



# St. Mary's Sixth Form Presentation Evening: UCAS Information

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023**





# Sixth Form Presentation Evening: UCAS

This 'Sixth Form Presentation Evening' will consist of three main areas:

- Introduction to UCAS.
- How To Apply Through UCAS.
- How Parents/Carers Can Support Through This Process.

The aim of this session is to help parents/carers to understand UCAS and how their child can apply for post-18 courses through UCAS.

This session is aimed at students who wish to enter university in 2024.



## What is UCAS?

UCAS is an independent charity providing information, advice and admissions services. There are there to help people figure out what the next step in education might be.

### ▶ UCAS does:

- ▶ Provide information, advice, and support
- ▶ Process applications
- ▶ Complete fraud and verification checks
- ▶ Take part in education sector engagement

### ▶ UCAS does not:

- ▶ Make decisions or offers
- ▶ Set entry requirements
- ▶ Advise on finance
- ▶ Advise on immigration or visas for individuals



# Introduction to UCAS

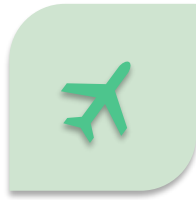
UCAS provides guidance on:



Higher  
education



Apprenticeships  
/ traineeships



Studying  
abroad



Gap year



Getting a job



# Why Higher Education?

Essential for some career paths.

Develop new transferable skills and subject knowledge.

Increase confidence and independence.

Broaden experiences.

Meet new people.

Investment in the future.

Increased job prospects.

Higher earning potential.







# Choosing the Right Place

- ▶ **Style** – from traditional, with a focus on subject-based courses and research, to modern universities/colleges, with a greater focus on vocational courses.
- ▶ **Location** – some are in large cities, others in small towns, by the coast or in the countryside – it's all a major influence on the environment and lifestyle.
- ▶ **Size** – larger universities can have more than 20,000 students, whereas some of the smallest have only a few thousand.
- ▶ **Culture and facilities** – influenced by a range of factors, including the diversity of students who attend.
- ▶ **What graduates do** – all universities collect destination statistics; it can be useful to find out what jobs or further study students go on to.
- ▶ **Tuition fees** – can vary between universities and colleges; check if there are scholarships or bursaries available.
- ▶ **Living costs** – accommodation, transport, and food can vary enormously.



# Choosing the Right Course

- ▶ What does the course cover?
- ▶ Courses with the same title may be very different.
- ▶ Look carefully at the core course content, and the range of optional studies/modules available.
- ▶ Which modules are the most interesting and relevant to your career aspirations?
- ▶ See if the course or university/college offers any internship, placement, or study abroad opportunities.
- ▶ How is the course taught – structured teaching, or more independent research? How many lectures are there, and how much group work will be done in seminars?
- ▶ How is the course assessed?



# Start Your Research

▶ Register with the UCAS Hub to:

Explore careers, subjects, places, and apprenticeships.

Find and favourite from over 35,000 courses.

Search for open days, online events, and virtual tours.

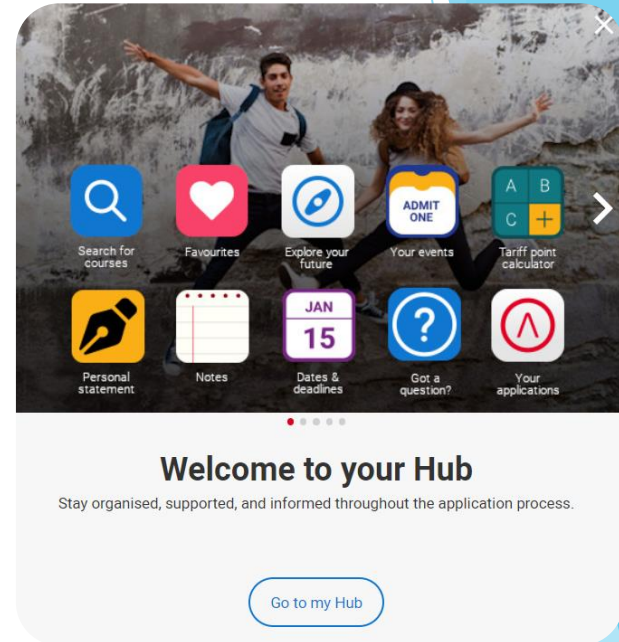
Turn predicted grades into UCAS Tariff points.

Speak to those in the know using Unibuddy.

Speak to career, higher education, and application specialists by attending the Hub lives.

Take the UCAS Quiz to find your career matches.

Start an application for 2024 entry (from May 2023).





# The UCAS Hub

▶ The UCAS Hub can help:

**FAVOURITES**

TOP 5 COURSES UNI & COLLEGES LOCATIONS SUBJECTS PAGES

- Industrial Design & Technology  
Brunel University London
- Add favourite course to top 5
- Add favourite course to top 5
- Add favourite course to top 5
- Add favourite course to top 5
- Add favourite course to top 5

VIEW ALL FAVOURITES

GO AND EXPLORE

**Search and favourite courses**

Search for courses, view your top five choices, and manage and edit your favourites.

Go to my Hub

**EXPLORE YOUR FUTURE**

COURSES FOR YOU RELATED SUBJECTS UNI & COLLEGES APPRENTICESHIPS

SPORT

- Chemistry**  
View 8 courses at your favourite uni & colleges
- Agriculture and related sciences**  
View 22 courses at your favourite uni & colleges
- Education**  
View 23 courses at your favourite uni & colleges

Suggestions are based on your favourites

GO AND EXPLORE

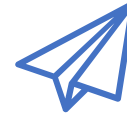
**Explore and favourite options**

Explore and favourite subjects, locations, uni and colleges, and courses.

Go to my Hub



# The UCAS Application



Student registers for a UCAS Hub account to carry out research and start application.

Student completes all sections of the application and sends it to their school/college.

Teacher reviews the application and adds reference and predicted grades.

Applications are sent to UCAS by St. Mary's on behalf of the student.

Universities and colleges make their decisions on the application.



# UCAS Key Dates - 2024

**2 May 2023** UCAS search tool displays 2024 courses.

**16 May 2023** Undergraduate applications open for 2024 entry.

**12 July 2023** Conservatoires applications open for 2024 entry.

**5 September 2023** Completed undergraduate applications can be submitted to UCAS.

**2 October 2023** Closing date for conservatoires music applications.

**16 October 2023** Applications for Oxford, Cambridge and most courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science should arrive at UCAS by 18:00 (UK time).

**31 January 2024** Applications for the majority of undergraduate courses should arrive at UCAS by 18:00 (UK time) on the equal consideration date.



# Key Facts

To start an application you need a **UCAS Hub account**.

Register for UCAS Hub at any time.

From **16 May 2023** you will be able to '**Start**' your application in your UCAS Hub.

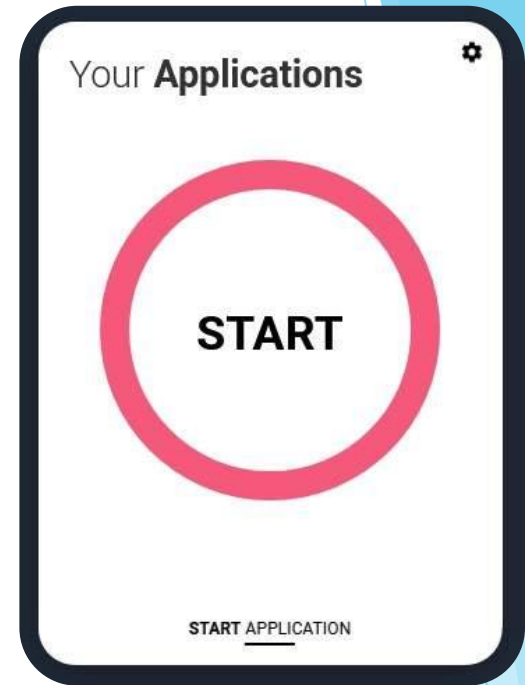
You have up to **five choices**, unless applying to study medicine, veterinary, medicine/science, dentistry – then it's **four choices**.

You **can not** apply to **both** Oxford and Cambridge.

Applying **cost** is £27.50.

Apply by the **equal consideration date**.

Universities and colleges **can not see** your other choices when you apply.





# Changes for 2024

## Academic References

UCAS are changing the reference for 2024 undergraduate entry to help schools focus their references on the areas providers want to know more about.

UCAS are replacing the free text approach with three structured sections.



Enter a general statement about your school/college  
(mandatory for applications sent via a registered centre)



Enter any information about extenuating circumstances which  
may affect this applicant's performance in examinations or other  
assessments (optional)



Outline any other circumstances specific to the applicant that you  
think universities/colleges should be aware of (optional)



# Changes for 2024

## Application Fee

There is no longer an option to have a reduced application fee (for fewer course choices).

**The fee for all 2024 undergraduate applications will be £27.50.**

## Gender Question

There are now two additional responses to the gender question on the UCAS application.

I use another term

I prefer not to say

### Gender \*

Select the gender you most identify with at this time. You can tell the university or college directly if you'd feel more comfortable identifying in another way, or if this changes.

Man  Woman  I use another term  I prefer not to say



# Changes for 2024

## **Grades Tool**

The historic entry grades tool is a feature that shares course-level information, on the grades students held when entering higher education.

This information helps students make informed decisions about their future when narrowing down their application choices.

This year the entry grades tool will be available on [ucas.com](https://ucas.com), to give students visibility over a range of grade profiles accepted for entry, to courses over a five-year period (where data is available). Testing shows the reports encourage students to find options they previously thought were unavailable to them.



# Linking to St. Mary's

As your child will be sending their application through St. Mary's they should enter their '**buzzword**' to link your application to them.

The buzzword is a unique code set by St. Mary's.

By linking their application they are giving St. Mary's permission to view and track their application.

It also means we will provide your child with a reference, and send the application to UCAS on your behalf.

**Our buzzword is StMarys2024.**

Are you applying from a school, college, or centre?

Yes

No

Select Yes here.

START >



# Application

## ▶ Profile:

- Personal details
- Contact and residency details
- Nationality details
- Supporting information
- English language skills
- Finance and funding
- Diversity and inclusion\*
- More about you

▶ \* (for students with a UK home address)

Profile

<b>Personal details &gt;</b> Name, age, title, and gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Section complete	<b>Contact &amp; residency details &gt;</b> Address, email, telephone, and where you live <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section	<b>Nationality details &gt;</b> Country and nationality details <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section
<b>Supporting information &gt;</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Section in progress	<b>English language skills &gt;</b> Is English your first language? <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section	<b>Finance &amp; funding &gt;</b> Tell us how you'll fund your study <input type="checkbox"/> Section in progress
<b>Diversity &amp; inclusion &gt;</b> Only shared with a provider once you have a place or your application is archived <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section	<b>More about you &gt;</b> Tell us about any circumstances that you might need support for during your studies <input type="checkbox"/> Start this section	



# Application

## ▶ Experiences:

- Education
- Employment
- Extra activities\*

• Personal statement

• Reference\*\*

• Add choices – up to five

▶ \* (for students with a UK home address)

▶ \*\* (not visible for students linked to their school/college)

### Experience

#### Education >

Your qualifications and periods of study

Section in progress

#### Employment >

Employment, paid or unpaid, or volunteer work

Section complete

#### Extra activities >

Activities you have attended in preparation for higher education

Start this section

### Personal Statement


#### Personal statement >


Why do you want to study this subject?

Start this section



# The Personal Statement

 The only section students have full control over

 Students only chance to market themselves individually

 The same for all choices

 A maximum of 4,000 characters, or 47 lines

 A minimum of 1,000 characters

There isn't a spelling or grammar check

 No formatting is allowed

UCAS' similarity detection service:  
every personal statement is run through software to check for plagiarism.



# The Personal Statement

## ▶ Include:

Academic achievements, past and present.

Why you are interested in the subject area.

Your knowledge of the subject area.

Your enthusiasm to go beyond the syllabus.

What you enjoy about studying.

Details of your independent study skills.





# The Personal Statement

## **Section 1: Why they want to study the subject/course?**

Reasons for studying the subject

What about the particular course/subject interests them?

## **Section 2: What makes them suitable to study that subject/course?**

What super-curricular activities have they done?  
For example, online lectures, reading, work experience

What have they learnt from those activities?

How has it made them think different about the topic or issue?

## **Section 3: Extra curricular**

What do they do outside of their studies?

What skills has this allowed them to develop?





# Decisions

Universities and colleges will review the:



**personal statement**



**qualifications**



**reference**

They may also ask for:



**admissions test**



**interview**



**portfolio/audition**



# Tracking Applications

Head to UCAS Hub to:  
Follow its progress 24/7  
See choices and personal information  
View offers  
Reply to offers online

One of three decisions will be made:  
Unconditional offer  
Conditional offer  
Unsuccessful





# Deadlines

UCAS has the following deadlines for submission of applications:

**16<sup>th</sup> October 2023:** Applications for Oxford, Cambridge and most courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science should arrive at UCAS by 18:00 (UK time).

**31<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** Applications for the majority of undergraduate courses should arrive at UCAS by 18:00 (UK time) on the equal consideration date.

Closing date for most conservatoires dance/drama/musical theatre applications.





# Deadlines

We have the following internal deadlines for the UCAS process.

## **Personal Statement – Early Entry**

**23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023:** First Draft (Submitted on Teams)

**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023 :** Second Draft – Early Entry (Submitted on Teams)

**6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 :** Final Draft – Early Entry (Submitted on Teams)

## **Personal Statement – Normal Entry**

**23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023:** First Draft (Submitted on Teams)

**23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 :** Second Draft (Submitted on Teams)

**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 :** Final Draft (Submitted on Teams)



# Deadlines

We have the following internal deadlines for the UCAS process.

## Applications

**11<sup>th</sup> October 2023:** Early Entry

**1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 :** All Other Entries





# Support Provided

At St. Mary's Sixth Form, we have a number of ways to support students with their applications:

We have a dedicated set of form tutors who will work with our students to help with their applications.

The Heads of Year and the Head of Sixth Form will review **every** application before it is sent off to UCAS.

We have specialist members of staff who will provide bespoke support and drop in sessions for students (this will start in the summer term).



# Support Provided

We have a dedicated UCAS Teams channel which will include resources, information videos, guidance and much more to help the students through the process.

Students will be added to this Teams channel after the Easter break.



UCAS

...

General

Apprenticeships

Choosing Courses - Information, Help and Guidan...

Choosing Universities - Information and Help

Clearing - Information, Help and Guidance

Form Tutor Information

Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science

Oxford and Cambridge Universities

Personal Statement - Information, Help and Guida...

Staff Information

Student Finance - Information, Help and Guidance

The UCAS Process - Information, Help and Guidan...



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We have a dedicated UCAS Teams channel which will include resources, information videos, guidance and much more to help the students through the process.

Students will be added to this Teams channel after the Easter break.

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Teams chat window with two messages from James Turnbull. The top message, dated 09/12/2022 16:37, is titled "Personal Statements" and includes a link to "Newcastle University - Personal Statements Help". The message text says: "Hi UCAS, I hope this message finds you well. Please find attached to this message, information from the Newcastle University regarding personal statements. Many thanks, Mr. Turnbull." Below the text is a PDF attachment titled "Newcastle University Personal Statement e-Book.pdf" with a subtitle "UCAS > Personal Statement - Information, Help and Guidance". A "Reply" button is visible below the message.

The bottom message, dated 15/03 15:50, is also titled "Personal Statements" and includes a link to "Information from the University of York". The message text says: "Hi all, I hope this message finds you well. The link below is a video from the University of York looking at your personal statements. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYcjptUVJ78> Many thanks, Mr Turnbull." Below the text is a video attachment titled "Personal Statement Tips - YouTube" with a subtitle "Student Recruitment Officer Vicki gives some top tips on how you can best approach writing your personal statement. For more".



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The screenshot displays a Microsoft Teams channel titled "Choosing Universities" with the University of Sheffield crest in the top right corner. The channel contains two messages:

- Message 1:** Sent on 18 October 2022. From "Information from the University of Sheffield". The text reads: "Hi all, I hope this message finds you well. Please find attached to this message, information from the University of Sheffield regarding studying in Sheffield. Many thanks, Ms. Turnbull". A PDF attachment is shown: "St Mary's - Why Sheffield 2022.pdf" with the path "UCAS > Choosing Universities - Information and Help". A "Reply" button is visible below the message.
- Message 2:** Sent on 15 March 2023. From "Information from the University of Leeds". The text reads: "Hi all, I hope this message finds you well. Please find attached to this message, information from the University of Leeds regarding studying in Leeds. Many thanks, Ms. Turnbull". A PDF attachment is shown: "Why Choose Leeds Presentation- updated Aug 22.pdf" with the path "UCAS > Choosing Universities - Information and Help". A "Reply" button is visible below the message.



# Support Provided

We have a dedicated section on the school website looking at applying for higher education.

This is updated regularly with new information regarding the application process.

The screenshot shows the website for St Mary's Catholic School, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The page features a navigation menu with the following items: About Us, Key Information, Sixth Form, Parents, and Students. The 'Sixth Form' menu is expanded, showing a list of options including '16 - 19 Study Programmes', 'Academic Achievement at Key Stage 5', 'A-Level Results Day 2022', 'Applying for Higher Education', 'Applying for the Sixth Form', 'Destinations & Retention', 'Examination Preparation', 'Information for Parents and Carers', 'Overview', 'Sixth Form Future Opportunities', 'Sixth Form Key Information', 'Sixth Form Open Evening', 'Sixth Form Student Leadership', 'Sixth Form Student Views', 'Sixth Form Transition Work', and 'Student Testimonials'. The 'Applying for Higher Education' option is highlighted, and a sub-menu is displayed with the following items: UCAS Information Presentation, Accepting Courses on UCAS, University Open Days, How to Prepare for University, UCAS Points Conversion Tables, Clearing Advice and Guidance, Information on Student Finance, and University Support Programmes. The background of the website shows a group of students in a classroom setting. The school's logo and name are visible in the top left corner, and the tagline 'St Mary's Catholic School Where Everyone Can Succeed' is displayed at the bottom. A 'LEARN MORE' button is located at the bottom center.



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This is updated regularly with new information regarding the application process.

The screenshot shows a website page with a dark blue header containing the school crest and navigation links for 'About Us' and 'Key Information'. The main heading is 'Information on Student Finance'. The text on the page states that representatives from Newcastle University visited the school on October 5th, 2022, to discuss student finance for the 2023-2024 academic year. It includes a link to a presentation slide titled 'Tuition Fee Loans'. The slide content is as follows:

- Tuition Fee Loans**
- Apply through Student Finance England (separate organisation to universities)
- Full-time or part-time students can apply
- You can apply to receive the full Tuition Fee Loan (£9,250) or only part of it
- Loan goes straight to the University

The slide also features the Newcastle University logo and a 'How to apply' button. The page footer includes a 'Download (PDF, 1.61MB)' link and a page indicator 'Page 6 / 25'.



# Support Provided

Students have a **free** subscription to Unifrog and SpringPod which they can use to help research opportunities and construct their applications.

unifrog

Springpod<sup>®</sup> 

The Springpod logo features the word 'Springpod' in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized rocket ship icon in a teal color with a black outline. The rocket is angled upwards and to the right, with a thin black line trailing behind it to suggest motion. A registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned above the 'd' in 'Springpod'.



# Support Provided

We also have a series of workshops, seminars and talks run by different universities to help students with the UCAS process.

## **Already Confirmed**

**18<sup>th</sup> April:** Student Finance Guidance by the University of Sunderland

**27<sup>th</sup> April :** Writing Your Personal Statement by Newcastle University

**10<sup>th</sup> May:** Interview Skills by the University of Huddersfield

**11<sup>th</sup> May:** The Transition to University by Sheffield University

**18<sup>th</sup> May:** Personal Statement Workshop by Durham University

**6<sup>th</sup> June:** Personal Statements by Sheffield University

**28<sup>th</sup> June:** Personal Statements Clinic By Leeds Beckett University



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There will be a parents information evening run by Newcastle University in October 2023 looking at applying for Student Finance.



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This is supplemented by work carried out in Personal Development lessons in the summer half term.



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This will include work with the school's personal UCAS Advisor who will review personal statements with all students in the Sixth Form.



# Student Finance

All applications for student finance are now to be completed online.

Students need to log-in via [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)

They will receive a customer reference number and will be required to choose a password and secret answer.

Students (with help of parents) complete application with all the necessary information e.g. financial details.

**This is carried out independently of the school.**



# Not Applying For University

Support is provided for students not applying for university.

Bi-weekly talks in the Sixth Form with different employers / professionals.

Apprenticeship information advertised weekly on Teams.

Further opportunities for students advertised weekly on Teams with the Future Opportunities Book and Calendar.

Students offered place on the Sixth Form Employability Group.

Regular meetings with staff to discuss future opportunities.

Information is provided on the UCAS Teams Tile.



# What Can Students Be Doing?

Research, research, research.

Attend open days and events – including virtual events online.

There is St. Mary's Career Fair on March 30<sup>th</sup> (3.30pm – 5.00pm)

Extra-Curricular and Super-curricular activities.

Work Experience (taking place in July 2023).

Student Leadership Scheme.

Volunteering (including the Mentoring and Volunteering Programme).

Independent learning outside the curriculum.

Focus on this year's studies.





# How Can You Support Them?

## Research

Use the parents/guardians' section of the UCAS website and read as much information as you can on the different courses on offer.

## Sign up

Sign up for parent updates from UCAS and get everything you need to know about the application process direct to your inbox.

## Open days

Attend virtual events and open days – you may have a different perspective.

## Be proactive

Make sure they carefully read everything that is sent to them and help them hand in applications/personal statements to the deadlines.



# Sixth Form Presentation Evening: UCAS

Thank you so much for attending this 'Sixth Form Presentation Evening' exploring the UCAS process. We really hope that the information shared has been helpful and informative.

If you do have any questions, please feel free to contact school anytime or pose a question in the chat facility. Please ensure questions do not mention any students or staff by name.

If you have a question regarding the UCAS process, please contact school. We are here to help. Thank you for your continued support.