

The Ultimate Guide to UCAS Changes





WHAT'S INSIDE

Welcome to the UCAS Changes Ultimate Guide!

You may have heard already that UCAS has made some changes to its application process for **2024 entry**, and in the coming years changes for **2025 applications** and **2026 entries** will also come into effect.

Applying to university and getting to grips with UCAS can already be stressful enough, so it's okay to be feeling overwhelmed by the changes! That's why we've written our UCAS Changes Ultimate Guide to clear everything up and make sure that you are applying to universities through UCAS with confidence. If you are aged 15-18 and looking to apply to a UK university for entry in 2025 onwards, this guide is for you.

Over the past decade at Oxford Scholastica, we've been running [academic summer schools in Oxford](#), as well as [online courses](#) and [internships](#).

We are aiming to look past the dramatic clickbait headlines to get to the information that's meaningful to you as a UK university applicant.

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These articles form a step-by-step guide to the change to the UCAS applications system, giving you the confidence of knowing that you're up-to-date on the application process.

So, let's get started!





About the Authors

We differentiate our resources from others available online by working with current students and education professionals to make sure everything we share is relevant and accurate.

Allow us to introduce you to...

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Jen is a finalist studying Classical Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Oxford. Outside of work, Jen enjoys spending time in nature and is a strong advocate for the mental health benefits of this – although she does like to soundtrack her peaceful, scenic routes with punk, rock and metal music mixes.

Ameal

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Ameal is reading English Language and Literature at Somerville College, University of Oxford. They are passionate about access and outreach, and they volunteer as a Student Ambassador for their college. They're interested in the power of literature to enhance and alter people's perspectives and thus to change the world. They particularly enjoy writing, reading and studying the literature of the fantastic.



Jo

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Jo's career in education includes a tenure as a teacher at one of the UK's leading schools, where she also served as a university admissions advisor. Having held senior leadership roles in various educational organisations, Jo is deeply committed to empowering young people to reach their full potential.



So, What's Changing?

What's Changing?

The following changes are being made and will be explained in more detail later in this Ultimate Guide:

- Structured questions are being introduced to the **personal statement**.
- The way your referees input your **academic references** is being reorganised.
- The **base application** is being remodelled – the application fee has been simplified, and two additional responses to the gender question are being added ('I use another term' and 'I prefer not to say').
- **Student access to resources** will be refined.

Don't worry if this all sounds confusing at the moment – all will be made clear as you read on.

When Are the Changes Happening?

Some of the changes have already come into effect for students starting their degrees in **Autumn 2024**, while others will be coming into effect for the **2025/2026 application and entry** window.

In **2024**, changes to the following came into effect:

- The academic references
- The base application (fee and demographic questions)

Who Will the Changes Affect?

The changes listed above and explained later in this Ultimate Guide will affect anyone using UCAS to apply to UK universities after 2024 – that is, these changes will affect anyone looking to apply to UK universities, including you!



What's in this Ultimate Guide?

Our Ultimate Guide has been written to answer any questions you might have about applying to a UK university after 2024, including:

What's 'UCAS' all about, anyway?

We've got a comprehensive introduction to all things UCAS (what it is, what it's for, and how it's used) so when the time comes you'll be ready to use all the tools available to you to make your applications.

What's actually going on?

We're giving you detailed information about the changes taking place with the UCAS system, to help clear the confusion which can arise from all of the opinions and clickbait articles out there.



Do I need to change anything in the way I'm preparing and applying?

We'll give you practical advice for how to go about applying under these new regulations.

When am I expected to do all of this?

When do these changes kick in? We've provided a UCAS timeline for all students applying to UK universities.





What Is UCAS?

It's all very well knowing things are changing with the UCAS application but, before we jump into the details, it's important to make sure you know exactly what UCAS is, how you're likely to interact with it, and what the process looks like. Read on...



What Is UCAS?

The Role and Purpose of UCAS

Depending on where you are in the UK university application process, you've probably already heard the word UCAS floating around. Or you might not have done. Either way, we're going to cover exactly what UCAS is and how to use it in this chapter.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (**UCAS**) is the central application portal for UK higher education institutions (anywhere you can get a qualification after you have turned 18, such as universities, colleges and conservatoires). It's an online, centralised and non-specific admissions service for all UK universities and colleges, so most applicants to UK higher education will use UCAS.

Who is UCAS for?

UCAS is used by everyone applying to UK higher education. This could be secondary school leavers from the UK and overseas, individuals who already have an undergraduate degree applying for postgraduate courses, and mature applicants.

Anyone can apply for any course so long as they meet the entry requirements (these can include, among other things, relevant qualifications, English language ability, and the capacity to pay university fees). In the UK, school-leavers typically first use UCAS during their final school year.

How has UCAS changed over time?

Before 1961, every student would apply to every university individually. This was before most homes had access to a computer, and so applying to each of the universities on your list became a very tedious process of writing applications by hand or on a typewriter, finding an envelope and buying a stamp, posting it off and starting all over again.

In 1961, the first centralised admissions service for UK higher education was formed, the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), to combat this. A couple of decades later, in 1985, the Polytechnics Central Admissions System (PCAS) was set up to provide the same service for polytechnics. Finally, as the higher education space evolved, the UCCA and the PCAS merged to form what we now know as UCAS in 1991.

A unified admissions service like UCAS allows a streamlined application process for all students wishing to apply to UK higher education, making university and college applications more universally accessible. All you have to do nowadays is shoot off one online application, and UCAS distributes it to all of your university choices, and then reports the universities' decisions back to you.



The UCAS Application Process Explained

1 Registration

Applying to UK higher education through UCAS begins with registration. You'll enter some personal details and create an account on the UCAS website. Some questions here will be for UK students only – don't worry if these don't apply to you!

When you've registered, you'll receive a UCAS ID and access to the application portal, and add your education and employment history if applicable.

3 Personal Statement

You will be asked to write a personal statement, which is where you can explain why you want to study your chosen course by showcasing your motivations, passions, and experiences.

Previously, this was one cohesive essay limited to 4,000 characters or 47 lines (whichever is reached first). **The guidance and personal statement requirements are currently undergoing change, and these are discussed elsewhere in this Ultimate Guide.**

2 Course Selection

In the portal, you'll be choose a maximum of five courses from up to five universities and colleges. There are three key things to remember:

1. You can choose all five of your courses at the same time, or leave some until later.
2. Your choices are not in order of preference.
3. The universities and colleges won't be able to see where else you've applied until you've replied to your offers.

Some special rules apply, for example:

- An undergraduate applicant can only choose either Oxford or Cambridge University;
- You can apply for a maximum of four courses in Medicine, Dentistry, or Veterinary Medicine/Science, so your fifth choice will need to be a different subject;
- If you are applying to conservatoires, you can choose up to six courses.

4 References

Your application will be supplemented by academic references from teachers or tutors.

- If you are applying through a school, college or UCAS-registered centre, these will be completed by your institution after you have submitted your application.
- If you are applying as an individual, you will need to attach the reference before you submit your application.

5 Predicted Grades

If you are still in school, you will be prompted to share your predicted grades (for UK students attending sixth form, these are usually the grades you achieved in your Year 12 mock exams).

6 Submission

After reviewing your application, you will submit it to UCAS for processing and forwarding to institutions. Now all you need to do is wait to hear back from them.

Some institutions and some courses may require further application processes, including entrance exams such as the LNAT for law, and/or interviews. You should know whether your application process will require these additional steps before you apply, and you can find out about them by checking the course page on each university's website.



Key UCAS Terms

UCAS Tariff Points

The UCAS tariff points system assigns a certain number of points to your qualifications, based on the level and the grade achieved.

For instance, an A-level achieved at grade C earns 32 tariff points, while a Merit in a BTEC Level 3 Diploma at Grade M will earn 16 points.

Universities and entry requirements

Some institutions will set specific UCAS Tariff point requirements for courses, and some will instead focus on specific grades or qualifications. It's best to have a look at the specific course pages on the university and college websites before you apply.

Qualifications included

Various qualifications are included in the UCAS tariff points system, including A-levels, BTECs and the IB, but not all of them are. Don't worry if you can't find your qualifications – not being on the list doesn't necessarily mean that your chosen universities and colleges won't consider it. Look at the course page for your chosen subject and, if you're still not sure, drop the admissions team an email – that's what they're there for!

UCAS Clearing

Clearing takes place from July to September, and can be used by students who didn't receive offers, declined all of their offers, and those who didn't quite meet the conditional requirements for any offers they did receive. Students using Clearing can explore courses on offer from universities and colleges that still have space, and make new applications.

UCAS Extra

If you apply to five universities but don't receive any offers, use UCAS Extra from late February to early July. With Extra, you can apply to one additional course at a time until you receive an offer.

Significance

UCAS Extra and Clearing are both valuable options for students who wish to:

- Explore different choices and/or institutions;
- Change their academic direction;
- Secure a place when their initial choices don't work out.

It's important to remember that it's not the end of the world if you don't get the offer(s) that you originally wanted – sometimes, this is just the beginning of a path to success you hadn't considered before.



Preparing for UCAS While in School

During your penultimate year of school, you can:

- Think about your subject choices further (for instance, you may know you want to study English, but there are many courses relating to English, such as English Literature, Comparative Literature, Creative Writing and so on).
- Visit universities and colleges you are interested in on their open days to learn more about them.
- Read guides online, like this UCAS Ultimate Guide.
- Begin thinking about your personal statement.

If you're aged 12-16, you might consider spending your time:

- Thinking about **which subject** you'd like to study at a higher level.
- Choosing qualifications to support your application (for example, if you wish to study Medicine, you should make sure that you are keeping up with qualifications in Maths and the sciences).
- Finding hobbies and extracurriculars you enjoy which can support you in your application (for example, becoming your school's netball captain can be used to show off your leadership skills in your personal statement).
- Engage in personal and academic development (for example, if you want to study Art, you can begin to build up your own portfolio of work, or if you want to study an essay-based subject you might consider entering an **essay competition**).
- Attend in-person and online programmes designed to help you understand what's involved in UK higher education, such as an **Academic Masterclass** or a **Debate Summer School**.





Is the UCAS Personal Statement Being Scrapped?



The UCAS Personal Statement



The Current UCAS Personal Statement

The current personal statement is '[your opportunity to talk about you, and why you want to enrol on a particular course](#)'. It's limited to 4000 characters (and 47 lines). A personal statement typically covers:

- Your reasons for applying;
- Your passion for your subject;
- Your work experience;
- Your skills and achievements;
- Your plans for the future.

Why's the Personal Statement Important?

Your personal statement is a chance to introduce yourself, your skills, and your motivations in your own words. Because your personal statement is unique to you, it can make you stand out in your university applications.

Admissions officers will read your personal statement hoping to learn more about you. It is a key part of convincing them that you're the person they should accept over the other applicants. As UCAS puts it, admissions officers will look at '[not just what you say, but how you say it, why you think it's important, and what you've done to show it](#)'. You should consider the qualities that make you stand out, and do your best to present them fully!



What Changes Are UCAS Making to the Personal Statement?

Previously, applicants submitted a freely written personal statement essay. The changes UCAS are introducing will offer a more supportive framework by including a set of questions to remove any guesswork about what should be included.

As of December 2023, UCAS has confirmed these three questions will be in the new personal statement framework:

- Why do you want to study these courses?
- How has your learning so far helped you to be ready to succeed on these courses?
- What else have you done to help you prepare, and why are these experiences useful?

UCAS also plans to include a separate extenuating circumstances section alongside the personal statement, rather than within it. In this section, you'll be able to choose to answer this question:

- Is there anything that the universities and colleges need to know about in order to help them put your achievements and experiences so far into context?

Universities will use this information not only to learn about challenges you may have faced, but also to help adjust your academic experience for the better once you start your degree.

Why Is the Personal Statement Changing?

There are a few reasons behind the changes. Firstly, in 2022 83% of UCAS applicants found writing their personal statement stressful. This was because they were unsure whether they had covered the correct information. They also felt as though they needed support from others to get their personal statement right.

UCAS has therefore decided to split the personal statement into sections to clearly demonstrate what information is important. This should reduce disparity caused by some students having more support than others.

Additionally, by creating a framework that is the same for everyone, it will also become easier for admissions officers to directly compare personal statements.

When Will the Changes Come into Effect?

The changes to the UCAS personal statement will not come into effect earlier than the 2026 entry cycle. The applications for this cycle will start in the autumn of 2025.

This delay will allow UCAS to discuss the changes with stakeholders, and give them time to make sure that the changes are as helpful as possible.



How to Maximise Your Personal Statement

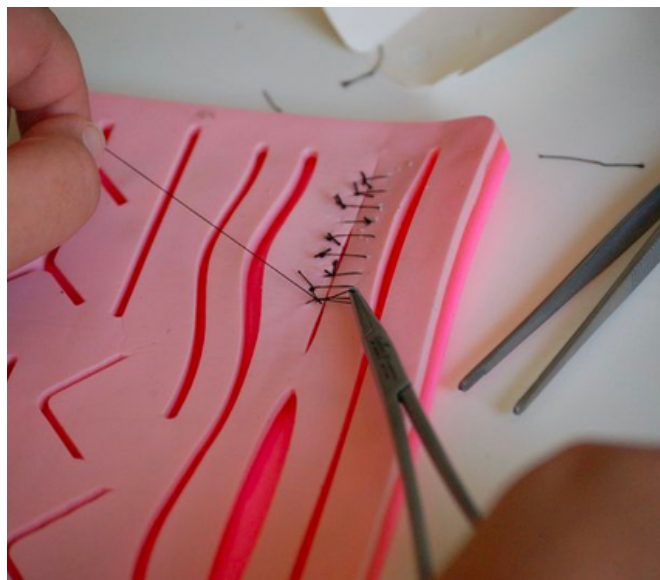
If you're in high school, here are some ways to prepare for your personal statement:

Gaining relevant work experience

Gaining work experience or volunteering in a field related to your chosen course is a brilliant addition to your UCAS personal statement, demonstrating that you're eager to learn and able to apply practical skills related to your subject. You can write about what you did, what you learnt, and how the experience helped you gain more insight into your field.

Finding opportunities to complete work experience can seem challenging, but there are lots of ways to get started:

- **Consider how the people you currently know might be able to help.** Ask family, friends, teachers and past employers whether they know any relevant opportunities.
- **Keep a lookout on social media.** Companies post opportunities online, and LinkedIn lets you contact employers directly.
- **Go to careers fairs.** Careers fairs are a great opportunity to speak with employers in person. You might attend one at school or elsewhere.
- **Email companies directly.** If there's a particular company in that you're interested in, don't be afraid to reach out and ask whether they offer work experience. You'll never know unless you try!



Reading and researching around your subject

One way to show that you are passionate about your subject is by doing extra reading and research. You could also ask your teacher for suggestions on the best reading for your personal statement.

Also, make sure to look at university reading lists for even more books related to your chosen field. If you end up getting an interview with one of your chosen universities later in the application process, they'll likely ask about how your extra reading helped and influenced you.

Another good way to achieve more knowledge around your subject is by taking part in a summer school course. You could also try out a short Open University OpenLearn Course.



How to Maximise Your Personal Statement

Participating in extracurricular activities

Writing about extracurricular activities in your UCAS personal statement is a great way to show that you're a well-rounded person. They can also demonstrate a skill or an interest related to your chosen field that isn't directly academic.

For example:

- If you're applying for a Literature-related subject, taking part in a club or activity related to visual arts could show that you are interested in how stories can be told in alternative ways.
- If you're applying for a Maths-related subject, regularly taking part in a strategy-based game like chess could demonstrate your ability to apply logic to different situations.
- If you're applying for a Science-related subject, becoming proficient in a musical instrument could indicate your attention to detail and self-discipline.

Of course, there are countless other activities, clubs, and projects you could take part in to enhance your personal statement. You just have to find something that you really enjoy!

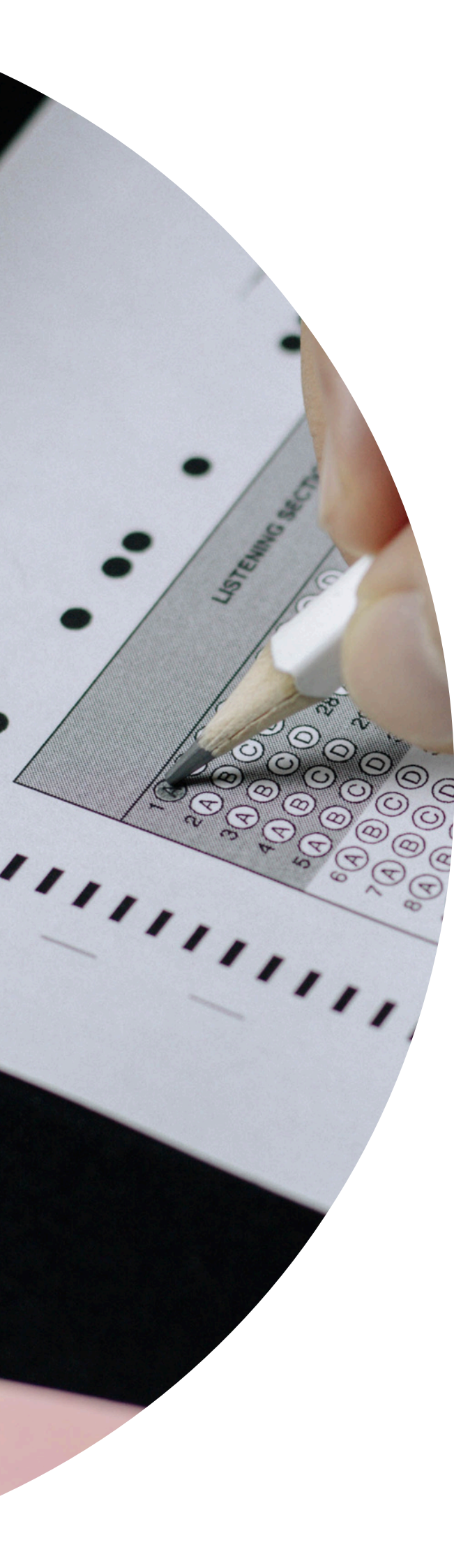
Seeking mentorship and guidance

Don't be afraid to seek out guidance from teachers, career counsellors, and experts in your chosen field. They have experience and knowledge that will be very helpful when writing your personal statement. Also, some teachers might be able to help with mock interviews or know of helpful extracurricular activities for you to try.

Keeping a reflective journal

To record your thoughts, experiences, and personal growth, it might be helpful to keep a reflective journal. Your personal statement is all about you, and having an idea of your personal journey can help you express it more clearly to others.





Other Changes to UCAS Applications

The changes to the personal statement are the UCAS alterations that will most directly impact students' application experience, but there are other notable changes planned that it's helpful to be aware of.

In this section, we cover changes to application fees, demographic questions, and additional resources being made available to students. We also offer an overview of the changes to academic references, provided by your teacher.



How is the Application Process Changing for Students?

There have been two important changes to the application process that students may notice:

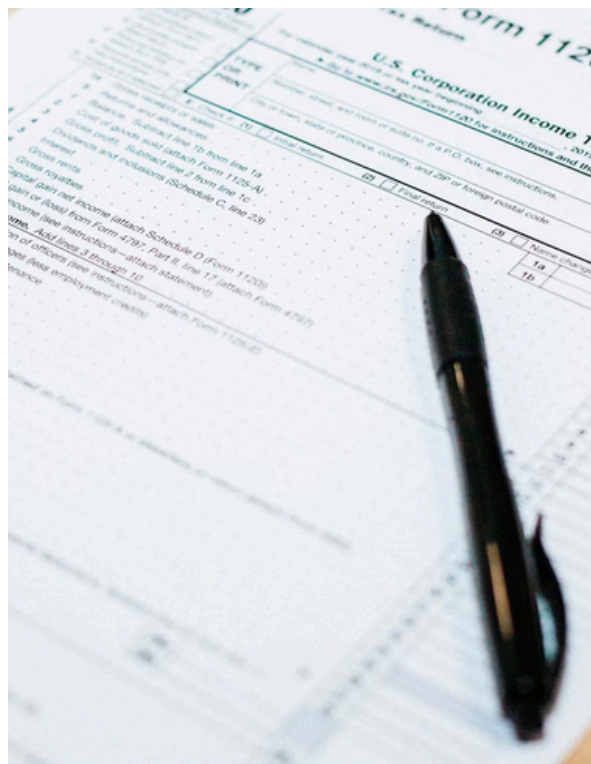
A Simpler Application Fee

As of the 2024 entry cycle, UCAS has removed the single application fee, which allowed for only one course choice. Every application now costs the same amount.

For the 2024 entry cycle, this fee is £27.50.

Because of this change, all undergraduate UCAS applications will allow you to add five course choices.

Keep in mind that all applicants will be able to use additional services offered by UCAS, such as [UCAS Extra](#), [Clearing](#), and [Clearing Plus](#) (discussed in our 'What is UCAS?' section earlier in the Ultimate Guide).



More Gender Options

As of the 2024 entry cycle, UCAS has added two extra answer options for the question about gender. Alongside 'man' and 'woman', you will now be able to select 'I use another term' or 'I prefer not to say'.

UCAS says it will '[continue to work with students, advisers, and universities and colleges to explore how \[it\] can improve the options available for future cycles](#)'.



Changes to Academic References

The changes that UCAS is making to academic references will not directly affect your application experience as a student, but they are still significant to the application process.

What is an Academic Reference?

An academic reference is a piece of writing from a teacher that supports your application. It gives universities and colleges context about you, your achievements, and your education.

Universities and colleges don't just use your academic reference to help in the selection process. The information will also allow them to provide targeted support if it is needed.



What's changing and why?

According to UCAS, as of the 2024 entry cycle, the academic reference will now be structured into these three sections:

- Enter a general statement about your school/college/centre.
- If applicable, enter any information about extenuating circumstances which may have impacted the applicant's education and achievement.
- Outline any other supportive information specific to the applicant and relevant to the course(s) applied for that you think universities/colleges should be aware of.

With the previous free text structure, it was difficult for universities and colleges to directly compare academic references because of differences in content. The new framework will help those writing the references to cover the information that universities and colleges are most interested in.

As of the 2024 entry cycle, advisers can be sure they are providing helpful information and universities can more easily compare academic references, make selection decisions, and give support to students.



Additional Resources



Is UCAS Making Any Additional Resources Available?

The Historic Entry Grades Tool will show the grades that students held when they were accepted for each undergraduate course over the past five years.

This tool already exists, but it has only been available to advisers up to now, according to UCAS, 'later this year [2024] the entry grades tool will be available on ucas.com'.

The tool will show students the range of grade profiles accepted for entry to each course, allowing them to be better informed and ensure their course and university choices are aspirational but achievable.

Why is this useful?

The tool aims to encourage students to apply for courses they may not have considered previously. By seeing the actual range of grades accepted by universities and colleges, students can more realistically make decisions about which courses to apply to.





7 Tips for UCAS Applications from 2026 Entry

So far in this Ultimate Guide, we've looked at what UCAS is and what changes are being made to the UK higher education application process in the coming years. Hopefully you've seen how all of these changes have been made to support student success and level the playing field for all applicants.

Now it's time to dig deeper into how you can make your application stand out. You'll already know at this point that the most important things you need are:

1. An interest in your chosen subject;
2. A strong motivation to study your chosen subject further.

But what else can you do at this stage?

In this section of the Ultimate Guide, we're going to share 7 Top Tips for your UCAS application.



1. Plan Early and Research Well

You usually fill out your online UCAS application in your final year of school – for UK students this is Year 13. But if you're not quite there yet, there are several things you can do to get a head start on an outstanding application.

Learn what the application process involves

It's important that you understand what's involved in the application process before you start filling out your UCAS application.

The great news is that you have already initiated this process by reading this Ultimate Guide! Even more good news – we're always going to be here creating more blog posts and resources to help you understand the process of applying to university.

The [UCAS website](#) is also a great source for basic information and updates. You might want to keep an eye on the general news and course pages of your top university websites for up-to-date information too.

Think about courses, universities, and entry requirements

Whether you've always known what you'd like to study or you're still figuring it out, starting your research as early as possible will pay dividends. The sooner you think about your choices, the more time you have to explore your options, ask questions, and ensure that your final decisions are the perfect fit

Knowing what entry requirements you're expected to meet can also give you time and the motivation to put your head down at school and work hard to achieve those grades! This will help you to secure solid academic references from your teachers, too.

Begin to come up with ideas for the personal statement

Again, much more on this coming in a moment. Before you even start writing, you can begin to consider what you might want to include, and identify any gaps in your relevant academic or extracurricular record.

Familiarise yourself with the deadlines

It's vitally important to find the specific dates for your year of application and entry, as these can change slightly from year to year. UCAS are also reviewing their timelines over the next few years, so it pays to know your deadlines!

Also make sure you check for any special deadlines your application might be subject to. For example, Oxford and Cambridge have an earlier application deadline than other UK universities, and all Medicine applications usually follow this earlier date too.



2. Choose the Right Course

You should be passionate about the subject you choose to study at university or college, and it should align with your career goals. Here are some ways to make that happen:

Use your summer

There's a whole host of things you can do over the summer to better understand your subject. A summer school would allow you to immerse yourself in your subject and meet like-minded teens, as well as tutors and leading specialists in the field.

Equally, you might want to spend your summer gaining work experience, perhaps through an internship, to improve your understanding of your subject in a real-life industry.

Visit a university open day

Once you have more of an idea of what subject you want to study, you can visit different university open days to see how your subject is taught differently at different institutions.

Not only will you talk with leading specialists in your subject, but often universities will offer taster talks and subject lectures, so you can get a real idea for what it would be like to study at degree level.

Self-reflect

At home, read articles and books, listen to podcasts, and watch videos to gain a better understanding of all sides of your subject. Take a careers test to see what direction you might head in your future and consider which degree will best serve you. Use self-reflection techniques to see where your heart lies.

Talk to friends and family

Are you thinking about studying Law? You might consider having a chat with your best friend's step dad, who has been a lawyer for ten years. Or if creative writing is your passion, why not ask your sister, a creative writing graduate, about her experiences? Make use of the personal experiences of the people you know to inform your subject choice.

Of course, you might not know anyone with relevant experiences for your own interests, but don't despair! There are loads of blog posts which can help you. Have a search on the internet – the amount (and specificity!) of guidance out there in the form of articles, blog posts, YouTube videos, and podcasts might surprise you!

Spend your time at school wisely

Take relevant classes, talk to subject teachers, and join after-school clubs to help you gain a well-rounded understanding of your subject, and learn about pathways you might not have considered yet. For example, you might know you want to study the social sciences, but did you know that many universities offer at least 9 courses in this field?



3. Stay Up To Date with UCAS Changes

We've covered what we know right now in this UCAS Changes Ultimate Guide, but as time goes on UCAS may introduce further changes and offer more clarity on the changes we already know about.

You should regularly check the [UCAS website](#) for updates, and keep an eye on the [Oxford Scholastica Academy blog](#), where we'll be covering any new developments for you!

4. Master the Personal Statement Sections

An effective personal statement is one which shows off your interest in your chosen course, and your motivation to study it. Your personal statement should knock the admissions officer out with your stunning potential! But how might you do this? Here are some of our top tips to master the personal statement in its new form.

Create a unique narrative

Just because the personal statement has changed to a question-based format doesn't mean you can't create a narrative.

This narrative will enable you to focus on the most important bits of your academic journey, and demonstrate your ability to construct an effective, argumentative piece of prose – which is what you'll be asked to do in university essays!



4. Master the Personal Statement Sections

Keep it personal

The personal statement has kept its name for a reason – it should still be **personal**. This is the only point in the application where you can talk to universities in your own voice, and the main way you can make your application stand out is by noting the things that are special about you.

Avoid impersonal touches like generic inspirational quotes, and consider the following questions instead:

- Do you have a unique take on life, or life experience? How does it add to your interest in and motivation to study your subject?
- What sub-topic within your subject interests you the most?
- What do you want to do with your subject once you graduate?

Answer the questions!

Don't fall into the trap of writing a personal statement in the old format and attempting to copy and paste it across to the new sections.

Doing this would mean that you're unlikely to be answering the questions, telling the admissions officers that you are inflexible and ignore instructions, which are two qualities they are not looking for in a potential student!

Draft it, then draft it again... and again

Personal statements take a lot of time and effort to write, but the key thing is to get started. If you keep putting it off, perhaps fearing that you won't get it perfect the first time around, you're sacrificing time that could be spent drafting, redrafting, and gathering feedback on your writing and ideas.

Most personal statements go through at least three drafts before the final version – with many going through ten or more!

Seek feedback, and take it on board

Once you have your first draft, get everyone to read it. Your mum, your dad, your brother, your sister, your aunt, your nephew, your best friend, your worst enemy, your favourite teacher, your least favourite teacher...

If there's somebody who's willing to read your personal statement for you, and likely to give you constructive feedback, drop it on their desk!

That said, don't let anyone bulldoze your original ideas. This is a personal statement, so if a piece of feedback doesn't resonate with you when you reflect upon it, then feel free to ignore it.



5. Balance Academics and Extracurriculars

A well-rounded application is the most valuable to admissions officers. They don't want robots that test well – they want people with lives outside of school. Therefore, you'll want to discuss your extracurricular activities in your personal statement.

At this point in time, you should start keeping track of any events, achievements, and courses you might want to use in your personal statement to showcase your amazing personality.

6. Prepare for Interviews and Assessments

As part of your application, some universities and colleges might ask you to attend an interview and/or assessment. You might have heard of these, with talk about Oxford interviews, or assessments like the UCAT or LNAT.

It is crucial that you prepare for these ahead of time, but remember that you can't do everything. While you might find reading some example interview questions helpful, there's no guarantee that you'll be asked the same questions.

Rather than trying to guess what will come up, focus on the key things that you can know and prepare for right now:

- Where do I need to go?
- When do I need to get there?
- What are they looking for? Is it a test of my knowledge or my ability to work through unseen problems?
- Is it a generic interview, or subject specific?
- What types of questions will the assessment be? Multiple choice, essay questions, or a mix?
- What are some topics in my subject that I particularly enjoy and can easily discuss on a deeper level?



7. Explore Your Other Options



There are many reasons you might not get your desired UCAS outcome after applying to university. You might not receive the offers from the universities you were hoping for, or you might change your mind about attending a particular course or uni after you've applied. Perhaps you didn't get the grades you needed on results day to meet the entry requirements.

However things go for you with your UCAS application, it's always helpful to have a backup plan in place if things don't end up going quite as you thought they would. Having a second option allows you to remain calm and confident as you take your first steps into your future in higher education or elsewhere.

In our section What Is UCAS?, we explained UCAS services like Extra and Clearing which can help you get onto a course at a university according to your planned timeline.

Alternatively, at this point you might consider a change of plan, whether it be taking time out, reapplying, or heading straight into employment.



Summary

That wraps up our 7 top tips for UCAS applications for 2026 entry! The key points to remember are:

- 1** | Start to figure out the application process now, including noting down the important deadlines.
- 2** | Spend your time picking a course that you're sure you want to study for 3+ years!
- 3** | Stay up to date with the latest UCAS changes through the UCAS website and our blog.
- 4** | Master your personal statement!
- 5** | Strike a balance between your academics and extracurriculars.
- 6** | Prepare for any interviews and/or assessments you might be asked to attend.
- 7** | Remember to have a backup in case things don't go to plan.



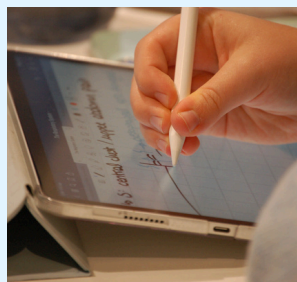


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