



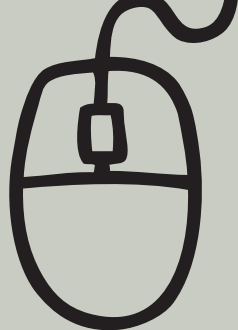
University of Essex

Your guide to UCAS



After choosing the best primary school, secondary school, sixth form or college, it now comes down to this... you're finally preparing for your son or daughter to head off to university.

What is UCAS?



Most universities in the UK use UCAS (which stands for Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) to process applications and enrol thousands of applicants into higher education every year.

UCAS is an online system which processes applications from students applying for UK universities.

Choosing what to do and where to do it

UCAS allows applicants to choose up to five universities or courses before submitting their application.

Make sure your son or daughter gets the most out of their university experience by choosing the right course and a university they can call home. As parents and guardians, you play a really important role; visiting campuses and exchanging opinions is an effective way to help your child find the right degree and the right university.

If your son or daughter are still undecided on a course or a university, and they're not quite sure what they need to take into consideration, check out our website and download our **Decision Making Guide** which will give you top tips for finding a course and university.

► www.essex.ac.uk/study/ug/essex101.aspx

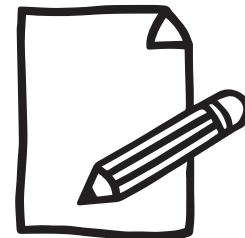


Applying



- 1 The first step will be setting up a UCAS account. Applicants will receive their personal ID or UCAS number, which acts as their login, as well as an important reference throughout the application process. Make sure they keep it somewhere safe!
- 2 If a student is applying via their school or college they will be provided with a buzzword to attach their application to the school.
- 3 Now your son or daughter can fill in their personal details, education and employment history, and funding details. Most students use Student Finance England... but don't worry, you apply for this later.
- 4 Applicants write a personal statement and are required to submit a reference. For students applying in school or college, references are generally written and submitted by teachers. Independent applicants, however, need to contact a former teacher or employer to recommend their suitability for the course.
- 5 Predicted grades are also provided by the referring sixth form or college; universities use these as a guideline when accepting applications by comparing the predicted grades and requirements of the chosen course.
- 6 Your son or daughter can apply for up to five choices – these can be a combination of universities and courses. UCAS charge a small fee depending on the number of choices on your application.

Personal statement



Students are required to write a personal statement with a strict limit of 4,000 characters or 47 lines. Remember, the personal statement applies to all courses and universities your son or daughter is applying for, so it is important that the content is relevant.

It can be a difficult task to get right so there may be a few drafts before the 'eureka' moment. Students should take this opportunity to clearly illustrate their skills, their interest in higher education, and most importantly, why they want to study this particular subject area.

Bite the bullet and ask if you can read their latest draft and offer some pointers on how it can be improved. Check out our **Personal Statement Guide** for more information.

► www.essex.ac.uk/study/ug/essex101.aspx

Application deadlines



Make sure your son or daughter submits their application before the deadline.

2017 entry:

By 6pm GMT

- 15 October 2016 – Applications to Oxford and Cambridge, and courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine/science
- 15 January 2017 – Deadline for all other courses except art and design.
- 24 March 2017 – Art and design courses

Don't panic if they miss the deadline – most universities will accept late applications.

After the application has been submitted, changes can still be made to personal details by logging onto 'UCAS Track'.

What happens next?

Once you submit your application, UCAS will send it to your child's chosen universities for consideration.

If you submitted your application by 15 January, you will receive your university or college's decision by 5 May.

Offers



Using their personal ID and password, applicants can check their university responses and offers on 'UCAS Track'. However, universities can respond to applications at various stages so it's best to prepare for suspense.

Universities will respond with a conditional, unconditional, or unsuccessful offer.

- Yippee, they received a conditional offer! The offer will be changed to unconditional once your son or daughter meets the academic requirements of the course.
- An unconditional offer is a cause for celebration – they've met the academic requirements, congratulations!

- An unsuccessful offer is no cause for an alarm! If an applicant rejects or doesn't receive offers from their selected universities, they can apply for another course, one at a time, using **UCAS Extra**. You can find more details about Extra on the UCAS website.

Interviews

Some universities and courses require candidates to attend an interview and occasionally a test before an offer is made. Don't be alarmed: this is a good way for the academics to determine the suitability of the candidate. It's the perfect opportunity for applicants to discuss the course in more detail and explore the university.

Decisions, decisions



Time to narrow down those choices! The first step is to pick their firm choice (favourite) and their insurance choice (runner-up). Any remaining offers will be automatically declined.

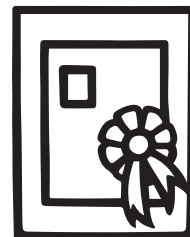
Reply deadlines

2017 entry:

By 6pm GMT:

- 25 February 2017 – Extra opens
- 4 May 2017 – Reply deadlines for offers made by 31 March
- 8 June 2017 – Reply deadlines for offers made by 5 May
- 22 June 2017 – Reply deadlines for offers made by 8 June
- 30 June 2017 – Deadline before applicants are automatically enrolled into 'Clearing'

Time to celebrate. They got the grades!



Congratulations! If they were holding a conditional offer, it will be changed to an unconditional offer on their UCAS account. Your son or daughter will also receive a confirmation from their confirmed university so they can rest assured that their place is secure.

Grades better than expected?

If they've done better than they expected, applicants will have a chance to change their university choices. UCAS's 'Adjustment' process enables applicants who have exceeded the conditions of their offer to find a course at a different university. Adjustment is open from 17 to 31 August 2017 and there is a five-day limit to register and apply for a new course.

What happens if they didn't get the grades they wanted?

First of all, don't panic! There are many possibilities ahead so advise them to keep calm and think about the steps they can take. Firstly, check 'Track' to see if your son or daughter has a confirmed offer. Universities can still confirm a place, or offer a different course, when entry requirements are not met.

There are a lot of possibilities to consider, so head online and download our **Results Survival Guide** where you can find more information on what options are available.

► www.essex.ac.uk/clearing/survival

Check list



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Hopefully this has prepared you for UCAS and a busy year ahead! Here's a helpful break-down to help you manage what you can do to help your son or daughter during their application process:

- Familiarise yourself with UCAS and the application process
- Check all application details are correct and complete
- Ensure your son or daughter's personal statement is top-notch
- Arrange to take your son or daughter to open days
▶ www.ucas.com/open-days
- Be aware of the application deadlines, offer replies, and any interview days
- Make sure that your son or daughter is at home when their results are released
- Understand and prepare for the next steps once results have been published

Need more information and advice?

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Additional information can be found online.

- ▶ www.essex.ac.uk
- ▶ www.ucas.com/parents
-  [/ucasonline](https://www.facebook.com/ucasonline)
-  [@UCAS_online](https://twitter.com/UCAS_online)



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