



2012

# Adviser Guide



For entry to university or college in 2012

This booklet is for staff at schools, colleges and other centres who advise potential applicants for higher education courses in the UK. It explains how students go about applying for HE and how UCAS deals with their applications.

It also outlines the various staff development, training and consultancy services that UCAS can offer to schools and colleges.

UCAS

at the heart of connecting people to higher education

Published by: UCAS Rosehill New Barn Lane Cheltenham GL52 3LZ

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UCAS, a company limited by guarantee, is registered in England and Wales number: 2839815

Registered charity number: 1024741 (England and Wales) and SC038598 (Scotland)

UCAS reference number: UC011012

Publication reference: 11\_089

We have made all reasonable efforts to ensure that 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)).

Further copies available from UCAS (p&p charges apply).

Contact: Publication Services PO Box 130 Cheltenham GL52 3ZF

email: [publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk) or fax: 01242 544 806

Copies of this publication can be downloaded from [www.ucas.com/documents/ucasguides/adviserguide2012.pdf](http://www.ucas.com/documents/ucasguides/adviserguide2012.pdf).

For further information about the UCAS application process for advisers go to [www.ucas.com/advisers](http://www.ucas.com/advisers).

If you need to contact the Schools Team: phone 0845 123 8001 or fax 01242 544 961.

If you are calling from outside the UK you can also contact our customer service team on 0044 330 333 0230 (international call rates apply).

If you have hearing difficulties, you can contact the customer service team, using the text relay service:

- From the UK phone 18001 0871 468 0 468
- From outside the UK phone 0044 151 494 1260 (text phone) and ask the operator to dial 0871 468 0 468.

Calls from BT landlines within the UK to the 0845 number above will cost no more than four pence per minute, and to the 0871 number above no more than nine pence per minute. The cost of calls from mobiles and other networks may vary.

#### UCAS QUALITY AWARDS



	page		page
ABOUT THIS BOOKLET – READ THIS FIRST	2	<b>PART 3 AFTER THE APPLICATION ARRIVES AT UCAS</b>	
MAJOR CHANGES SINCE THE 2011 EDITION	2	3.1 What happens at UCAS when we receive the application?	16
<b>PART 1 PREPARATION</b>		3.2 Detecting fraud	16
1.1 Preparing your centre	3	3.3 Death of an applicant	16
1.2 Preparing yourself – Planet UCAS quiz	3	3.4 How to add more information	16
1.3 UCAS applicant journey	4	3.5 Remember to change postal address	16
1.4 Step 1 – Choosing courses	4	3.6 Step 3 – Offers	16
1.5 Engaging parents	7	3.7 Adviser Track	17
1.6 Application flowchart	8	3.8 Deadlines for replying to offers	17
		3.9 UCAS Tariff points	17
<b>PART 2 COMPLETING THE APPLICATION</b>		3.10 Step 4 – Results	18
2.1 How UCAS works	9	3.11 Step 5 – Next steps	19
2.2 Step 2 –Applying	9	3.12 Step 6 – Starting university or college	19
When to apply	10	<b>PART 4 CUSTOMER SERVICE INFORMATION</b>	
How to apply	11	4.1 How to contact us	20
Disabilities, special needs and medical conditions	11	4.2 Our feedback procedure	20
2.3 Advice for referees	11		
2.4 Using the staff area of the online application system	13	<b>PART 5 FURTHER HELP FOR THAT WE CAN PROVIDE FOR ADVISERS</b>	
		5.1 UCAS training services	20
		5.2 Dedicated support team	24
		5.3 UCAS International team	24

## GLOSSARY

**Adjustment:** a period of up to five days after A level results day during which candidates whose results meet and exceed their firmly accepted conditional offer may research alternative courses without relinquishing their confirmed place.

**Adviser Track:** subscribing centres are able to follow the progress of their centre's applicants after submission to UCAS.

**Applicant:** a person who has submitted an application to UCAS.

**Apply:** the UCAS online application system for applying for full-time higher education.

**Cancellation:** either a student or a university/college cancels a choice before a decision has been made - a reason will be included if the withdrawal was issued by an institution.

**Centre:** an organisation advising students in their application to HE (in addition to schools and colleges, this includes British Council offices overseas and careers offices such as Connexions).

**Clearing:** the system used towards the end of the application cycle. If your students have not yet secured a place, it enables them to apply electronically for course vacancies.

**Conditional offer:** an offer made by a university or college, whereby the applicant must fulfil certain criteria before he/she can be accepted on the relevant course.

**Confirmation:** when conditional offers that have been accepted become unconditional or are declined. Confirmation is dependent on applicants' qualification/exam results.

**Course Search:** UCAS' online provision to search for courses at the institutions. Extensively used by applicants, parents and advisers.

**Deferral:** holding an offer until the following year.

**Entry Profile:** primary source of information about individual courses and institutions, including statistics and entry requirements. Entry Profiles are found on Course Search and are provided by the HEIs.

**Extra:** the opportunity to apply for another course if an applicant has used all five choices and is not holding any offers. It runs from 24 February to 6 July.

**Feedback:** right of an unsuccessful applicant to seek a reason why an institution has declined to make an offer – viewable through Track.

**Firm offer:** the offer that has been accepted as an applicant's first choice.

**Fraud:** provision of false, incomplete or misleading information by applicant.

**HE:** higher education.

**HE/Institution:** a university or college offering higher education courses.

**Insurance offer:** the offer that has been accepted as a second choice (in case an applicant does not meet the conditions of his/her firm offer).

**Nominated access:** the opportunity for an applicant to supply details of a third party (often a parent) to act on their behalf in contacting UCAS in their absence.

**Personal ID:** a 10-digit individual number assigned to a student when they register to use Apply. It is printed on every letter we send them and is displayed in the format 123-456-7890. They will be asked to provide this number if they contact our Customer Service Unit.

**Point of entry:** year of entry to the course; for example, 2 refers to the second year of the course.

**Student:** means a person who is considering or is in the process of completing an application to UCAS.

**Tariff points:** a system used to report achievement for entry to HE in a numerical format. It establishes agreed comparability between different types of qualifications and provides comparisons between applicants with different types and volumes of achievement.

**The Knowledge:** full day training sessions aimed at advisers and teachers new to the world of UCAS applications. These popular events are held monthly at UCAS HQ in Cheltenham.

**Track:** a system where students can track the progress of their application online, reply to any offers received, register for Adjustment and Clearing, and make certain amendments, for example, change address or email.

**Unconditional offer:** an offer given to students by a university or college if they have satisfied the entry criteria and can attend the course.

**Unistats:** a website for students who want to research and compare subjects and universities before deciding where to apply. They can also look at student satisfaction ratings and explore the figures about getting a graduate job after completing a course. See [www.direct.gov.uk/unistats](http://www.direct.gov.uk/unistats)

**Unsuccessful:** an application has not been accepted by the university or college concerned.

**yougo:** a free, interactive, student-only community website, brought to students and applicants by UCAS. yougo has all the essential information you need for life at university and college. For more information visit [yougo.further.co.uk](http://yougo.further.co.uk).

**Wider Picture:** the UCAS consultancy programme that brings expertise and an authoritative voice to schools, colleges, staff, students and parents. Bespoke sessions covering all matters relating to HE are delivered by highly experienced UCAS officers to hundreds of organizations each year at locations throughout the UK and Europe.

**Wise Adviser:** new staff development sessions for experienced school and college UCAS tutors, run at UCAS headquarters in Cheltenham.

## MEANING OF WORDS

Throughout this booklet, the following words have these specific meanings:

'we', 'us' and 'our' refer to UCAS

'you' and 'your' refer to staff at schools, colleges and other centres

## About this booklet – read this first

This booklet is for staff at schools, colleges and other centres such as careers offices, who advise potential applicants to HE courses in the UK. It explains how to apply for HE, how UCAS processes applications, how advisers can oversee their students' applications, and the various training services that we offer.

For new advisers, the idea of giving information, advice and guidance to students hoping to progress to HE may seem daunting. To help, we have created The Knowledge @ UCAS one-day events – see page 23 for more information.

If you have been helping students to apply to HE for a number of years, you already have knowledge and experience of UCAS. So what extra could you learn? Well, we've thought about this and are introducing a series of Wise Adviser training days, run at UCAS, to refresh your expertise. With unrivalled behind-the-scenes access to UCAS facilities, we'll discuss best practice methods, inform you of future changes and take an interactive look at reference writing (see page 23 for more information).

Rest assured, whichever end of the spectrum you occupy – indeed, you may be in the middle – UCAS is committed to providing help and support.

## Major changes since the 2011 edition

**The application fee** has increased to £22 for two or more choices and remains at £11 for one choice.

Extended character sets are available for certain fields - From 2012 entry, applicants and referees will be able to enter some European characters that are not in the English alphabet (extended character sets) in certain fields of Apply and Staff Apply. Fields marked with the symbol 'Æ' in the following sections will accept European characters (the 'Æ' symbol will only be displayed if a European character has been input):

- Personal details
- Personal statement
- Employment
- Referee details
- Reference.

Applicants can also enter European characters if they change their address in Track.

Not all universities and colleges can view these characters correctly, so a version with substituted English characters is also made available to them. If a European character is entered in Apply or Track, a warning message will appear on the screen and the applicant/referee will need to view and agree to the substituted characters version of each section in which they've entered European characters before submitting the application. If a European character is entered that does not have a valid substitution, we will insert the character '#'.

A full list of the European characters accepted in Apply and Track will be available at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

**Contextual data** - From 2012 UCAS will be able to provide additional contextual data from publicly available data sets to those institutions who wish to use it. Further information is available at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). Applicants will be able to see which institutions are using contextual data.

The information that we will provide is:

- the school performance of students achieving:
  - five A\*-C GCSE including English or Welsh and mathematics or equivalent in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
  - five or more SCQF level 4 Scottish Standard grade including English and mathematics or equivalent in Scotland

- the school performance relating to the:
  - average QCA points for the best eight GCSEs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
  - average points for the best eight Scottish Standard grades or equivalent in Scotland
- the school performance relating to the:
  - average QCA points per A level entry (or equivalent) in England, Wales, Northern Ireland
  - average UCAS Tariff points per Scottish Highers entry in Scotland
- the school performance relating to the:
  - average QCA points per A level student (or equivalent) in England, Wales, Northern Ireland
  - average UCAS Tariff points per Scottish Highers student in Scotland
- the percentage of students at the school
  - entitled to free school meals in \*England, Wales and Northern Ireland
  - registered for free school meals in Scotland

\*Note: the information for England has been sourced by local authority
- the percentage of students at the school
  - entitled to educational maintenance allowance in England, Wales, Northern Ireland (note this information will be available for one year only for England as this data will no longer be collected in England. It will be available for other administrations if still available through them).
  - registered for educational maintenance allowance in Scotland
- Lives in a low progression to higher education neighbourhood (Polar 2).

The information will be linked to the applicant or can be made available as generic data sets. It will initially be available for the 2009 and 2010 academic years.

**The "cooling off" period** - This has been reduced from 14 to seven days. Applicants will now have seven calendar days in which to withdraw their application and receive a refund of their application fee, and seven calendar days in which to change their choices of institution or course.

**Activities in preparation for HE** - There is a new category in this section to allow applicants to state that they have completed such activities after leaving school.

## 1.1 Preparing your centre

If your centre has had no previous contact with UCAS (for example, you are a newly created sixth form), then please email us at [customerdatabase@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:customerdatabase@ucas.ac.uk). In response, we will send you an electronic form for you to provide us with details of your centre and when we receive these we will issue your centre with a username and password.

All centres, whether new or already registered, need to appoint at least one member of staff to act as Apply coordinator. It is also sensible to ensure that key individuals, such as the Head of Sixth Form, Head of Careers and IT Manager/staff, know about the application process.

Your Apply coordinators are usually a good source of information about how the system works and, on a practical note, are the people who decide what level of access all other members of staff are given (see 2.4 – ‘Using the staff area of the online application system’ for more information).

We are committed to reducing our reliance on printed communications and therefore are asking all advisers to make sure that their students give us a validated email address to receive letters and messages, and a mobile phone number to receive text messages.

Despite the central importance of electronic communications, UCAS realises that printed publications still have a role to play in guidance work including one-to-one support, tutor groups, career sessions for parents and higher education evenings and events. Please see our Publications Catalogue of the most relevant and helpful publications for your needs. Copies of the catalogue should be available for viewing in your school or college – if not, contact [publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk) for a copy.

Finally, remember to put time aside regularly to view the adviser section of our website ([www.ucas.com/advisers](http://www.ucas.com/advisers)) for helpful hints, reminders on key application dates and details of any new or changed services.

## 1.2 Preparing yourself

With the readership of this booklet running into tens of thousands, there will inevitably be a wide range in terms of adviser experience in matters relating to UCAS. To help establish a baseline for your current knowledge levels, we suggest you take 15 minutes to try the following quiz.

The quiz will test your UCAS knowledge. Answers can be found on the UCAS website in the area dedicated to training updates for advisers: [www.ucas.com/advisers/training](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/training).

### UCAS SPOKEN HERE

- 1. What does the Admissions test MML stand for?**

  - A Multiple-choice Medical Lancet
  - B Modern and Medieval Languages
  - C Mathematics, Measurement and Logic
- 2. Which of these universities offers a degree in Viking Studies?**

  - A The University of Aberdeen
  - B The University of Nottingham
  - C The University of Hull
- 3. What does the tuition fee code 05 signify?**

  - A Sponsored by the World Health Council
  - B Wishes to pay by monthly instalments
  - C DHSS/Regional Health – contribution from the Dept of Health and Social Security or from a Regional Health Authority
- 4. How many Tariff points are awarded to the Arts Award (Gold)?**

  - A 35
  - B 60
  - C 100
- 5. How much does UCAS Extra cost for applicants?**

  - A £10.00 if used before March 31st
  - B £15.00 a choice
  - C It's free for eligible applicants
- 6. The term ‘red brick university’ was first coined to describe:**

  - A The University of Bradford
  - B The University of Liverpool
  - C The University of Birmingham
- 7. The annual UCAS Adjustment period ends on:**

  - A 29 August
  - B 31 August
  - C 2 September
- 8. How long do UCAS applicants have to accept or decline a ‘changed course’ offer?**

  - A 14 days
  - B 5 days
  - C 21 days
- 9. An applicant can defer entry through UCAS for a maximum of:**

  - A Three years
  - B Two years
  - C One year
- 10. What is the name given to UCAS-based training days for experienced advisers?**

  - A The Ultimate Adviser
  - B Wise Adviser
  - C Gold Star Adviser
- 11. How much is the book The UCAS Guide to Getting into University and College?**

  - A £15.00
  - B £11.99
  - C £13.00
- 12. What is the name of the annual UCAS performing arts student fair?**

  - A Compose Your Future
  - B Lights, Music, Action
  - C Ready, Steady, Perform
- 13. In 2010, what was the most popular subject by acceptances?**

  - A Law
  - B Nursing
  - C Psychology
- 14. The Open University YASS Scheme stands for:**

  - A Young Apprentices Skills Scheme
  - B Yearlong Assessment of Schools Scheme
  - C Young Applicants in Schools Scheme

### 15. The UCAStv video on writing references contains advice from teachers from schools in:

- A Gloucestershire, Surrey and Cumbria
- B Durham, Oxfordshire, Essex and Glamorgan
- C Oxfordshire, Yorkshire, Hampshire and Glasgow

#### Good luck!

As an adviser, it is vitally important to recognise and understand the differences between your own experience of higher education and the experience your students starting in 2012 will embark on.

The revolution in web 2.0 technology, eagerly adopted by many IT-savvy young people, has created an expectation that their learning experience will reflect these developments. Do not be surprised, therefore, if some 'Google generation' students seem resistant to leafing through university prospectuses or careers reference books!

Whilst we are very proud of the plaudits given to our use of new technology, we still believe that published resources can be a highly effective way to support advisers. To gain an overview of higher education, try reading:

#### The UCAS Guide to getting into University and College

This book covers the entire applicant journey, from deciding if HE is the right path up until they begin their life as a student. More competition for places and increased costs mean that choosing the right place and making a high quality application are more important than ever. Here at UCAS we know the questions that worry potential applicants:

- Is HE the right option?
- How do I choose a course?
- How do I apply?
- How do I find out about finance and funding?
- How do I prepare for an interview?
- What if I don't get the grades?
- What happens once I am accepted onto a course?

The answers to all these and many more questions can now be found in our UCAS guide. Staff from across UCAS have pooled their expertise alongside schools, universities and other organisations within the HE sector to create the definitive guide to getting into university and college.

#### Progression Series

Expert guidance to help students into the most sought-after subject areas. Each title provides an introduction to each subject, career options, student and graduate case studies, advice on applying and the personal statement, and complete course listings with entry requirements.

These 10 guides cover 20 of the most popular and increasingly competitive subject areas. They will give potential students an understanding of the subject and the opportunities available, helping them into the course that is right for them.

Subjects covered include Medicine, Law, Art and Design, Teaching, Psychology, Economics, Engineering, Nursing, Journalism and Sport, amongst many others.

These and other resources are available from our bookshop at [www.ucasbooks.co.uk](http://www.ucasbooks.co.uk), or contact our Publication Services Unit ([publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk)).

Apart from annual INSET days, which are often mandatory and count as evidence towards your continuing professional development, you may also find it useful to attend a UCAS conference. Utilising nationally-known speakers, and with plenty of opportunities for discussion at workshop sessions, this is also a great opportunity to hear about ideas and changes first-hand and to network with advisers in centres similar to your own.

## 1.3 UCAS applicant journey

An applicant's journey with UCAS falls into six steps as illustrated in the diagram opposite. To help advisers with centre preparation, we have included suggestions for staff activity - see red text - for each step.

## 1.4 Step 1 - Choosing courses

How do you help your students to decide what and where they want to study? How do you build the self-confidence of students who might be wavering? Here are some ideas to encourage, support and guide them:

#### VISIT [WWW.UCAS.COM](http://WWW.UCAS.COM)

One of the most popular websites in the UK, [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) has a comprehensive online database of over 50,000 HE courses available at more than 300 universities and colleges which are members of UCAS.

Nearly 88% of courses on the UCAS Course Search have what are known as Entry Profiles. These are compiled by staff at each university or college, and provide information about the course, specific entry requirements and career possibilities, and about the qualities or experience admissions staff are looking for in applicants. Increasingly, they are also providing information about an institution's admission and selection criteria, fees, bursaries and financial support, accommodation and access for students with special needs, open days and student life. Entry Profiles make it easier to differentiate between courses which have similar names.

Applicants can search for courses in their chosen subject and/or institution or UK region. The information on our website is normally updated hourly, so students do not waste their time reading through out-of-date material.

#### VISIT [WWW.UCAS.TV](http://WWW.UCAS.TV)

UCAStv is the latest way for applicants to get all the information they need about applying for higher education. As well as constantly updated 'how to' guides your applicants can use when choosing courses and making decisions about their application, it features video case studies by applicants about their UCAS journey which can help alleviate fears about how to approach applying for university or college, and videos of our customer service staff giving answers to frequently asked questions.

#### TAKE THE STAMFORD TEST

Also on the UCAS website applicants can find the Stamford Test. If a student is not sure what subject(s) to study, this free service asks them to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'possibly' to a short series of questions. On the basis of their answers it gives them a list of subjects that might be worth looking into.

#### BOOKS AND GUIDES

Applicants can find books giving information and guidance on higher education online at the UCAS bookstore [www.ucasbooks.co.uk](http://www.ucasbooks.co.uk), elsewhere on the web or at libraries.

*Prospectuses* – Students should get hold of the prospectuses for any institutions or courses they are interested in. However, they should be aware that these are often printed many months before the application process begins and more up-to-date information is usually available online.

## UCAS applicant journey for advisers

### STEP 1

#### 1 Choosing courses

Your students use Course Search at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to find out which courses might suit them and the universities and colleges that offer them.

You can use Course Search to keep yourself abreast of changes in subject availability, new course developments and modes of delivery.



### STEP 2

#### 2 Applying

Your students can apply for up to five courses using the online application system at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

Staff Apply allows you to check the progress your students are making in filling in their applications.



### STEP 3

#### 3 Offers

Your students can check the progress of their applications using Track at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com), which will be updated as they receive decisions from universities and colleges.

Adviser Track, for subscribers, allows you full view of your students' offers, including conditions, as well as any replies they have made.



### STEP 4

#### 4 Results

Your students can check Track at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to see if they've got a place on their chosen course. We receive many exam results direct from the exam boards – your students can check the list at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

You can check the list of which results we receive direct at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).



### STEP 5

#### 5 Next steps

Depending on your students' circumstances, they might use this step. If your students have received different grades than expected, or have changed their mind, there may be other options available. They need to look at Track and at course vacancies at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

Check the Adviser section of [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) for full details of Clearing and Adjustment.



### STEP 6

#### 6 Starting university or college

Your students need to make sure they have everything ready, such as accommodation, finances, travel arrangements, books and equipments required for the course.

Subscribers to Adviser Track will receive a final list of their students' HE destinations in late September.

### PODCASTS

To save costs, an increasing number of universities and colleges are providing podcast material, free to download, through iTunes.

### UNISTATS

This website brings together a wealth of authoritative, official information, enabling applicants to compare subjects at UK universities and colleges. It includes destinations of leavers from higher education and the results of student satisfaction surveys. See [www.unistats.direct.gov.uk](http://www.unistats.direct.gov.uk).

### YOUNGOFURTHER.CO.UK

[youngofurther.co.uk](http://youngofurther.co.uk), the UCAS student network, is the place for your students to meet their future course mates. 'yougo', as it is more commonly known, is the place for your students to meet other applicants who will be going to the same university or college, or even the same course. It's also a good way to ask UCAS questions as well as the universities and colleges themselves.

By joining yougo your students will be able to:

- meet people like them before they go to university or college
- get their questions answered by UCAS experts and the universities themselves
- enter competitions exclusively for yougo members.

The great thing about yougo is that it is free to join and exclusively for students. It can help your students get the most out of the UCAS application process.

If your students have any enquiries about joining yougo, they can email [support@youngofurther.co.uk](mailto:support@youngofurther.co.uk).

### GET OUT THERE!

To help them make their minds up, there are three other sources of valuable information available to your students: open days, taster courses and education conventions. Students can try and get answers by phone or email, but they are unlikely to get the full picture unless they meet people face to face and visit the universities and colleges where they are thinking of studying.

### GO TO OPEN DAYS

Attending university and college open days is a great way for applicants to get a feel for a place. During their visit, they should be shown around areas such as the student union, library, accommodation areas and the department in which they might end up studying. They might be able to meet tutors and chat with current students.

Many university open days make use of student ambassadors – these are students who are available to answer questions and give practical guidance to visitors. They are often second year students, so they are not remote from the application process and know exactly what it is like to be a fresher at their particular institution. In fact, UCAS has helped train some ambassadors so they really are up to speed on making an application and can speak from wider expert knowledge as well as their own experience.

Most students would say that open days have enabled them to make an instinctive decision – the place may or may not feel right for them. If they don't explore beforehand, they risk feeling disappointed when turning up to start the course, only to find that it's not what they expected.

Each year, we publish our *Open Days* booklet, which also has details of taster courses and education conventions. A copy automatically goes to schools and colleges. You can buy more copies through our Publication Services team, contact [publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk).

**Did you know?** The majority of students attending an open day will attend with a parent (or parents). Given this state of affairs, most universities and colleges will timetable in sessions just for parents on key topics like student finance, staff/student contact hours and accommodation.

### ENROL ON TASTER COURSES

A number of universities and colleges around the UK offer short taster courses, giving students experience of academic and social life in an HE environment. Most of these courses are free, and they last from one day to a full week. There are also summer courses available which are designed to be as authentic as possible, with lectures and tutorials, and give students the chance to share their academic interests. Demonstrating commitment in this way will also look good in the student's personal statement.

Understandably, these taster courses are popular. Those who are interested need to book early to reserve a place.

### GO TO UCAS EDUCATION CONVENTIONS

UCAS conventions start at the beginning of March in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the last ones being held in early July. In Scotland, they are mainly in September and October.

Representatives from UCAS and over 230 universities and colleges are on hand to give information and advice in person. And there are seminars on a range of topics associated with students' applications and their future in HE.

In addition, we organise a growing series of events linked to particular subject areas. At present, students can choose between *Design Your Future* (art and design), *Compose Your Future* (performing arts) and *Examine Your Future* (medicine, nursing and allied healthcare).

Visit the adviser section on our website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) for more details about conventions.

### ASK FAMILY, FRIENDS AND PROFESSIONALS

Students mustn't be afraid to ask for advice and opinion. As well as talking to you or other professional advisers, they can talk things through with their parents and with friends who have progressed to HE to find out what their experiences were like. (What did they do before applying? And, with the benefit of hindsight, would they do anything differently if they had to go through the process again?)

Some schools maintain links with former pupils as they progress through university, which can provide a further source of information (and inspiration) to current applicants.

**BRING IN UCAS TO TALK TO YOUR STUDENTS**

The opportunity to have UCAS come to you is very popular with schools, colleges, Connexions and other careers advisers. Our presenters are chosen not just for their educational experience, but also for their ability to empathise with young students. Sessions are guaranteed to bring to life the key factors that impact on making a successful application to HE (for more information, see Part 5).

**READY, STEADY, WRITE....***Personal statement workshops for students*

We regularly travel throughout the UK to deliver school and college-based sessions. Whether you have 20 or 200 applicants, we can energise them for the task ahead!

For further information see

**[www.ucas.com/advisers/training/consultancyservices/](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/training/consultancyservices/)**

or to book a session, contact

**[professionaldevelopment@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:professionaldevelopment@ucas.ac.uk)**

## 1.5 Engaging parents

For parents, the prospect of a son or daughter applying through UCAS for higher education for the first time can be a watershed for the whole family. Naturally, they will have numerous questions and, inevitably, many will revolve around the costs associated with higher tuition fees from 2012 onwards.

Parents should be encouraged to explore the section of the UCAS website that has information just for them ([www.ucas.com/parents/](http://www.ucas.com/parents/)). This introduces them to the process their son or daughter is going through and gives links to further information about deadlines, the Tariff and the UCAS online bookstore ([www.ucasbooks.co.uk](http://www.ucasbooks.co.uk)). They can sign up for our free monthly e-newsletters and find answers to parents' frequently asked questions and order a copy of the Parent Guide to Higher Education by contacting [publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk).

To help, UCAS speakers can be booked to attend at any UK school or college parent information evening aimed at demystifying the HE application process. Whether the audience is 25 or 250, every parent or career attending will receive a complimentary copy of our popular Parents Guide to Higher Education along with copies of other key UCAS publications. In the words of one head of sixth, participating in a workshop at the UCAS Advisers Conference, February 2011, at The Belfry, West Midlands:

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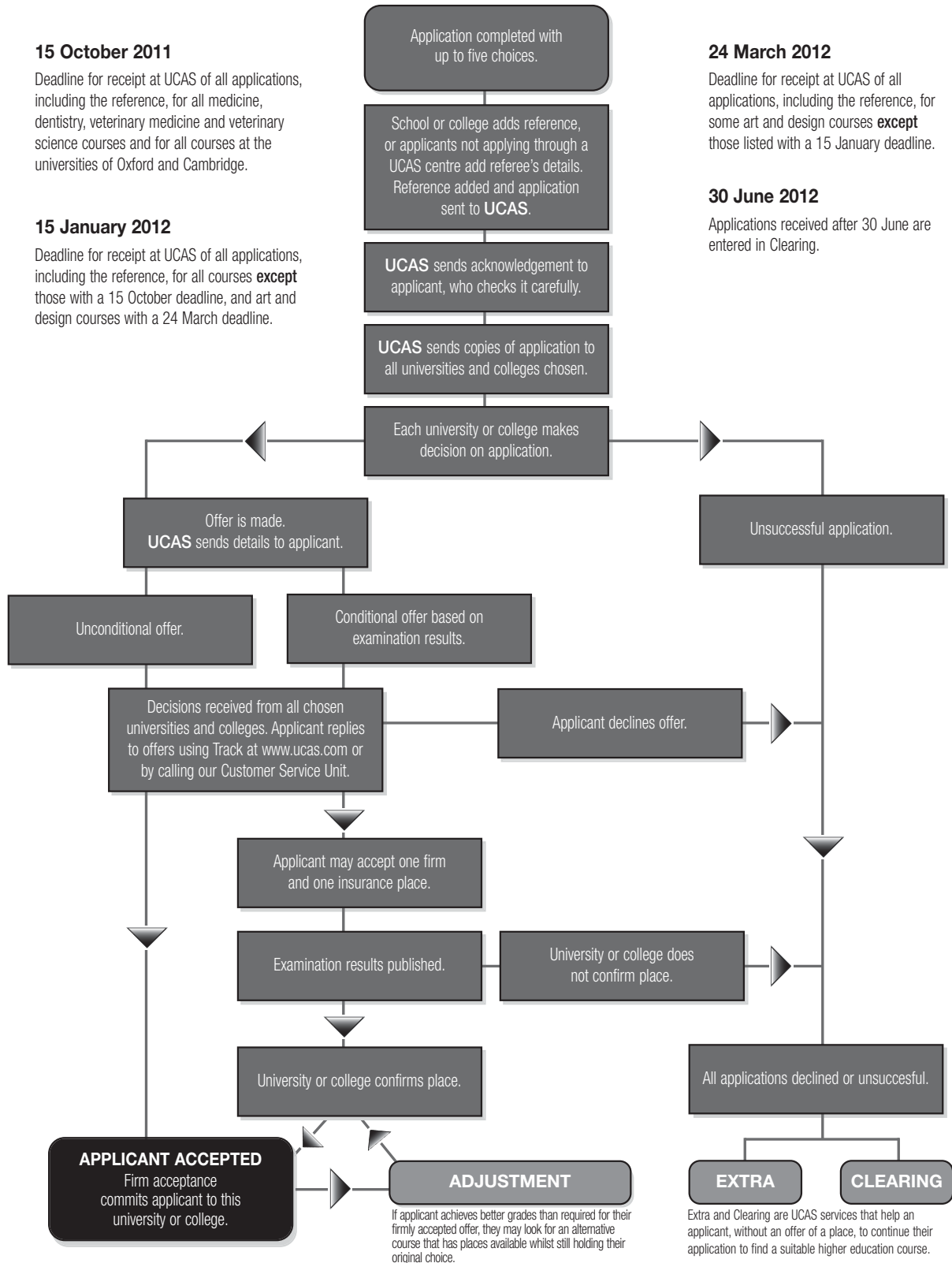
“

Our UCAS speaker really struck a chord with our parents, most of whom are not graduates, and stayed behind, willingly and with enthusiasm, to talk to a long queue of parents. You are very lucky to have such personable speakers.

**Did you know?** All UCAS applicants, when filling in the Personal Details section of their application, can choose to nominate a parent, or carer, to contact UCAS on their behalf if unable to phone themselves. This means that UCAS is able – subject to identity checks – to discuss in detail an individual's application with the named holder of nominated access.

## 1.6 Application flowchart

### Applications for UCAS courses



## 2.1 How UCAS works

### INVISIBILITY OF CHOICES

When we receive an application, we send a Welcome letter (AS2) and our Applicant Welcome Guide to the applicant, and we send the application on to each of the chosen universities and colleges at the same time. Each university or college has access to the information about their choice only. They must not ask applicants to reveal their other choices.

Schools and colleges will be sent a sample Welcome letter (AS2) and a copy of the Applicant Welcome Guide in their September mailing from UCAS.

Only much later in the application cycle, when an applicant has received decisions on all their choices and has replied to all offers made, can each university or college see details of the other choices. This ensures that each university or college decides independently whether to offer a place and what conditions, if any, to attach to an offer.

**Did you know?** Choices aren't sent in preference order – we send an application to all the universities at the same time and they don't know where else your student has applied.

### DECISION MAKING

The time taken by universities and colleges to make their decision varies. Sometimes the applicant has to sit an admissions test or attend an interview, perhaps both, depending on the subject and popularity of the course. Art and design students in particular might need to present a portfolio of their work. Invitations to submit a portfolio or attend an interview may be sent via UCAS or direct, at the institution's discretion. Remind students that they must respond to invitations to interview. They can accept, decline, or request a new time or date.

The university or college sends their decision to us (not direct to the applicant) and we notify the applicant of that decision. Applicants can use Track at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to find out the latest position on all their choices.

All decisions are made at the universities and colleges. We do not have any involvement in deciding to make offers or reject applications.

An offer may be either unconditional or conditional, and will tell the applicant the year and month that their course starts, and the point of entry (for example, the second year of the course rather than the first).

Unconditional offer (U) – means that the applicant has met all the university's or college's academic entrance requirements. They might have still to meet other requirements, such as financial or medical conditions.

Conditional offer (C) – means that the offer has certain conditions, for example the applicant has to achieve certain exam results. The conditions must be met by 31 August 2012 (even if entry is deferred to 2013), or if the applicant is taking a winter exam, they may have to meet the conditions by an earlier date. The conditions may include achievement of specific grades, possibly in named subjects, or a certain number of UCAS Tariff points. For details of the UCAS Tariff, visit the UCAS website.

Samples of our offer letter (AS3) and Unsuccessful letter (AS4) will be sent to schools and colleges in our October mailing.

### REPLYING TO OFFERS

For each applicant, when all decisions are in, we send a letter explaining how to reply to offers. Applicants can accept one offer 'firmly' and, if that is a

conditional offer, they can also accept a second offer as an insurance choice in case they do not meet the conditions of the 'firmly accepted' offer.

If an applicant firmly accepts an unconditional offer, they are committing themselves to take up that place and cannot accept an insurance offer.

It is important that applicants think very carefully when they choose their firm and insurance choices and should ensure that they do not accept an offer from any university or college if they would not be prepared to attend their course there.

A sample Replying to Offers letter (AS6) will be sent to schools and colleges in our January mailing, and sample Status Check (AS9) and Status Check Decline (AS9D) letters will be included in our March mailing, illustrating what communications applicants receive from us when they have replied to their offers.

### EXTRA – THE WAY TO APPLY TO FURTHER UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

All is not lost if your students have been unsuccessful or declined offers from all five of their choices. You can encourage these students to use Extra, described below, to apply to further universities and colleges that still have vacancies. You need to make them aware that they do not have to wait until Clearing to apply for more courses. They can apply for several courses in Extra, but only one course at a time.

Students who originally applied for high-demand courses could consider applying for courses in related or alternative subjects.

Each year we send a poster promoting the Extra process to schools, colleges, careers centres and British Council offices. If you have received a poster, please would you ensure that it is displayed prominently. If you would like us to send you an Extra poster, please contact [publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:publicationservices@ucas.ac.uk).

The Extra process operates from 24 February to the end of June 2012. Applicants use Course Search at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to find out which courses are advertising vacancies in Extra. They then need to confirm direct with the university or college whether they can consider them before making their application on the Track service at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) or by calling our Customer Service Unit.

From October 2011 until 30 June 2012 we notify applicants when they become eligible to use Extra. These applicants apply for courses in Extra by using a special button that appears on Track.

## 2.2 Step 2 – Applying

When your students have completed their research they will have identified the courses for which they are going to apply. They are then ready to turn to the task of applying.

### NUMBER OF CHOICES ALLOWED

Each student can make a maximum of five choices on their application, including:

- no more than four choices in any one of the following three areas: (i) medicine; (ii) dentistry; (iii) veterinary medicine or veterinary science

- no more than one choice for Oxford University or the University of Cambridge (students can apply to both only if they already hold a degree or expect to hold a degree before the courses start).

If an applicant originally applies to fewer than five choices, they can add more as long as they have not replied to their offers. They must add any further choices by 30 June 2012.

#### WHEN TO APPLY

Universities and colleges try to give equal consideration to all applications received by the dates given below. They may consider late applications if they still have vacancies, but they do not have to.

For all applications, we recommend that you encourage students to do their research and complete their applications as early as they can. We recommend that you explain to the students that their referees need time to write considered references. Referees should not be expected to do this just before the published closing date.

At centres registered with us, all applications have to be checked and approved before you send them to us. In order to accommodate your local approval process, you might ask your students to work to an earlier closing date for completing their parts of the application.

Recognising the demands imposed by the need to write references and approve applications, we urge referees and other staff at schools and colleges to complete their part of the process without undue delay, so that applications can reach us as soon as possible.

Applications for 2012 entry should reach us between mid-September 2011 and 15 January 2012 except for the following:

#### OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

Applications for courses at the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge should reach us by 15 October 2011. In addition to their UCAS application, all students applying to Oxford for a choral or organ award, must complete and return a special application form by 1 September 2011; all applicants from outside the EU applying to the University of Cambridge must complete a Cambridge Overseas Application Form (COAF) and send it to the Admissions Office of your college of preference by 15 October 2011. There are also additional application forms for applicants for music awards, and the Cambridge Special Access Scheme.

For details of how to obtain forms please visit the universities' websites.

In most circumstances students can apply to either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge but not both. Students may apply to both these universities only if they are graduates or expect to hold a degree before September 2012.

**Did you know?** Your students don't have to be posh to go to Oxford or Cambridge – places are offered based on qualifications, application, previous experience (if relevant), admissions tests and interview (if the course needs an interview).

#### CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS QUESTION

The way UCAS collects information on criminal convictions changed in 2011.

The criminal convictions question asked in the Personal Details section of Apply relates since 2011 to a wider range of offences, as detailed in the helptext. Spent convictions need not be disclosed in answer to this question. However, applicants applying to particular courses (for example

those entailing contact with vulnerable persons, including the elderly and sick) are also asked to indicate whether they have been convicted of any criminal offences regardless of whether these are spent.

#### MEDICINE, DENTISTRY, VETERINARY MEDICINE OR VETERINARY SCIENCE

Applications for these subjects should reach us by 15 October 2011. This date applies to medicine course codes A100, A101, A102, A103, A104, A105, A106 and A300; dentistry course codes A200, A201, A202, A203, A204, A205, A206 and A400; and veterinary medicine and veterinary science course codes D100, D101 and D102.

#### ART AND DESIGN

Applications for art and design courses should reach us between mid-September 2011 and either 15 January or 24 March 2012. The deadline applicable to each course is given in Course Search.

#### PASSPORT DETAILS

Passport details are now collected at the application stage in cases where it is likely that an applicant will need a visa to enter the UK to study. If an applicant does not hold a passport at the time of application, passport details can be added later through Track. If an applicant holds dual nationality, the first nationality entered must be that relating to the passport that will be used to enter the UK to study, and the other nationality must be entered under 'Dual nationality'.

#### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Students who live outside the European Union can apply at any time between early September 2011 and 30 June 2012, unless they are applying for Oxford or Cambridge or the courses listed above.

However, such applicants should be reminded that most UK students will apply well before 15 January 2012, and some popular courses might not have places available after that date. Students should check with universities and colleges if they are applying after 15 January. Students from outside the EU should allow enough time to arrange immigration, travel and accommodation.

Please see contact details for the UCAS International Team in section 4.1 on page 20.

Applicants who think they may be assessed as a 'home' student (UK or EU) for tuition fees should apply by 15 January 2012.

#### EARLY START DATES

Applicants who want to accept an offer for a course with an early start date (ie before September 2012) should reply to the offer as soon as they can. They **must not** wait either for all of their decisions to come through or for their UCAS reply date, and must ensure they reply **before** the start date of the course. If they do not reply promptly to an offer they want to accept, they risk losing it.

#### LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications reaching us between 16 January 2012 and 30 June 2012 and art and design applications for courses with a 24 March 2012 deadline received between 25 March 2011 and 30 June 2012, will be considered by the universities and colleges at their discretion, if they still have vacancies after considering all on-time applications. However, they may take until 19 July 2012 to make decisions on late applications.

Students who apply late should explain any reasons for the delay in the personal statement section of the application.

**IMPORTANT:** All new applications that we receive after 30 June 2012 are entered directly into the Clearing system. Applicants should look at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to find out more about Clearing.

#### DEFERRED APPLICATIONS

The same closing dates apply for deferred applications. Before choosing to defer an application each student should contact individual universities or colleges direct to check that they would be willing to consider a deferred application. In some cases, for example, the course may not be offered the following year.

Students defer through Apply by choosing the appropriate start date for a future course. Students applying for deferred entry need to be aware that they will still be expected to meet entry requirements by 31 August 2012 (the same as an applicant applying for current year courses).

#### HOW TO APPLY

As part of our commitment in our environmental policy to reducing our consumption of resources such as paper, we are not sending out any paper application forms to schools, colleges or centres for 2012 entry.

If your centre does not have internet access, contact our Customer Service Unit on 0845 123 8001 (or +44 845 123 8001 from outside the UK).

This priority number is for use only by your staff. You must not give it to applicants or parents.

#### APPLYING ONLINE

Apply is our secure web-based application system. The on-screen help text guides users through the application. For more details, see our website at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

Students can use Apply anywhere that has internet access. They can rework and resave details on their application as often as necessary, before submitting the final version to their teacher, adviser, referee or UCAS, as appropriate.

Applicants who apply through a UCAS-registered centre, such as a school, college or careers centre, need to obtain the buzzword for the centre.

Authorised staff at those centres can check through the applications and, where necessary, refer them back to students for correction. Please check the completed application carefully before sending it to us. In particular, please check the choices section for correct course and institution codes, and the education section for correct details of qualifications.

We invite students to include their unit grades for certificated qualifications. Giving this information is optional – you may wish to advise students if you believe that by disclosing their unit grades they will improve their chances of being offered a place.

#### ART AND DESIGN COURSES

All art and design courses use one of two application deadlines: 15 January or 24 March. The later closing date is to allow students taking a Diploma in Foundation Studies (Art and Design) time to identify their specialisation and put together a portfolio of work, which they will need to present at interview.

Students who want to apply for a mixture of courses with different deadlines should not delay submitting their applications beyond the normal closing date (15 January 2012). Provided they have left sufficient room for their further choices, have not replied to any offers they have received and places are still available, their balance of choices can be added later either online using Track or by calling the UCAS Customer Service Unit.

#### DISABILITIES, SPECIAL NEEDS AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Universities and colleges welcome applications from people with disabilities, special needs or medical conditions, and try to provide as much support as possible. There is more information about this, including full contact details for Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, at [www.ucas.com/students/disabledstudents/](http://www.ucas.com/students/disabledstudents/) or visit [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk). Applicants who need support in their studies, accommodation or daily living should contact their chosen universities and colleges, who will want to know:

- the course in which the applicant is interested
- the nature and extent of the disability, special need or medical condition
- any arrangements that the applicant has needed, or found helpful, in the past.

Universities and colleges will consider the application on the same academic criteria as any other, and any medical information will remain confidential.

If a university or college cannot meet the applicant's needs, the applicant can ask us to substitute another choice.

Visit the student section of our website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) for more useful information to give to students with disabilities or special needs.

**Did you know?** Famous people with dyslexia include: Sir Winston Churchill, Leonardo da Vinci and Agatha Christie

## 2.3 Advice for referees

You may be asked to write references for current or previous students. In the staff section of Apply you can now provide a reference for a former student online without adding them to your current cohort. They can contact you online and allow you to see their application so that you can write your reference. Whilst you are doing so, the applicant will see that the reference section is in progress and then will see a tick when you have completed the reference. The applicant cannot view the reference on Apply but once the reference is complete they send the whole application on to us with their payment.

**Did you know?** The reference doesn't have to be written by the head teacher or head of sixth form – it's more important that it is written by someone who knows the student well enough to comment on their academic abilities and any personal qualities that will help them to succeed at university.

In all cases, before writing your reference, you should first review the information supplied by the student. You do not need to repeat in your reference any of the information that the student has given unless you want to comment on it.

Under the heading Predicted grades, you will see listed most Tariff-scored qualifications the applicant has listed as pending. Please select your prediction of the grade or result from the dropdown list.

For other qualifications which are pending, please enter the title of the course or qualification and the grades, results or performance outcome that you predict the student will achieve.

For GCE students who have certificated AS, but who are intending to re-sit one or more units in order to maximise their A level grade in the subject concerned, it would be helpful to mention this in the reference.

Each university and college chosen by the student will see your reference. The universities and colleges, however, will not know to which other universities and colleges the student has applied. If you refer to one of them in your reference, this could compromise the application.

To help the universities and colleges, please try to comment on the application as follows.

(a) For UK students taking GCE qualifications, provide a brief statement on the school's or college's curriculum policy, including, where appropriate, reference to:

- the range of opportunities available to all students
- the typical numbers of AS and A level subjects taken by each GCE student
- policies for certification of GCE AS
- opportunities to take vocationally related qualifications, such as Applied A levels, and of mixing these with academic GCE qualifications.

If the individual student's situation differs in some way from the normal policy, give details.

For students taking Scottish qualifications, you should comment on the school's policy if you no longer enter candidates for Standard Grades in S4.

(b) Give an assessment of the suitability of the student for the HE courses that they have applied to and, where possible, include the following points:

- existing achievement, with particular reference to subjects relating to the courses for which they are applying
- motivation and commitment towards the chosen course(s)
- any relevant skills achievement, whether certificated or not
- potential (other than predicted grades)
- powers of analysis and independent thought
- relevant curriculum enrichment and other activities
- relevant work experience, such as work placements, voluntary work and so on
- proposed career plan
- where relevant, their suitability for training for a particular profession
- any factors, such as personal circumstances, that may have affected, or might affect their performance

- information about any special needs and other requirements. Do not give information about a student's health or disability without their agreement
- any information you might want to add about performance in individual units of qualifications, for example, GCE AS and A levels, that the student has not already given in the personal statement
- for UK students, how the school or college is involved in widening participation or Gifted and Talented initiatives, Partnerships for Progression and so on. If students have mentioned any of these activities in their personal statement, comments on their involvement may also be helpful
- any commitments (for example, January AS assessments) that might prevent the student from going to an interview on a particular day.

**Did you know?** Over-predicting grades can be counter-productive because many universities and colleges are likely to monitor the accuracy of schools' and colleges' predictions.

Please remember that even though universities and colleges cannot see what other choices the student has made, they all see the personal statement and reference.

You should write the reference in a way that supports the student's intentions for progressing to HE, as directly as possible. This may be difficult if the student has chosen a wide range of different courses, and students may need to be advised about this.

If you are writing a reference for an international student, please write in English. If the first language of the student is not English, please comment on their ability to write and speak in English, and say which if any of their studies were taught in English. Please explain any break in their education, and how they compare with others in their class.

If the student is on an Access or Foundation course or other one-year course, you may not have known them long enough to write a full reference. In this case, please say so and explain that you are providing a temporary reference with details of how the course is assessed and the number of credits that are awarded. Include confirmation that you will send a more detailed reference direct to all chosen universities and colleges next spring.

If the student is still studying, you should give a predicted overall achievement (in the predicted grades box). If you wish, you can also comment on the student's performance in any units they have taken so far. You should also explain if the student has yet to decide on their final qualification (for example, maths or applied maths, A level or AS).

If the application, including the reference, has any relevant information missing (in other words, information that might influence the decision of a university or college whether – and on what terms – to offer a place to the student), or has any false or misleading information, UCAS and the universities and colleges have the right to cancel the application and withdraw any offers without returning the application fee.

When writing a reference, remember that, under the Data Protection Act, students can obtain a copy of the reference and any other personal information that we have about them.

**Did you know?** UCAS regularly runs reference and personal statement workshops for advisers. These can be run at your school or college at a date and time convenient to you, and are suitable for both new and more experienced advisers. See page 23 for information on how to book your session.

## 2.4 Using the staff area of the online application system

We have designed the staff area of Apply to allow authorised users to:

- check the progress their students are making with filling in their applications
- add and approve references
- approve applications
- send them to us
- deal with payments if so wished
- track progress of applications after sending to UCAS.

The following notes will be useful to users of the staff area of Apply.

- Use the navigation on the left of the screen to move between sections and to return to the summary 'Welcome' screen.
- Use the UCAS icon at the top left of each screen to return to the main menu screen.
- Within the reference section, always use the save button before moving to another screen.
- Always log out when you have finished using Apply.

### REGISTRATION

At least one member of staff should be appointed to act as Apply co-ordinator for your centre, who will have responsibility for setting up the staff area, including adding members of staff and allocating to each user the appropriate level of access. If desired, centres can decide to choose a co-ordinator whose role will be restricted to the setting up and maintenance of the staff area, with no involvement in viewing or approving applications or in providing or approving references.

### SUBSEQUENT YEARS

The initial setting up described here is necessary only the first time your centre registers on Apply. For subsequent application cycles, you are able to carry forward the list of groups and staff members to the next year. The co-ordinator will then only need to add permissions (see below) and to update any records where there are changes from the previous year.

### INITIAL SET-UP

There are four initial steps in setting up the staff area.

- We will send you a username and password for your centre. Log on and check the centre's contact details (such as name, address, phone number and so on), which are entered by us from details on our main database. You can update this information if necessary for use in Apply, but this will **not** automatically update our main database – you must still tell us of any changes in the usual way.

You can specify any dates when all students will be unavailable for interview. Any such dates will be pre-filled on all applications, but can be changed later (by the referee) for individual students as required.

- Set up named groups, if necessary, to help staff members manage applications from groups of students. This is particularly helpful if there are large numbers of students.
- Choose a payment method. Select one from the following three options:
  - individually by students using debit or credit card **or**
  - UCAS to bill the centre for total due **or**
  - a combination of both the above methods.

You can still accept cheques from individual students, but if they are made payable to UCAS, your centre must send them to us only as part of an invoice payment. Individual students must not send cheques direct to us.

- Create a buzzword. All students will need to use this when they first register on Apply.

Schools and colleges normally complete the above registration process in June. This allows you to tell your students the buzzword before they leave for the summer break.

### SETTING UP STAFF USERS

The next step is for the co-ordinator to add members of staff to the system. You must set up all referees and other staff involved in checking and approving applications, allocating appropriate levels of access.

After the initial setting-up, we recommend that all centres appoint more than one co-ordinator, in case the original co-ordinator is unavailable for any reason. Only a co-ordinator can change the information originally input during registration or add, amend or delete staff records.

There are five types of user:

- co-ordinator – has access to all areas, but cannot be a named referee
- co-ordinator/referee – has access to all areas and can be a named referee
- user – can see all applications in their allocated group(s), but cannot be a named referee
- referee – can be a named referee, but has no access to the system. This user type is sometimes given to school heads (or equivalent), where local practice is for the head's name to appear on each reference, even if other members of staff actually write the references
- user/referee – can see all applications in their allocated group(s), and can be a named referee.

### PASSWORDS

The online system automatically generates a username (from their full name) and password (comprising random letters and numbers) for each member of staff. **The co-ordinator should take a print of this screen for each user, because after leaving this screen the password will not be displayed again.**

The first time each user logs on to the staff area, Apply will ask them to change the password to one of their own choosing. This allows them to choose a more memorable password.

If a member of staff forgets their password, the co-ordinator can give them a new one.

If a student forgets their password, they can access a 'lost log in details' function from the applicant area of Apply. If they still cannot log in successfully, the staff area of Apply allows you to choose a new password for them so they can re-access the system.

### PERMISSIONS

The co-ordinator then allocates the appropriate permissions to each user to enable them to process the relevant applications. Each user will receive one or more individual permissions from the following list:

- view application
- approve application
- view reference
- edit reference
- approve reference
- send to UCAS
- delete application.

Users can have permissions in more than one student group, if appropriate, and can have different permissions in different groups. If necessary, the system allows you to give a person the same permissions across all groups.

Note that many schools and colleges elect to set up a member of their secretarial or administrative staff to edit references (this enables them to add the reference to the application on behalf of the referee) and send approved applications to us. In such cases, permission to send applications to us might be withheld from all other members of staff.

Throughout this section of the booklet, each user's ability to carry out the different tasks will depend on the level of their permissions.

### TRACKING AND CHECKING APPLICATIONS (INCLUDING ERRORS AND DELETIONS)

In the staff area of Apply, you can check to see what progress your students are making with their applications. You can view only the records of students in the groups for which you have permission.

For each application, the student completes five or six sections:

- personal details
- additional information (UK applicants only)
- choices
- education
- employment
- statement.

For each student, Apply shows the current status of each section:

- not started
- in progress
- completed.

Similarly, you can check the overall status of each application (all five or six sections combined), and separately for each reference:

- not started
- in progress
- completed
- approved
- sent.

If an application shows all the sections as complete, but the application status itself is in progress, it is possible that the student has forgotten to send it to you for checking.

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

After the students have registered, you can view individual applications at any stage: you do not have to wait until they are complete.

When each student marks their application as complete and sends it to the referee, it is ready for checking and for the reference to be added (see below). The system will prevent the student from making further changes meanwhile. The main areas to be checked are the qualifications and the choices. The qualifications section has a tick box you can use, if you wish, to confirm that you have checked that section. If, during checking, you find there are errors to be put right, you can unlock the record and return the application to the student. When you are satisfied that everything is correct, you can mark the completed application as approved.

**Please note** that the definitions for Residential Category changed in 2010. We have had some feedback from universities and colleges that applicants are using the category *Settled in the UK* when they should be using *UK Citizen or EU National*. Please can you check your centre's applications to see that the correct category has been chosen before approving them for sending to us. If any applications are sent with the wrong category, the applicant will need to contact our Customer Service Unit to correct it.

As applications and references are completed, approved and sent to us, you can check the overall position for your centre. To help you monitor progress, the welcome screen shows the status of applications for which you have control.

If a student decides to withdraw their application before you send it to us, you can delete the record from Apply. If you need it reinstated, call the dedicated support team (see page 24) who will be able to arrange this for you.

### REFERENCES

For advice on what to include in references, see page 11. There is also online help available to advise referees on the best approach.

Although referees can write a reference in advance if they wish, they should first read what the student has written on the application. For this reason, it is important to encourage students to complete their applications early, and not leave it to the last minute.

**Did you know?** It is not helpful for references to include lengthy descriptions of the school or college. A single sentence or two to put the school in context is enough.

For each student, you should choose the name of their referee from the list. It is this name that will appear on the reference, even if the local practice is for another member of staff to write the actual reference.

Referees should create each reference in a word-processed document outside Apply, especially if it is local practice to keep an electronic copy of all references provided. Text can then be cut and pasted into Apply. We recommend that referees do not type text directly into the space provided in the reference section of Apply. But if they do, it is important that they remember to save it regularly. Otherwise any interruption to the internet connection would result in all unsaved text being lost.

If necessary, incomplete references can be saved on Apply and finished later. Once finished, they can be marked as complete, which means they are ready for the final check by an approver.

**IMPORTANT:** Whatever method you use, always remember to save the reference before leaving the reference screen in Apply.

Subject to local procedures, it is often a different member of staff (not the referee) who approves the reference.

You might prefer to print the reference for checking, instead of checking it online (you will have to print the whole application – you cannot print just the reference). Many people find it easier to read through large blocks of text on a paper copy, rather than trying to do so on a computer screen.

If you have the necessary authority, you can amend a reference after it is marked as complete (indeed, you can still change it after it has been approved – provided, of course, it has not yet been sent to us).

#### **PAYMENT**

Fees for 2012 are as follows: £11 for a student who uses just one of the five choices allowed, or £22 for students making two or more choices.

There are three possible payment methods available to your centre. Your co-ordinator will choose one method when registering for Apply, as detailed on page 13. If you choose a combination of methods, Apply will identify which students have paid by card within the 'sent details' section. The initial choice of payment method, made at the time of registration, is not fixed. If necessary, you can change the payment method for your centre.

#### **SENDING APPLICATIONS TO UCAS**

Only after you have approved both the application and the associated reference, is it ready for sending to us. With Apply, you cannot send an application to us before it is ready. Before you can send it, the following steps must be taken on each application.

- The student marks it as complete and sends it to the referee.
- A member of staff with appropriate permissions checks and approves it.
- A member of staff with appropriate permissions adds a reference.
- A member of staff with appropriate permissions checks and approves the reference.
- A member of staff with appropriate permissions sends it to us. They will need to select each application to send, and then they will be asked to reconfirm their choice of application(s) before finally completing the process.

Please remember the various deadlines for applications to reach us – refer to page 10. We recommend that you send applications to us as and when they are ready: do not wait until all your students' applications are approved.

#### **SUMMARIES AND STATISTICS**

For those groups where you have permissions, you can view a list of applications showing which ones have been sent to us, and what payment method applies to each student. This allows you to follow up any outstanding payments. The list will show the fee per student, payment method, and whether the application has been sent to UCAS, and if so, the date sent.

Against each student on the list, there is an information button shown as 'i'. This provides details of who did what to the application at various stages of the process. The information shown includes the applicant's Personal ID.

## 3.1 What happens at UCAS when we receive the application?

Generally speaking, there are no delays when we receive online applications. Initial processing is normally completed within one working day and the relevant details are dispatched to universities and colleges.

The universities and colleges are able to view the whole application online, but cannot see where else applicants have applied. The universities and colleges then begin their decision-making process – this differs between and even within institutions and we can give no general guidelines unfortunately, other than to say that some applicants will receive acknowledgements of their application and others will not. Applicants will hear from their choices at different times: your students may be contacted within a very short period of time or it may be some months before they hear anything.

Although the built-in checks in Apply help to ensure most errors are dealt with before you send the application to us, there might be rare circumstances when we need to query something with the applicant. If this happens, there might be a delay in our sending the application to the applicant's chosen universities and colleges.

After we have processed the application, we will send the applicant a Welcome letter, giving them their personal ID, their personal details and a list in a randomly generated order of the courses that they have applied to. They should check this information immediately and let us know at once if it is not correct.

With the Welcome letter, we send a copy of our booklet *Your UCAS Welcome Guide* (formerly known as the Applicant Welcome Guide), which explains:

- what happens next in the application process
- how the applicant will receive notice of the universities' and colleges' decisions
- how to reply to any offers received
- how to tell us about changes to the applicant's details after the application has been submitted.

Applicants follow their progress and accept or decline their offers by using Track. When each university or college makes a decision about their application, we show the details on Track and alert the applicant by email.

## 3.2 Detecting fraud

Please make sure your students are aware of the following information.

- We have a Verification unit working to identify fraudulent applications. Any attempt by applicants to provide false or misleading information could lead to the cancellation of their application. We reserve the right to cancel an application without refunding the application fee.
- If we or a university or college believe that an applicant or referee has left out any relevant information or given false or misleading information, we may take any necessary steps to check whether the information given is complete and accurate. If you have any reason to

believe that information we have about the applicant is not complete or accurate, you must tell us.

- 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.
- Along with other verification checks for identity and academic qualifications, we carry out checks to verify that personal statements are the applicants' 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.

## 3.3 Death of an applicant

If an applicant dies after you have sent their application to us, please tell us as soon as possible. We will immediately cancel the application and tell the universities and colleges concerned. By taking this action promptly, we aim to bar any further correspondence about the application, thereby minimising the risk of causing further distress to the applicant's family.

## 3.4 How to add more information

If you or a referee or an applicant want to add more information after submitting an application to us, you should write direct to the chosen universities and colleges. Do not send the additional information to us. Remember that under the Data Protection Act, applicants can ask to see a copy of all information held about them, including their reference.

## 3.5 Remember to change postal address

Particularly for staff advising students at boarding school, please remind all students to change their postal address to their home address (or an alternative address where they can receive mail) at the end of the summer term. They can do this on Track.

## 3.6 Step 3 – Offers

When the universities and colleges have received and considered your students' applications, they will start sending out their responses to us, and we forward them to applicants. As advisers, you need to ensure you understand what your applicants need to do next. There are many ways you can keep up to date with their progress apart from your direct communication with them, as detailed in the next section.

## 3.7 Adviser Track

In September 2011, all establishments on our mailing list will be invited to subscribe to Adviser Track for their students applying for 2012/13 entry. Orders need to be received by UCAS by 31 October 2011 for access to Adviser Track and the monthly reports as outlined below. Details of price etc will be given on our website nearer the time.

Once subscribed, Adviser Track will let you see how your students are progressing. You can view the decisions made by their chosen universities and college. If they receive offers, any conditions will be displayed, as well as your students' replies to these offers. Adviser Track lets you search for applicants by status – for example those who need to reply to their offers – or those eligible for Extra or Clearing. You will also be provided with a similarity alert should any of your students' personal statements appear to be copied from another source.

In addition, subscribers can access the Applicant Status Reports, which allow you to track your students' progress monthly throughout the application cycle. These reports can be downloaded via a link in the Staff Apply section of the UCAS website and stored for your records.

Adviser Track now lets you take part in online discussion forums to share good practice and discuss issues with advisers at other schools and colleges and view notes on discussions of relevant groups, for instance the two UCAS Service Advisory Groups, serving respectively the maintained and independent sectors.

### TUTORS AT THE HEART OF THE PROCESS

*“When I introduced our tutor team to Adviser Track they were delighted,”* said Steve McArdle, Head of Sixth form at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School in Durham.

He said: *“Since we signed up, staff have been much more engaged in discussing plans with students. They’re learning a lot about how HE admissions staff communicate with students. This has put tutors back at the heart of this process and really supports students’ decision making.”*

Mr McArdle who looks after around 460 sixth formers, is Chair of the UCAS Service Advisory Group for maintained schools.

He helped UCAS test Adviser Track. He said: *“I had a call from a local head of sixth. He expressed real frustration that progress reports on his students were monthly and not live. I talked him through Adviser Track and he is now a happy man.”*

## 3.8 Deadlines for replying to offers

The date by which an applicant must reply to their offers depends on when we receive the last decision from the universities and colleges chosen by the applicant. Each applicant's deadline is worked out using the following table. Your students need to understand that their dates could well be different from their friends' deadlines – there is no single date for all applicants.

	LAST DECISION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE	APPLICANTS MUST REPLY BY 4 PM BRITISH SUMMER TIME ON
<b>All applicants regardless of address</b>	31 March 2012	9 May 2012
	10 May 2012	7 June 2012
	8 June 2012	28 June 2012
	19 July 2012	26 July 2012

**Did you know?** Applicants don't have to accept an insurance choice - if they're not sure about any of their other choices once they have accepted a firm choice, it might be better to wait and see what's available in Clearing without having to negotiate their way out of an offer that they don't want.

## 3.9 UCAS Tariff points

Applicants may receive an offer of a place that is conditional on their achieving a certain number of UCAS Tariff points. For up-to-date information about the UCAS Tariff, go to [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

Make sure your students understand that they cannot 'double count' exams in the same subject. Points for AS level qualifications or SQA Highers cannot be included if an applicant has been assessed in the same subject at A level or Advanced Higher.

Here are examples of how two applicants would add up their Tariff points. Only the points shown in **bold** can be included in the total.

### EXAMPLE A

SUBJECT	LEVEL	GRADE	TARIFF POINTS
History	GCE AS	C	<b>40</b>
English Language	GCE AS	B	50
French	GCE AS	B	50
Health & Social Care	GCE A	C	<b>80</b>
English Language	GCE A	B	<b>100</b>
French	GCE A	C	<b>80</b>
<b>Total Tariff points</b>			<b>300</b>

### EXAMPLE B

SUBJECT	LEVEL	GRADE	TARIFF POINTS
English	Higher	C	<b>50</b>
Chemistry	Higher	B	<b>65</b>
Physics	Higher	B	65
Maths	Higher	A	80
French	Higher	C	<b>50</b>
Physics	Advanced Higher	C	<b>90</b>
Maths	Advanced Higher	B	<b>110</b>
<b>Total Tariff points</b>			<b>365</b>

In July 2010, UCAS announced plans to review the Tariff. This review will take between 18 months and two years. You can read more about the review at [www.ucas.com/qireview](http://www.ucas.com/qireview).

## 3.10 Step 4 - Results

### EXAM RESULTS AND CONFIRMATION

When universities and colleges receive applicants' exam results, they decide whether or not to confirm conditional offers. If a university or college confirms a 'firmly accepted' offer, the applicant is committed to taking up that place. The insurance choice, if any, becomes redundant.

If a university or college does not confirm a 'firmly accepted' offer, the insurance choice is uprated to firm acceptance. If the applicant meets all the conditions of the uprated offer, they are committed to take up the place.

It is therefore imperative that when applicants make an insurance acceptance they are prepared to take up the place. If they end up committed to their insurance place and do not want it, they will have to withdraw altogether or negotiate with the university or college to be released into Clearing. The institution is under no obligation to agree.

Schools and colleges will be sent a sample Confirmation letter (AS12) in their April mailing from UCAS, along with our Confirmation and Clearing for Advisers leaflet.

Please note that if an applicant has achieved better than expected results they will have a short time to research alternative courses through Adjustment.

### DELAYS

Universities will wait until 31 August to receive exam results. If the results are not forthcoming until after that date, they are not obliged to hold the place open. If you know of any results likely to be subject to delay it is important the the university is notified in good time.

### RE-MARKS AND APPEALS

Applicants who use the re-mark and appeal services have no guarantee that their offers will remain open. It is therefore imperative that when a Priority Service 2 enquiry is lodged with the awarding body, the universities are notified of a possible change of grade. Although universities and colleges are under no obligation to agree to wait for the re-mark or appeal, applicants are advised to ask them if they are able to hold the offer open.

### ADJUSTMENT

If an applicant has both met and exceeded the conditions of their firmly accepted offer, they have up to five days from the time their place was confirmed (or A level results day, whichever is the later) to research places which correspond better to their performance. Applicants have to nominate themselves for this system, and their eligibility will be confirmed by the institution they apply to adjust to.

This process is known as Adjustment. It is available for two weeks only and was introduced for the first time in 2009. Participation is entirely the choice and responsibility of the applicant.

#### The system works as follows:

1. The applicant holds a firmly accepted conditional offer.
2. On results day, the applicant meets and exceeds the terms of their offer and the offer is confirmed.
3. They decide to research alternative courses and register this intention on Track.

4. They have up to five days (120 hours) in which to research alternative courses while holding their confirmed offer.
5. They speak to universities and colleges to explore what places are available and whether their application may be of interest.
6. The university they have approached checks their eligibility for the scheme and may offer them an unconditional place which the applicant may accept, or the applicant decides to stay with their original offer.

In its first two years of operation, Adjustment was relevant to a relatively small number of applicants. Opportunities to adjust will always be limited but for a small number of applicants it will allow them to find a more appropriate course without having to give up their confirmed place while they do their research. It is possible to adjust to a deferred place.

Advisers can see when applicants register for Adjustment in Adviser Track.

#### Points for applicants to consider:

- Adjustment is entirely optional, and not everyone will want to try to find an alternative place. Nothing really beats the careful research they did to find the right courses for them before they made their application.
- There is no guarantee there will be any vacancies on the course they decide they want to be considered for, and it is unlikely that the most competitive courses will have any places available. If other applicants decide to adjust their places, the vacancy situation may change on a daily basis. Some applicants may be better advised to consider applying again in the following year when many more vacancies will be available.
- Before deciding to use Adjustment, applicants must also consider non-academic arrangements such as accommodation and student finance. These may be difficult to secure or there may be delays if changes are made at short notice.
- If they register to use Adjustment, the university or college will check that their results were higher than those they needed to meet the conditions of their firm choice. Please make sure the applicant understands exactly what this means.

#### EXAMPLES OF MEETING AND EXCEEDING AN OFFER. APPLICANT IS ELIGIBLE TO USE ADJUSTMENT:

OFFER	ACTUAL GRADES
A level AAB	A level AAA
A level CCD (C in chemistry)	A level ACD (A in chemistry)
A level ABB (B in history)	A level ABB (A in history)
SQA Higher BCC	SQA Higher ABC
SQA Higher BBC (C in chemistry)	SQA Higher ABC (B in chemistry)
SQA Adv Higher D in Italian	SQA Adv Higher B in Italian
International Baccalaureate total 30 points including 5 in Mathematics and 5 in chemistry	International Baccalaureate total 30 points including 6 in Mathematics and 5 in chemistry
Irish Leaving Certificate (Higher level) grade B in mathematics and grades BCC	Irish Leaving Certificate (Higher level) grade B in mathematics and grades ABC

### EXAMPLES OF NOT MEETING AND EXCEEDING AN OFFER. APPLICANT IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO USE ADJUSTMENT:

OFFER	ACTUAL GRADES
A level CCD (C in chemistry)	A level BCD (D in chemistry)
A level BBC	A level BBCC
SQA Higher CCC	SQA Higher BCD
240 Tariff points overall including C in French	280 Tariff points overall including D in French
BTEC National Diploma MMM	BTEC National Diploma MMP
International Baccalaureate total 30 points including 5 in mathematics and 5 in chemistry	International Baccalaureate total 32 points including 4 in mathematics and 5 in chemistry

If an applicant does not receive confirmation of their offer(s), they go into Clearing. See below for information about Clearing.

#### CHANGED OFFERS

A university or college may offer a place on an alternative basis to the applicant's original choice, such as:

- a different course
- a deferred entry (2013 instead of 2012)
- a different point of entry (a 'year zero' foundation year instead of year 1 of a degree course).

If this happens, the applicant must let us know within five days whether they decline or accept it. We will write to the applicant explaining their options.

The UCAS June mailing to schools will contain a copy of the Advisory letter sent to all applicants.

**Did you know?** We don't update Track at midnight on A level results day – only Clearing vacancies are published at midnight. Your students need to wait until the morning to see if they're accepted.

## 3.11 Step 5 - Next steps

### CLEARING

If your students don't get the exam grades they hoped for and their places are not confirmed, there is a chance that they could find another course through Clearing.

The Clearing process runs from mid-July and helps students who have not got the right grades (or who have applied late) to find courses where there are still places available. [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) lists courses available from Scottish results day for vacancies in Scotland, and from A level results day for vacancies in the rest of the UK.

Clearing is not the 'mad scramble' that is sometimes described in the media. If your students' results are reasonable, and they are flexible about where and what they want to study, they have a fair chance of finding a place on a suitable course.

Your students need to be available in person to deal with admissions tutors and make decisions. They should plan their summer holiday so they are at home when their exam results come out.

In Clearing, applicants can apply for any course that has places left. They don't have to keep to the same subjects that they first applied for.

If applicants only made one choice on their original application and paid the reduced fee of £11, they can go through Clearing if they pay us an extra £11. (Information about fees can be found on page 2.)

Your students will be able to go through Clearing if one of the following situations applies:

- they hold no offers and they have not withdrawn from the UCAS scheme
- their offers have not been confirmed because they have not met the conditions
- they declined or have not replied to a confirmed offer of a changed course and, as a result, hold no offers.

We use Track to tell eligible applicants when and how they can use Clearing and to give them their Clearing Numbers.

Lists of courses with places in Clearing (including their entry requirements where possible) will be published until late September at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and in some national newspapers.

Your students should check the lists for suitable courses and then contact universities and college to confirm their interest in a place. They should do this themselves as admissions tutors will want to speak to them personally, not through their parents or teachers.

After speaking to admissions tutors and being offered a place, applicants in Clearing must enter details of the institution and course into Track, and the university or college will then confirm the place provided it is still available. If the student is unsuccessful, they may repeat the process.

## 3.12 Step 6 - Starting university or college

After seeing your students through the application process you will now be waving them off to start their adventures in higher education. This might be a good time to point them in the direction of the budget calculator and sources of support listed on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). Your attention will no doubt soon be grabbed by the next group, eagerly looking to you as the voice of experience as they take their turn in planning and plotting their futures. Good luck to them and to you!

## 4.1 How to contact us

### BY PHONE

We operate a dedicated priority telephone line for schools, colleges and careers offices. If you call us on 0845 123 8001 (+44 845 123 8001 from outside the UK) between 08.30 and 17.30 (UK time) on Monday to Friday, we will be able to deal with your enquiries quickly and efficiently. Your call will bypass our queuing system and you will be put straight through to one of our Customer Service Advisers. Calls to 0845 123 8001 are charged at the local rather than the national rate.

**Your priority number 0845 123 8001 (+44 845 123 8001 from outside the UK) must only be used by your staff. You must not give it to applicants or parents.**

### BY LETTER

Our address is:

Customer Service Unit  
UCAS, Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ

### BY FAX

You can send a fax to us on 01242 544961 from within the UK or on +44 1242 544961 from outside the UK.

### INTERNATIONAL ADVISERS

If you have feedback or questions specifically relating to the international application process, you can also contact the International Team at [international\\_enquiries@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:international_enquiries@ucas.ac.uk).

## 4.2 Our feedback procedure

### CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

Whilst we aim to deliver excellent standards of service to all our customers, we also realise that at times you may be dissatisfied when something for which we are responsible has not gone well. We welcome the opportunity to be able to address this and to investigate the matter for you.

Whenever we receive a complaint, we do our best to sort out the problem as quickly and helpfully as we can, and to improve our service by learning from the episode.

If you wish to complain about our service, you can call our dedicated School and College Team on 0845 123 8001, send an email to [complaints@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@ucas.ac.uk) or write to UCAS, Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham GL52 3LZ. Please give us the Personal ID of the applicant involved if you know it.

**The email address above is for complaints only.** If you have a query about an application, please call the number above.

If you phone, the Customer Service Adviser who answers your call may be able to deal with your complaint. If you are not satisfied with their response, you can ask to speak to or write to a supervisor or manager. The Customer Service Adviser will be able to give you the correct name and address or telephone number.

If you are not satisfied with the manager's response, you can write direct to the Chief Executive (Complaints), UCAS, Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham GL52 3LZ.

The Chief Executive will investigate your complaint and then advise you of the outcome. However, if you are still not satisfied, and in exceptional cases, you can ask for your case to be referred to the Complaint Review Panel. The Review Panel consists of Board Members under an independent chair and will provide a final independent assessment in cases where people feel that they have not been dealt with fairly. If you want to take this action, please phone the Planning and Governance Officer on +44 (0)1242 544992 for advice on how to present your case and where to send it.

We aim to reply to all letters of complaint, including complaints we receive by email, within 14 calendar days. However, if we cannot give a full reply within this time, we will write to you to tell you when you can expect a full reply.

### SERVICE FEEDBACK

If you have received excellent service and would like to acknowledge this we would like to hear from you.

We will make sure that your appreciation is passed on to the person you have mentioned. Your positive feedback will help us highlight these actions within UCAS and turn exceptional service into business as usual, giving all of our customers the service they deserve.

Please email your comments to [employeeexcellenceawards@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:employeeexcellenceawards@ucas.ac.uk) including the following information.

- Name of UCAS employee
- Brief description of the service received
- Your name
- Your email address
- Personal ID number (if applicable)
- University code (if applicable)
- School code (if applicable)

Thank you for taking the time to let us know.

## 5.1 UCAS training services

As an organisation we take very seriously our role as a provider of quality staff training and development.

### WIDER PICTURE PROGRAMME

This is where we come to you, irrespective of your location – ie, Inverness, the Isle of Wight, London, South Wales or mainland Europe – we can deliver high quality on-site training at your centre. In addition, we have considerable experience of delivering keynote talks and running workshops at conferences and INSET days.

*“As always, an excellent, informative and well-judged presentation that met our needs completely. Feedback & student satisfaction surveys revealed high scores & staff found the session very useful. Many thanks.”*  
said Sadie Gray, from The Voyager School, Peterborough

## Tell us what you think...

We aim to provide a quality customer service and welcome your help with this.

**We would like your comments on the Adviser Guide.** In order to make sure this Adviser Guide contains the information you need and want in order to help your students through the UCAS admissions process, we would like to know your answers to any or all of the following questions...

1) Does this guide give all the information you need? Are there any parts you would like expanded? Are there parts you never consult?

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2) Do you think there is any other information that should be included in this guide?

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3) Would you prefer to view the information in this guide online? What would be the benefits or disadvantages to you of online publication?

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4) Are the examples of Tariff points helpful? Are there any other examples you would like to see? If yes, in what areas?

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5) Are the FAQs (page 24) helpful? Are there any additional such questions and answers we should include?

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6) Have you any other comments about any aspect of the UCAS service?

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**Many thanks for taking the time to help us make this guide better for advisers in the future.** Please post your responses (either on the form above or in any other format) to: Publishing Team, UCAS, Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, Glos GL53, 3LZ.

Alternatively you can email [feedback@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:feedback@ucas.ac.uk). Please note this email address is for feedback only; you will not receive a response.

# Parents' HE Evenings

Our speakers are chosen not just for their expert knowledge of UCAS, but also for their ability to empathise with the needs of parents and carers.

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL THE DETAILS BELOW IN BALLPOINT PEN

## Address for correspondence/invoice

Title Forename Surname

Designation

Institution/organisation

Address

Postcode

Telephone Fax

Email Purchase order no

## EVENT VENUE ADDRESS

(If different to correspondence/invoice)

## I WISH TO BOOK A UCAS SPEAKER

Date Time

## TOPICS TO BE COVERED

(Please tick relevant boxes. If choosing 'Other', please supply detail of what is required.)

- Applying through UCAS
- Why go to university? (trends in Graduate Employment etc)
- What admissions tutors look for
- Student life
- Issues for parents
- Understanding HE league tables
- The UCAS Tariff
- Using the UCAS website (to research courses)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Session to be aimed at:  Parents only  Students and parents

I agree that UCAS may invoice my institution for this service at the following rate:

Speaker fee - £200.000

(The above fee includes the free supply of bulk copies of UCAS publications such as The Parent's Guide to Higher Education for distribution to parents and students. Travel will be charged at 40p a mile or standard rail fare.)

I also agree that members of UCAS staff may contact me to discuss the arrangements and, if appropriate, obtain further information about my institution and my requirements. (It would be helpful if schools and colleges could send a copy of their Prospectus and any other relevant information when making a booking.)

Signed Date

### Eight reasons to sign up for a UCAS Wider Picture session

- Convenience – no need to travel, we will come to you (irrespective of your location in the UK or overseas)
- Flexibility – no need to collapse the timetable, we can deliver sessions at the end of the school/college day
- Approachable – our presenters are chosen for their ability to engage with and enthuse audiences
- Authoritative – as the admissions experts, you can be sure we know our stuff
- Quality – better informed advisers means better quality advice for students
- Focused – you choose the topics, we research it and deliver a session for your target audience (staff, students or parents)
- Marketing – inviting UCAS to speak at a parents' evening can help promote the notion of higher education within your community
- Good value – no upper limit on number of staff, students or parents who can attend a session

#### THE KNOWLEDGE @ UCAS

The 2011/12 application cycle will see hundreds of teachers and advisers making their debuts as sources of information about UCAS. If you know somebody like this – indeed, it could be yourself – then the best remedy is to come along to one of our popular The Knowledge @ UCAS training sessions.

Run at UCAS headquarters and providing an unrivalled opportunity to see behind the scenes of our busy operation, it is not surprising that hundreds of teachers and advisers have already benefited from attendance.

*"The day was very helpful, full of relevant information and conducted at a good pace,"* said Samantha Smith from Exeter College.

She added: *"All the speakers were very knowledgeable, patient and professional."*

## THE KNOWLEDGE @ UCAS

### Training for inexperienced advisers

16 May 2011	22 November 2011
15 June 2011	8 December 2011
5 July 2011	25 January 2012
7 September 2011	21 February 2012
14 September 2011	21 March 2012
20 September 2011	25 April 2012
5 October 2011	16 May 2012
18 October 2011	19 June 2012
8 November 2011	3 July 2012

For further information or to book a place, contact  
**professionaldevelopment@ucas.ac.uk**

#### APPLY TRAINING

UCAS Apply training is delivered by trainers at approved centres throughout the year, or can be delivered at your school or college as a bespoke session. Learning through hands-on experience has proved very popular and effective, but if you prefer to have a demonstration only, this is also possible.

*"I learned a great deal... excellent."*

*"Excellent opportunity for 'hands-on' experience."*

*"Informative, helpful and easy to understand."*

*"Perfectly pitched and delivered."*

Comments made by delegates attending the UCAS centre endorsed Apply training at King James' School in Harrogate.

#### WISE ADVISER

Fine tune your expertise by attending one of our new training sessions for experienced advisers. Featuring exclusive behind-the-scenes access to our headquarters, we'll inform you of future changes, show you how to make the most of UCAS data, discuss key topics such as the craft of reference writing, whilst letting you see for yourself how we operate.

*"Very interesting, excellent speakers. Well worth attending."* said Kerry Reynolds of Royal National College for the Blind.

## WISE ADVISER

### Training for experienced advisers

25 May 2011	31 January 2012
21 June 2011	28 February 2012
12 July 2011	27 March 2012
27 September 2011	30 April 2012
13 October 2011	23 May 2012
15 November 2011	27 June 2012
12 December 2011	10 July 2012

For further information or to book a place, contact  
**professionaldevelopment@ucas.ac.uk**

#### UKPASS

Don't overlook opportunities to develop your own career and continue your own professional development. Have you considered your options for further study? It's not just your students who can benefit from embracing the next educational challenge. Postgraduate study can take you further in your skills, knowledge and career.



**UKPASS** UCAS Postgraduate Application Service

## Thinking of postgraduate study?

**Start here** ▶ Search online for postgraduate opportunities  
[www.ukpass.ac.uk](http://www.ukpass.ac.uk)

brought to you by  
**UCAS**

## 5.2 Dedicated support team

Phone us on: **0845 123 8001**

We receive a range of calls from advisers about problems that their students are experiencing – from completing their initial applications before they can ‘send to referee’ all the way through to making their replies once they have received their offers. See below for a few of the most frequently asked questions – with answers!

### FAQS FOR ADVISERS

*“One of our students has registered as an individual, what can we do?”*

Ask your student to look at the options section of their application and find the option to link their application to a school. When they have clicked on the option, they can then enter the centre’s buzzword. You will be able to agree to link their application to your centre in the staff section of Apply using the ‘Link applications to centre’ option.

*“I am Apply co-ordinator and have transferred staff members over from last year. Can they use the same username and password this year, and can I view their login details?”*

No; each member of staff is given new login details every year. It is important to print out the log in details as soon as you have transferred staff. After this doing this you will be able to view staff usernames and reset their passwords.

*“Why are some of my students missing when I look at the ‘references’ and ‘applications’ sections?”*

It could be that some students have not selected the correct Group when registering and the Tutor concerned does not have the relevant level of permissions to view the group the student is in (often the Default Group);

Or, it may be that some students have registered as individuals rather than through the school (see above);

Or, you may not be selecting ‘all sections’ under ‘references’ or ‘applications’.

*“My student has completed her application and sent it to the centre, but has made a mistake. What can we do?”*

If the application has not yet been sent to UCAS you can return the application to the student for the mistake to be corrected – simply select the student concerned and select ‘return application’ from the ‘Actions’ drop-down menu. If the application has already gone to UCAS then it will not be possible to return the application. The student should contact our CSU (Customer Service Unit) on 0871 468 0 468 for further advice.

*“Where can I find details about the status of my students’ applications on Apply?”*

Once the application has been sent to UCAS most details of their progress can be obtained through Adviser Track (see page 17). If your school/college has not subscribed to this service it can do so by e-mailing [customerdatabase@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:customerdatabase@ucas.ac.uk)

*“When will I be able to send an application to UCAS?”*

You will be able to send applications to UCAS from mid-September.

*“How many Coordinators should be set up on the staff area of apply?”*

We would recommend that the initial Coordinator should set up another staff member as Coordinator so that they are able to cover the role in event of the initial Coordinator’s absence.

*“I have been asked to write a reference for a former student; can I do this through the staff area of Apply?”*

If the applicant has registered as an individual, they can link their application to your centre to obtain a reference. Ask your student to look at the ‘Options’ section of their application and find the option to ask a registered school or college to write their reference only, and tell them your buzzword. When they have clicked on the option, they can then enter your centre’s buzzword. You will be able to agree to link their application to the centre to write their reference in the staff section of Apply under the ‘Link applications to centre’ option. The applicant will remain an individual applicant.

**The support team is your dedicated first point of contact. It is in place for the entire cycle to help you help your students through the UCAS system.**

## 5.3 International team

UCAS has a dedicated International Team that participates in a number of UK and worldwide conferences, events and exhibitions where they meet with applicants, advisers, parents and other stakeholders to advise about resources available for international audiences and the UCAS application process. They also work with key stakeholders such as the British Council and UKCISA in supporting international applicants in their journey to UK higher education.

You will find a number of resources on the Non-UK pages of the UCAS website for both applicants and advisers, including information in several languages and a list of upcoming international visits. The Non-UK pages may be found here: [www.ucas.com/international](http://www.ucas.com/international). During their international visits, the team, when appropriate, arranges visits to local schools as well as delivering training or presentations to advisers and applicants. Similarly, the team is happy to welcome UCAS advisers who are visiting the UK, through its series of training days offered at the UCAS offices and with the annual UCAS International Advisers Conference.

# UCAS spoken here

Our skilled presenters can make your staff fully fluent in managing UCAS applications and advising applicants.

## VISITS FROM UCAS

Our Wider Picture presenters travel throughout the UK to deliver training sessions for schools, colleges and Connexions services to staff, students and parents. No matter where the location we can bring the key issues to life!



## TRAINING FOR BEGINNERS

Induction sessions, or The Knowledge@UCAS as we like to call them, are one-day workshops for inexperienced and new advisers run throughout the year at our Cheltenham headquarters.

## WISE ADVISER

Our one-day refresher training event, designed for seasoned advisers – including an interactive session on the craft of reference writing – is held once a month at our Cheltenham headquarters.



## APPLY TRAINING

Our Apply training is delivered by trainers at approved centres throughout the year, or can be delivered at your centre as a bespoke session to meet the needs and requirements of your staff.

What our customers say:  
*“Thank you for a truly UCASTIC session”*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

### Professional Development Team

UCAS, Rosehill, New Barn Lane  
Cheltenham GL52 3LZ

t 01242 545712

e [professionaldevelopment@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:professionaldevelopment@ucas.ac.uk)

// [www.ucas.com/advisers/training/](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/training/)



# UCAS

2012



[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

UCAS is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK.

Choosing what and where to study are very important decisions. Every year we help over 600,000 applicants apply to university or college in the UK.

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