

Guide to...

APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY

If the student you're supporting has decided to go to university, they will need to apply via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). The deadline to apply will be towards the end of January. Check the UCAS website for more details but usually their school or college will have an internal deadline that needs to be met. This fact sheet will provide you with the information you need to help support your aspiring student with their UCAS application.

1

Register

Your future graduate will firstly need to register for an account with UCAS by visiting the UCAS website. Here, they will be asked to set a username and password. If applying through their school or college, your student will be given a buzzword that they will need to use to register.

2

Log in

Once registered, your student can log in to their account and complete additional personal details: email address, residential status, special needs or impairments. Names must be entered exactly as they appear on official documentation such as a passport or birth certificate. This is also the section where parents and supporters can be nominated as a contact person, giving UCAS and the chosen universities permission to discuss the application with them.

3

Additional information [for UK applicants only]

This section has both mandatory and optional components and is used to monitor applications and to collate data. It is not used in the decision-making process and is shared with universities once a place is secured or at the end of the application cycle.

4

Student finance [UK and EU applicants only]

This section will only appear if your student has stated that they are a UK or EU resident in section 2. UCAS does not deal with student finance directly.

5

Course choices

Up to five courses can be chosen when applying through UCAS. These can be multiple choices at one institution, or different courses at five different institutions. The courses are not entered in order of preference and the full list can only be viewed by each university once a decision is made.

Applications to medicine, dentistry, veterinary science/medicine can only be made to a maximum of four courses. A fifth choice can be made but it cannot be one of the aforementioned. Only one application can be made, although there are exceptions.



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6

Full education history

This is where your future graduate will be asked for their qualifications from secondary education onwards. If currently studying for a qualification or awaiting results, their referee will add the predicted grades to the application. It is really important that the qualifications are entered accurately and if unsure of the correct title of a qualification, please ask your child's school for clarification. It is also important to include all academic-related study, for example, music theory or dance certificates taken.

7

Employment history

As the name suggests, this is the section where any paid employment can be recorded. Up to five jobs can be listed and it is useful for universities to read as it helps to build an overall picture of the applicant.

8

Writing their personal statement

This is your student's chance to show universities why the course is of interest and what it is that makes them a great student. There are three questions with a minimum of 250 characters required per question and a maximum limit of 4000 characters for the whole personal statement. You can support your child by proof reading their personal statement for any grammatical mistakes and ensuring that what they write is relevant to the course they are applying for.

An important note: plagiarising a personal statement is taken seriously, so please encourage your student to make sure their personal statement is original and completely their own work.

9

Checking the details

Time to check the form and make any necessary edits and then mark the sections as complete and save. You can support your child by reading through their application to make sure they haven't missed anything. Once this has been completed, they will need to read and agree to the declaration which allows UCAS to process their information and send it to the universities they have chosen.

10

References, paying the application fee and sending the application to UCAS

In school or college, your future graduate will be allocated a personal tutor, advisor or teacher who knows them academically, who will be asked to write a reference for them. Every application must include a reference and therefore this section needs to be completed by the allocated person before it is sent to UCAS.

Once the reference is done, the application fee needs to be paid, which is currently set at £28.95 for undergraduate applications for a 2026 start. This fee is waived for those in receipt of free school meals.

Once these steps are complete and the application has been submitted to UCAS, it will be distributed to the universities listed on the application form. Your student's UCAS Hub should be regularly checked as this is where the universities' decisions or requests for an interview will be shown.

The UCAS application process is logical to follow and should not raise too many questions, but if it does then you can contact UCAS or your student's school for advice.

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