

THE UCAS APPLICATION:

# A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SUPPORTING CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS

UCAS



# ARE YOU HELPING A CARE-EXPERIENCED YOUNG PERSON APPLY TO UNIVERSITY BUT YOU'RE NEW TO UCAS?

THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU FROM **START TO FINISH**

## STEP 1

### DISCOVER YOUR OPTIONS

- ▶ How to use the UCAS Hub to research options
- ▶ Individual support needs
- ▶ Open days

## STEP 2

### SEARCH AND SHORTLIST

- ▶ Find courses and universities
- ▶ Shortlist favourites

## STEP 3

### APPLY AND SEND

- ▶ Complete the UCAS application
- ▶ Sharing personal circumstances
- ▶ The personal statement
- ▶ References
- ▶ Final checks
- ▶ Apply for finance
- ▶ Think about accommodation

## STEP 4

### DECISIONS AND OFFERS

- ▶ University decisions
- ▶ Replying to offers
- ▶ Results and confirmation
- ▶ Clearing

## STEP 5

### GET READY TO GO!

- ▶ Sort finances
- ▶ Prepare for HE study
- ▶ Get ready for independent living

# WHERE TO GET INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS

## UCAS RESOURCES FOR CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS

- ▶ [Applying to university as a care-experienced student](#)
- ▶ [Finance and funding for care-experienced students](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships as a care-experienced student](#)
- ▶ [PEPs Action Guide for professionals supporting young people in care](#)

## OTHER ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING CARE-EXPERIENCED STUDENTS

- ▶ [Propel from Become Charity](#) has an excellent [guide for teachers, parents and carers](#) and a [guide for young people](#) making their education choices.
- ▶ [The EaCES Handbook](#) is written by care-experienced and estranged students to help others going to university – including practical tips.
- ▶ [NNECL](#) has a wealth of resources that advisers may find useful, and a Student Voice Network.
- ▶ [Who Cares? Scotland](#) offers guidance to care-experienced young people in Scotland.
- ▶ [CLASS Cymru](#) is made up of universities, colleges, social services, and charities across Wales, to support care experienced students applying to higher and further education.
- ▶ [The Unite Foundation](#) offers scholarships for care-experienced students, and host an online community [All of Us](#).
- ▶ [Pathways to University from Care](#) is aimed at care-experienced young people. It explored the potential barriers and how they can be overcome, with videos and case studies.



This guide is relevant to those who are in a variety of care settings, and includes information for those who are no longer in care. However, the support available may vary depending on the individual circumstances and legal definitions (e.g. 'Care leaver', 'former Relevant Child' and 'Qualifying'). Young people should check with their Leaving Care teams if they are unsure. See also Coram Voice's [Am I a Care Leaver?](#) page.

# ARE YOU SUPPORTING A **YOUNG PERSON IN CARE** WITH THEIR PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN (PEP)?

Created in collaboration with colleagues at Sheffield Local Authority, this guide suggests some practical actions for young people in care for professionals completing their PEPs.

The actions are relevant for pupils from Year 8, who are starting to think about their qualification choices, through to those in post-16 education who are taking their next steps and completing their UCAS applications.

The PEP Action Guide is designed to be a starting point to support professionals who are helping young people make decisions about their post-18 education and career choices.

[Access the PEP Action Guide](#)

↑ / Advisers / Help and training / Toolkits / Adviser toolkit: Supporting students with individual needs

## SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE WITH THEIR PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS (PEPS)

Explore this section ▾

If you are supporting a young person's Personal Education Plan (PEP), this guide suggests professional actions as they make their career and education choices – from Year 8 through to post-16 study. Content provided by Virtual School Sheffield.

### Actions which can be used in the PEP

- ▶ Year 8 and 9
- ▶ Year 10 and 11
- ▶ Post-16 Level 2 programme
- ▶ Post-16 Level 3 programme – first year
- ▶ Post-16 Level 3 programme – second year
- ▶ Final steps: Practical transition support

#### ▼ Post-16 Level 3 programme – first year

**Aim:** Students aiming for a pathway towards HE and higher apprenticeship will have plans in place for:

- knowing what support is available
- identifying programmes that may suit them
- researching and visiting relevant universities/colleges
- understanding the benefit of sharing care experience

**Timing:** Autumn and spring terms, as ready.

**Actions:**

- Ensure clarity about how many UCAS Tariff points the student's programme can lead to – this informs HE pathways. (Learning provider)
- Ensure the student and home team know what support is available from their provider and are clear about the timescales involved in the process. (Learning provider/carers/social worker)
- Offer a careers interview so the student can explore HE programmes that interest them and give support with the UCAS process. (Learning provider)
- Offer support to register on the UCAS Hub where they can read subject guides, industry guides, employer profiles, and take the UCAS Career Quiz to generate ideas, and get inspiration about their next steps. (Learning provider/carers)
- Plan for the student to access UCAS' [guidance for care experienced students](#) so they know:
  - universities welcome applications from care experienced young people, make offers of support that can include contextual offers (accepting lower grade(s)) and buddying schemes (connecting the young person with a student)

**STEP 1**

# DISCOVER YOUR OPTIONS



# THE UCAS HUB: WHAT IS IT?

This is where applicants can access tools and information to:

- ▶ explore and research their options
- ▶ shortlist choices
- ▶ apply to courses
- ▶ track and reply to decisions

## **Register for the Hub any time!**

Applicants don't have to be ready to apply, or even apply at all – it's a great place to explore all options and pathways, whether they:

- ▶ have a clear idea of what they want to do and how to get there
- ▶ have some ideas but need more information
- ▶ don't have a clue where to start!



# THE UCAS HUB: WHAT YOU NEED

To create a personalised Hub dashboard and plan next steps, applicants need:

- ▶ a computer, laptop, phone or tablet
- ▶ an email address
- ▶ to create a memorable password

**Ready?**

**Register and get started on the Hub**

Next, they can tell us about the subjects or courses of interest, and where they might like to study. Their content will be personalised based on their preferences, and even suggest related options they might not have considered.

**Want to learn more?**

**Why not register on the UCAS Hub and look around yourself?  
Feel free to sign up and explore.**



**INTERESTED IN AN APPRENTICESHIP?**

UCAS can help with that too! Visit our [apprenticeship pages](#) for more information and advice, and to search for opportunities.

# HUB TOOLS TO HELP STUDENTS EXPLORE THEIR OPTIONS

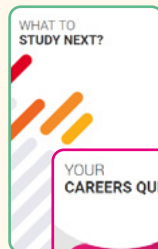


KPMG



Construction, architecture, and the built environment

**Subject, industry and employer profiles** give details about different careers and options. Learn about and search for apprenticeships alongside degree courses.



The **Careers Quiz** and **What to study next** tools suggest possible career and study pathways matched to students' skills, interests and qualifications.

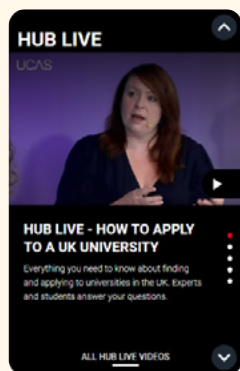
## CHAT TO STUDENTS

Find out more about a university or college from students already studying there.

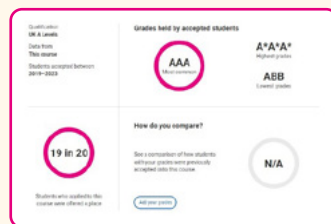
[Chat to students](#)



**Chat to students:** Find out what it's like to study at a particular university, or on a certain course with current students through UniBuddy.



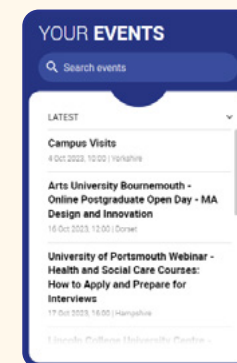
**Hub lives:** Rewatch our series of Hub lives about making decisions and applying.



**Historic entry grades tool**  
Students may be accepted with lower grades - this tool shows the grade ranges accepted in previous years to help with decision making. **[Read more about how to use the historic entry grades tool.](#)**



**Favourites:** bookmark information, subject guides, universities, and courses – and return to it later.



**Your Events:** find upcoming UCAS exhibitions and university open days.



# HUB TOOLS TO HELP STUDENTS EXPLORE THEIR OPTIONS

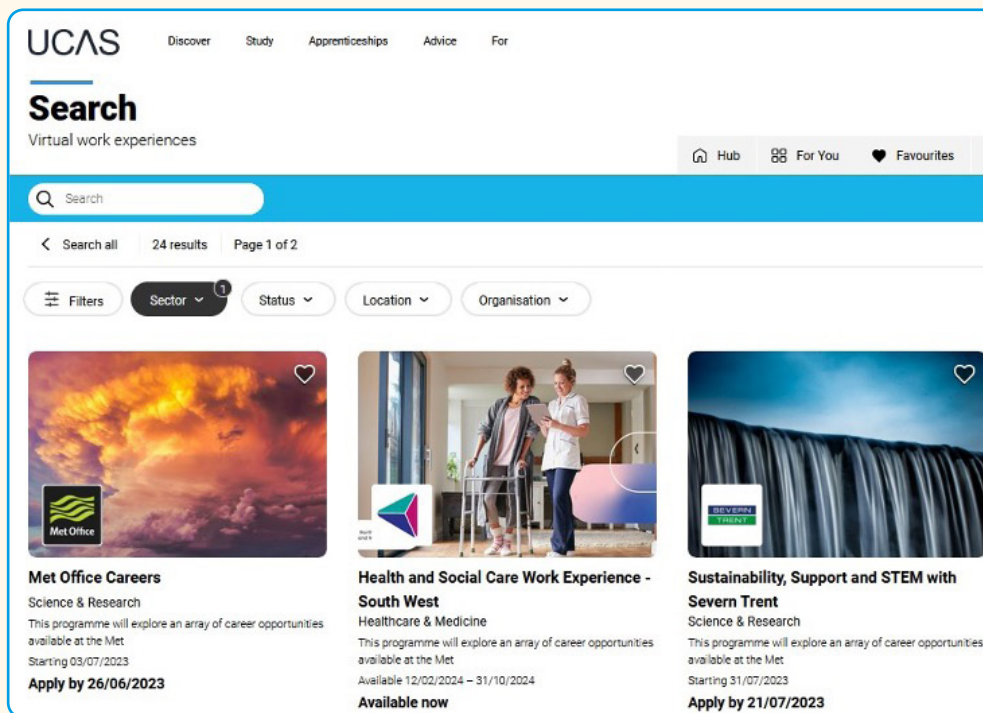
## University course tasters

Experience what a university course would be like with Springpod's Subject Spotlights. These interactive, virtual university course tasters feature real-life lectures, seminars, and academics.

[More info](#)



**Subject tasters** let you try before you apply, giving a taste of what it's like to study real subjects delivered by university lecturers. These taster courses are created in partnership with universities and include interactive activities.



The screenshot shows the UCAS Search interface. At the top, there are navigation links for Discover, Study, Apprenticeships, Advice, and For. The main heading is 'Search' with the sub-heading 'Virtual work experiences'. Below this is a search bar and a navigation bar with 'Hub', 'For You', and 'Favourites'. The search results are displayed on 'Page 1 of 2' with '24 results'. There are filter buttons for Sector, Status, Location, and Organisation. Three results are visible:

- Met Office Careers**: Science & Research. This programme will explore an array of career opportunities available at the Met. Starting 03/07/2023. **Apply by 26/06/2023**.
- Health and Social Care Work Experience - South West**: Healthcare & Medicine. This programme will explore an array of career opportunities available at the Met. Available 12/02/2024 – 31/10/2024. **Available now**.
- Sustainability, Support and STEM with Severn Trent**: Science & Research. This programme will explore an array of career opportunities available at the Met. Starting 31/07/2023. **Apply by 21/07/2023**.

## Virtual work experiences

are real work experience opportunities offered by the world's leading employers across a range of careers. These incorporate real workplace activities and the chance to interact with industry professionals – all online and available now.

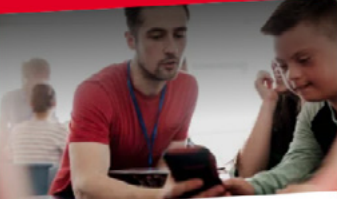


On completion of subject tasters and virtual work experiences, students will receive a completion certificate. Applicants may talk about these courses in their personal statement as evidence of their extra research into the subject area or career type.

# GET INFORMATION ABOUT SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

In the **Preferences** section (see right), tick the **Care experience box** (and any others that apply) to help UCAS show content the applicant will find useful.

**READ NEXT**

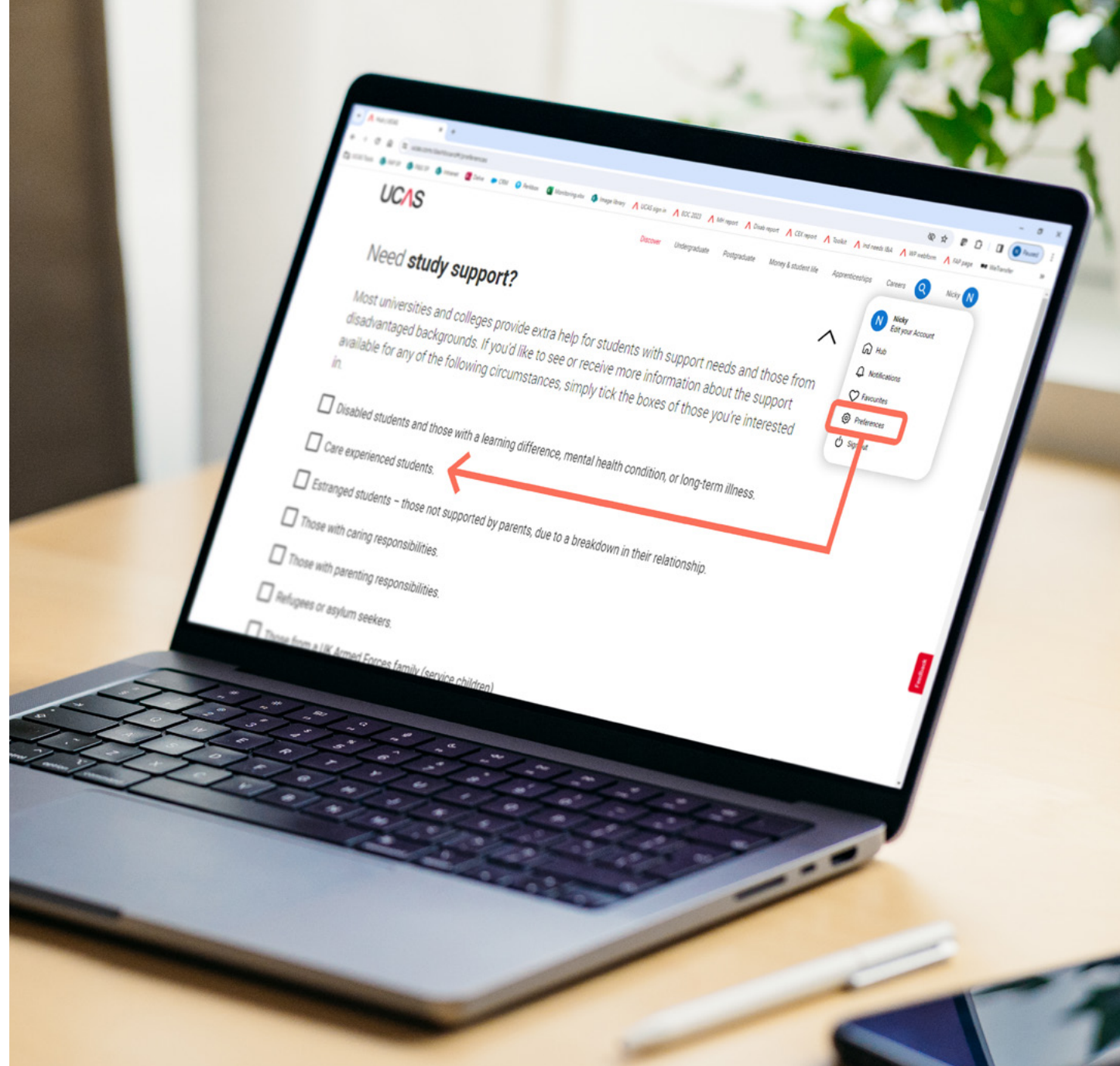


**INDIVIDUAL NEEDS?**

No matter what background or specific needs you may have, education is an inclusive environment. Find out how universities and colleges can help you throughout your higher education.

[READ MORE](#)

Students can also find information and advice about getting support for their individual needs.



**READ ABOUT SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

## UCAS EXHIBITIONS

These free events happen all over the UK from spring through to autumn to help young people consider their options – students need to register in advance.

**Discovery events:** talk to universities, colleges, employers and apprenticeship providers all under one roof. Find out more about traditional degrees, apprenticeships, careers and more.

**Read UCAS' Ultimate Guide to Discovery Exhibitions** to make the most of the visit.

## CREATE YOUR FUTURE EVENTS

**Exciting exhibitions** dedicated to creative careers. Talk to universities, colleges, conservatoires, employers, and industry experts – and watch live performances from current students.

## UNIVERSITY OPEN DAYS

These happen all year round and are free to attend. They are a great opportunity to visit the campus and decide if it is the right fit. Students usually need to book a place in advance.

The UCAS **guide to open days** will help students:

- ▶ find an event
- ▶ know what to ask
- ▶ plan their day
- ▶ reflect on their visit

If the student can't attend, see if they offer a **virtual tour**. They can also chat to current students about the university on **UniBuddy**.



SEARCH FOR ALL EVENTS AND OPEN DAYS ON [UCAS.COM](https://ucas.com)

# TOP TIPS TO HELP CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS DISCOVER THEIR OPTIONS

CHALLENGE	WAYS TO HELP
<p><b><i>"Is this for me?"</i></b> Student feels overwhelmed or daunted by the process or practicalities</p>	<p><b>Help the student feel this is possible by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ discussing plans with a care leaver's pathway plan personal adviser, and checking what help is available with costs, accommodation and practicalities – check the <a href="#">Care Leaver Offer website</a>.</li><li>▶ asking university widening access and participation teams about programmes or support for care-experienced students. The UCAS adviser at school or college will also be able to check opportunities listed on the UCAS Outreach Connection Service.</li><li>▶ linking the applicant with the student support team in advance to discuss needs or answer questions.</li><li>▶ connecting the student to a role model (e.g. via Unibuddy, mentoring scheme, or through case studies).</li></ul>
<p><b><i>"I can't afford it"</i></b> Student is worried about the cost of going to university, or attending interviews and open days</p>	<p><b>Forward planning is important, so:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ reassure students that student finance is for everyone and explain how it works (see Step 3).</li><li>▶ plan support to attend open days, events and interviews – can the local authority or university help cover any costs of travel and accommodation?</li><li>▶ ask the local authority about the Higher Education Bursary (England and Wales) or the Care Experienced Students Bursary (Scotland) and work with the Local Authority team (e.g. at PEP and pathway planning meetings) to plan next steps.</li><li>▶ check bursaries and scholarships available from individual universities on the <a href="#">Propel website</a>.</li></ul>
<p><b><i>"My grades aren't good enough"</i></b> Student thinks their grades will prevent them getting a place</p>	<p><b>Some universities make contextual offers to care-experienced students, so:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ read about <a href="#">contextual admissions</a> – check university websites and contact them to discuss details.</li><li>▶ in Scotland? Care-experienced students are eligible for the <a href="#">guaranteed offer</a> if they meet minimum entry requirements.</li><li>▶ students in Scotland, may also be able to enter university directly into the second or third year after studying at college - contact the university directly to check and read the <a href="#">Who Cares? Scotland guide to articulation</a> for care-experienced students.</li></ul>

**STEP 2**

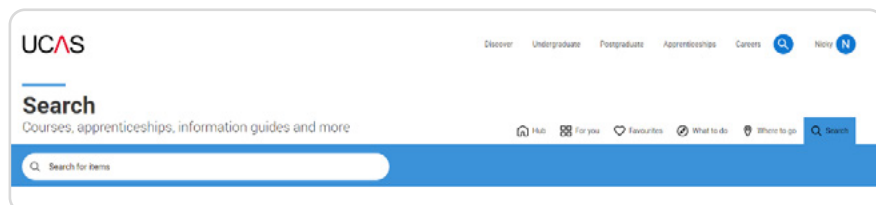
# **SEARCH AND SHORTLIST**



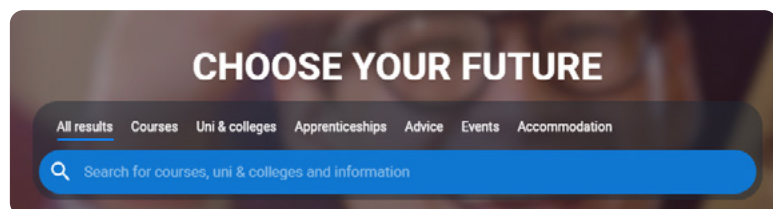
# HOW TO SEARCH

Once the applicant has researched their options, the next step is to search and finalise their course choices.

To find courses, you can either:



Search in the Hub



Use the blue search box on the homepage of [ucas.com](https://www.ucas.com)

Students can search by:

- ▶ course title
- ▶ subject area
- ▶ university or college name
- ▶ apprenticeship opportunity



## CONSERVATOIRE APPLICATIONS

Conservatoires are specialist institutions that offer performance-based courses, such as drama and music. There is a separate UCAS application for these courses - [find out more](#).

# SEARCH RESULTS

Search results appear as 'tiles' – click on them to read more details, such as:

- ▶ **Course summary** – a brief description of the course and modules.
- ▶ **How to apply** – deadlines, course codes and information on applying.
- ▶ **Entry requirements** – a full list of qualifications and grades students need to apply.

# SHORTLISTING AND FAVOURITES

Favourite and shortlist courses by **clicking the heart icon**. When they've decided on their final five courses, they are ready to apply.

## Favourites

Review your favourites and shortlist

Home Hub For you Favourites

2 Shortlist Review your choices

8 All Favourites View favourites collections

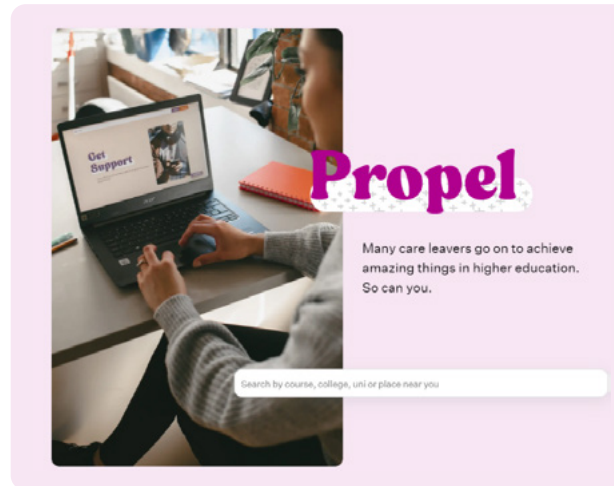


# TOP TIPS TO HELP CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS SEARCH AND SHORTLIST

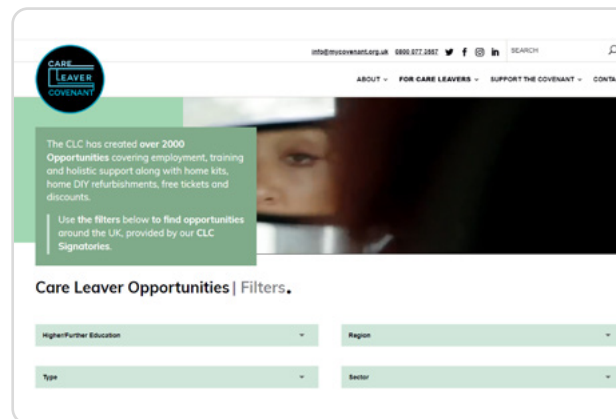
## What to remember when shortlisting universities:

- ▶ **The type and level of support differs** from one university to another – check they can meet your needs before applying.
- ▶ **Check the university website** for student support services (it might be called something else).
- ▶ **The student support team** is always happy to answer questions and give information – not only when students start their course, but during their application, so get in touch. Find their contact details on the university website.
- ▶ If you're unsure whether a university makes **contextual offers**, or if an applicant is eligible, contact the admissions team. Their details are available in the UCAS Hub.
- ▶ If the applicant has other individual needs (e.g. a disability, learning difference or mental health concern), **read our advice pages** and check the university can support them.

## USEFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES



- ▶ Use **Propel** to search for universities around the UK and see what support they offer to care-experienced students.



- ▶ The **Care Leaver Covenant** (England only) lists universities and colleges that have made a commitment to supporting care-experienced students. Apply the Higher/Further education filter or search for a specific university to see what they offer and who to contact.



**STEP 3**

**APPLY  
AND SEND**



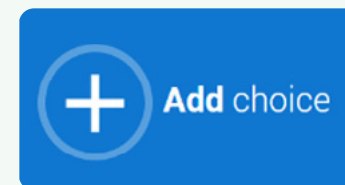
# HOW TO COMPLETE THE UCAS APPLICATION

Click Start on the **Your Applications** tile in the Hub dashboard.



Link to your school or college using the **Buzzword** provided. If you are not applying from a school or college, skip this step.

Add up to five courses using the **Add Choice** box.



Enter the required information for each section and **mark as complete**.

You can save the application at any time and complete it later. You can't mark the section as complete until all required information is added (marked with an asterisk\*).

Mark this section as complete \*

You must complete all mandatory fields in this section before you can mark it as complete. All sections must be marked as complete before you can send your application.

Save this section

The dashboard will show progress **for each section**

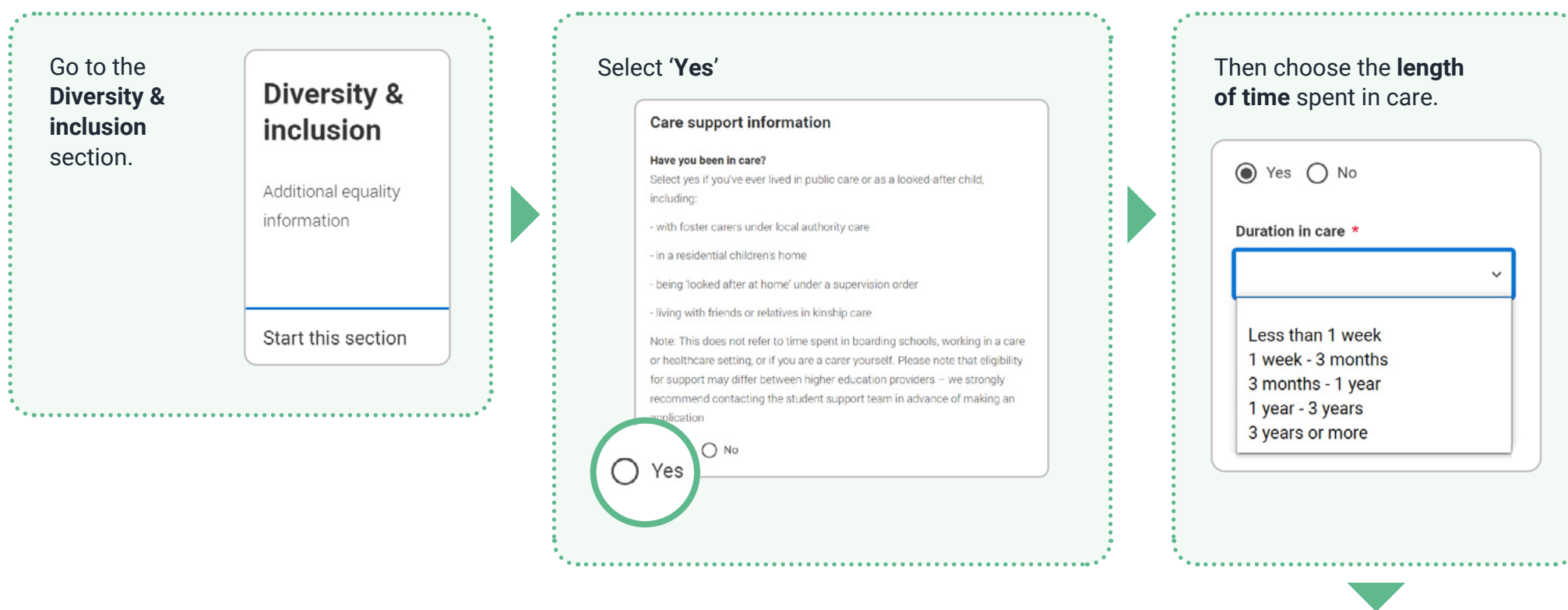
# SECTIONS OF THE APPLICATION

Applicants can save their progress and edit until they're ready to submit. **They must complete the following sections:**

- ▶ **Personal details** – some details will auto-fill using the information given during registration. There will be more questions about student support and where they live.
- ▶ **Where you live** - address history for the past three years
- ▶ **Contact details** – address, email, telephone number, and details of anyone who they wish to act on their behalf.
- ▶ **Nationality details** – birthplace and nationality.
- ▶ **Supporting information** – if they've lived or worked (or have parents from) the EU, EEA or Switzerland.
- ▶ **Finance and funding** – how they will fund their studies? Most UK applicants choose 'UK, CHI, IoM, or EU student finance'.
- ▶ **Diversity and inclusion (UK applicants only)** – most of this information is only shared with universities after a place is confirmed and it is used for equality monitoring.
- ▶ **More about you** – see page 19.
- ▶ **Education** – all schools attended since age 11, with qualifications achieved and pending. If the applicant is awaiting exam results, predicted grades will be included in the reference. Applicants should have qualification certificates/transcripts ready so they can enter the details accurately.
- ▶ **Employment** – full or part-time paid employment. Applicants can talk more about this, along with any voluntary work or unpaid work experience, in their personal statement (see below).
- ▶ **Extra activities** – if they've participated in an activity to prepare them for university (e.g. an outreach programme), they can give details here.



# HELPING CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS SHARE THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES



## Why 'tick the box'?

Applicants might be unsure about sharing their care background. It's important to reassure them that this information is treated sensitively and only used positively. These resources might help:

- ▶ [UCAS blog article: 'Three reasons to tick the box'](#)
- ▶ [University case study: how this information is used](#)
- ▶ [The Fostering Network's annual #TickTheBox campaign](#) encourages people to share their care experience on the UCAS application

Information about care background will be shared with universities **when the application is sent**. Other information in this section is shared after the place is confirmed as it is not used to arrange support.

# MORE ABOUT YOU - SHARING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There's lots of support available to help students from different backgrounds. These questions are included to help applicants access support and information support – they do not affect the applicant's chances of receiving an offer, and all data is treated sensitively.

This information gives the university a better understanding of the applicant's achievements – they don't just look at grades. In some cases, they may adjust their usual offer to help them access their chosen course – this is called 'contextual admissions' - [read more here](#).

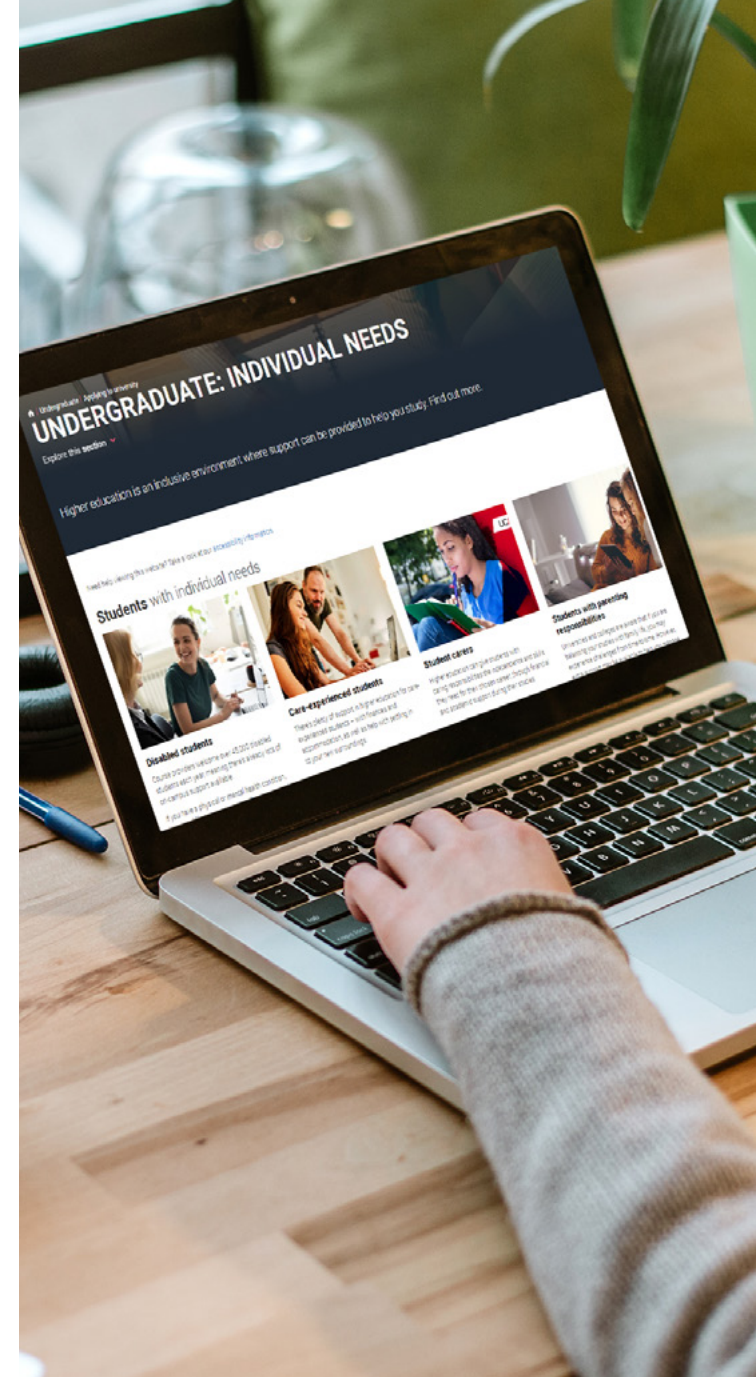
## More about you >

Tell us about any circumstances that you might need support for during your studies

[Start this section](#)

## Applicants can share if they:

- ▶ are disabled (including mental health conditions, learning differences and long-term health conditions)
- ▶ have caring responsibilities
- ▶ have parenting responsibilities
- ▶ are estranged from their parents
- ▶ are a refugee, asylum seeker or have limited leave to remain in the UK
- ▶ are from a UK Armed Forces family
- ▶ are a UK Armed Forces veteran
- ▶ were in receipt of free school meals in secondary education



[READ MORE ABOUT APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY WITH INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT NEEDS](#)

# HELPING CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS SHARE OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

## More about you

Tell us about any circumstances that you might need support for during your studies.

Start this section

In the **'More about you'** section, students can share any other circumstances and support needs.



### Not sure about how to answer a question?

Check the detailed help text by clicking the blue question mark at the bottom of the page.

### All information about personal circumstances will be:

- ▶ treated sensitively and only shared with those who arrange support.
- ▶ used positively – it is never used to decide whether to make an offer. Some applicants are worried about this so may need reassurance.

**This UCAS blog explains** why it's important to share a care background, and the **FAQs page** gives more information about how this information is used.

**Universities may get in touch for more information.** Some may require supporting evidence to give access to certain types of support (e.g. a bursary or accommodation) – they will let you know what they need (usually a letter from the school or local authority).



# THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

Applicants write in their own style, explaining their ambitions, skills and experience, and why they want to study a particular course or subject.

## TRY OUR PERSONAL STATEMENT BUILDER

Not sure what to write? Our handy tool will help.  
[Get help](#)



UCAS offers lots of help with **writing a personal statement**, including our personal statement builder, guidance for applicants from certain backgrounds, and key tips on what to include.

# THE REFERENCE

This is a written recommendation from a teacher, careers adviser, trainer, employer or other professional who knows the applicant academically or professionally.

Those applying independently (i.e. not in school or college) will be asked to enter their referee's contact details and UCAS will email them for the reference.

Once this is received, the applicant will be prompted to pay and send their application.

For applicants linked to a school or college, the reference will be requested once they pay and submit.

**[Read more about references](#)**



# HELPING CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS APPLY AND SEND

## The personal statement

A great opportunity for applicants to highlight their skills, strengths and characteristics – and their motivations for applying. They do not need to mention their care background but they may want to talk about how this has affected their decisions or helped them develop valuable skills.

**This blog article from Become** gives useful advice on completing the personal statement as a care-experienced applicant.

## The reference

The reference is split into three sections, one of which is 'extenuating circumstances'. This is a good place to highlight anything which may have affected an applicant's attainment or performance (e.g. disruption as a result of changing school or placement).

If the applicant is in school or college, make sure the UCAS adviser/referee knows about their circumstances – check the applicant is happy for this to be mentioned.



IF THE STUDENT CHANGES ADDRESS AFTER SUBMITTING THEIR APPLICATION, THEY CAN UPDATE THEIR CONTACT DETAILS IN THE HUB



# SENDING THE APPLICATION – FINAL CHECKS

- ▶ **Make sure all sections are marked as complete.**

Watch out for asterisks next to questions which must be answered.

Mark this section as complete \*

- ▶ **Check course application deadlines.**  
Some courses have different deadlines – often a long time in advance of the start of the course. For Oxford and Cambridge universities, and medicine, dentistry and veterinary courses, the UCAS deadline is in October. Most other courses are in January. Check the course information page in the Hub, and [our key dates page](#).
- ▶ **Pay the application fee.**  
The application can only be submitted when the £28.50 fee is paid. This can be paid online by credit or debit card. Avoid sending applications at the last minute in case of payment problems. If the applicant is currently at school or college and has been in receipt of free school meals during their secondary education, they may be eligible for this fee to be waived – check with the school. [More information about paying the application fee.](#)

- ▶ **Making changes to the application.**  
After submission, the applicant can only update their contact details. To make other changes, they must contact UCAS on **0371 468 0 468** with their Personal ID number.



**Note: If applying through a school/college, there may be a different internal deadline.** This is to allow time for the adviser to check the application and write the reference.

## Late applications

Those who miss the January deadline can still apply up until 30th June – but universities do not have to consider late applications and course places may already be filled. After this, applicants can apply for vacancies in Clearing (see Step 5).



# NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO THINK ABOUT...

## ... FINANCE AND FUNDING

This usually includes a tuition fee loan (except in Scotland where this is covered by the government) and a maintenance loan. What is available depends on where you live in the UK and your household income – we cover all the details in our [guide to student finance](#).

- ▶ **Repaying student loans:** if a young person is worried about paying back a loan, reassure them that they only start when earning above a certain salary threshold.
- ▶ **Other funding:** Some universities and organisations offer bursaries, grants and scholarships. These do not have to be paid back but there may be application deadlines, so check early. [Read more about other funding](#).
- ▶ **The Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)** helps with additional study-related costs. We've teamed up with Diversity and Ability to create a [comprehensive guide to DSA](#) – including eligibility and how to apply.

## ... ACCOMMODATION

If the applicant is planning to move away, they should start to think about accommodation. There are lots of options, from halls to shared houses. The university can help, and you can read more about how to choose on our [accommodation pages](#).



# HELPING CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS APPLY FOR FINANCE AND FUNDING

STUDENT FINANCE APPLICATIONS	BURSARIES, GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS	OTHER FUNDING	LOCAL AUTHORITY
<p>Encourage early applications – applicants don't need a confirmed offer to apply.</p>	<p>Students applying for social work courses may be eligible for a bursary – <a href="#">read more about social work bursaries.</a></p>	<p>Many universities offer additional financial support. Speak to the university or check the <a href="#">Propel website.</a></p>	<p>Those aged under 25 may be entitled to the Higher Education Bursary. This varies depending on where you live in the UK.</p>
<p>Care leavers apply as independent students, giving them access to the maximum maintenance support.</p>	<p>Students applying for medicine courses may be eligible for a bursary – <a href="#">read more about NHS bursaries.</a></p>	<p>Some charitable organisations offer additional financial support – <a href="#">some are listed here.</a> Also check <a href="http://www.turn2us.org.uk">www.turn2us.org.uk</a></p>	<p>Ask your local authority if the applicant is eligible and how the bursary will be paid – check the <a href="#">Care Leaver Local Offer website</a> and make sure any details are confirmed in writing.</p>
<p>Check if students are eligible for the <a href="#">Disabled Students' Allowance</a> – apply with student finance.</p>	<p>Check application deadlines and prepare required documentation.</p>	<p>Universities often prioritise care-experienced applicants for hardship funds – speak to the student support team.</p>	<p>Students in Scotland should apply for the <a href="#">Care Experienced Students' Bursary</a> through SAAS.</p>



**SEE THE UCAS GUIDE TO FINANCE AND FUNDING FOR CARE-EXPERIENCED STUDENTS**  
[READ PROPEL'S GUIDE TO FUNDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION](#)

# HELPING CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS PLAN THEIR ACCOMMODATION

- ▶ Most universities can help care-experienced applicants find the right accommodation
- ▶ Many universities offer year-round accommodation
- ▶ Some universities offer scholarships and support packages which include accommodation



Unite Foundation scholarships give care-experienced students rent-free, year-round accommodation (including bills) for up to three years. The team helps students settle in, and keeps in touch during their course. [Find out more about applying for the Unite Foundation Scholarship](#)

## Encourage applicants to:

- ▶ Take accommodation into account in their research and decision-making
- ▶ Check the university website or speak directly to the student support team to find out what is available
- ▶ Search the [Propel website](#)
- ▶ Check the [Unite Foundation accommodation bursaries](#)
- ▶ Speak to their Personal Adviser about getting help with finding accommodation – whether they are planning to move away or stay in their local area
- ▶ Check if they need a guarantor and/or deposit to secure accommodation – the university may be able to help

## IN SCOTLAND?

Students may be able to get help with accommodation costs during the summer holidays with a **Care Experienced Accommodation Grant**.

[Read more on the SAAS website](#)



READ [PROPEL'S GUIDE TO ACCOMMODATION FOR CARE-EXPERIENCED STUDENTS](#)

**STEP 4**

# **DECISIONS AND OFFERS**



# UNIVERSITY DECISIONS

After the application is sent, applicants can track the universities' decisions in their Hub. There are several different decisions they may receive:

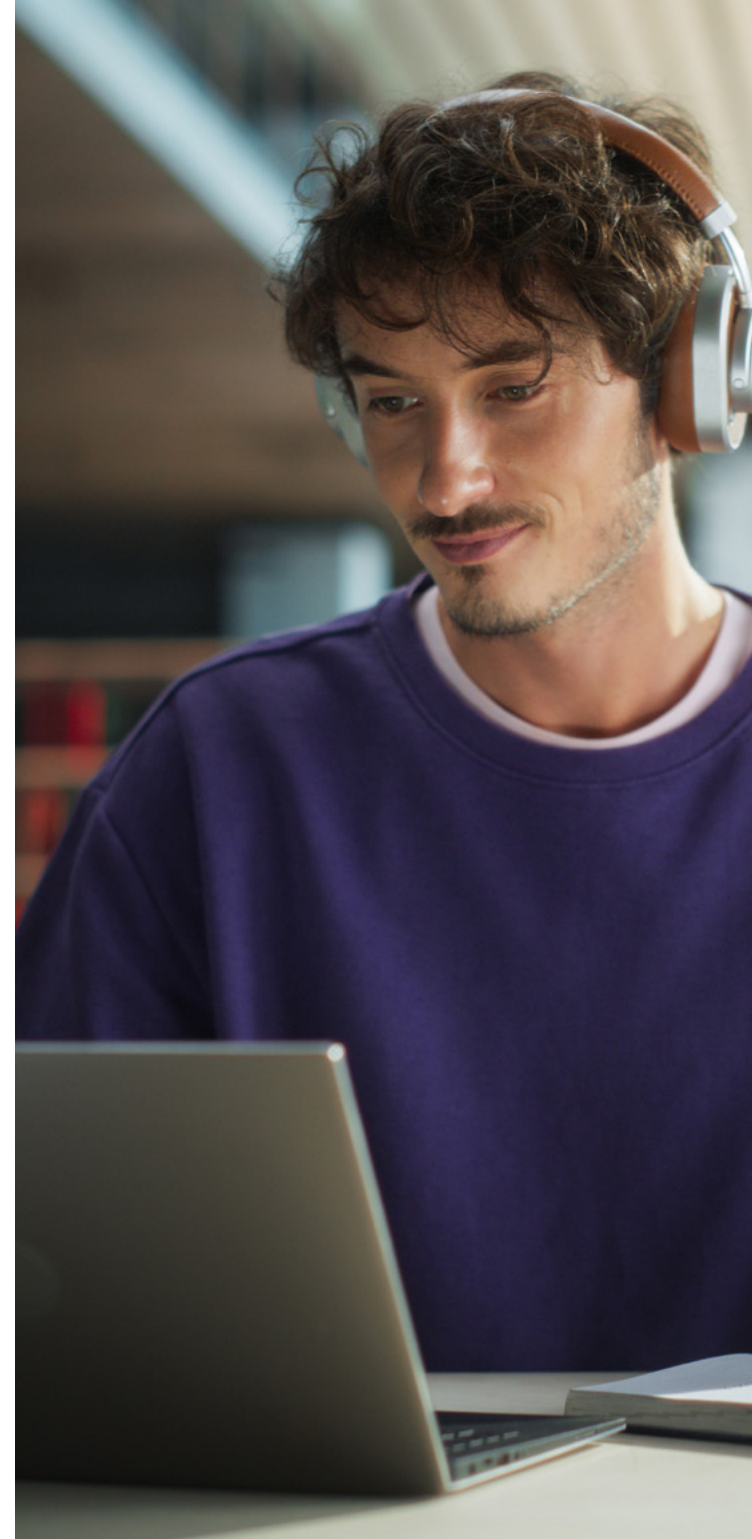
- ▶ **Conditional offer** – the applicant has a place if they meet certain requirements (e.g. exam grades).
- ▶ **Unconditional offer** – the applicant has been accepted and the place is theirs if they want it.
- ▶ **Unsuccessful** – the university has decided to not offer the applicant a place. They might provide a reason, but you can ask for more information if not.
- ▶ **Withdrawn** – the university has withdrawn a course choice. This might be due to a missed interview or not responding to an email or letter. It can also mean that the applicant has withdrawn.

[Read more about UCAS decisions](#)

## INTERVIEWS

Applicants may be invited to attend an interview before a decision is made. The university will get in touch via the Hub or contact the applicant directly with the details. Depending on the type of course, this might be an audition or a portfolio of work.

[Read more about interviews.](#)



## HOW TO REPLY TO OFFERS

Once the applicant has received all their offers, it's time to reply. They will be given a deadline to reply, so take some time to consider this decision carefully.

**Read more about reply dates.**

Applicants can accept two choices – a **firm** choice and an **insurance** choice:

**Firm choice** – their first choice, the place they most want to go.

**Insurance choice** – the back-up choice in case they miss the conditions of their firm choice.

Once the firm and insurance choices are chosen, all other offers must be **declined**.

**Read more about replying to offers**

**Unconditional offers:** if the applicant accepts an unconditional offer as their firm choice, they cannot add an insurance choice because they have committed to accepting the firm place. However, they may accept an unconditional offer as their insurance choice – as a guaranteed back up.

## TRACK DECISIONS IN THE UCAS HUB:



2023 UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION

### Waiting for decisions

Universities or colleges are considering your application.

Providers have until dd-mm-yyyy to respond to your choices.



2023 UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION

### All decisions received

You've received a decision from all of your choices. You can now reply to your offers at any time.

Reply by dd-mm-yyyy



2023 UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION

### Waiting for confirmation

You're waiting for confirmation of your choices. If you meet the offer conditions, the university/college will confirm your place. Send them your results if requested.

[Go to application](#)

If the applicant makes a mistake or changes their mind, call UCAS on **0371 468 0 468** with their Personal ID number within 14 days. One of our advisers will be able to help.



## RECEIVED NO OFFERS? THERE ARE STILL OPTIONS!

If the applicant is unsuccessful in all choices (or they have declined all offers), they may be able to find a place through **Extra**.

This service is available February to July and allows applicants holding no offers to apply to one additional course at a time. Eligible students will see the Extra option in their Hub.

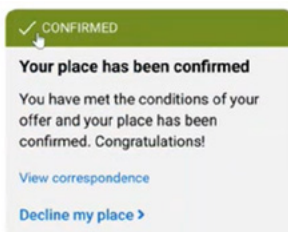
When Extra closes, applicants holding no offers can still apply for vacancies through **Clearing** (see below).

[Read more about Extra choices](#)

## FINAL DECISIONS – CONFIRMATION

Applicants awaiting results (e.g. A levels, Scottish Highers, BTECs) for a conditional offer, can see if they have been accepted in their UCAS Hub.

This usually happens on **results days** in August.



**Top tip:** check if there are any other conditions to meet before the place is secured (e.g. passing DBS checks)

## NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL? THERE ARE STILL OPTIONS!

It can be a difficult time for applicants who don't get the grades they need but it's not the end of the road.

Firstly, wait for the decision in the Hub – missing a grade doesn't necessarily mean the student won't be accepted. If they are unsuccessful, they can use Clearing (below) to find an alternative place or **explore other options**.



READ OUR [FULL GUIDE TO RESULTS DAY](#) – INCLUDING WHAT HAPPENS AND NEXT STEPS



# CLEARING

Clearing is a service where universities fill empty spaces on their courses – and where applicants can find alternative places.

This service is available to applicants who have:

- ▶ been unsuccessful in securing a place at their firm and insurance choices
- ▶ chosen to decline their offers
- ▶ applied after 30 June

Many courses and universities are available in Clearing.

[Read more about Clearing.](#)

# CLEARING PLUS

If all the choices feel overwhelming, applicants can find **Clearing matches**. Just click the button under **My Matches** in the Hub – it will automatically appear for applicants with no offers.

This tool matches applicants to what universities are looking for – including their qualifications, grades and preferred courses.

[Read more about Clearing matches.](#)



OUR [ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CLEARING](#) WILL TELL YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

# HELPING CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS HANDLE DECISIONS AND OFFERS



## INTERVIEWS AND AUDITIONS

Check if there are any practical barriers to attending. Applicants may be able to get help with travel and accommodation costs from the local authority or the university.

For virtual meetings, check they have the right equipment, quiet space, and time to prepare.



## APPLYING THROUGH CLEARING

Encourage the applicant to tell the university about their care background to ensure they get the right support.

It may be harder to secure year-round accommodation in Clearing so, if this is important, speak to the university to see what they can offer.



**STEP 5**

**GET READY  
TO GO!**



## FINANCES

If the applicant has applied for student finance, make sure their university and course details are correct with their student finance provider. Also check all bank details are up to date.

The first instalment is paid into the student's bank account once all documentation has been received and the university has confirmed attendance with the Student Loans Company.

Now is a good time to shop around for a student bank account and think about budgeting and money management – **we have some resources to help.**

## STUDY

University study is different to school or college – students are expected to learn more independently.

We've created these **study skills guides** with the National Extension College (NEC) to help students prepare.

## ACCOMMODATION

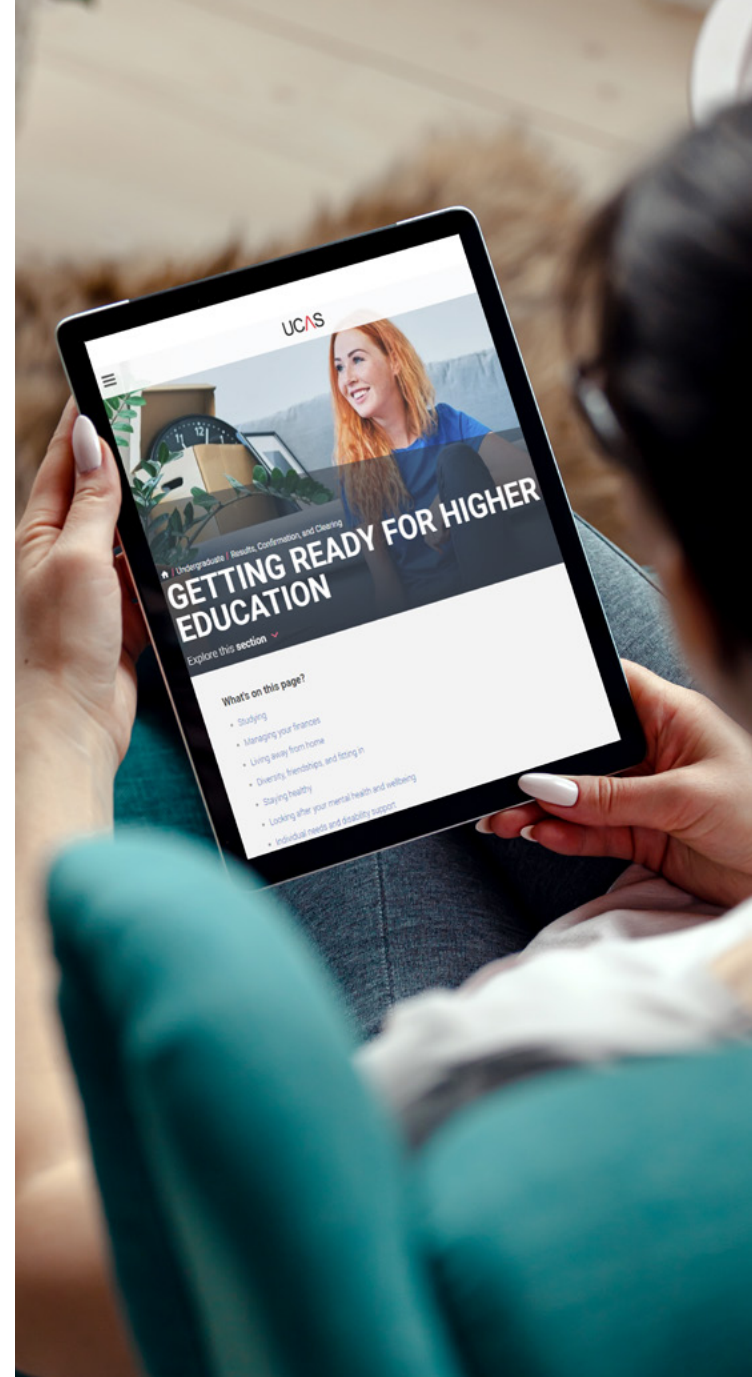
Those who are moving away may have already secured accommodation, or be starting to look now.

Also start to plan around insurance, bills, shopping and equipment (e.g. bedding and kitchen utensils), as well as how they will move to their new location.

## GETTING SUPPORT AT UNIVERSITY

Make sure students know where to get support if they need it. The student support team is often the best place to start.

**Find out about support at university and where to go for help.**



**READ ALL ABOUT WHAT TO DO AFTER RESULTS DAY**

# HELPING CARE-EXPERIENCED APPLICANTS GET READY TO GO!

## GET THE PRACTICALITIES SORTED

- ▶ **Prepare to move to their accommodation.**  
Have they planned their move (where applicable) with their Personal Adviser? The local authority may be able to help with costs.
- ▶ **Check what equipment they need.**  
Find out what is provided and what they need to buy. Some universities offer starter packs (e.g. kitchen equipment and bedding) to care leavers, and the local authority may be able to help. If they are worried about the cost of books, the library will be able to help.
- ▶ **Know where to get help.**  
Many universities have a dedicated care-experienced adviser (most are listed on [Propel](#)).
- ▶ **Get ready for independent living.**  
Cooking and budgeting skills are really helpful preparation for university life.

- ▶ **Look after their mental health and wellbeing.**

Check what mental health and wellbeing support is available and how to access it. The [Charlie Waller guide for care leavers](#) gives sound advice on making the transition to university while looking after your mental health and wellbeing.

- ▶ **Keep in touch.**

Leaving your support network and settling into a new environment can be difficult. Try to find some time to check in with the young person to see how they are getting on.

## MAKING FRIENDS

Universities are diverse and inclusive environments, offering a range of clubs and societies to help like-minded students connect. Check what's on offer via student services or the students' union.

Some universities have groups just for care-experienced students to meet and support each other – they may also be interested in these groups.



**[This Is Us from the Unite Foundation](#)** is a student-led community offering a safe online space for care-experienced students to connect, share info, arrange meet-ups and more. It's free, and open to all ages and years of study.



**[Uni:fy from the Rees Foundation](#)** provides online sessions where care-experienced students of all ages and study years can meet and chat about their experiences of student life, and provide mutual support and advice.

## IF YOU NEED MORE HELP

UCAS Customer Experience Centre:

**0371 468 0 468**

08:30 – 18:00 (UK time) Mon to Fri

Follow us on social media:



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



[@ucas\\_online](https://twitter.com/ucas_online)



[www.instagram.com/ucas\\_online](https://www.instagram.com/ucas_online)

### Information for parents, carers and supporters

- ▶ [Read our parents/carers guide](#) for everything you need to support a young person with their higher education choices
- ▶ [Sign up for our parent/carer newsletter](#)

All applicants have a **Personal ID number** which they should quote whenever they contact UCAS – this is located on the top right of the application screen.

We can only talk to applicants about their application, unless they **nominate another person** we can talk to on their behalf. This can be done on the application form.

UCAS



CM-00232