

Accepting Offers for UCAS Information and Guidance

UCAS

Now that you have started to receive your offers through UCAS, you must consider which offer(s) to accept.

You can only do this when you have received all your decisions from your different courses.

If you want to, you can permanently withdraw from any outstanding choices to reply to offers you have already received.

If you decide to withdraw a choice, it will not be available to you later and the university will be informed you no longer wish to be considered for the course.

Take your time to consider your options and only do this if you are sure.

This should be an option if you have received offers from the two universities you are definitely deciding to select.

You can only accept offers once all decisions have been made on your applications.

When your last decision comes in, UCAS send an email to say there is an update.

At this point:

Sign in to your application to make your replies.

You will see the deadline you need to reply by.

If you have an unconditional offer, you can select it now to confirm your place.

If your offers are conditional on exam results or other requirements, you can pick two offers, so you have one option as a **back-up choice**.

Types of Replies

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Firm acceptance – this is your first choice.

If it is an unconditional offer, the place is yours!

So that course provider will expect you as their student on the start date of the offer.

If this is the case, you **cannot have an insurance choice.**

Types of Replies

There are three replies which you can make:

Firm acceptance – this is your first choice.

If it is conditional, the place is yours if you meet the offer conditions.
So just in case you do not make the offer conditions, you can pick a second offer as a backup – **your insurance acceptance.**

Types of Replies

There are three replies which you can make:

Insurance acceptance – the back-up choice to a conditional firm acceptance.

If you are choosing an insurance, **go for something with lower offer conditions than your firm** – make sure it is somewhere you would still be happy to go to though.

That way, if your results are lower than expected, you might still meet the conditions at your insurance choice; then you have your place confirmed there.

Remember, you will only attend your insurance choice course if you do not meet the conditions of your firm choice, but you do meet the conditions of your insurance.

You cannot choose between your firm and insurance when you get your results, so make sure you are happy with which is your firm, and which is your insurance before you reply.

Types of Replies

There are three replies which you can make:

Decline – you will need to decline any other offers you get.

However, if you decide you do not want to accept any of the offers, you can decline them all and add more courses in the UCAS Extra service.

Alternatively, you can see what courses still have vacancies later in the UCAS Clearing service – this is available after the Results Day in the summer.

You can only accept one firm choice and one insurance choice (if you choose to have one).

You must decline all other offers.

Types of Replies

Here are the different combinations of reply possible:

Unconditional firm (UF) – You are in!

Conditional firm (CF) – You are in if you meet the conditions set out in the offer.

Conditional firm (CF) and conditional insurance (CI) – You have made a first and second choice – you will be in at the first if you meet the conditions. If not, you might have met the conditions of the second – if so, you will be on that course instead.

Conditional firm (CF) and unconditional insurance (UI) – You have made a first and second choice – if you meet the conditions of the first you will be on that course. If not, you will be on the second.

You get your results



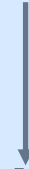
**Did you meet
your Firm conditions?**

YES



**Placed at
your Firm choice**

NO



**If not: did you meet
your Insurance
conditions?**

YES



**Placed at
your Insurance choice**

NO



**If you miss both:
Clearing / alternatives**

Why insurance helps

- It reduces stress on results day
- Gives you a confirmed back-up plan
- Stops you relying on Clearing as the only option

You must reply to all your offers at the same time.

But that does not mean you need to rush to decide as soon as you are able to reply.

If you reply before the deadline date (this is given on your UCAS application) then your replies will be recorded.

That said, it is not a good idea to wait until the last minute on your reply deadline day – so do give yourself enough time to reply carefully.

Reply Dates

There is a deadline for accepting offers on your UCAS application.

These are based on when we get the last decision in from your universities or colleges.
Check your application to see your own personal deadline.

If you receive your last decision on or before 31 March 2026, your reply date is **6 May 2026** (except if you are using Extra to find a place).

If you receive your last decision on or before 13 May 2026, your reply date is **3 June 2026** (except if you are using Extra to find a place).

If you receive your last decision on or before 15 July 2026, your reply date is **22 July 2026** (including Extra choices).

Changed Your Mind?

If you change your mind after you have accepted an offer:

If you accepted your offers in the last 14 days, contact UCAS to make any changes to your replies.

If it is been more than 14 days since you replied to your offers, there is a more detailed process you need to follow. As you have agreed to a contract with your chosen universities, it may be possible, but it cannot be guaranteed you can change them. You will need to speak to the university about changing your replies and then call UCAS to inform them of the outcome.

No course swaps are possible after **24th July 2026**.

If you have changed your mind and no longer want to go to university with the offer you have accepted, you can sign into UCAS and completely withdraw your application.

Advice

When selecting offers for your UCAS application, please remember that if you are selecting an insurance choice to make sure it has a lower offer than your firm choice.

Only select a firm and insurance choice if you are happy to go to either of these universities.

Students are tied into their insurance choice if they achieve those conditions and not their firm, so cannot enter Clearing straight away on Results Day if needed.

If you have not received an offer from any universities, or you have declined all your offers from your original application, you can select another course using UCAS Extra.

Advice

Firm Choice

Choose the course first — then the university

Course content: modules, assessment, placements, accreditation

Teaching style: contact hours, practical work, independent study

Support: academic support, wellbeing, disability support, finance help

Location & lifestyle: travel, campus/city, accommodation, cost of living

Outcomes: employability support, year abroad/industry, typical destinations

Consider: Are you on track for the grades in your offer?

Do you meet any subject requirements?

Do you still want it after a visit / open day?

Before replying:

Re-read each offer carefully

Compare course pages side by side

Talk it through (tutor/careers/subject teachers)

Advice

Insurance Choice

- You'd genuinely be happy to go there
- Entry requirements you can realistically meet
- Conditions are clear (including subject grades)
- Course and location still fit your priorities
- You can afford it and live there

Avoid these traps

- "Aspirational insurance" (same/harder grades than firm)
- Picking a uni you wouldn't attend just "to have an insurance"
- Ignoring grade profile (e.g., must include Maths)
- Forgetting extra conditions (portfolio, health checks, etc.)

A good insurance is...

- Low enough to be a safety net,
- not so low that you'd regret it.

Advice

Insurance Choice – How Low Should it be?

Start from evidence: mocks, topic tests, and how you perform under exam conditions.

Account for “bad day” variation (illness, timing, nerves).

Check grade profiles (e.g., “AAB including Maths” vs “ABB any subjects”).

If your firm is a stretch, make your insurance safer.

If you’re consistently exceeding your firm offer, the buffer can be smaller.

Advice

Select an insurance that is about 1–2 grades (\approx 8–16 UCAS points) below your firm — but this depends on the course and your confidence.

The Insurance Buffer

Lower overall tariff / easier grade profile.

Fewer “must have” subject requirements.

Less reliance on one subject going perfectly.

Still a course you’d be happy to study for 3+ years.

Advice

Scenario	Firm offer	Insurance offer	Why this works
A	AAA (includes Maths)	ABB (any subjects)	Buffer in tariff and/or grade profile, but still close enough to feel like a strong option.
B	ABB	BBB	One-grade buffer reduces risk if exams go slightly worse than expected.
C	BBB (plus portfolio)	BCC (no extra conditions)	Safer grades and fewer extra conditions — useful for competitive/portfolio courses.

If you have any questions regarding the UCAS process either ask myself, Mrs Francis, or your Form Tutor.

Many thanks,

Mr Turnbull