



INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE GUIDE

PARENTS

UCAS

UCAS IS THE ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING APPLICATIONS TO UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN THE UK

This guide will help parents to support their child in applying to study in the UK.

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WHO ARE WE?

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

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

WHY CHOOSE THE UK?

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

Choice and quality

- > With over 400 universities and colleges offering more than 35,000 undergraduate courses, the UK has a course of study to suit everyone.
- > UK degree courses are often very specialised, so students can focus on their chosen subject from their first day.
- > The qualification awarded at the end of the course will be recognised and respected throughout the world because all UK degrees meet strict academic standards.

Value and improved career prospects

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

Easy application process

- > UCAS was created by UK universities and colleges to provide an easy and fair application process for everyone.
- > Over 140,000 people from outside the UK apply through UCAS, the central admissions service, to study full-time undergraduate degree courses in the UK every year.
- > One online application to UK universities and colleges through ucas.com. Your child can apply for up to five courses at once, making the application process much quicker.



EXPLAINING UK HIGHER EDUCATION

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

GETTING STARTED

> Higher education

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

> Course

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

WHO DOES WHAT

> Universities and colleges

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

> Applicants

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

> Advisers

Members of staff at a school, college, university, advisory service or agency that provides information about studying in the UK, assists students with their UCAS application and, in certain cases, visa applications. Advisers can register as a UCAS centre to have access to the best advice, and to oversee student applications through UCAS' online system. UCAS centres are widely considered as a trusted source of applications by universities and colleges. Your child would need to check with their school to see if they are a UCAS centre. Some advisers may charge for their services if they are agents. Advisers can offer valuable support to students, but students can also apply independently.



HERE ARE EXPLANATIONS OF SOME OF THE TERMS USED THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE:

> Acceptance

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

> Apply

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

> Clearing

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

> Conditional offer

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

> Extra

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

> Firm choice

The offer the applicant has accepted as their first choice.

> Insurance choice

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

> Offer

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

> Personal ID

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

> Reference

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

> Track

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

> UCAS search tool

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

> Unconditional offer

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

> Undergraduate

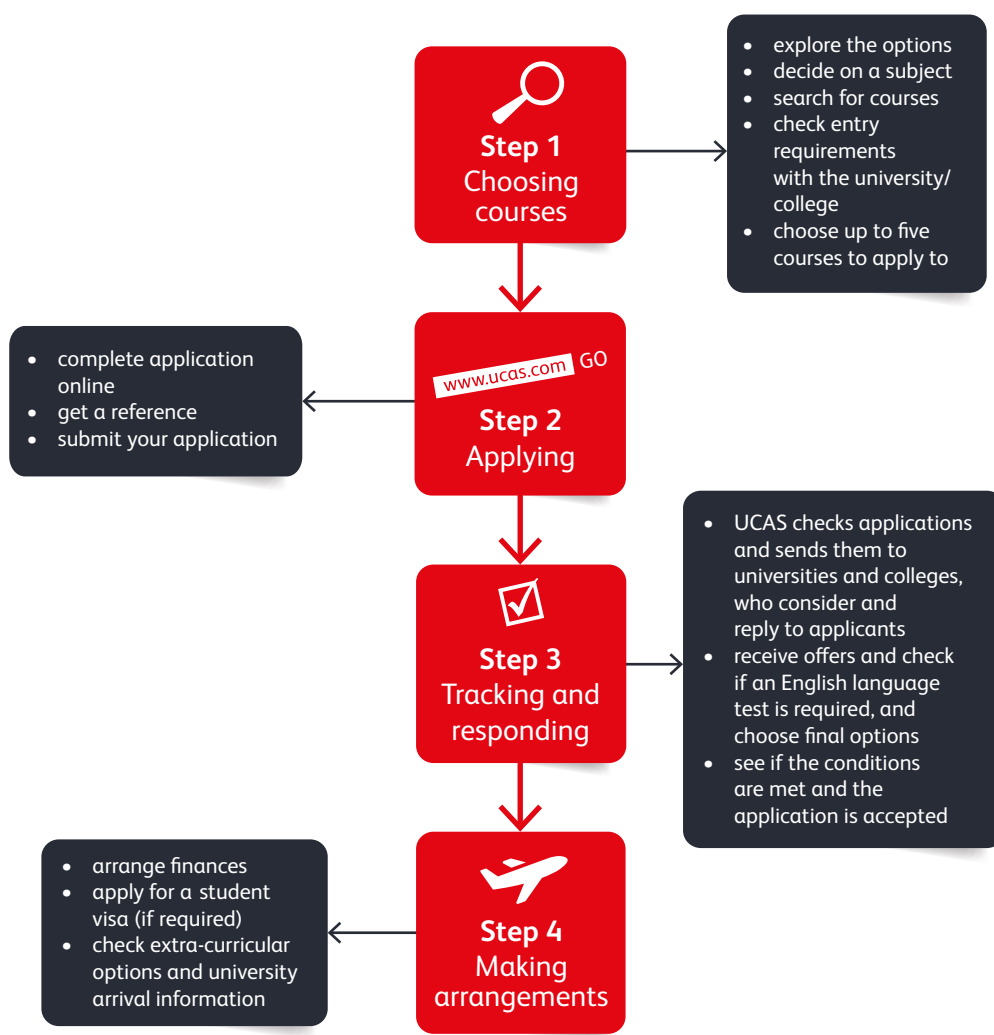
The first level of study in higher education. Once a student has graduated from an undergraduate course, they can move on to postgraduate study.





HOW TO APPLY

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



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

CHOOSING COURSES

If they wish, your child can choose to apply for up to five courses in their application to UK higher education. They can apply for multiple courses at one university or college, but each course counts as one of the five choices.

There are some exceptions – only four courses can be chosen in the field of medicine, dentistry, or veterinary science, and the universities of Oxford and Cambridge will not accept applications for multiple courses.

When deciding which courses to apply for, your child should do the following research first:

Research courses at digital.ucas.com/search

- > **Choose an enjoyable subject** – having a genuine interest in the subject can mean greater success in the course.
- > **Explore job websites and graduate opportunities** – to see what courses might be relevant for future careers.
- > **Research course content** – even courses with the same title can have very different content, so your child should make sure it's suitable for their needs.
- > **Check application deadlines** – in the UK, courses usually start in September, and some have application deadlines almost a year in advance. It is important to start researching as early as possible so as not to rush to meet the deadline. See page 12 for deadline details.

Research the right place to study

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



Identify the right study type

Full-time undergraduate degrees at UK universities and colleges usually last three or four years, and can then lead on to postgraduate study. However, some degree courses include an additional year working in industry or studying abroad – these are called ‘sandwich’ or placement courses.

There is also a wide variety of certificate and diploma courses available. These often last one or two years, but do not lead directly to postgraduate study.

Check entry requirements

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

Other things to consider

- > **Course fees** – often called ‘tuition fees’. Universities and colleges charge different amounts – find out the cost by looking at their websites or on digital.ucas.com/search.
- > Living costs – including accommodation, food, utility bills, clothes, and travel. It may cost more to live in London and some other big cities than in other parts of the UK.



APPLYING

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

Contents of an application

There are six sections to an application:

- > **Personal details** – so we can contact your child.
- > **Choices** – up to five different courses your child wants to apply for. There's no preference order, and the universities and colleges will not see the other choices.
- > **Education** – a list of all current and pending qualifications.
- > **Employment** – details of any full- or part-time paid employment.
- > **Personal statement** – a very important part of the application to show a university or college why your child should be accepted on to the course (see below for details).
- > **Reference** – a letter of recommendation from an adviser, teacher or other appropriate person who knows your child academically.

Personal statement

Universities and colleges read personal statements (a maximum of up to 4,000 characters or 47 lines) to assess a student's suitability for a course and decide whether to offer a place. A good personal statement shows a student's motivation for applying and why they are suitable for the course.

You should encourage your child to follow these tips:

1. Start planning their personal statement early so there is plenty of time to write it.
2. Read all of the advice about writing a personal statement at ucas.com/personalstatement.
3. Ask teachers, friends, and parents to read and check their personal statement before it is submitted.
4. Make sure it is all their own writing. All personal statements are checked against thousands of others for plagiarism, and students who are suspected of copying others will be reported to the universities and colleges they are applying to.



References

The reference allows the university or college to find out more about your child as a student – their academic potential and their attitude to studying. This helps universities and colleges to decide whether to offer a place or not.

- > The reference should be written by a teacher, school adviser, or employer – someone who knows your child academically.
- > If your child is applying through a registered UCAS centre, an adviser, agent, or teacher will automatically be asked to provide the reference.
- > However, if your child is applying independently and not using a UCAS centre, they should ask a teacher or other appropriate person to complete the reference before submitting their application to UCAS.
- > If your son or daughter is still studying at the time they apply, the reference should include predicted grades or scores – an idea of what results they might achieve in their current level of study. This helps universities and colleges to see if the student is expected to meet the entry requirements for the course.

When to apply

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

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

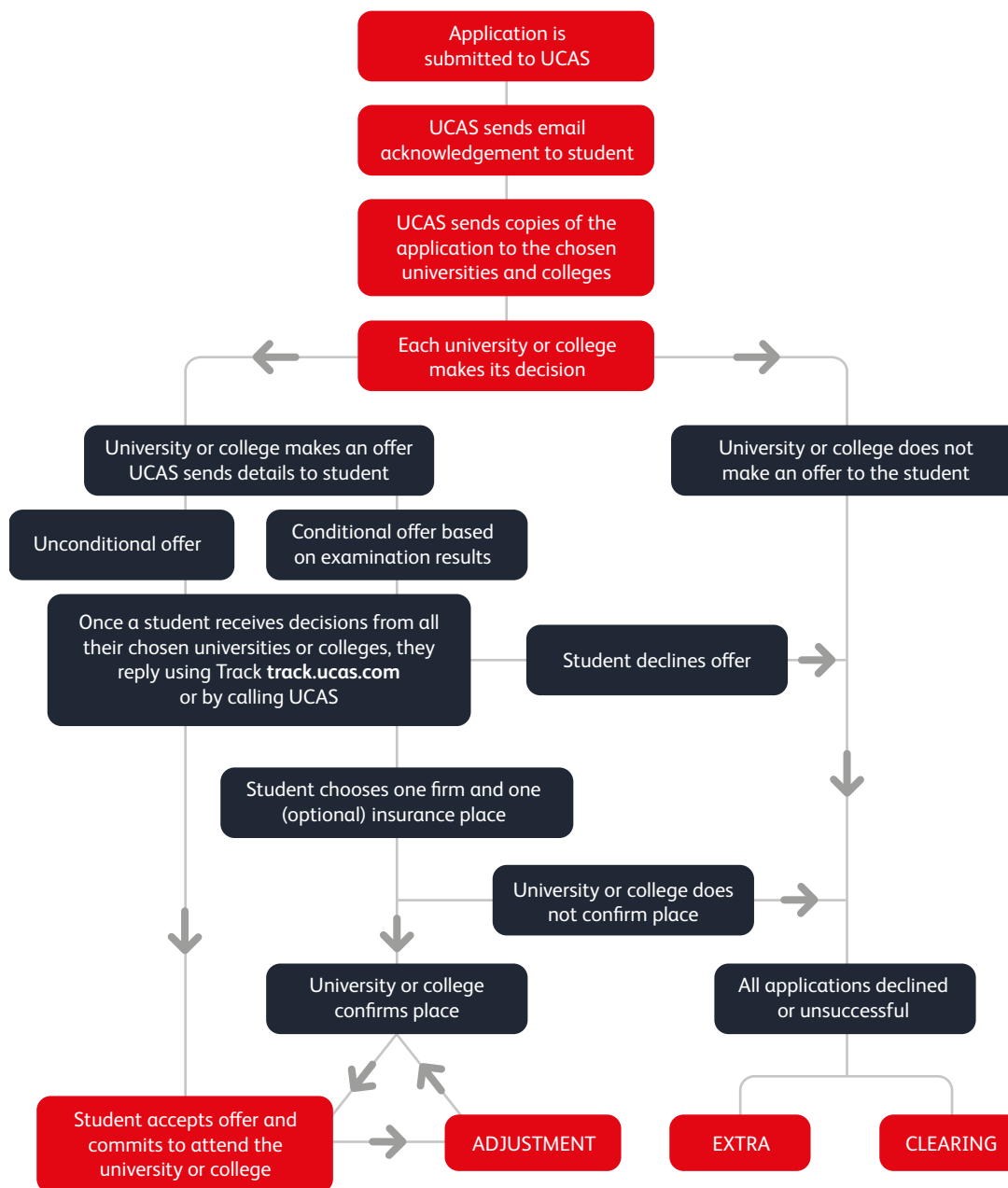
For each of these deadlines, their application must be received by UCAS by **18:00 UK time**.



TRACKING AND REPLYING

Once your child has submitted their application, they have to wait for the universities and colleges to consider all the applications they receive. Students will be able to sign in to the UCAS Track system to see how the application is progressing, and receive decisions from the universities and colleges they applied to. Find out more at www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/track-your-ucas-application.

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



Adjustment, Extra, and Clearing are further services that UCAS uses to help students find a course if the application has not been successful initially.

If a student achieves better grades than required for their firmly accepted offer, they may look for an alternative course that has places available whilst still holding their original choice. Find out more at ucas.com/adjustment.

Extra and Clearing are UCAS services that help a student without an offer of a place to continue their application to find a suitable degree course. Extra is open from February to July, and allows students to add a new choice to the application if the first five choices have been used without receiving any offers the student wants. Clearing shows what courses are available to students who don't have any offers they want after the 30 June application deadline. Find out more at www.ucas.com/extra and www.ucas.com/clearing.



MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

Students will need to make certain arrangements in order to study in the UK. These are the things to be aware of.

English language tests

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

Visas

We don't advise on visas, but your child may require one:

- > find out whether your son or daughter needs a visa at www.gov.uk/visas-immigration

Living costs

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

- > contact the international offices at UK universities and colleges
- > contact your local British Council office – www.britishcouncil.org

Financial support

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



FURTHER HELP AND SUPPORT FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD

We are here to answer your questions about the application process. Either call our dedicated Customer Contact Centre on **+44 330 3330 230*** between 08:30 – 18:00 (UK time), Monday to Friday, or come and see us at one of our worldwide events. However please note we cannot discuss your child's application unless they nominate you as their alternative contact within their application. A full events calendar, along with translated guides and full information about studying in the UK can be found at ucas.com/international.

Find us on social media

- > Join the UCAS facebook group to see what other applicants are asking www.facebook.com/ucasonline.
- > Follow us on Twitter to find out the latest news www.twitter.com/ucas_online.

Watch our videos

- > Watch and share our videos and 'How to' guides ucas.com/videos.
- > Watch video guides and find out what other international students think www.youtube.com/ucasonline.

Other sources of information

- > The British Council's Education UK website has lots of information to help international students prepare for and enjoy their UK experience, including practical advice on visas, travel, and finance – www.educationuk.org.
- > UK Council for International Student Affairs has lots of information for international students on many topics from immigration advice and English language tests, to scholarships and accommodation – www.ukcisa.org.uk.
- > Use the Discover Uni website to see student satisfaction ratings and to compare subjects, universities and colleges – <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>.

*If you are calling from the UK, please use **0371 468 0 468**.



UK AIRPORTS



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

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