



Supporting your **students** – higher education admissions



Discover
Uni

Students are often overwhelmed by the amount of information that is available about higher education or find it difficult to know where to start. This guide for teachers and advisers will help you provide the best advice to students as they navigate the decision-making process.

We also have a [guide written for students](#).

Help for students doing their research

There are many things for your students to consider when deciding what and where to study. Here are some things they can think about:

- Which subjects they are interested in and will enjoy.
- The details of courses and which modules appeal to them most.
- What they want to get out of their course. Is it a career, to study a subject they love, or something else?
- If they want to study at home or move to a new place.
- Whether they want to study full-time or part-time.
- Whether they want to gain practical experience, such as a placement or an internship.

Not all of these points will be important for everyone, so it is a good idea for your students to start by thinking about what matters most to them.

Resources

Explore our [About higher education](#) page for information on the different qualifications available.

Additional resources to explore with students:

- see [how to choose the right career path](#) from Get Career Confident.
- explore [careers ideas](#) and use the [careers quiz](#) on UCAS for support.
- view [BBC Bitesize careers](#) for videos and articles on the variety of careers available.

Entry requirements

It's important to check the entry requirements of each course, and for your students to consider whether they are likely to meet the requirements. Entry requirements ensure students have the right skills and knowledge to successfully complete the course.

Universities and colleges set their own entry requirements, and these vary depending on the subject, the course and provider.

Discover Uni shows the entry qualifications and the UCAS tariff points that students had when they were accepted onto each course. This information is helpful to look at to use as a guide — however the information is specific to the previous academic year and may vary each year. The information can be found in the 'Entry information' section for each course on Discover Uni.

Widening access and contextual offers

Universities and colleges have their own policies around widening access. Some will consider the personal circumstances of applicants that can affect academic attainment and may make offers requiring lower grades than the standard entry requirements for that course.

The circumstances considered for contextual offers vary but can include being the first in a family to attend higher education, low parental income, the school or area where the applicant lives, or personal characteristics, such as being a care leaver, a refugee or having a disability.

Not all universities make contextual offers, some only offer them on specific courses, and the criteria they use will vary, so it's worth speaking with potentially eligible students and checking each course page to understand what criteria apply.

Finding the right courses for your students

There is information on Discover Uni to support your students through their options. Students can search for courses they are interested in to find official data and information about them. The course data includes official statistics about higher education courses taken from national surveys and data collected from universities and colleges about all their students.

On Discover Uni you can see information such as:

- student views of the course including how students scored the quality of the teaching, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources, learning community and student voice
- how many students have continued into their second year
- what jobs graduates have gone into after completing their degree
- graduate earnings at 15 months, 3 years and 5 years after the course
- graduate perceptions which show if graduates feel that their course is positively impacting their work after graduating
- qualifications and UCAS tariff points students had when they were accepted onto the course.

Our [About our data](#) section gives further information on the data displayed on the site.

Comparison tool

Students can use our comparison tool to compare up to seven courses. This will help applicants to compare aspects of courses alongside each other to refine their choices.

You can support your students to use the tool by referring to our resources which help students to view courses and by watching our 'how to use Discover Uni' videos.

You can also find information, advice and guidance on [our website](#).

Open days

Open days and events offer prospective students a chance to experience what a course and university has to offer. There are lots of open days and UCAS events which can be attended in person, and there are also many virtual events held which can be found on [UCAS](#). Individual universities and colleges may also have live sessions on their social media channels. Look for open days and events on:

- The [Find Open Days](#) website
- The [UCAS](#) website
- University and college websites

Here are some key things for your students to consider:

- ? Do they know how the course will be taught? For example, in person, online or a mix of both?
- ? Do they know what the arrangements are for accommodation at each of their choices?
- ? What are the deferral policies at the universities or colleges they have applied to? Do they know whether they can defer or not, should they wish to?
- ? Have they considered any effects on their career prospects of either going to university or college this year, or deferring for a year?
- ? If the student is interested in gaining specific skills, does the course they are interested in offer the opportunity to do so – perhaps by providing specialist equipment, laboratory or studio facilities, or opportunities such as field trips?
- ? Have they thought about opportunities they want to have outside of the course, such as societies, sports clubs, volunteering or study abroad opportunities? Are they available at the university they are interested in?

Applying to uni

For most courses in the UK, applicants should apply through UCAS. The key dates for this year are listed [on its website](#).

If they're applying for a practice-based musical theatre, music, dance or drama course at one of the [UK's conservatoires](#), they should apply through the [UCAS conservatoire route](#).

If they miss the UCAS application deadline, they can still apply for many courses until Clearing opens in the summer, but they should check with the university or college if they have spaces first.

In some cases, providers will accept a direct application for a course – for example, some part-time or professional courses. However, this usually only applies to students with specific circumstances. If your students are unsure of the application process for a particular course, it is best to check with the university or college directly.

Completing the application

Entry requirements vary for each course and it is important that applicants check and consider these as part of making their final selection of courses they want to apply for.

The UCAS application will require applicants to list the qualifications they currently hold, or are in the process of completing, such as A-levels or BTECs. Many applicants will be taking exams this year, and these should be listed along with any predicted grades.

An important part of the application is the personal statement, where the applicant is expected to demonstrate their interest in the course. Course descriptions may mention skills, interests or experience it's good to have, so students should look out for these details to inform their personal statement. Writing a personal statement can be daunting and time consuming, but there are many online [resources available to help students write personal statements](#).

The application also requires a reference from an adult who knows the applicant and can comment on their experience and suitability for the course they are applying for. If the student is applying through their school or college, this is likely to be a teacher or advisor. This [referee guidance](#) supports teachers and advisors in writing the reference.

Once the application has been submitted to UCAS, applicants will be able to see the process of their application in [UCAS Track](#). If there is a significant change in the application cycle, UCAS will contact students. Students should check their Track account to ensure their contact details are correct. Universities may also get in touch with applicants directly to discuss any requirements or to offer support.

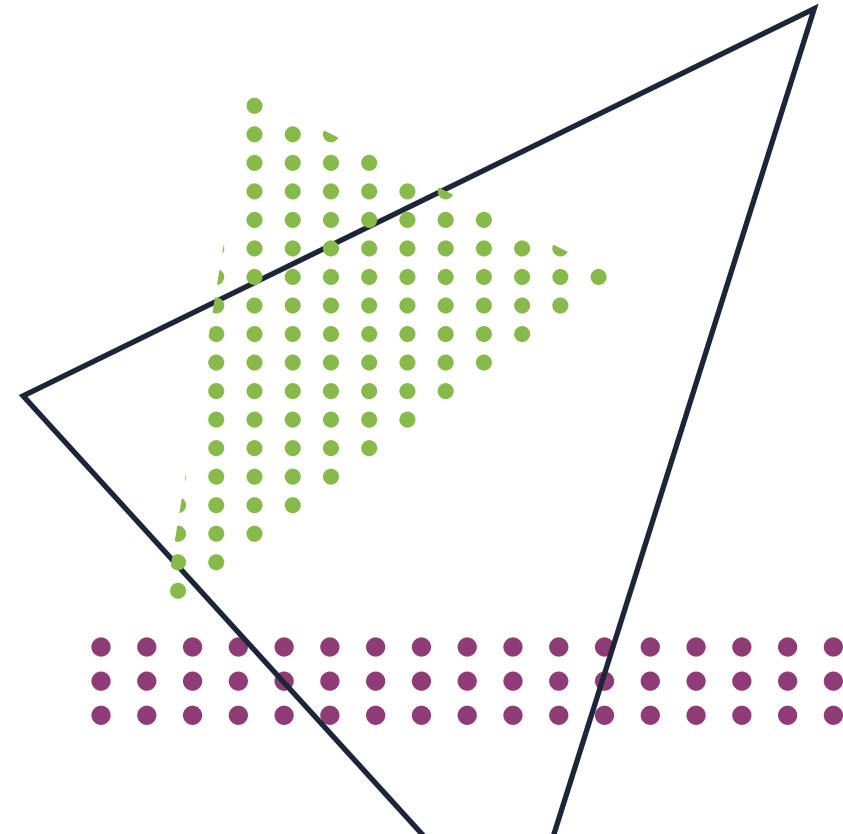
What's next for students?

For each choice, universities will either make an unconditional offer, a conditional offer, or tell applicants that the application has been unsuccessful. Some universities might invite applicants to an interview or audition before deciding whether to make an offer. If no offers are made to an applicant, they can add an extra choice to their application through the UCAS Extra service. Check the UCAS website for the dates by which an applicant should respond to their offers. [Find out more about the different decisions and types of offers.](#)

Depending on the offer applicants received, applicants will need to respond to them. They can accept a maximum of two choices – one firm and one insurance. They can only have an insurance choice if their firm choice is a conditional offer. If they accept an unconditional offer as their firm choice then the place is guaranteed, so they cannot have an insurance choice.

It can take some time for universities to consider all their applications, so the applicant might not hear from them straight away. This is a good time for applicants to further review their chosen university and college websites to research important aspects of university life such as accommodation options and student support.

This is also a great time for applicants to start looking into their student finance options. Applications for tuition fee loans and student finance open in the spring. Check the latest information and dates on the [how will I pay for it?](#) section of Discover Uni.



After results day

UCAS will receive grades from the awarding bodies and will match them to your students' applications and send them on to the universities.

It is important that schools and colleges check the full list of the exam results UCAS receives. If any of your students are taking an examination not listed, it's important they send their results to their chosen course providers.

After considering the grades, universities will update the application status on UCAS.

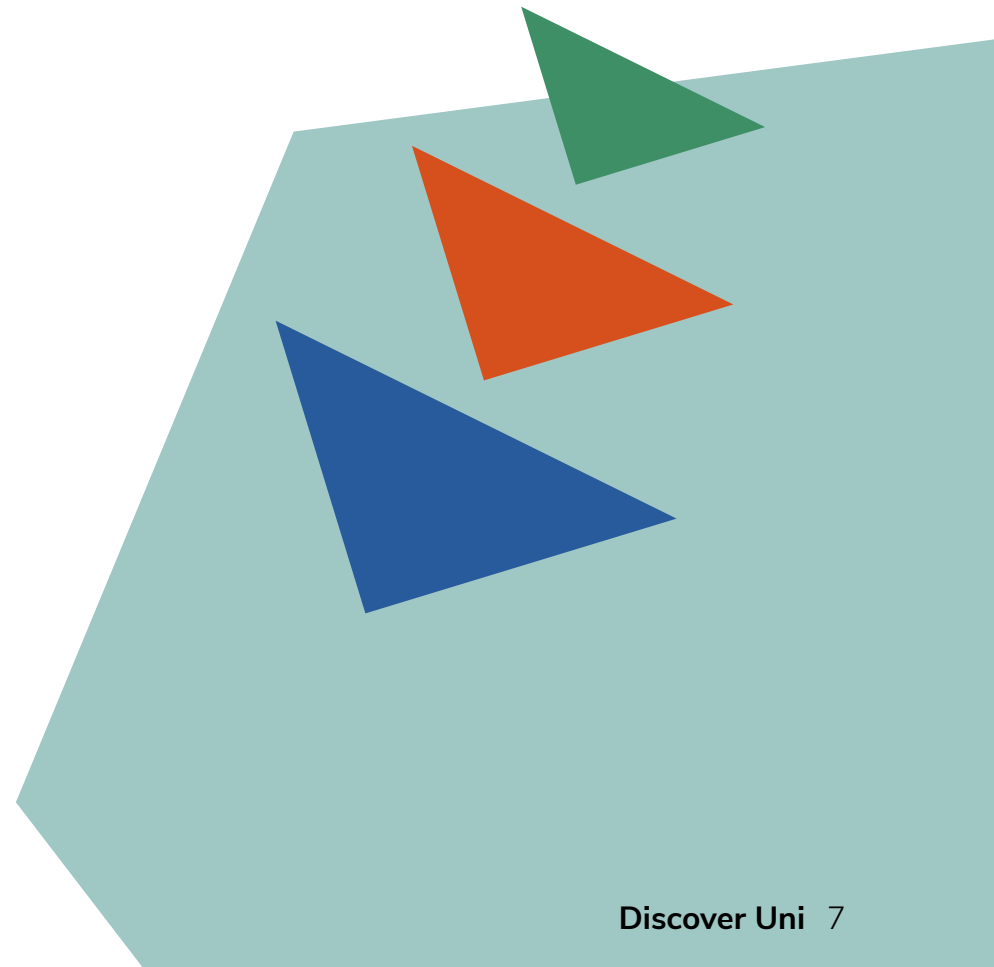
- If applicants meet the conditions of their offers, the university or college will confirm their place in their application.
- If applicants do not get the grades they need, universities or colleges may still confirm their offer or make an alternative offer: this will show as a 'changed offer' against their application.

Applicants who do not get the grades they need can contact the university or college to discuss their situation. Information about what to do next will be shown in UCAS Track. If students change their mind about the courses they've applied for or accepted places for, they can find information on the UCAS website about what they can do. Students who are applying after the application window has closed, and students who have previously made a UCAS application and do not hold any offers, can enter Clearing.

Find further information on our [Exam results and Clearing](#) page.

Applicants will now be thinking about getting ready to start their course. Discover Uni has useful information on the [Preparing to start uni](#) page, or they may be interested in the 'Know before you go' guide from Student Minds: [transitions to university](#).

Students can find support that they may need while they are at university on [Student Space](#) which is operated by [Student Minds](#).



Where to get more information

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

UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/ucas-undergraduate-when-apply>

Careers and degrees:

- Prospects: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>
- National Careers Service, Get the Jump campaign: [Get the Jump campaign](#) (The National Careers Service)
- Skills Development Scotland: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>
- Careers Wales: <https://careerswales.gov.wales/>
- NI Direct: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers/service>
- Get Career Confident: <https://www.getcareerconfident.co.uk/>
- BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers>
- UCAS careers quiz: <https://www.ucas.com/explore/career-quiz> and careers profiles: <https://www.ucas.com/explore/career-list>

Information on what you can do with your degree:

Prospects: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree>

Funding for International and EU students:

UKCISA: <https://ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/Home-or-Overseas-fees-the-basics>

International student advice:

UKCISA: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice>

British Council: <https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/moving-uk/support-guidance>

Mental health support:

Student Minds: <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/>

Student Space: <https://studentspace.org.uk/>