

MASTERCLASS: THE APPLICATION PROCESS



ROSS SANGER, UCAS

UCAS

MASTERCLASS: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

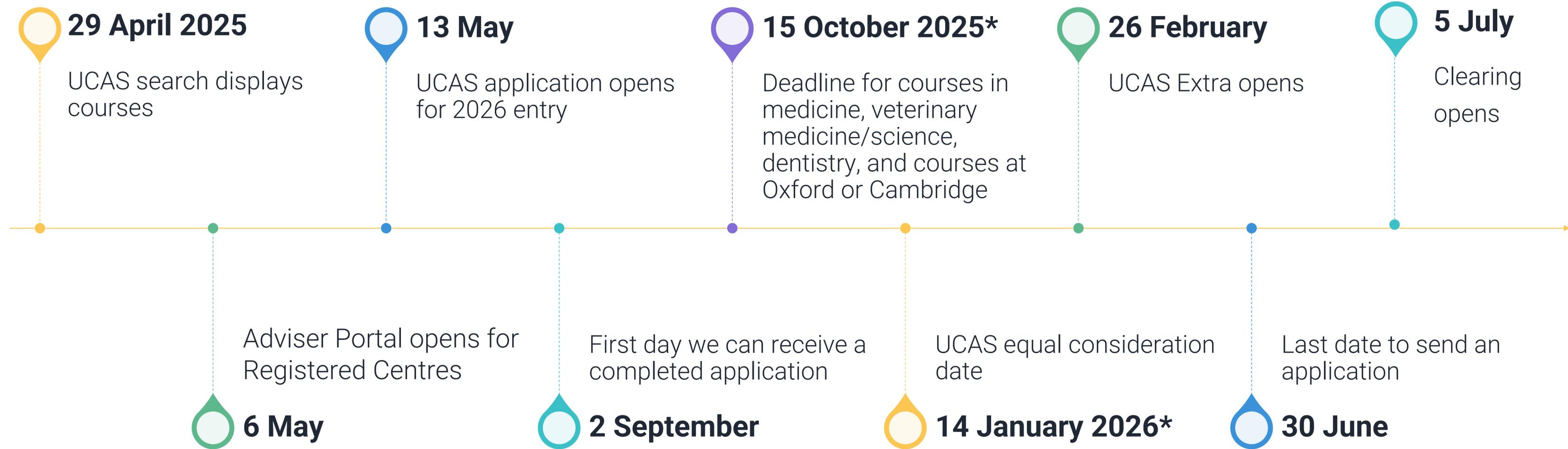
Ross Sanger,
Schools and Colleges Success Partner



TRUE OR FALSE?

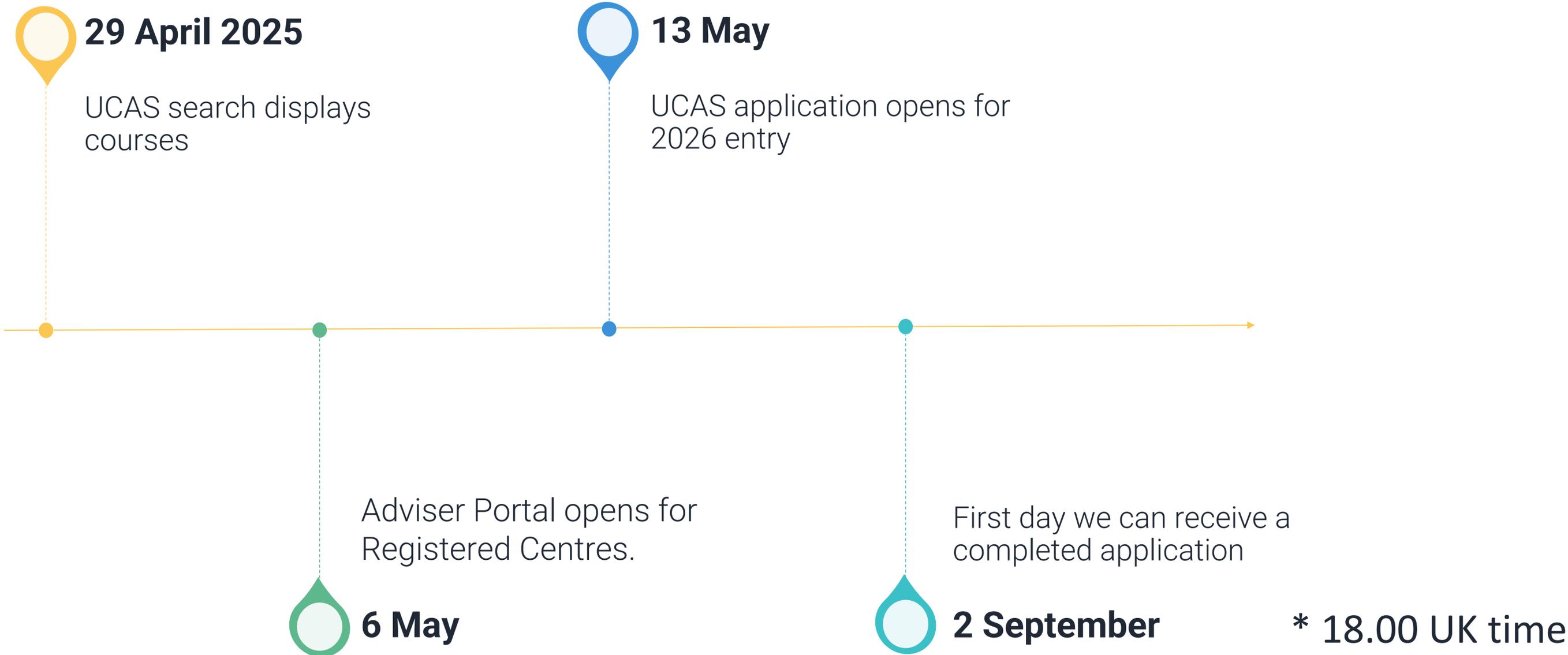
| | |
|--|-------|
| a) Applicants must choose five universities to apply to. | FALSE |
| b) Independent applicants can request an application fee waiver. | FALSE |
| c) Qualification errors can be updated with UCAS. | TRUE |
| d) UCAS Extra is the only way to apply to more choices after the January equal consideration deadline. | FALSE |
| e) Applicants can swap their acceptance replies if they wish to. | TRUE |

THE 2026 CYCLE



* 18.00 UK time

2026 – THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING STARTED



APPLICATION – TOP TIPS!

- Make sure your students are aware of the buzzword and are linked to you.
- Target early completion of the **profile** section.
- Lay the groundwork to understand the application, without jumping ahead.
- Think **time-saving** – Finding transcripts/certificates, highlighting the help text.

Profile

Personal details

Name, age, title and gender

Start this section

Nationality details

Birthplace and nationalities

Start this section

Where you live

Tell us about your address history

▶ Section in progress

Contact details

Address, email, and telephone

▶ Section in progress

Supporting information

So that providers know how to support you during your studies

Start this section

Finance & funding

Tell us how you'll fund your study

Start this section

Diversity & inclusion

Additional equality information

Start this section

More about you

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

Start this section

Experience

Education

Qualifications and periods of study

✔ Section complete

Employment

Paid employment

✔ Section complete

Extra activities

Taken part in any activities to prepare you for higher education?

Start this section

Personal Statement

Personal statement

Why do you want to study this subject?

Start this section

Need some more general help with your application?

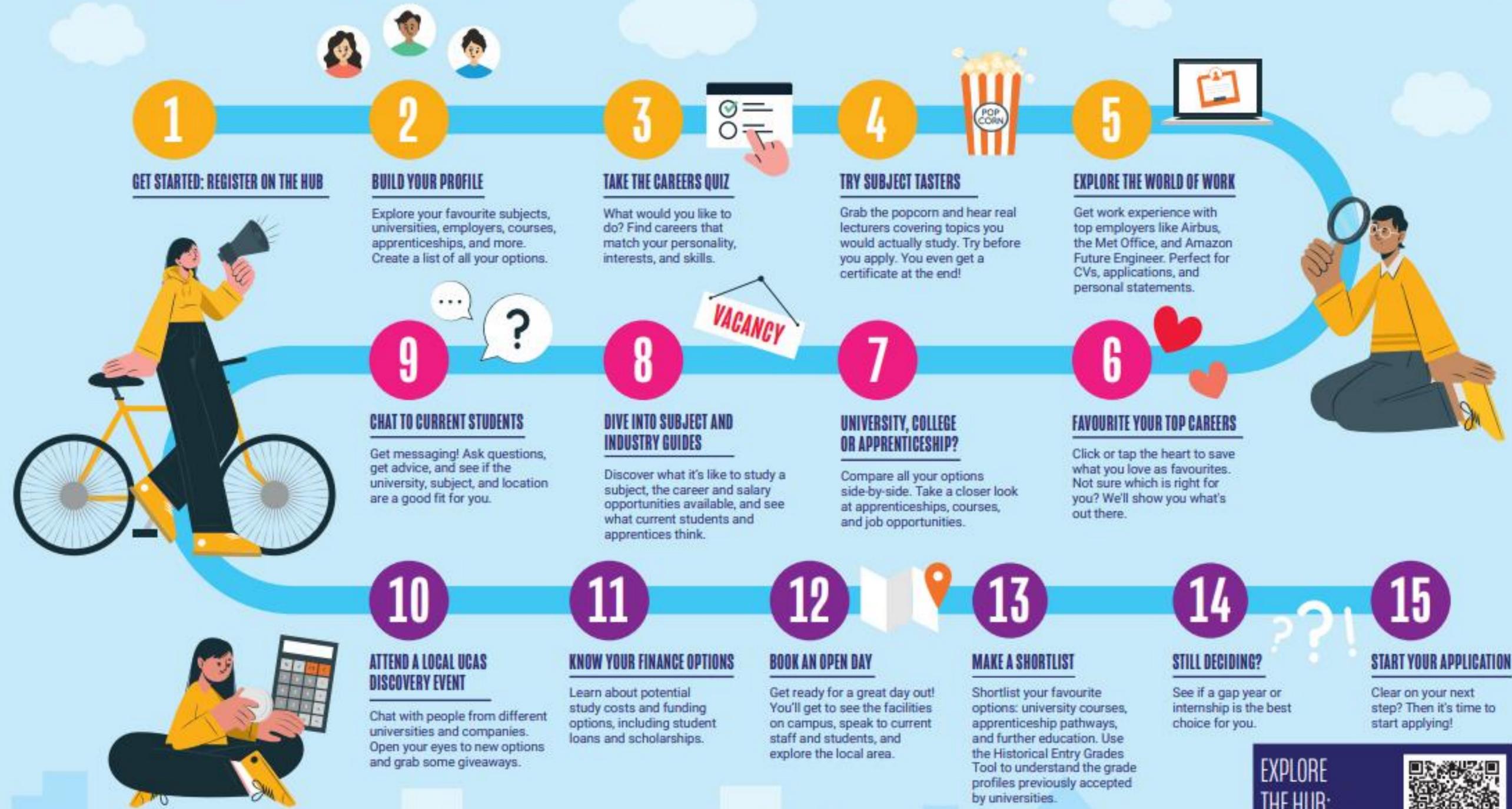
Guide to completing your UCAS application ?

?

YOUR HUB JOURNEY



UCAS



1

GET STARTED: REGISTER ON THE HUB



2

BUILD YOUR PROFILE

Explore your favourite subjects, universities, employers, courses, apprenticeships, and more. Create a list of all your options.

3

TAKE THE CAREERS QUIZ

What would you like to do? Find careers that match your personality, interests, and skills.

4

TRY SUBJECT TASTERS

Grab the popcorn and hear real lecturers covering topics you would actually study. Try before you apply. You even get a certificate at the end!

5

EXPLORE THE WORLD OF WORK

Get work experience with top employers like Airbus, the Met Office, and Amazon Future Engineer. Perfect for CVs, applications, and personal statements.

9

CHAT TO CURRENT STUDENTS

Get messaging! Ask questions, get advice, and see if the university, subject, and location are a good fit for you.

8

DIVE INTO SUBJECT AND INDUSTRY GUIDES

Discover what it's like to study a subject, the career and salary opportunities available, and see what current students and apprentices think.

7

UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OR APPRENTICESHIP?

Compare all your options side-by-side. Take a closer look at apprenticeships, courses, and job opportunities.

6

FAVOURITE YOUR TOP CAREERS

Click or tap the heart to save what you love as favourites. Not sure which is right for you? We'll show you what's out there.

10

ATTEND A LOCAL UCAS DISCOVERY EVENT

Chat with people from different universities and companies. Open your eyes to new options and grab some giveaways.



11

KNOW YOUR FINANCE OPTIONS

Learn about potential study costs and funding options, including student loans and scholarships.

12

BOOK AN OPEN DAY

Get ready for a great day out! You'll get to see the facilities on campus, speak to current staff and students, and explore the local area.

13

MAKE A SHORTLIST

Shortlist your favourite options: university courses, apprenticeship pathways, and further education. Use the Historical Entry Grades Tool to understand the grade profiles previously accepted by universities.

14

STILL DECIDING?

See if a gap year or internship is the best choice for you.

15

START YOUR APPLICATION

Clear on your next step? Then it's time to start applying!

EXPLORE THE HUB:
[UCAS.COM/HUB](https://ucas.com/hub)



Your Hub

Explore your options

Hub For you Favourites What to do Where to go Search

Welcome back Sam
You're applying for Undergraduate courses in 2025 - Change year

Start application

2025 Application



Start an application

Apply to universities and colleges to study degrees, HNDs, and HNCs and dance, drama and music at conservatoires.

Start application

DISCOVER WHAT TO DO

Browse subjects and careers with related courses and apprenticeships.
Discover more



FAQS

What subject should I take?

Read our subject guides to see what might be right for you.



DISCOVER CAREERS

Try our quiz and get recommended careers that match your skills and personality traits.
Take the quiz



FAQS

Key application dates

Find out what you need to do and when.

HOW TO

How to nail that personal statement

Writing a personal statement can be daunting. Follow our tips and advice to help make it easier.

DISCOVER WHERE TO GO

Browse universities, colleges and employers and learn more about cities and regions in the UK.
Find out more



What's happening

Replying to your offers - your questions answered

Getting ready to reply to your offers? We've got all your questions answered.
More info



Chat to students

Chat with UK and international students who are already studying the courses you've applied for at universities and colleges across the UK, on Unibuddy.
More info



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



Live now: Studying in the UK

There's a lot to consider when moving to a new country. We explore accommodation, visas, scholarships and everything in between.
More info



Careers



Sam



Sam

Edit your Account



Adviser Homepage



Adviser Portal



Student Hub



Sign out

APPLICATION - KEY FACTS



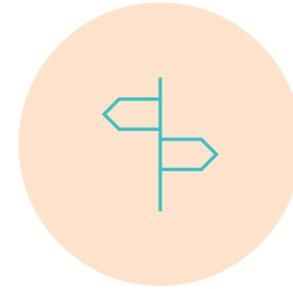
Start an application
from
13 May 2025



Universities and
colleges **can't see**
student's other
choices when they
apply



Apply by the **equal**
consideration date



Five choices, unless
applying to study
medicine,
veterinary,
medicine/science,
dentistry – then it's
four choices



A student **can't**
apply to both Oxford
and Cambridge

2026 – MAIN SCHEME APPLICATION KEY DATES



* 18.00 UK time

Name and DOB
entered incorrectly



Contact details not up to date

Qualifications missing
or entered incorrectly



COMMON ERRORS



Failing to check
entry requirements

Failing to reply to offers
on time



Not reading the
help text

THE MORE ABOUT YOU SECTION

Profile

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Personal details > Name, age, title and gender Start this section | Contact & residency details > Address, email, telephone and where you live ✓ Section complete | Nationality details > Birthplace and nationalities Start this section |
| Supporting information > So that providers know how to support you during your studies Start this section | English language skills > Is English your first language? Start this section | Finance & funding > Tell us how you'll fund your study Start this section |
| Diversity & inclusion > Only shared with a provider once you have a place or your application is archived Start this section | More about you > Tell us about any circumstances that you might need support for during your studies. Start this section | |

THE MORE ABOUT YOU SECTION



[Further education](#)
[Undergraduate](#)
[Postgraduate](#)

MORE ABOUT YOU

Undergraduate application

[Home](#) / [UCAS application](#) / [More about you](#)

[Return to application overview](#)

- [Personal details](#)
- [✔ Contact and residency details](#)
- [Nationality details](#)
- [Supporting information](#)
- [English language skills](#)
- [Finance and funding](#)
- [Diversity and inclusion](#)
- [More about you](#)
- [Education](#)

Here, you can tell us about any circumstances that you might need support for during your studies. You might feel uncertain about sharing your personal circumstances but we want to reassure you that this information is confidential and will not negatively impact your application.

We don't need you to give details – this information will be shared with those involved in making arrangements to support you at the university or college (e.g. the student support team, admissions staff), and they may get in touch to tell you more.

Note: Not all universities and colleges offer the same support, so contact them directly to discuss your requirements and questions before you apply.

These questions are optional. Use the ? icon to get more help with answering the question and visit the FAQs pages if you need more information.

Every year, over 60,000 students with a physical and/or mental health condition, long-term illness, or learning difference apply through UCAS to study at a university or college in the UK, and access a range of support available to help with their studies, day-to-day activities, travel, or lifestyle. Would you consider yourself as living with any of the following: *

THE MORE ABOUT YOU SECTION

Would you consider yourself estranged from your parents?

Yes No

Do you have any caring responsibilities?

Yes No

Are you a parent or do you have children?

Yes No

Do you have official refugee status?

No The UK government

I have limited or discretionary status

Do you have a parent or carer with a mental health condition?

Yes No

Have you ever served in the UK Armed Forces?

Yes No

Are you currently receiving free school meals or free secondary education?

Yes No Don't know

Mark this section as complete

You must complete all mandatory questions before you can save this section. Questions marked as complete before you save this section will not be saved.

Save this section

Help for estranged

An estranged person is someone who no longer has the support of their parents, and often also other family members, due to a permanent breakdown in their relationship which has led to ceased contact. This might mean your biological, step or adoptive parents or wider family members who have been responsible for supporting you in the past. Select Yes if you feel this description applies to you. [Find out more](#) about applying to university if you are estranged from your family. If you select Yes, your information will be treated in confidence, to help the university or college provide support for you. It may also be used for monitoring purposes to inform and improve support for future students who are estranged from their parents. If you have been in local authority care, you may be considered 'care experienced'. [Find out more](#) about applying to



Need some help?

Questions from this page that you might need help with:

- [Help for disability](#)
- [Help for estranged](#)
- [Help for caring responsibilities](#)
- [Help for parental responsibilities](#)
- [Help for refugees](#)
- [Help for parent armed forces](#)
- [Help for armed forces](#)
- [Help for free school meals](#)

Need some more general help with your application?

[Guide to completing your UCAS application](#)



Where can I get more information about applying to university or college if I am estranged from my family? [show answer](#)

- [Find out more about applying to university or college if you're estranged from your parent.](#)

I have been in care in the past – am I care experienced or estranged? [hide answer](#)

If you've been in local authority care at any time in your past, you may be considered 'care experienced' – there's a separate question on the application to share information about this.

You're free to choose 'Yes' for both questions – the university or college may get in touch to find out more so they know how to help you the best they can.

[Find out more about applying to university or college if you have been in care.](#)

Related topics [Applying to study in 2022 – estranged](#)
[direct link](#)

Should I mention my circumstances in the personal statement? [show answer](#)

Although this question was introduced so estranged students didn't have to use their personal statement to explain their circumstances, you may want to use this space to talk about any relevant skills and qualities you've developed as a result

I am an international student, so I will be studying away from my family – is this the same thing? [show answer](#)

No – an estranged student's relationship with their parents has broken down and they have removed themselves from their family home or been disowned.

How is information about estrangement used? [show answer](#)

This information is shared (securely) with those who are responsible for supporting you at university or college (e.g. the student services team).

Why would a university or college want to know if I am estranged from my family? [show answer](#)

**Extended FAQ-style
help text**

[Find out more about the support you could receive on \[ucas.com\]\(https://ucas.com\)](#)

MORE ABOUT YOU – FREE SCHOOL MEALS WAIVER

Eligible students need to:

- declare they are in receipt of free school meals in the **‘More about you’** section of the application,
- choose to **‘Apply with Fee Waiver’** when they **‘Review and Submit’** their application.
- Check your application fee payment method in **‘Centre Management’** is set to an option that enables invoicing.

Find out more through our [step-by-step](#) slide pack.

Are you currently receiving free school meals, or were you in receipt of free school meals between the ages of 11 to 18?

Yes No Don't know

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

Free school meals waiver

UCAS is waiving the application fee for students who are in receipt of UK government funded free school meals, or have been at some point over the past six years and can evidence this, if required.

[Check if you are eligible](#)

Apply with Waiver

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS PAGES

[Link to the individual needs pages](#)

Students from Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater (GTRSB) communities

Students from GTRSB communities who are considering higher education might find it useful to find out more about how they can be supported to apply to university, and to understand more about the support they may be able to receive on campus.

The GTRSB into Higher Education Pledge¹ is a firm commitment by a university or college to support GTRSB students into and within higher education, and to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment.

More information and support can be found from:

- The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT) website²
- The Friends, Families and Travellers website³
- The Traveller Movement website⁴

Homeless students

People who are homeless and want to progress to higher education may find there are a number of challenges to overcome – such as qualifications, financial issues, and access to expert information, advice, and guidance.

- The Foyer Federation⁵ provides housing to young people aged 16-25, along with help to reconnect with learning and increase employability. If you've spent time in a foyer, you may be able to access funding to help you go to university.
- Crisis Skylight centres⁶ across the UK can offer careers information, advice and guidance – including access to courses and qualifications.

If you're homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, the CentrePoint helpline⁷ is there for anyone aged 16-25 in England to get advice. They also offer careers support and training programmes⁸ to help you get to where you want to be.

Sharing your individual needs in the UCAS application

When you apply through UCAS, you will have the opportunity to share any individual needs or circumstances, including many of those listed above. Sharing this information helps the university connect you to the right support – they may send you more information or contact you to discuss what would help you succeed.

Universities are diverse and inclusive environments, and people from all backgrounds are welcomed – the support is available because they recognise some people may have different challenges and priorities, so this is in place to make sure you can make the most of your time. Visit the pages above to find out more about what may be available.

The information you share will always be treated sensitively, and only used by those responsible for arranging support and helping you with your application (e.g. the student support team). It is never used when universities decide whether to offer you a place, but it might be used to make you an offer that looks at your achievements in context.

We recommend that you read the relevant pages above and research what help the university can offer before making an application – it is important that you make a decision that is right for you.

▶ [England](#)

▶ [Wales](#)

▶ [Scotland](#)

▶ [Northern Ireland](#)

▶ [Channel Islands and the Isle of Man](#)



Contextual admissions

Some students face additional challenges during their education which may impact their results. Universities recognise these challenges, and can make adjustments through 'contextual admissions'. Find out more about what this is, who is eligible, and how you qualify.



EDUCATION SECTION

To add:

- Places of study
- Qualifications studied

When adding a school, college or centre, the following is required:

- Name
- Dates
- Centre number (if applicable)
- Full time/Part time
- Whether they received a qualification

Add place of education

Name of the school, college, or university *

Exam centre number
This may be automatically filled in based on your school, college, or university

Start date *

Month Year

End date *

Month Year

Type of study *

Full time Part time Exam only

Study Mode *

Online In Person

You are linked to UCAS SCHOOL, CHELTENHAM, would you like to add this centre?

Yes No

[Save and add Qualification](#) [Save and return to Education Section](#) [Cancel](#)

STUDENT VIEW OF AN EXAMPLE QUALIFICATIONS SHORTLIST UCAS

Pick your qualification type

Choose the type of qualification you would like to add - you can search for specific qualifications and view those shortlisted by your adviser within each group.

A Level, AS, EPQ, and T Levels ▾ GCSE and equivalent BTEC ▾ Job related

Scottish qualifications International and EU ▾ Baccalaureate Apprenticeships

Access to HE Technical (not including BTEC) Core maths HNC, HND, and Degrees

Performance, Art, and Design ▾ More UK Qualifications **All qualifications**

All qualification category types will be shown to all students.

Search for your qualifications

If you cannot find your qualification, select the "All qualifications" filter and search there, if you still can't find your qualification you can select the "All qualifications" filter and search "Other".

🔍 Search

Provided by your school or college

- + AVCE (6 Units)
- + BTEC Diploma
- + Extended Project (Level 3)
- + GCE Advanced Level (A-Level)
- + GCE Advanced Subsidiary
- + GCSE (Grade: A*-G)
- + National 5
- + T Level Technical Qualification - Overall Grade

Your qualifications shortlist will be presented to your linked students once they've clicked on the qualification category type.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING QUALIFICATION ERRORS

1. Names on the application should match the details entered with the awarding organisations and official documentation.
2. Date of birth should be entered on both the application and the exam entry in the UK format (day/month/year).
3. Enter any preferred name(s) or previous name(s) e.g. surname.
4. Ensure the correct 'awarding body' is selected.
5. It's useful if students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland enter their Unique Learning Number (ULN).

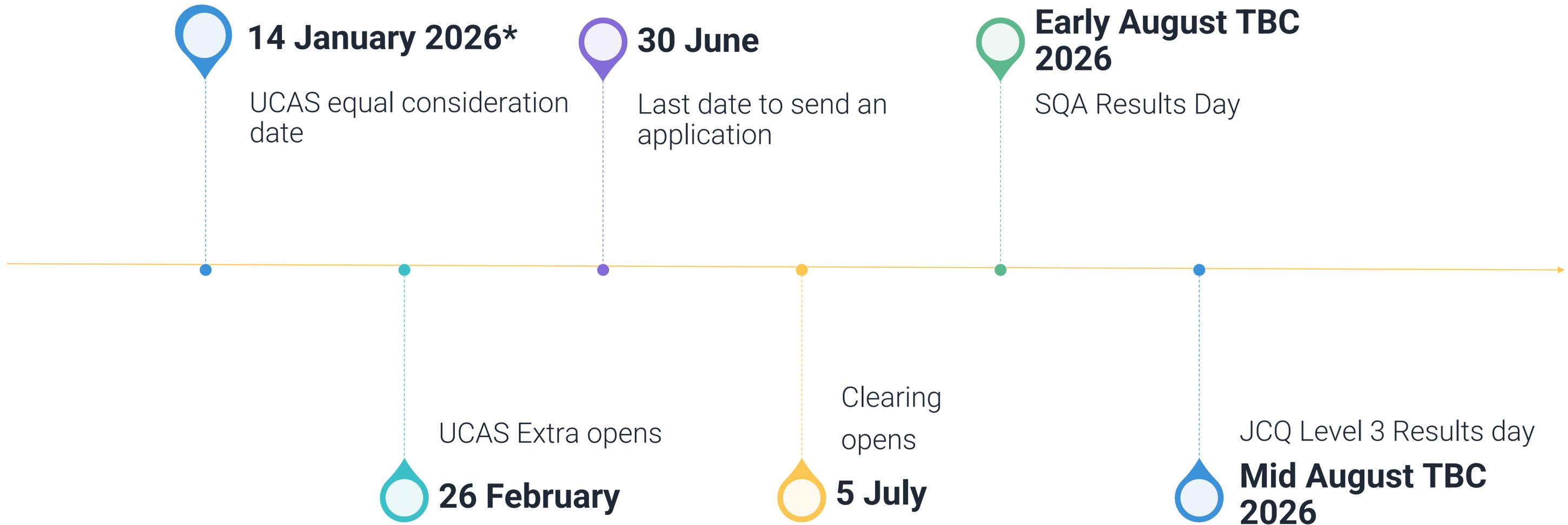
QUALIFICATION AMENDMENTS

| What can be changed | What can't be changed |
|--|---|
| Add, remove or amend overall qualifications | Change, add, or remove unit/module/subject information within a qualification. |
| Exam centre number | Attach certificates to an application. |
| Awarding body/exam board | Add new results/grades received after submission . |
| Qualification titles | Remove a completed qualification that a grade has been received for. |
| Type and level of qualification | The changes can only be done by contacts and speaking directly to choices. |
| Qualification results date | |

ADVISER TOP TIPS

1. Set your own internal deadline (and be strict with it!) and have a plan in place to know how to support students if this isn't met.
2. Delegation, clear internal processes and system permissions.
3. Good communication and resources – students know who to go to and what support they have.
4. Managing references for late applicants, re-apppliers and ex-students.
5. Managing the personal statement for late applicants.

2026 – OTHER KEY DATES



* 18.00 UK time

KNOWING OUR BUSINESS RULES



Add choice

Add choice

University/college name *

Course *

Location *

Start date *

Further details
You only need to provide information here if your chosen university or college has asked you to.

Point of entry
This tells the universities and colleges which year of the course you want to start, e.g. point of entry one is the first year of the course. If you wish to start in the first year of the course leave the box blank and you will automatically be considered for the first year. Enter 0 if you intend to take a foundation year – not all universities offer a foundation year so please check before applying.
If you've spoken to your chosen university or college and they are willing to consider your application to start the course after the first year, please enter the relevant number for the year, e.g. second year = 2, third year = 3, etc.

Live at home while studying?*

Yes No

Adding more choices

- Every student can apply with five choices to UCAS. More can be added until:
 - 30 June
- and
 - As long as no offer has been accepted or declined.
- If a student accepts an offer and wants to add more choices, this is also possible, by contacting our customer experience centre.

KNOWING OUR BUSINESS RULES

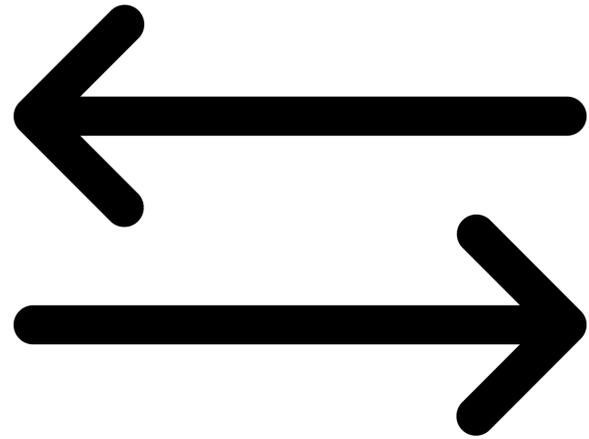
Substituting a University or College choice

- Students can swap a choice for a different one within **14 days** of receiving the welcome email. But be aware:
 - This can only be done **once**.
 - No swaps after **30 June**.
 - Swapped choices after 29 January are considered as **Late**.

The image displays two screenshots from the UCAS application system. The top screenshot, titled "Waiting for decisions", shows the details for the "Horticulture and Amenity Management (HORT)" course at the University of UCAS (Z98). It lists attributes such as Location: C, Start date: 01 September 2022, Point of entry: 1st year, Deferred entry: No, Live at home while studying: Yes, and Criminal convictions declaration: Undeclared. An "ACTIONS" box provides two options: "Substitute this choice" (with a note that it can only be done for a limited period) and "Permanently withdraw from this choice" (with a note that it cannot be changed afterwards).

The bottom screenshot, titled "SUBSTITUTE YOUR CHOICE", shows the process of substituting the HORT course. It includes a progress bar with two steps: "1 Select new course" and "2 Confirm substitution". Below the progress bar, the details of the current choice (HORT) are displayed. A section titled "To substitute this choice please add the new choice details below" contains four input fields: "University/college name" (with a search for institution), "Course" (with a search for course), "Location" (a dropdown menu), and "Start date" (a dropdown menu). A help icon (?) is visible in the bottom right corner of the interface.

KNOWING OUR BUSINESS RULES



Changing replies

- Within 14 days – Can be changed by contacting us.
- Outside of 14 days – Still possible, but we need **permission** from the universities or colleges involved to do it.
- No reply swaps after **24 July**.

CHANGING AN APPLICATION

| Which part of the application? | Can it be changed in the application post-submission? | How? |
|---|---|---|
| Personal details (e.g. email, phone number, postal address) | Yes | Can be changed easily by the student from within the application. |
| Name, date of birth. Qualifications | Yes, but there may be a delay. | By sending a form and relevant documentation to UCAS (if required). |
| Personal statement Reference Predicted grades | No | By contacting choices directly. |

EXTRA – THE PROCESS

01

Must have used all five choices and not be holding an offer.

02

Use between 26 Feb - 4 July.

Search for courses with vacancies on [search tool](#).

03

Contact university or college to check they'll consider an application.

Add the choice details in the application.

THREE OUTCOMES WHEN USING EXTRA

01

If a student receives an offer, they reply in their application.

If they accept the offer, it's theirs – subject to meeting conditions.

02

If an offer is received and they don't want to accept it, they can decline and start the Extra search again.

03

If they're not offered a place, they can start the Extra process again – and keep going until they get a place or until it closes on 4 July.

REPLIES

Firm reply

If all conditions are met, this is where a student will be placed.

Insurance reply

Usually lower conditions in case the firm conditions are not met.

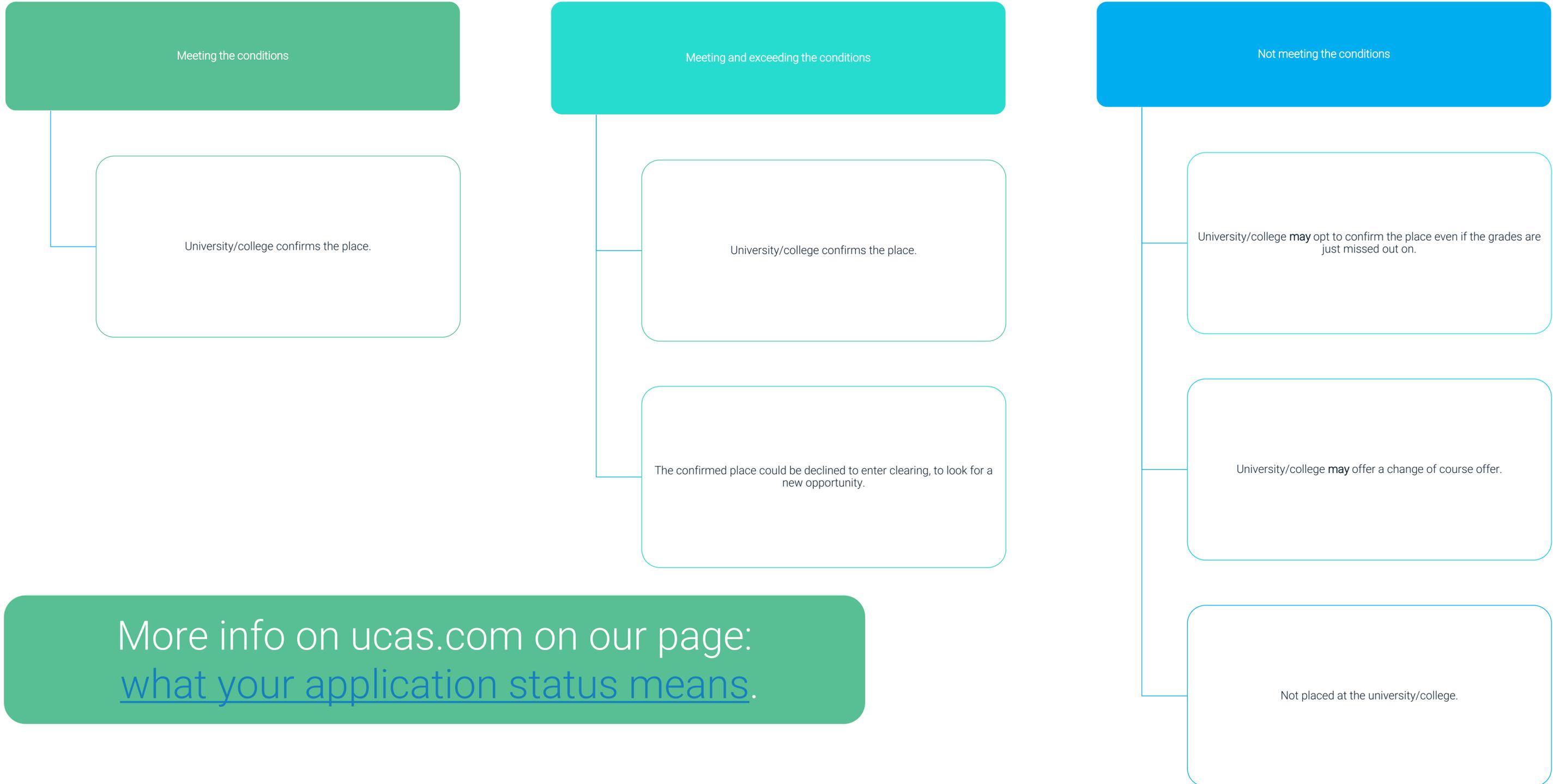
Decline

To state an applicant doesn't wish to take that place.

Other offers

All other offers must be declined at this point.

WHAT COULD A **CONFIRMATION** DECISION BE?



More info on ucas.com on our page: [what your application status means.](#)

3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. It's harder to change something after submission than making sure it's right before hand.
2. There is lots of opportunity in the cycle dates.
3. Applicants **don't have to apply with all 5 choices.**

UCAS

Your resource links

www.ucas.com/advisers

- [Application Presentations](#)
- [Resources for parents](#)
- [Your guide to UCAS Hub](#)
- [The adviser guide](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Adviser lives webinars](#)
- [On demand online training](#)
- [Hub guide for advisers](#)

ADVISER GUIDE 2025

FOR ENTRY TO UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE IN 2025

OUR SUPPORT

UCAS Customer Experience Centre:

0371 468 0 468

UCAS' Adviser Help Team

0345 123 8001

adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk

Monday to Friday

08:30 – 18:00 (UK time)



@ucas_online



@ucas_online



@ucas_online



@ucas



@UCASonline