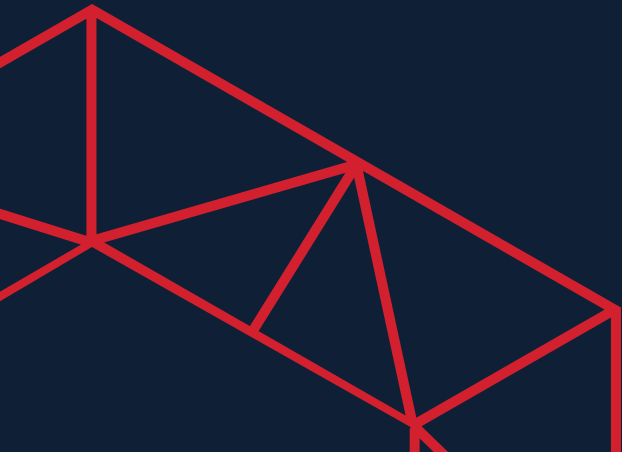




What **next?**

If you have already applied or are thinking about applying to university or college this year, you have an opportunity to research your options. Here is a guide to help you.



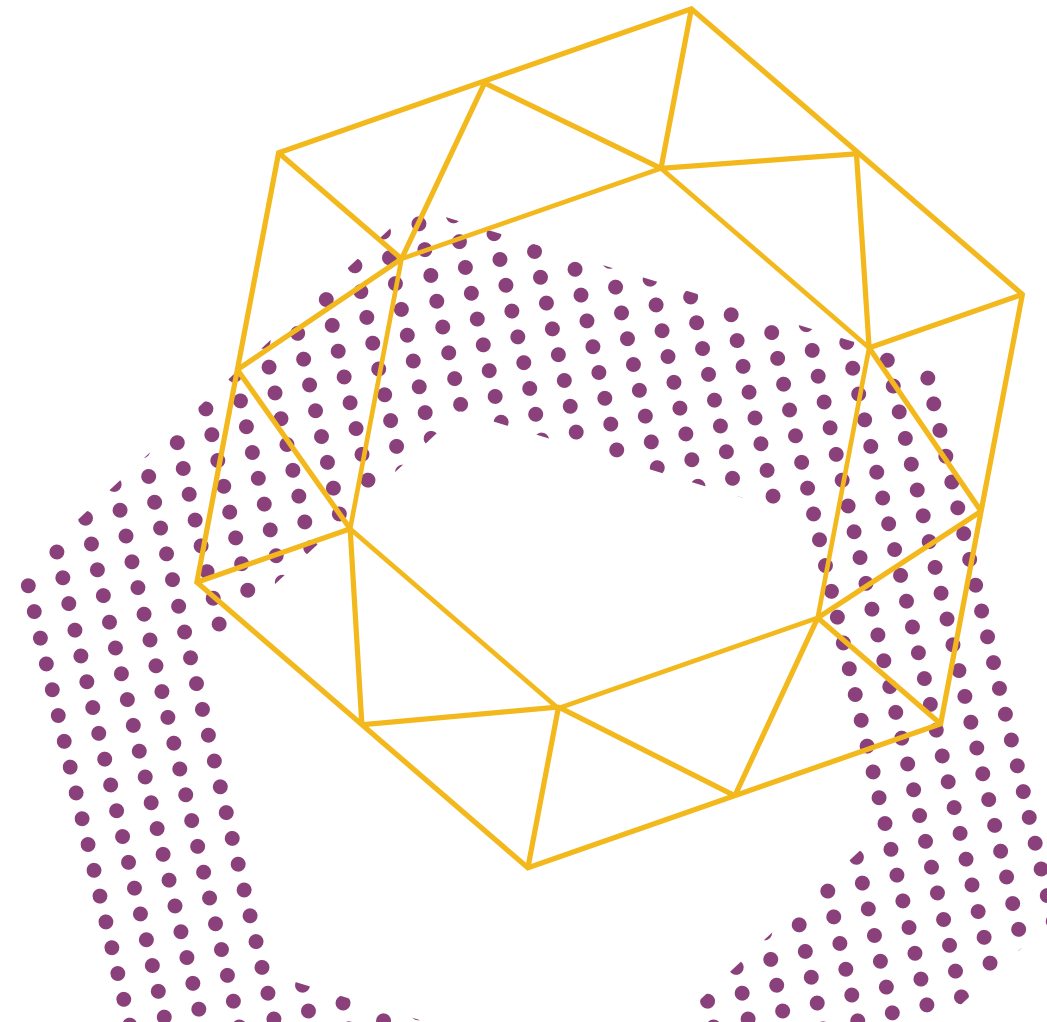
**Discover
Uni**

Doing your research

Here are some things you can look at when deciding what and where to study. It's a good idea to first think about what matters to you and find information related to that.

- Choose a subject or subject combination that interests you.
- Look at the details of courses you're considering, such as the modules on offer.
- Think about what you want to get out of your course. Is it to gain new skills, to study a subject you love, or something else?
- Consider if you want to study at home or move away. Also think through the type of place you want to live, and whether you want to study full-time or part-time.
- Check the entry requirements for courses you're keen on. Universities and colleges set their own requirements, so these may be different depending on the institution you're applying to.
- Make sure to check how the institution will deliver the course. Will it be online, or in person? Keep checking the institution's website for updates on course delivery.
- Think about whether you want to do a course with a practical element, such as placements or an internship. Is this important to you?

- Think about other options, such as higher or degree apprenticeships. You can find information about apprenticeships on [Discover Uni](#). Remember, you can also apply for apprenticeships at the same time as applying for an undergraduate degree.



How to research options

It's important that you research your options for university or college thoroughly this year, and you'll need to look at a range of factors. You could use a table like this one to help you see which university or course can offer the things that are most important to you.

	Option 1	Option 2	etc.
Entry requirements Do they fit with your actual or predicted grades? Remember to consider different options – why not include some courses that are above your grades, some that match and one that is lower as a backup.	BBB – match	AAB – higher than predicted	
Course content Does the course subject and content match your interests and potential career aspirations?			
Work experience Does the university or college offer placements or internship opportunities? How will these opportunities be affected by the pandemic?		Sandwich years on hold	
Assessment How will the course be assessed? Think about whether you prefer exams or coursework and check how modules are assessed.	No exams	Mix of exams and coursework	

	Option 1	Option 2	etc.
Delivery methods How is the course now being taught? Is it online, face-to-face, or a mixture? How long will any changes to teaching methods last – just for the first term, or the whole first year? What teaching methods would suit your preferred learning style best?	All online		
Location Where is the course based? Consider whether you want to be closer to home or further away, and what kind of campus you would like to attend.	3 hour train ride		
Fees and costs Are there any additional costs you may have to pay for the course, such as for materials or field trips?		£200 field trip in first year	
Financial support Are there any scholarships or bursaries available for the course?			
Additional support Does the university or college provide any additional support that you may need? For example, if you have a disability, how will the university make sure the course is fully accessible to you? Or if you are a care leaver or estranged from your family, is the university able to offer year-round accommodation?	Guaranteed accessible accommodation in first year		

Applying

If you have already applied to university or college, you should receive a reply by 20 May. You should respond to any offer through the UCAS website by 10 June. You have until 30 June to apply for courses that still have places. You should check [UCAS](#) for more information on which courses are available.

Applications after 30 of June will be entered into Clearing. Clearing is the process where unis and colleges fill any remaining places.

Clearing this year will run from 5 July to 19 October. You can apply for a course using Clearing if you don't have an offer, or do not want to accept any offers you have received from a uni or college.

For more information on Clearing and how you can use it, see the UCAS [website](#).

Please note that application deadlines, offer-making and arrangements for Clearing may change this year because of the pandemic. For updates, keep checking [Discover Uni](#).

Before you apply, remember to look carefully at the course information and entry requirements on university and college websites. These may highlight key things they are looking for in your application and personal statement.

After you apply

Universities and colleges will reply to your application. This may include an invite to interview or an offer of a place. Each university and college will make their decisions at different times, meaning you might hear back before or after your friends do.

You can withdraw or make changes to your application either on the UCAS Track Tool or by contacting the university or college directly.

Withdrawing or deferring

If you do not want to apply to higher education anymore, you can cancel your application via [Track](#). You should remember that you can't get an application refund unless your application has been cancelled within 14 days of being submitted to UCAS.

If you want to defer your place or had originally applied for deferred entry and no longer want to defer, you will need to check with your chosen university or college for information about their deferral process.

You can also withdraw your application completely and apply for university or college next year, but please keep in mind there is no guarantee you will get an offer or place then.

It is important for you to think carefully before you decide to defer. Consider what you would do in the intervening year and that there may be fewer opportunities for employment or 'gap year' travel this year.

I'm worried about access to financial support

There have been some changes to student finance access this year for EU students, but you can find information and support on this

I could use the year to work

Employment opportunities may be limited with more people applying for fewer jobs

I am worried about living away from home in these difficult times

You could look for a university closer to home

I could use the year to travel

There may be travel restrictions for some time to come

I'm worried I might miss out on the social side of university and won't get to experience Freshers' Week

We are learning new ways of socialising via the internet and with social distancing measures

I have considered all of my options and have decided to defer this year

If you have considered all of your options and your university or college will allow you to defer, that's fine!

I am worried I will feel isolated wherever I study

It's natural to feel worried at the moment, but social distancing may change and universities and colleges will adjust

The pandemic has negatively affected my mental health and I'm not in the right headspace to go to university or college this year

I want to move into student accommodation and meet new people

You may still be able to move into your accommodation this year, even if it is not right at the start of the term

That's fine if that is your decision - look after yourself and go to university when it's the right time for you. Make sure to check in with the university or college you've applied to about their deferral policy

What if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 at my university or college?

The uni or colleges you have applied to will have put plans in place on what to do if there is an outbreak to make sure you're safe and supported

While you are waiting for your results

1. Check your chosen university or college's plans for next year.

It's really important to find out whether your chosen university or college changes the way it plans to deliver courses you've applied for or are considering. Courses due to start in autumn 2021 may involve some online delivery, especially in the first term. Start dates and course content may also change.

Check the university or college website, and make sure you look for information about your specific faculty, subject area and course. For example, lab-based work or work placements may be pushed back until later in the year, delivered in a different way (e.g. through small group teaching), or even moved to next year.

2. Get prepared for Clearing.

Whether or not you're planning to use Clearing, it's a good idea to look at other universities and courses as a back-up, in case you don't get the grades you need or you get higher grades than you expected.

Draw up a shortlist of alternative courses you might be interested in.

3. Have a look around.

Many universities and colleges have virtual campus tours available on their websites. You can also sign up for virtual open days and online discussions. UCAS keeps a list of virtual events on [its website](#).

4. Make sure support is in place.

If you have particular requirements, inform the universities or colleges you've applied to. For example, if you are a care leaver or you have a disability, look for support on their websites and ask what they can offer you.

5. Talk to other students.

Talking to current students is a great way to understand what university life is really like at the moment and how your university or college is adapting to the pandemic.

Sign up for [Unibuddy](#) and [The Student Room](#) to hear from other students like you. Your university or college may also include information from current students on their websites or social media.

You can also look at the course information on Discover Uni – it includes surveys from students who've done the course and information on what they've gone on to do. Check out our [short video](#) to help you understand the statistics that are available through Discover Uni.

Where to find information

- Check your university or college's website for information. They are the first point of call for information about everything from course content to accommodation.
- You can search for, bookmark and compare courses on the [Discover Uni](#) website.
- [Prospects](#) or [What Uni](#) can help with ideas based on your A-levels or other Level 3 qualifications if you want to think about your options for Clearing.

When you get your results

International Baccalaureate results are released on the 5 July 2021.

A-level results in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will be released on 10 August 2021.

SQA results (Scotland) come out on 10 August 2021.

Dates for BTEC results vary.

For information on other results, check with your school or college, contact the qualifications body in your country (listed in the A-Z at the end of this guide) or see the [UCAS website](#).

1. Your application

If you have applied through UCAS, your application will continue as normal through the admissions process. UCAS will still receive your grades and will forward them to your universities.

If you are applying as a private candidate (i.e. not through UCAS), you will need to get in touch with the universities or colleges you have applied to for information on their admissions processes.

If you are applying as a private A-Level candidate (i.e. you are self-teaching and were only taking your A-level exams at a centre), your centre should have now submitted your assessments. Universities and colleges have been asked to be

flexible in their admissions for private candidates, so do make sure to contact them and have a look at their websites.

2. Your results

If you receive the grades you need to get to a university or college you're happy with, congratulations!

Remember to keep checking the information on the government websites in the final section of this resource for updates on results (see page 14).

3. If you haven't yet applied or are unplaced

If you haven't applied yet or have not received any offers, you can apply through Clearing.

This is where any research you've done will help as you may have some universities, colleges and courses in mind you'd like to apply to.

4. If you did better than expected

You will have an opportunity to reconsider your options if you achieve better grades than you were predicted.

You can register for Adjustment through your Track account. Make sure to discuss Adjustment with any universities you are interested in to see if there is sufficient space for you on the course.

5. If you have changed your mind

If you have an offer but you have changed your mind, you can release yourself from this choice to be automatically placed into Clearing. Think carefully before you do this and make sure you have done plenty of research, as you will lose the place once you release yourself into Clearing.

Your rights

To help you make an informed decision about accepting an offer of a place on a course, universities and colleges are obliged under [consumer protection legislation](#) to make certain information available to you. This includes information about costs, complaints, terms and conditions and your right to cancel the contract you hold with the university or college.

If you are applying to a university or college in England, the Office for Students has [released guidance](#) which states that your university or college should:

- tell you about any changes to your course, for example, whether you will be taught online or on-campus
- let you know whether the teaching on courses could change due to public health advice
- provide you with their terms and conditions
- ensure that their complaints procedure is accessible, clear and fair, and let you know where you can find it.

They should give you all of this information before places are confirmed in August.

If you are applying to a university or college in Wales, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales expects universities to make sure that students have access to clear and up-to-date information, based on what is known at the time. Where universities have made decisions about the delivery of part of the academic year, but not the whole year, they should provide information on the decisions

made to date, and the timescales in which information on the remainder of the academic year will be made available. Complaints processes must continue to remain accessible, transparent and fair, and universities must provide clear information on how students can escalate any issues, including through contacting the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

If you don't think your university or college has given you the information you need to make an informed choice, there are a few steps you can take:

- Complain to the university or college through their complaints procedure.
- If you are in England, you can notify the [Office for Students](#). Bear in mind that this information will only be used to search for patterns of behaviour in universities, not to take further action on your individual case.
- If you are in England or Wales, you may be able to complain to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#).
- If you are in Northern Ireland, you may be able to complain to the [NI Ombudsman](#).
- If you are in Scotland, you may be able to complain to the [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman](#).
- If you think the university or college has breached consumer protection law, you can report their behaviour to the [Competition and Markets Authority](#).



Information for international students

There are currently travel restrictions to the UK because of the pandemic. To find out about these, see the resources section of this guide.

If you're an EU, European Economic Area or Swiss citizen applying for higher education in the UK starting after 31 July 2021, the rules regarding access to student finance have changed. For more information, see the resources section or this [Discover Uni](#) page.

Some helpful resources for supporting you if you're an international student are:

- [The British Council](#)
- [The UK Council for International Student Affairs](#)

If you're applying for a higher education course in the UK, you will need to look at how the university or college you're interested in plans to deliver the course and when the term will start. Some universities will have delayed or multiple start dates, or will only be teaching online for the first few weeks. Don't rush to book your travel, as you may be able to do the first part of your course from home.

When you are able to travel to the UK, you may find that you need to quarantine for a period. Make sure to keep checking the [UK Government's website](#) for information on travel and quarantining regulations.

The student support team at your university or college will be able to provide information on their specific social distancing measures or policies. Make sure you check in with them before you set off and let them know your planned arrival date.

A-Z of resources

Researching options

Discover Uni: <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

Prospects: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

The Student Room: <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/>

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

Unibuddy: <https://www.ucas.com/chat-to-students>

What Uni: www.whatuni.com

Qualifications information

England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021>

Scotland: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/96763.html>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/examination-and-assessment-guidance-2020-2021>

Northern Ireland: <https://ccea.org.uk/summer-2021>

Government information

UK Government coronavirus information: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Welsh Government coronavirus support for higher education students: <https://gov.wales/higher-education-and-student-support-coronavirus>

Scottish Government coronavirus information for students: <https://www.studentinformation.gov.scot/>

Northern Irish Government coronavirus information for students: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-schools-colleges-and-universities>

Consumer protection

Competition and Markets Authority: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority>

Consumer protection law advice for higher education providers and students: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students>

Office of the Independent Adjudicator: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

Submit a notification to the Office for Students: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/notifications/>

NI Ombudsman: <https://nipso.org.uk/>

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman: <https://www.spsso.org.uk/>