

UCAS

# ADVISER GUIDE 2025

FOR ENTRY TO UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE IN 2025

An operational guide for all teachers, advisers, and agents who help undergraduate students apply to study in the UK, as a UCAS registered centre.

Updated August 2024



# CONTENTS

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 3  | About this guide                                       |
| 3  | What is UCAS?  |
| 4  | Your responsibilities as a UCAS registered centre      |
| 5  | Changes for 2025 entry                                 |
| 6  | Free School Meals Fee Waiver                           |
| 12 | 2025 entry key dates                                   |
| 13 | Stay up-to-date  |
| 14 | Section 1: The application opens                       |
| 15 | 1.1 Preparing students                                 |
| 17 | 1.2 Resources for your students' parents and guardians |
| 18 | Section 2: Completing the application                  |
| 20 | 2.1 Application overview                               |
| 21 | 2.2 First stop – the applicant sections                |
| 24 | 2.3 Next stop – adviser portal                         |
| 26 | 2.4 References   |
| 28 | 2.5 Submitting applications                            |
| 31 | Section 3: Post-submission                             |
| 32 | 3.1 At UCAS  |
| 33 | 3.2 At the universities and colleges                   |
| 33 | 3.3 What applicants and advisers need to know          |
| 45 | 3.4 What about Clearing?                               |
| 46 | 3.5 Reports for advisers                               |
| 47 | Section 4: Training and conferences for advisers       |
| 49 | Section 5: UCAS terms explained                        |
| 53 | Annex A: Data protection and information security      |
| 56 | Annex B: Embargo guidelines                            |



# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

**This guide is for staff at schools, colleges, and other centres, such as careers offices and agencies, who advise potential undergraduate applicants to higher education (HE) courses in the UK.**

It explains how to apply to UK universities and colleges, how UCAS processes applications, how you can manage your students' applications, and the support, training, guides, and resources we provide.

This guide, together with the [adviser portal terms of service](#), form your agreement with UCAS to use the adviser portal.

To keep up-to-date with the latest information and advice on applications for 2025 please refer to our monthly newsletters and [www.ucas.com/advisers](http://www.ucas.com/advisers). You can sign up to receive the latest news straight to your inbox at [www.ucas.com/adviser-updates](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-updates).

# WHAT IS UCAS?

**UCAS is an independent charity, and the UK's shared admissions service for higher education.**

We support 1.5 million students every year to explore entering higher education, employment and apprenticeships. And we manage almost three million applications, from over 750,000 people each year, for full-time undergraduate courses at approximately 400 universities and colleges across the UK.

We help advisers to help their students make informed choices, by guiding them through all their options and the entire higher education application process.

We also provide information, advice, and an admissions service for UK conservatoires (UCAS Conservatoires). Through our apprenticeship and graduate job search we're also connecting prospective students to apprenticeships and graduate job opportunities.

If your school or college has not had previous contact with us (for example, you are a newly created sixth form), you can find information about becoming a UCAS registered centre at [www.ucas.com/becomeacentre](http://www.ucas.com/becomeacentre). Once we have reviewed your application and it is successful, we will confirm setup, so you can access the adviser portal.

Other types of organisations and independent advisers / counsellors outside of schools or colleges, can also apply to become a UCAS registered centre.

If you need to contact us about any aspect of the application process, our dedicated Customer Success Team for UCAS registered centres is here to help (Monday to Friday, 08:00 – 18:00 (UK time):

- ▶ Phone from the UK – **0345 123 8001\***
- ▶ Phone from outside the UK – **+44 330 333 0239** (international call rates apply)
- ▶ Email – [adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk)

If you have hearing difficulties, you can contact our Customer Experience Centre, using the text relay service:

- ▶ Phone from the UK – **18001 0371 468 0 468\***
- ▶ Phone from outside the UK – **+44 151 494 1260** (text phone) and ask the operator to dial **0371 468 0 468**



# YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A UCAS REGISTERED CENTRE

This guide, together with the [adviser portal terms of service](#), form your agreement with UCAS to use the adviser portal. With regular staff changes within registered centres each year, the individual setting up for the new cycle (e.g UCAS Registered Correspondent) will confirm they agree to the adviser portal terms of service, which incorporates this Adviser Guide, on your organisation's behalf. This forms part of the annual setting up process for a registered centre to be able to manage applications.

Some of your key responsibilities as a UCAS registered centre are as follows:

- ▶ Understand the UCAS Undergraduate application process, and associated UCAS business rules, such as results embargoes (Annex B) dates and deadlines, and UCAS terminology **outlined in this guide**.
- ▶ Signpost your students to advice and guidance about the UCAS process.
- ▶ Keep up-to-date with changes and advances in UK higher education admissions policy, UCAS' developments, and operational updates – we'll send these to you by email. **Please see our 'Stay up-to-date' section for information.**
- ▶ Manage your centre's undergraduate applications through the adviser portal.
- ▶ Send completed applications to UCAS for processing by the appropriate deadline.
  - The October deadline is for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as

for courses in medicine, veterinary medicine / science and dentistry.

- The January equal consideration date is the date by which students have to submit an application if they want it to definitely be considered by universities or colleges. Any application submitted after this date may not be considered.

## As part of managing your centre's undergraduate applications through the adviser portal, you will be required to:

- ▶ monitor, check, advise, and approve student applications linked to your centre
- ▶ ensure predicted grades and a reference are added to every application. Predicted grades must be as accurate as possible
- ▶ identify relevant referees for each applicant, and approve references
- ▶ tick the 'Qualifications checked' box if you have checked students' qualifications. Leave it blank if you have not checked them
- ▶ set up payment options for your students' application fees
- ▶ set a shortlist of qualifications and keep this up-to-date – it will help your students enter the correct qualifications in the application
- ▶ set relevant permissions for your staff and colleagues to access the adviser portal / applications

## Ensure you and all staff members comply with data protection and information security best practice, set out in the [UCAS adviser portal terms of service](#) and this guide, which includes:

- ▶ ensuring the named UCAS registered centre correspondent contact details are up to date, please inform us as soon as possible if this key contact needs to change
- ▶ informing UCAS immediately if you become aware of a security incident at your centre which has, or is likely to, impact on UCAS systems
- ▶ ensuring permissions are reviewed regularly, and staff who have left are removed from the system, to ensure data security
- ▶ reminding staff and colleagues they should not share sign in details. If a member of staff requires access to the system they must be set up as a user in their own right

Please read our complete guidance in [Annex A](#), Data Protection and Information security.

Our [adviser portal guidance](#) is available to help you with the above.



# CHANGES FOR 2025 ENTRY

- ▶ **Application fee of £28.50:** For the 2025 cycle, the UCAS Undergraduate and UCAS Conservatoires application fee is increasing to £28.50. Introduced last year, this single application fee enables all UCAS undergraduate applicants to add five choices to their application, and utilise additional services should they need to, opening up choice in a competitive admissions landscape.
- ▶ **Contact and residency:** From 2025 entry, the Contact and residency section of the application will be split into two sections

'Where you live' – which will ask applicants to provide their address history for the last three years to help universities and colleges make tuition fee assessments.

'Contact details' – which will continue to ask applicants for their contact details.

- ▶ **Nationality:** We're making improvements to the Nationality section with new questions and responses around applicant visas, to make this clearer for applicants and universities.

- ▶ **Education/qualifications:** We're making improvements to the Education section and the way applicants search for their qualifications. The changes will make finding and selecting the correct type of qualification much easier for applicants, so the information provided to universities and colleges is more accurate. We're also moving the English language certificate question into the Education section from the 2025 cycle. The English language skills section will then be removed from the application.

All 2025 entry application changes will be reflected in the adviser portal.

**For full details of all 2025 application changes,** please go to the 2025 adviser toolkit at [www.ucas.com/2025-cycle-toolkit](http://www.ucas.com/2025-cycle-toolkit)

- ▶ **Student access to entry grades data:** Historic entry grades data is currently a feature within the adviser portal that shares course-level information about student grades upon entry into higher education. Students have told us that this information would help them make informed decisions about their future when narrowing down their application choices.

Therefore, from May 2024, following an 18-month testing program with providers and students, which confirmed the data is motivating and informative for students, entry grades data is available on course details pages within our search tool. In conjunction with undergraduate applications opening for 2025 entry, students can see the grade profiles of students accepted onto courses, alongside offer rates. Additionally, they have the opportunity to add their predicted grades to contextualise the historic information to them.

To **keep up-to-date** with the latest changes, information and advice on applications for 2025, please refer to our monthly newsletters, webinars, and adviser updates – you can find everything you need in the adviser news section on [www.ucas.com/advisers](http://www.ucas.com/advisers)

Sign up to receive the latest news straight to your inbox at [www.ucas.com/adviser-updates](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-updates)



# FREE SCHOOL MEALS FEE WAIVER

## WHAT IS THE FREE SCHOOL MEALS FEE WAIVER?

For the 2025 cycle, UCAS will be waiving the undergraduate application fee for any student who is/or has been in receipt of free school meals (FSM) at some point during the last six years, up until the end of their final year at school or college. This will become effective from September 2024. This is only applicable for students who are domiciled in the UK.

## WHY IS UCAS WAIVING THE FEE?

As an independent charity, UCAS has an important role to play in supporting the most disadvantaged applicants to access higher education. The initiative comes at a critical time. The entry rate to higher education of applicants receiving free school meals is at its lowest level since 2019, and national datasets across the UK indicate an increase in the number of free school meals students due to a combination of factors including the cost-of-living crisis. The claiming of free school meals is also the only defined widening participation characteristic which directly links to the individual's circumstances of financial disadvantage. Our aim is to remove potential barriers to accessing higher education for disadvantaged students.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO HAVE THE APPLICATION FEE WAIVED?

1. For the 2025 cycle, students who are currently enrolled at school or college in the UK and have been in receipt of free school meals at some point during the last six years, will be eligible to have the application fee waived.
2. Students applying from the independent school sector can indicate their financial circumstances would have made them eligible for free school meals in the past six years. This can be verified by teachers/ advisers using confirmation through the student's previous school or college, a letter of confirmation from the local authority, or using the Bursary Assessment Associates contextualised data service.
3. Students who are not currently enrolled at a school or college, but who are applying through a registered centre and can demonstrate to the centre they have been in receipt of free school meals at some point during the last six years, are eligible to have the application fee waived.

**Eligibility guidance and FAQs are available to support you.**

## YOUR GUIDE TO THE PROCESS FOR 2025 ENTRY

This is a new process for 2025, and as with all developments we will refine the process for future years.

We'll need your help to encourage eligible students to share they have been in receipt of free school meals in their application and ask for your support in the Adviser Portal by reviewing the application fee payment method for us to be able to waive the application fee.

**For the FSM waiver to be applied students will need to:**

1. Share they are in receipt of free school meals in the 'More about you' section of the application
2. When students need to 'Pay and Submit' their application (from 3 September) they will need to choose the 'Apply with waiver' option.

**For the FSM waiver to be applied we need Registered Centres to:**

1. Check your application fee payment method in 'Centre Management' is set to a method that activates the invoicing option. This ensures UCAS can apply the fee waiver to eligible students and they do not need to pay when they submit their application. **Your school will not be invoiced for eligible FSM students that you provide agreement for in the Adviser Portal** (see guidance on how to set your payment option below see guidance on how to set your payment option outlined in the following pages).
2. In the Adviser Portal provide agreement for those students who have shared that they are or have been in receipt of Free School Meals in the last six years.

## ACTION REQUIRED: CHECK YOUR 'APPLICATION FEE PAYMENT METHOD' IN THE ADVISER PORTAL

This is where you can ensure that your eligible students do not miss out on the waiver. For us to apply a fee waiver to eligible applicants the fee payment method in centre management needs to be reviewed. There are three ways for you to set your centre's application fee payment method; these are shown to your linked students when they 'review and submit' their applications.

- ▶ **A fee payment method that activates the invoicing option is required to ensure eligible students do not need to pay to submit their application and that we can apply the fee waiver.**
- ▶ **If your centre is not set up to enable invoices, your students cannot benefit from the waiver.**
- ▶ **Your centre will not be invoiced for eligible FSM students that you provide agreement for in the Adviser Portal.**
- ▶ **As this is a new process there will be warning messages built into the adviser portal to support you.**

| Current Application Fee Payment Method  | Action required   |
|---|---|
| UCAS will send your centre an invoice   | No action needs to be taken   |
| All your applicants will pay online by credit or debit card   | <b>Application fee payment method will need to be changed before 3 September 2024</b> when pay and submit goes live |
| Some applicants will pay online by card, UCAS will provide an invoice for remaining applicants (the invoice is to be paid by your centre) | No action needs to be taken   |

## CHECKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BEFORE AN APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED TO UCAS

The 'Payment option' column in application management enables you to check that only students eligible for the FSM fee waiver have used an invoice option.

- ▶ For applications 'Sent' to UCAS where an applicant has chosen 'Apply with waiver' but agreement has not been given in the Adviser Portal as FSM eligible UCAS will generate an invoice and payment is required.
1. If an applicant has incorrectly chosen 'Apply with Waiver' or 'Pay Centre' this can be returned to the applicant to ensure they 'Pay by Card' before you send to UCAS.
  2. If an applicant who is eligible for FSM waiver has chosen to 'Pay by Card' you will not be given the opportunity to agree eligibility as we are unable to apply the FSM fee waiver retrospectively.

**Please see the process for each option in the following pages.**

## HOW IS THE INFORMATION ABOUT FREE SCHOOL MEALS USED BY UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES?

Adviser agreement of FSM status is not shared with providers and will only be used by UCAS to support the FSM fee waiver scheme.

Self-declared answers in the 'More about you' section are securely shared with those who are responsible for putting support in place at university or college, and this information is treated sensitively.

Knowing about the applicant's circumstances may also help admissions staff take their achievements into account and gain a better understanding of their achievements and potential in context. They may be able to offer additional support during their studies (e.g. through a scholarship or bursary scheme), or events or activities to help them prepare for higher education. Information about an applicant's circumstances is not used to decide whether to make them an offer, but some universities and colleges may use this to make them a contextual offer. For more information visit [ucas.com/advisers](https://ucas.com/advisers).

The information an applicant provides in their UCAS application may also be used anonymously for monitoring purposes. This may inform and improve the support provided by universities and colleges to their students in the future. The data is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 – read our [privacy policy](#).

**Eligibility guidance and FAQs are available to support you.**

## SUMMARY OF APPLICATION FEE AND INVOICE PROCESS

For applications processed through UCAS, a payment is required. Applicants are charged £28.50 for their application; the FSM waiver can only be applied to eligible applicants who share they are or have been in receipt of free school meals in the 'More about you' section and where agreement is provided in the adviser portal.

If the selected application fee payment option does not work as part of your centre's billing processes, it can be changed at any point during the cycle.

► **UCAS will send your centre an invoice (applicants should not send payments directly to UCAS)**

If you choose this option, our Finance department will send you an invoice at the end of each calendar month, identifying applicants whose applications you have submitted. A waiver will be applied for FSM eligible students and will not be included in your invoice total.

► **All your applicants will pay online by credit or debit card**

This fee payment method will not enable UCAS to apply the free school meal waiver. In addition, once a student (even if eligible) pays by card this cannot be reversed and a fee waiver cannot be applied.

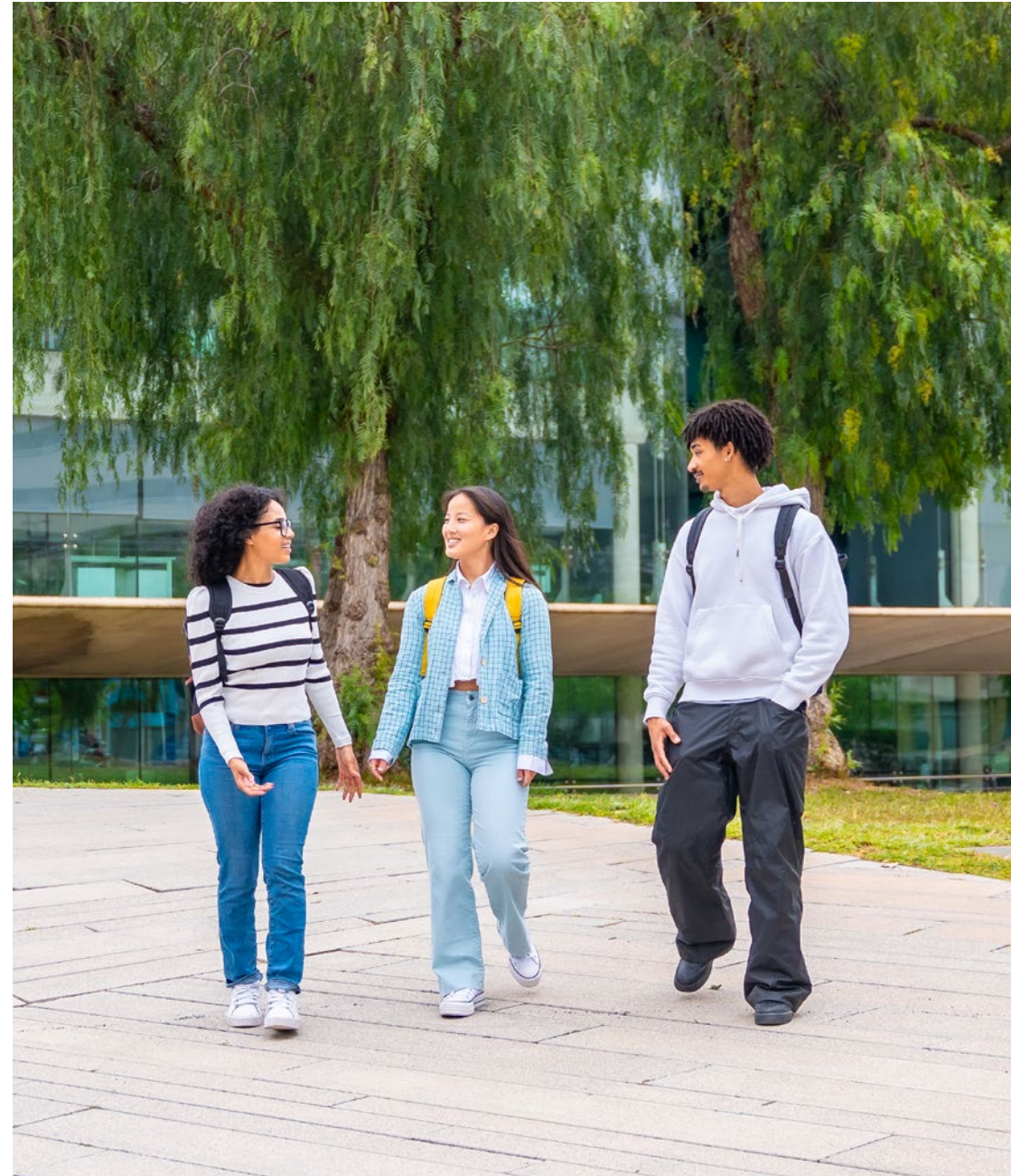
► **Some applicants will pay online by card, and UCAS will provide an invoice for remaining applicants (the invoice is to be paid by your centre)**

Your centre will not be invoiced for eligible

FSM students that you provide agreement for in the Adviser Portal. Invoices will be created at the end of each calendar month for students who are not eligible for the FSM waiver but have chosen 'Apply with waiver' or 'Pay Centre', and you have sent to UCAS.

Invoices are sent by email, usually to a finance contact, and copied to the Registered Centre Correspondent at the centre. You have 30 days to pay. Please ensure we have an up-to-date central finance contact. It's best to use an accounts payable email rather than a named individual. If you need to change the contact, or have any queries, please contact [receivables@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:receivables@ucas.ac.uk), or call **01242 544 923**.

Students who have been in receipt of FSM and are making a UCAS Conservatoire application will be contacted directly via email with further instructions when they declare they are in receipt of free school meals in the 'More about you' section of the Conservatoire application.







# FREE SCHOOL MEALS FEE WAIVER

## OPTION 1 - UCAS WILL SEND YOUR CENTRE AN INVOICE:

### Centre management 2025

UCAS Training School  
UCAS centre number: 15043

Centre and reference details

Contacts

Centre linking (buzzword)

Qualification shortlist

Groups

**Application fee payment methods**

Referee contact details

Reference template

#### Select application fee payment option

Save Cancel

Payment is required for undergraduate applications. Choose how you would like students to pay for their applications in the 'Pay and send' section of Apply.

UCAS will send your centre an invoice (applicants should not send payments directly to UCAS)

All your applicants will pay online by credit or debit card

Some applicants will pay online by card. UCAS will provide an invoice for remaining applicants (the invoice is to be paid by your centre)

Your centre pays the application fee for each applicant applying through your centre. You can ask for reimbursement from the applicants if you wish.

The process would work as follows:

1. Student completes their application and shares that they are in receipt of free school meals in the 'More about you' section of the application.
2. Student will 'Review and submit' their application.
3. Adviser checks their application and agrees the student is eligible for FSM in the Adviser Portal.
4. Adviser sends the application to UCAS.
5. UCAS will generate invoices as usual for all applicants but will remove any confirmed FSM students and waive the application fee for these students.

Important points to note:

- ▶ Advisers can return the application to the student as normal and if required students can update the answer to the FSM question in the 'More about you section'.
- ▶ **IMPORTANT: Once a centre has sent an application to UCAS the application cannot be returned to the student, the payment option cannot be changed and payment cannot be retrospectively waived.**

## OPTION 2 - ALL YOUR APPLICANTS WILL PAY ONLINE BY CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD:

In order for UCAS to apply the fee waiver eligible students must choose 'Apply with waiver' when they 'Pay and submit'. If your centre chooses not to change the fee payment method for all applicants, the process will need to work as follows to support eligible applicants:

1. Student completes their application and shares that they are in receipt of free school meals in the 'More about you' section of the application.
2. If you are **present with the student** (eligible for the FSM waiver) **before** they intend to 'Pay and submit', advisers could **temporarily** change the payment fee method to the 'invoice' or 'hybrid (invoice and card)' option.
3. Once the adviser has changed the application fee payment method the eligible student can choose 'Apply with waiver' and submit to your school/college/centre.
4. Advisers will then need to **remember to switch the application fee payment method back** to 'All your applicants will pay online by credit or debit card' for any remaining applicants.
5. Adviser checks their application and agrees student is eligible for FSM in the Adviser Portal.
6. Adviser sends application to UCAS.
7. UCAS will remove any invoices for those confirmed FSM students' status and waive the application fee.

Important points to note:

- ▶ This might be a preferred option for those who have a very small cohort of students eligible for the FSM waiver.
- ▶ If you return that application to the student for updates, you will need to change the application fee payment method again prior to them resubmitting to the centre.
- ▶ If you do not change the application fee payment method and eligible students 'pay by card' the fee waiver cannot be applied.
- ▶ The 'Payment option' column in application management enables you to check that only students eligible for the FSM fee waiver have used an invoice option.
- ▶ If students who are not eligible for the FSM waiver have accidentally chosen the to 'Apply with waiver' or 'Pay centre' option (which will generate an invoice) advisers can return the application and ask them to choose the right payment method and 'Pay by card' to rectify this.
- ▶ **IMPORTANT: Once a centre has sent an application to UCAS the application cannot be returned to the student, the payment option cannot be changed and the application fee cannot be retrospectively waived.**





## OPTION 3 - SOME APPLICANTS WILL PAY ONLINE BY CARD, UCAS WILL PROVIDE AN INVOICE FOR REMAINING APPLICANTS (THE INVOICE IS TO BE PAID BY YOUR CENTRE):

**Centre management 2025**  
UCAS Training School  
UCAS centre number: 19048

Centre and reference details

Contacts

Centre linking (buzzword)

Qualification shortlist

Group

**Application fee payment methods**

Referee contact details

Reference template

### Select application fee payment option

Payment is required for undergraduate applications. Choose how you would like students to pay for their applications in the 'Pay and send' section of Apply.

UCAS will send your centre an invoice (applicants should not send payments directly to UCAS)

All your applicants will pay online by credit or debit card

Some applicants will pay online by card. UCAS will provide an invoice for remaining applicants (the invoice is to be paid by your centre)

Applicants are given the option to choose whether they pay the application fee themselves. Those who do not pay will be charged to your centre.

[Save](#) [Cancel](#)

To enable fee waivers to be applied you could change your fee payment method to **'Some applicants will pay online by card, UCAS will provide an invoice for remaining applicants (the invoice is to be paid by your centre)'**. The process would work as follows:

1. Student completes their application and shares that they are in receipt of free school meals in the 'More about you' section of the application.
2. Student chooses 'Apply with waiver' when they 'Pay and submit' their application from **3 September 2024**.
3. Adviser checks their application and agrees student is eligible for FSM fee waiver in the Adviser Portal.
4. Adviser sends the application to UCAS.
5. UCAS will remove any invoices for those confirmed FSM students' status and waive the application fee.

Important points to note:

- ▶ **Once payments have been made by card it is not possible to apply the fee waiver.** The 'Payment option' column in application management enables you to check that only students eligible for the FSM fee waiver have used an invoice option.
- ▶ If students who are not eligible for the FSM waiver have accidentally chosen the 'Apply with waiver' or 'Pay centre' option (which will generate an invoice) advisers can return the application and ask them to choose the right payment method and 'Pay by card' to rectify this.
- ▶ **IMPORTANT: Once a centre has sent an application to UCAS the application cannot be returned to the student and the payment option cannot be changed.**

For further information read [2.6 Payments and billing](#)

# 2025 ENTRY KEY DATES

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>30 April 2024</b>                       | UCAS' search tool displays 2025 courses.   |
| <b>7 May 2024</b>                          | The adviser portal opens for 2025 entry. From this date, you can set up your adviser portal ready for your students to link to your centre.  |
| <b>14 May 2024</b>                         | Undergraduate applications open for 2025 entry. From this date, applicants can start their applications and send them to you for references and approval.  |
| <b>10 July 2024</b>                        | Conservatoire applications open for 2025 entry. From this date, applicants can register, pay for, and send their applications to UCAS.   |
| <b>3 September 2024</b>                    | Completed undergraduate applications can be submitted to UCAS.   |
| <b>2 October 2024<br/>18:00 (UK time)</b>  | Application deadline for conservatoire music applications. Applications for dance, drama, and musical theatre courses may have a different deadline – check conservatoires' websites for information.  |
| <b>15 October 2024<br/>18:00 (UK time)</b> | 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 us.   |
| <b>29 January 2025<br/>18:00 (UK time)</b> | Equal consideration date for applications for most undergraduate courses. The reference must be completed before the application can be sent to us.<br><br>Deadline for most conservatoire undergraduate dance, drama or musical theatre courses. Check on the specific course to be sure. |
| <b>26 February 2025</b>                    | 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.   |
| <b>30 June 2025<br/>18:00 (UK time)</b>    | Applications received by this deadline will be sent to universities and colleges. After this time, applications are automatically entered into Clearing.   |
| <b>4 July 2025</b>                         | Last date to add an Extra choice in their application.   |
| <b>5 July 2025</b>                         | Clearing opens for eligible applicants, and vacancies are displayed in UCAS' search tool. Applicants can release themselves into Clearing.   |



# STAY UP-TO-DATE

## ucas.com

There's a dedicated section for advisers on our website at [www.ucas.com/advisers](http://www.ucas.com/advisers). Here you'll find all our latest news, events, advice on things like managing applications and writing references, and a variety of guides and resources to help you through the whole application cycle.

## Newsletters

As a registered centre and user of our adviser portal, it's important you stay up-to-date with our latest developments and operational updates, as well as **key changes** and advances in the higher education sector. Our newsletters and operational emails will provide you with all the information you need, so whether you're an experienced or new adviser, it's important you take time to read them.

Your colleagues, students, and their parents can also sign up for tailored updates at [www.ucas.com/sign-up](http://www.ucas.com/sign-up). They'll get all the latest information, reminders, events, and training details, straight to their inboxes!

## UCAS' social media channels

Active on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok? Stay in the loop by following us [@ucas\\_online](https://twitter.com/ucas_online).

## Adviser news

From updates on UCAS' products and services and useful resources, to sector news and top tips from experienced advisers and subject matter experts, our adviser newsfeed gives you timely, relevant updates to support you in your role. For the latest adviser news, visit [www.ucas.com/adviser-news](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-news).

## Adviser Lives

Join us in our live online sessions, created to help you in your role. We'll be speaking to experts from across UCAS and different sectors, exploring all the student pathways. Take a look at our upcoming events on [www.ucas.com/adviser-lives](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-lives).

## The UCAS widget

The UCAS widget has been designed to be hosted on your school or college's website or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), to link your students and their parents to important information about higher education and the UCAS application process. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/widget](http://www.ucas.com/widget).



# SECTION 1: THE APPLICATION OPENS



# SECTION 1: THE APPLICATION OPENS

**The adviser portal will be available for 2025 entry from 7 May 2024.**

If you are a new centre and this is your first time using the adviser portal, the UCAS registered centre correspondent will need to register and set up your account.

If you are an existing centre, you can access the adviser portal with the same username and password details you first registered with. Your staff, their permissions, referees, groups, and qualifications shortlist will all be rolled over from the previous cycle. You need to check your centre details are still up-to-date, create a buzzword, and set up the application fee payment option for the new cycle.

For more information, please see [our adviser portal guidance](#).

From 14 May 2024, students can register and start their applications. Students and centres are linked by a buzzword, created by the UCAS registered centre correspondent in the adviser portal, and added by students when registering in the application. All students linked to centres can be viewed in the adviser portal. Further information can be found in section 2.2.

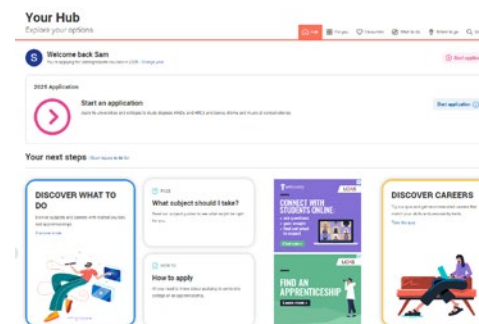
## 1.1 PREPARING STUDENTS

Our adviser resources include some great ideas and resources for classroom activities with your students – highlighting essential information, and helping them refine their choices to make informed decisions. Visit [www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources) for more information.

### TOP TIP

Don't forget, the **2025 cycle toolkit** has everything you need to prepare – download your support materials today!

**Get your students thinking about their future with the UCAS Hub before they apply**



The UCAS Hub provides your students with all the tools and information they need to start thinking about their next steps. From exploring subjects, considering apprenticeships, shortlisting their final five, writing a killer personal statement or CV – it has everything they need in one place – for free.

And the best bit – it's now linked to the application so everything is under one login. Each student will have their own dashboard. It's their space, and their future.

Students can sign up at [www.ucas.com/hub](http://www.ucas.com/hub).

The adviser portal can also help you keep up-to-date with your students' research activity under the Student Hub Activity tile.

Find out what the Hub has to offer your students in our guide for advisers at [ucas.com/hub-adviser](http://ucas.com/hub-adviser).

**Browse thousands of courses with our search tool**

Our search tool has over 52,000 courses at approximately 400 providers in the UK. This mobile-friendly tool enables students to shortlist courses, and access all undergraduate, postgraduate, and conservatoire courses in one search tool, as well as explore apprenticeship opportunities and chat to current students. Visit the [UCAS search tool](#).

**Support students' individual needs**

To help you support the needs of disadvantaged and under-represented students, we have created a [toolkit for advisers](#) that offers practical steps for every step of the application journey. Also visit our [Professional Development Platform](#) for online training on supporting care experienced students and those with mental health conditions through the application.

**Compare accommodation options with our search**

Our accommodation search helps your 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](http://accommodation.ucas.com).

**Read student blogs**

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

**Subject Spotlights**

Subject Spotlights from Springpod give students the chance to explore, interact with and sample university subjects, courses and work experience online for the first time, before they apply. Find out more at [ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/springpod](http://ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/springpod).

**Chat to uni students**

We know the value peer-to-peer conversations have, so we've teamed up with Unibuddy to give your 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](http://www.ucas.com/chat-to-students).



# UCAS DISCOVERY EVENTS

UCAS organises a wide range of events to give students the chance to explore all their options.

## 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](http://www.ucas.com/discovery).

## 92% OF ATTENDEES

IN 2023 FOUND A UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OR EMPLOYER THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN APPLYING TO.

## GET OUT THERE!

To help your students decide, encourage them 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 our search tool at [www.ucas.com/open-days](http://www.ucas.com/open-days).

If your 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](http://www.ucas.com/virtual-tours).

## Enrol on a taster course or summer school

Many universities and colleges offer short taster courses or summer schools, giving students experience of academic and social life in a higher education environment. Most are free, and they can last from one day to a week. Summer schools are designed to be as authentic as possible, with lectures and tutorials, and give students the chance to share their academic interests. Check with the universities and colleges to find out more about these for the current cycle.

UK applicants are asked if they've participated in such activities in the 'Extra activities' section of their application.

## One student commented:

SUMMER SCHOOL WAS THE SOLE REASON I WENT TO UNI - IF I HADN'T GONE, I DEFINITELY WOULDN'T BE DOING MENTAL HEALTH NURSING NOW. IT GAVE ME A TASTE OF WHAT UNI IS LIKE. IT ALSO GAVE ME A CLEAR CAREER PLAN - I MADE SURE I REDID MY MATHS GCSE, SO I COULD GET IN, AND GET THE A LEVEL GRADES I NEEDED.

## Information for international students

- ▶ UCAS information and advice for international and EU students: [www.ucas.com/international](http://www.ucas.com/international).
- ▶ British Council: [study-uk.britishcouncil.org](http://study-uk.britishcouncil.org).

## Other useful resources and websites

- ▶ Information about higher and degree apprenticeships: [www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships](http://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships).
- ▶ National Careers Service (England): [nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk).
- ▶ My World of Work (Scotland): [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk).
- ▶ Careers Service (Northern Ireland): [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk).
- ▶ Careers Wales: [www.careerswales.com](http://www.careerswales.com).
- ▶ Prospects: [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) – what students can do with their degrees.
- ▶ University league tables rank universities and colleges – it's important to check their weighting and methodology to understand their bias. The Times Online at [www.timeshighereducation.com](http://www.timeshighereducation.com), and Complete University Guide at [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk) are interactive sites. Users can highlight their requirements and create their own unique table.
- ▶ UCAS' Careers Quiz is to help your students find their ideal job matched to their personality, and a list of courses previous students studied to get there: [www.ucas.com/careers-quiz](http://www.ucas.com/careers-quiz).





## 1.2 RESOURCES FOR YOUR STUDENTS' PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The best place for parents and guardians to get the support they need is [www.ucas.com/parents](http://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](http://www.ucas.com/parents-signup).

We'd encourage you to promote these resources through your parent portal, at school events, or on your website, to help your students' parents and guardians easily access the information they need.



### One parent told us:

I WASN'T SURE HOW TO HELP MY SON ACCESS AN APPLICATION TO UNIVERSITY AND KNEW THAT UCAS HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT. WHEN I FOUND THE PARENT NEWSLETTER, IT WAS BRILLIANT, AND I SIGNED UP TO MAKE SURE I WAS HELPING HIM THE BEST WAY I COULD.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In the 'Personal details' section of the application, **applicants can nominate a parent, guardian, teacher, adviser, or carer to contact UCAS on their behalf**, if they can't phone themselves. Subject to security checks, we can then discuss an individual's application with their 'nominated access' named person.



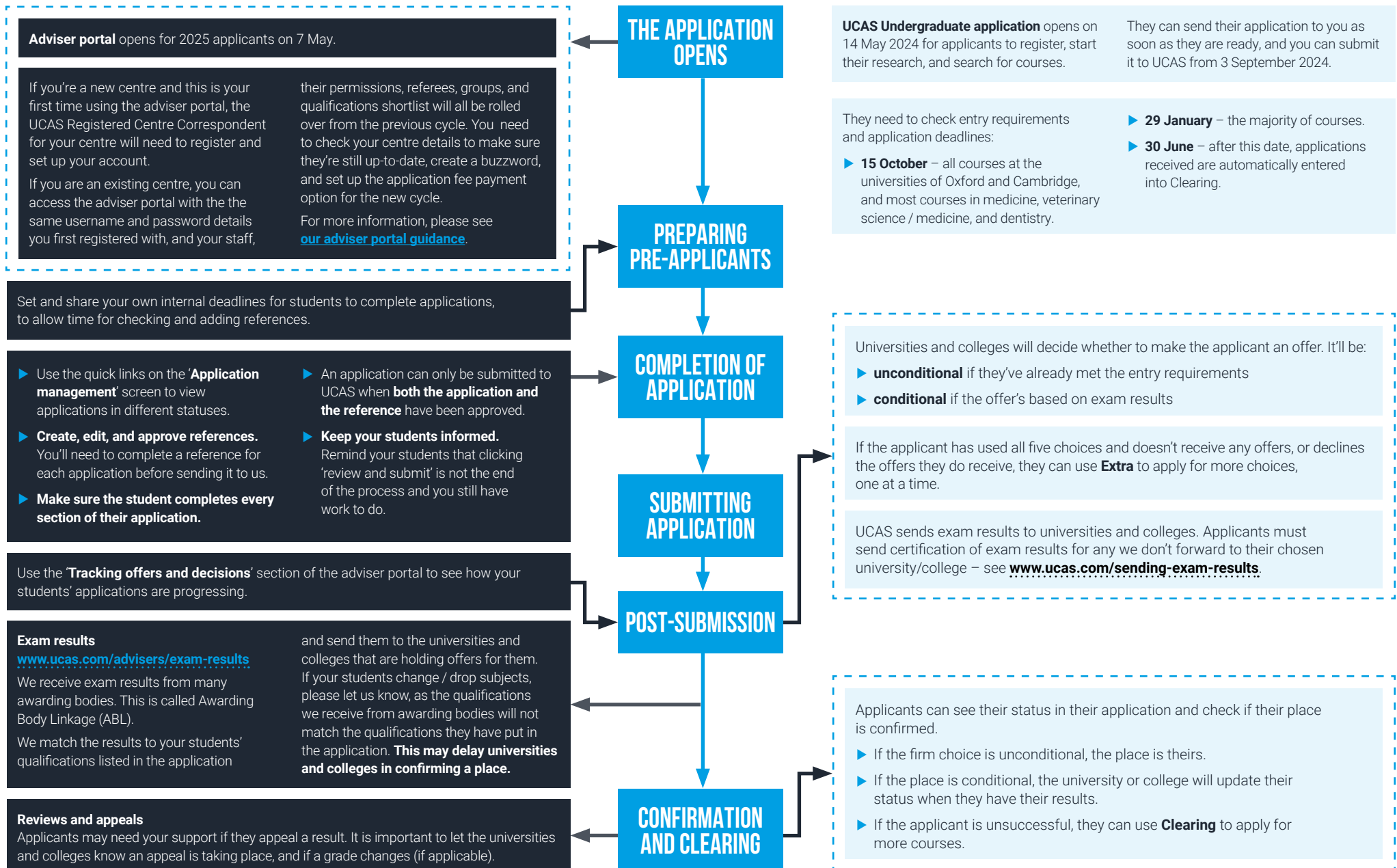
# SECTION 2: COMPLETING THE APPLICATION



## ADVISERS

## JOURNEY OF AN APPLICATION

## APPLICANTS



## 2.1 APPLICATION OVERVIEW

The application has several sections for your students to complete. Once all the sections have been completed by students and payment is authorised, it can be sent to centres to review, add a reference, and return to the student to amend if required. Before it can be submitted to UCAS by the centre, both the status of the application and the status of the reference has to be approved by the centre.

### When to apply

Before looking in detail at the application, it's important to know when to apply. Applicants can submit their applications to you for approval from 14 May, and you can submit their applications to UCAS from 3 September.

There are three application deadlines to be aware of – please refer to **the key dates on page 6** for full details of these. You may want to set your own internal deadlines.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>15 October</b> | All applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge must be submitted by this date, as well as most applications to medicine, veterinary science / medicine, and dentistry courses. |
| <b>29 January</b> | Equal consideration date – applications submitted by this time must be considered equally by universities and colleges.  |
| <b>30 June</b>    | New applications must be submitted by this time – after this, applications are entered directly into Clearing.   |

If you aren't sure which deadline applies, you can find the deadline for each course in our **[search tool](#)**.

Centres submit applications to UCAS on behalf of students linked to them. Applications can be submitted before students have completed their qualifications and received results. Offers from universities and colleges may be conditional, potentially based on qualification results to be achieved. Referees are expected to provide predicted grades for the qualifications their students are studying, so universities and colleges have an idea of their expected result.

### Late applications

Universities and colleges give equal consideration to all applications received by the equal consideration date. They may consider late applications if they still have vacancies, but they don't have to. They can also close courses after the relevant deadline has passed, if they don't want to receive any more applications. A quick check in the **[UCAS search tool](#)** is the first step in choosing a course, to see if there are vacancies.

### 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)**.



### International students

Applicants who submit their application by 18:00 (UK time) on the course deadline date are guaranteed equal consideration by universities and colleges. Many offer extended deadlines for international applicants – students should check with universities and colleges. It's important to remember that most UK students will make their applications well before the deadline, and some popular courses might not have places available after that date.

### 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 2026 when they add their course choice
- ▶ meet the conditions of their offer by 3 September 2025, 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.



## 2.2 FIRST STOP - THE APPLICANT SECTIONS

### How to apply

Your students need to register an account in the Hub. Once they have done this (and the application cycle 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. If your students are using a shared computer in a classroom, library, or IT suite, please remind them to sign out of their application, to avoid another user mistakenly signing in to the wrong application, or seeing personal data.

### TOP TIP

If a student forgets their password, they can use the 'Forgot your password?' link on the sign in page, they don't need to contact us.



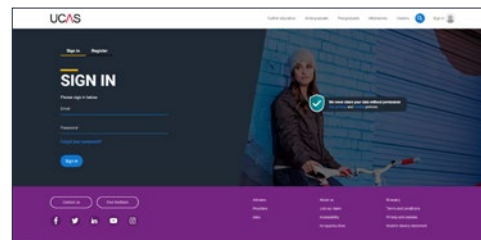
### TOP TIP

We recommend your students use a personal email address so they can get updates from UCAS and their university and college choices all year round.



Students complete a profile, including the following sections:

- ▶ Personal details
- ▶ Nationality details
- ▶ Where you live
- ▶ Contact details
- ▶ Supporting information
- ▶ 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.

All students linked to centres can be viewed in the adviser portal. The buzzword is a unique word centres set up in the adviser portal at the start of the cycle (however, it can be changed at any time throughout the cycle).

Students use the buzzword at the start of the application, and can also choose the group they are to be assigned to. If a student forgets to use the buzzword, and starts an independent application, they are able to change this in the 'Application status' section at the top of the application.

If groups have not been set up (by the UCAS registered centre correspondent), the student will automatically be listed in the centre's 'Default' group list. Students can be changed from one group to another – see the our **adviser portal guidance**.

Registered centres should not sign in as applicants, or ask applicants to share their username and password details. Advisers should only use the adviser portal to access applications.

**Former students** can apply as independent applicants, and request a reference only from the centre. They will need your buzzword to request a reference only but they won't be linked to your centre, and you will not be able to track and check the completion of their application – you'll just provide a reference.

While you're writing it, the student will see their 'Reference' section is in progress. When you have completed it, they will see it's been completed. They cannot view their reference in the application, but once it's complete, we'll let them know. Then they can send the whole application to us, with their payment.

If a former student wishes to link their **full application** to your centre, they will need your buzzword. Accepting a full application link means you're agreeing to approve their application, write and attach a reference, and submit their application to UCAS once all sections are complete.

Find out more at [www.ucas.com/reference-processes-and-terminology](https://www.ucas.com/reference-processes-and-terminology).

### TOP TIP

If a student enters details in their reference section, they would need to delete this before they can try to link to a centre.



There is a quick link from the applications list in the 'Application management' screen ('Waiting to link to centre'), so you can easily see who is waiting to link. We tell you if they are requesting to link their full application or reference only, so you can check they have requested the right support before accepting them.

## TOP TIP

We recommend you create and name a group 'Former students' to easily identify them from your current students – see our [adviser portal guidance](#) for how to do this.



### Acknowledgement emails

We send applicants an automated acknowledgement email after:

- ▶ they have completed all sections of their application, and submitted it to their centre
- ▶ the centre has returned the application to the student for amendment
- ▶ the reference has been added to the application, and it has been received at UCAS

We also send a number of emails to applicants at various stages of their application journey.

Contact details should be kept up-to-date, and **a personal email address used** rather than a school or college one, to make sure they receive important information.

### 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. The exception to this is if the applicant will be a graduate at the start of the course, and they're applying for graduate medicine at the University of Cambridge. In this case, they can also apply for medicine at Cambridge, in addition to being able to apply to graduate medicine at the University of Oxford. No other combinations are permitted

## DID YOU KNOW?

You can add choices after an application has been submitted to UCAS. If all five choices haven't been used, additional choices can be added later (if they've not replied to their offers). They should, however, check the equal consideration date for the course. If a choice is added after the equal consideration date, it will be considered late.

### Invisibility of choices

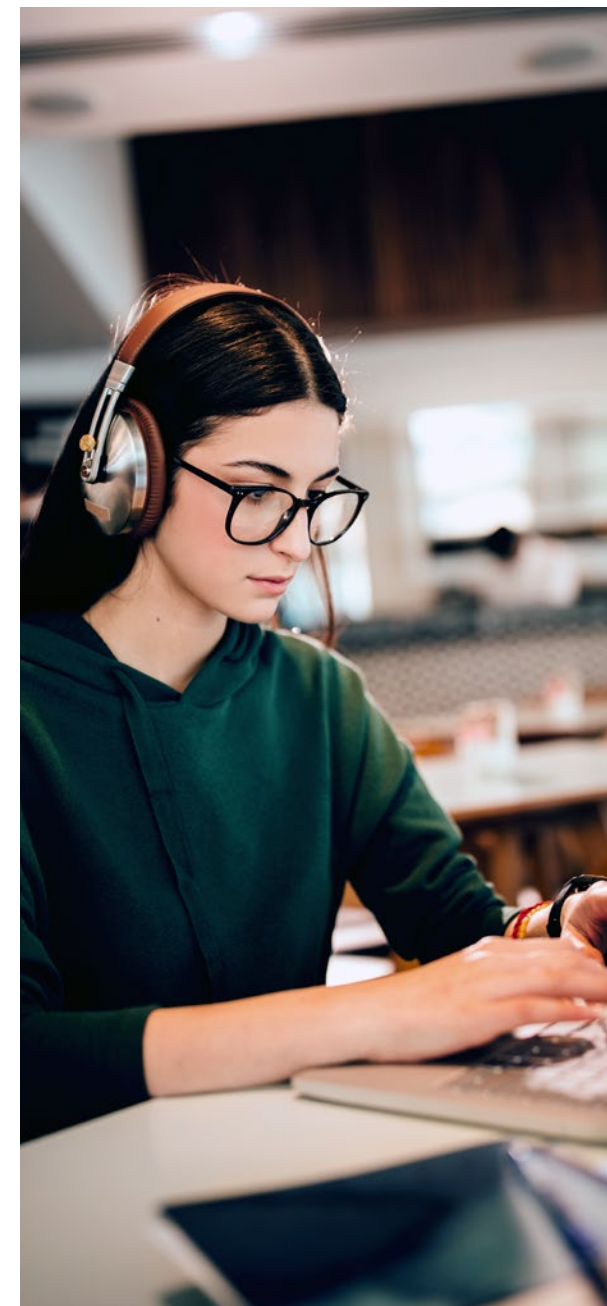
We send the application on to each of the chosen universities and colleges at the same time. Each university or college only has access to the information about its choice. They must not ask applicants, or the person the applicant has nominated to have access to their application, to reveal their other 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. Advisers must ensure this confidentiality is not broken.

## DID YOU KNOW?

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



## Entering qualifications

### TOP TIPS

Applicants should enter all achieved qualifications on their application.



1. This should be from secondary education (or equivalent) onwards; whether they have the result (even any that were ungraded) or they are still awaiting results. This includes all GCSEs and Level 2 equivalent qualifications.
2. It is important that pending and previously sat (including re-sat) qualifications are entered accurately – UCAS will match awarded qualifications to the applicant, so universities and colleges can make confirmation decisions. But before universities and colleges have these, they will use pending qualifications to make decisions.
3. Incorrectly stated qualifications can lead to delays in the provision of qualification results. Names declared on the application should match the names entered with the awarding organisations. Any previously known by names, surnames, and preferred names should be stated as these are extremely helpful when matching qualification entries and results.
4. It's useful if students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland enter their Unique Learning Number (ULN) as it can also help with matching of qualification results.

Students should continue to input any certificated AS qualifications. This includes the decoupled AS in England, the coupled AS in Wales and Northern Ireland, and AS levels offered by international awarding bodies

### Inputting qualifications awarded in summer 2021 and 2022

We understand the context is different in recent years, however students will enter all achieved and pending qualifications in the same way they would have done previously – if a qualification has been certificated, then the student should include it in their application. This is the same for all students, and applies to the final grades they were ultimately awarded in summer 2021 – including Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) or calculated grades in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and overseas (where applicable), and estimations or moderated results in Scotland – including teacher assessed grades.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The full list of results we receive and forward to universities and colleges can be viewed at

**[ucas.com/sending-exam-results](https://ucas.com/sending-exam-results)**

If any of your students' qualifications aren't listed, they will need to send their results on to their universities, colleges, or conservatoires.



## 2.3 NEXT STOP - ADVISER PORTAL

Each UCAS registered centre will have a UCAS registered centre correspondent contact set up on the adviser portal with full permissions. This contact will be responsible for:

- ▶ the setup of their centre details, including creating a buzzword and setting application fee payment options
- ▶ creating a reference template of the school/college/centre profile
- ▶ reviewing staff access, adding new staff, setting their permissions, and assigning them to groups
- ▶ creating and managing groups

### TOP TIP

Don't forget to review your qualification shortlist each year to make sure the most up-to-date qualifications appear. See our [top tips article in adviser news](#).



If you're an existing UCAS registered centre correspondent, all of your staff, their permissions, groups, referees, and shortlisted qualifications will be rolled over from the previous cycle. You'll just need to check your centre details to make sure they're still up-to-date, create a buzzword, and set up the application fee payment option for the new cycle. Anyone already registered for the adviser portal can sign in using the username and password they currently use.

If this is your first year as the UCAS registered centre correspondent for your centre, you will need to register for the adviser portal before you can start the set up process. Please see our [adviser portal guidance](#) for more information.

### TOP TIP

When adding staff, it's important to use their work email address. If the email address you input for a staff member is different to the one they registered with, they won't be able to access the adviser portal. Both email addresses must match.



### Adviser portal dashboard

The UCAS registered centre correspondent will see and have access to the following tiles on their adviser portal dashboard:

- ▶ **Application management** – a list of students linked to your centre pre-submission.
- ▶ **Tracking offers and decisions** – view offers and decisions of students linked to your centre post-submission to UCAS.
- ▶ **Centre management** – set up your buzzword, payment options, referees, and groups.
- ▶ **Staff management** – add staff and set their permissions.
- ▶ **Data and reporting** – a link to see your subscribed paid for reporting or order additional paid for reporting.
- ▶ **Student Hub activity** – see a list of students who have registered and their login activity in the UCAS Hub.

- ▶ **Outreach Connection Service** – see a list of opportunities/activities available for disadvantaged and underrepresented students (UK only).

In addition, all staff will have access to information and advice quick links at the bottom of the dashboard.

All other staff users will see the tiles based on their permissions.

### TOP TIP

If you cannot see individual students, you may need to be added to specific groups under 'centre management'. Please check with the UCAS registered centre correspondent at your centre to be added.



### Permissions

Users of the adviser portal can have the following permissions:

- ▶ Manage staff
  - It's important that all staff are reviewed regularly and anyone who has left your school/college/centre is removed from the adviser portal, to ensure security. If you wish to delegate this to another member of staff, you may give them this permission too.
- ▶ Manage centre details
- ▶ Manage groups
- ▶ View applications
- ▶ Approve applications
- ▶ Send to UCAS

- ▶ Delete and undelete applications
- ▶ View references
- ▶ Edit references
- ▶ Approve references
- ▶ Tracking offers and decisions
- ▶ Student Hub activity
- ▶ Data and reporting

See the [adviser portal guidance](#) for more information on permissions.

### Checking applications

From your dashboard in the adviser portal, you can check to see the progress your students are making with their applications in the 'Application management' tile.

You can check the overall status of each of your students' applications with the 'Applicant status' column and can filter based on this. The 'Section progress' tab will show you at a glance, which applicant has completed each section – this can help you work out who needs more support, or a reminder. See the [adviser portal guidance](#) for further information.

### TOP TIP

You can sort lists of students by name, group, or the status of their application. If you have a large number of students, listing by status is a convenient way of seeing who needs a reminder.





- ▶ Once your students have registered, and linked to you with the buzzword, you can view individual applications in progress at any stage by clicking their name in 'Application management' – you do not have to wait until they are complete or submitted to the school/college or centre.
- ▶ When a student marks their application as complete and clicks review and submit, it will be sent to the centre to check, add predicted grades, and input their reference. At this point, the student will not be able to make any changes to their application unless you return it to them for a correction. Please check the completed application carefully before submitting it to UCAS.

**The main areas to be checked are their qualifications and choices.** If you fully check the qualifications, please tick the qualifications check box, which is located in the 'Applicants' education' section in the adviser portal. This tick box is seen by universities and colleges as part of the reference.

## TOP TIP

If you return an application to be amended, the applicant will receive an email from UCAS to let them know they need to sign in to their application and check.



Your return to applicant message will appear in the email and on the student's application when they sign in. Add this message to your 'adviser notes' so you can refer to them when the student resubmits.



## 2.4 REFERENCES

It is your responsibility as a UCAS registered centre to identify relevant referees, add, and approve references.

### Reference reform

The format of the reference was changed for the 2024 cycle, to help you focus on what universities and colleges want to know about and make it easier for them to identify relevant information about students.

Following feedback and evaluation of the new format from universities, colleges, and advisers, we are not making any technical changes to the format for 2025.

Please read our fully updated information and guidance, including frequently asked questions and resources, at [www.ucas.com/advisers/references](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/references).

### Key updates to previous information and guidance

- ▶ **Character count** – there is a maximum of 4,000 characters, which includes spaces, section headings, and line breaks, all of which take up at least one character. This means that your entered text will need to be under 3,800 characters. Most references will not need to use the total character count.
- ▶ **Extenuating circumstances (section 2)** – we have provided further guidance as to what should be included and how this information might be used. If there are complex or sensitive circumstances (particularly if this relates to safeguarding considerations), it may be appropriate to highlight there are extenuating circumstances in this section and contact

universities and colleges with more detailed additional information directly.

- ▶ **Other supportive information (section 3)** – we have updated our guidance to indicate that this should contain short, concise and factual sentences to demonstrate suitability for the course(s) applied for and share relevant context to the application. Please indicate there is 'no other information to provide' in circumstances where you are unable to provide any additional supportive individual context to the application. Please see the full information and guidance on [www.ucas.com/advisers/references](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/references).

### Who should write the reference?

- ▶ The reference doesn't have to be written by the head teacher or head of sixth form – it's more important that it's written by someone who knows the student well enough to comment on their individual circumstances.
- ▶ For each student, choose their referee from the list created in the adviser portal. This name will appear on the reference, even if another member of staff writes it. A different member of staff (not the referee) often approves the reference.
- ▶ The named referee may be contacted by providers for additional information about the student. Consideration should be given to the name and contact details provided on the reference. We would always advise that a **named organisational email** is given as universities and colleges may be unable to communicate with advisers who are not specified in the application or reference due to data protection laws.



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 other supportive information specific to the applicant and relevant to the course(s) applied for that you think universities/colleges should be aware of.



### Operational guidance for writing references

As an adviser, you may be responsible for writing your students' references.

- ▶ You have a maximum of 4,000 characters, which includes spaces, section headings, and line breaks, all of which take up at least one character. This means that your entered text will need to be under 3,800 characters. Most references will not need to use the total character count.
- ▶ You cannot use **bold**, *italics* or underlining in the reference.
- ▶ You can write the reference in advance, but you should read what the student has written in their application before you finalise it. There's no need to repeat anything the student has mentioned, unless you want to comment on it.
- ▶ Each university or college listed on the application will see your reference. They will not, however, know where else the student has applied. If you refer to one of them in your reference you effectively remove some of the 'invisibility' and could compromise the application.
- ▶ We recommend references are written in a word processor first, then copied and pasted into the application. If you type text directly into the space provided in the 'Reference' section of the adviser portal, it's important to save it regularly. Any interruption to the internet connection would result in all unsaved text being lost.

- ▶ Incomplete/draft references can be saved in the adviser portal and finished later. Once finished, they can be marked as complete, which means they are ready for the final check by a staff member who has the 'Approve reference' permission.
- ▶ Whichever method you use, always remember to save the reference before leaving the 'Reference' section in the adviser portal.
- ▶ A reference can be changed after it has been marked as complete or approved. **It cannot be changed once it has been sent to UCAS.**

For more information on how to save, mark as complete, and approve references, please see the [adviser portal guidance](#).

## PREDICTED GRADES

A predicted grade is the grade of qualification an applicant's school or college believes they're likely to achieve in positive circumstances. These predicted grades are then used by universities and colleges, as part of the admissions process, to help them understand an applicant's potential.

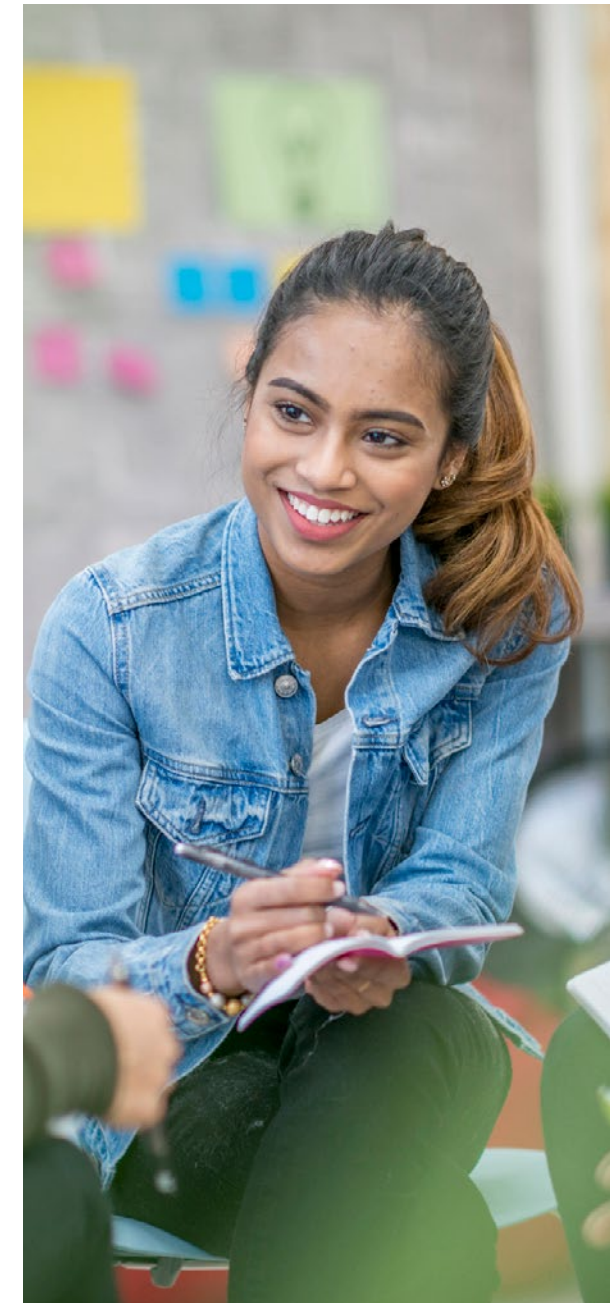
Predicted grades are part of the reference, and it's the responsibility of the registered centre to make sure they have been added to an application. Usually, the named referee predicts the grades – if this is not the case, please state who has predicted the grades in the 'Reference' section. More information on how to enter predicted grades can be found in the [adviser portal guidance](#).

**Don't forget predicted grades can't be changed after sending.**

**Read more guidance and support for advisers when predicting grades.**

### Copy references and the Data Protection Act

Under the Data Protection Act, students can request a copy of their application from us, including the reference, free of charge.



## 2.5 SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

When all sections are complete, and the reference and application have been approved, an application is ready to be sent to UCAS. A quick link to identify applications 'Ready to send' is located in 'Application management'. It is important to do this in plenty of time, and not leave it to the day of the deadline. See **[adviser portal guidance](#)**.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2024, 594,940 applications were submitted before the January deadline. Those submitted after that date would have been considered late, and may not have been considered equally by universities and colleges.



**The following only applies to an individual or organisation ('agent') completing an application on behalf of someone else.**

Before completing an application on behalf of someone else, an agent must:

- ▶ have all necessary authority to complete and submit the application on behalf of the applicant
- ▶ ensure the applicant has sufficient time to read and understand the applicant declaration, our website terms and conditions, and our privacy policy

We have the right to cancel an application if we determine (having carried out any necessary checks), or have reason to believe, that an agent has not fully complied with these requirements.

## TOP TIP

Please ensure we have an up-to-date central finance contact. It's best to use an accounts payable email rather than a named individual.



### Payments and billing

For applications processed through UCAS, a payment is required. Applicants are charged £28.50 for their application, which allows them to have anywhere between one and five choices. As a centre, you have the option to decide how these fees are paid. In the adviser portal, under 'Centre management', you must choose one of three options for application fee payments as outlined below – this can be changed at any point during the cycle.

▶ **UCAS will send your centre an invoice (applicants should not send payments directly to UCAS)**

If you choose this option, our Finance department will send you an invoice at the end of each calendar month, identifying applicants whose applications you have submitted. Invoices are sent by email, usually to a finance contact, and copied to the Registered Centre Correspondent at the centre. You have 30 days to pay. If you need to change the contact, or have any queries, please contact [receivables@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:receivables@ucas.ac.uk), or call 01242 544 923.

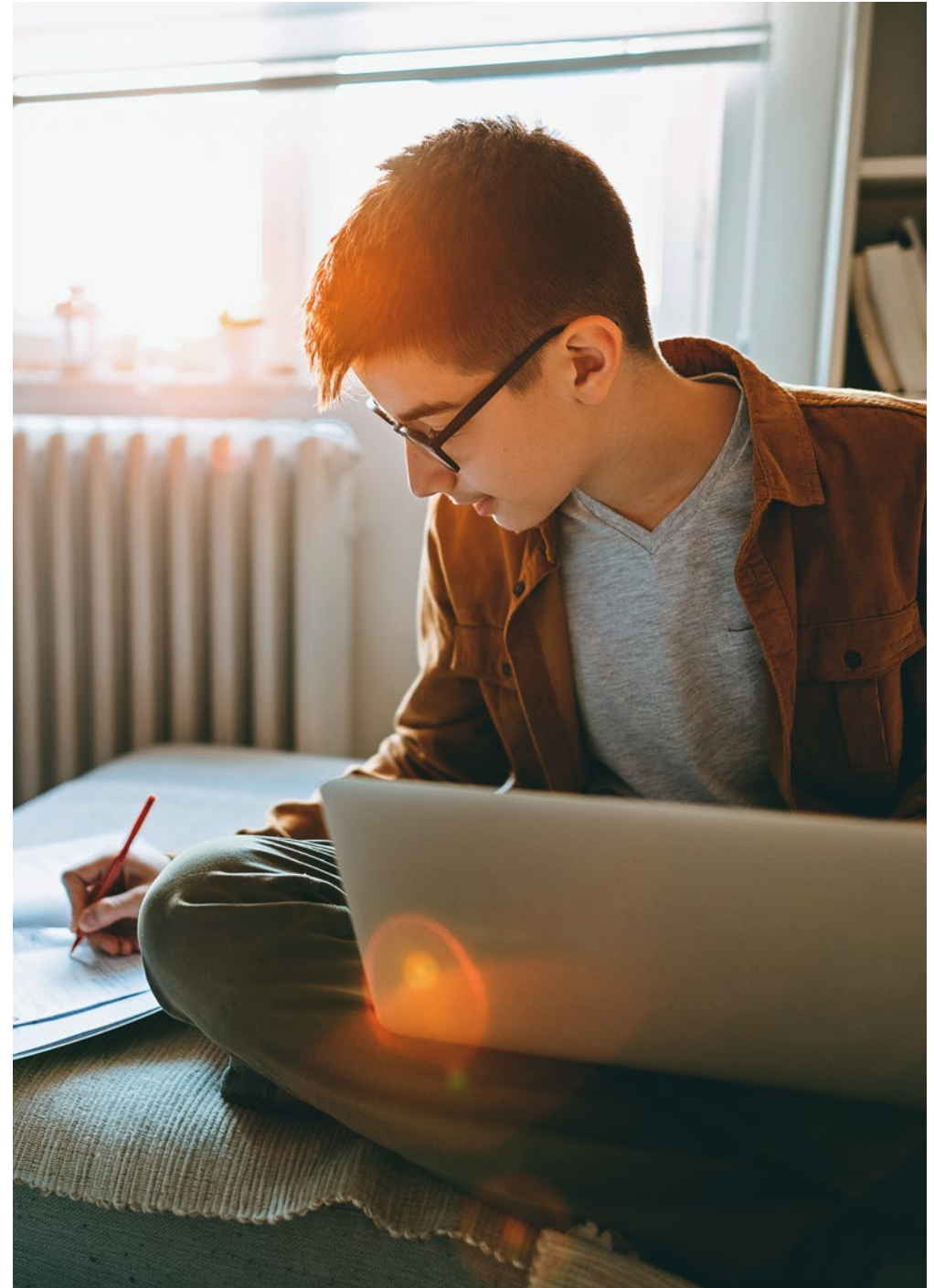
▶ **All your applicants will pay online by credit or debit card**

Please note, American Express and Diners Club are not currently accepted.

▶ **Some applicants will pay online by card, and UCAS will provide an invoice for remaining applicants (the invoice is to be paid by your centre)**

Invoices will be created at the end of each calendar month, identifying applicants whose applications you have submitted, but have told us their centre will pay their fee.

How to set your application fee payment method is outlined in our [adviser portal guidance](#).



# SECTION 3: POST-SUBMISSION



# SECTION 3 :

## POST-SUBMISSION

### 3.1 AT UCAS

#### What happens when we receive an application?

The built-in checks in the application make sure most errors are dealt with before you send the application to us. Occasionally, we may need to query something with the applicant – if this happens, there may be a delay in sending the application to the universities and colleges.

UCAS' dedicated Verification Team is tasked with the prevention and detection of fraud in applications, and plagiarism in personal statements. We screen each application against a variety of markers to detect the level of risk – we then investigate flagged applications and cancel those deemed to be fraudulent.

We also run personal statements through our Copycatch database, which flags any similarities to online personal statements, or those submitted by applicants in past cycles. We then automatically send emails to the applicants and their choices, to let them know a similarity has been detected, and the university or college can decide to take further action if they wish to do so.

#### Detecting fraud

Please make sure your students are aware of the following information about our Verification Team, and its work to identify fraudulent applications. More information and FAQs can be found at [www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/filling-your-application/fraud-and-similarity](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/filling-your-application/fraud-and-similarity).

#### False or misleading information

If we, or a university or college, believe an applicant has left out any relevant information, or has given false or misleading information, we may take steps to check whether the information given is complete and accurate. If you have any reason to believe information we have about the applicant is not complete or accurate, you must tell us. We reserve the right to cancel an application without refunding the application fee.

#### Provide more information

We, and the universities and colleges, may at any time ask the applicant, their referee, or their employer, to provide more information about the application (for example, proof of identity, status, qualifications, education, or employment history). If we do not receive that information by a set date, or if the information is not satisfactory, we reserve the right to cancel the application without refunding the application fee.

#### Personal statement

Along with other verification checks for identity and academic qualifications, we carry out checks to verify personal statements are the applicant's own work. If we have cause to question an application, we will contact the applicant, and at the same time, inform all the universities and colleges to which the applicant has applied, who will then take any action they consider appropriate.

#### Reference

It's important your reference provides individual contextual information about the applicant. If an application, including the reference, has any false or misleading information in it, this could lead to an unfair decision outcome. In such circumstances, UCAS, and the universities and colleges, retain the right to cancel the application and withdraw any offers, without refunding the application fee.

Once an application has been processed through our databases, it's usually with the universities and colleges within two working days of being sent to us. They can see the whole application, but at this stage, they can't see the applicant's other choices of university and college.



## 3.2 AT THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

### What happens at the universities and colleges when they receive an application?

The universities and colleges begin their decision-making process. This differs between them, and even for different courses at the same university or college.

Applicants will hear about each of their choices at different times – sometimes they're contacted very quickly, or it may be several months before they hear anything.

Universities and colleges have deadlines by which they must make decisions on applications – this date depends on when the application was submitted to UCAS.

To see the deadlines that universities and colleges must adhere by visit [www.ucas.com/key-dates](http://www.ucas.com/key-dates).

If we don't receive a decision from the university or college by their deadline, we automatically make the application unsuccessful. This is explained to the applicant in their application, and in the adviser portal, under 'Tracking offers and decisions' you will see 'unsuccessful by default' (often referred to as a reject by default [RBD] by UCAS and universities and colleges).

### Sharing information about a student's personal circumstances

Information about a disability or mental health condition, care experience or other personal circumstances is shared with the university at the point of application, so they can tell the student more about the support they can offer and make any necessary adjustments. In some cases, this information may be used to make the student a contextual offer.

**This information is never used to make a judgement on a student's application.**

### Contextualised admissions – what this means for your students

Contextual information and data can be used by universities and colleges to assess an applicant's achievement and potential, considering their educational and socioeconomic background. The aim is to form a more complete picture of an applicant's characteristics.

As a teacher or adviser, it's important to be aware of this, so you can give the best advice to your students. Contextualised admissions encourage aspirational applications and may also help explain why a student has received a certain offer.

### What practical steps can I take to help?

- ▶ Encourage your students to complete all the relevant application fields in full. The contextual information submitted on the UCAS application is critical to facilitating contextualised admissions.
- ▶ Use the reference to indicate any further contextual information which might warrant special consideration. This could include individual circumstances – e.g. mature student, disability, widening participation activities, or information about your school which may affect performance, such as significant staff changes, or damage to buildings.
- ▶ Signpost students to the **individual needs** and **contextual admissions** advice we have.

We've produced a factsheet in conjunction with the Fair Education Alliance (FEA), to explain what this might mean for your students' applications. You can download this at [www.ucas.com/widening-participation](http://www.ucas.com/widening-participation).

## 3.3 WHAT APPLICANTS AND ADVISERS NEED TO KNOW

### Changes to qualification details applicants have entered in their application

After an application has been sent to us, please let us know straightaway via our **webform** if any of your students' exam details change, and let their chosen universities and colleges know too. That's anything from exam subjects, modules, or units, to awarding / examining bodies and centre numbers.

It's important to tell us, as it could delay the processing of exam results if we are not updated. If results can't be confirmed, your student might not get their place.

You can find out more about the exam results process at [www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results).

### Checking for decisions from choices

When universities and colleges have considered an application, they send us their decision, and we update the application. We email the applicant to let them know something has changed, so it's vital they check their emails regularly.

Sometimes, applicants are invited to undertake an assessment before the university or college can decide whether to make an offer. They may need to sit an admissions test or attend an interview, perhaps both, depending on the subject and popularity of the course. Art and design students usually need to present a portfolio of their work.





Invitations to submit a portfolio, or attend an interview or audition, may be received through their UCAS application, or direct from the university or college.

Please remind your students they must respond to invitations to interviews as soon as possible. They can accept, decline, or request a new time or date – if they want to change the date, they must contact the university or college.

While we encourage universities and colleges to record all offers and interview invitations on UCAS' system, so both advisers and students are kept up-to-date, it is not unusual for a university or college to make an offer, or an invitation to an interview, directly to the student. Therefore, it is important to remind students to check their emails during the application stage.

## DID YOU KNOW?

One of UCAS' admission principles for our universities and colleges states: 'Providers must not place undue pressure (i.e. that which is not in the applicant's best interests) to directly or indirectly influence an applicant's decision.'

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

### Offers

Students can view their offers in the application, and advisers can see offers and decisions for their applicants in the adviser portal, under 'Tracking offers and decisions'. Centres receive offers and decisions at the same time as students. There are a number of quick links in this area, for example, 'Students with no offers', 'Students with all offers received', and 'Students with unconditional offers', to help you identify students who may need additional support. To understand what has been updated since the last time you signed in, you can sort your applicants by the 'Last updated' column. See our **[adviser portal guidance](#)** for full functionality.

An offer will be either conditional or unconditional. In the UCAS system, it will show the year and month the course starts, and the point of entry (for example, the second year of the course, rather than the first).

**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 3 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.

The Fair Admissions Code of Practice published by Universities UK sets the behaviours for universities to improve fairness and transparency in the admissions system while maintaining high academic standards. Find out more at **[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/universities-uk-publishes-fair](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/universities-uk-publishes-fair)**.

Offers may also be for an alternative course.

This option can be used, for example, if the applicant has changed the subject they are studying, or if the university or college wants to make an offer for its HND rather than for a degree. The university or college should discuss an offer for a different course with the applicant before formally making its offer.

There are two other decisions a university or college can make.

**Unsuccessful** – the university or college has not offered the applicant a place on the course.

**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

### Making changes to the application after applying

There are some changes an applicant can make to their application once it's been submitted, and for others they can either contact the universities and colleges, or UCAS. For more details, go to **[ucas.com/makingchanges](http://ucas.com/makingchanges)**.



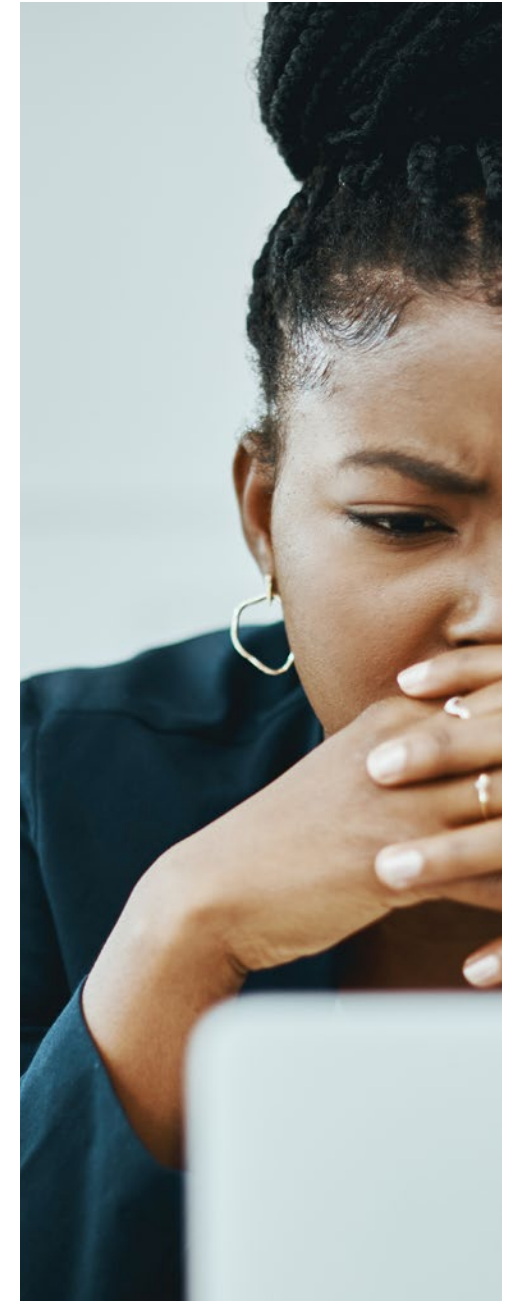
## ADVISER PORTAL APPLICANT STATUSES EXPLAINED

- ▶ **Ready to send to university / college** – applications that have been processed by UCAS, but not yet sent to the universities or colleges listed.
- ▶ **Waiting for university / college to respond** – applications that have been sent to the universities and colleges, but decisions have not been received from all choices.
- ▶ **Waiting for applicant's reply** – applicants have received decisions from their choices, and are now required to reply to their offers.
- ▶ **Eligible for Extra / Clearing / new choice(s)** – applicants who are not holding any offers, and can apply for further choices through Extra, Clearing, or by adding a new choice to their application. Applicants will be displayed in one of the following categories, depending on their status and the time of year:
- ▶ **Waiting for Extra** – Extra has not yet started. Applicant applied to five choices, and either received no offers, or declined any offers received.
- ▶ **Eligible for Extra** – Extra is open. Applicant applied to five choices, and either received no offers, or declined any offers received.
- ▶ **Waiting for Clearing** – Clearing has not yet started. Applicant applied to fewer than five choices, and declined any offers received.
- ▶ **Eligible for Clearing** – Clearing is open. Applicant has either been unsuccessful, or declined any offers received.
- ▶ **No offers, other options available** – Applicant applied to fewer than five choices, and has been unsuccessful at all choices. Applicant is now eligible to apply for new choices (up to the maximum of five), or be entered into Clearing.
- ▶ **Has accepted offer(s)** – applicants who have accepted one of their offers (as their firm choice) or two of their offers (as their firm and insurance choices). Their firm choice will be conditional, for example, CF. Applicants with an unconditional firm offer (UF) are listed under Final place accepted.
- ▶ **In Clearing** – applicants who apply after 30 June, and are eligible to apply through Clearing for a choice.
- ▶ **University / college to make final decision** – applicants who are waiting for their university or college to confirm their conditional offer. The decision will be based on whether they meet the conditions of the offer.
- ▶ **Applicant to reply to revised offer** – applicants who have received a changed course offer from their chosen university or college, e.g. a change of course, entry year, or campus. These applicants need to reply to the revised offer in their application.
- ▶ **Final place accepted** – applicants who have firmly accepted an unconditional offer, received an unconditional offer after meeting their conditional offer requirements, or been given a place in Clearing, for example, UF.
- ▶ **Application cancelled** – there are several reasons why an application may be cancelled. It is usually because the applicant has chosen to cancel the application within 14 days of the date it was processed. If this is the case, the application fee is refunded, and the applicant is able to submit another application in the same academic year.
- ▶ **Withdrawn from this year's cycle** – applications that have been completely withdrawn from UCAS for the current academic year, either by the applicant or by the university or college the applicant accepted as their unconditional firm choice. Applicants are not able to submit another application in the same academic year.

### TOP TIP

Before making any decisions, encourage your students to take a look at our advice on making informed choices

– [www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/making-right-decision](https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/making-right-decision)



## ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

The Applicant Status Report (ASR) and the Final Destination Report (FDR), which you can download via the adviser portal, use various abbreviations and codes. Please find below a list of codes you should find useful when interpreting your data.

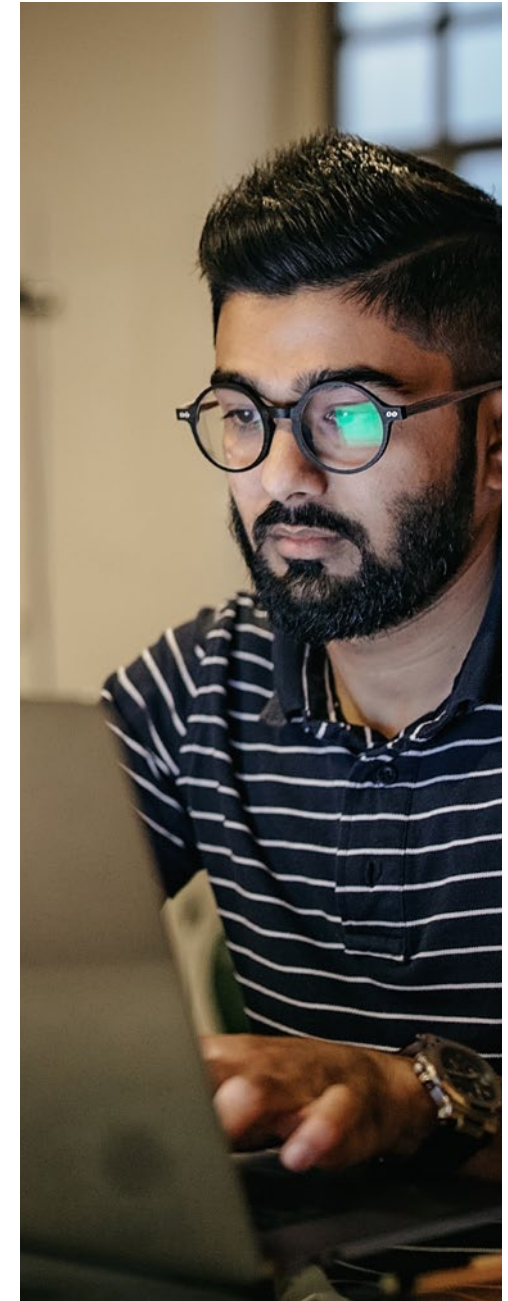
### Decisions and replies

- ▶ **REF** – Sent to provider for consideration
- ▶ **FULL** – Course became full after application sent to provider for consideration
- ▶ **INV** – Invitation from provider to attend interview, audition, or send portfolio
- ▶ **U(UF)** – Unconditional offer (firmly accepted)
- ▶ **UI** – Unconditional offer (held as insurance)
- ▶ **U(D)** – Unconditional offer (declined)
- ▶ **C(CF)** – Conditional offer (firmly accepted)
- ▶ **C(CI)** – Conditional offer (held as insurance)
- ▶ **C(D)** – Conditional offer (declined)
- ▶ **REJ** – Unsuccessful
- ▶ **W** – Withdrawn (either at the request of the applicant or provider)
- ▶ **C(DBD)/U(DBD)** – Offer declined by UCAS. Reply not received from applicant by deadline given
- ▶ **UCC(F)** – Unconditional Changed Course offer (firmly accepted)
- ▶ **UCC(DBD)** – Changed Course offer declined by UCAS. Reply not received from applicant by deadline given
- ▶ **CLA** – Clearing Accept
- ▶ **DCF(F)** – Delayed Confirmation of CF choice
- ▶ **RBD** – Reject by default (decision not received from provider)

### Summary of conditions

Students will receive conditions of which they will have to meet in order to secure their place at any of their choices. Universities and colleges abbreviate these conditions, so below is a summary to help you understand what they mean.

- ▶ **M** – The offer is subject to satisfying the general entrance conditions of the provider.
- ▶ **A, B, C, D, E** – The offer shows the grades required in subjects at GCE Advanced level, or SQA Highers and Advanced Highers.
- ▶ **+** – The offer contains a GCE AS award requirement.
- ▶ **X** – The offer contains a GCSE / Standard Grade requirement.
- ▶ **F** – The offer contains a Foundation / Access course requirement.
- ▶ **G** – The offer includes a requirement for a financial guarantee.
- ▶ **H** – The offer also includes an alternative course / HND offer.
- ▶ **L** – The offer includes an English language qualification requirement.
- ▶ **T** – The offer is subject to industrial sponsorship being obtained.
- ▶ **J** – The offer contains an Edexcel Foundation / BTEC Scottish Qualifications Authority qualification required other than those covered by codes A – E above.
- ▶ **K** – The offer is based on other academic requirements, e.g. Irish Leaving Certificate or International Baccalaureate. You should refer to the applicant's offer letter.
- ▶ **N** – The offer includes non-academic conditions, e.g. satisfactory medical report or criminal record check.
- ▶ **Numeric e.g. 96** – The offer has been expressed in UCAS Tariff points. You can check Tariff points against grades at [www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator).



## STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

### Disabled students (including mental health conditions, learning differences and long-term health conditions)

A wide range of support is available to help students with individual needs in higher education. This might be related to their studies, day-to-day activities, travel or lifestyle.

The type and level of support will vary between providers so it is advisable for applicants to contact student support services to check what is available and that it meets their needs before applying. They will also be able to arrange any support needed to attend interviews and open days, and arrange to visit in person if required. All universities and colleges must, under the Equality Act 2010, make reasonable adjustments to ensure students are not disadvantaged. In the rare instance the university or college cannot meet an applicant's needs, their choice can be substituted with another free of charge.

All applicants have the opportunity to share a condition or impairment when they complete their application. There are a number of options to choose from, including 'None', and a free text box to enter further details about their support needs. If a student has multiple impairments, they should select 'two or more impairments' and give more information in the free text box.

The course provider may contact the student for further information, and to talk about the support services they can offer – usually after an offer is accepted. This information is treated sensitively and only shared with those responsible for arranging support.

It is especially important for international students to contact the course provider in advance, as funding arrangements to support them can be different from UK students. They may be able to bring support funding from their home country to study in the UK, but they will need to arrange this with the university or college well in advance. More information can be found on the British Council website, at [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org).

If an applicant is concerned about sharing an impairment or condition, please encourage them not to be. This information will not affect their chances of receiving an offer – it is used to ensure the student is supported throughout their studies.

Some universities and colleges may use this information when setting the conditions of an offer (i.e. a contextual offer), but it will not affect whether an applicant receives an offer.

Even if the student decides not to use the support, having it in place means it is ready in case their circumstances change. A diagnosis is not needed to share an impairment or condition via UCAS.

With the applicant's permission, you may also use the reference to explain if their condition has impacted their performance or to highlight how they have overcome any challenges.

Our toolkit to help you support disabled students at each stage of their journey is available at [www.ucas.com/adviser-toolkit-supporting-disabled-students-including-those-long-term-illnesses-and-learning](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-toolkit-supporting-disabled-students-including-those-long-term-illnesses-and-learning).

The toolkit for supporting students with mental health conditions is available at [www.ucas.com/supporting-students-mental-health-conditions](http://www.ucas.com/supporting-students-mental-health-conditions).

### Care-experienced students

All UK applicants are asked if they have ever spent time in local authority care, including foster care, in a residential care home, under a home supervision order (Scotland), or kinship care.

By sharing this information, the university or college may be able to help with:

- ▶ year-round accommodation, including during the holidays
- ▶ bursaries, scholarships, or access to hardship funds
- ▶ financial advice, such a budgeting and applying for additional support
- ▶ other support services, including mental health and wellbeing, childcare, disability, and careers guidance

Universities and colleges treat this information sensitively. They may contact a student to discuss if they need any extra resources or support during their course.

Some universities and colleges may use this information when setting the conditions of an offer (i.e. a contextual offer).

Note: Please ensure applicants who are leaving care have spoken to their pathway plan personal adviser about their next steps.

Find practical tips to support care-experienced students at each stage in our toolkit: [www.ucas.com/supporting-care-experienced-students](http://www.ucas.com/supporting-care-experienced-students).

### Students estranged from their parents

UK applicants can flag if they do not have the support either of their parents due to an irreconcilable breakdown in their relationship – or if they are in the process of becoming estranged from their parents. Many universities and colleges offer support to estranged

students, such as:

- ▶ year-round accommodation, including during the holidays
- ▶ financial help, including bursaries, and support with applying for student finance as an independent student
- ▶ other support services, including mental health and wellbeing counselling, childcare, disability, and careers guidance

We recommend applicants contact student support services before they apply, to see how they can help. We would also suggest that, with the student's permission, their circumstances are mentioned in section 2 of their reference.

Universities and colleges treat this information sensitively. They may contact a student to discuss if they need any extra resources or support during their course. Some providers may use this information when setting the conditions of an offer (i.e. a contextual offer).

Find practical tips to support estranged students through each step of their journey in our toolkit: [www.ucas.com/supporting-students-estranged-their-parents](http://www.ucas.com/supporting-students-estranged-their-parents).

## TOP TIP

Visit the Propel website at [propel.org.uk](http://propel.org.uk) for information about moving into higher education from care, and specific details about the support individual universities and colleges across the UK offer.



### Students with caring or parenting responsibilities

Applicants who are parents, or provide regular care to a family member or friend with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or addiction, can flag their circumstances in the UCAS application. Students may be able to access support such as:

- ▶ financial support, including bursaries
- ▶ help with managing health and wellbeing
- ▶ support services, such as childcare, money management advice, and careers guidance

We recommend students contact student support services before they apply, to check what support is available. We would also suggest that, with the student's permission, their circumstances are mentioned in their reference.

Universities and colleges treat this information sensitively. They may contact a student to discuss if they need any extra resources or support during their course. Some universities and colleges may use this information when setting the conditions of an offer (i.e. a contextual offer).

For further advice, see our adviser toolkits for:

- ▶ **students with caring responsibilities:** [www.ucas.com/supporting-students-caring-responsibilities](http://www.ucas.com/supporting-students-caring-responsibilities)
- ▶ **students with parenting responsibilities:** [www.ucas.com/supporting-students-parenting-responsibilities](http://www.ucas.com/supporting-students-parenting-responsibilities)

### Refugees, asylum seekers, and students with an insecure immigration status

Applicants who are refugees, asylum seekers or have limited leave to remain may be able to access support to progress to higher education. The type of support available is variable and

will depend on the applicant's status, so it is important they research their options carefully before applying.

Students with **official refugee** status in the UK are entitled to apply for student finance, and usually considered a 'home' student for calculating tuition fees. This usually applies to students with humanitarian protection, subject to meeting ordinary residence requirements.

**Asylum seekers** are usually considered as 'overseas' students, meaning they are ineligible for student finance, and subject to different tuition fees. However, some universities offer scholarships to students seeking asylum in the UK and they may be eligible for 'home' fees and/or support through their relationship with a family member.

Applicants with an insecure status (e.g. limited leave to remain), are usually classed as overseas students and ineligible for student finance – but this may depend on how long they have lived in the UK. At the age of 18, many young people will face a change of status. HE admissions staff are aware of this complication, and will advise according to their policies. It's essential that any change of status is communicated to the universities immediately, as this may affect the student's fee status and the help they are eligible for. Any concerns or queries can be addressed with the university or college directly, or contact **UKCISA** or **Coram Children's Legal Centre** for further help.

For further advice – including details of organisations who can offer free advice and guidance – see our adviser toolkit for supporting asylum seekers and refugees at [www.ucas.com/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers](http://www.ucas.com/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers)



### Students from UK Armed Forces families

Students from UK Armed Forces families (sometimes referred to as 'Service children') have at least one parent or carer serving in the UK Armed Forces (regular or reservist).

Many universities and colleges support these students through their application and transition, including through outreach activities and events, and applicants can share their circumstances on the UCAS application.

We would recommend the reference section is used to highlight any issues that have affected the applicant's attainment or performance as a result of their circumstances.

You can get practical tips on supporting these students in our adviser toolkit: [www.ucas.com/supporting-children-uk-armed-forces-families-service-children](http://www.ucas.com/supporting-children-uk-armed-forces-families-service-children).

### TOP TIP



We strongly recommend students contact universities and colleges prior to application, to discuss their individual circumstances and find out what support is available. If their circumstances change after they have applied, they should contact their university or college immediately. For more information, visit [www.ucas.com/undergraduate-individual-needs](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate-individual-needs).

### UK Armed Forces veterans and Service leavers

If you are supporting an applicant who has previously served in the UK Armed Forces themselves, you may find their journey to HE is slightly different, due to the alternative qualifications, training, and experience they may have.

Applicants should check the Ministry of Defence's ELCAS website for more information: [www.enhancedlearningcredits.com](http://www.enhancedlearningcredits.com).

For more details of how to support Service leavers and veterans with their application, read our adviser toolkit: [www.ucas.com/supporting-uk-armed-forces-veterans-and-service-leavers](http://www.ucas.com/supporting-uk-armed-forces-veterans-and-service-leavers).

### Widening participation

We support widening access and participation, and work in partnership with charities and other sector organisations to provide practical and inspiring information, advice, and resources for underrepresented groups.

Find out more at [www.ucas.com/providers/ucas-fair-access-programme](http://www.ucas.com/providers/ucas-fair-access-programme).

Applicants can self-identify if they have received free school meals while at school.

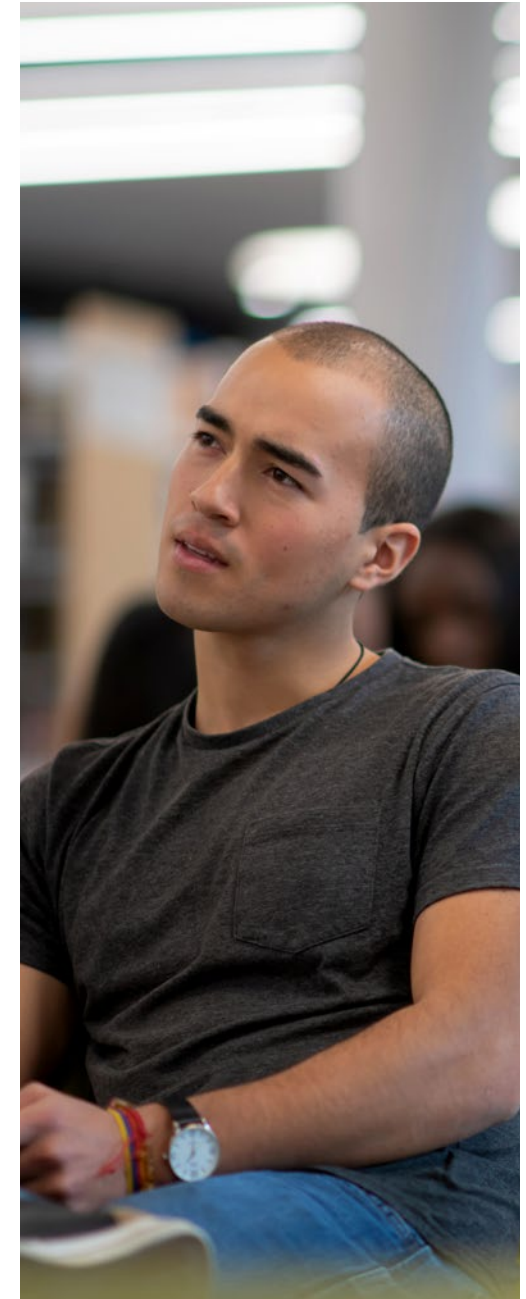
This question is in addition to the verified data we provide at the point of application about FSM eligibility directly from Government sources, which covers English, Northern Irish, and Welsh state and independent school pupils.

Read more about how this information is used: [www.ucas.com/applicants-eligible-free-school-meals-fsm](http://www.ucas.com/applicants-eligible-free-school-meals-fsm).

### Outreach Connection Service

UCAS' Outreach Connection Service has been developed for UK teachers and advisers, offering an efficient and time-saving online tool for you to support disadvantaged and underrepresented students to higher education. It allows trusted and onboarded providers and third-party providers to showcase their outreach opportunities via the adviser portal, so you can connect to the opportunities relevant for your students throughout their discovery journey.

We also produce reports to inform public debate, such as our end of cycle releases and insight reports. View our policy reports page at [www.ucas.com/insights](http://www.ucas.com/insights).



### 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 2024 the Tariff update will be applicable to students starting university in September 2025.

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. Our Tariff points calculator at [ucas.com/tariff-calculator](https://www.ucas.com/tariff-calculator) can help students understand how many Tariff points their qualifications carry.

It's important to make sure your students understand they cannot 'double count' exams in the same subject. Points for GCE AS qualifications or SQA Highers 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).

Here is an example of how an applicant would add up their Tariff points. Only the points shown in **bold** can be included in the total.

| Subject                       | Level         | Grade    | Tariff points |
|-------------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|
| <b>History</b>                | <b>GCE AS</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>12</b>     |
| English language              | GCE AS        | B        | 16            |
| French                        | GCE AS        | B        | 16            |
| <b>Health and social care</b> | <b>GCE A</b>  | <b>C</b> | <b>32</b>     |
| <b>English language</b>       | <b>GCE A</b>  | <b>B</b> | <b>40</b>     |
| <b>French</b>                 | <b>GCE A</b>  | <b>C</b> | <b>32</b>     |
| <b>Total Tariff points</b>    |               |          | <b>116</b>    |

### DID YOU KNOW?

Tariff points are allocated to all Level 3/SCQF Level 6 qualifications which have been UK-regulated. UCAS has not allocated Tariff points to international qualifications since 2021, with the exception of the Irish Leaving Certificate.

Please check [www.ucas.com/advisers/tariff](https://www.ucas.com/advisers/tariff) for the most up-to-date list of qualifications included on the Tariff.

**International students:** Universities and colleges can make an offer based on exam grades. Contact them directly to check their entry requirements for international qualifications.



## TARIFF POINTS FOR SOME POPULAR QUALIFICATIONS

| Scottish Higher qualification and grade | Scottish Advanced Higher grade | Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate | Extended Project Qualification | AS Level | A Level | T Level  | TARIFF POINTS | BTEC National Extended Diploma | BTEC National Diploma | BTEC National Subsidiary Diploma | BTEC National Certificate | IB Higher Diploma | IB Standard Diploma | IB Extended Essay/Theory of Knowledge |
|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         | D*       | 168           | D*D*D*                         |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 160           | D*D*D                          |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 152           | D*DD                           |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         | D        | 144           | DDD                            |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 128           | DDM                            |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         | M        | 120           |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 112           | DMM                            | D*D*                  |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 104           |                                | D*D                   |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         | P (A*-C) | 96            | MMM                            | DD                    |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 80            | MMP                            | DM                    |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         | P (D-E)  | 72            |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 64            | MPP                            | MM                    |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   | A                              | A*  |                                |          | A*      |          | 56            |                                |                       | D*                               |                           | H7                |                     |                                       |
|   | B                              | A   |                                |          | A       |          | 48            | PPP                            | MP                    | D                                |                           | H6                |                     |                                       |
|   | C                              | B   |                                |          | B       |          | 40            |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
| A                                       |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 33            |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   | D                              | C   |                                |          | C       |          | 32            |                                | PP                    | M                                |                           | H5                |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   | A*                             |          |         |          | 28            |                                |                       |                                  | D*                        |                   | S7                  |                                       |
| B                                       |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 27            |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                | D   | A                              |          | D       |          | 24            |                                |                       |                                  | D                         | H4                | S6                  |                                       |
| C                                       |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 21            |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   | B                              | A        |         |          | 20            |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                | E   | C                              | B        | E       |          | 16            |                                |                       | P                                | M                         |                   | S5                  |                                       |
| D                                       |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 15            |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     |                                       |
|   |                                |   | D                              | C        |         |          | 12            |                                |                       |                                  |                           | H3                | S4                  | A                                     |
|   |                                |   |                                | D        |         |          | 10            |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     | B                                     |
|   |                                |   | E                              |          |         |          | 8             |                                |                       | P                                |                           |                   |                     | C                                     |
|   |                                |   |                                | E        |         |          | 6             |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   | S3                  | D                                     |
|   |                                |   |                                |          |         |          | 4             |                                |                       |                                  |                           |                   |                     | E                                     |



### 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.

You should encourage your students to 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.

You can find out more at [wwwucas.com/your-consumer-rights](http://wwwucas.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.

You can see applicant reply dates at [wwwucas.com/key-dates](http://wwwucas.com/key-dates).

Make sure your students are aware their reply date could be different from their friends' – there is no single date for all applicants.

### AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR YOUR STUDENTS

If they don't reply to their offers on or before their reply date, UCAS will decline them on their behalf (often referred to as declined by default [DBD]). This means they will lose all their offers.

The UCAS application process complies with consumer law and the Competition and Markets Authority's advice. This means applicants have 14 days to change their mind after they accept an offer, which constitutes a contractual decision.



### Extra – a chance to apply to more universities and colleges

All is not lost if your students are not offered a place at any of their five choices, or they decline all their offers. You can encourage them to 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)'. You can view this in the adviser portal under 'Tracking offers and decisions'.

See page 6 for the opening and closing dates of Extra.

### Qualification results and Confirmation

UCAS receives qualification results from many awarding bodies and sends them to the universities and colleges that are holding offers for applicants. Tracking offers and decisions in the adviser portal will show real-time data on SQA and JCQ (including A levels) results days (once the embargo periods have been lifted). Check which results we receive at [www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results](http://www.ucas.com/sending-exam-results).

### DID YOU KNOW?

If your students are taking any other qualifications – in particular, non-UK qualifications – they must send their results to the universities and colleges themselves as soon as they receive them.

Universities and colleges will want proof of all qualifications entered in the application (e.g. GCSEs).

International and EU students may have to send proof of their results to their chosen universities in certificates or transcripts. Different universities and colleges have different policies for how they want to receive them – some might ask for them as soon as they receive the application, while others might do their initial assessment of the application before asking to see proof of results.

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.**

### TOP TIP

It's a bit of an urban myth that we update applications at midnight on results day – we don't!

Your students need to wait until our published time in the morning to see if they're accepted, so they might as well get some sleep.



- ▶ **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' qualification 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. See 'Change of course' below to see how this works, and page 38 for information about Clearing.

### Change of course

If an applicant doesn't meet the conditions of their offer, a university or college may offer them an alternative, such as:

- ▶ a different course
- ▶ a deferred entry place
- ▶ a different point of entry (a 'year zero' foundation year instead of year one of a degree course)

If this happens, applicants have five days to decide if they want to accept the alternative offered. All their options will be explained in the offer on their application.

**Reasons for pending confirmation:** Introduced in 2023, we've enabled universities and colleges to inform applicants as to why a confirmation decision hasn't been made. They're able to specify a reason, for example awaiting a DBS check, so applicants know why there is a delay.

### Delayed or late qualification results

Universities will wait until 3 September to receive results, unless they specify a different date. If the results are not available until after this, they are not obliged to hold the place open. If you know of any results likely to be subject to delay, it's important the university or college is notified in good time.

### Reviews and appeals

Applicants who use the review and appeal services have no guarantee their offers will remain open. It is imperative to notify universities and colleges of a possible change of grade as soon as a review is logged with the awarding body. Although they are under no obligation to agree to wait for a review of marking or appeal, students should ask them if they are able to hold the offer open. For more information, go to:

[www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/exam-results).



## 3.4 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. Our Clearing service is used by tens of thousands of applicants each year and runs from the beginning of July – see page 6 for this cycle's date.

### Who can use Clearing?

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

- ▶ Place is not confirmed after their qualification results are published.
- ▶ No offers have been 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 our [search tool](#).

- ▶ Your 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.

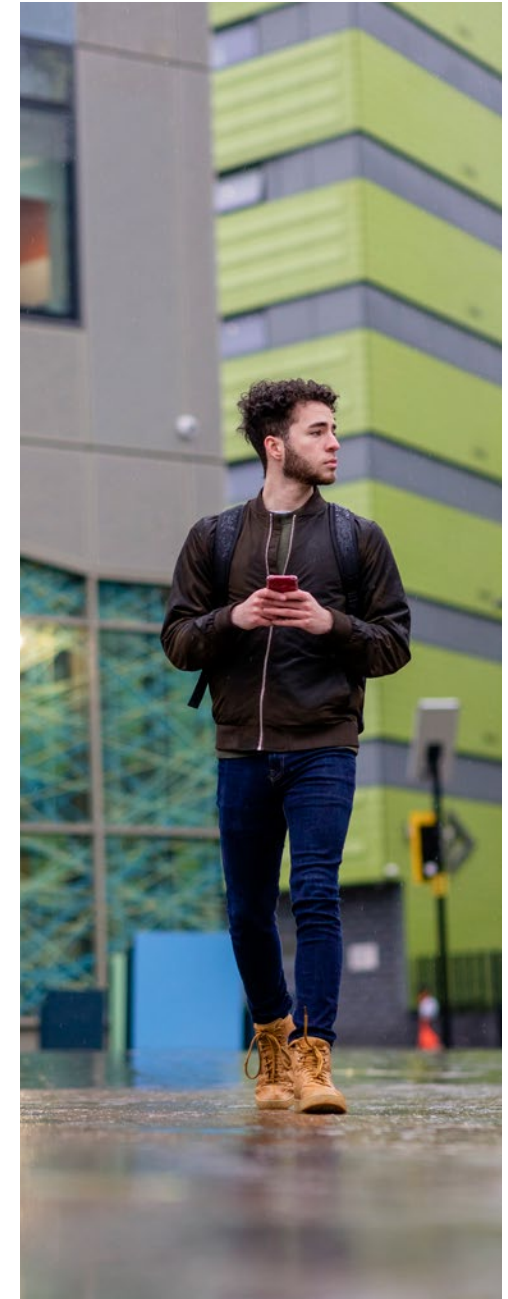
- ▶ The applicant signs in to their application, and clicks the 'decline my place' button on their homepage.
- ▶ They will be taken to a page which explains what they're about to do, and a drop-down question which they must complete, before confirming.
- ▶ They will then receive an email to confirm they're 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 our search tool.

To find out more about Clearing Plus visit: [www.ucas.com/what-clearing-plus](http://www.ucas.com/what-clearing-plus).



## 3.5 REPORTS FOR ADVISERS

In addition to accessing the free 'Tracking offers and decisions' section of the adviser portal, you will also be able to download your Applicant Status Report and Final Destination Report.

**Applicant Status Report (ASR)** – filter and sort your applicants, and download an ASR with real-time data, provided in an Excel spreadsheet. This is a snapshot of your students' statuses, which pulls through applicant data including their PID, their group, choices, offers (in summary and in full), and predicted grades. It is worth noting that staff who have access to tracking offers and decisions will only be able to see applicants in the groups they have permission to see.

**Final Destination Report (available on the second tab in the spreadsheet)** – applicants will only appear in this list when they have been placed, and therefore have their final destination confirmed.

More information on how to access, download, and interpret the data can be found in our **adviser portal guidance**.

### Upgrade your insight, with additional reports

We have a number of packages available to purchase, for all the insight you need to assist with reporting, planning, and progression monitoring. You can view these from the 'Data and reporting' tile in the adviser portal. Each is designed to offer a different level of insight, but all provide information in easily accessible, touch-of-a-button formats, and are accessible through our secure file transfer system.

### Monthly key statistics report – £50

This insight report is designed to save you time, by providing key statistical trends and analysis of your students, their choices, and their offers. You'll receive a snapshot view of the overall status of your students on a month-by-month basis, presented in an infographic style to download or print. This is an easy way to keep colleagues and senior leadership teams informed of your cohort's progress throughout the cycle.

### Silver package – £200

This package provides more in-depth information about your students, and their route to higher education. Focused on better understanding your current situation, and how it compares to previous years, it's the ideal option for planning ahead and identifying areas for focus.

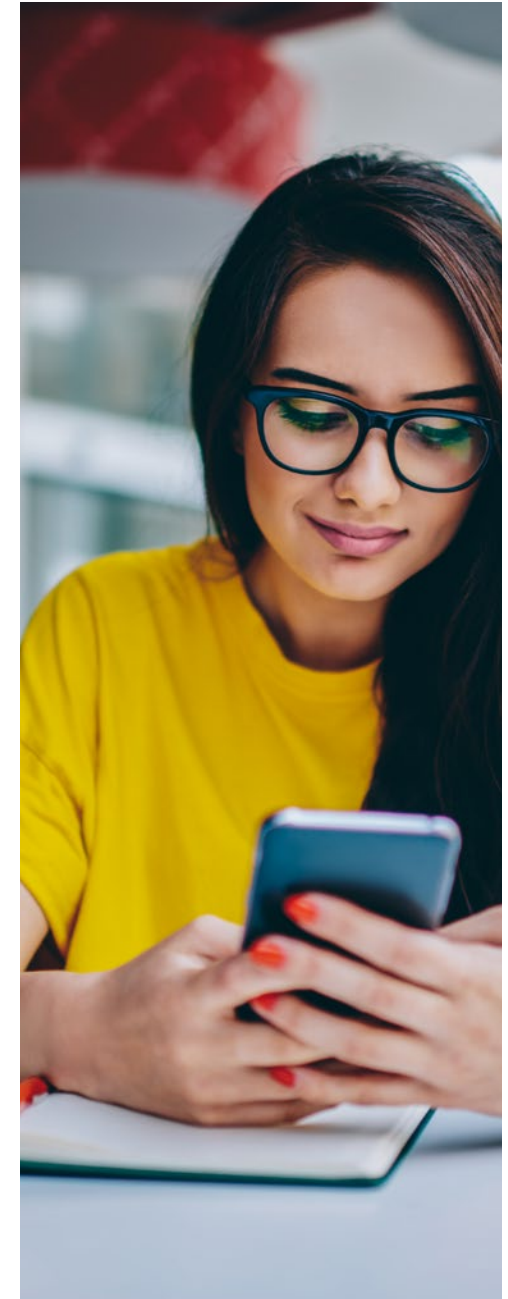
- ▶ **Monthly key statistics report**
- ▶ **Annual progression report** – this report shows which universities and subjects your students from previous cycles have progressed to, and the offers they received. See overall trends and analysis of your cohort for up to five previous years – their choices, decisions, offers and replies – as well as acceptances and offers by sex, ethnic group, qualification, by university/college, and subject group. The report also contains a printable PDF destination map showing where your students were placed in the previous cycle.

### Gold package – £275

This package combines all the benefits of the silver package, with increased information to help you understand your performance against specific competitors.

- ▶ **Monthly key statistics report**
- ▶ **Annual progression report**
- ▶ **Annual destination data map**
- ▶ **Annual competitor report** – directly compare your centre against a group of five or more competitors, which you define. You can purchase standalone reports (up to two per customer), to understand any variations in where you sit between two groups (e.g. local rankings against national rankings). If you subscribe to the gold package, you'll receive one of these reports as part of the package.

Visit [ucas.com/advisers-reports](https://ucas.com/advisers-reports) for more information.



# SECTION 4: TRAINING AND CONFERENCES FOR ADVISERS



## SECTION 4 : TRAINING AND CONFERENCES FOR ADVISERS

There are a number of dedicated events, conferences, webinars, and professional development sessions for teachers and advisers right across the year – everything needed to help you help your students.

### Online training

Our Professional Development Platform for advisers gives you **free access** to a series of short training courses, designed to expand your understanding of the UCAS admissions service, including the UCAS Undergraduate process and the UCAS Hub.

### Need further support?

We can work with you to design bespoke training sessions specific to your needs – for you, your team, or centre.

Sessions can be delivered digitally, they can be live, pre-recorded and delivered as presentations, Q&A sessions or workshops.

Visit [www.ucas.com/training](http://www.ucas.com/training) for the most up-to-date information.

To access our free online training, go to [www.pdp.ucas.com](http://www.pdp.ucas.com).

THE INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS AND THE QUIZ AT THE END HELPED ME CHECK I HAD UNDERSTOOD ALL THE ELEMENTS. IT WAS REASSURING TO SEE THAT I WAS GAINING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THIS.

### Conferences

Our popular UCAS adviser conferences run throughout the year, and provide a unique opportunity to:

- ▶ speak with representatives from UK universities and other relevant organisations, to gain first-hand insight and advice on how you can help your students
- ▶ hear from the education sector's leading experts – including admissions and student recruitment specialists
- ▶ learn about upcoming changes to the education landscape, and the impact on students applying to university or college
- ▶ discover how to best prepare your students for their next steps

Visit [www.ucas.com/conferences](http://www.ucas.com/conferences) for more information.

THE ORGANISATION AND CONTENT EXCEEDED MY EXPECTATIONS.

### Adviser webinars and live Q&A sessions

We regularly host live webinars and Q&A sessions for you to join and get your questions answered. Often we are joined by expert panellists who share insight and advice to help you support your students.

Visit [www.ucas.com/adviser-webinars](http://www.ucas.com/adviser-webinars).



# SECTION 5: UCAS TERMS EXPLAINED





## SECTION 5 : UCAS TERMS EXPLAINED

**Admissions test** – some universities and colleges require applicants to sit an admissions test for certain courses, in addition to making a UCAS application.

**Adviser portal** – the service UCAS registered centres use to manage and track the progress of their students' applications – before and after they have been sent to UCAS.

**Applicant** – a person who has started a UCAS application.

**ASR** – the Applicant Status Report (ASR) is available from the adviser portal and is a real-time snapshot listing all your students, their predicted grades, their choice of universities and colleges, their offers, full conditions, and replies – it's available anytime you want to download it.

**Buzzword** – a word or phrase, chosen by a school or college, which links its students to them when they start an application.

**Cancellation** – an applicant, university, or college cancels a choice before a decision has been made.

**Centre** – an organisation advising students applying to HE (in addition to schools and colleges, this includes the British Council and careers offices).

**Changed course offer** – applicants might get one of these if they haven't met their offer conditions, or if the university or college has made changes to the courses they run. It might involve a different start date or point of entry, or a different course altogether.

**Clearing** – the service used towards the end of the application cycle. If your students have not yet secured a place, they can apply for course vacancies.

**Clearing Plus** – Unplaced students in Clearing can view a list of courses with vacancies that they've personally been matched to.

**Conditional offer** – an offer made by a university or college, subject to certain conditions, usually related to qualification results.

**Confirmation** – the outcome of a conditional offer which has been accepted by an applicant. If the applicant meets the conditions, the place will be confirmed – if not, the applicant may not be accepted.

**Deferral** – holding an offer to start in the following year.

**Entry requirements** – what the university or college recommends you need to do / have to get on the course – from qualifications and specific subjects or grades, to interviews, admissions tests, and medical requirements.

**Extra** – the opportunity to apply for another course, if an applicant has used all five choices and is not holding any offers.

**FDR** – the Final Destination Report (FDR) shows confirmation of your students' destinations and is available to download from your 'Tracking offers and decisions' section, as and when applicants are placed.

**FE** – further education.

**Firm offer** – the offer an applicant has accepted as their first choice.

**Fraud** – provision of false, incomplete, or misleading information by an applicant or their referee or agent.

**HE** – higher education.

**UCAS Hub** – an information and advice platform designed to provide students with all the tools and information they need to explore their options – in one place – and for free. Applicants register in the UCAS Hub to access and start their application.

**IAG** – information, advice, and guidance offered by advisers about progression to higher education.

**Insurance offer** – the offer an applicant has accepted as their second choice (in case they don't meet the conditions of their firm offer).

**Invitation** – an invitation from a university or college to attend an interview or audition, or to provide a portfolio, essay, or other piece of work.

**Nominated access** – applicants can supply details of a third party (usually a parent, guardian, or teacher) to act on their behalf in contacting UCAS.

**Open days search tool** – an online search tool at [www.ucas.com/open-days](http://www.ucas.com/open-days) to find university and college open days and virtual tours.

**Personal ID** – a ten-digit individual number assigned to an applicant when they start their application. Applicants will be asked to provide this number if they contact our Customer Experience Centre.

## SECTION 5 : UCAS TERMS EXPLAINED

**Personal statement** – a piece of text applicants write to show why they're applying, and why they'd be a great student for a university or college to accept.

**Point of entry** – year of entry to the course – for example, '2' means they would start in the second year of the course.

**Reports for registered centres** – a range of UCAS reports designed to help advisers with reporting, IAG planning, and progression monitoring.

**Search tool** – our online search tool for undergraduate and postgraduate courses at universities, colleges, conservatoires, and other HE course providers – [www.ucas.com/search](http://www.ucas.com/search).

**Similarity detection software** – used by UCAS on all applications, to identify personal statements containing plagiarised sentences or paragraphs.

**Status code** – every undergraduate applicant is assigned a status code. These can be used to quickly open a student bank account with a bank or building society. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/student-banking](http://www.ucas.com/student-banking).

**Subject Spotlights** – Subject Spotlights from Springpod give students the chance to try a university course before they apply. Delivered by the lecturers themselves, students will gain insight into what it's like to study the course and give their personal statement a boost: [www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/springpod](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/springpod)

**UCAS Tariff** – the UCAS Tariff is the system for allocating points to some qualifications used for entry to undergraduate higher education. Not all qualifications are included on the Tariff.

**Unconditional offer** – an offer given to an applicant who has met all the academic requirements for the course – the place is theirs if they want it. The university or college might have other requirements, such as financial or medical conditions, which need to be met.

**Unibuddy** – an online platform giving students the chance to talk to current undergraduates about their experiences and get peer-to-peer advice: [www.ucas.com/chat-to-students](http://www.ucas.com/chat-to-students)

**Unsuccessful** – the university or college has not offered the applicant a place on the course.

**Withdrawal** – before the decision has been made to make an offer or not, the applicant, or the university or college, can withdraw a choice.



### UCAS information and advice

The [UCAS Hub](#) is designed to help your students explore all their options in one central place, but on [ucas.com](#) we also offer a range of information and advice about apprenticeships, taking a gap year, and going into employment, as well as resources to support students exploring and applying to higher education.

We're aware that many teachers and advisers are also keen to refresh their own knowledge of these options, so they can advise and support their students as they approach their choices. Here is a quick guide to the information, advice, and resources on [ucas.com](#).

### Higher education

- ▶ [Thinking about higher education](#)
- ▶ [Careers Quiz](#)
- ▶ [Exploring university](#)
- ▶ [UCAS events and exhibitions](#)
- ▶ [Universities and colleges](#)
- ▶ [Open day and event tips](#)
- ▶ [Subject guides](#)
- ▶ [Choosing what to study](#)
- ▶ [Choosing where to study](#)
- ▶ [Entry requirements](#)
- ▶ [Personal statement](#)
- ▶ [Search for courses](#)
- ▶ [International and EU students](#)
- ▶ [Applying](#)
- ▶ [Interviews](#)
- ▶ [Conservatoire assessments](#)
- ▶ [Student fees and finance](#)

### Accommodation

- ▶ [Accommodation search](#)
- ▶ [Preparing for your studies](#)

- ▶ [Higher Technical Qualifications](#)
- ▶ [Location guides](#)
- ▶ [Study at a conservatoire](#)

### Students with individual support needs

- ▶ [Disabled students](#)
- ▶ [Estranged students](#)
- ▶ [Students with caring responsibilities](#)
- ▶ [Students with parenting responsibilities](#)
- ▶ [Care experienced students](#)
- ▶ [Mental health and wellbeing support](#)
- ▶ [Refugees, asylum seekers and students with limited leave to remain](#)
- ▶ [Students from UK Armed Forces backgrounds](#)

### Apprenticeships

- ▶ [Apprenticeships in the UK](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in Wales](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in Scotland](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeships in England](#)
- ▶ [Apprenticeship and graduate job search](#)
- ▶ [Industry guides](#)
- ▶ [How I got my apprenticeship](#)
- ▶ [What you need to know about apprenticeships](#)
- ▶ [Employers](#)

### Gap years

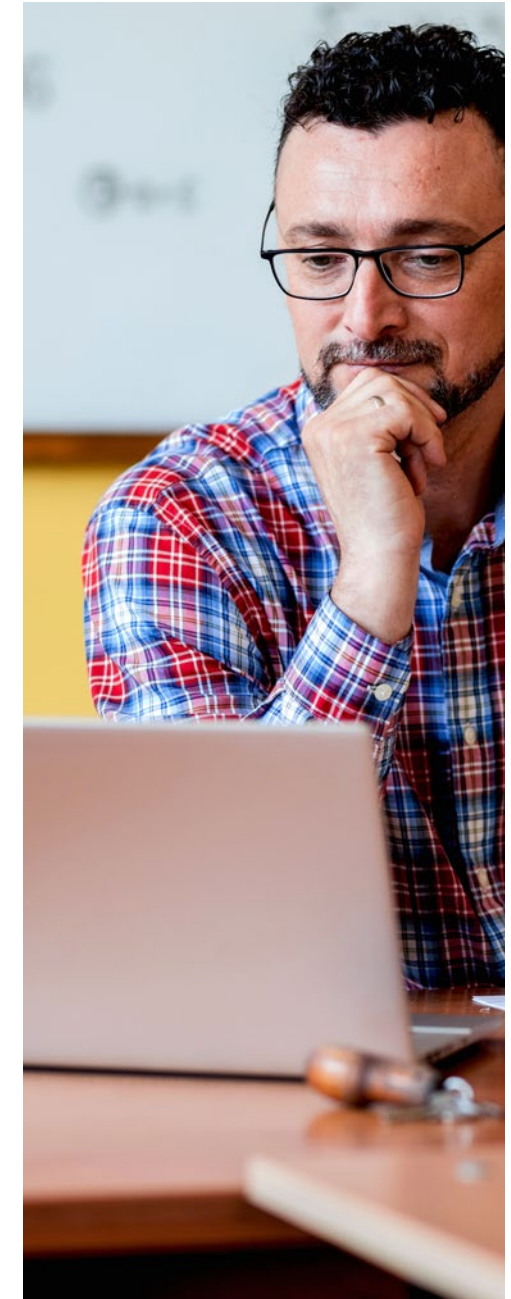
- ▶ [Gap years](#)

### Jobs and careers

- ▶ [How to get into work](#)
- ▶ [What are employers looking for?](#)
- ▶ [Tips on finding career ideas](#)
- ▶ [UCAS' Careers Quiz](#)

- ▶ [Apprenticeship and graduate job search](#)
- ▶ [Internships](#)
- ▶ [Explore jobs and careers](#)
- ▶ [Is work experience important?](#)
- ▶ [Applying for jobs – tips](#)
- ▶ [How to write a CV](#)
- ▶ [Working for yourself – self-employment and starting a business](#)
- ▶ [How you get paid at work](#)

To help you support your students with their research, we've developed a number of classroom resources, lesson activities, and student packs for you use and share with them. Download your copies at [ucas.com/guides-for-teachers](#) and [ucas.com/advisers/lesson-activities](#).



# ANNEX A: DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SECURITY



# ANNEX A : DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SECURITY

During the application process, you will be processing your students' personal data. You are responsible for the correct handling of this data, as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

## Looking after your adviser portal sign in details

To guarantee the security of your students' data, please ensure your password is unique but memorable, in line with our onscreen guidelines. Your password must be between eight and 30 characters long, and contain all the following:

- ▶ uppercase letter
- ▶ lowercase letter
- ▶ number
- ▶ special character (e.g. !£\$%#)

Please note, UCAS cannot reset your password for you. You must use the 'Forgotten password' link on the sign in screen.

We advise using your organisation's email address and not your personal one. Please do not share your sign in details. If another member of staff requires access to the system, those with staff management permissions can grant access for them. Please contact the **Adviser Help Team** for help with this.

To support the security of yours and your students' data UCAS uses multi-factor authentication (MFA) for all users. To find out more visit [www.ucas.com/mfa](http://www.ucas.com/mfa).

## Security Incidents involving your centre

UCAS must be informed immediately when a centre becomes aware of a security incident which has, or is likely to, impact on UCAS systems. This includes (but is not limited to) the loss or theft of credentials used to access UCAS systems or any other security incident affecting centre IT systems which may cause a direct impact to UCAS.

UCAS will then assess the impact and any restrictions required (including whether it is necessary to temporarily suspend access to some or all of its systems) while the incident is managed, and will work with the customer to reinstate access as soon as practicably possible once assurances of system integrity have been provided and deemed acceptable by UCAS.

This will enable UCAS to ensure the safety and security of applicant data. If you become aware of a security incident, please email [adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:adviserhelp@ucas.ac.uk).

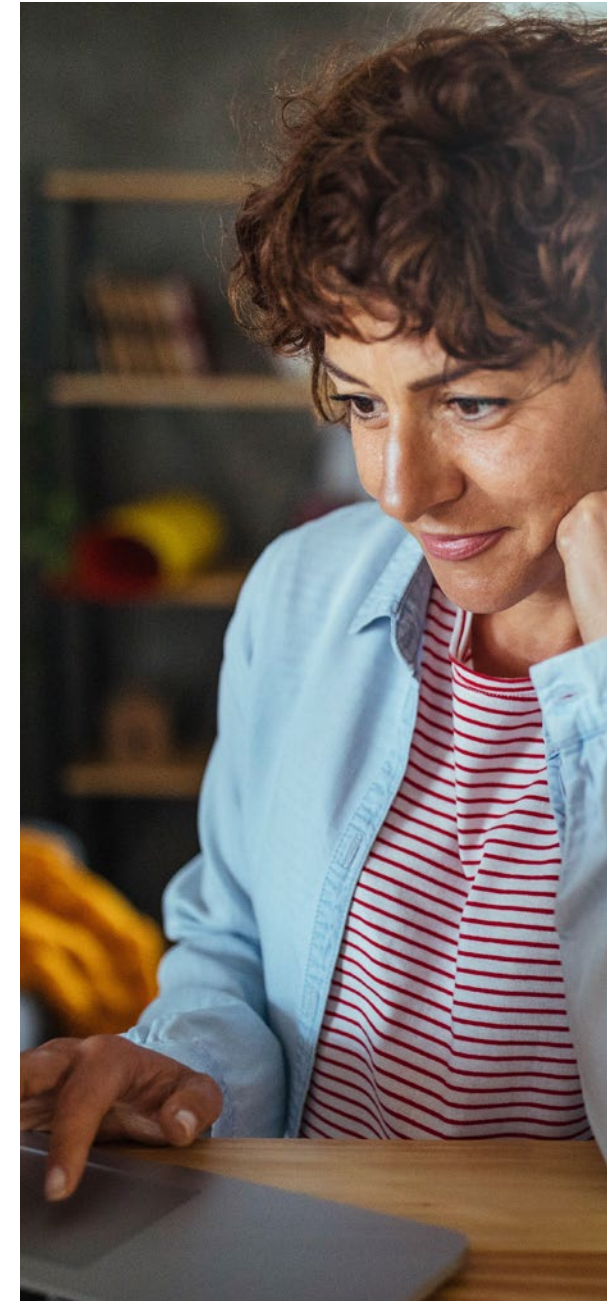
## Setting up groups

Users should be given access to the appropriate level of data they need to conduct the duties of their role. Setting up the appropriate groupings in your centre's system will assist with this, making sure staff can only access the data of the students they are supporting.

## Information sharing

The personal data stored in the system should not be shared with other centres. An individual's choice of where to apply should be confidential to them. The system should not be used to discuss this.

The personal data is gathered for the application process, and should not be used for any other purpose without the consent of the individual.



### Hard copies

Please do not print personal data unless there is no other option. If you need to print any personal data from the system, you need to ensure the handling of this data is secure.

- ▶ **Do not** leave the data in any open areas where it may be seen by third parties.
- ▶ **Do not** take the data out of your centre if at all possible. This will ensure there are no issues of loss in transit.
- ▶ **Do not** leave hard copy data in vehicles or have it on view on public transport. If you do have to take it outside of the centre, please use a secure method of transportation, such as a locked briefcase.
- ▶ **Do** store hard copy data securely. If this data is to be kept in hard copy form, it should be securely stored. We would advise a 'double lock' approach, whereby it is kept in a locked drawer, in a locked room.
- ▶ **Do not** keep hard copy data for longer than it is needed. Please refer to your centre's retention policy and ensure this is enforced.
- ▶ **Do** ensure it is confidentially destroyed when you have finished using it.
- ▶ **Do not** allow others to see this data if they would not be able to access it via the system.

### Inappropriate use of the system

Accessing personal data, where you do not have a legitimate reason to do so, is a breach of the Data Protection Act.

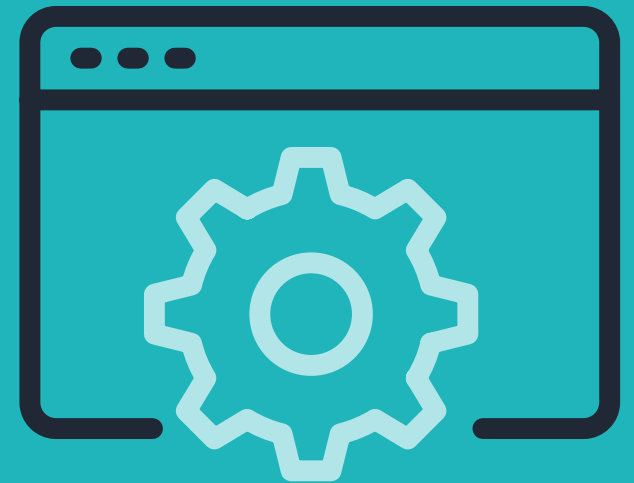
Please do not look at students' details if you are not supporting them. This includes students you are related to or know in a non-professional capacity.

### Subject access requests

If a student requests access to any of their personal data, you should action this in line with your own data protection policy and processes.



# ANNEX B: EMBARGO GUIDELINES



# ANNEX B : EMBARGO GUIDELINES

## QUALIFICATION RESULTS

### Confidentiality of results

Each year, UCAS and universities and colleges are under strict embargo arrangements, through signed results embargo agreements with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The dates for the embargo period will be confirmed closer to results days and published on [ucas.com/advisers](https://ucas.com/advisers).

The results embargo period allows universities and colleges to prepare for the publication of qualification results, so as many potential students as possible learn of their decisions by the official publication date through their application. This time also allows you, as teachers, advisers, and exam centres, to plan for the publication date.

During the results embargo period:

- ▶ the adviser portal will not show updated / real-time information
- ▶ universities and colleges cannot discuss any applicant's individual status with them, or with an adviser
- ▶ access to the tracking offers and decisions section of the Adviser Portal will be restricted.

### Breaches and inferences

During the embargo periods for **SQA** and **JCQ**, we are all responsible for adhering to the strict rules imposed on us to protect the release of results data until the published dates and times.

A breach not only includes disclosure of results, but also any indication as to the outcome of a student's application they may interpret as an inference of their results. For example, if a student is made an offer on the basis of AAA at A level, and they receive notification that they have been accepted before the results embargo is lifted, they could infer that they have achieved AAA at A level.

It can be as stressful and confusing for applicants to hear an indication of the outcome of their application, as it is to hear of their actual results before publication day(s), particularly without the support network around them. It can also place unnecessary strain on other applicants who have not heard the outcome of their application and results.

Together, it is our responsibility to ensure all necessary steps are put in place to protect embargoed results information.

If you breach the results embargo, please follow the steps as guided by either SQA or JCQ. If you become aware of a breach by a university or college, please contact [embargobreach@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:embargobreach@ucas.ac.uk) in the first instance.





Published by:

**UCAS Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, GL52 3LZ**

**© UCAS 2024 All rights reserved. UCAS is a registered trade mark.**

UCAS, a company limited by guarantee, is registered in England and Wales, number: 2839815 Registered charity number: 1024741 (England and Wales) and SC038598 (Scotland)

We have made all reasonable efforts to ensure the information in this publication was correct at time of publication. We will not, however, accept any liability for errors, omissions, or changes to information since publication. Wherever possible, any changes will be updated on the UCAS website ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)).

Copies of this publication can be downloaded from [www.ucas.com/adviserresources](http://www.ucas.com/adviserresources).

Terms of service for the adviser portal can be found at [www.ucas.com/about-us/policies/terms-and-conditions/adviser-portal](http://www.ucas.com/about-us/policies/terms-and-conditions/adviser-portal).

**For further information and guidance about the UCAS application process for advisers, visit [www.ucas.com/advisers](http://www.ucas.com/advisers)**

