



UCAS

Adviser Guide

For entry to university or
college in 2015

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

For further information about the UCAS application process for advisers go to www.ucas.com/advisers.

If you need to contact the Schools Team: phone 0345 123 8001 or fax 01242 544 961.

If you are calling from outside the UK you can also contact our Customer Contact Centre on 0044 330 333 0230 (international call rates apply).

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

- From the UK phone 18001 0371 468 0 468
- From outside the UK phone 0044 151 494 1260 (text phone) and ask the operator to dial 0371 468 0 468.

Calls will be charged at your standard network rate.

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About this booklet

This booklet is for staff at schools, colleges and other centres such as careers offices, who advise potential applicants to HE courses in the UK. It explains how to apply for HE, how UCAS processes applications, how advisers can oversee their students' applications, and the various training services that we offer.

As an adviser, the idea of giving information, advice and guidance to students hoping to progress to HE may seem daunting. To help you we offer free training at UCAS HQ in Cheltenham. See page 22 for details.

Major changes for 2015 entry

CHANGES – UCAS AND CUKAS	WHAT IT MEANS
Equality questions for UK applicants	<p>Three new equality questions have been introduced to the additional information section in Apply for UK applicants.</p> <p>The questions ask applicants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• select their religion or belief• select their sexual orientation• state if their gender identity is different to the sex they were assumed to be at birth <p>Their completion is optional and all three have the option 'I prefer not to say'.</p> <p>As advisers you will not have access to the answer given by your students at any point during the application process.</p> <p>Universities and colleges are required to report on this information about their students, as part of their annual return to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). UCAS will only make this information available after the applicant has secured a place or at the end of the application cycle.</p> <p>The collection of this information will help universities and colleges monitor progress in equal opportunities and meet their legal obligations under the Equalities Act 2010.</p>
Legal sex All applicants	<p>The gender question has been changed to legal sex. Applicants must give the sex given on their birth certificate.</p> <p>The question is mandatory and they must choose between male or female.</p>
Title All applicants	<p>Mx has been added to the drop-down list of titles.</p>
Occupational background UK applicants	<p>This is not a new question; however the functionality for completing the question has changed. Applicants are asked to type the job title into a search box and will be presented with a list of job titles to select from. The more characters they type the easier it will be to find the job title they want.</p>
Residential category for UK and EU applicants	<p>The UK citizen or EU national category in the residential category question has been divided into individual regions so that different tuition fee arrangements can be managed by the universities and colleges. The new categories are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UK citizen – England• UK citizen – Northern Ireland• UK citizen – Scotland• UK citizen – Wales• British citizen – Channel Islands and Isle of Man• British citizen – British Overseas Territories• EU national – (non-UK citizen) <p>The other categories are unchanged.</p>

The key dates

2014

June	UCAS Apply for 2015 available.
Mid-September	Applications can be submitted to UCAS.
15 October (18:00 UK time)	Deadline for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and applications for medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and veterinary medicine.

2015

15 January (18:00 UK time)	Deadline for application to all courses except those listed with a 15 October or 24 March deadline.
25 February	Extra opens.
24 March (18:00 UK time)	Deadline for applications to art and design courses except those listed with a 15 January deadline. Applications received after the above deadlines will still be forwarded to universities and colleges, providing they have vacancies, but they are not obliged to consider them.
30 June (18:00 UK time)	Last date for receipt of applications at UCAS. All applications received later are automatically entered into Clearing.
Early August	SQA results are published and Scottish Clearing vacancy information service starts.
13 August	GCE A level, Advanced Diploma and Pre-U results are published and full Clearing information service starts.
21 September (18:00 UK time)	Last receipt of applications through Apply.

Section 1: Getting ready

It's important to have everything set up for your centre well before your students start preparing their applications. It's never too early to get your students thinking about what they want to study.

Read this section to find out what needs to be done.

1.1 Preparing your centre

The first thing to do is get your centre ready. At the end of May each year we will send your centre's login details for the next application cycle to your centre's UCAS coordinator. You will receive your five character school ID, username and coordinator's password. Once you have this you can set your centre up ready for the next UCAS application cycle.

- **Log in and check your centre's contact details** (such as name, address, phone number and so on) are correct. If any changes are needed you can update this information for your own use in Apply; but you still need to contact us with the corrected details as well.
- **Copy over last year's staff and group names.** This will save a lot of time; it's important to do it right at the start as later on you won't be able to go back to retrieve the information.
- **Specify any dates when your students will not be available for interview**, for example exam days. These dates will be pre-filled in all your centre's applications, but can be changed by the referee later for individual students.
- Create a **shortlist of qualifications** for your applicants to select from when they are in the education section of Apply. This helps them to enter the correct qualifications – particularly important if there are similar qualifications to choose from. If they are also studying qualifications through another school or college they can be easily added by selecting 'other'. To create a shortlist, you select from our long list and click 'add' to your shortlist.
- **Set up named groups** to help staff at your centre manage applications from groups of students. This is particularly helpful if there are large numbers of students.
- **Specify a payment method.** Select one from the following three options:
 - individually by students using debit or credit card
 - UCAS to bill the centre for total due
 - a combination of both the above methods

You can still accept cheques from individual students, but if they are made payable to UCAS, your centre must send them to us only as part of an invoice payment. Individual students must not send cheques direct to us.

- **Create your centre's new buzzword.** All students will need to use this when they first register to use Apply. Schools and colleges normally complete the above registration process in June. This allows you to tell your students the buzzword before they leave for the summer break.

To avoid confusion between application cycles we recommend that the buzzword is different from the one used in the previous cycle. It's also important to choose one that's unlikely to be used by other centres; so, for example, UCAS2015 is not recommended. We also find that names from Harry Potter stories are very popular – so why not set the trend with another favourite!

If your school or college has had no previous contact with UCAS (for example, you are a newly created sixth form), then email us at schools@ucas.ac.uk so we can ask you for the details of your centre. When we receive these we will issue your centre with a username and password.

1.2 Preparing your centre's advisers

All centres, whether new or already registered, need to appoint at least one member of staff to act as Apply coordinator. After the initial set-up a centre can appoint more than one coordinator in case they are not available. Only someone with coordinator access can change the information originally entered when your centre registered with UCAS, and add, amend or delete staff details.

It is also sensible to ensure that key individuals, such as the Head of Sixth Form, Head of Careers and your IT Manager and staff, know about the application process.

Setting up staff users

The next step is for the coordinator to add staff at your centre to the system. Anyone who is a referee or involved in checking and approving applications must be added, with appropriate levels of access. Each new staff member will automatically have access to view the Default Group.

There are five types of user:

- **coordinator** – has access to all areas, but cannot be a named referee
- **coordinator/referee** – has access to all areas and can be a named referee
- **user** – can see all applications in their allocated group(s), but cannot be a named referee
- **referee** – can be a named referee, but has no access to the system. This user type is sometimes given to school heads where local practice is for the head's name to appear on each reference, even if other members of staff actually write the references
- **user/referee** – can see all applications in their allocated group(s), and can be a named referee.

Passwords

The online system automatically generates a username (from their full name) and password (random letters and numbers) for each member of staff. The coordinator should take a print of this screen for each user, because after leaving this screen the password will not be displayed again.

The first time each user logs in to the staff area, Apply will ask them to change the password to one of their own choosing. This allows them to choose a more memorable password.

If a member of staff forgets their password, the coordinator can unlock their account or change it for them from the security option in the main menu.

If a student forgets their password, they can access a login reminder service from the applicant area of Apply. If they still cannot log in successfully, the security area allows you to choose a new password or unlock their account for them so they can re-access their application.

Permissions

The coordinator must allocate the appropriate permissions to each user so they can process the relevant applications. Each user will have one or more individual permissions from the following list:

- view application – to check the progress their students are making with filling in their applications
- approve application
- view reference
- edit reference
- approve reference
- send to UCAS
- delete application

Users can have permissions in more than one student group, and can have either the same or different permissions in different groups.

Many schools and colleges set up a member of their secretarial or administrative staff to edit references. This enables them to add a reference to an application on behalf of the referee and send approved applications to UCAS. If your centre does this, permission to send applications to UCAS might be withheld from all other members of staff.

The following notes will be useful to users of the staff area of Apply.

- Use the left hand navigation to move between sections and get back to the 'Welcome' screen.
- In the reference section, always use the save button before moving to another screen.
- Always log out when you have finished using Apply.

1.3 Preparing your students

UCAS is much more than just an application process. It offers the 'I' in Information, Advice and Guidance. So putting UCAS and advisers together means your students get all the support they need for their journey to their higher education course.

How do you help your students to decide what and where they want to study? Start by asking the following questions:

1. Which career?
2. Which subject?
3. Which course?

Some will know exactly what they want to do, while others won't have decided yet. Even those who know exactly what they want still have some choices to make. As their adviser you'll want to give them as much opportunity as possible to research the options open to them. You've probably started this already, but to make sure you're all up to speed here are some of the places to go.

Visit the UCAS search tool at search.ucas.com

The search tool is a comprehensive database of over 38,000 HE courses available at more than 300 universities and colleges in the UCAS application scheme. It has detailed information about individual universities and colleges, including a map showing where they are, as well as the courses they offer. The course information includes the entry requirements, fees, UCAS deadline date for applying and course start date. Applicants can search by course, university or college or location.

There's also a subject search for those who want to search by subject categories as well as an A-Z list to look for individual subjects.

Visit UCAStv at www.ucas.com/tv

UCAStv is where you'll find a wealth of videos to help you and your students.

Videos for students:

- how-to guides for your students to use when choosing their courses or when they visit a UCAS event
- student case studies which explain what to expect when they first arrive

Videos for advisers:

- writing references
- Adviser Apply
- Adviser Track
- preparing for results

Playlists of the most relevant and useful guides are always available for you and your students at every stage of the application process.

Visit UCASonline at www.youtube.com/ucasonline

There are short FAQs to answer most of the questions your students ask about applying on our YouTube channel UCASonline.

GET OUT THERE!

To help them make their minds up, there are three other sources of valuable information available to your students: open days, taster courses and education conventions. Even in this online world it's important to meet people face-to-face and visit the universities and colleges where they are thinking of studying to get the full picture. If they don't explore beforehand, there's a risk of being disappointed when they start the course.

Go to open days

Attending university and college open days is a great way for applicants to get a feel for a place. They can expect to be shown around the student union, library, accommodation and the department where they might end up studying, as well as meet tutors and students who can answer all kinds of questions about studying there. The students are often in their second year, so can still remember the application process and know exactly what it's like to be a fresher at their university.

One parent told us: Now that we have finished our round of open days both my son and I have a better understanding about where he wants to go and what he wants to study.

There's a searchable open days tool on our website at www.ucas.com/open-days.

Did you know? Many universities and colleges timetable in sessions just for parents on key topics like student finance, staff/student contact hours and accommodation as part of the open day programme.

Enrol on a taster course or summer school

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

One student commented: Summer school was the sole reason that I went to uni; if I hadn't gone I definitely wouldn't be doing mental health nursing now. It gave me the taste of what uni is like. It also gave me a clear career plan; I made sure I redid my maths GCSE so I could get in and got the A level grades I needed.

Understandably, they are popular and it's necessary to book early to reserve a place.

The skills and experiences from these events can also be used in the student's personal statement to demonstrate their interest in the subject.

Go to UCAS education conventions

UCAS conventions start at the beginning of March in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the last ones being held in early July. In Scotland, they are mainly in September and October.

UCAS brings together universities and colleges, charities, gap year companies, recruiters and other organisations under one roof to help students plan their future options. Many have seminars on a range of topics associated with students' applications and their future in HE.

There are also two subject-specific conventions:

Design your future for those interested in studying art, design, media, fashion, ceramics, 3D animation, mobile phone technology, photography and much more

Compose your future for those interested in studying performing arts, television, music and drama and multi-media production

You can find an up-to-date list of conventions at www.ucas.com/news-events/events and so your students can make the most of their visit, go to the Prep. website (www.ucas.com/prep).

Ask family, friends and professionals

Students mustn't be afraid to ask for advice and opinion. Talking to people who have been to university or college can be a really good way to find out what the experience was like for them and how it affected their future. They can also help students to avoid some of the pitfalls they came across on the way and, with the benefit of hindsight, what they would they do differently if they had to go through the process again.

Some schools have links with former pupils as they progress through university, which can provide a further source of information and inspiration to current students.

1.4 Keeping parents and guardians in the loop

Advisers are often well placed to support their students' parents before and during the application process, so they in turn can support their son or daughter on their journey to university or college. Parents naturally have many questions and we've found that the top four questions they ask are about the application process, UCAS deadlines, student finance and Clearing. All these are covered on www.ucas.com.

UCAS has a number of resources especially for parents that we'd like to encourage you to promote at your school events, on your website or through links to www.ucas.com.

The **UCAS website** is the best place for parents and guardians to get the support they need – www.ucas.com/parents. Here there's information and videos to guide them through the different stages of the application process. They can also sign up for our free monthly parent email newsletters; these have timely advice and tips about what's about to happen.

See what other people think. There are a number of useful places to suggest that parents look online.

- For a student viewpoint the Unistats website (unistats.direct.gov.uk) has subject and university and college reviews.
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (www.qaa.ac.uk) reports on the quality and standards of UK higher education.
- University league tables rank universities and colleges. It's important to check their weighting and methodology to understand their bias; The Times Online and Complete University Guide are interactive sites and users can highlight their own requirements and create their own unique table.

Did you know? In the personal details section of Apply, applicants can choose to nominate a parent, teacher, adviser or carer to contact UCAS on their behalf if they are unable to phone themselves. Subject to security checks, we can then discuss in detail an individual's application with the named holder of nominated access.

Section 2: Completing a UCAS application

Application flowchart



Having got yourself, your centre, and your students and their parents ready, it's time for your students to start completing their applications.

This section covers the key stages of completing and submitting a UCAS application – for both you and your students.

2.1 Application overview

How the UCAS application scheme works

'A picture tells a 1,000 words' – so our application flowchart on page 8 is the place to start. A four-step journey is all it takes.

The application has sections for your students to complete as well as a section for a referee to write their reference. Once all the sections are complete and payment authorised, it can be sent to UCAS.

When to apply

Top tip: Be realistic about how long is needed and allow extra time in case things don't go to plan.

Before looking in detail at the application, it's important to know when to apply. Applications for 2015 entry should reach us between mid-September 2014 and 18:00 (UK time) on 15 January 2015 except for the following:

- **Oxford and Cambridge**
Applications for courses at the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge should reach us by 18:00 (UK time) on 15 October 2014. In addition to their UCAS application some applicants will need to complete an additional application form in order to apply. Please see www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate or www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply.
- **Medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science**
Applications for all professional medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and veterinary science courses should reach us by 18:00 (UK time) on 15 October 2014.
- **Art and design**
All art and design courses use one of two application deadlines: 18:00 (UK time) on 15 January or 24 March 2015. The later closing date is to allow students taking a Diploma in Foundation Studies (Art and Design) time to identify their specialisation and put together a portfolio of work, which they will need to present at interview.
- All other courses must be submitted by 18:00 (UK time) on 15 January 2015.

If you aren't sure which deadline applies you can find the date for individual courses on our search tool.

Late applications

Universities and colleges give equal consideration to all applications received by these dates; they may consider late applications if they still have vacancies, but they do not have to. They can also close courses after the relevant deadline has passed if they don't want to receive any more applications; so a quick check on the UCAS search tool is the first step in choosing a course. Students cannot add a choice to their application if it's been closed by the university.

International students

Applying early is advisable. Students can submit their application before they have completed their course and received their results; offers will be conditional, based on exam results to be achieved at a later date. In this case referees are expected to provide predicted grades for courses that the student is studying as part of their reference, so that universities and colleges have an idea of the student's expected performance.

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

Applicants who think they may be assessed as a 'home' student (UK or EU) for tuition fees should apply by the course deadline.

Students from outside the EU should allow enough time to arrange immigration, travel and accommodation.

Taking a year out after school

Students who take a gap year, including national service, can apply in the 2015 entry cycle but to start a course in 2016. This is called **deferred entry**.

The 'rules' are the same as for applicants starting their courses in 2015.

- They apply by the same application deadlines.
- They choose a start date in 2016 when they add the choice.
- They must meet the conditions of their offer by 31 August 2015, unless a different date is specified.

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

2.2 First stop – the student sections

How to apply

Applications are made online using our secure web-based application system Apply. Its on-screen help guides users through the application. For more details, see our website at www.ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication. If your centre does not have internet access, contact our Schools Team on 0345 123 8001 (or +44 345 123 8001 from outside the UK). **This priority number is for use only by your staff. You must not give it to students or parents.**

Because it's online students can use Apply anywhere that has internet access. They can rework and resave details in their application as often as necessary, before submitting the final version to their teacher, adviser, referee or UCAS, as appropriate.

Students complete up to seven sections (one is for UK applicants only) in their application

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

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

- Not started ☐
- In progress ☐
- Completed ☒

Applicants who apply through a UCAS-registered centre, such as a school, college or careers centre, need the buzzword for their centre. This is the buzzword you set up at the start of the cycle and will be used by UCAS to link your students' applications to your centre.

Authorised staff at UCAS centres can check through the applications and, where necessary, refer them back to students for correction. Please check the completed application carefully before sending it to us. In particular, please check the choices section for correct course and institution codes, and the education section for correct details of qualifications. All certificated qualifications, including GCSEs and any ungraded results, must be included in the application. Any omissions may result in subsequent cancellation of the application.

Students can include their unit grades for certificated qualifications. This is optional and you may decide to advise your students to enter them if you believe this will improve their chances of being offered a place.

Acknowledgement emails

We send applicants an acknowledgement email when:

1. they have completed all sections of their application and it is now at their school or college
2. the reference has been added to the application and it has been sent to UCAS

Number of choices allowed

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

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

It's not compulsory to use all five choices. If they apply to fewer than five choices to begin with, they can add more later as long as they have not replied to their offers. They should, however, remember to check the application deadline for the course.

Invisibility of choices

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

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

Top tip: Choices aren't sent in preference order – we send an application to all the universities at the same time and they don't know where else your student has applied.

Disabilities, special needs and medical conditions

Universities and colleges welcome applications from people with disabilities, special needs or medical conditions, and try to provide as much support as possible. For more information visit the Disability Rights UK website at www.disabilityrightsuk.org.

It's a good idea to contact individual universities to discuss what they might need as early as possible – even before sending their application. If they are likely to need support in their studies, accommodation or daily living they will want to know:

- the course they are interested in
- the nature and extent of the disability, special need or medical condition
- any arrangements that they have needed, or found helpful, in the past

Universities and colleges will consider the application on the same academic criteria as any other, and any medical information will remain confidential. If they cannot meet the student's needs, they can ask us to substitute another choice.

Visit www.ucas.com/individual-needs for more useful information to give to students with disabilities or special needs.

All applicants are asked to disclose if they have a disability/special need or not when they complete the personal details section of Apply. There are a number of options to choose from, including 'no disability'. If they are concerned about disclosing their disability please encourage them not to be. Early disclosure will help support to be put in place in time for the start of the course.

Students who are care leavers or Looked after children

All applicants with a permanent home in the UK are asked if they have ever been in local authority care, including foster care, semi-independent living or in a residential care home.

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

- support for all-year-round accommodation, including during vacations
- sorting out their finances
- bursary entitlements
- support services such as counselling, childcare, disability and careers guidance

The Buttle UK Quality Mark is awarded to universities and colleges that have demonstrated their commitment to young people in and leaving care. Their logo is usually displayed on the websites of universities and colleges with the award – so keep an eye out for it.

Universities and colleges treat this information in confidence and may contact a student to discuss whether or not they need any extra resources or support during the course.

The Who Cares? Trust has published *The HE Handbook for Care Leavers*. This is a free guide for care leavers which sets out what universities and colleges across England and Scotland offer care-experienced students. The guide can be found here: www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/data/files/H.E.Handbook_2014_England.pdf

2.3 Next step – the adviser's sections

Tracking and checking applications

In the staff area of Apply, you can check to see what progress your students are making with their applications. Don't forget that your permissions may restrict your access.

Advisers can check the overall status of each of their students' applications (all sections combined), and separately for each reference:

Applicant sections:

- Not started ☐
- In progress ☐
- Completed ☒

Reference:

- Reference completed ☒
- Reference approved ☒
- Application sent to UCAS ☒

Next to each student's name is an information button; click on this for a summary of the application.

If an application shows all the sections are complete, but the application status itself is in progress, it is possible that the student has forgotten to send it to you for checking.

You can sort lists of students by name, by group or by the status of their application. If you have a large number of students, then listing by status is a convenient way of seeing who needs a reminder. Once your students have registered, you can view individual applications at any stage; you do not have to wait until they are complete.

When a student marks their application as complete and sends it to the referee, it is ready for you to check and to add their reference. At this point the student will not be able to make any changes to their application. The main areas to be checked are their qualifications and choices.

If a student has not entered any qualifications you will see a warning message and will need to either confirm that they have no qualifications, or return the application to them to enter their qualifications.

As applications and references are completed, approved and sent to us, you can check the overall position for your centre. To help you monitor progress, the welcome screen shows the status of applications for which you have control.

If a student decides to withdraw their application before you send it to UCAS you can delete the record. If you need it reinstated, call the UCAS Schools Team (see page 23) who will be able to arrange this for you.

Guidance for writing references

As an adviser you may be asked to write references for one of your students.

Although a reference can be written in advance you will need to read what the student has written in their application before you finalise it. There is no need to repeat anything that the student has already given, unless you want to comment on it. It'll help if you encourage students to complete their applications early, and not leave it to the last minute.

Your reference should support the student's intentions for progressing to HE, as directly as possible. If a student has chosen a wide range of different courses you may find this difficult and you will need to explain this to them.

If a student has had a break in their education it's helpful to explain the reason; you will need to discuss this with them.

Remember that each university and college chosen by the student will see your reference. They will not, however, know which other universities and colleges the student has applied to. If you refer to one of them in your reference you effectively remove some of the 'invisibility' and so could compromise the application.

For each student, you should choose the name of their referee from the list. It is this name that will appear on the reference, even if the local practice is for another member of staff to write the actual reference. It is often a different member of staff (not the referee) who approves the reference.

Did you know? The reference doesn't have to be written by the head teacher or head of sixth form – it's more important that it is written by someone who knows the student well enough to comment on their academic abilities and any personal qualities that will help them to succeed at university.

Referees should create each reference in a word-processed document outside Apply. Text can then be copied and pasted into Apply. We recommend that referees do not type text directly into the space provided in the reference section of Apply. But if they do, it is important that they remember to save it regularly. Otherwise any interruption to the internet connection would result in all unsaved text being lost. Incomplete references can be saved in Apply and finished later. Once finished, they can be marked as complete, which means they are ready for the final check by an approver.

Important: Whatever method you use, always remember to save the reference before leaving the reference screen in Apply.

With the correct permissions 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.

One-year courses

If the student is on an Access or Foundation course or other one-year course, you may not have known them long enough to write a full reference. You should explain this and say that you are providing a temporary reference with details of how the course is assessed and the number of credits that are awarded. Confirm that you will send a more detailed reference direct to all chosen universities and colleges at a later date.

Former students

You may be asked to provide a reference for a former student and you can do this without adding them to your current cohort. They'll see a link in the Options section of their application for them to 'ask a registered school, college or organisation to write your reference only'. While you are writing a reference, the student will see that their reference section is in progress. When you have completed it they will see a tick. ☒ They cannot view their reference in Apply but once the reference is complete we notify them and then they can send the whole application on to us with their payment.

Students from outside the UK

The reference must be submitted in English. If you cannot write in English then it should be translated by someone other than the applicant or their family.

If their first language is not English, it's helpful to comment on their ability to write and speak in English, and say which, if any, of their studies were taught in English.

When writing a reference, remember that, under the Data Protection Act, students can obtain a copy of the

reference and any other personal information that we have about them.

What to include in your reference

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

Your centre's curriculum policy

- For students taking GCE qualifications provide a brief statement on the school or college's curriculum policy, including reference to:
 - the range of opportunities available to all students
 - the typical numbers of AS and A level subjects taken by each GCE student
 - policies for certification of GCE AS
 - opportunities to take vocationally related qualifications, such as Applied A levels, and of mixing these with academic GCE qualifications
- For students taking Scottish qualifications, you should comment on the school's policy if you no longer enter candidates for Standard Grades in S4.
- If the individual student's situation differs in some way from the normal policy, give details.

About the applicant

Give an assessment of the suitability of the student for the HE courses that they have chosen and, where possible, include the following points:

- existing achievement, particularly for subjects relating to the courses they have applied for
- motivation and commitment towards the chosen courses
- any relevant skills achievement, whether certificated or not
- potential (other than predicted grades)
- powers of analysis and independent thought
- relevant curriculum enrichment and other activities
- relevant work experience, such as work placements, voluntary work and so on
- proposed career plan
- where relevant, their suitability for training for a particular profession
- any factors, such as personal circumstances, that may have affected, or might affect their performance
- information about any special needs and other requirements. Do not give information about a student's health or disability without their agreement
- any information you might want to add about performance in individual units of qualifications, for example, GCE AS and A levels, that the student has not already given

- for UK students, how the school or college is involved in widening participation, Gifted and Talented initiatives, and so on. If students have mentioned any of these activities in their personal statement, comments on their involvement may also be helpful
- any commitments (for example, examinations) that might prevent the student from going to an interview on a particular day

For GCE students who have certificated an AS subject, but who are intending to re-sit one or more units to maximise their A level grade in that subject, it is useful to mention this in your reference.

Did you know? It is not helpful for references to include lengthy descriptions of the school or college. A single sentence or two to put the school in context is enough.

Predicted grades

If the student is still studying, you should give a predicted overall achievement (in the predicted grades box). There's space to comment on their performance in any units they have taken so far. It's also helpful to explain if the student has yet to decide on their final qualification (for example, maths or applied maths, A level or AS).

Under the heading predicted grades, you will see listed most Tariff-scored qualifications the applicant has listed as pending. Please select your prediction of the grade or result from the dropdown list. For other qualifications which are pending, please enter the title of the course or qualification and the grades, results or performance outcome that you predict the student will achieve.

Did you know? Over-predicting grades can be counter-productive because many universities and colleges are likely to monitor the accuracy of schools' and colleges' predictions.

Detecting fraud

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

False or misleading information

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

Provide more information

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

Personal statement

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

Reference

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

Section 3: After the application arrives at UCAS

You may think the job is done – but in fact there's still plenty to do.

This section takes you through the main features of what happens after an application is sent to UCAS.

Find out what you and your applicant need to be ready to do.

3.1 At UCAS

What happens at UCAS when we receive an application?

The built-in checks in Apply make sure most errors are dealt with before you send the application to us. On a few occasions, however, we may need to query something with the applicant; if this happens, there may be a delay in sending the application to the applicant's chosen universities and colleges.

Once an application has been processed through our databases it will normally be with the universities and colleges within two working days of being sent to UCAS. They'll be able to see the whole application but at this stage they won't be able to see where else an applicant has applied.

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 individual universities and colleges, and even for different courses at the same one. There are no guidelines about what or when something will happen. Applicants will hear about their individual choices at different times; your students may be contacted within a very short time or it may be some months before they hear anything.

The only guaranteed event is the date that they will have heard about each of their choices. This depends on when the applicant applied.

Application received at UCAS on or before	University or college must make a decision on or before
15 January 2015	7 May 2015
1 July 2015	16 July 2015

3.3 For applicants to keep an eye on

Track

Applicants need to follow the progress of their application using Track. When a university or college makes a decision

about one of their choices, we alert them with an email telling them to look at the change in Track at www.ucas.com/track (see fig. 1).

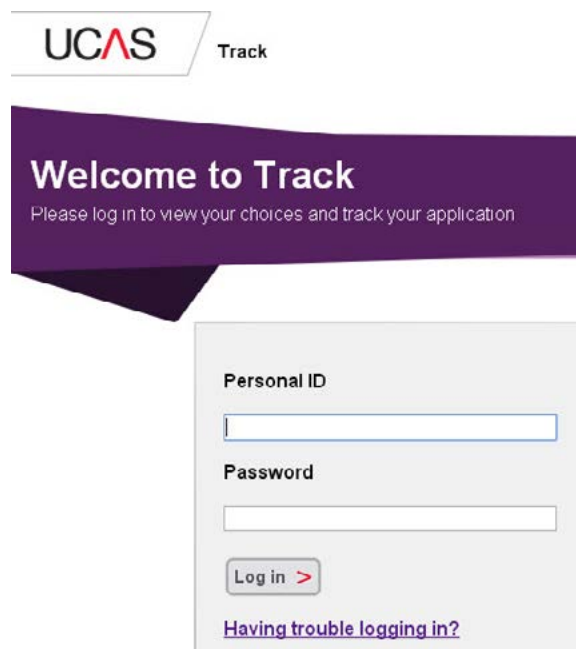


Fig. 1 – Track login page

Changing details

Applicants can change their contact details in Track. It's important that they keep these up-to-date so that universities and colleges can contact them about their application.

If you are in a boarding school, please remind all your students to change their postal address to their home address (or an alternative address where they can receive mail) at the end of the summer term.

Checking for decisions about choices

When the universities and colleges have received and considered a student's application, they send their decision to us and we update Track for the applicant to see. So that they know something has changed we send them an email. This means it's vital they check their emails regularly.

Sometimes applicants are invited to undertake an assessment before the university or college can decide whether or not to make an offer. They may need to sit an admissions test or attend an interview, perhaps both, depending on the subject and popularity of the course. Art and design students in particular might need to present a portfolio of their work. Invitations to submit a portfolio or attend an interview or audition may be

received in Track or direct; it's at a university or college's discretion. Remind students that they must respond to invitations to interview as soon as possible. They can accept, decline, or request a new time or date.

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

Applicants can use Track at www.ucas.com/track to find out the latest status of their choices.

Offers

An offer may be either conditional or unconditional. It will show the year and month the course starts, and the point of entry (for example, the second year of the course rather than the first). They can be viewed in Track (see fig. 2)

Conditional offer – means that the offer has conditions. For example, the applicant has to achieve certain exam results. Unless a different date is specified, the conditions must be met by 31 August 2015 (even if entry is deferred to 2016). The conditions may include achievement of specific grades, possibly in named subjects, or a certain number of UCAS Tariff points. For details of the UCAS Tariff go to www.ucas.com/ucas-tariff.

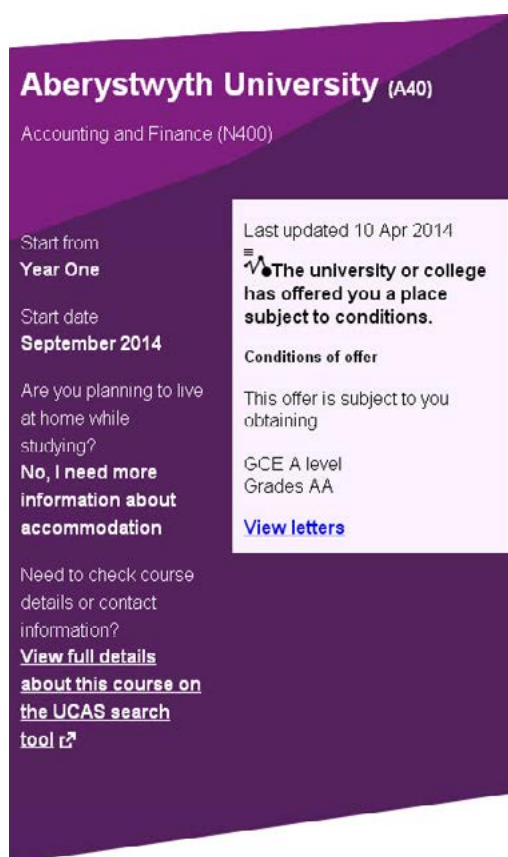


Fig. 2 – conditional offer viewed in Track

Conditional offers may also be for an alternative course. This option can be used, for example, if the applicant has changed the subjects they are studying or if the university wants to make an offer for their HND rather than degree.

The university or college should discuss an offer for a different course with the applicant before formally making their offer.

UCAS Tariff points

Applicants may receive an offer of a place that is conditional on achieving a certain number of UCAS Tariff points.

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

Here are examples of how two applicants would add up their Tariff points. Only the points shown in **bold** can be included in the total.

Example A

Subject	Level	Grade	Tariff points
History	GCE AS	C	40
English language	GCE AS	B	50
French	GCE AS	B	50
Health & social care	GCE A	C	80
English language	GCE A	B	100
French	GCE A	C	80
Total Tariff points	300		

Example B

Subject	Level	Grade	Tariff points
English	Higher	C	50
Chemistry	Higher	B	65
Physics	Higher	B	65
Maths	Higher	A	80
French	Higher	C	50
Physics	Advanced Higher	C	90
Maths	Advanced Higher	B	110
Total Tariff points	365		

Unconditional offer – usually means that 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.

There are two other decisions that a university can make.

Unsuccessful: the university or colleges 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
- the applicant did not attend for interview, test or audition
- the applicant did not reply to letters from the university or college
- the course has been withdrawn and the applicant has not chosen an alternative
- the applicant wants to enter Extra

Replying to offers

When an applicant has a decision for each of their choices they need to decide which ones they want to accept. The date they must reply to their offers is shown in Track (see fig. 3).

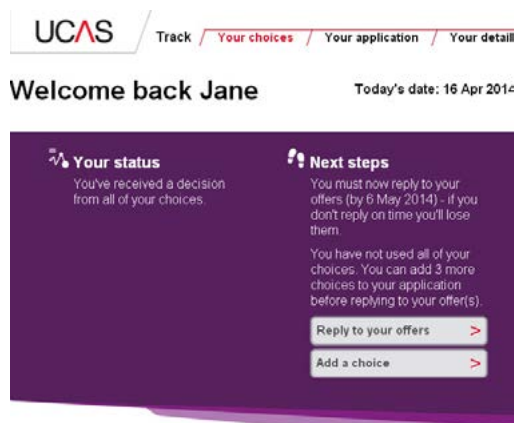


Fig. 3 – reply date viewed in Track

They can accept one offer as their firm choice and, if that is a conditional offer, they can also accept a second offer as an insurance choice, in case they do not meet the conditions of their firm choice. Any other offers must be declined. Applicants reply to their offers in Track (see fig. 4).

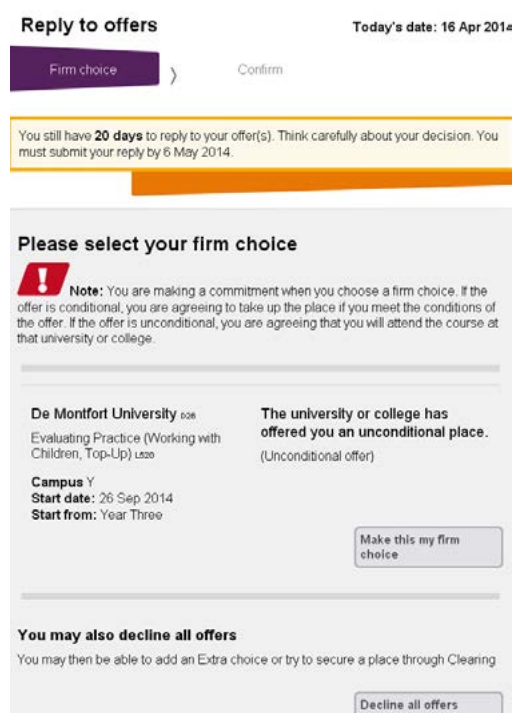


Fig. 4 – replying to an offer viewed in Track

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

It is important that applicants think very carefully when they choose their firm and insurance choices and should ensure that they do not accept an offer from any university or college if they would not be prepared to attend their course there.

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

It's important that an applicant replies before the date we give them. We call it their reply date and they'll see it in Track. The date depends on when they receive the last decision from their universities and colleges.

Last decision from university or college received on or before	Applicants must reply on or before
31 March 2015	6 May 2015
7 May 2015	4 June 2015
4 June 2015	25 June 2015
16 July 2015	23 July 2015

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

Extra – a chance to apply to more universities and colleges

All is not lost if your students are unsuccessful in being offered a place for any of their five choices, or they declined all their offers. In this case you can encourage them to use Extra to apply to other universities and colleges that still have vacancies. You can make them aware that it's an opportunity to look for a place 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. Search for courses with Extra vacancies on the UCAS search tool at searchucas.com.
2. Think about related and quite 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 that's different from their initial choices, they can explain that they've changed their mind and offer to send them a revised personal statement to support their application. They cannot change their original personal statement.
4. Add the details in Track.

The Extra process operates from 25 February to the beginning of July 2015. Fig. 5 shows a Confirmed place in Extra.

Your status
You have replied to your offer(s) and are holding at least one conditional place.

Next steps
If you meet the conditions of your offer(s), the university or college will confirm your place. You may need to send them details of your results if they ask for them.

Latest update
8 January 2014, 12:24
Askham Bryan College has offered you a place for Animal Management, subject to conditions. Please view the choice to see these.
[View all updates](#)

Your choices

Your firm choice

Extra choice
Askham Bryan College A70
Animal Management U301
Campus: G
Start date: 1 Sep 2014
Start from: Foundation year
Your place will be confirmed at this university or college if you meet the conditions of this offer.
(Conditional offer (firmly accepted))
Last updated 10 Apr 2014 [View](#)

Unsuccessful, declined and withdrawn choices

Aberystwyth University A40
LAW M100
Start date: 24 Sep 2015
Start from: Year One
Your application for this choice has been unsuccessful.
(Unsuccessful)
Last updated 8 Jan 2014 [View](#)

Fig. 5 – a conditional offer firmly accepted in Extra viewed in Track

Exam results and Confirmation

UCAS receives exam results from many UK awarding bodies and sends them to the universities and colleges that are holding offers for your students. Check which exam results these are: wwwucas.com/sending-exam-results. If your students are taking other qualifications they must send their results to the individual universities and colleges.

When universities and colleges receive applicants' exam results, they decide whether or not the applicants have met the conditions of their offer. If they have they will confirm the place and the applicant is placed. **This is called Confirmation.** It can be viewed in Track (see fig. 6).

International Baccalaureate – so that UCAS has access to your student's IB results, you need to make sure that UCAS is listed as a provider that has permission to access the student's results. If permission is not given UCAS will not receive the results, which will delay confirmation from the university or college.

Your status
Congratulations! Your place at De Montfort University D26 for Evaluating Practice (Working with Children, Top-Up) L520 has been confirmed.

Next steps
Check your confirmation letter carefully. You should receive details from the university or college about what to do next. Adjustment is available for applicants who've met and exceeded the conditions of their offers, and may wish to look for places on an alternative course.

Latest update
16 April 2014, 14:08
Congratulations, your place at De Montfort University for Evaluating Practice (Working with Children, Top-Up) has been confirmed. The university or college should now send you more information.
[View all updates](#)

Your choices

Your confirmed place

De Montfort University D26
Evaluating Practice (Working with Children, Top-Up) L520
Campus: Y
Start date: 26 Sep 2014
Start from: Year Three
Congratulations! Your place at De Montfort University to study Evaluating Practice (Working with Children, Top-Up) is confirmed.
(Unconditional offer (firmly accepted))
Last updated 16 Apr 2014 [View](#)

Fig. 6 – confirmed place viewed in Track

Did you know? We don't update Track at midnight on A level results day – only Clearing vacancies are published at midnight. Your students need to wait until the morning to see if they're accepted.

If a university or college confirms a 'firmly accepted' offer, the applicant is committed to taking up that place. The insurance choice, if any, becomes redundant.

If a university or college does not confirm a 'firmly accepted' offer, they may meet the conditions of their insurance choice, in which case they are committed to take up the place.

It's imperative that if applicants choose an insurance choice they are prepared to take up the place. If they end up committed to their insurance place and do not want it, they will have to withdraw altogether or negotiate with the university or college to be entered into Clearing. They are under no obligation to agree.

If a student has achieved better than expected results, and has **met and exceeded** the conditions of their firmly accepted offer, they will have a short time to research and secure an alternative course in Adjustment – details on page 19.

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

If a student doesn't have either their firm or insurance place confirmed they will automatically be able to use Clearing, unless they are offered an alternative course. See **Change of course** below to see how this works and page 20 for information about Clearing.

Change of course

If a student doesn't meet the conditions of their offer, a university or college may offer a place on an alternative basis to their original choice, such as:

- a different course
- a deferred entry (2016 instead of 2015)
- a different point of entry (a 'year zero' foundation year instead of year 1 of a degree course)

If this happens, they have five days to decide whether they want to accept it or not. All the options are explained in Track.

Delayed or late exam results

Universities will wait until 31 August to receive exam results, unless they specify a different date. If the results are not available until after this date, 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 is notified in good time.

Re-marks and appeals

Students who use the re-mark and appeal services have no guarantee that their offers will remain open. It is imperative that universities are notified of a possible change of grade as soon as a Priority Service 2 application is lodged with the awarding body. Although universities and colleges are under no obligation to agree to wait for the re-mark or appeal, students are advised to ask them if they are able to hold the offer open.

Results are better than expected – think about Adjustment

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

Applicants must register online in Track to use Adjustment, and their eligibility will be confirmed by the university or college they apply to adjust to. During the five-day period their original firmly accepted place is secure; if they do not find an alternative place they still have their original firmly accepted place.

Adjustment is available from A level results day until 31 August and participation is entirely the choice and responsibility of the applicant.

Adjustment works as follows:

1. The applicant has accepted a conditional offer as their firm choice.
2. On results day, the applicant meets **and exceeds** the terms of their conditional firm offer and their place is confirmed.
3. They decide to research alternative courses and register for Adjustment in Track. Students who only made one choice on their original application and paid the reduced application fee of £12, will have to pay an extra £11.
4. They have up to five calendar days (120 hours) in which to research alternative courses while holding their confirmed place. They can check in Track to see how much of the five days remain.
5. They speak to universities and colleges to explore what places are available and whether their application may be of interest.
6. The universities check their eligibility for Adjustment and may offer them an unconditional place. If they have more than one offer they must decide which one, if any, they want to accept, or stay with their original place.
7. If they decide to accept an offer, they must be sure it's the right one; they can only adjust once.
8. If they are sure they want to accept, the applicant must tell the university or college; they will let us know and the applicant will see their new confirmed place in Track.

Opportunities to adjust will always be limited but for a small number of applicants it will allow them to find a more appropriate course without having to give up their confirmed place while they do their research. It is possible to adjust to a deferred place, if the university agrees. Just over 1,000 applicants changed their courses using Adjustment last year.

Advisers can see when applicants register for Adjustment in Adviser Track.

Your students need to consider these points if they are thinking about using Adjustment.

- Adjustment is entirely optional, and not everyone will want to try to find an alternative place. Nothing really beats the careful research they did to find the right courses for them before they made their application.
- There is no guarantee there will be any vacancies on the course they decide they want to be considered for, and it is unlikely that the most competitive courses will have any places available. If other applicants decide to adjust their places, the vacancy situation may change on a daily basis. Some applicants may be better advised to consider applying again in the following year when many more vacancies will be available.
- Before deciding to use Adjustment, applicants must also consider non-academic arrangements such as accommodation and student finance. These may be difficult to secure or there may be delays if changes are made at short notice.
- If they register to use Adjustment, the university or college will check that their results were higher than those they needed to meet the conditions of their firm choice. Please make sure the applicant understands exactly what this means.

Check these examples to understand what it means to meet and exceed the conditions of an offer.

Eligible for Adjustment:

Offer	Actual grades
A level AAB	A level AAA
A level CCD (C in chemistry)	A level ACD (A in chemistry)
A level ABB (B in history)	A level ABB (A in history)
SQA Higher BCC	SQA Higher ABC
SQA Higher BBC (C in chemistry)	SQA Higher ABC (B in chemistry)
SQA Adv Higher D in Italian	SQA Adv Higher B in Italian
International Baccalaureate total 30 points including 5 in mathematics and 5 in chemistry	International Baccalaureate total 30 points including 6 in mathematics and 5 in chemistry
Irish Leaving Certificate (Higher level) grade B in mathematics and grades BCC	Irish Leaving Certificate (Higher level) grade B in mathematics and grades ABC

Not eligible for Adjustment:

Offer	Actual grades
A level CCD (C in chemistry)	A level BCD (D in chemistry)
A level BBC	A level BBCC
SQA Higher CCC	SQA Higher BCD
240 Tariff points overall including C in French	280 Tariff points overall including D in French
BTEC National Diploma MMM	BTEC National Diploma MMP
International Baccalaureate total 30 points including 5 in mathematics and 5 in chemistry	International Baccalaureate total 30 points including 4 in mathematics and 5 in chemistry

Results not as good as expected – think about Clearing

If your students don't get the exam grades they hoped for and their places are not confirmed, they could find another course by using Clearing.

The Clearing process runs from mid-July and helps students without a confirmed place (or who have applied after 30 June) to find courses where there are still places available once they have received their results. www.ucas.com lists courses available from Scottish results day for vacancies in Scotland, and from A level results day for vacancies for the whole of the UK.

If your students are flexible about where and what they want to study, they have a fair chance of finding a place on a suitable course.

Your students need to be available in person to deal with admissions tutors and make decisions. They should plan their summer holiday so they are at home when their exam results come out.

They can apply for any course that has places left. They don't have to keep to the same subjects that they first applied for.

If they only made one choice on their original application and paid the reduced fee of £12, they can go through Clearing if they pay us an extra £11.

Your students will be eligible to go through Clearing if one of the following situations applies:

- they hold no offers and they have not withdrawn from the UCAS scheme
- their offers have not been confirmed because they have not met the conditions
- they declined or have not replied to a confirmed offer of a changed course and, as a result, hold no offers

We use Track to tell eligible applicants when and how they can use Clearing.

Lists of courses with places in Clearing are published until late September on the search tool on www.ucas.com and in some national newspapers.

Your students should check the lists for suitable courses and then contact universities and colleges to find out more about the course and to see if they will offer them a place. They should do this themselves as admissions tutors will want to speak to them personally, not through their parents or teachers.

After speaking to admissions tutors and being offered a place, applicants in Clearing must enter details of the university or college and the course into Track. The university or college will then confirm the place provided it is still available. If the student is unsuccessful, they can repeat the process.

3.4 Facilities to help advisers keep an eye on their students' applications

Once you have sent an application to UCAS the staff area of Apply gives you no more information about the application unless you subscribe to one of our post-application services.

Adviser Track

As advisers, you will want to ensure you understand what your students need to do next. Adviser Track has the facilities to help you do this.

Subscription to Adviser Track allows you to:

- track the offers that your students have received from universities and colleges
- see the conditions of the offers they're required to meet
- see the replies your students make to their offers

You can also:

- search for students by status, e.g. those who need to reply to offers, those eligible for Extra and Clearing. This makes it easy to see who needs your advice

- download Applicant Status Reports (ASR). These are weekly reports available on Mondays. They give you a snapshot of the status of your students' applications each week. The two monthly reports in September and October are the Final Destination Reports, and give details of where your students have been placed, or if they have not been placed
- use the email facility to remind your students to reply to their offers
- receive similarity alerts if your students have used copied material in their personal statements

An annual subscription to Adviser Track runs from 1 November 2014 to 31 October 2015 and is £46.67 plus VAT. Automatic renewal, with a 30-day cancellation period, is available.

Reports for schools

This range of reports is designed to help you with reporting, IAG planning and progression monitoring.

UCAS Progression Report, available at the end of November each year, has application data from the last two complete application cycles, providing summaries, demographics, accepting universities and colleges and subjects. It can be used to identify trends and compare your applications against the sector. There's also a Progression Report specifically designed for Scottish schools, colleges and centres.

Offers Report has information about your students' choices, offers, replies and acceptances. Based on the previous two application cycles it is available in the spring each year.

Competitors Report has information on demographics, subjects and mission groups for your chosen competitor group. Based on the previous two application cycles it is available in the spring each year.

There are annual subscriptions for each report, together with savings if more than one report and Adviser Track are purchased at the same time. More details and an order form can be found on the UCAS website: www.ucas.com/advisers/online/advisertrack/.

Section 4: UCAS supporting you

You may be thinking there's a lot to discover about how to support your students to use the application scheme. Well, it's important to remember you're not on your own...

We have support facilities specially tailored for you. Read on to find out what they are.

4.1 Resources

To support you throughout the application cycle there is a range of UCAS resources, including toolkits designed for different times in the application cycle, monthly e-newsletters and guides.

Find out what's available on the UCAS website:

www.ucas.com/adviserresources.

Make sure you are receiving our regular updates and newsletters by checking we have your correct contact details. If they need to be updated please let us know by emailing schools@ucas.ac.uk, remembering to include your five-digit UCAS centre number.

4.2 Training

The UCAS Professional Development Team offers a range of training sessions and presentations for new and experienced teachers and advisers. They're excellent ways to get in-depth information about the UK higher education application process.

Adviser training at UCAS in Cheltenham

Both our introductory and advanced adviser training sessions are available at our UCAS office in Cheltenham. So whether you have little or no experience of UCAS, or have several years' experience, this opportunity will be invaluable. See the back cover of this guide for the training session dates.

And because you come to us... they are free!

UCAS comes to you!

You can book speakers to come to an event you are running to talk on a range of topics, including writing personal statements and references, applications for art and design courses, assessment tools such as admissions tests, interviews and auditions, and ideas for making successful applications.

For these there's a flat fee of £90 plus VAT to cover our admin, travel, subsistence and accommodation.

Managing UCAS applications

These day-long sessions are aimed at inexperienced advisers getting ready to support their first cohort of students with their UCAS applications. They are held in Cheltenham, Glasgow, Harrogate and London.

The charge for these is £140 plus VAT per person, with a 10% discount if two or more delegates from the same school or college book in one booking. The price includes course materials, lunch and refreshments.

Parents' evenings

Unfortunately we can't attend parents' evenings ourselves; but we've created a presentation that you can download from our website to explain higher education applications to your students' parents.

There's more information about these services on the UCAS website: www.ucas.com/advisertraining.

4.3 Events

UCAS organises events for both advisers and their students.

UCAS higher education conventions and subject-specific exhibitions bring an opportunity for your students to talk with staff and students from universities, colleges and conservatoires about their courses. Events in England, Wales and Northern Ireland take place between March and July each year; Scottish events are in late August and September. With about 50 events each year there should be one near you.

Conferences for teachers and advisers bring together experienced speakers, universities and colleges, and advisory bodies to provide comprehensive information and advice to help you support your students with their applications.

More information can be found on the UCAS website: www.ucas.com/events.

4.4 Contact us

If you need to speak to someone at UCAS our Schools Team is here to help.

We receive a range of calls from advisers on all aspects of the application process, right from the start of the application process through to Confirmation. The Schools Team can help and guide you on:

- any aspect of the application process
- using Staff Apply
- using Adviser Track
- pre- and post-application queries
- application deadlines
- replying to offers
- Extra
- Clearing and Confirmation

Call the UCAS Schools Team on 0345 123 8001. This number is for advisers only; so that it is available as much as possible please do not give this number to your students – they should use 0371 468 0 468.

The lines are open Monday to Friday 08:30 to 17:30.

Why not try our UCAS Centres Twitter site [@UCAS_centres](#) to keep up-to-date with what's going on.

Section 5: Glossary

Adjustment: a period of up to five days after A level results day during which applicants, whose results meet and exceed their firmly accepted conditional offer, may research alternative courses without relinquishing their firm choice.

Admissions test: for some universities and colleges, in certain subjects, there will be a requirement to sit an admissions test in addition to making a UCAS application.

Adviser Track: subscribing centres can track the progress of their students' applications once they have been sent to UCAS.

Applicant: a person who has submitted an application to UCAS.

Apply: the UCAS online application system for applying for higher education courses.

Buzzword: a word or phrase, chosen by a school or college, which its applicants use when registering with Apply.

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

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

Clearing: the service used towards the end of the application cycle. If your students have not yet secured a place, it enables them to apply for course vacancies.

Conditional offer: an offer made by a university or college, whereby the applicant must fulfil certain criteria before they can be accepted on the course.

Confirmation: when universities and colleges make conditional offers, which have been accepted by an applicant, either unconditional or unsuccessful. Confirmation is usually dependent on applicants' qualifications or exam results.

Deferral: holding an offer until the following year.

Extra: the opportunity to apply for another course, if an applicant has used all five choices and is not holding any offers. It runs from 25 February until the beginning of July.

Firm offer: the offer that has been accepted as an applicant's first choice.

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

HE: higher education.

IAG: Information, advice and guidance offered by advisers about progression to higher education.

Insurance offer: the offer that has been accepted as a second choice (in case the applicant does not meet the conditions of their firm offer).

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

Nominated access: the opportunity for an applicant to supply details of a third party (usually a parent, guardian or teacher) to act on their behalf in contacting UCAS in their absence.

Open day search tool: an online search tool at www.ucas.com/open-days to find university and college open days.

Personal ID: a 10-digit individual number assigned to an applicant when they register to use Apply. Applicants will be asked to provide this number if they contact our Customer Contact Centre.

Point of entry: year of entry to the course; for example, 2 refers to the second year of the course.

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

Similarity detection software: used by UCAS on all applications to identify personal statements that contain plagiarised sentences or paragraphs.

Tariff points: a system used to report achievement for entry to HE in a numerical format. It establishes agreed comparability between different types of qualifications and provides comparisons between applicants with different types and volumes of achievement.

Track: an online system where applicants can track the progress of their application, view institution decisions, reply to any offers received and change some details such as email address, postal address and telephone number.

UCAS search tool: online provision to find courses across universities, colleges and other HE course providers.

Unconditional offer: an offer given to an applicant who has met all the academic requirements for the course – the university or college is happy to accept them. The university or college might have other requirements, like financial or medical conditions, that need to be met.

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

Adviser training: NOW FREE!



UCAS

The Adviser Introductory

Ideal for anyone who's new to advising applicants. The session introduces you to the world of higher education applications, providing you with easy to digest information on the various stages of the UCAS application cycle. There's also advice on what's required in the applicant's reference and personal statement, and much more. This event is delivered at UCAS headquarters in Cheltenham.

The Adviser Advanced

Offers a fantastic opportunity to learn, share, and discuss issues affecting applications to higher education – such as current policy and legislation, applicant trends, and forthcoming plans for UCAS. This session also delivered in Cheltenham is designed for advisers who've experienced at least three application cycles and are part of a UCAS centre.

The Adviser – Introductory

2014

16 September
21 October
18 November
10 December

2015

20 January
4 February
4 March
21 April
12 May
9 June
7 July

The Adviser – Advanced

2014

12 November

2015

27 January
16 June
23 June

If you'd like to book onto these training sessions, visit www.ucas.com/training. For further information, please contact the UCAS Professional Development Team on +44 (0) 1242 545712 or email: professionaldevelopment@ucas.ac.uk

Career focused university degrees

GSM London offers a range of free services including presentations and advice sessions to help you and your students with their UCAS application. Sessions will be on topics of interest to your students and typically include:

- how to write a winning personal statement
- financing your studies through the student loans system
- life at university

We can either come to your institution, or organise a specialist taster day for you and your students on our campuses.

▼ Why choose GSM London?

- 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

▼ We offer career focused degrees in

- Business Management
- Computer Science
- Economics
- Finance
- Law
- Oil and Gas Management

Book your event now

✉ outreach.services@gsm.org.uk

☎ 020 3733 7266

🌐 gsm.org.uk

