

# 2025

## UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION IMPROVEMENTS

UCAS



# WELCOME TO YOUR QUICK GUIDE FOR THE 2025 UCAS ADMISSIONS CYCLE, OPENING FOR STUDENTS ON 14 MAY 2024.

This is a summary of some of the improvements that have been made in the undergraduate application. Several of the questions have been amended based on feedback and significant engagement with the sector.

The focus of these changes is to improve the application experience for students, whilst delivering more accurate and relevant data to universities and colleges.

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# IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EDUCATION SECTION:

## **NEW** We will prepopulate 'place of education' information linked applicants.

If a student links to your school, college or centre through your buzzword, we will ask the student if they wish to add this as a place of education.

Students can add additional 'Places of education' in the usual way. If adding a centre not in our data set, we'll ask for additional address information to help make sure it is accurately input.

## **IMPROVEMENTS: SEARCHING AND ADDING QUALIFICATION CATEGORIES**

We've made improvements to the applicant journey for searching and adding qualifications; our hope is this makes it easier for students to add an accurate education history.

For the 'Education' section students must enter all qualifications from secondary education (or equivalent) onwards – whether they have the result (even any that were ungraded) or they are still awaiting exams and results. This includes all GCSEs and level 2 qualification equivalents.

Incorrectly stated qualifications can lead to delays in the provision of qualification results. Names declared on the application should match the names entered with the awarding

organisations. Any previously known by names, surnames and preferred names should be stated. These are extremely helpful when matching exam entries and results.

For learners in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland it is useful if they can enter their Unique Learning Number (ULN) as can also help with matching of qualification results. As a reminder if a ULN is entered we pull the information through to the Applicant Status Report (ASR) in the Adviser Portal.

## **NEW** Allowing an applicant to enter city and country where a school they have studied at is based (when manually entering the school) which will allow providers to understand the location of a school or college.

Providers have told us that they are often using search engines to find centres online and then are left guessing the locations.

## **NEW OPTIONS** Attendance type: Full Time / Part Time / Exam Only

We're making it easier for a student to explain how they've attended or studied at a centre, so that applicants can accurately represent all qualifications they've taken on the application form and not just those who have attended schools or college.

## **NEW** Study Mode - In person / Online

We're also adding a question to enable an applicant to tell us whether they attended remotely or in person. This will give useful context to their learning journey and allow those attending online courses to represent that on the form. We'll add additional help-text so that those who attended their classes online during covid will understand how to present this on the form.

## **MOVED** TOEFL and IELTS certificate numbers

The English language tests have been moved into the education section. The English language test section and "Is English your first language?" question which has caused confusion from applicants has been removed.

## **REMOVED** Highest level of qualification on entry question

This question has been removed based on feedback from applicants and advisers.

# CHANGES TO THE NATIONALITY SECTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

We have added some questions so that universities and colleges can determine 'Fee status' for non-UK nationals, this will also support those who may require a visa to help check anything that might have been missed or previously answered incorrectly.

## **NEW** When does your pre settled status expire? DD MM YYYY

This question is not mandatory and will only be asked to applicants who have indicated settled or pre-settled status, it will only be shown to those who need to see it. No student with British or Irish nationality will see this question, provided they have added either one of those nationalities to the application.

## **NEW OPTIONS**

### **Do you need a student visa to study in UK? – “Don't know”**

The current options of 'Yes' or 'No' force students to guess whether they require a visa or not (even if they don't know). The additional option highlights more questions might be needed from universities and colleges to determine if the applicant requires a visa.

## **NEW**

### **Why don't you need a UK visa to study?**

This will only be shown to those who state they don't need a visa to study in the UK. Applicants will be able to select from a list of reasons. This has been added to highlight if anything might have been missed or previously answered incorrectly and helps support analysis for fee status.

## **NEW**

### **What level was your [previous visa] study?**

This is a follow up question to the existing 'Have you previously studied on a student or Tier 4 visa in the UK?' question. If the applicant answers yes to this, they will see the additional study visa questions. This will help to show academic progression and duration between levels of study, it includes a start and end date of study.

## **NEW**

### **What is your UK visa or immigration status?**

A list of common visa or immigration statuses will be provided for applicants to select from, there will also be an 'other option' to enter free text. Applicants will be able to provide any relevant dates for their visa/immigration status.

# NEW SECTION 'WHERE YOU LIVE' COLLECTING THREE-YEAR ADDRESS HISTORY:

This will be a new section separate to contact details where the home and postal address are added (and remain unchanged).

In addition to the above addresses, we'll ask applicants where they have physically lived for the last three years, when they started living there, for what purpose (selected from a drop down list), and continue to collect these addresses until there is three years' worth of information, starting from 1 September in the cycle year they are applying.

Address fields and formats for the three-year address history will be the same as address formats used in home and postal addresses and cover UK, International, and BFPO.



# ADVISER PORTAL

All 2025 entry application changes will be reflected in the Adviser Portal in conjunction with some new functionality and features:

▶ **New Terms of Service tick box at the point of setting up for the 2025 cycle.**

With regular staff changes within Registered Centres each year the individual setting up for the new cycle (e.g UCAS Registered Correspondent) will confirm that they agree to the Adviser Portal Terms of Service which incorporates the annual Adviser Guide on your organisation's behalf. This forms part of the annual setting up process for a Registered Centre to be able to manage applications.

▶ **Bulk PDF application download is available**

– You can bulk download applications by group or whole cohort by using the filtering function available. A reminder that we'll be removing 2022 and 2023 cycle data from the adviser portal when we launch 2025 entry cycle.

- ▶ **To align with student messaging**, we will show you those choices that may require an admissions test or assessment, this will be alongside the current link to course entry requirements.
- ▶ **New** categories will be assigned and updated in the qualifications shortlist, aligned to the new categories in the education section of the application form. Please review your shortlist to ensure relevant and up to date qualifications are presented to students.
- ▶ **New** 'resubmission date' column will be shown alongside the original submission date to identify those applicants who have resubmitted their completed application following changes to their application.



# REFERENCES FOR 2025 CYCLE

The format of the reference was changed for the 2024 cycle to help you focus on what universities and colleges want to know about and make it easier for them to identify relevant information about applicants.

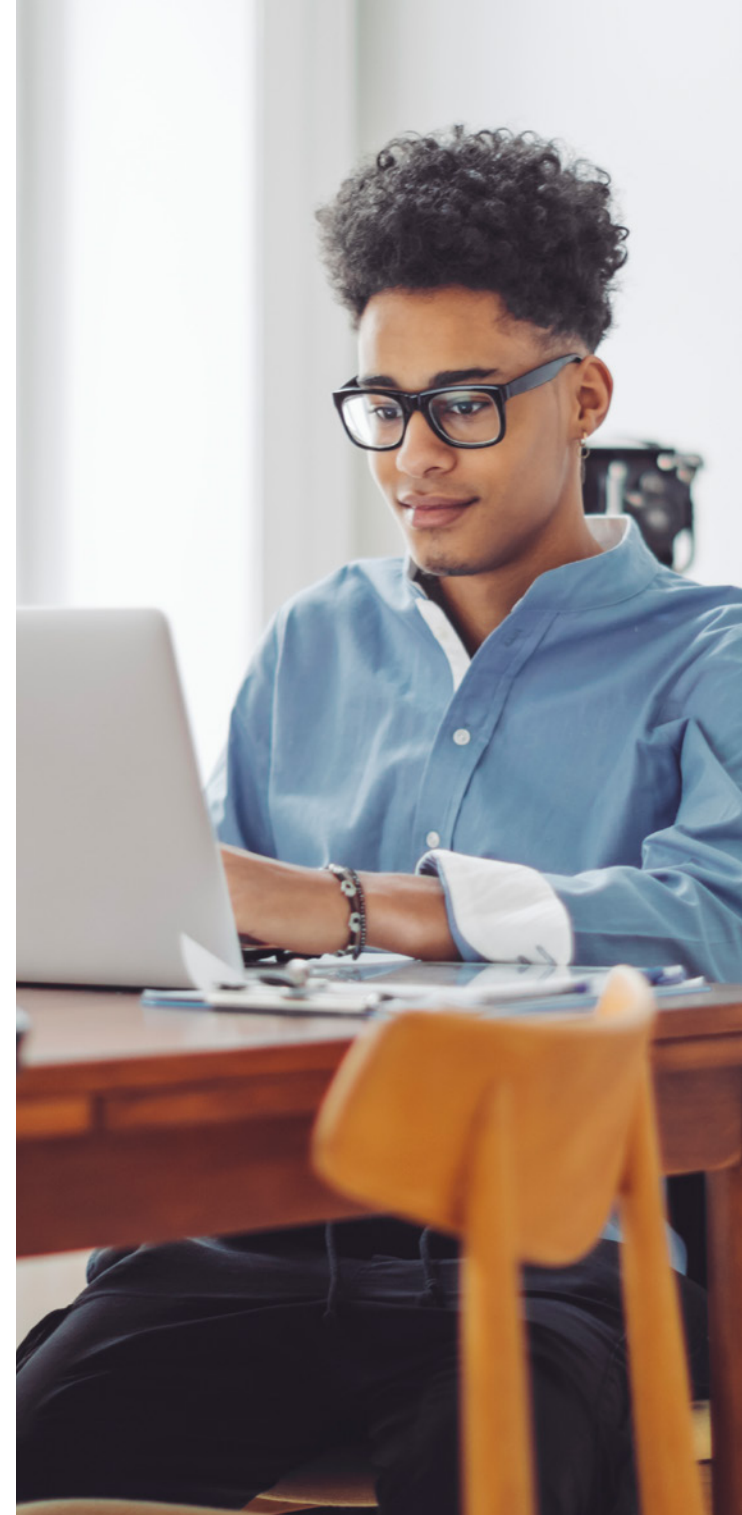
Following feedback and evaluation of the new format from universities, colleges, and advisers, we are not making any technical changes to the format for 2025 entry. We have updated the advice and guidance, please read the full updated information and guidance, including frequently asked questions and resources on [ucas.com/advisers/references](https://ucas.com/advisers/references).

## KEY UPDATES TO PREVIOUS INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

- ▶ The maximum 4,000 characters includes spaces, section headings, and line breaks, all of which take up at least one character. This means that your entered text will need to be under 3,800 characters. Most references will not need to use the total character count.

- ▶ **Extenuating circumstances (section 2)** – we have provided further guidance as to what should be included and how this information might be used. Please read the full guidance at [ucas.com/advisers/references](https://ucas.com/advisers/references). If there are complex or sensitive circumstances (particularly if this relates to safeguarding considerations), it may be appropriate to highlight there are extenuating circumstances in this section and contact universities and colleges with more detailed additional information directly.
- ▶ **Other supportive information (section 3)** – we've updated our guidance to indicate this should contain short, concise, and factual sentences to demonstrate suitability for the course(s) applied for and share relevant context to the application. **Please indicate there is 'no other information to provide' in circumstances where you are unable to provide any additional supportive individual context to the application.**

Please read full information and guidance on [ucas.com/advisers/references](https://ucas.com/advisers/references).



# STUDENT ACCESS TO ENTRY GRADES DATA

Applying to university can feel like an aspirational choice, or perhaps even out of reach for young people when looking at entry requirements, especially those from disadvantaged or under-represented backgrounds.

Historic entry grades data has previously been a feature available only in the adviser portal, sharing course-level information about student grades on entry to higher education.

Students told us having access to this data would help them make informed decisions about their future when narrowing down application choices, and 18 months of testing has confirmed the data is motivating and informative. Showing entry grades data in a transparent manner on course pages within our search tool will help students understand there is often a level of flexibility between advertised entry grades and the actual results previous students were accepted with, ultimately helping them make informed choices.

From May 2024, after 2025 entry undergraduate applications open, entry grades data will be available on course details pages in our search tool, showing grade profiles of applicants accepted onto courses, alongside offer rates. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to add their own predicted grades, to contextualise the historic information to them.

A level and BTEC grades of 18-year-olds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland across the 2019 - 2023 cycles will be included in the initial beta product given these qualifications represent the most popular qualifications taken by students. We plan to expand the qualifications included in the future.





# PERSONAL STATEMENT CHANGES

A reminder that any changes to the personal statement will not be taking effect until the 2026 cycle (launching May 2025). The format for this current 2025 application cycle remains the same.

Please make sure you stay up to date with all changes and guidance by reading your newsletters, checking adviser news articles and joining our monthly webinars [ucas.com/adviser-updates](https://ucas.com/adviser-updates).



# APPENDIX – SUMMARY OF THE NEW FIELDS

Section in the application	New/amended/ Removed	Question field name	Allowable values
Education	Amended	Attendance type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Full time</li> <li>▶ Part time</li> <li>▶ Exam only</li> <li>▶ (Removed: Sandwich)</li> </ul>
Education	New	Study Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Online</li> <li>▶ In Person</li> </ul>
Education	Removed	Highest level of qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Not applicable</li> </ul>
Where you live	New	Address history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Address lines (UK, International or BFPO)</li> <li>▶ Start date</li> <li>▶ End date</li> </ul> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Temporary for education (boarding school)</li> <li>▶ Temporary for education (not boarding)</li> <li>▶ Temporary for work</li> <li>▶ Temporary because of my parents/guardian's job/study</li> <li>▶ This is my permanent home</li> <li>▶ Temporary whilst seeking asylum or similar</li> <li>▶ Other</li> </ul>
Nationality	New	Pre-Settled expiry date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ DD MM YYYY</li> </ul>

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Section in the application	New/amended/ Removed	Field name	Allowable values
Nationality	Amended	Do you need a student visa to study in the UK?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Yes</li> <li>▶ No</li> <li>▶ Don't know (new option)</li> </ul>
Nationality	New	Reason for not requiring a visa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ I am a settled/pre-settled dependent</li> <li>▶ I have a skilled worker visa</li> <li>▶ I am a UK passport holder</li> <li>▶ I am a British National Overseas (BNO)</li> <li>▶ I am a refugee</li> <li>▶ I have a Ukrainian scheme visa</li> <li>▶ I have an alternative UK visa or immigration status that allows me to study</li> <li>▶ Other (FREE TEXT OPTION)</li> </ul>
Nationality	New	Level of study on previous visa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Below degree level</li> <li>▶ Undergraduate degree</li> <li>▶ Postgraduate degree</li> <li>▶ Other</li> </ul>
Nationality	New	Start date of study End date of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ DD MM YYYY</li> </ul>

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Section in the application	New/amended/ Removed	Field name	Allowable values
Nationality	New	Visa or immigration status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ No visa, not in UK</li> <li>▶ Pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme</li> <li>▶ Settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme</li> <li>▶ Indefinite Leave (“permanent residence”, ILR)</li> <li>▶ Ukraine scheme visa</li> <li>▶ Partner or child visa of someone with British citizenship or ILR</li> <li>▶ Partner or child visa of someone with a work or study visa</li> <li>▶ Work visa</li> <li>▶ Study visa</li> <li>▶ Pending application for EUSS with cert of application</li> <li>▶ Asylum seeker with evidence of a pending application</li> <li>▶ Refugee status granted by UK government</li> <li>▶ Humanitarian Protection</li> <li>▶ Other “Limited leave to remain” not covered above</li> <li>▶ Other (FREE TEXT OPTION)</li> </ul>
Nationality	New	Start date End date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ DD MM YYYY</li> </ul>