

# UCAS 2024 APPLICATION PROCESS

## 2024 ENTRY KEY DATES

**2 May 2023** UCAS' search tool displays 2024 courses.

**9 May 2023** The adviser portal opens for 2024 entry.

**16 May 2023** Undergraduate applications open for 2024 entry. From this date, applicants can start their applications.

**12 July 2023** Conservatoire applications open for 2024 entry. From this date, applicants can register, pay, and send their applications.

**5 September 2023** Completed undergraduate applications can be submitted to UCAS.

**2 October 2023 18:00 (UK time)** Application deadline for conservatoire music applications. Applications for dance, drama, and musical theatre courses may have a different deadline – check conservatoires' websites for information.

**16 October 2023 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. The reference must be completed before the application can be sent to UCAS.

**31 January 2024 18:00 (UK time)** Equal consideration date for applications for most undergraduate courses. The reference must be completed before the application can be sent to us. Deadline for most conservatoire undergraduate dance, drama or musical theatre courses. Check on the specific course to be sure.

**28 February 2024** Extra opens – applicants who have used all five choices and are not holding any offers may be able to add another choice in their application.

**30 June 2024 18:00 (UK time)** Applications received by this deadline will be sent to universities and colleges. After this time, applications are automatically entered into Clearing.

**4 July 2024** Last date to add an Extra choice in their application.

**5 July 2024** Clearing opens for eligible applicants, and vacancies are displayed in UCAS' search tool. Applicants can release themselves into Clearing.

**Thursday 15 August 2024** – Results Day

## MAKING YOUR APPLICATION

Students can browse thousands of courses with the UCAS search tool. It has over 51,000 courses at approximately 350 providers in the UK. This mobile-friendly tool enables students to shortlist courses, save searches, and access all undergraduate, postgraduate, and conservatoire courses in one search tool. Visit [www.ucas.com/search](https://www.ucas.com/search).

Please also use [unifrog.org](https://unifrog.org) which you are all signed up to.

Compare accommodation options with our search. The UCAS accommodation search helps students see what's available from both universities and colleges, and private providers.

Understanding what options there are will help them to narrow down where they might want to study. Start searching at [accommodation.ucas.com](https://accommodation.ucas.com).

Read student blogs. For inspiration, insight into what university or college is really like, advice about applying, and student finance, students can read our blogs at [www.ucas.com/blogs](https://www.ucas.com/blogs).

Chat to uni students We know the value peer-to-peer conversations have, so UCAS has teamed up with Unibuddy to give students the chance to talk to current undergraduates about their first-hand experiences. They can find out what studying a particular course and life at uni is really like at [www.ucas.com/chat-to-students](https://www.ucas.com/chat-to-students).

## STEP ONE

### FIRST STOP – THE APPLICANT SECTIONS

The buzzword you need to sign-in the first time for 2024 is: Outstanding  
You must make sure you link your application to the school.

How to apply Students can sign up at [www.ucas.com/hub](https://www.ucas.com/hub).

They need to register an account in the Hub. Once they have done this (and the application is open) they will be able to begin filling out their information.

On-screen help will guide users through their application. Students can use the application anywhere that has internet access. They can change and save their application details as often as necessary, before submitting the final version to their linked centre.

**TOP TIP** If a student forgets their password, they can access a login reminder service, and reset their password from their application, they don't need to contact UCAS.

Students complete a profile, including the following sections:

- ▶ Registering – students should use their personal email address so they can get updates all year round
- ▶ Personal details
- ▶ Contact & residency details
- ▶ Nationality details
- ▶ Supporting information
- ▶ English language skills
- ▶ Finance & funding
- ▶ Diversity & inclusion (UK applicants only)
- ▶ More about you
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Extra activities (UK applicants only)
- ▶ Personal statement

► Choices - Applicants who apply through a UCAS registered centre need the buzzword to automatically link them to their centre. Then they can send the whole application to us, with their payment

**TOP TIP** Most admissions tests are sat at the start of the academic cycle, so applicants need to register as soon as possible. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/admissions-tests](http://www.ucas.com/admissions-tests) .

**The single application fee will no longer be available so the fee for all 2024 undergraduate applications will be £27.50.**

### Number of choices

Each student can make a maximum of five choices on their application, including:

- no more than four choices in any one of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or veterinary science
- no more than one course at either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge.

If they apply to fewer than five choices to begin with, they can add more later, if they have not replied to their offers. They should, however, remember to check the equal consideration date for the course – if a choice is added after the equal consideration date, it will be considered as late.

### Invisibility of choices

UCAS sends the application on to each of the chosen universities and colleges at the same time.

Each university or college only has access to the information about its choice. They must not ask applicants, or the person the applicant has nominated to have access to their application, to reveal their other choices. This is what we call invisibility. Only much later in the application cycle, when an applicant has received decisions on all their choices and replied to any offers, will each university or college be able to see details of the other choices. This ensures each university or college decides independently whether to offer a place, and what conditions, if any, to attach to an offer. It's very important that confidentiality is maintained on course and university and college choices until each offer has been responded to by the applicant.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Choices aren't sent in preference order – UCAS sends an application to all the universities and colleges at the same time. They don't know where else the student has applied, or what order the choices were placed in.

### UCAS TARIFF POINTS

The UCAS Tariff allows universities and colleges to draw comparisons between the wide range of qualifications they see on applications, and is published in May each year. The Tariff points included in each update are applicable to students starting higher education in

September of the following year. For example, in May 2023 the Tariff update will be applicable to students starting university in September 2024. Some universities and colleges use Tariff points in their entry requirements. Applicants may receive an offer of a place that is conditional on achieving a certain number of UCAS Tariff points. The UCAS Tariff points calculator at [ucas.com/tariff-calculator](https://ucas.com/tariff-calculator) can help students understand how many Tariff points their qualifications carry. Points for GCE AS qualifications cannot be included if an applicant has been assessed in the same subject at A level, or Advanced Higher. The same rule applies to BTECs: If a Diploma and Extended Diploma have been achieved in the same subject, typically only points for the higher level will be accepted by a university or college.

For more guidance on the UCAS Tariff, visit [www.ucas.com/advisers/tariff](https://www.ucas.com/advisers/tariff).

## GAP YEAR

Taking a year out after school.

Students who take a gap year, including national service, can apply in this cycle, to start a course in the next one. This is called deferred entry. The 'rules' are the same for applicants starting their courses in this cycle, and they'll need to:

- ▶ apply by the same application deadlines
- ▶ choose a start date of 2025 when they add their course choice
- ▶ meet the conditions of their offer by 4 September 2024, unless a different date is specified by the university or college Before applying, students should contact universities or colleges to check they consider deferred applications. For some courses, they may not – for example, the course may not be offered the following year, or they may prefer there not to be a break in study.

## UCAS DISCOVERY EVENTS

### UCAS Discovery UK tour

UCAS Discovery exhibitions give students the chance to meet hundreds of universities, colleges, and employers, and chat face-to-face with current students and apprentices – all under one roof. They'll also be able to attend live Q&A talks with subject and industry experts, and get the latest advice and information on applications and career choices to help them narrow down their options after school or college. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/discovery](https://www.ucas.com/discovery) **GET OUT THERE!**

To help students decide, it is a good idea to attend open days. They're a great opportunity to ask questions face-to-face with potential future tutors and fellow students, and a chance to get a taste of what it would be like studying at a university or college. Find open days using the UCAS search tool at [www.ucas.com/open-days](https://www.ucas.com/open-days). If students can't attend an open day, a university or college virtual tour might be a good alternative. Although nothing beats seeing it for themselves, virtual tours give an idea of the facilities. These are especially helpful for international students. You can find a list at [www.ucas.com/virtual-tours](https://www.ucas.com/virtual-tours) and there are also virtual tours on [unifrog.com](https://unifrog.com)

## Student access to grades tool – New for 2024 applications

The historic entry grades tool is currently an adviser portal feature that shares course-level information, on the grades students held when entering higher education.

Students have told us this information would help them make informed decisions about their future when narrowing down their application choices.

So later this year the entry grades tool will be available on [ucas.com](https://ucas.com), to give students visibility over a range of grade profiles accepted for entry, to courses over a five-year period (where data is available). Testing shows the reports encourage students to find options they previously thought were unavailable to them.

## RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS' PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The best place for parents and guardians to get the support they need is [www.ucas.com/parents](https://www.ucas.com/parents). Here they'll have access to a wide range of guidance and resources, all designed to help them through the different stages of the application process:

- ▶ Parent videos – for advice, hints, and useful tips.
- ▶ Parent newsletters – all the updates and information they need, along with timely explanations of the application process.

Parents and guardians can sign up at [www.ucas.com/parents-signup](https://www.ucas.com/parents-signup) .

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Universities and colleges will decide whether to make the applicant an offer.

It'll be:

- ▶ **Conditional offer** – the offer has conditions. For example, the applicant has to achieve certain exam results. Unless a different date is specified, the conditions must be met by 6 September (even if entry is deferred to the following year). The conditions may include achievement of specific grades, possibly in named subjects, or a certain number of UCAS Tariff points.

- ▶ **Unconditional offer** – this usually means the applicant has already met all the university or college's entry requirements for the course. They might still have to meet other requirements, such as financial or medical conditions.

If the applicant has used all five choices and doesn't receive any offers, or declines the offers they do receive, they can use **Extra** to apply for more choices, one at a time. UCAS sends exam results to universities and colleges. Applicants must send certification of exam results for any. UCAS does not forward to their chosen university/college – see [www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results](http://www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results). Applicants can see their status in their application and check if their place is confirmed.

- ▶ If the firm choice is unconditional, the place is theirs.
- ▶ If the place is conditional, the university or college will update their status when they have their results.
- ▶ **Unsuccessful** – the university or college has not offered the applicant a place on the course.

If the applicant is unsuccessful, they can use **Clearing** to apply for more courses.

- ▶ **Withdrawal** – the application to the course has been withdrawn, because the applicant:
  - ▶ asked to withdraw
  - ▶ did not attend their interview, test, or audition
  - ▶ did not reply to letters from the university or college
  - ▶ has not chosen an alternative after the course has been withdrawn.

All decisions are made by the universities and colleges. UCAS does not have any involvement in deciding whether to make an offer.

**TOP TIP** Before making any decisions, students should take a look at UCAS advice on making informed choices – [www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/making-right-decision](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/making-right-decision) .

## Replying to offers

When an applicant has decisions from all their choices, they need to decide which one(s) they want to accept. The date they must reply to their offers by is shown in their application.

- ▶ They can accept one offer as their firm choice.
- ▶ If that's a conditional offer, they can also accept a second offer as an insurance choice, if they want to, in case they don't meet the conditions of their firm choice.
- ▶ Any other offers must be declined.

Choosing the right course and university or college is a very important decision – the student will be investing a lot of time, money, and effort, and it can be difficult to change if they're not satisfied. To help applicants make an informed decision about where to apply, what to study, and whether to accept an offer, the university or college is required to make information available under consumer protection legislation. Students should read and understand this information before making a decision. If they have not received this information, or they're unclear about anything, they should contact the university or college to ask for further advice. There is more information at [www.ucas.com/your-consumer-rights](http://www.ucas.com/your-consumer-rights).

If an applicant firmly accepts an unconditional offer, they are committing themselves to take up that place, and cannot hold an insurance choice. Applicants need to think very carefully, and make sure they do not accept an offer from any university or college if they would not be prepared to study there.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Applicants don't have to hold an insurance choice. If they aren't sure any of their other offers are right for them, it might be better to wait and see what's available in Clearing. It's important that applicants reply by the date we give them in the application status section. This date depends on when they receive the last decision from their chosen universities and colleges.

**Extra** – a chance to apply to more universities and colleges.

All is not lost if students are not offered a place at any of their five choices, or they decline all their offers. They can use **Extra** to apply to other universities and colleges that still have vacancies. It's a free service that gives applicants an opportunity to look for a place earlier, instead of waiting for Clearing. They can apply for several courses in Extra, but only one course at a time.

There are four steps to using Extra:

- ▶ From February, search for courses with vacancies in the UCAS search tool at [www.ucas.com/search](http://www.ucas.com/search).
- ▶ Think about related and different subjects.

► Get in touch with the university or college to check they can consider them. If they want to apply for a course different from their original choices, they can explain they've changed their mind, and offer to send a revised personal statement to support their application. However, they cannot change their original personal statement.

► Add a choice in the application.

When applicants are eligible for Extra, they will have the status 'Waiting for Extra / Clearing / new choice(s)'.

## ON RESULTS DAY

When universities and colleges receive exam results, they decide whether the applicant has met the conditions of their offer. If they have, the university or college will confirm their place. This is called **Confirmation**.

► If a university or college confirms a 'firmly accepted' offer, the applicant is committed to taking up that place. The insurance choice, if they have one, becomes redundant.

► If a university or college does not confirm a 'firmly accepted' offer, the applicant may meet the conditions of their insurance choice, in which case they are committed to take up that place. If an applicant chooses an insurance choice, they must be willing to take up the place.

If they end up committed to their insurance place and do not want it, they will have to release themselves into **Clearing** using 'decline my place', or withdraw their application altogether. They can do this in their application. If an applicant doesn't meet the conditions of either their firm or insurance choice, they may still have their place confirmed. This is at the discretion of the university or college, and depends on a number of factors, such as how far off their results are from their offer, other students' exam results, and the popularity of the course. Once the results have been published, if no decision has been made, it's often worth the applicant calling the university or college to talk to them about their application. If an applicant doesn't have their firm or insurance place confirmed, they will automatically be able to use Clearing, unless they are offered an alternative course.

**TOP TIP** It is really important to find some potential places in clearing before results day. If students are unsuccessful and have to go through the clearing process, it is first come first served and places are allocated over the phone so it is vital to be prepared and not waste time on the day.



## WHAT ABOUT CLEARING?

### What is Clearing?

UCAS operates a service called Clearing, which is an opportunity for students who have not got a confirmed place to find a course using UCAS' search tool – the only official vacancy listing. UCAS Clearing service is used by tens of thousands of applicants each year and runs from the 5 July 2024.

### Who can use Clearing?

Applicants become eligible for Clearing at different times, for one of the following reasons:

- ▶ Place is not confirmed after their exam results are published.
- ▶ No offers received.
- ▶ They declined or have not replied to a confirmed offer of a changed course and, as a result, don't hold any offers.
- ▶ Application was made after 30 June.
- ▶ They have chosen to release themselves into Clearing.

### How do applicants use Clearing?

- ▶ When Clearing opens, if an applicant is eligible, they can add a Clearing choice in their application. ▶ Lists of courses with vacancies in Clearing are published from the beginning of July until late September in the UCAS search tool – [www.ucas.com/search](http://www.ucas.com/search) .
- ▶ Students should check the lists for suitable courses, then contact universities and colleges to find out more about the course, and see if they will offer them a place. They must do this themselves – admissions tutors want to speak to them, not their parents or teachers .
- ▶ Applicants can apply for any course that has places left. They don't have to keep to the same subjects they first applied for.
- ▶ The applicant must have permission from the university or college before they add a Clearing choice in their application. If they don't, their application may be delayed.
- ▶ If an applicant originally had an offer and wants to decline their place and go into Clearing, they can release themselves in their application.
- ▶ If a student has individual support needs, they should mention this in any Clearing conversation to arrange any support they may need. Once a Clearing choice has been added, the applicant cannot change it until the university or college has made a decision. If they're accepted, they are firmly committed to that course. If the applicant is unsuccessful, they can repeat the process. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/clearing](http://www.ucas.com/clearing) .

### Online self-release into Clearing

If an applicant is placed but no longer wants to go to their firm choice, they can use the 'decline my place' button in their application to release themselves into Clearing.

**How does it work?** The process is simple, but incorporates a number of warnings to make sure applicants fully understand what they are doing.

- ▶ The applicant signs in to their application, and clicks the 'decline my place' button on their homepage.
- ▶ They will be taken to a page which explains what they're about to do, and a drop-down question which they must complete, before confirming.
- ▶ They will then receive an email to confirm they're in Clearing, and advising them to phone the university or college they declined, if they made a mistake. If an applicant uses this feature, their contract with the university or college will be cancelled, and they will lose their place. Therefore, they should only use this button if they're sure they no longer want their place.

### Clearing Plus

Unplaced students in Clearing can view a list of courses with vacancies which they've personally been matched to via their application – alongside the UCAS search tool. To find out more about Clearing Plus visit: [www.ucas.com/what-clearing-plus](http://www.ucas.com/what-clearing-plus) .

**GOOD LUCK – PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO SPEAK TO MRS ALIBERTI AT ANY POINT DURING THE PROCESS IF YOU NEED HELP**