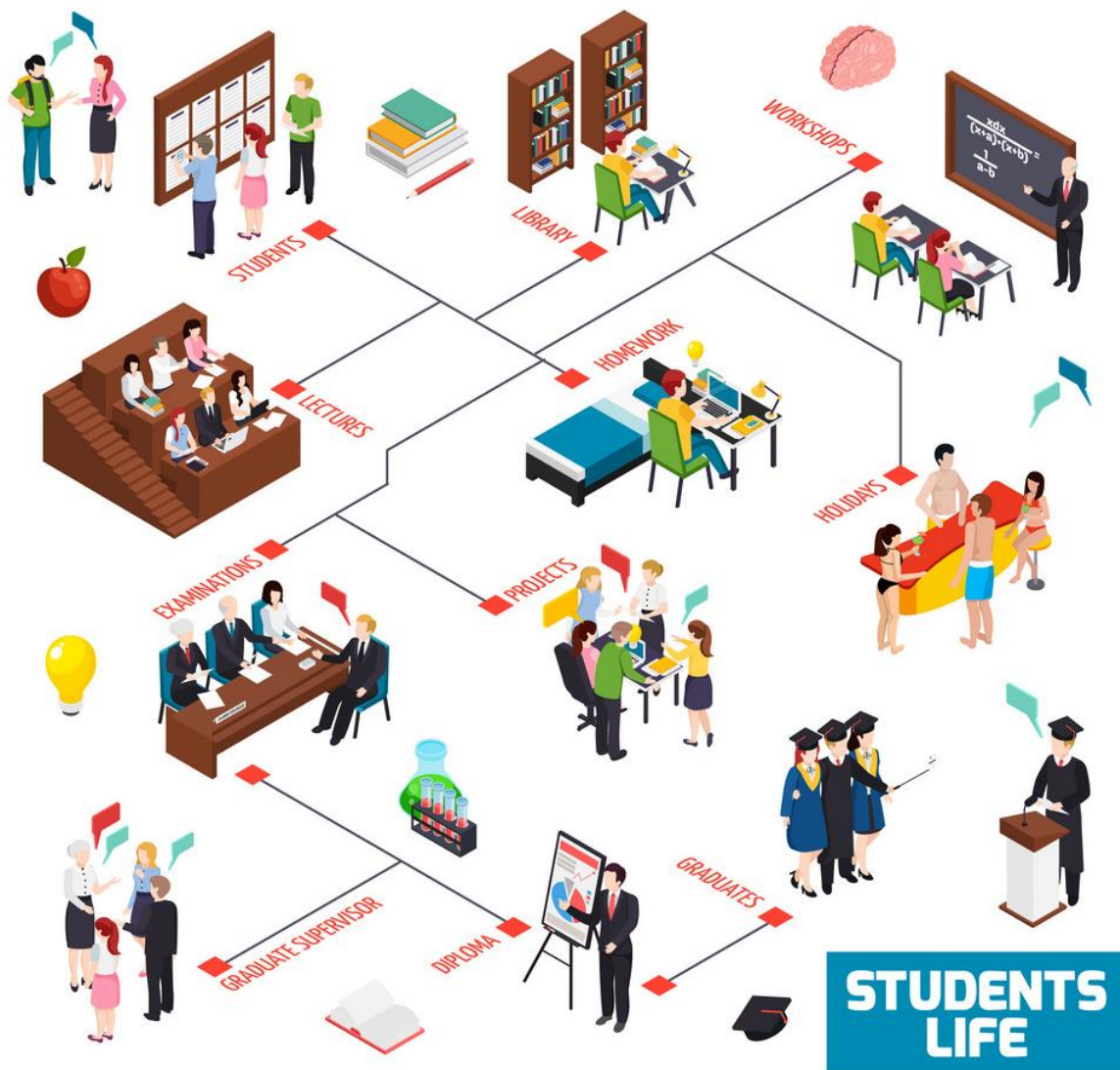


Parent, Guardian and Carer Guide To UCAS 2019



Before your child starts their application, there's a lot to consider. Here's all the key information, and the things they'll need bear in mind.

Key dates at a glance

2019

- 8 May: Courses starting in 2020 are available in the UCAS search tool.
- 22 May: UCAS Undergraduate Apply – the application system for those applying to courses starting in 2012 – becomes available for registration only, allowing your child to start filling in their application.
- 5 September: Completed applications can be paid for and sent to UCAS. Applications can't be sent until all sections are complete, the reference is added, and the application fee has been paid.
- 15 October (18:00 UK time): Deadline for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and for most courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science. An application can still be sent after this date, but the universities and colleges concerned cannot guarantee they'll give it equal consideration
- 17 December Schools deadline for most undergraduate courses. An application can still be sent after this date, but the universities and colleges concerned cannot guarantee they'll give it equal consideration.

2020

- 25 February: Extra opens.
- 30 June (18:00 UK time): Last date for receipt of applications. Applications received after this deadline are automatically entered into Clearing .
- 4 July (18:00 UK time): Extra closes.
- 5 July: Clearing opens, and vacancies are shown in the UCAS search tool.
- Early August: SQA results day.
4 August
- 20 September (18:00 UK time): Final deadline for applications to courses starting in 2020.



Planning their future

It's important students consider their post-school plans early – but with so many options, where should they start?

Subject ideas

A few light conversations over dinner or while watching TV – as opposed to an intimidating sit down talk about 'the future' – is probably the best way to get them thinking about their next steps. If that step is university, but they're struggling to get inspired by a particular subject, try to get them thinking about potential areas of study, in terms of:



- a subject they study now If it's the subject they love and are best at, get them to consider whether it's going to keep them interested for the next few years, and which career path(s) it might lead to.
- a subject related to a career If they already have more vocational ambitions, explore together whether they need to study a particular degree subject to get a job in that field, or if the options are more flexible.
- a completely new subject There are many degree-level disciplines they won't have encountered in their studies before. Assess their suitability for these with an open mind, relating each back to what they enjoy and how they learn best.

If your child has an idea of what they want to study. Get them to check the entry requirements – these may mention particular subjects or qualifications they'll need, as well as any grades they'll need to get on to the course. They might not be able to apply to certain courses without having taken specific qualifications – for example, Higher Biology is a requirement for medicine courses.

Remember to be a positive sounding board – being pushy, or putting pressure on your child to follow a certain career or degree path, can be counter-productive. Keep conversations positive and aspirational.

comfortable with. Use the open days search tool at www.ucas.com/opendays to find out when the university they're interested in is holding its next open day.

- Taster courses are tailored to specific courses or subjects, and often include lectures and hands-on workshops to give your child a feel for what it would be like to study that particular course. You can find them at www.ucas.com/taster-courses.

Step 3 – Get informed

Entry requirements

It's really important your child understands the entry requirements for courses they're interested in, so they can make fully informed choices about courses that are right for them.

Some uni and college entry requirements will be based on Tariff points. The UCAS Tariff is used by universities and colleges to make broad comparisons between qualifications used for entry to higher education. Tariff points are allocated to a wide range of qualifications, and can be added together (within certain rules) to give an overall Tariff score. Go to www.ucas.com/tariff to find out more and to use the UCAS Tariff calculator – a handy tool to help your child find out how many Tariff points their qualifications and grades add up to.

Know the UCAS deadlines

Depending on which course and uni or college they've chosen, your child will have a UCAS application deadline which they'll need to meet. It's important they check the date for their chosen courses, so they leave themselves plenty of time to complete their application.



Help your child stand out from the crowd



There's a lot more to a university – or a job – application than academic achievements. Admissions tutors and employers want to see how applicants have built up skills and experience outside of their studies too.

Work experience and internships

Work experience looks great on a personal statement, but only if your child can reflect on what they learnt from it, and how it's relevant to the course they're applying for.

Work experience doesn't always have to be in a relevant industry – at this stage, just gaining some experience in the workplace is more important.

Using a real work experience example to answer the all-important question 'why should we give you a place on this course?' is bound to impress. For those looking to study medicine, for example, work experience that shows an interest in caring professions would be valuable – like nursery, preschools, or care home experience.

Part-time work

Even a Saturday job in a shop can demonstrate potential to admissions tutors. Encourage your child to be specific and describe a situation they've dealt with. How did they handle the situation? What did they learn? Get them to keep it relevant to the course, and describe how the skills link to their degree work. If they've developed strong communication skills as a result of interacting with

customers, they should mention how they would put them to good use when presenting ideas in seminars, for example.

Volunteering

Doing voluntary work at a younger age shows that an applicant has drive. It is often a good way of building up communication and interaction skills too, so help your child reflect on these in their personal statement.

Clubs and hobbies

Talking about other interests or hobbies helps inject some personality into their statement. Before it goes in, they should ask themselves 'so what?'. Less can sometimes be more – only include an example if it's relevant.

Key points

- Draw on how each experience helped them learn, and how it's relevant to what they're applying for. Working in a supermarket can do this just as well as a high-flying internship.
- Make sure everything in their application is relevant – if it doesn't add anything, leave it out, no matter how much they enjoyed it.
- The more experience gained in a relevant industry during university, the better their chances of gaining employment in that area.
- Voluntary work is a great way of taking on responsibility in a chosen field, and often provides more opportunities to do so than in a commercial environment.

VOLUNTEER

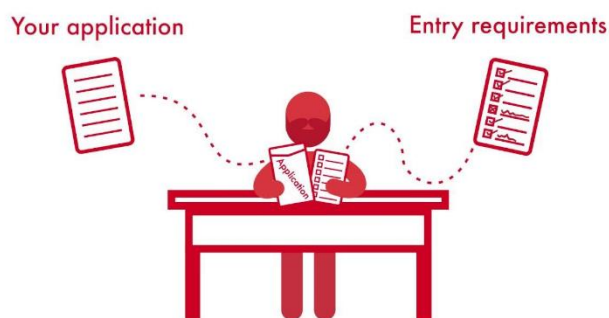


How to fill in the UCAS application

Once your child has chosen the unis and courses that interest them most, it's time to start their application. First, they'll need to register – it only takes about five minutes to enter their basic details and set up security information. If your child is applying through a school, they'll be given a 'buzzword' so their application can be linked to their school. If they're applying independently, there will be a few additional questions they'll need to answer. Once they've registered, there are seven sections to complete – before they get started, get them to watch our short video guide at ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication

1. Personal details – This will already contain the information they gave when registering, and there will be more questions about student support and where they live.
2. Additional information – If your child has a UK address, they'll be asked a few equality questions, and details about any preparation they've done for higher education.
3. Student finance – Here they can sign up to receive an email from UCAS letting them know when they can apply for student finance.
4. Choices – They can make up to five course choices (but only four for courses in medicine, dentistry, or veterinary medicine/science).
5. Education – They'll need to provide a list of all the schools they've been to since the age of 11, including the dates they were there, all their exam results (pass or fail), and details of any exams still to be taken.
6. Personal statement – This is their opportunity to convince the university or college to offer them a place.
7. Employment – If they have a part-time job, they should include the basic details here. They can talk more about this in their personal statement

Your child can fill in their application at any time, saving their progress as they go. They can go back and edit it until they're happy it's complete. Finally, there's a section for the reference, which is added by their referee – usually their teacher, but this can also be an employer or trainer for students applying independently.



Help your child write a great personal statement.

Your child may find writing their personal statement the most difficult part of the application process – they're not alone, as everyone finds it hard!

For most applicants, it will be the first time they've had to write reflectively about themselves. Taking a positive approach, and leaving enough time to do a good job, really can make your child's application stand out from the crowd.

Help your child think about what to write and how to structure it, with UCAS' personal statement tool – www.ucas.com/planyourstatement. Not only is it a great tool to get them thinking about what they should be writing about, but it also tracks the characters they use, making sure they keep to the 4,000 limit.

To get started, encourage them to:

- think about what makes them interesting, and what makes them stand out in a positive way
- write down a whole load of words – anything that shows why they're excited about the course(s) they're applying for
- remember why they chose the subject
- list work experience or other activities as supporting evidence, to show why they'd make a great student
- think about skills they could use on the course, such as leadership, communication, and time management
- ask you, their teacher, and their friends for ideas and feedback

Pulling it together

Taking all those ideas, and structuring them into a perfect personal statement of up to 4,000 characters, is the next step. There are four key parts to a good personal statement:

1. First part – a punchy opening paragraph, showing their excitement for and understanding of the course. What makes them want to study it over any other course?
2. Middle part – evidence to support their interest in the course. They should include why it interests them, why they're suitable (relevant skills, work experience, and inspirational moments will all sit here), and any activities they've taken part in that demonstrate their interest in the course or subject area.

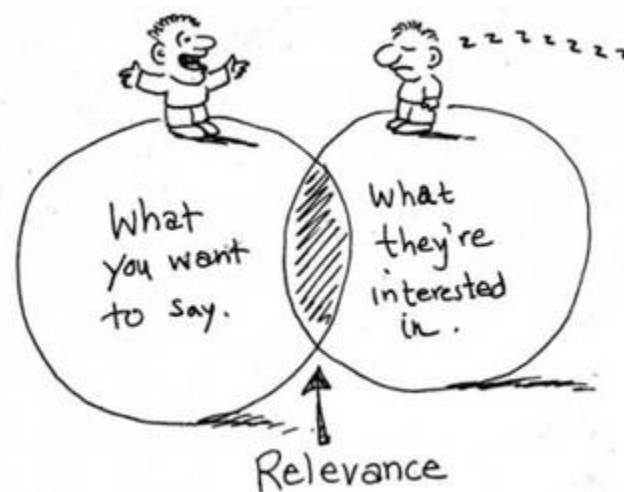
3. Final part – this is where they write about themselves, what they're interested in, and how well they will fit in to university life. This could include achievements they're proud of, positions of responsibility they've held, and attributes that make them interesting, special, or unique.
4. Closing paragraph – a concise statement which leaves the reader with a clear understanding of why your child is perfect for the course

TIP: A good personal statement:

- is relevant and focused – don't waste the 4,000 characters
- uses clear, plain English
- avoids clichés
- is original – UCAS' software scans all personal statements for plagiarism
- is redrafted multiple times until it's right

Don't forget, they can apply to more than one course, but can only write one personal statement, so it has to be relevant to all.

For personal statement pointers about specific subjects, and handy resources to help your child create their first draft, go to www.which.co.uk/pstips.



Useful resources to help you

UCAS updates www.ucas.com/sign-up	Students, parents, and your colleagues can sign up to receive regular updates, links to useful resources, and guidance throughout the application process.
UCAS higher education exhibitions www.ucas.com/exhibitions	UCAS exhibitions are a great way for students to explore their options face-to-face, all under one roof.
Open days www.ucas.com/opendays	Open days are fantastic for getting a flavour of what uni's really like. Students can use our open day listing to find out when and where they're taking place.
UCAS search tool www.ucas.com/2018search	Our search tool allows students to explore the wide range of subjects available, and find the right course for them!
How to fill in your application guide www.ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication	A step-by-step guide to filling in a UCAS application.
The Parent Guide www.ucas.com/parents	Our Parent Guide helps parents and carers better understand the process of applying to higher education, so they can support their son or daughter throughout the process. We also offer a Welsh version.
Personal statement tool www.ucas.com/personalstatement	Our personal statement tool helps students think about what to include and how to structure it. The tool also has a word count so they can see when they're close to the 4,000-character limit.
Video wall www.ucas.com/videos	There are hundreds of videos on our video wall for students, parents, and advisers, covering all aspects of the journey to higher education.
Social media @ucas_online and @ucas_advisers www.facebook.com/ucasonline www.instagram.com/ucas_online	Encourage others to follow us on social media for useful hints and tips throughout the year. They can also get in touch for more information.
FAQs www.ucas.com/faqs	Have your students, parents, or colleagues got a question? They're probably not the first to ask it. Direct them to our FAQs.

Useful websites

www.ucas.com

www.ucas.com/apply

www.ucas.com/yougofurther.co.uk

www.ucas.com/ucascard/

www.opendays.com

www.thestudentroom.co.uk

www.unistats.com

www.ukcoursefinder.com

www.push.co.uk

www.ucas.com/students/choosingcourses/admissions

www.ucas.com/students/ucas_tariff/index.html

www.educationguardian.co.uk/universityguide

www.thetimes.co.uk/Good_Uni_Guide

www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

<http://www.ucas.com/students/studentfinance/>

www.direct.gov.uk/yourfuture

www.prospects.ac.uk

www.open.ac.uk

<http://www.brightknowledge.org/knowledge-bank/money/get-sponsored-to-study>