

Guide to Higher Education

Universities, UCAS and Apprenticeships

Thinking about your next steps can be scary.

Whether you're in year 12, just finishing a gap year, or wanting to go to university after years in work, making these decisions can be daunting for all of us. However, it's also really exciting! It's a chance for you to explore your passion, gain independence and take your next steps in your educational journey!

A lot of people decide to go to university after school however this pathway is certainly not the only option and not the best choice for all of us. It's important that you explore all of the pathways available to you.

Speak with your teachers, your friends, your family, your mentor and us here at Arts Emergency! We're all here to support you with these next steps.

In this guide, we hope to provide you with the key details you need to know about universities, UCAS and apprenticeships.

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How does UCAS work?

UCAS is the central application system of all UK universities. You apply on UCAS, track your offers through UCAS and accept your offers through the website. It's basically your go-to place throughout the entire process.

UCAS: Key Facts for 2022 applications

- UCAS stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.
- UCAS is the centralised system for all UK university applications.
- You send one application to (up to) 5 university choices.
- Therefore this should not be personalised to one university in particular.
- Your choices are 'invisible': universities won't be able to see where else you have applied.
- The process is entirely online.
- If you are looking to apply for Oxbridge, you can only apply for Oxford or Cambridge; you can't submit an application for both.
- There is a cost: £22 to submit your application to one university and £26.50 for up to five universities.

You will need to set up an account with UCAS Apply. This is where your application is stored until it is ready to send off. This will open on 18th May 2021.

The UCAS search tool will be updated from 5th May 2021 for 2022 courses.

| Sections of UCAS Apply (your application): | |
|---|---|
| Section | What? |
| Personal details | This will include you name, address, DOB etc |
| Additional information | This is where you can make universities aware of any special requirements, disabilities or illnesses. |
| Student Finance | This is just to indicate if you will be wanting to apply for student finance (you will apply for this from February 2022) |
| Choices | This is where you input your 5 university course choices |
| Education | This is where you input your A levels and your GCSEs, as well as any extra qualifications. |
| Employment | Here you can include any part time or full time work |
| Personal statement | The hardest part of your application! Remember you write one personal statement that gets sent to all your choices. We'll send out personal statement guidance in our next newsletter. |
| Referee details. | Your referee adds your reference and submits the application. Your school will be responsible for doing this. If you are applying independently from a school, you will be able to nominate someone to do this. |

When you set up UCAS apply, you will be asked if you are applying through a school or college. For a lot of you, this is how you will apply. You will be asked for a 'buzzword' which will link your application to your school and allow your teacher to check through the application and add your reference. Your tutor/careers lead will be able to provide this.

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apply

Welcome

<Log out

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Welcome | |
| Personal details | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Choices | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| View all details | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pay/Send | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Help | |
| Options/Opsiynau | |

Key

- ☒ Completed
- ☐ In progress
- ☐ Not started
- ☐ Help

Welcome

Welcome Nick,

Your Personal ID is: 140-031-5703

Please make a note of this number and keep it handy. You will need to quote this number if you call our Customer Contact Centre.

Need guidance? Watch the video advice below [\[Hide video\]](#).(Unable to view videos here? You can watch them at www.ucas.com/connect/videos instead)**Verify your email address**

Your email address needs to be verified as valid before you send your application to us.
[Please click here to verify your email address](#)

Before starting your application, please read through the relevant information below regarding:

- [completing your application](#)
- [applicants applying through a school, college or organisation](#)
- [applicants applying as an individual](#)
- [deadlines for submitting your application](#)

Make sure you make a note of your username and password, as well as your UCAS ID number. This is what universities and UCAS will use to identify you.



What happens next?

| University Offers: each uni will respond to your application via UCAS Track. | |
|--|--|
| Universities will review | Universities will respond with |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal statement reference qualifications admissions test results (if needed) interview (if needed) portfolio (if needed) audition (if needed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unconditional offer (you will have the place regardless of meeting conditions) Conditional offer (you will have a place providing you meet conditions) Application unsuccessful |

Your response! Once you have heard back from all of your university choices it's your turn to make your decisions. You are able to select a response from the following options:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Firm Choice | Normally a university with higher entry requirements. If all conditions are met, you will be placed here on results day. |
| Insurance Choice | Normally a university with slightly lower entry requirements. You will be placed here if you don't meet your Firm Choice conditions on results day. |
| Decline | You must decline all other offers. |

Make sure you meet the deadline given to you to respond otherwise your offers will be withdrawn.

The screenshot shows the UCAS Track interface for a user named Rebecca. The top navigation bar includes 'Track', 'Your choices' (highlighted), 'Your application', 'Your details', 'Help', and 'Contact us'. The main heading is 'Welcome back Rebecca' with the date 'Today's date: 13 March 2013'. A progress bar shows four stages: 'Waiting for offers', 'Reply to your offers' (current stage), 'Waiting for confirmation', and 'Confirmation of place'. Below the progress bar, the 'Your status' section states 'You've received offers from all your choices.' The 'Next steps' section features a prominent red button labeled 'Reply to your offers (by 6 June)' and a warning: 'If you don't reply on time, you'll lose your offers.' On the right, there is a 'Frequently asked questions' section with several placeholder links.

Your other UCAS options

There are other options to be aware of that are part of the UCAS process:

Extra: available February - July

If you included five choices on your application, have received decisions from all five, and weren't accepted, or if you declined the offers you received, you will be able to use Extra. You can add an extra choice to your application, and the university will then accept or decline your application.

Clearing: available July - October

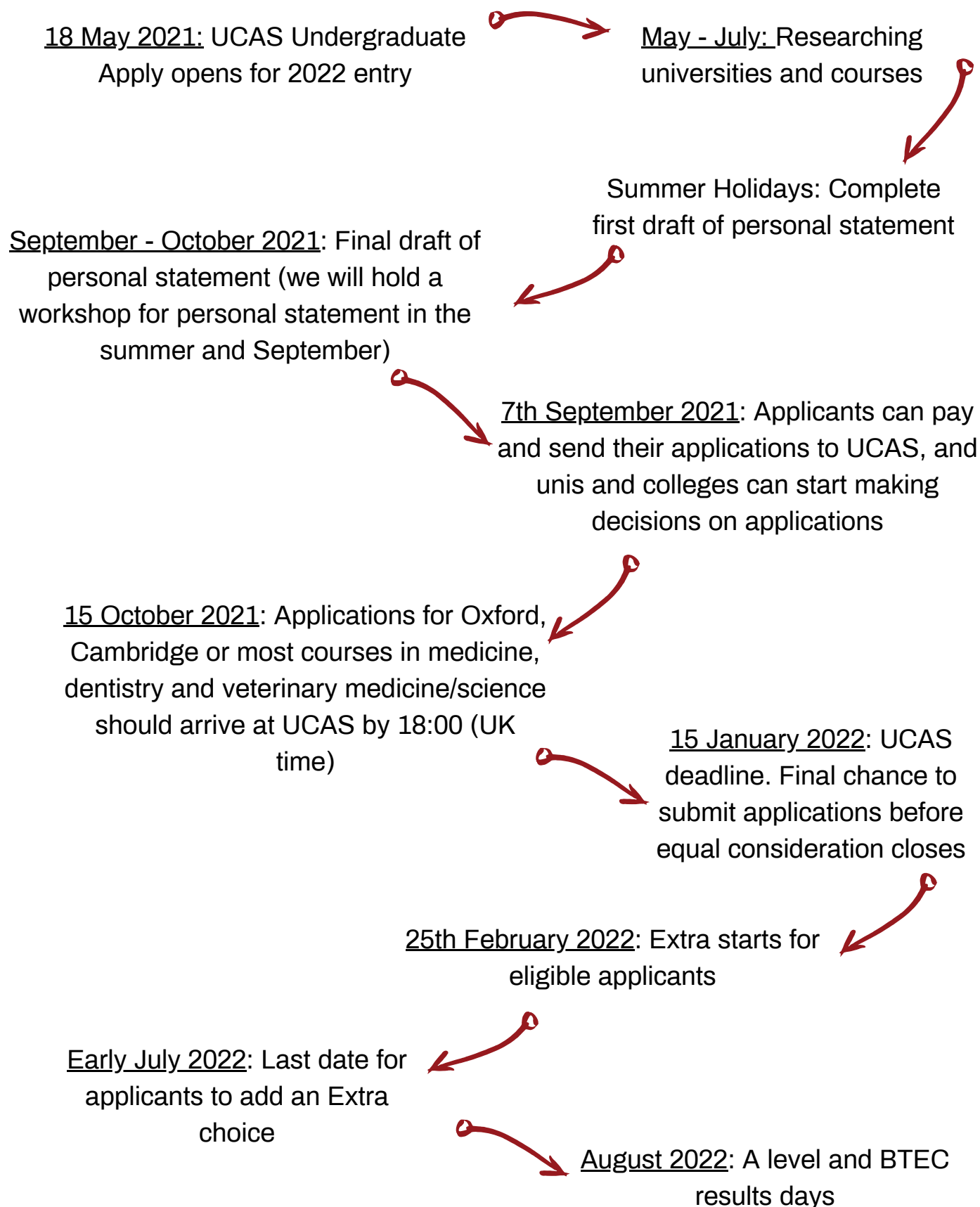
You would apply through Clearing if you apply after 30th June, if you don't meet the conditions of your offer on results day, or you want to change your options. You will be able to search for course vacancies via UCAS and enter these on your UCAS Track. Universities will set up special phone lines for students going through Clearing on results day.

Adjustment: up to five days after results day

You have the options of using Adjustment if you exceed the offer made by your firm choice on results day. You can register this in Track and find an alternative course. You have five days to secure a new place but if you don't, you will be placed in your original firm choice of uni.

THE APPLICATION TIMELINE!

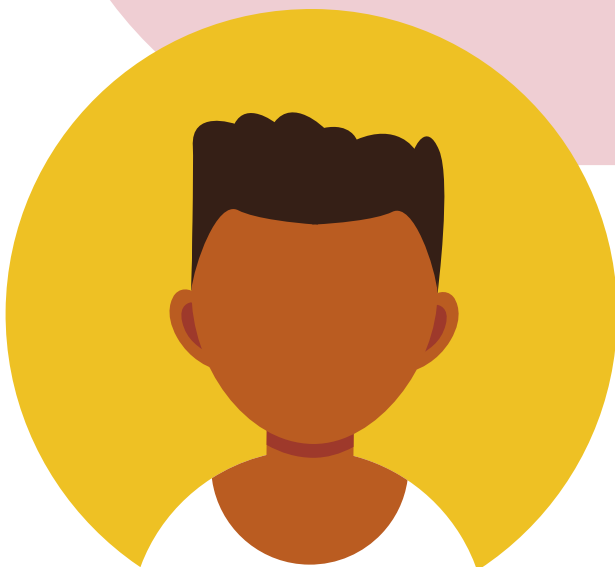
Most college/sixth form timetables for the UCAS process will look something like this:



RESEARCHING COURSES

With so many courses out there, how do you go about choosing your five options?! Here are some questions you may like to ask yourself when you're doing your research.

- What subjects am I passionate about?
- What will I want to study for three years?
- Do I know what I want to do as a career? Do I need a certain qualification for this?
- Do I want to be in a city?
- Do I want to be close to home?
- What does the course cover? (courses with the same name can still be very different!)
- What are the core modules and what are the optional modules?
- How is the course taught?
- How is the course assessed?
- What grades am I realistically on track to achieve?



APPRENTICESHIPS

What is an apprenticeship?

Work while you study – an apprenticeship is a way to gain the skills, knowledge and experience you need to get into many careers. They combine work, training, and study, letting you 'earn while you learn'.

There are many different apprenticeships available across a wide range of industries, and for a wide variety of job roles. As a paid employee, each apprentice works alongside their studies. There are no student fees – your training costs are funded by the government and your employer.

It's an ideal option if you have a clear idea of the career path you want to follow, providing you with practical, on-the-job training, and classroom-based instruction.

Similarly to jobs, there are often only one or two apprenticeship positions available and so it is a much more competitive process than getting a university place.

Apprenticeships are offered from level 2 - 7. Below shows the equivalent qualification at university. It's important that you find the correct level for you.

| Name | Level | Equivalent Educational Level |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Intermediate | 2 | GCSE |
| Advanced | 3 | A Level |
| Higher | 4,5, 6 and 7 | Foundation degree and above |
| Degree | 6 and 7 | Bachelor's or master's degree |

There are plenty of apprenticeships out there however there aren't apprenticeships available that support all avenues of the creative industries at the moment. Therefore it's important to do your research into the available options.

Current apprenticeships are in areas such as advertising and media, visual effects, broadcasting, digital arts, culture and heritage, design, and marketing. However, new apprenticeships are in development every year and so it is always worth doing research in your preferred area to see if anything has been created.

Below are a list of links that are useful to use when searching for apprenticeships:

- <https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/search?programme=3&show=jobs>
- https://artswork.org.uk/our-work-with-young-people/creative-apprenticeships/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlu6CfiJC65gIVCuR3Ch0IRAh9EAAYAyAAEgJKJfD_BwE
- <http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/apprenticeship-by-skills-interests/creative-apprenticeships/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
- <https://whitehat.org.uk><https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/>



WHERE TO START?

You've just taken in a LOT of information and we're sure you've read a lot more from other sources too.

The best thing to do at this stage is research. There's no looming deadline so use this time to investigate your options and speak to people about your thoughts.

Remember there's no right or wrong path to take and no 'right' course to choose. It's a completely personal choice.

Here are things you may like to do/sites you may like to look at to help you with these decision.

- Have a think about what style of learning suits you. Would you like to gain a qualification through university or an apprenticeship.
- Brainstorm areas and subjects you are interested in.
- Look up which universities offer these subjects.
- Order/download prospectuses from universities.
- Visit open days! (Many unis are currently holding virtual open days due to Covid-19).
- Have a look at what apprenticeships are currently available. Do any of them appeal to you?
- Speak to your teachers, your friends, your family, your mentor, and us at AE! Ask us about our pathways and our experiences.
- Visit the Arts Emergency website for more tips and advice!