

# Parent Guide 2016

Information about the  
UCAS undergraduate  
application process

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**TIP:** Register for our monthly parents' e-newsletter – it's free and will remind you about the key things your son or daughter needs to do throughout the application process.  
[www.ucas.com/parentform](http://www.ucas.com/parentform)



## About the Parent Guide

This guide is for anyone supporting a young person applying to study at university or college in autumn 2016. It covers the key stages of the UCAS undergraduate application process. If you have any questions there are several ways for you to get in touch: [www.ucas.com/contactus](http://www.ucas.com/contactus)

### Why higher education?

Making the decision about going to university involves all the family, so it's important that everyone, including parents, guardians, foster parents and grandparents, know about the benefits.

**While your son or daughter is at university** they'll have the opportunity to:

- study a subject that they are passionate about
- achieve a qualification that will lead to their chosen career
- learn to be an independent thinker for all aspects and challenges of life
- develop important skills that will widen their prospects
- become more independent and self-confident
- make lifelong friends

**Once they have their degree,** your son or daughter will have:

- the opportunity to follow their career path
- better job prospects
- higher earning potential

Ultimately, going to university will equip your son or daughter with skills and experiences they can use in their career and in their personal life.

## What is UCAS?

UCAS is the organisation that processes applications to study full-time courses at universities and colleges in the UK. However we don't just process applications; our aim is to help students make informed choices that are right for them, by guiding them through the entire higher education application process. To support this, we provide a wide range of valuable information and supporting services for young learners, applicants and their parents.

Using our website, [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com), your son or daughter will be able to find out more about how to get started, research course options, make their application and track the progress of their course choices. There's information especially for parents and guardians at [www.ucas.com/parents](http://www.ucas.com/parents), including details about the application process and lots of helpful video guides.

### UCAS terms explained

There are quite a few terms that we and the universities use that you may not be familiar with. Go to [www.ucas.com/ucas-terms-explained](http://www.ucas.com/ucas-terms-explained) for more information.

## Go beyond with Middlesex University

**With a practice-led approach, our teaching is designed to enhance your son or daughter's employability. We help them develop into a fully rounded individual, foster their academic achievement and prepare them for a successful career.**

### Industry links and work experience

Through our specialist courses and impressive industry networks, we offer numerous avenues for gaining professional experience, including placements, internships and volunteering opportunities.

### Employability Service

To complement our industry-aligned courses, our team of employability advisers are available from the moment your son or daughter arrives.

### Networking events and showcasing opportunities

Our students gain insight and contacts through regular events with blue-chip employers. We also offer the opportunity to enter national and international competitions and win awards that can kick-start a career.

For more information, please visit: [www.mdx.ac.uk/parents](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/parents)

## Dates you need to know

### 2015

<b>Summer</b>	The undergraduate application system for courses starting in autumn 2016 becomes available. This is called Apply.
<b>Mid-September</b>	Applications can be submitted to UCAS.
<b>15 October (18:00 UK time)</b>	Equal consideration deadline for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and applications for most medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and veterinary science courses.

### 2016

<b>15 January (18:00 UK time)</b>	Equal consideration deadline for applications to all courses except those listed in the UCAS search tool, <a href="http://search.ucas.com">search.ucas.com</a> , with a 15 October or 24 March deadline.
<b>25 February</b>	Extra opens.
<b>24 March (18:00 UK time)</b>	Equal consideration deadline for applications to art and design courses, except those listed with a 15 January deadline. <b>Applications received after the above deadlines will still be forwarded to universities, providing they have vacancies, but they are not obliged to consider them.</b>
<b>30 June (18:00 UK time)</b>	Last date for receipt of applications with up to five choices. Applications received later are automatically entered into Clearing and the applicant needs to contact the universities direct to be considered for a course.
<b>4 July (18:00 UK time)</b>	Extra closes.
<b>Early August</b>	SQA results are published and Scottish Clearing vacancy information service starts.
<b>18 August</b>	GCE A level, Advanced Diploma and Pre-U results are published and full Clearing information service starts.
<b>20 September (18:00 UK time)</b>	Last receipt of applications through Apply.

There will be specified cut-off dates for replying to offers – details can be found on [www.ucas.com/whentoapply](http://www.ucas.com/whentoapply).



**TIP:** Schools and colleges often set an earlier deadline so that they have enough time to check the application and add the reference. Sometimes they may need to return the application for your son or daughter to make changes or add any missing information.



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\*Graduates working or in further study (Destinations  
of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions, 2012/13)

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## Thinking about their future

**Get them to start thinking about what they want to do after leaving school or college.**

Your son or daughter may have been talking about what they want to do when they grow up from a very young age. It's now time to take some action to turn their plans into reality by thinking about what they'll do once they have left school or college. There are so many options to choose from, including going to university, getting a job, taking a gap year or taking an Apprenticeship. But before they make that decision they need to think more about their future by asking 'what interests them so much that they'd like to spend at least three years learning more about it?'

The answer could be something they do at school, something they do in their own time – or something they've never done before, but like the sound of.

It's not possible to know what they'll be doing in 10 or 20 years' time. Think about yourself when you left school and where you are now – that sets the scene for your son or daughter. At this stage the mission is to equip themselves with skills to follow a path that they enjoy.

“ I chose my degree simply because I enjoyed the subject at school, was good at it and the thought of studying it for three years excited me.”

For more information and useful tips, go to [www.ucas.com/planning-your-future](http://www.ucas.com/planning-your-future).



### TIP: Things your son or daughter can do to help them plan their future ...

1. Write a list of things they are interested in.
2. Talk to as many people as they can to find out about their experiences of work.
3. Arrange some work experience to find out more about the subject in the workplace.
4. Try some part-time work at weekends or holidays.
5. Try some volunteering.

## Research, research, research

Once your son or daughter has decided what they are interested in, it's time for them to look at which courses match their interests.

With over 35,000 courses available to choose from, they'll soon realise there is masses of research to do – on occasions they may feel they'll never get it all done! But eventually there will be enough information to decide which courses they want to apply for. To help them, they'll need to go online as well as get out and about.

### Get online

Your son or daughter can use our search tool [search.ucas.com](http://search.ucas.com) to search for courses at universities, colleges and conservatoires. The search results give the entry requirements, information on fees and finances, and details of how and when to apply for individual courses.

Search the university, college and conservatoire websites for more in-depth detail about their facilities and courses, and look at their virtual tours at [www.ucas.com/virtual-tours](http://www.ucas.com/virtual-tours).

### Get out and about

- **UCAS conventions** give your son or daughter a great opportunity to meet us in person, and to talk to staff from universities, colleges and other course providers, who will be able to answer questions about their courses and facilities. There will also be professional bodies and commercial companies that offer sponsored degrees. Your son or daughter's school may arrange a visit – or you can go independently.

Why go to a UCAS convention? Well, imagine visiting all the universities and colleges that your son or daughter is thinking of studying at – this could mean travelling miles and miles around the country; it would take weeks and cost a lot in petrol or train fares. Well there's no need – you can visit a UCAS convention where many universities exhibit with staff available to answer your queries. And best of all they are free to get in! There's bound to be one near you so go to [www.ucas.com/events/convention-exhibition](http://www.ucas.com/events/convention-exhibition) to find out what's on.

“ ...there's nothing more important than to choose a course which motivates you to work harder and helps define you as an individual.”

- **University and college open days and taster courses** let you see inside a university or college, and meet academic staff and students who are already there. Our search tool makes it really easy to look for an open day at a university or college – you can search by town, region, month and year and the dates are listed in calendar order – so there's no excuse for missing one! You can find out more about open days here: [www.ucas.com/events/exploring-university/find-open-day](http://www.ucas.com/events/exploring-university/find-open-day). Taster courses are usually tailored to specific courses or subjects and often include lectures and hands-on workshops. They can be one day, over the weekend or a week, and overnight stays are included. You can search for taster courses on [www.ucas.com/taster-courses](http://www.ucas.com/taster-courses).

## Filling in their UCAS application

UCAS Apply, for entry to university and college in the autumn 2016, is available on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) in summer 2015. This is the moment your son or daughter has been waiting for – they can now start their application. Before they start, take a look at our short video about filling in their application [www.ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication](http://www.ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication).



**TIP:** It's vital that your son or daughter remembers their log in details and the answers to their security questions. They'll need them to log back in throughout the year, especially on results day.

### Register first

The first step is to register. It's free and takes about 15 minutes to enter their basic details, including name and address, and set up their security information.

**Once registered there are seven sections that they need to complete.**

**1. Personal details.** This will already have all the information from when they registered, although there will be some other questions about student support and residency.

**2. Additional information** for UK applicants only. This includes equality questions and details about any preparation they've done for higher education.

**3. Student finance.** Your son or daughter can sign-up to receive an email from us letting them know when applications for student finance are open. Page 22 has more information about student finance.

**4. Choices.** There's room for up to five course choices (four in medicine, dentistry or veterinary science).

**5. Education.** Here they must list all the schools they've been to since the age of 11, together with dates they were there, all their exam results (pass or fail) and any exams still to be taken.

**6. Personal statement.** This is their opportunity to convince the university and college to offer them a place. There's more information about writing their personal statement on page 12.

**7. Employment.** If your son or daughter has a part-time, Saturday or holiday job, they should include the basic details. They can talk more about this in their personal statement.

Your son or daughter can enter information at any time, saving as they go. They can go back and edit it until everything is as they want. It is a long process, but as long as they start early there's plenty of time.

**Finally there's a section for their reference, which is added by their referee.**

## When to apply

There are different deadlines depending on the courses they've applied for – see the key dates on page 6.

Once all the sections have been completed and the reference added, your son or daughter's application will be complete. It's important that they take time to make sure everything is just as they want it, but they need to be aware of the deadline that applies for their particular course.

- Applications cannot be submitted until:
  - **September 2015** when we are ready to accept applications
  - the application fee has been paid
- If your son or daughter is applying from their school or college, it will be the school or college that submits their application. Make sure your son or daughter knows how their school or college will be paying the application fee.



**TIP:** Encourage your son or daughter to give themselves some contingency time, just in case something goes wrong at the last minute; no internet access, credit card payment failure, reference not added are just a few of the reasons we often hear about when applicants miss the deadline.



**TIP:** In the personal details section there's a question called nominated access where your son or daughter can provide the details of anyone they want to be able to contact us, or the universities they have applied to, on their behalf. A parent, guardian or adviser is ideal for this. Just make sure you have their Personal ID and can answer basic security questions when you call.

**The UCAS Tariff** is used by universities and colleges to make broad comparisons between qualifications used for entry to higher education courses. Points have been allocated to a wide range of qualifications and these can be added together, within certain rules, to achieve a Tariff score.

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

- for courses starting **before** September 2017 [www.ucas.com/tariff-tables](http://www.ucas.com/tariff-tables).
- for courses starting **from** September 2017 [www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/tariff/new-tariff](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/tariff/new-tariff).

## Starting work on their personal statement

Many applicants find writing their personal statement the most difficult part. Starting with a blank sheet and writing 4,000 characters about yourself is a bit scary! Taking a positive approach, and enough time to do a good job, it really can make your son or daughter's application stand out from the competition.

### Where to start?

Get them to:

- think about what is exciting about themselves and makes them stand out – in a good way, in a positive way
- write down words (masses of them!) that come to mind – anything that shows why they are really excited about the courses they are applying for. Keep it positive
- remember why they said 'Wow – that's what I want to do!' Was it when they read an article, heard someone talking about their work, or even somewhere they went?
- list supporting evidence to back up why they are so excited about the courses they have chosen; include work experience or out of school activities
- think about their skills they can use on the course; leadership, communication, playing music, for example
- ask you and their friends for more ideas

## Pulling it together

Taking all the ideas and turning them into their winning statement is the next step. Make sure it has a structure:

**First part** – a punchy opening paragraph showing their excitement and understanding of what the course is all about.

**Middle part** – this is where the evidence to support their interest for the course needs to be. Relevant skills, work experience, inspirational moments will all take their place here.

**Final part** – this is where they write about themselves, what they are interested in and how well they fit into life at university.

**Closing paragraph** – end with a concise statement that leaves the reader with a clear understanding of why the course is right for your son or daughter, and why they are perfect for the course.



### TIP: A good personal statement...

- is relevant and focused; don't waste the 4,000 characters – every one counts!
- uses clear, plain English
- avoids clichés – they've been used before!
- is original – don't copy from another personal statement – we will know as our software scans all statements for plagiarism

For more help and to find our personal statement video go to [wwwucas.com/personalstatement](http://wwwucas.com/personalstatement).

Then all that is left to do is draft, redraft, redraft .... until it's right.

## Once we get their application

1. We check that everything is OK and that the personal statement has not been copied. This takes up to 48 hours.
2. When our checks are complete we send our welcome email to your son or daughter. This explains how to use our Track service to check the progress of their application. It also has their Personal ID which they'll need to log in. There's a video about using Track on [wwwucas.com/trackyourapplication](http://wwwucas.com/trackyourapplication).
3. At the same time, the application is sent to all the universities and colleges they have applied to. At this stage none of the universities will know where else they've applied; so they'll be considering the application totally independently.
4. Universities and colleges will consider their application.
5. Whenever they let us know about an interview, audition, test or decision we'll alert your son or daughter by email – so they know when to check their application in Track.

### Types of decisions universities and colleges can make

Receiving a conditional or unconditional offer, or even both, is good news, but it's important to be clear about the difference and commitment they are making if they accept one.

- **A conditional offer** means your son or daughter needs to meet some specified requirements – usually exam results – before the course starts, to secure the place. If they accept a conditional offer as their firm choice (see page 15) they are committed to take up the place.

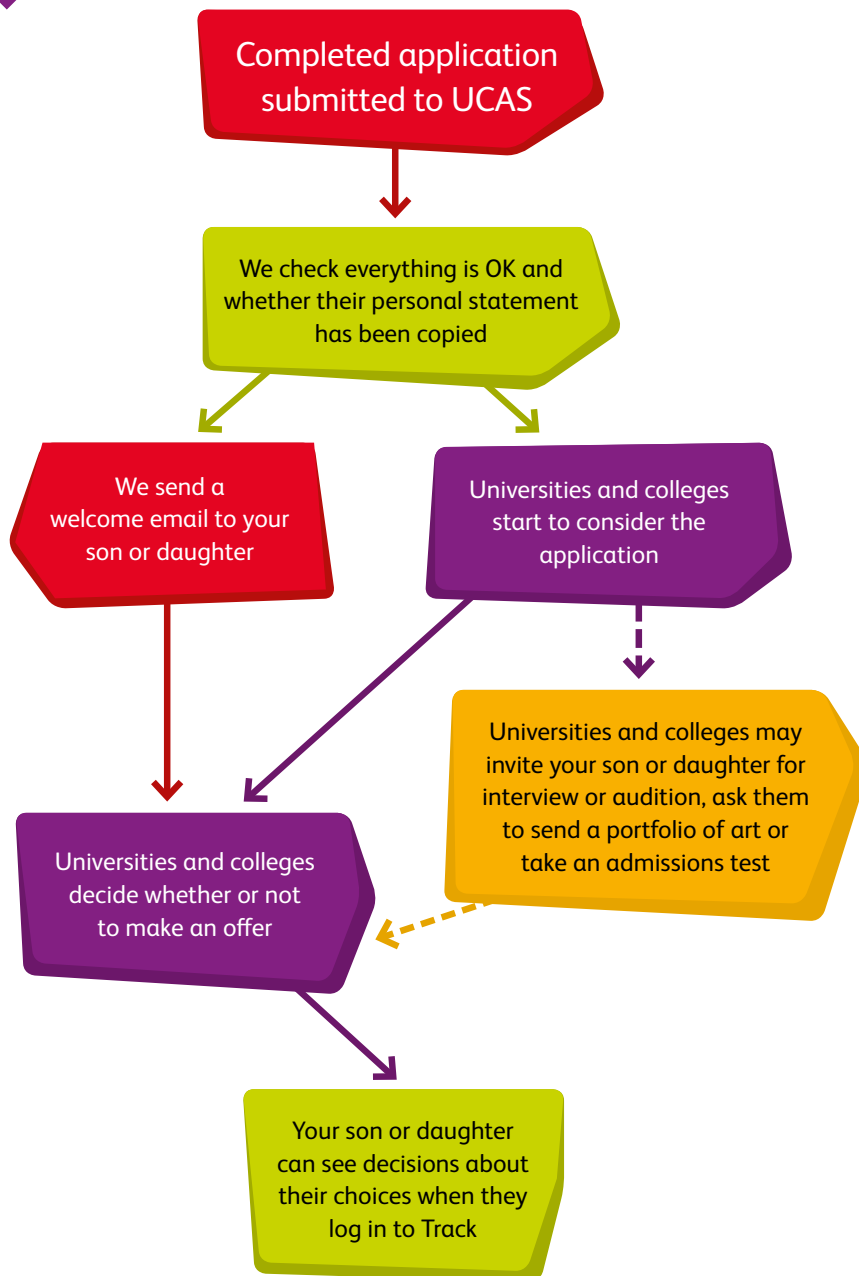
- **An unconditional offer** means they have a guaranteed place if they accept it, as long as they meet any non-academic conditions such as a health or criminal record check, or financial requirements. If they accept an unconditional offer as their firm choice (see page 15) they are committed to take up the place regardless of what grades they get. If they are thinking of accepting an unconditional offer they need to remember that:

- they cannot have an insurance choice (see page 15) or use Clearing (see page 21).
- their exam results won't affect whether or not they can start the course.
- although their university place may not be dependent on their grades, they may have an impact on your son or daughter's future employment. Graduate employers often consider school or college exam results when reviewing job applications; so it's important to know this when they prepare for their exams.

- **Unsuccessful** application means the university has decided not to offer them a place. Sometimes there's a reason given; if not they can contact the university to discuss the reason. It may help later if they need to choose other courses.
- **Withdrawn** application means that the choice has been withdrawn either by your son or daughter or by the university. If the university has done this they'll let them know why.

Once they have decisions for all their choices they are ready to reply to them – see page 15.





## Replying to offers

When a decision has been received for all your son or daughter's choices they'll need to reply to any offers they have. This is a very important step in the process and they'll need to be absolutely sure they accept the right offer, for the right reason. They'll need your support in making the decision.

### Before they reply there are a few things to do

- Make sure they understand the conditions of their offers. If anything is not clear they should contact the university or college for clarification.
- Visit the university or college – if they haven't already done so – to check it's somewhere they'd want to spend the next three or four years. Will it be easy to get there, what's the accommodation like for first year students and is a particular sport on offer?
- If your son or daughter needs special support, for example for a disability, then discuss this with the university disability officer so everything is in place when they start the course.
- Check out the tuition fees for each course – it's important to know what they are before accepting the offer.
- Rank the offers in two ways; firstly based on their personal favourites, and then in terms of the difficulty the offers are to achieve. And then compare the two lists.

By doing this it'll be easier to decide which offers they want to accept and which they don't.

### What are the options for replying?

They can accept an offer as their firm or their insurance choice.

#### Firm choice

- For a conditional offer, your son or daughter will be guaranteed a place on the course if they meet all the conditions of the offer.
- If their offer is unconditional, then the place is theirs.

In either case they are committed to that course at that university; they cannot look elsewhere.



**TIP:** Your son or daughter must reply to their offers online using Track – make sure they know the deadline and their log in details.

#### Insurance choice

This has the same commitment as a firm choice but only comes into play if they don't meet the conditions of their firm choice – it's like a back-up or second chance to get a place. So it makes sense for the insurance choice to have less demanding conditions than their firm choice.

There's more information and a video on our website about replying to offers:

[www.ucas.com/replies](http://www.ucas.com/replies).

### Extra opens

Despite all the careful research choosing the right courses, sometimes it doesn't always work out as expected. Competition can be really high for some courses which can mean that even the best students don't always get the offers they'd hoped for. On the other hand, they may receive a selection of offers for courses that they now decide they're not interested in. So they think of turning them down – but what's the alternative?

#### It's Extra!

Extra is an opportunity for your son or daughter to look for another course – even a different subject at a different university – without waiting for Clearing (see page 21). But there are some rules to follow to be eligible for Extra.

- All five choices must have been used.
- Your son or daughter either has no offers, or has declined any offers they received.

**Extra opens on 25 February 2016 and closes on 4 July 2016. For more details go to [www.ucas.com/extra](http://www.ucas.com/extra).**



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Matthew, BSc (Hons) Environmental Science

June to August 2016

## Preparing for results

Results are usually announced in the summer before the start of the university term. With this in mind, it's worth spending some time considering what to do if they don't get the results they're expecting. Having a well thought out 'what if' plan in place beforehand, covering as many eventualities as possible, will save time later. It will also reduce the risk of making quick, badly thought out decisions that they may regret.

### So what if they don't get the grades they were expecting? What are the alternatives?

- The university might still accept them – but there's no guarantee and depends on how far below the offer the results are and how other students have done in their exams.
- They may offer them a place on an alternative course or year of entry. Before accepting this they need to find out more about it and maybe even pay a visit there. They must be really certain it's right for them.
- They may not accept them – so a rethink is needed. Here are some of the options.
  - Look for a different course using Clearing – see page 21.
  - Retake exams and reapply next year – some universities will want higher grades from resit students.
  - Do an apprenticeship or traineeship – go to [www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/alternatives-higher-education](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/alternatives-higher-education).

- Take a gap year – learn to manage new independence and great for a CV.
- Earn and learn with a job – some employers have school leaver programmes and could even send your son or daughter to university while being paid at the same time.



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

**What if there's some really good news** when the results are announced; they achieve even better grades than anticipated and much higher than the conditions of their offer – see page 21 for details about Adjustment. But for now have a plan for what your son or daughter would do if this happens.

## Exam results

### Getting their results

The big day has arrived. We don't give your son or daughter their results, they come from the exam board – either via their school (they may need to go back to collect them), by post, or online.

Check whether your son or daughter needs to send any results to their firm and insurance choice. If so, they need to do this as soon as their results are available. For example, we don't process GCSE or Scottish National 4 results. They can check which results we receive at: [www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results](http://www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results).



**TIP:** Try to be there when they get their results, so you can share in their excitement or support them if the news isn't good.



### Finding out if they have a place at university or college

- We receive exam results for a large number of different qualifications, match them to individual applicants and then make them available to the universities that are holding firm and insurance places.



**TIP:** While we are processing Scottish and A level results, there is restricted access to Track. Details of when it will be available will be shown on our website from the end of July. Full access to Track returns on the morning of Scottish and A level results days.

- The universities then check the offer details and confirm places where the conditions have been met. They may also confirm places – at their discretion – if the conditions have not been met.
- If the university has confirmed the place this will be shown clearly in Track.

## Clearing and Adjustment

Clearing and Adjustment are options to use when exam results aren't what was expected; but they are used in different situations.

**Clearing** is a chance for students to look for a place if they don't have one. It's also the final chance for universities and colleges to fill any places they still have available.

To look for a course in Clearing your son or daughter must first be eligible. This means that either:

- they have no offers
- their firm or insurance universities have made them unsuccessful
- they applied after 30 June 2016 – see page 6



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

Clearing officially starts in early July. However, students must have all their exam results to be able to use it; so for the majority of students they will use Clearing in August. For more information go to [www.ucas.com/clearing](http://www.ucas.com/clearing).



### Adjustment

When the results arrive, and they turn out to be better than expected – in fact your son or daughter's results have met and exceeded the conditions of their firm choice, they might want to think about Adjustment to secure an alternative course.

Adjustment is available between 18 and 31 August 2016. However there is a time restriction applied; they have five days from the day the university confirms their place or from 18 August, whichever is the later. For more information go to [www.ucas.com/adjustment](http://www.ucas.com/adjustment).



“But I am, if nothing else, determined. I had set my mind on going to university. If I couldn't study acting, then I would try my other love; which was writing. So, using UCAS' Clearing system, I applied to three universities and was delighted to be offered a place at all of them.”

One of the questions often asked about going to university or college is 'What is it going to cost?'. Parents sometimes wonder whether it's worth it, especially if they think that they will be responsible for any loans their son or daughter has during the course – on this last point, any loan will be paid back by your son or daughter, not you.

The student finance arrangements for students living in the UK depend not only on where they live, but also on where they are going to study. In general, the packages are a mixture of repayable, non-repayable, and means tested and non-means tested loans and grants.

## What do they need to pay for?

- Tuition fees – up to £9,000 per year for students in the UK and EU. Universities can set their own fees for students from outside the EU. Our search tool [search.ucas.com](http://search.ucas.com) lists the tuition fees on the Fees & finances tab for each course.
- Maintenance loans and grants – these cover the living costs, such as accommodation, food and travel while they are studying. If the course is in London they'll receive more to cover the higher cost of living, and if they live at home while studying, they may receive less.
- Special support grants – these are additional payments made in specific situations. They may be paid, for example, if they are in receipt of income support or housing benefit, or are a lone parent.
- Extra support is also available for students with disabilities, those who are in care and for those with children or dependents.

## Where can they go for funding?

It depends on where they live in the UK:

**England** [www.gov.uk/studentfinancesteps](http://www.gov.uk/studentfinancesteps)

**Northern Ireland** [www.studentfinancenir.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk)

**Scotland** [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk)

**Wales** [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk)  
[www.cyllidmyfyrwycymru.co.uk](http://www.cyllidmyfyrwycymru.co.uk)

There are also other sources of funding that are definitely worth exploring. Many universities offer scholarships, so check out their websites or the online scholarship website [www.scholarship-search.org.uk](http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk)

## Funding for specific subjects

Not all courses are funded by the student finance organisations. The NHS, for example, provides non-means tested bursaries for courses leading to a number of healthcare and social work professions. For information go to [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk) and click on students.

Many universities have additional funding they can allocate at their discretion if things get tough; they can also offer help with managing money.



**TIP:** Your son or daughter may wish to consider getting a part-time job to supplement their finances.

## When do they need to apply?

They should apply as soon as possible. The different funding organisations will open their applications for new students starting university in 2016 as follows:

- for England, Northern Ireland and Wales it's in the spring of 2016
- for Scotland it's early April to the end of June 2016



**TIP:** Ensure your son or daughter applies for student finance before their exam results are announced and their place confirmed – they will then have the money in place when the term starts.

## How do they apply?

It's online – so there are no paper forms to fill in. Once they've set up a student finance account they can complete their student finance application.

- They'll need the university and course details (can be changed later), an identity document (passport or birth certificate), their bank account details and their national insurance number to hand.
- There's a section for you to complete to support the application; this includes details of earned and unearned income, as well as any other dependent children.
- Documentary evidence may also be requested – it's best to send these promptly so as not to delay the application. All original documents will be returned within four weeks.
- Once the application has been submitted and approved your son or daughter will be sent a loan declaration, containing the details of the funding they will receive, which they must sign and return.

## When will they receive the finance?

Students from England, Northern Ireland and Wales are paid over three instalments at the start of each term. Scottish students are paid weekly during term time.

## Repayments – how much will it cost?

- Your son or daughter will only start repaying their student loan when they have left university or college, and are earning over the income threshold.
- The amount they will pay back each month is dependent on how much they're earning.
  - In England and Wales the repayment threshold is currently £21,000.
  - In Northern Ireland and Scotland the repayment threshold is £17,335.
  - The loan is written off after 30 years (35 years in Scotland).

For more details and to watch our video about student finance, go to [www.ucas.com/startingstudies](http://www.ucas.com/startingstudies).



University does cost money and you have to work hard to get the rewards, but in all of this there are an endless amount of rewards that will make you realise that the debt doesn't compare to the breathtaking roller coaster that you are immersed in. Go to university and see for yourself."

## Considering music, dance or drama?

If your son or daughter is thinking of a career in music, dance or drama, either as a professional performer or in the performing arts arena, they have two options: UCAS Conservatoires and UCAS Undergraduate. Both universities and conservatoires offer bachelor's degrees, so wanting a degree isn't a reason to base their decision.



**TIP:** If your son or daughter is not sure which type of course suits them, they can apply through UCAS Apply and UCAS Conservatoire Apply. If they get a place in both we'll ask them to decide which they want to take up.

### Study at a conservatoire

- A conservatoire is a college that specialises in the study of music, dance and drama, but also includes academic studies.
- If your son or daughter's interests are focused on a practical discipline such as instrumental or vocal performance, dance or drama, they may favour a conservatoire.
- To study at a conservatoire from autumn 2016, your son or daughter will need to apply through the UCAS Conservatoires scheme at [www.ucas.com/ucas/conservatoires/apply-and-track](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/conservatoires/apply-and-track), which becomes available in summer 2015.



**TIP:** Check whether there are any audition fees which need to be paid.



The prospect of my future in music exhilarates me."

- The equal consideration deadlines for submitting applications are:
  - 1 October 2015 (18:00 UK time) for music courses
  - 15 January 2016 (18:00 UK time) for most dance, drama and screen production courses. There are some exceptions so check the conservatoire websites
- For more information and advice about applying to and studying at a conservatoire, go to [www.ucas.com/conservatoires](http://www.ucas.com/conservatoires).



What I love about my job is telling stories. Whether it's on camera or stage, through song or a puppet, my interest is in how the sharing of our life experiences and emotions can better our understanding of our own lives."

### Study at a university or college

- If your son or daughter's interest is more as an intellectual academic discipline, such as history of music, a university might be the best route for them.
- Many universities offer performance-based courses.
- To study at a university or college your son or daughter needs to apply through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme.

## Considering teaching?

If your son or daughter is considering a career as a teacher they need Initial Teacher Education or Training (ITET) based at a university, school or college in the UK. There are two routes they can follow to achieve this; undergraduate and postgraduate.

### Undergraduate

- Your son or daughter can be trained as a teacher while taking their degree.
- Courses vary depending on where they study, but they will receive Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at the end, as well as their degree.
- To apply for an undergraduate degree in teaching, your son or daughter should apply through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme.



If I have one thing that I wish all pupils I teach to remember is that our existence on the Earth is fleeting but the knowledge we gain, build and pass on is forever eternal. Remember this and watch yourself grow into something you could have never imagined before. Learning has no ceiling, inspiration can never be contained: embrace it."

### Postgraduate

- Your son or daughter would have already studied for an undergraduate degree, although it doesn't have to be the specific subject they want to teach.

- As long as they pass their degree with the right classification, they will be eligible to apply for a one-year postgraduate teaching course leading to QTS. Many courses also award a Postgraduate or Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).
- If your son or daughter wishes to apply for a postgraduate teaching degree course in England or Wales they should apply through the UCAS Teacher Training scheme. To apply for programmes in Scotland, they need to apply through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme.
- [www.ucas.com/ucas/teacher-training/getting-started](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/teacher-training/getting-started) contains information about what they need to do, and they can also sign up to receive our free information pack, which will help them navigate their way through the postgraduate teacher training application process.



## Getting help online

There are a number of ways that you and your son or daughter can get help from us online – go to [www.ucas.com/contactus](http://www.ucas.com/contactus) where you'll find video guides, links to Twitter and Facebook, and blogs from other parents going through the same experience as you.



[www.twitter.com/ucas\\_online](http://www.twitter.com/ucas_online)



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



[www.youtube.com/ucasonline](http://www.youtube.com/ucasonline)



[plus.google.com/  
+Ucasonlineofficial/posts](https://plus.google.com/+Ucasonlineofficial/posts)

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



**TIP:** If your son or daughter is currently living outside of the UK you might find our 'International undergraduate guide for parents' a useful resource to read. You can view the guide at [www.ucas.com/internationalguides](http://www.ucas.com/internationalguides)

### Specialist information

You may also find these other websites useful:

#### Careers advice

National Careers Service for England  
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

Careers Service Northern Ireland  
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers)

Skills Development Scotland  
[www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk)

Careers Wales  
[www.careerswales.com](http://www.careerswales.com)

Conservatoires UK  
[www.conservatoiresuk.ac.uk](http://www.conservatoiresuk.ac.uk)

Get into teaching  
[www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching](http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching)

#### Students with disabilities

Disability Rights UK  
[www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

Disabled Students' Allowances  
[www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas](http://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas)

#### Gap years

gap-year.com  
[www.gap-year.com](http://www.gap-year.com)

The Year Out Group  
[www.yearoutgroup.org](http://www.yearoutgroup.org)

#### General higher education advice

Unistats  
<http://unistats.direct.gov.uk>

National Union of Students  
[www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk)

#### Funding

See page 22 for details of the different funding organisations.

## Why students love learning

Last year, undergraduate students at university and college in the UK were invited to tell us why they love learning – in either a 500 word essay or a 30 second video. We ran the Love Learning competition in conjunction with The Times and over 2,500 students entered.

Here's what some of them told us:

“ I am barely the same person who anxiously filled out the UCAS application years ago. I have not only grappled with some pretty astonishing science, but somewhere along the way I've grown up. That's what happens when you meet people from cultures you didn't know existed, talk to people who think in different ways, and interact with a whole world of people that lead rich and fascinating lives.”

“ Studying at university, irrespective of what degree you choose, teaches you more than mere information on your chosen subject. It teaches you to look beyond the surface of whatever confronts you, and consider the unconsidered.”

“ University has helped me to grow and mature. And to my joy, I've done this at the same time that I've learned more and more about a subject that has always captivated me.”

Read the winning essay and watch the four winning videos at [www.ucas.com/lovelearning](http://www.ucas.com/lovelearning)

## A handy checklist



- ✓ **Register for our monthly parents' e-newsletter** – it's free and will remind you about the key things your son or daughter needs to do throughout the application process. [www.ucas.com/parentform](http://www.ucas.com/parentform).
- ✓ **Familiarise yourself with our website** – [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) has all the information you and your son or daughter will need at every stage.
- ✓ **Arrange to take your son or daughter to university and college open days** [www.ucas.com/open-days](http://www.ucas.com/open-days).
- ✓ **Know what date your son or daughter needs to submit their application** – [www.ucas.com/whentoapply](http://www.ucas.com/whentoapply).
- ✓ **Know when their reply deadlines are** – these will vary depending on what courses they've applied for and when they have received a decision for each choice.
- ✓ **Understand what student finance support is available for your son or daughter** (see page 22).
- ✓ **Ensure your son or daughter is at home when their results are due.**
- ✓ **Understand how Extra, Clearing and Adjustment work** (see pages 16 and 21).

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

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

To sign up for your **FREE** copy, visit [www.southwales.ac.uk/parents](http://www.southwales.ac.uk/parents) or call our Parents' Hotline on **03455 760 996**.

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