

Parent Guide

Everything you need to know about
your child's journey to university or college

2017



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Wherever possible any changes will be updated on the UCAS website (www.ucas.com).

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

For further information about the UCAS Undergraduate application process go to www.ucas.com.



TIP: Register for our monthly parent newsletter – it's free and gives you all the updates and information you need, along with timely explanations of the application process.
www.ucas.com/parentform

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About the Parent Guide

This guide is for anyone supporting a young person applying to study at university or college in 2017, and covers the key stages of the UCAS Undergraduate application process. If you have any questions, find out how to get in touch at www.ucas.com/contactus.

Your UCAS journey checklist

Are you as prepared as you can be to support your son or daughter through their application journey? Use this handy checklist to make sure.

- **Register for our monthly parent newsletter** – it's free and gives you all the updates and information you need, along with timely explanations of the application process – www.ucas.com/parentform.
- **Familiarise yourself with our website** – www.ucas.com has all the information you and your son or daughter will need at every stage of the application journey.
- **Visit uni and college open days** – www.ucas.com/opendays.
- **Know when your son or daughter needs to send their application** – www.ucas.com/whentoapply.
- **Check when they need to reply to their offers** – this varies depending on the course(s) they've applied to and when they receive decisions for each choice.
- **Find out what finance and support is available** – see page 6.
- **Understand how Extra, Clearing, and Adjustment work** – see pages 19 and 23.
- **Supporting an international applicant?** Download our 'International undergraduate guide for parents' at www.ucas.com/parents.

Key dates at a glance

2016

24 May: UCAS Undergraduate Apply – the application system for those applying to courses starting in 2017 – becomes available for registration only.

1 September: Completed applications can be sent to UCAS.

15 October (18:00 UK time): Deadline for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and for most courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science.



TIP: Schools and colleges often set an earlier deadline so they have enough time to check applications and add references, before sending completed applications to UCAS.

Advise your son or daughter to check search.ucas.com to find the deadline(s) of the courses they're applying to.

Applications received after the deadlines will be sent to universities and colleges, but they are not obliged to consider them.

2017

15 January (18:00 UK time): Deadline for most undergraduate courses.

25 February: Extra opens.

24 March (18:00 UK time): Deadline for applications to some art and design courses.

30 June (18:00 UK time): Last date for receipt of applications. Applications received after this deadline are automatically entered into Clearing (see page 23).

4 July (18:00 UK time): Extra closes.

5 July: Clearing vacancies shown in the UCAS search tool – search.ucas.com.

Early August: SQA results day – Scottish Clearing vacancies only will be shown in the search tool.

17 August: A level results day – all Clearing vacancies will be shown in the search tool.

20 September (18:00 UK time): Final deadline for applications to courses starting in 2017.



What is UCAS?

We are a charity that processes applications to study full-time courses at universities and colleges in the UK.

However, we don't just process applications – our aim is to help students make informed choices that are right for them, by guiding them through the entire higher education application process and beyond. To support this, we provide a wide range of valuable information and services for applicants, their parents, and teachers.

Your son or daughter can use www.ucas.com to find out how to get started, research their options, make their application, and track its progress. There's information especially for you at www.ucas.com/parents, including details of the application process and a host of helpful video guides.

UCAS terms explained

Throughout the application process, you'll come across a number of terms that you may not be familiar with. Go to www.ucas.com/ucas-terms-explained to find out what they mean.

How to pay for university

One of the biggest concerns for students and their parents is the cost of university – here's a breakdown of what you need to know about fees, finance, and repayment.

Tuition fees

Your child can pay up to £9,000 per year in tuition fees as a UK student, though fees could rise with inflation above this figure from 2017 onwards at some universities.

Fees don't need to be paid upfront. Students can apply for a tuition fee loan to cover all or part of their fees.

Because of the way the system works (see 'Repayment'), taking out a loan yourself to cover the cost of fees and avoid your child getting into debt will almost always work out more expensive in the long run.

Living costs

The second loan they can apply for is the maintenance loan, to help towards living expenses while at university, such as accommodation, food, and course materials.

The amount they're eligible to borrow depends on several factors, including where they will be studying and your household income. You'll need to declare this information to receive the maximum amount available.

For example, if they'll be living away from home (outside of London), a maintenance loan of up to £8,200 per year could be available for households earning £25,000 per year or less. If you're earning more than this, the loan amount your child is eligible for will be lower.

Student loans are repayable after completion of the course, and once your child is earning over a certain salary.

Extra support

Grants were scrapped in 2015, but extra support is available in certain circumstances.

- **Scholarships and bursaries** – offered on the basis of academic ability, following means testing or for other reasons, for example, if your child has a disability.
- **Fee waivers** – these reduce tuition fees, either on their own, or as a broader package of support with a bursary.
- **Hardship funds** – these can help if you're struggling financially either before or during uni.

Location matters

We've mainly covered the system in England, but if you live elsewhere in the UK, the fees, loans, repayment, and cost of living will be different. If your son or daughter lives in:

- **England**, they could pay around £9,000 in tuition fees. Apply to Student Finance England at www.gov.uk/student-finance
- **Scotland** and goes to a Scottish university, they won't pay tuition fees. Apply for maintenance loans via the Student Awards Agency for Scotland at www.saas.gov.uk
- **Wales** and goes to a Welsh uni, they'll pay £3,810 in fees and get a tuition fee grant to cover the rest. Apply to Student Finance Wales at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk
- **Northern Ireland** and studies in NI too, they'll pay £3,805 in fees. Apply to Student Finance NI at www.studentfinancenl.co.uk

Applying

There's no need for your child to wait to receive offers from universities before applying for student finance – they can usually do this from the end of January with the student funding body for where they currently live (see 'Location matters').

To make sure they receive their loans on time, remind them to provide their supporting evidence and send off their signed declaration as soon as possible!

Repayment

This isn't based on how much your son or daughter has borrowed, but instead on how much they go on to earn.

The income threshold is currently set at £21,000 for English and Welsh students (£16,910 for Scottish students, and £17,335 for Northern Irish students).

This is the point at which they'll begin to pay back an amount – currently 9% – based on what they're earning **over** that figure per year. Earning less than that? Then they won't pay anything back.

Once your child starts repaying their loan, it will be automatically collected through PAYE, so they won't be able to fall behind on their repayments.

While the loans do accrue interest, any outstanding debt still owed after 30 years is written off, meaning it's not always worth helping your child pay back their loan early. Student loans won't appear on your child's credit file either.

Which? University can help you help your son or daughter get on top of student finance, budgets, and money matters. Head to www.which.co.uk/studentfinance to find out more.



Planning their future

Teenagers can be temperamental at the best of times, so how do you broach the touchy subject of their post-school plans?

Subject ideas

A few light conversations over dinner or while watching TV, as opposed to an intimidating sit-down talk about 'the future' is probably the best way to get them thinking about their next steps.

If that step is university but they're struggling to get inspired by a particular subject, get them thinking about potential areas of study in either:

- **a subject they study now** – if it's the subject they love and are best at, get them to consider whether it's going to keep them interested for the next few years, and which career path(s) it might lead to
- **a subject related to a career** – if they already have more vocational ambitions, explore together whether they need to study a particular degree subject in order to get a job in that field, or if their options are more flexible
- **a completely new subject** – there are many degree-level disciplines they won't have encountered in their studies before. Together, assess these with an open mind, relating each back to what they enjoy and how they learn best.

Be a positive sounding board

Being pushy or putting pressure on your child to follow a certain career or degree path can (and probably will) be counterproductive.

Keep the conversation positive, focusing on their strengths, interests (both academic and outside the classroom), and aspirations. Recent predicted grades, report cards, and parents' evenings can work well as practical prompts to help identify what these are.

Encourage your son or daughter to speak to teachers, careers advisers, and other family members for another perspective.

Alternatives to university

If university isn't the answer (or at least not right now), there are other options to consider.

- **Apprenticeships** – on-the-job experience and training for a whole range of career paths, including finance, retail, IT, and childcare.
- **The world of work** – get them to develop their CV, check out job ads, and speak to recruiters to get a sense of different job markets, including school leaver programmes.
- **Deferred entry to university** – spend time gaining work experience or completing a gap year to build up skills, knowledge, and confidence before higher education.

Test out those interests

If they've mentioned a few areas they're interested in, get them to test these out as early as possible where they can.

Work experience placements, university taster days, volunteering, or part-time work might offer some fresh insights.

Get them inspired with tips, stories from other students, and step-by-step advice on choosing a degree course at www.which.co.uk/degrecourse.

What's next?

It can be tricky to decide, that's why we offer free and impartial careers advice that will help take you further. Just visit nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk or call an adviser on 0800 100 900.

National Careers Service
Helping you take the next step

Traineeships

Apprenticeships

WHAT'S STOPPING YOU

There are up to 27,000 apprenticeship vacancies and 9,000 traineeship opportunities available on the website. Right now.

apprenticeships.org.uk

Brought to you by
National Apprenticeship Service

How you can help with researching their options

If your son or daughter decides university is the right path for them, there's still a lot of research to do, with over 37,000 undergraduate courses to choose from. Here are our top tips to help you help your child with their research.

1. Get online

- Use our search tool at search.ucas.com to find undergraduate courses at universities, colleges, and conservatoires. Search results will show entry requirements, fees information, and details of when to apply.
- Take a look at university, college, or conservatoire websites for in-depth details about their facilities and courses, and explore the campus with their virtual tour at www.ucas.com/virtual-tours.

2. Get out and about

- **UCAS exhibitions** give your son or daughter the chance to meet universities, colleges, other course providers, and us in person, to get their questions answered and find out what they can offer. Their school may arrange a group visit, or you can attend independently.

These exhibitions are free and there's bound to be one near you. Go to www.ucas.com/exhibitions to find one and to book your place!

- **University and college open days** allow you to look around, meet staff and students, and see if your son or daughter

would be happy studying there. Use our open days search tool at www.ucas.com/opendays to find out when the university they're interested in is holding their next open day. You can filter by region and date to hone your search results.

- Taster courses are tailored to specific courses or subjects and often include lectures and hands-on workshops, to give your son or daughter a feel of what it would be like to study that particular course. You can find them at www.ucas.com/taster-courses.

3. Considering music, dance, or drama?

If your son or daughter is thinking of a career in music, dance, or drama, they can choose between applying through UCAS Undergraduate or UCAS Conservatoires. Both universities and conservatoires offer undergraduate degrees.



TIP: If your son or daughter isn't sure which type of course suits them best, they can apply through both application services. If they get a place in both, they'll need to decide which to take up.

Conservatoire study:

- A conservatoire is a college that specialises in performance-based courses, but also includes academic study.
- If your son or daughter's interests are in a practical discipline, such as vocal performance or dance, they may favour a conservatoire.

- The deadlines for conservatoire applications are:
 - 1 October 2016 (18:00 UK time) for music courses
 - 15 January 2017 (18:00 UK time) for most dance, drama, and screen production courses – there are some exceptions, so check the conservatoires' websites

For more information and advice about applying to and studying at a conservatoire, go to www.ucas.com/conservatoires.

4. Considering teaching?

If your son or daughter is considering a career as a teacher, they need Initial Teacher Education or Training (ITET), based at a university, school, or college in the UK. They can train as either an undergraduate, or as a postgraduate if they already have an undergraduate degree.

Point them towards www.ucas.com/teachertraining for information on what they need to do, and to sign up for our free information pack, which will help them navigate their way through the application process.

The UCAS Tariff

The Tariff is used by universities and colleges to make broad comparisons between qualifications used for entry to higher education. Points are allocated to a wide range of qualifications and can be added together (within certain rules) to give a Tariff score. Some universities refer to Tariff points as conditions of their offers.

We are introducing a new Tariff for courses starting from September 2017. Make sure your son or daughter looks at the correct one for when they are applying:

- For courses starting **before** September 2017, go to www.ucas.com/tariff-tables.
- For courses starting **from** September 2017, see www.ucas.com/new-tariff.





June to September 2016

How to fill in the UCAS application

Before they start their application, encourage your son or daughter to look at our short video guide at www.ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication.

Register

This is the first step – it's free and takes about 15 minutes to enter basic details and set up security information. Once they've registered, there are seven sections to complete:

1. **Personal details** – This will already contain the information they gave when registering, and there will be more questions about student support and residency.
2. **Additional information** – This includes equality questions and details about any preparation they've done for higher education.

3. **Student finance** – Your son or daughter can sign up to receive an email from us letting them know when they can apply for student finance. See pages 6 and 7 for more information.
4. **Choices** – They can make up to five course choices (four in medicine, dentistry, or veterinary science).
5. **Education** – They'll need to provide a list of all the schools they've been to since the age of 11, including the dates they were there, all their exam results (pass or fail), and details of any exams still to be taken.
6. **Personal statement** – This is their opportunity to convince the university or college to offer them a place.
7. **Employment** – If your son or daughter has a part-time job, they should include the basic details here. They can talk more about this in their personal statement.

Your son or daughter can fill in their application at any time, saving their progress as they go. They can go back and edit it until they're happy it's complete. Finally, there's a section for the reference, which is added by their referee (usually their teacher).

June to September 2016

Help your child write a great personal statement

Many applicants find writing their personal statement the most difficult part of the application. Taking a positive approach and leaving enough time to do a good job really can make your son or daughter's application stand out from the crowd.



TIP: A good personal statement...

- is relevant and focused – don't waste the 4,000 characters
- uses clear, plain English
- avoids clichés
- is original – our software scans all personal statements for plagiarism
- is redrafted multiple times until it's right

We've created a personal statement tool to help your son or daughter think about what to write and how to structure it. To try it, go to www.ucas.com/personalstatement.

Where should they start?

Encourage them to:

- think about what makes them interesting and what makes them stand out in a positive way
- write down a whole load of words – anything that shows why they're excited about the course(s) they're applying for
- remember why they chose the subject
- list work experience or other activities as supporting evidence to show why they'd make a great student
- think about skills they could use on the course, such as leadership, communication, and time management
- ask you and their friends for ideas and feedback

Pulling it together

Taking all those ideas and structuring them into a perfect personal statement is the next step. Your son or daughter has up to 4,000 characters to write their personal statement. There are four key parts to a good personal statement:

- **First part** – a punchy opening paragraph showing their excitement for and understanding of the course.
- **Middle part** – evidence to support their interest in the course. Relevant skills, work experience, and inspirational moments will all sit here.
- **Final part** – this is where they write about themselves, what they're interested in, and how well they will fit into university life.
- **Closing paragraph** – a concise statement which leaves the reader with a clear understanding of why your son or daughter is perfect for the course.

When should they apply?

UCAS Undergraduate Apply 2017 opens on 24 May 2016 – applications can be started then but can't be sent to us until 1 September 2016. There are different application deadlines depending on the courses your son or daughter has applied to – see page 3 for details.

Applications cannot be sent to UCAS until:

- 1 September 2016
- all sections are complete, and the application fee has been paid



TIP: Encourage your son or daughter to leave contingency time before the UCAS deadline in case something goes wrong, for example, loss of internet access, card payment failure, or if the reference isn't added in time.

If your son or daughter is applying through their school or college, it will be a member of staff who sends their application.



TIP: In the personal details section of the application, there's the option for your son or daughter to add your name to their application for 'nominated access'. This allows you to contact us – or the universities they have applied to – on their behalf. Just make sure you have their Personal ID handy and can answer basic security questions when you call.

Universities and UCAS are not able to talk to you about the specifics of your son or daughter's application unless you have nominated access.



EXPLORE
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DISCOVER

STUDY WITH
A TOP FIVE
MODERN UK
UNIVERSITY*

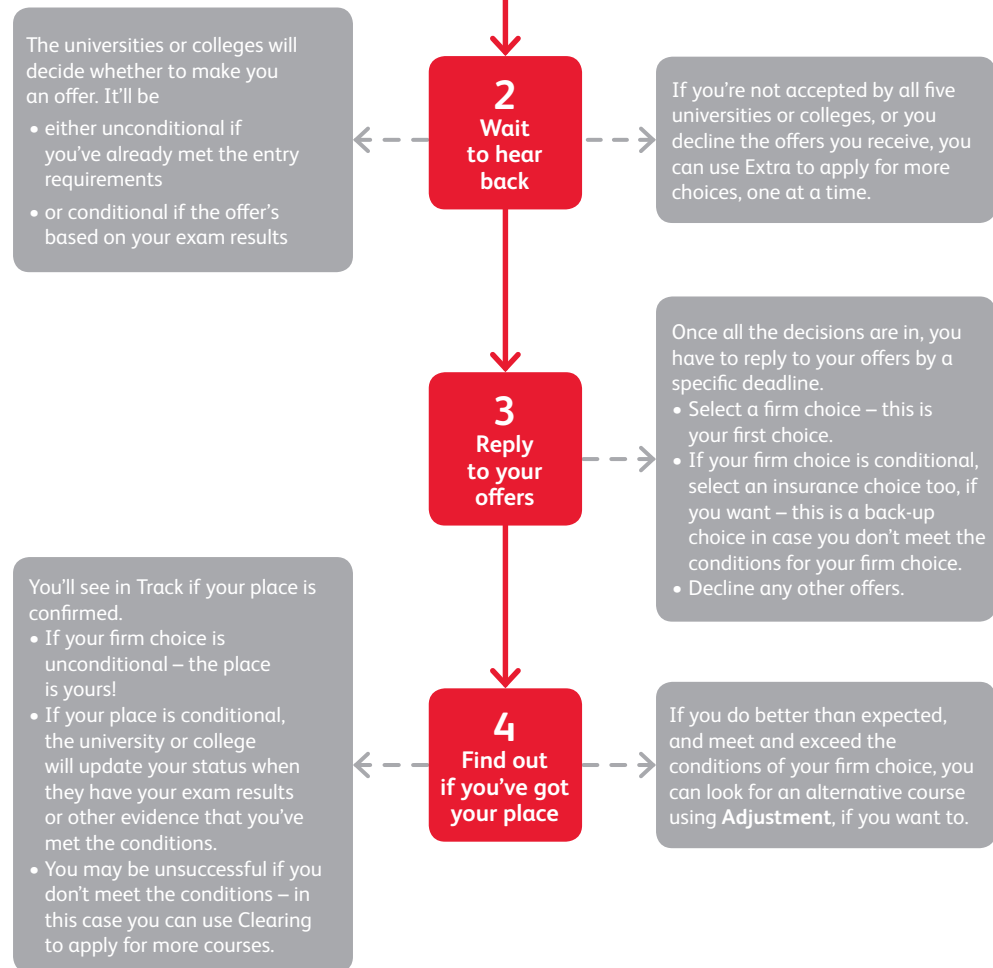
DISCOVER
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

www.plymouth.ac.uk/apply

   /PlymUniApply

*2015 Times Higher Education 100 under 50

Journey of an application



What happens once we get their application?

1. We check everything is OK and that the personal statement has not been copied. This can take up to 48 hours.
2. We send your son or daughter a welcome email when our checks are complete. This explains how to use Track to check the progress of their application, and contains their Personal ID, which they'll need to sign in. There's a handy video about using Track at www.ucas.com/trackyourapplication.
3. At the same time, the application is sent to their chosen universities and colleges. Universities won't know where else they've applied.
4. As soon as universities let us know about an interview, audition, test, or decision, we'll email your son or daughter so they know to check Track.

Types of decisions a university can make

Receiving a conditional or unconditional offer is good news, but it's important to know the difference and commitment they're making if they accept one.

- **A conditional offer** means your son or daughter needs to meet some conditions – usually exam results – before they secure the place. If they accept a conditional offer as their firm choice, they are committed to taking up the place.

- **An unconditional offer** means the place is theirs if they want it. They still might have to meet non-academic conditions, such as a health check. If they accept an unconditional offer as their firm choice (see page 18), they are committed to taking up the place, regardless of what grades they get.
- **An unsuccessful application** means the university has decided not to offer your son or daughter a place.
- **A withdrawn application** means the choice has been withdrawn either by your son or daughter, or by the university. If the university has done this, they'll let your son or daughter know why.

Once they've had decisions from all their choices, you son or daughter can reply to them.

Replying to offers

When your son or daughter has received decisions from all their choices, they'll need to reply to any offers they have. They'll need to be absolutely sure they're accepting the right offer, for the right reason.

The UCAS application process complies with consumer law and the Competition and Markets Authority's advice. This means that after they've sent their application to us, your son or daughter has 14 days in which to cancel their application and receive a full refund, should they wish to do so.

When your son or daughter has replied to their offers, they also have 14 days in which they can change their replies, but can only do so once.

Before they reply, they will need to:

- **understand the conditions of their offer** – if they're not sure, they should contact the university
- **visit the university or college** – if they haven't already done so, it's good to check if it's somewhere they'll be happy
- **discuss any individual needs with the university** – for example, if they have a disability – so everything is in place when they start the course
- **check the tuition fees** – it's important to know what they are before accepting the offer
- **compare their offers** to decide which they want to accept and which they don't

What replies can they make?

Your son or daughter can accept an offer as their **firm** or **insurance** choice.

Firm choice

- For a conditional offer, they will be guaranteed a place on the course if they meet the conditions.
- For an unconditional offer, the place is theirs.
- In either case, they are committed to that course at that university.

Insurance choice

This has the same level of commitment as a firm choice, but only comes into play if your son or daughter doesn't meet the conditions of their firm choice – it's like a second chance to get a place. It makes sense for the insurance choice to have less demanding conditions than the firm choice.

You can find more information and a video about replying to offers at www.ucas.com/replies.

Extra opens

Despite all the careful research choosing the right course(s), sometimes it doesn't work out as expected. Competition can be tough, meaning even the best students don't always get the offers they'd hoped for. Alternatively, they might receive offers for courses they're no longer interested in. So what can they do instead?

Extra is an opportunity for your son or daughter to look for another course without waiting for Clearing (see page 23). In order to use Extra, they must first be eligible:

- All five choices must have been used.
- They must either have no offers, or have declined any offers they received.

Extra opens on 25 February 2017 and ends on 4 July 2017.

For more details, go to www.ucas.com/extra.



Preparing for results

Exams over, your son or daughter is in for an impatient wait until results day. Use that time to devise a plan B, just in case things don't work out as hoped...

Setting early expectations

Try to gauge how things have gone. While they can't anticipate everything, they should have a rough idea based on how their exams and assignments went. This can be helpful to determine whether it's a back-up plan or an alternative that's needed.

Near miss on their grades

Think positively! Even in the event they don't achieve the grades they were expecting or needing, their firm choice university may still accept them.

An alternative uni course

If they do miss out on their place, UCAS' Clearing service (see page 23) offers the chance to apply for alternative courses. Start preparing now by encouraging them to revisit the original courses they considered – a good way to get a ready-made shortlist of universities and courses.

A year out

They may wish to reapply next year for slightly different courses or to other universities. Now is a good time to start thinking about what a productive gap year could look like, to make sure they get the most out of it.

Retakes

Depending on their results, they might decide to resit a subject before reapplying. This means more exams next summer, finding somewhere to sit them, and probably some extra tuition.

Re-marks and appeals

If your son or daughter is unhappy with an exam result and feel it's been unfairly marked, talk to their school or college about appealing the grade (you won't be able to enquire directly with the examining board yourself).

They will also be able to advise you based on the knowledge of all outcomes for that exam across your son or daughter's year group.

Head to www.which.co.uk/appeals for step-by-step advice on the grade appeals process.

Better than expected

If your child has high hopes for results day, there's the option to 'trade up' their place through UCAS' Adjustment process (see page 23) to gain an offer on a course with higher entry requirements. Use the time now to research potential courses.

An alternative path

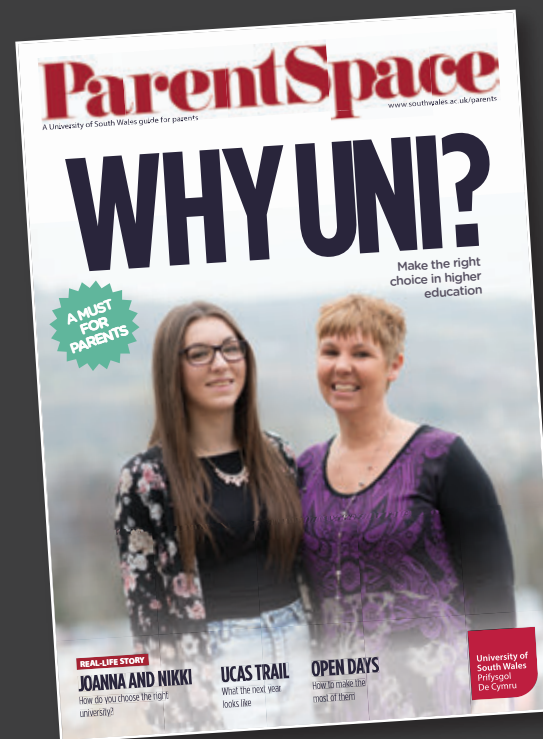
Studying abroad might be a viable alternative – there may even be vacancies available on English-speaking courses at certain European unis. What about a different qualification entirely, or entering the world of work?

It's strongly recommended that your child is in the country for results day, so avoid booking any holidays around that week. This way, should they need to speak to someone about their results or options on the day, they can do so. You might want to be around too...

Which? University has more tips and advice to help you get set for results day. Head to www.which.co.uk/resultsday.

University of
South Wales
Prifysgol
De Cymru

Is your child applying to university? ParentSpace can help you.



ParentSpace is designed to help you survive the university application process.


We have tips on how to get the most out of Open Days and how to balance the cost of university.

We even have interviews with parents and a jargon buster to help you keep up with higher education terminology.

To sign up for your FREE copy, visit www.southwales.ac.uk/parents or call our Parents' Hotline on 03455 760 996.

Getting exam results


- We receive exam results, match them to individuals, and make them available to universities and colleges.
- Universities then check the offer details and confirm the conditions have been met.
- If the university has confirmed their place, this will be shown clearly in Track.

 **TIP:** There is restricted access to Track while we process results. Details of its availability will be shown on our website.

Getting their results


We don't communicate results to applicants – they come from the exam board, either via their school, by post, or online.

We send some results on to universities or colleges, but not all of them. Check if your son or daughter needs to send any of their results to their firm and insurance choices. If they do, they'll need to do this as soon as the results are available. You can check which results we receive at www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results.

 **TIP:** Try to be there when they get their exam results, so you can share in their excitement, or support them if things don't go as planned.

What if there's really good news?

When their results are announced, your son or daughter could achieve much higher grades than the conditions of their offer. If this happens, see page 23 for details of our Adjustment service.

 **TIP:** Make sure your son or daughter's contact details are up-to-date in Track, including their address, email, and mobile phone number.

What if they don't get the grades they were expecting?

- The university might still accept them, but there's no guarantee.
- They might offer your son or daughter a place on another course, or for a different year of entry.
- Your son or daughter could:
 - look for another course using Clearing (see page 23)
 - retake some exams and reapply next year
 - do an apprenticeship or traineeship – find out more at www.ucas.com/alternatives
 - take a gap year
 - earn and learn with a job


Clearing and Adjustment

Clearing and Adjustment are both options to use when exam results aren't as expected, but are used under different circumstances.

Clearing is a chance for students to look for a place if they don't have one after they get their exam results. It's also the final chance for universities to fill any places they still have available.

To look for a Clearing place, your son or daughter must be eligible. This means that either:

- they have no offers
- their firm and insurance choices have made them unsuccessful
- they applied after 30 June 2017 (see page 3)

 **TIP:** If your son or daughter only paid for one choice, they will need to pay an additional £11 to apply for a course in Clearing. They can do this in Track.

Clearing officially starts on 5 July 2017. However, students must have all their exam results to be able to use it, so the majority of eligible students will use Clearing in August. To find out more, go to www.ucas.com/clearing.

Adjustment

If your son or daughter's results are better than expected, they might exceed the conditions of their firm choice. In this situation, they may wish to look at Adjustment to find an alternative course.

Adjustment is available between 18 and 31 August 2017, but applicants only have five days to use it, from the moment their firm choice confirms their place, or from 18 August, whichever is later.

If they don't find an alternative course they like, they will keep the place they gained on results day. For more information, go to www.ucas.com/adjustment.



Preparing for university

The hard work is done and they're nearly on their way to university! Now there's the small matter of packing, plus some final planning before they wave goodbye for a few years.

Budgets and bank accounts

By now, you and your son or daughter should have a good idea of their budget per term. Give them some tips for cutting their living costs, and the tools to stay within their budget – a simple weekly expenditure spreadsheet could work wonders!

Opening a student bank account before they head off is also a good idea, so they can take their time comparing what's on offer.

Banks are keen to entice students with freebies, but look beyond student railcard or voucher incentives. Often it's features such as the level of interest-free overdraft that may prove more essential in the long-run. When you're comparing 0% overdraft facilities on offer, check whether the headline amount is guaranteed, or just 'up to', and if there are any other restrictions.

Encourage your child to see an overdraft as a helpful buffer rather than extra cash, and to always stick within their authorised limit to avoid hefty charges.

For a comparison of student bank accounts, great value gadgets, and more advice on how to prepare them for uni, head to www.which.co.uk/preparingforuni.

Student bills

- **Council tax** – if everyone living in your son or daughter's household is a full-time student, they won't have to pay Council tax.

If someone in their household isn't a full-time student, they'll get a Council tax bill, but will qualify for a discount.

- **Utility bills** – if your child is moving into private accommodation, utility bills may not be included, so make sure they're aware of gas, electricity, and water bills.
- **Internet** – many universities offer a free wireless connection in halls, so be sure to ask.
- **TV licence** – students need a TV licence if they watch or record television programmes as they're being shown on TV, on any device. Halls of residence usually have a licence covering communal areas. You don't need one to use a catch-up or streaming service such as Amazon Prime, BBC iPlayer, or Netflix.
- **Insurance** – check the small print of your contents insurance. If their personal belongings aren't covered when away from home, it may be worth getting them a separate policy.

Teach them some independence

Spare your child some domestic disasters (and yourself some frantic messages or phone calls) by teaching them some simple recipes, how to do laundry without turning everything pink, and handy extras like how to sew a button back on.

Prepare yourself too

It's not all about them! This is a big change for you as well. Talk to other parents whose homes are also a bit quieter since their kids left for university.

Think about what you'd like to do with your extra time – perhaps take up a hobby you've been putting off or spend more time with friends and other family members.

Must-have items:

- **Clothes** – don't pack everything; enough for that term will do.
- **Bedding** – duvet, sheets, pillows, and towels.
- **From the bathroom cabinet** – toiletries, glasses, contact lenses, medication, and a small first aid kit.
- **Laundry** – washing products, laundry bag, and drying rack.
- **Electronics** – laptop, tablet, printer, extension leads, and chargers.
- **Kitchen** – cutlery, crockery, glasses, pots, pans, plus basic gadgets such as a kettle and toaster, if these won't be provided (check with their accommodation first!)
- **Admin** – passport, driving licence, NHS medical card, National Insurance number, and all important correspondences with their university.
- **Food basics** – coffee, tea bags, cereal, cooking oil, tins, and condiments.

Things to leave behind:

- **TV and games console** – encourage them to get out and meet people, rather than barricading themselves indoors.
- **Stationery and books** – apart from the books they'll need for the very start of term, they can buy the majority once they arrive.
- **Posters and décor** – aside from some special extras to help remind them of home, they can personalise their room once they're settled in.



Useful resources to help you

There are a number of ways you and your son or daughter can get help from us online – go to www.ucas.com/connect to find video guides, social media links, and blogs from other parents going through the same experiences as you.



www.twitter.com/ucas_online



www.facebook.com/ucasonline



www.youtube.com/ucasonline



plus.google.com/+ucasonlineofficial/posts

You can call us on **0371 468 0 468**, Monday to Friday, 08:30 – 18:00 (UK time).

Check out our video wall at www.ucas.com/connect/videos for handy 'how-to' videos, a series of 90 second parent guides, and much, much more.



You may find these other websites useful:

- **Careers advice:**

National Careers Service for England
nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Careers Service Northern Ireland
www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers

Skills Development Scotland
www.myworldofwork.co.uk

Careers Wales
www.careerswales.com

Conservatoires UK
www.conservatoiresuk.ac.uk

Get into teaching
www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching

- **Students with disabilities:**

Disability Rights UK
www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Disabled Students' Allowances
www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas

- **Gap years:**

gap-year.com
www.gap-year.com

The Year Out Group
www.yearoutgroup.org

- **General higher education advice:**

Unistats
unistats.direct.gov.uk

National Union of Students
www.nus.org.uk

Which? University
university.which.co.uk

- **Student finance and funding:**

See page 6 for details of the different funding organisations.



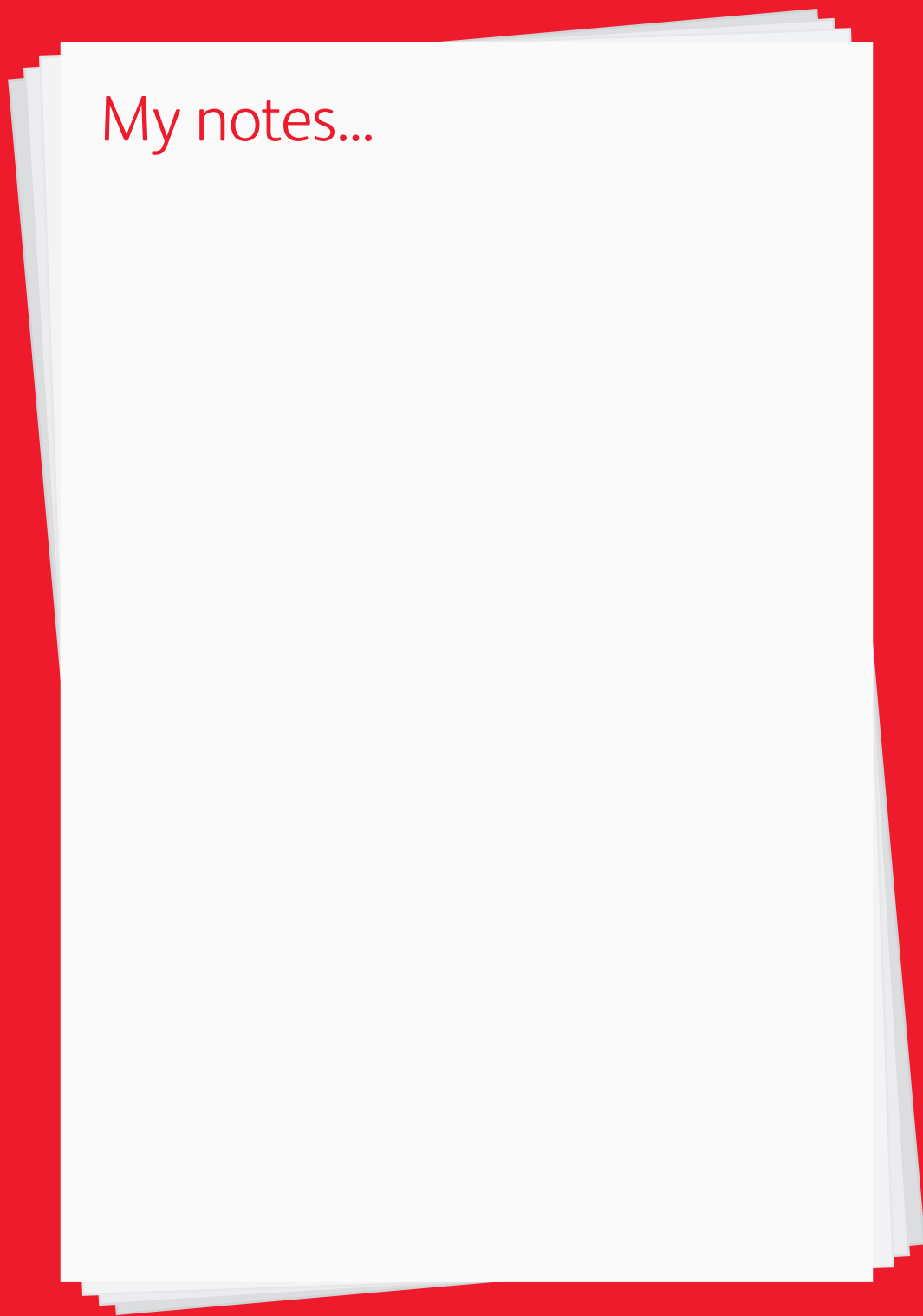
TIP: If your son or daughter currently lives outside the UK, you might find our 'International undergraduate guide for parents' a useful read. You can download the guide at www.ucas.com/internationalguides.

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My notes...



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