

UCAS and Apprenticeships 2020-21 - A guide

<https://www.ucas.com/events/2021-entry-ucas-undergraduate-apply-live-369566>

Key Dates:

- Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary deadline: **15th October 2020**
- ECSfG draft personal statement final deadline: **23th October** (half term)
- ECSfG UCAS application deadline: **11th December** (Christmas)
- Final deadline for applications to UCAS: **15th January**

What is UCAS?

- ▶ UCAS stands for Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. It's the centralised service that students use to apply to university.
- ▶ Pretty much everyone who wants to study an undergraduate degree in the UK will have to apply through UCAS. They run the university application systems in the UK.
- ▶ Students use UCAS's Apply & Track function to send in and manage their applications to university. We can track this at school using UCAS Apply. We can see where and when a student has applied, and we press the final button to send the student info to UCAS.
- ▶ It costs £26 to apply to up to 5 courses through UCAS.

The UCAS application process:

<https://www.ucas.com/students>

- Set up an account with UCAS (buzzword: hollywalk)
- Enter all general/admin info. Help is available from school if you are unsure.
- Enter qualifications.
- Choose up to 5 courses/universities.
- Enter Personal Statement.
- Pay £26.
- School enters predicted grades & academic reference.
- Application is sent to UCAS.

What does ECSfG do in the UCAS process?

The tutor:

- oversees the UCAS application on a week by week basis in PSHE/enrichment time
- Advises on university choices
- Reviews the personal statement
- Compiles the reference

Subject teachers:

- Writes the subject specific academic reference
- Provides predicted grades

PAL Post 16/Careers adviser/UCAS Co-ordinator:

- Advises on university choices
- Reviews the overall application
- Reviews personal statements and references
- Sends the application to UCAS

UCAS General Administration

Most is straightforward, but please ask if unsure about:

- **Nationality**
- **Area of permanent residence (this is your home borough e.g. Enfield)**
- **Fee code (usually 02 UK)**
- **Student support arrangements (same as home borough)**
- **Disability or special needs**
- **Contextual info (e.g. if parents have been to university)**

A document containing step-by-step guidance is available in the sixth form area of our website and in our resource folder on MS Teams for students to access. – this has all the information needed for completing the process. Students will be guided through this by their form tutor.

Qualifications

Students will need to enter any GCSEs, BTECs etc they have, when they achieved them, which school they achieved them at, the exam board and the grade.

If they have done a qualification more than once (e.g. a GCSE resit), enter the most recent & BEST grade.

They will also need to enter any qualifications they are currently working towards. Teachers put in the predicted grades.

Students studying at another school e.g., Enfield Grammar School should also enter this school as well as ECSfG.

Choosing the right courses

It is very important that students choose the right courses. Once the application is sent, it may be difficult to amend them, so get it right the first time!

Students should look very closely at:

- **The type of university (campus or city)**
- **The location**
- **League table rankings (although be wary of these as they all use different criteria)**
- **The course itself**
- **Graduate destinations**

Take the Buzz quiz on the UCAS website to help you narrow down your area to search

How do I choose?

The best way is to visit the university! Many are now doing virtual on line visits. Check out their websites.

Once a student has narrowed down their choices, look carefully at the entry requirements and **BE HONEST.**

- Are you going to get 3 A* grades? If not, don't apply. You are wasting a course choice.
- Do you really want to live 350 miles away from home?
- Have you read the course content?
- Do you know what the course involves?
- Does this course link to what you want to do in the future?
- Do you enjoy doing this?

How do I choose?

Once you have answered these questions, choose:

- **Two ASPIRATIONAL courses**
- **Two SAFE courses**
- **One BACK UP course**

You can choose more than one course at the same university if you really want to go there.

DO NOT choose 5 courses that need 3 A* grades (or 5 that need 3 E grades)!

Personal Statements

The personal statement is your opportunity to prove to your universities that you are the best student for that course.

The majority – around 80% - of the statement should cover:

- **Your skills in the subject you want to do**
- **Evidence of those skills & where you have been successful using them**
- **Evidence of extra reading/work outside school – super curricular activities**

Your statement should also prove that you are literate and can communicate effectively.

You should include extra curricular, work experience etc, but **you must make it relevant**. Explain how you have improved your skills in these areas.

Personal Statement dos and don'ts

DO:

Be specific about your achievements in relevant academic areas

Link everything to skills

Evaluate how/why you have got better

Refer to books, websites etc that you have used to learn more

Discuss relevant work experience, volunteering, awards etc

Proof read

DON'T:

Lie. We will catch you, and UCAS will catch you

List irrelevant stuff, even if you are proud of it

Tell them about your attendance award from primary school

Swallow a thesaurus

Use lots of pretentious quotations

Use clichés – “since I was born I have always wanted to study

Biochemistry...”

The reference

We use specific references written by each teacher/subject to compile the full reference. We may also include some general information about the school.

The predicted grades are decided on by teachers based on work in Y12 & potential to improve. We always set predicted grades to give our students the best possible chance, but we will not fabricate them!

The sixth form team cannot change predicted grades set by subject teachers, as **they** are the experts.

Course offers

Universities choose their students in a few ways:

- **From the predicted grades**
- **From the personal statement**
- **By their own assessment**
- **By interview**

These can vary from course to course at the same university. Popular courses tend to have higher entry requirements and are more likely to have an interview. Expect to be interviewed for Oxbridge, medicine, dentistry and veterinary, or vocational degrees such as nursing.

Oxbridge run their own entrance exams for some subjects. These are on the 4th November this year. You can do these at ECSfG if you need to.

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/admissions-timeline?wssl=1>

Students applying for medicine will need to sit the UKCAT or BMAT. Please check online for costs and dates.

Interviews

Interviews are usually panel interviews with two or three professors from the university. The interviews will usually run alongside a tour of the university. You might do more than one interview across one or two days.

Interviews are NOT:

- Trying to catch you out
- There to ask stupid or confusing questions
- An exam
- A memory test

They ARE:

- To assess how well you'd fit on that particular course
- Meant to be tough and stretch you!
- Designed to make you think and use your brain
- There to help you decide if you want to go to that university

Offers

You can get your offers at any point from when you submit your application. Universities have to consider all applications equally if they are made before the 15th January. Most offers are made before the end of March. You will need to respond by the beginning of May.

Types of offers:

CONDITIONAL: the most common type of offer. A place is reserved for you as long as you meet the conditions (usually a grade or UCAS point offer)

UNCONDITIONAL: you have a place regardless of your grade outcome. You will usually have to pick this university as your first choice to get this offer.

Accepting Offers

Once all your offers are in, choose a FIRM and an INSURANCE.

Your FIRM choice is where you definitely want to go. The INSURANCE is a back up, and should be a lower grade/point offer.

You can't swap between the two, so be certain!

Look at unconditional offers very carefully and only take them if you want to go there. Don't choose the easy option! If you choose an Unconditional offer, you will usually not get an Insurance.

Clearing, Adjustment & Extra

If you get no offers or you decline them all, you can use the UCAS **Extra** service to make another choice for free.

If you accept offers but do not meet the conditions when you get your grades, you will be eligible for **Clearing**. This is a list of all the courses available through UCAS that are not full.

If you do much better than expected, you may be eligible for **Adjustment** and be able to swap your firm choice for a different one (if you want to!)

Paying for University

Tuition fees and loans can be daunting, but don't be too worried – there is little to pay in advance, and the loans are taken out of postgraduate wages via PAYE.

The deadline for applying for student finance will be the end of May. You can apply before you get your offers, but it's often best to wait as where you study and live affects the amount of money you can borrow.

More on this later in the year!

How can parents help?

- Help your child to be realistic
- Encourage them
- Visit universities and attend open days (Virtual tours/open days are available so please check the university website)
- Read personal statements or encourage them to go to a teacher
- Know the deadlines

Useful websites:

<https://www.ucas.com/students>

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide>

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login>

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-loans-tuition-fees-changes/>

<https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus>

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/Update-from-UCAS-and-Universities-UK-.aspx>



But what if I don't want to
go to university?

Remember that you don't have to!

- ▶ College/FE/other courses
- ▶ Apprenticeships
- ▶ Work
- ▶ Gap year

College & FE

- ▶ Art (and other) Foundation years
 - ▶ Excellent prep for university (if you want to go)
 - ▶ Great for BTEC students
 - ▶ Stand alone Foundation years are usually free for students under 19
- ▶ Other L3 courses – specific/vocational
 - ▶ Preparation for a specific university course, or to increase UCAS points
 - ▶ e.g. Capel Manor College Diploma in Veterinary Science

Apprenticeships

- ▶ Excellent opportunities improving all the time
- ▶ Degree/higher level apprenticeships usually combine work & study over 5 years
- ▶ There are also Level 3 and 4 apprenticeships that are usually 12 months long and paid
- ▶ Apprentices pay no tuition fees and earn a wage, so do not need a loan – a great way to get a degree whilst earning!
- ▶ You can go on to university after a Level 3 or 4 apprenticeship, do another apprenticeship or go into full time work.
- ▶ Many sectors are promoting apprenticeship learning, including accountancy and law.
- ▶ Some apprenticeships are extremely competitive, especially at well known firms such as Google – the most competitive degree apprenticeships are harder to get than a place at Oxbridge! **e.g., one of our Y13 students has been successful at being offered an Engineering apprenticeship with TFL!**

How to apply for Apprenticeship

- ▶ There is no central hub like UCAS for apprenticeships, but they are collated by the government and a few other websites.
- ▶ You can set up alerts to let you know when new apprenticeships are available.
- ▶ Each opportunity is offered by the employer, and so has a unique application process.
- ▶ Applications can involve an application form & personal statement, CV, phone interviews, Skype interviews, group interviews, task days etc. They are as varied as job applications.
- ▶ Applying for them can be time consuming and complex, but it is worth it for the best opportunities.
- ▶ You have to be active & seek them out.
- ▶ You will usually have to apply for a few before you are accepted.
- ▶ Please contact our careers adviser **Ms Bastienne** should you require further information

Apprenticeship tips

- ▶ They are a great alternative to university, but hard work! Are you ready?
- ▶ You will have 3 or 4 years experience ahead of your peers, and be earning money
- ▶ You live in the best place in the country to take advantage of them. The vast majority of apprenticeships are in London – make use of that!
- ▶ Ask to visit employers (when it is safe to do so..)
- ▶ Get work experience so you know if it's for you

Gap year/deferring

- ▶ If you want to go to university but not right now, you can defer your place.
- ▶ It is best to still apply now while you have the support at school, but apply for 2022 entry instead of 2021.
- ▶ The rest of the process is the same and goes through UCAS as normal.
- ▶ If you change your mind during your gap year to can let the university know you don't want to take up the place.
- ▶ You can't defer for courses at Oxbridge and some medicine degrees. So check them out.
- ▶ Some courses will let you Date | Insert Name apply now and defer later in the year if you change your mind, but they don't have to.

Useful websites:

- ▶ <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>
- ▶ <https://www.getingofar.gov.uk/>
- ▶ <https://www.ucas.com/apprenticeships-in-the-uk>
- ▶ <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/>
- ▶ <https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/>
- ▶ <https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/business/jobs-and-skills/apprenticeships/>

Good luck and remember we are here at school should you need help:

ecsgeneral@enfieldcs.enfield.sch.uk

Head of Post 16 (pastoral): Mrs Goulding

Assistant Headteacher Post 16 (UCAS): Ms Evans

Careers Co-ordinator and work experience: Ms Bastienne