

Applying for University

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UCAS

(University and Colleges Admissions Service)

- Admin body that distribute applications to universities
- Online application
- Add up to 5 courses to apply to
- Complete a personal statement
- School will complete an academic reference
- Separate UCAS Conservatoire application (Music and drama)

Calendar of Events

- University Open Days
- Deadline for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Vet Medicine, Dentistry – 15 October 2025
- Deadline for UCAS applications – 14 January 2026 (completed before Christmas and prelims)
- UCAS pass your application to each of your choices (they don't see who else you've applied to)
- Offers made (unconditional, conditional, rejection)

Choosing Courses

- Which course?

Continued interest from school, new subject, vocational course, combined degree, length of course, career options, method of teaching and assessment

- Which university?

Home or away, who offers the course in which you are interested, finance, travel, other interests (sports, clubs)

- Entrance Requirements

Could limit options

Entrance Requirements

- Going rates vs minimum requirements - University will state their minimum requirements but “going rate” is often used as a realistic entry requirement.
- Usually expressed in Highers e.g. 4H AB BB
- May require specific subjects or specific grades in specific subjects
- May differentiate between a subject being required or recommended
- First sitting usually means S5
- May also be minimum requirements at National 5
- Advanced Highers will supersede the same subject at Higher

Other considerations

- Finance – Fees paid for Scottish students at Scottish universities
- Residency – need to be 3 years in UK at the start of the course to get fees paid (all levels of course)
- HNC/D courses at SRUC (Oatridge) go through UCAS
- Some courses require you to sit tests – Medicine and Law
- If you qualify for free school meals you don't have to pay the fee for applying through UCAS
- LEAPS – widening access grades

Researching information

UCAS website – www.ucas.com UCAS Hub

My World of Work – www.myworldofwork.co.uk

University prospectuses – online, library, request copies

Open Days

LEAPS – take advantage if eligible

Advice – H&W classes, Heads of House, SMT, Careers Adviser

Personal Statement –

Each answer will have a minimum character count of 350 characters (including spaces, full stops etc). (You can write 4,000 characters total).

Question 1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?

This question gives you the chance to express your passion and motivation for your chosen subject. It's important to demonstrate that you've thought deeply about your decision and that you are truly interested in the field you want to pursue.

Your motivations: Why did you choose this course? Did a specific experience, book, or person inspire you? Universities want to see your enthusiasm for the subject, so be authentic and show your passion.

Your understanding of the subject area: Talk about any super-curricular activities you've engaged in (activities outside the classroom that have contributed to your knowledge, like reading academic journals, attending lectures, or participating in online courses).

Your future goals: Even if you're not sure what career you want, think about how this course will help you develop the skills necessary for your future ambitions.

Question 2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you prepare for this course?

This question focuses on how your academic background has prepared you for the subject. It's your chance to show how your studies so far are directly relevant to your chosen course

Your relevant qualifications: Think about the subjects you've studied that have given you the foundational knowledge for your course. Whether it's a specific module in school or college, or an online course you've completed, mention anything that relates directly to your field of study.

Transferable skills: Don't just talk about what you've learned in the classroom. Universities also want to see the skills you've gained that will help you succeed at university, such as analytical thinking, problem-solving, or research skills.

Any notable academic achievements: If you've won an award, received a certificate, or achieved something significant in your studies, mention this here.

Include positions of responsibility you hold, or have held, both in and out of school.

Question 3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

In this section, you get to talk about anything you've done outside of your formal education that shows you're ready for university. This could include work experience, volunteering, or any other activities that have helped you build skills relevant to your course.

Work experience or volunteering: Have you worked or volunteered in a role that gave you hands-on experience in your chosen field? Explain how these experiences helped you develop important skills, like communication, teamwork, or time management. Skills from paid work/part time jobs can also be included.

Personal life experiences: Think about any personal challenges or responsibilities you've taken that have helped you grow. For example, caring for a family member may have developed your resilience, empathy, and organisational skills.

Hobbies and extracurricular activities: Did you participate in any clubs or sports that helped you build important skills? Maybe you volunteered at a summer school or attended extra-curricular workshops to enhance your knowledge.

Post-education activities (for applicants not currently in school): If you're applying after taking a gap year or working, explain how your activities during this time have prepared you for university.

Academic Reference

- We will ask pupils to speak to all current teachers for a character reference and a predicted grade.
- We also ask pupils to get a subject specific reference that links to what they are applying for.
- This allows for a personal reference that highlights why are a suitable university candidate and why they are suited for the course they are applying for.

What Now?

- May require an application for HNC/D at college if likely to get conditional offers
- Have a good email account you can use for all correspondence
- Information will be posted on “S6” and “Transition to Work” Teams channel and via Health and Wellbeing classes
- Be around when exam results come out
- Need to be proactive and make it happen

Questions

