

Guide to applying to university

<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/ucas-application/6-steps-you-need-to-take-to-apply-to-university>

1. Choose where you want to go and what you want to study

University is a big investment, so you'll want to make sure you choose the right place and course.

When you're [deciding which course to take](#), there are a few things you can consider to make your decision a bit easier.

These include: the type of subject you want to study; how the course will be taught; how the course will be assessed; and whether the course has any particular grade requirements.

Charlie Ball, head of higher education intelligence for Prospects at Jisc, advises that "there's no national syllabus for university courses. This means it's important to check that the modules you are interested in are covered."

It's also worth looking for "courses that include work experience as you'll really appreciate that when you graduate. Also look at whether you can do the extracurricular activities that interest you as this is a hugely important part of your personal development."

When you're settling on a university, you might want to consider factors such as its location, how much it costs to live there and what kind of environment it has – a campus university or a city one, for example.

It's also really useful to go on [open days](#) to get more of a feel for what a university is really like.

Charlie suggests that applicants "look at how good the student support services are as you never know when you might need them – and if you need them, you might really need them."

And it's worth speaking to current students to get their honest opinions on everything from the course content to the accommodation. Take a look at [The Student Room forum for your chosen university](#) to see what current students have to say about their experiences.

On The Uni Guide, you can use [our course search](#), check out [our university profiles](#) or [match your A-level subjects](#) to narrow down what degree choice will suit you.

- Read more: [which university is right for you?](#)

2. Make sure you know all the deadlines and key dates

Get those key dates down in your diary, so you can make sure you're not missing any deadlines.

For most undergraduate courses starting in 2028, you'll need to get your application in by 6pm on 29 January 2028.

Everyone who applies by this date will be considered equally, whether they send their application in early or wait until the last minute.

If you miss this deadline you can still apply – the only difference will be that universities and colleges don't have to consider your application if, for example, they've already got plenty of great applicants for their course.

If you're applying to any course at Oxford or Cambridge, or most courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/science, and dentistry you'll have an earlier deadline and will need to get your application in by 6pm on 15 October 2027 for 2025 entry.

Here's the [full list of Ucas deadlines and key application dates](#).

3. Check the entry requirements

Entry requirements are the criteria set by the individual universities that students need to meet to be considered for a place on the course. These will vary depending on the university and course you're applying to, with some having much tougher entry requirements than others.

You should be able to easily find each course's entry requirements on the university's website.

Entry requirements could include: certain qualifications such as GCSEs, A-levels, Highers and Btecs; portfolios of work; admissions tests; and Ucas points.

Ucas points are points assigned to different grades for post-16 qualifications. For example, an A* at A-level is worth 56 Ucas points, and an A is worth 48.

You can [find everything you need to know about the Ucas tariff here](#), including the points assigned to all grades for A-levels, Highers, Btec Nationals, T-levels, International Baccalaureate and Welsh Baccalaureate.

- **Read more:** [what are university entry requirements?](#)

4. Get your application started

Once you've chosen your dream course and university, it's time to get started on your application.

First of all, you'll need to [register with Ucas here](#). You'll be able to choose up to five universities to apply to, and you'll be asked to fill in your personal details, including your education history and all your qualifications.

You'll also need to include a reference in your application. If your referee is someone at your school or college, they'll enter their reference into your application once it's all filled out – including your personal statement, but more on that below – and then send the whole thing off to Ucas.

- **Read more:** [how to get the Ucas reference you want](#)

5. Write your personal statement

Your personal statement is a really important part of your application – it's your opportunity to show what makes you a great applicant and could end up being the deciding factor between you and someone else with similar qualifications.

Courteney Sheppard, senior customer experience manager at Ucas, says your personal statement "is the only part of the application that you have direct control over. Do lots of research to demonstrate your passion, curiosity and drive to pursue your chosen subject."

It should include things like why you want to take that particular course, any extra-curricular activities you've been involved in that are relevant to your application and the skills or qualities you have that would make you good at the subject.

You can [find lots more tips for writing your personal statement here](#).

These [teacher secrets for writing a great personal statement](#) should also come in handy, as well as [these personal statement FAQs](#).

6. Wait to start getting your offers!

There's no set date that you'll hear back from the universities by, although if you submit your application by the 29 January deadline for 2028 entry, it will be by 14 May 2028 at the latest.

Courteney from Ucas suggests that you "do further research about accommodation, student life and maybe even managing money whilst you wait for your offers to come through.

Prepare and practice for interviews in case you get invited for one too!"

You can find a bit more detail about [when you'll hear back from the universities you've applied to here](#).