ahead.

Figuring it out

Stuck on what to study? Think about what you enjoy and what you're good at, then consider related topics. Higher education courses have a much broader scope than BTECs or A levels. For example, if English is your thing, you might consider English Literature, or Creative Writing. Or if you're a maths whizz, why not choose something that'll play to your strengths, but is quite different to anything you've studied before... like astrophysics or aerospace engineering?

If you want to study more than one subject, you could do a joint (50/50) or a major/minor (75/25) course. There are also a number of different ways you could study; most unis offer 'flexible learning'. Take a look here for more: www.ucas.com/study-types.

Go see for yourself

City or field campus? Close to the action or rural tranquillity? Choosing a place is just as important as finding the right subject, so it's vital you get out there. Go to open days to get a flavour of different unis and colleges. You'll find details of open days on the UCAS website: www.ucas.com/open-days.

UCAS conventions are another great way to get up close and personal with unis, colleges, courses and careers – as well as charities, recruiters and gap year companies. Every year we welcome up to 275,000 visitors, at conventions big and small, right across the UK. Find one happening near you: www.ucas.com/conventions.



Start the search

If you're keen to start exploring, our search tool should be your first port of call: search.ucas.com. Here you'll be able to get an in-depth overview of what's on offer at each uni or higher education college. Search by subject, provider or location.

And while you're on our website, make sure you sign up for a UCAS e-card – www.ucas.com/ucascard. Each month you'll get tailored advice on getting into uni from us and a wealth of other insight from selected partners – all designed to keep you ahead of the curve when application time comes around. You'll also get some big brand discount vouchers. What's not to like?

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- explore your options
- decide on a subject
- search for courses
- check entry requirements

choosing courses

- apply online
- wait to hear back from course providers
- attend an interview/audition
- reply to any offers you get
- see if you meet the conditions and get accepted

applying

www.ucas.com GO

- make sure your finance is sorted
- buy course materials
- check social options and get ready to go!

starting your course

Apply yourself!

So, you know what, when and where you want to study. It's time to start applying. Here's what you need to know...

The application

Register for our online Apply service www.ucas.com/apply and fill in your application. There's lots of information and advice available on our website to guide you through the process.

Personal statement

Though it might look like 'yet another essay', a personal statement is the only opportunity you'll get to showcase your personality. It's your chance to demonstrate to universities and colleges that you're committed to your chosen subject, and persuade them you'd be a great student.

The key to making a powerful personal statement is a clear and concise plan of action. It'll take a while to get it right, so it's worth sharing drafts with your friends, parents, teachers and advisers. Then refine it and show it to them again. And again – it's that important.

There's more advice, and a number of hints, tips and tools to help you online: www.ucas.com/personalstatement.

Did you know...

The unis you've applied to won't know which other places you've applied to. They only find out after you've accepted an offer, if you are unsuccessful in securing an offer, or if you decline all of your offers.

Meet the deadline!

If you're applying through a school or college, your teachers and advisers will take care of your references. Often they'll set an internal deadline to make sure that



they have enough time to complete references. It's important to stick to the date set by them. In most cases the UCAS application deadline is 15 January each year – otherwise it's 15 October or 24 March. Take a look here for full details: www.ucas.com/whentoapply.

Did you know...

UCAS isn't in charge of who goes to uni and who doesn't, nor do we read every application; we don't need to. We're here to help everyone: both applicants and unis and colleges. We can access your application if we need to, but unless there's a problem we don't intervene.

Continued
overleaf

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Get in!

So, you submit your application, and then what? There's no point curling up into a ball during the (admittedly nail-biting) wait to hear if you've got a place at your chosen uni or college.

As each uni makes its decision about your application, we'll let you know. Even if you don't get the offer you want, hope isn't lost. For the full lowdown visit: www.ucas.com/tracking-your-application.



Stay on Track

Track is the online system you will use to monitor the progress of your application. Think of it as a continuation of 'Apply' – you use your Personal ID and password. You may be invited to an interview or audition, or asked to provide additional pieces of work – like an essay or portfolio. This info will show in Track, and you'll need to respond accordingly.

If you're offered a place...

We email you as soon as one of your chosen unis or colleges make a decision, asking you to log in to Track to review the offer details in full. Broadly speaking, there are two types of offer:

- **Conditional** – a place is reserved for you, providing you meet the conditions they've set. These are usually academic – such as getting three 'B' grades at A level.
- **Unconditional** – you've met all entry requirements but there may be non-academic requirements, for example criminal record and health checks.



The majority of offers made are conditional. If you get two or more offers, you can select a 'Firm' (first) choice and an 'Insurance' (second) choice, and 'Decline' any other offers. The date you need to respond by depends on when your last offer was received.

If you're not offered a place...

Hope isn't lost if you don't receive any offers at all, or you decide that you don't want to accept any of the offers you receive. In either case you may be eligible to apply for more courses using our Extra service www.ucas.com/extra – a final chance to secure a place before Clearing.

Did you know...

Clearing is a service that unplaced students can use to find available courses. It begins in July each year, but doesn't really kick in until summer results are through in August – www.ucas.com/clearing.

And if all goes to plan...

Come results time, if you meet the conditions set out in your original offer – congratulations! You have a place at uni subject to meeting any non-academic requirements. You might even get your firm choice place if you narrowly miss the original offer. If you do better than expected, you could use our Adjustment service.

Did you know...

Adjustment allows students who meet and exceed the conditions of their firm choice to change their offer and secure a place on a different course or at a different uni. It opens in August each year – www.ucas.com/adjustment.

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Money, money, money...

There's no denying that higher education costs a lot of money, but that shouldn't stop you from pursuing a uni place. There are lots of different options available – wherever you live, wherever you want to study.

Did you know...

UCAS doesn't arrange student finance, but we have information and advice on our website to point you to the right place. Find out more at www.ucas.com/studentfinance.

How much?

There are two main financial obligations you'll need to be concerned with as a student: the cost of studying and the cost of living.

Currently tuition fees can cost up to £9,000 per year, depending where you're from in the UK and where you study (unless you're Scottish and choose to study in Scotland – then you don't pay any fees at all). The good news is that you don't have to stump up that amount every autumn.

Student finance

You can apply for Maintenance Grants and Loans to cover your living costs. The amount you get depends on how much your household earns, and where you study.

Tuition Fee Loans are also available – which you don't start paying back until you graduate, and when you're earning over £21,000 per year.

Student finance applications can usually be made from the January before you start uni, so don't wait for your results. Applying early makes sure it's all in place before your course starts.

Need more?

Additional funding's available for those with individual needs; such as care leavers and those with disabilities. There's also funding available for specific subjects and for those who are interested in teacher training.

sound advice on

STUDENT FINANCE

student finance wales
cyllid myfyrwyr cymru

When it's time to think about paying for university Student Finance Wales will be here to help with a range of loans and grants.

For sound advice about student finance visit our website, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

 [facebook/sfwales](https://www.facebook.com/sfwales)

 [twitter/SF_Wales](https://twitter.com/SF_Wales)

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GYLLID I FYFYRWYR

Pan fydd hi'n bryd ystyried sut i dalu am eich cyfnod yn y brifysgol, bydd Cyllid Myfyrwyr Cymru yma i helpu gydag amrediad o fenthyciadau a grantiau.

I gael cyngor doeth am gyllid i fyfyrwyr, trowch at ein gwefan, hoffwch ni ar Facebook neu dilynwch ni ar Twitter.

www.cyllidmyfyrwyr.cymru.co.uk

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 [twitter/SF_Wales](https://twitter.com/SF_Wales)

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Other options

You might feel like taking a breather from education before making any big decisions. Uni may be on the cards, but there are other options too. There's loads you could do when you leave school or college – even if you're not sure of your long-term plans.

Travel

The world is your oyster. Travelling is a great way to get an insight into a new culture. You could consider: learning a language abroad, working holidays, conservation projects, or teaching English. Why not try some voluntary work and develop on a positive and rewarding environment?

Work

If you're keen to get cracking in the world of work, you have a few different options: get a job, do some work experience (paid or volunteering), or start your own business.

Train

Why not combine work and study, and get hands-on experience and qualifications doing a vocational course? BTECs, HNCs, HNDs, NVQs, Apprenticeships – they're all there for the taking.

Study

If you decide to keep on studying you could progress straight onto an undergraduate degree course. There's just the small matter of applying. Luckily, we're here to help with that...

Need more of a steer? Check out our website: www.ucas.com/planning-your-future.

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Don't be a stranger!

As well as our information-packed website, we've a strong social media presence, a UCAS blog, and a video channel with 'how-to' guides on everything from applying to starting uni. Take a look...

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/ucasonline
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/ucas_online
- Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/ucas
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/ucas_online
- Google+: plus.google.com/+ucasonlineofficial
- And, of course there's: www.ucas.com



Key dates

The application cycle begins each autumn; here are some of the key dates worth bearing in mind...

- **15 October:** application deadline for Oxford, Cambridge, and any course in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine/science.
- **15 January:** application deadline for the majority of courses.
- **25 February:** Extra opens.
- **24 March:** application deadline for some art and design courses.
- **30 June:** last date to submit applications before Clearing.
- **2 July:** last date to apply through Extra.
- **5 August:** Scottish results day.
- **14 August:** A level results day.



Your future
in secure hands.

Mandarin Language Opportunities

Choosing a course that fulfils your potential and secures a long-term career is tough. However, if you have the skills and interest to pursue Mandarin, there are all kinds of opportunities at MI5, MI6 or GCHQ. People with rare language skills are particularly important to us, and will be in the future. To find out more, visit

www.mi5.gov.uk/careers

www.sis.gov.uk/careers

www.gchq-careers.co.uk

To be eligible to apply to MI5, MI6 or GCHQ you must be a born or naturalised British citizen and one of your parents must be a British citizen or have substantial ties to the UK.



SECURITY SERVICE
MI5



SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
MI6