UCAS

PARENT, GUARDIAN AND CARER GUIDE 2026

Everything you need to support your child with their higher education choices

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ABOUT THE PARENT, GUARDIAN AND CARER GUIDE

As a parent, guardian, or someone with caring responsibilities, you're likely to be one of the most important and trusted sources of information and advice to your child. With that in mind, UCAS has produced this guide.

It's designed to give you the tools to guide and support a young person consider all their options, including starting a course or apprenticeship in 2026, through their decision-making, and the UCAS application process.

If you have any questions, find out how to get in touch at **ucas.com/contact-us**.

UCAS TERMS EXPLAINED

Throughout the application process, you'll come across a number of terms you may not be familiar with.

Go to **ucas.com/ucas-terms-explained** to find out what they mean.

PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING AND EXPLORING THEIR OPTIONS

Before your child starts their application, there's a lot to consider. Here's all the key information and the things they'll need to bear in mind.

KEY DATES AT A GLANCE

2025

- **29 April:** Courses starting in 2026 are available in the UCAS search tool.
- **13 May:** UCAS Undergraduate application live for registrations for 2026 entry courses. Your child can start their application but cannot submit it to UCAS until September.
- **10 July:** Conservatoire applications open for 2026 entry. From this date, applicants can register, pay, and send their applications.
- **2 September:** Completed UCAS Undergraduate applications can be paid for and sent to UCAS. Applications can't be sent until all sections are complete, the reference is added, and the application fee has been paid.
- **2 October (18:00 UK time):** Application deadline for conservatoire music applications. Applications for dance, drama, and musical theatre courses may have a different deadline – check conservatoires' websites for information.
- **15 October (18:00 UK time):** Deadline for applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and for most courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science. An application can still be sent after this date, but the universities and colleges concerned cannot guarantee they'll give it equal consideration.

TIP Encourage your child to leave contingency time before the UCAS deadline in case something goes wrong, for example, loss of internet access, card payment failure, or if the reference isn't added in time. If they're applying through their school or college, it will be a member of staff who sends their application to us, so make sure you know what their deadlines are.

2026

- **14 January (18:00 UK time):** Deadline for most undergraduate courses and most conservatoire undergraduate dance, drama, or musical theatre courses. An application can still be sent after this date, but the providers concerned cannot guarantee they'll give it equal consideration.
- **26 February:** Extra opens. If your child has used all five choices and is not holding an offer, they can add another choice using Extra.
- **30 June (18:00 UK time):** Last date for receipt of applications with choices. Applications received after this deadline are automatically entered into Clearing.
- **1 July:** Extra closes.
- **2 July:** Clearing opens, and vacancies are shown in the UCAS search tool.

Further dates are available at: **ucas.com/key-dates**

HOW TO PAY FOR UNI

One of the biggest concerns for students and their parents is the cost of university. Here's a breakdown of what you need to know about fees, finance, and repayment.

This information has been provided in association with the Student Loans Company (SLC). It mainly covers the system in England but contains some information for other domiciles.

Tuition fees

Your child will typically pay up to £9,535 per year in tuition fees as a UK student, though for many courses it's less.

Fees don't need to be paid upfront. Students can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan to cover all or part of their fees.

Because of the way the system works (see the 'Repayment' section), taking out a loan, such as a bank loan, yourself to cover the cost of fees and avoid your child getting into debt will almost always work out more expensive in the long run, so it's not advisable.

Living costs

They can also apply for a Maintenance Loan, to help towards living costs while at university, such as accommodation, food, and course materials.

The amount they can borrow depends on several factors, including where they will be living during term time and your household income. You'll need to give SLC permission to check your household income with HMRC so the student can apply for the maximum amount available.

For example, if they'll be living away from home (outside of London), a Maintenance Loan of up to £10,544 could be available per year depending on your household income.

If you're earning more than the threshold, the loan amount your child is eligible for will be lower, meaning they or you will need to make up any financial shortfall.

Extra support

Maintenance Grants are no longer available for new students, but there is extra support available in certain circumstances:

- Scholarships and bursaries – offered on the basis of academic ability, your income, or for other reasons (for example, if your child has a disability).
- Fee waivers – these reduce tuition fees, either on their own, or in a broader package of support with a bursary.
- Hardship funds – these can help if your child is struggling financially, either before or during uni.
- Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) – if your child has a disability, including a long-term health condition, mental health condition, or specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia they might be able to get funds to cover extra costs. Students can get up to £27,783 of support for 2025 to 2026. There are exceptions for students who need more money for travel costs. This will apply for both new and continuing students. How much they get depends on their individual needs, not your household income. DSA can be applied for alongside the main student finance application and don't usually have to be paid back unless your child leaves their course early.

Applying

There's no need for your child to wait to receive offers back from universities to apply for student finance – they should apply as soon as the application service opens.

> Student loans are only repayable once your child has finished or left their course and they're earning over a certain amount.

To make sure they receive their money on time, remind them to provide their supporting evidence as soon as possible!

Supporting your child's application

If your child is applying for student finance that depends on your household income, you'll need to give the Student Loans Company (SLC) your National Insurance number, which they will use to get your income details from HMRC.

To do this, you'll need to create an account at **www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login** if you live in England, or **www.studentfinancewales.co.uk** if you live in Wales. The SLC will use the information from HMRC to work out how much student finance your child can get. In some cases, they might need to contact you to ask for specific evidence of your household income – but don't send this unless you are asked to, as it could delay your child's application. Don't worry if this happens – it's just part of their checks to make sure your child gets the funding they're entitled to.

Repayment

Importantly, this is based on how much your child earns when they've finished or left their course, not how much they borrowed.

You can visit Gov.uk to find out about **repayment plans** and what the current **repayment thresholds** are.

> Once your child starts repaying their loan, it will be automatically collected through PAYE, so they won't be able to fall behind on their repayments.

While the loans do accrue interest, any outstanding debt still owed after 40 years is written off (Plan 5 students), meaning it's not always worth helping your child pay back their loan early. For Welsh and Scottish students this is 30 years, and 25 years for Northern Irish students.

Student loans won't appear on their credit file either.

The Student Loans Company's guidance – **www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan** – has more information about how they'll repay their student loan, how much they'll repay, and the interest involved.

Location matters

We've mainly covered the system in England, but if you live elsewhere in the UK, the fees, loans, repayment, and cost of living will be different.

If your child lives in:

- England they could pay up to £9,535 in tuition fees. Apply to Student Finance England at **www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance**
- Scotland and goes to a Scottish university, they won't pay tuition fees. Apply for Maintenance Loans via the Student Awards Agency Scotland at **www.saas.gov.uk**.
- Wales and goes to a Welsh uni, they can get a Tuition Fee Loan to cover the fees charged. Apply to Student Finance Wales at **www.studentfinancewales.co.uk**.
- Northern Ireland and studies in NI too, they can get a Tuition Fee Loan to cover the fees charged. Apply to Student Finance NI at **www.studentfinanceni.co.uk**.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FINANCE

If you're unsure if your child is eligible for home or international fees, discuss this with the university or college. International student fees vary, so make sure you check this carefully if you think that your child will be in this category. Most universities will take payment in lump sums throughout the year, but if you need to pay in instalments, check with them about payment plans. You can also visit the **UKCISA** website for free support.

Living costs

Living costs vary between cities – most universities will have a general budget calculator on their website so you can get a feel for this.

If your child needs a visa, there is a minimum monthly amount you must show you have in your bank account for 'maintenance' (on top of tuition fees) – find out more at **www.gov.uk/student-visa/money**. There is also a charge for:

- visa fees: **www.gov.uk/student-visa**
- the immigration health surcharge: **www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/how-much-pay**

Working

International students can work to support themselves while studying, but they need to make sure they adhere to the UKVI guidelines about maximum hours – information about this will be clearly provided with the student visa documentation.

Be aware that for some courses, such as medicine, students are unlikely to have time to regularly work part-time as well as study and attend placements.

Loans and sponsorship

Some countries offer an official education loan system – such as FAFSA in the USA, or sponsorship options, such as the Saudi Cultural Bureau. These can often be used overseas, including in UK universities. Certain funding options can only be used for selected universities or courses, so check with the organisation providing the sponsorship/loan before deciding on where to apply. There may also be conditions attached, such as returning to work in the country issuing the loan in a specific industry for a set period of time.

Other countries have private loans specifically for the purposes of education available through banks.

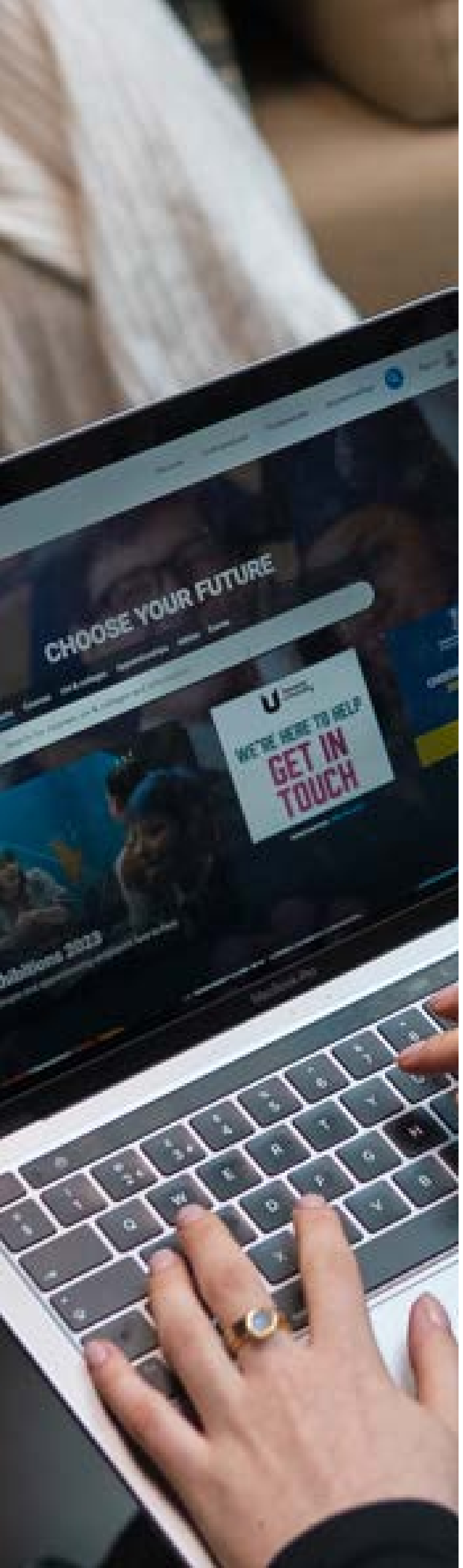
Please check the terms and conditions of any loan, as some may have specific conditions linked to academic performance.

Scholarships and bursaries

Scholarships and bursaries may be available for international students and are normally applied as a tuition discount. Check terms and conditions carefully, as sometimes there are conditions such as becoming an ambassador for the university, or being featured in promotional materials. There may also be requirements for the student to maintain a certain level of academic performance.

Find information about this on the university websites directly. There may also be regional scholarships offered by national bodies in your country, so search online as well.

Discover what financial options there are, how UK banking works, and about scholarships and bursaries at **ucas.com/financial-information-international-students**.



PLANNING THEIR FUTURE

It's important students consider their post-school plans early – but with so many options, where should they start?

Subject ideas

A few light conversations over dinner or while watching TV – as opposed to an intimidating sit down talk about 'the future' – is probably the best way to get them thinking about their next steps.

If that step is university, but they're struggling to get inspired by a particular subject, try to get them thinking about potential areas of study, in terms of:

- **a subject they study now -** If it's the subject they love and are best at, get them to consider whether it's going to keep them interested for the next few years, and which career path(s) it might lead to.
- **a subject related to a career -** If they already have more vocational ambitions, explore together whether they need to study a particular degree subject to get a job in that field, or if the options are more flexible.
- **a completely new subject -** There are many degree-level disciplines they won't have encountered in their studies before. Assess their suitability for these with an open mind, relating each back to what they enjoy and how they learn best.
- **UCAS' Careers Quiz** - By answering questions about their interests, personality and plans, students as young as 11 can now receive personalised career matches along with a list of courses that previous students studied to get there.
- **UCAS' subject guides** - We have over 70 guides packed full of great stats and information to help your child discover what it's like to study a subject, how to get into it, and the career opportunities available. They can quickly view relevant courses, apprenticeships, and job opportunities, and see profiles of employers and the universities and colleges where they can study those courses.

Early decisions

The decisions your child makes early on, even as far back as GCSE (or equivalent) options, can have an impact on what – and where – they end up studying for their degree. It all depends on what they want to do in the future, but some extra thought early on could pay off later down the line.

Choosing GCSEs, National 5s, A levels, Highers, T Levels, or BTECs (or equivalent)

If your child has an idea of what they want to study…

Get them to check the entry requirements – these may mention particular subjects or qualifications they'll need, as well as any grades they'll need to get on to the course.

They might not be able to apply to certain courses without having taken specific qualifications – for example, GCSE chemistry may be a requirement for medicine courses.

> Most university courses have minimum GCSE entry requirements in English and maths.

What if they're still undecided about university?

It's not unusual for young people to be unsure about their future at this stage, so try not to worry! Encourage them to keep their options open by selecting commonly asked for subjects in university entry requirements. These are known as 'facilitating' subjects, and include the sciences, English, geography, history, maths, and languages. Doing what they enjoy most and are good at is always a good idea too, as this is usually the subject(s) they'll do best in and go on to study.

> Remember to be a positive sounding board – being pushy, or putting pressure on your child to follow a certain career or degree path, can be counter-productive. Keep conversations positive and aspirational.

ALL ABOUT APPRENTICESHIPS

If your child isn't sure about a traditional degree, or learns better in a hands-on way, an apprenticeship is a great option to get practical industry experience while being paid and earning qualifications.

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a paid job, with formal training. Apprentices are an employee of a company, so they're paid a salary and entitled to all the same rights as other employees. They are paid at least the relevant national minimum wage, but the average apprentice wage is often higher than the minimum hourly rate required by the Government.

Parent and guardian guide to apprenticeships
In our guide we share what you need to know and practical tips for supporting someone who might be thinking about an apprenticeship: **www.ucas.com/apprenticeships/parent-and-guardian-guide-apprenticeships**

How does an apprenticeship work?

Apprentices spend most of their time working, and the rest of their time studying at a college or uni. They have protected time as part of their contract that must be used for studying. This is called 'off the job training' and is delivered by subject experts. It can include classroom learning, work shadowing, and mentoring time to research and write assignments depending on the apprenticeship.

Need to knows

- There are different levels of apprenticeships depending on where you are in the UK.
- Each apprenticeship will have different entry requirements and offer a different salary.
- There is no specific start date for apprenticeships. They come up as and when throughout the year.

Employer search
Get to know leading brands and the range of apprenticeships they offer. Including leading employers such as Sky, Channel 4, KPMG, Rolls Royce, and more.

Benefits of an apprenticeship

- An apprentice is treated the same as an employee, gets a salary, and is entitled to a holiday allowance and sick pay.
- An apprentice doesn't pay any study costs, even if they are studying for a degree. The costs are funded by the employer and the Government.
- An apprenticeship is a great way to gain professional experience. Apprentices are very employable as they already have lots of industry experience.

How to apply for apprenticeships

Applying for an apprenticeship is like applying for a job. Applicants will need:

- an up-to-date CV – including any academic achievements, work experience, volunteering or internships. If your child is still at school, filling a CV with any transferrable skills like sports teams and part-time jobs can demonstrate relevant skills. The UCAS CV Builder guides you through creating a CV. Find out more at **www.ucas.com/careers-advice/cv-builder**
- a cover letter –explaining why they are interested in the apprenticeship, why they would be a good fit and why they want to work for the company. Do a bespoke letter for each application.
- You can find more information at **www.ucas.com/careers-advice** and get tips from employers and apprentices in our tailored guides to applying for an apprenticeship at **www.ucas.com/apprenticeship-application-guides**

Smart alerts

From their UCAS Hub, your child can sign up to get the latest apprenticeship opportunities straight to their inbox. Smart Alerts is an email service that can match them to apprenticeship opportunities where employers are looking for specific candidates.

They just need to share some basic information about themselves and their apprenticeship aspirations, and UCAS will match them to potential employers who have opportunities that fit their future goals.

For more detailed information, visit: **www.ucas.com/apprenticeships**

TIP If your child is doing a personal statement for university, this can be a good basis for an apprenticeship application. You may want to encourage them to apply for both traditional degrees and apprenticeships to keep their options open.

UCAS apprenticeship search

If your child thinks a job or an apprenticeship could be right for them, they can:

- search for jobs and apprenticeships
- filter by industry, level, and location
- shortlist jobs and sign up for job alerts

Parents' podcast
Check our apprenticeships episode for great tips from a careers adviser and an apprentice on how to best support your child through the process: **www.ucas.com/apprenticeships**

OTHER ALTERNATIVES TO UNIVERSITY

Going to uni or doing an apprenticeship isn't right for everybody. When researching post-16 plans, it's important your child weighs up all their options to make the right decision for them in the long-term.

The world of work

Some people might want to get straight into the world of work and climb their way up the career ladder.

Get them to develop their CV, research job vacancies, and speak with recruiters to get a sense of different industries, including school leaver programmes, that can help with their long-term career aspirations.

Gap years

Your child may want to take some time out before taking their next steps, whether that be going to uni, doing an apprenticeship, or something else entirely.

A gap year is a chance to work and build up some money, do an internship or volunteering, or go travelling, for example.

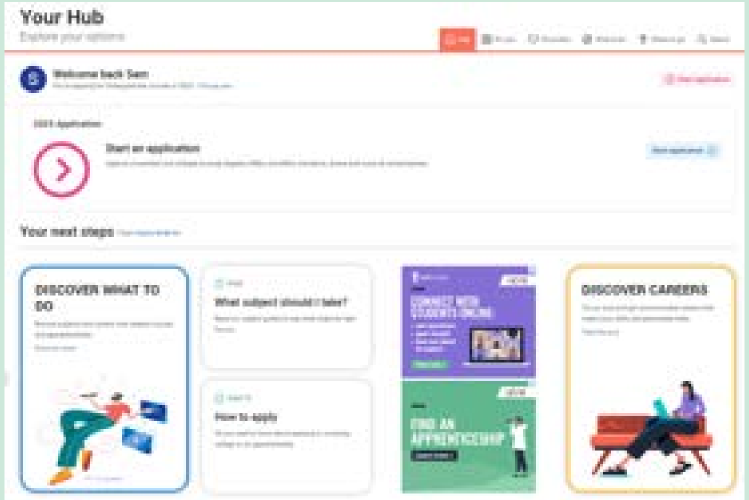
How to support someone who isn't sure about university

As a parent, you should focus on providing all the support and reassurance you can. Make sure you're there to listen; it's the most important thing you can do.

- **Be positive and supportive:** Remember, there's no need to rush into a decision. It's okay to take a step back and figure it all out. Give reassurance and stay positive.
- **Get clued up:** Learning about the path your child is interested in can help them have confidence in their next steps. Take a look at ucas.com for more information and advice about all the different routes they could take.
- **Help them explore:** Helping your child make their next steps is all about finding the right path for them. Help them explore all the options, including apprenticeships, jobs, and more. You might want to encourage them to do a UCAS application too, so they can keep their options open.
- **Help them prepare:** Help with their CV, cover letter, and any interview prep. You might want to encourage them to find a part-time job, work experience, volunteering, or an internship, to make their application stand out.

Visit our **careers advice section** for lots of advice on careers opportunities, applying for jobs, industry guides, employer case studies, and much more.

The UCAS Hub is packed with all the information and tools your child needs to explore their options in one place. From considering apprenticeships, to choosing their future career and writing a stand-out CV. Visit **ucas.com/hub** to find out more.



HOW YOU CAN HELP WITH RESEARCHING THEIR OPTIONS

If your child decides university is the right path for them, there's still a lot of research to do, with approximately 35,000 undergraduate courses to choose from.

Step 1 – Get online

- Use the **UCAS search tool** to find and shortlist undergraduate courses at universities, colleges, and conservatoires (collectively referred to as course providers). Each search result lists a summary of the course, how and when to apply, fees and finances associated with the course, and information on the entry requirements the course provider is looking for.

> Entry requirements are set by course providers, as a guideline of the academic ability students will need, and are usually a mix of qualifications, subjects, and/or exam grades.

- Get your child to register for their **UCAS Hub** to start exploring their options, favouriting subjects, and using our handy tools – all in one place.
- From their Hub, your child can also access subject spotlights, which give them a chance to try a university course before applying. Delivered by the lecturers themselves, students can gain insight into what it's like to study the course and give their personal statement a boost. Find out more at **ucas.com/subject-tasters**.
- Point them to online step-by-step guidance to choosing a course at **ucas.com/choosing-a-course**, which covers choosing a subject, the right type of degree, how to study, and where to study.
- Take a look at university, college, or conservatoire websites for in-depth details about their facilities and courses, and explore the campus with their virtual tour at **ucas.com/virtual**-tours.
- Speak to current undergraduates on **ucas.com/chat-to-students** for the chance to ask questions and gain valuable insight into what life at uni is really like.

Step 2 – Attend UCAS Discovery events and open days

- UCAS Discovery events give students the chance to meet hundreds of universities, colleges, and employers, and chat face-to-face with current students and apprentices – all in one place. They'll also be able to attend live Q&A talks with subject and industry experts, and get the latest advice and information on applications and career choices to help them narrow down their options after school or college. Go to **ucas.com/exhibitions** to learn more and book free tickets for your nearest event.
- University and college open days give you the chance to look around, meet staff and students, and see if your child would be happy living and studying there. They're great for giving you peace of mind that wherever they end up studying, you know they will be in a familiar place they're comfortable with. Use the open days search tool at **ucas.com/opendays** to find out when the university they're interested in is holding its next open day.
- Taster courses are tailored to specific courses or subjects, and often include lectures and hands-on workshops to give your child a feel for what it would be like to study that particular course.

Step 3 – Get informed

Entry requirements

- It's really important your child understands the entry requirements for courses they're interested in, so they can make fully informed choices about courses that are right for them.
- **Historical entry grades data:** You can see grade profiles of students previously accepted and offer rates for the course, under the entry requirements in the UCAS search tool. This is historical data so doesn't tell you what a university or college will accept this year – but it's there to give an indication of the grade profiles they previously accepted.
- Some uni and college entry requirements will be based on Tariff points. The UCAS Tariff is used by universities and colleges to make broad comparisons between qualifications used for entry to higher education. Tariff points are allocated to a wide range of qualifications, and can be added together (within certain rules) to give an overall Tariff score.
- Go to **ucas.com/tariff** to find out more and to use the UCAS Tariff calculator – a handy tool to help your child find out how many Tariff points their qualifications and grades add up to.

Know the UCAS deadlines

Depending on which course and uni or college they've chosen, your child will have a UCAS application deadline which they'll need to meet. It's important they check the date for their chosen courses, so they leave themselves plenty of time to complete their application. Visit **ucas.com/whentoapply** to find out more.

HELP YOUR CHILD STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

There's a lot more to a university – or a job – application than academic achievements.

Admissions tutors and employers want to see how applicants have built up skills and experience outside of their studies too.

Work experience and internships

Before uni

Work experience looks great on a personal statement, but only if your child can reflect on what they learnt from it, and how it's relevant to the course they're applying for.

Using a real work experience example to answer the all-important question 'why should we give you a place on this course?' is bound to impress. For those looking to study medicine, for example, work experience that shows an interest in caring professions would be valuable – like nursery, preschools, or care home experience.

Work experience doesn't always have to be in a relevant industry – at this stage, just gaining some experience in the workplace is more important.

Virtual Work Experiences

Students can explore their career options with **Virtual Work Experiences** through the Springpod platform.

Springpod provides in-depth, interactive and informative Virtual Work Experiences from industry experts in the world's leading employers, to help young people understand industries and the world's best employers as if they were already working there. This is invaluable to students, as it can help them to choose the right career path, better prepare them for employment by gaining direct experience, and boost their CV at this critical stage of their discovery journey.

99% of students completing Springpod's programmes rate the awareness of careers in their chosen industry as good or excellent.

At uni

Getting some professional experience, ideally relevant to your child's chosen industry, will be looked on favourably by employers, and will help them decide if a particular career is right for them.

Part-time work

Before uni

A Saturday job in a shop can demonstrate potential to admissions tutors. Encourage your child to be specific and describe a situation they've dealt with. How did they handle the situation? What did they learn? Get them to keep it relevant to the course, and describe how the skills link to their degree work. If they've developed strong communication skills as a result of interacting with customers, they should mention how they would put them to good use when presenting ideas in seminars, for example.

At uni

A part-time job can equip them with transferable skills, show they can balance work with their studies, and help cover living costs.

Volunteering

Before uni

Doing voluntary work at a younger age shows that an applicant has drive. It is often a good way of building up communication and interaction skills too, so help your child reflect on these in their personal statement.

At uni

Volunteering could give your child the opportunity to gain more hands-on experience in a particular role than they would in a part-time job, or even through work experience. Many smaller charities are willing to give students more responsibility, as they don't have the funds to pay lots of staff.

Clubs and hobbies

Before uni

Talking about other interests or hobbies helps inject some personality into their statement. Before it goes in, they should ask themselves 'so what?'. Less can sometimes be more – only include an example if it's relevant.

At uni

The key words here are moderation and motivation. They should be picky, and avoid the temptation to sign up to everything in freshers' week. It's far better to actively contribute to one or two societies or initiatives so they have something more meaningful to put on their CV and job applications.

Key points

- Draw on how each experience helped them learn, and how it's relevant to what they're applying for. Working in a supermarket can do this just as well as a high-flying internship.
- Make sure everything in their application is relevant – if it doesn't add anything, leave it out, no matter how much they enjoyed it.
- The more experience gained in a relevant industry during university, the better their chances of gaining employment in that area.
- Voluntary work is a great way of taking on responsibility in a chosen field, and often provides more opportunities to do so than in a commercial environment.

MAKING A UCAS APPLICATION

If your child has decided university is the right path for them, here's what they'll need to know about making a UCAS application.

HOW TO FILL IN THE UCAS APPLICATION

Once your child has chosen the unis and courses that interest them most, it's time to start their application.

First, they'll need to register in the **UCAS Hub** – it only takes about five minutes to enter their basic details and set up security information. If your child is applying through a school, they'll be given a 'buzzword' so their application can be linked to their school.

If they're applying independently, there will be a few additional questions they'll need to answer.

Before they start their application, get them to read our advice **www.ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication**.

Personal details – this will already contain the information they gave when registering, and there will be more questions about student support.

Contact details – email, telephone number, postal address, and if they want someone else to be able to act on their behalf.

Where you live – they'll be asked where they've lived for the last three years and for what purpose, as unis need to know if they're living there temporarily or permanently.

Supporting information – these questions ask if they've lived or worked – or have parents from – the EU, EEA or Switzerland.

Finance and funding – how they will fund their studies.

Diversity and inclusion (UK applicants only) – equality monitoring information. Providers only see this information after a place is secured or at the end of the application cycle – so it doesn't influence any decision-making.

More about you – gives the opportunity to highlight their individual circumstances in the application. Universities and colleges can make more informed decisions about an applicant's circumstances and ensure supportive measures are in place for them.

Education – details and dates of all schools they've attended since the age of 11, exam results, and exams still to be taken.

Employment – basic details of any relevant full or part-time paid employment. They can talk more about this in their personal statement.

Extra activities (UK applicants only) – if they've participated in an activity to prepare them for higher education, they can give details of it here.

Personal statement – their opportunity to tell the university or college about their ambitions, skills and experience, and why they want to study a particular course or subject.

Your child can fill in their application at any time, saving their progress as they go. They can go back and edit it until they're happy it's complete. Finally, there's a section for the reference, which is added by their referee – usually their teacher, but this can also be an employer or trainer for students applying independently.

How much does it cost to send a UCAS application?

The application fee is £28.95 for up to five choices.

Why does UCAS charge an application fee?

UCAS is a charity. The cost of running the undergraduate admissions service is paid for by the application fees students pay and the fees universities and colleges pay when students are accepted. The profits from our wholly-owned commercial subsidiary, UCAS Media Ltd, help us to keep investing in improving the service for the next generation of students.

We work hard to keep our costs down and believe the application fee represents good value for money. The application fee pays for: information and support to help students make well-informed decisions about their futures, the processing and management of applications with universities and colleges, our Customer Experience Centre, matching millions of exam results with students' applications to speed up decision-making, and the Clearing service – which helps applicants find a place after the main application period has finished.

Free school meals application fee waiver: If your child has been in receipt of UK government funded free school meals at some point during the last six years (during their secondary education) up until the end of their final year, they will be eligible to have their application fee waived. Find out more at **ucas.com/students-eligible-free-school-meals-fsm**

What does a school do?

If your child is applying through a school, pressing 'Send' on their application sends it to their school, not directly to UCAS. Once they've completed their application, there's still a lot for their school to do. That's why most schools will set an internal deadline, which is earlier than the UCAS application deadline. This gives them time to check their students' applications to make sure all sections have been filled in correctly, support those struggling with their application, and write and add references for all their students.

Once all this has been completed, the school will need to pay for and send their students' applications. They will often arrange payment beforehand, so they can do it all in one go.

Encourage your child to speak to their teacher to check internal application and payment deadlines.

Universities and UCAS are not able to talk to you about the specifics of your child's application, unless you have nominated access.

Predicted grades

Risks of inflating predicted grades

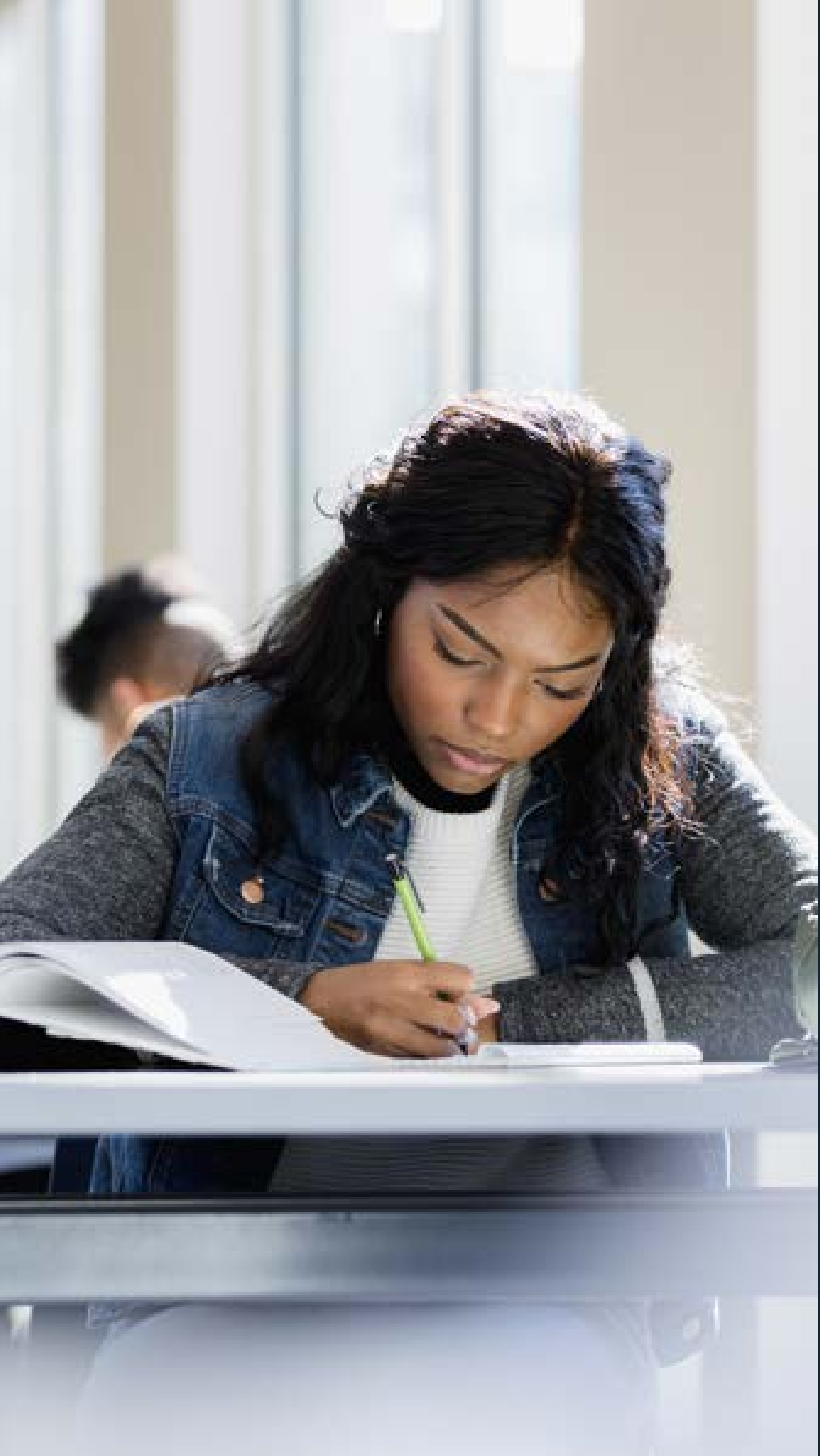
Some referees have been asked to inflate their students' predicted grades in the belief it will give them a better chance of receiving an offer for a certain course. However, this could significantly disadvantage the applicant:

- An applicant may receive an offer(s) they are unlikely to meet, leading to disappointment on results day.
- Applicants might gain admission to a course which they cannot succeed in – choosing the right course is a very important decision as they will be investing a lot of time, money, and effort, and it can be difficult to change.
- If a university or college has reason to believe that a predicted grade is grossly inaccurate, they retain the right to withdraw any offers.

Risks of suppressing predicted grades

In other cases, referees have been encouraged to suppress predicted grades for highly selective courses, due to a belief this will trigger a (relatively) lower offer for an applicant. Again, this is not without risk, as a student may miss out on receiving an offer from their preferred choice, based on suppressed predicted grades. They would then be required to accept an alternative offer, defer entry, or make use of Clearing.

TIP In the 'Contact details' section of the application, there's the option for your child to add your name for 'nominated access'. This allows you to contact UCAS – or the universities they have applied to – on their behalf to discuss the status of their application. Just make sure you have their Personal ID handy and can answer basic security questions when you call.



HELP YOUR CHILD WRITE A GREAT PERSONAL STATEMENT

Writing a personal statement is an important part of your child's university application, and with the new format for 2026 entry, there's a clear structure to follow. As a parent, guardian, or carer, your support can make a real difference.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW PERSONAL STATEMENT FORMAT

For 2026 entry, the personal statement focuses on three key questions to help students clearly communicate their motivations and suitability for the course. These questions ensure all students, no matter their background, can present a strong case.

1. **Why do you want to study this course or subject?** Your child should explain what excites and interests them about the subject, and how their interest developed. They should link their interest to long-term goals if they have a career path in mind, but this will vary depending on course.
2. **How have your qualifications and studies helped you prepare for this course?** Help them pick academic accomplishments relevant to the course to highlight their achievements. They should demonstrate how their studies have given them skills for success. Make sure they don't waste characters listing their qualifications, as these will be found elsewhere in their application.
3. **What else have you done to prepare, and why are these experiences useful?** Here, your child can discuss any activities outside school – such as work experience, volunteering, internships or personal projects – and how these experiences have prepared them for university. Encourage your child to select relevant experiences that show commitment. They can include any challenges they've overcome and how these prepared them for university.

Help your child get started

Encourage reflection: Help your child think about why they are interested in the course and what sparked their passion. This reflection is key to answering the first question.

Identify experiences: Support your child in showing both academic and personal experiences that relate to their course. Whether it's a project, job, hobby or a balancing of their responsibilities, like caring for a family member, these can demonstrate their commitment and readiness.

Discuss future goals: If applicable – for instance, medical and allied health courses – encourage your child to talk about their career goals and how the course can help them achieve these. This will help them focus their personal statement. Alternatively, you could help your child express what they hope to gain from the course and what they're excited to learn more about.

Emphasise relevance: Encourage your child to avoid vague statements and focus on specific experiences and achievements that support their application.

For students without extracurricular activities: Your child can focus on academic achievements and personal responsibilities. Encourage them to:

- discuss classroom experiences that helped them develop key skills
- highlight part-time jobs, linking them to transferable skills like time management

Suggest alternative means of experiencing extracurricular activities, through online courses, podcasts, or documentaries that can help them expand their knowledge and show their interest in the subject area.

Subject tasters and **Virtual Work Experiences**, run by Springpod through the UCAS website, offer an unparalleled insight into courses, subjects and careers, and can be included in their personal statement as relevant evidence.

What to avoid

- **Generic statements:** Avoid vague phrases and be specific about their experiences and why they matter.
- **Repetition:** Each part of the statement should add value, so remind them not to repeat information. The three answers will be reviewed as a whole, so there's no need to repeat information or agonise over the 'right' box to include certain examples or information.
- **Overloading with skills:** Focus on a few key skills, rather than listing too many without depth.
- **Clichéd quotes:** Avoid overused quotes, instead share their unique perspective.
- **Irrelevant information:** Ensure that every part of the statement supports their application to the course.

Helping your child stand out

- **Work experience:** Include relevant work experience or internships.
- **Part-time work:** Even if unrelated to the course, a part-time job can show transferable skills like time management and responsibility.
- **Volunteering:** This can demonstrate commitment and willingness to contribute to the community.

Personal statement subject guides
Our subject-specific guides will show your child what universities and colleges want to see in their personal statement and how they can set themselves apart: **ucas.com/2026-personal-statement-guides.**

Final checks

- **Proofread:** Encourage your child to check their statement for spelling and grammar mistakes and have someone review it for clarity.
- **Get feedback:** Suggest they share their personal statement with a trusted person for constructive feedback.
- **Check relevance:** Remind them to ensure every part of their statement is relevant to the course and their goals.

Follow this guidance to help your child create a personal statement that reflects their strengths and ambitions. This is their chance to tell their story – ensure it truly represents who they are and what they want to achieve.

Read more advice, watch our video guide to writing a personal statement, and download our handy checklist to support your child through the process of writing their personal statement at **ucas.com/supporting-your-child-writing-their-personal-statement-2026-entry**.

CONSIDERING MUSIC, DANCE, OR DRAMA?

If your child is thinking of a career in music, dance, or drama, they can choose between applying through the UCAS Undergraduate or UCAS Conservatoires application schemes. Both universities and conservatoires offer undergraduate degrees.

TIP If your child isn't sure which type of course will suit them best, they can apply through both application schemes. If they get a place in both, they'll need to decide which to take up.

What does conservatoire study involve?

- A conservatoire is a course provider that specialises in performance-based courses, but also includes academic study.
- All courses at conservatoires have a strong vocational, performance-based focus, and course structures are reflective of the industry.

If your child's interests are in a practical discipline, such as vocal performance or dance, they may favour a conservatoire.

- All teaching staff at conservatoires are working professionals. There is a strong emphasis on one-to-one tuition, alongside group work and performances.
- The deadlines for conservatoire applications are:
  - **2 October 2025 (18:00 UK time)** for music courses
  - **14 January 2026 (18:00 UK time)** for most dance, drama, and musical theatre courses

There are some exceptions, so check conservatoires' websites and check details of courses in the **UCAS search tool**.

How to apply for conservatoire courses

Students can apply for courses at conservatoires through UCAS Conservatoires. They'll need to register before they start filling in their application.

For more information and advice about applying to and studying at a conservatoire, go to **ucas.com/conservatoires/getting-started**.

CONSIDERING TEACHING?

If your child is considering a career as a teacher, they need Initial Teacher Education or Training (ITET), based at a university, school, or college in the UK.

How to apply

If your child is an undergraduate, or a graduate looking for a training programme in Scotland or Wales, they will need to apply through the UCAS Undergraduate route.

If they already have an undergraduate degree and are based in England, they will need to make their application through the Department for Education's 'Apply for teacher training service' at **www.gov.uk/apply-for-teacher-training**.

There are several different ways of becoming a teacher, and it's important students do their research to find the route that suits them best.

Each involves:

- a minimum of 24 weeks in at least two schools, to give practical classroom experience
- academic study to provide the knowledge and understanding to teach successfully
- tutoring in classroom management
- mentoring from experienced professionals
- an assessment of your child's teaching skills through observed classes

Head to **ucas.com/teaching-in-the-uk** to find out what the options are, and how to apply to each.

They can train as either an undergraduate, or as a postgraduate if they already have a degree.

JOURNEY OF AN APPLICATION

Apply online

Explore subjects in the UCAS Hub and find courses in the search tool. Check entry requirements and application deadlines:

15 October at 18:00 (UK time) – all courses at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and most courses in medicine, veterinary science/medicine, and dentistry.

14 January at 18:00 (UK time) – the majority of undergraduate courses.

Wait to hear back

Universities or colleges will decide whether to make your child an offer. It'll be:

- unconditional if they've already met the entry requirements
- conditional if the offer's based on their exam results

If they're not accepted by their choices, or decline any offers they receive, your child can use Extra to apply for more choices, one at a time.

Reply to offers

Once all the decisions are in, your child has to reply to their offers by a specific deadline

- Select a firm choice – this is their first choice.
- If their firm choice is conditional, they can select an insurance choice too, if they want a back-up.
- Decline any other offers.

Find out if they've got a place

Your child will see in their application if their place is confirmed.

- If their firm choice is unconditional, the place is theirs.
- If their place is conditional, the university or college will update their status when they have your child's exam results, or other evidence they've met the conditions.
- They may be unsuccessful if they don't meet the conditions – in this case, they can use Clearing to apply for more courses.
- If your child changes their mind and no longer wants their firm choice, they can use the 'decline my place' button in their application to use Clearing to find another place.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once your child has sent their application to UCAS, there's still a lot for them to do. It's important to keep them engaged and make sure they're prepared for all outcomes. Here's what they'll need to be aware of…

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE UCAS GETS THEIR APPLICATION?

1. Your child's personal statement is checked to make sure it has not been copied, then all the information in their application is processed. This can take up to 48 hours.
2. They will then be sent a welcome email when the checks are complete. This explains how to check the progress of their application, and contains their Personal ID, which they'll need to sign in.
3. At the same time, the application is sent to their chosen universities and colleges. Universities won't know where else they've applied.
4. As soon as universities let UCAS know about an interview, audition, test, or decision, your child will receive an email so they know to check their application.

Types of decisions a university can make

Receiving a conditional or unconditional offer is good news, but it's important to know the difference and commitment they're making if they accept one.

- A conditional offer means your child needs to meet some conditions – usually exam results. If they accept a conditional offer as their firm choice, they are committed to taking up the place if they meet the conditions.
- An unconditional offer means the place is theirs if they want it. They still might have to meet non-academic conditions, such as a health check. If they accept an unconditional offer as their firm choice, they are committed to taking up the place, regardless of what grades they get.
- An unsuccessful application means the university has decided not to offer them a place.
- A withdrawn application means the choice has been withdrawn, either by your child, or by the university. If the university has done this, they'll let your child know why.

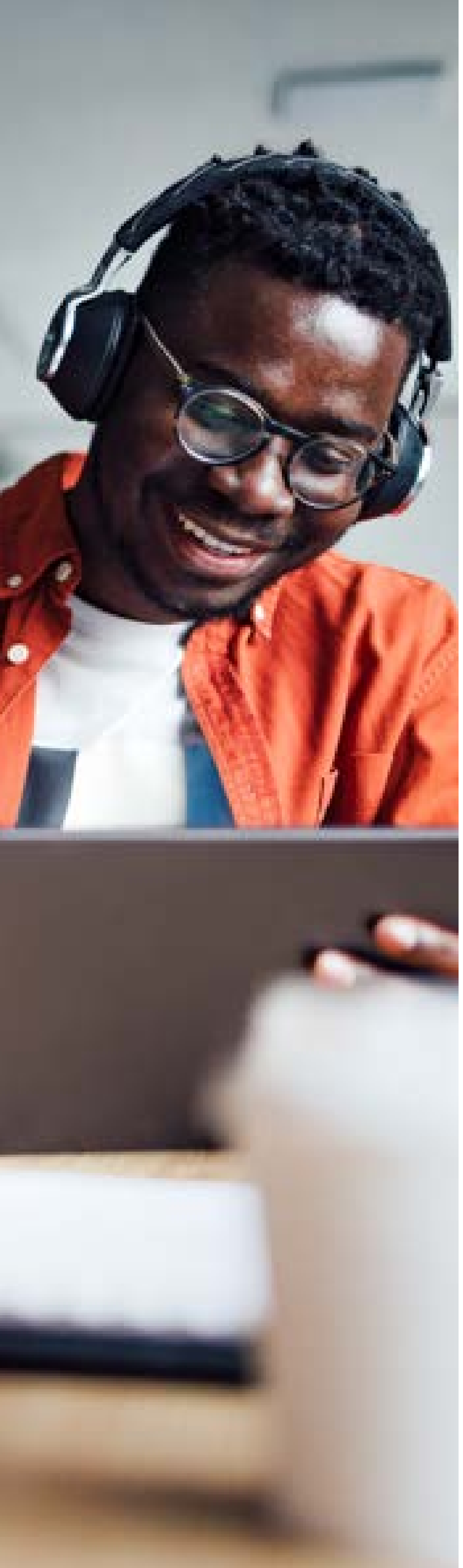
Once they've had decisions from all their choices, your child can reply to them.

MAKING CHANGES TO THEIR APPLICATION

After your child has sent their application, they may need to change their contact details or qualifications. It's really important to keep these details up-to-date, so they don't miss any correspondence or deadlines.

- They'll need to call UCAS to change their name, qualifications, and school or college. If their exam details change, they must let us know straightaway by completing our qualifications amendment form **ucas.com/amend-qualifications** and let their chosen unis/colleges know too. If any of these details aren't correct, your child's results may not be sent to their chosen unis, causing all sorts of stress and panic on results day.
- They can change their contact details in their application. We'll let their chosen unis/colleges know, but it's a good idea if your child contacts them too.
- If they need to let us know about a change of name, date of birth or give us their passport details, they can fill in the form at **ucas.com/forms/update-my-details-form**.
- If they want to change their course, the year they'll start their studies, or the point of entry, they'll need to get in touch with the uni/college. If they agree to it, they'll let UCAS know. If your child already has an offer from the uni/college, their application will be updated to show the new details.
- If they wish to change the university or college they've applied to, they can swap a choice for a different one from their application within 14 days of the date on their welcome email.

Find out more about making changes to their application at **ucas.com/makingchanges**.



REPLYING TO OFFERS

When your child has received decisions from all their choices, they'll need to reply to any offers they have. Make sure they're accepting the right offer, for the right reasons. Before they reply, they will need to:

- **understand the conditions of their offer –** if they're not sure, they should contact the university
- **visit the university or college –** if they haven't already done so, it's good to check if it's somewhere they'll be happy
- **discuss any individual needs with the university –** for example, if they have a disability, so everything is in place when they start the course
- **check the tuition fees –** it's important to know what they are before accepting the offer
- **take time to compare their offers,** to make sure they're happy with those they want to accept and those they don't

What replies can they make?

- Your child can accept an offer as their firm or insurance choice.

Firm choice

- For a conditional offer, they will be guaranteed a place on the course if they meet the conditions.
- For an unconditional offer, the place is theirs.
- In either case, they are committed to that course at that university or college.

Insurance choice

This has the same level of commitment as a firm choice, but only comes into play if your child doesn't meet the conditions of their firm choice – it's like a second chance to get a place. It makes sense for the insurance choice to have less demanding conditions than the firm choice.

When do they need to reply by?

Your child will have a deadline to reply to the offers they receive, which depends on when they received the last one. The table below shows the official deadline dates, but it's really important they check their application to see their personal deadline.

If they don't reply to their offers by their deadline, any offers they have will be automatically declined on their behalf – this is called decline by default.

Last decision received on or before...	Means their reply date is...
31 March 2026	6 May 2026 (unless they're using Extra to find a place)
13 May 2026	3 June 2026 (unless they're using Extra to find a place)
15 July 2026	22 July 2026

How can you help?

Narrowing down a potential five offers to decide their firm and insurance choices can be difficult. This is where you can serve as a valuable sounding board.

If they're unsure what to do, talk to them about what they want to get out of a course and their university experience. Has this changed at all in the last few months? How do these offers align with their goals or preferences?

Remind them their firm choice should be their first choice. Ask them if the offer is achievable, and if there is any flexibility if they don't get the grades they were expecting.

Their right to change their mind

The UCAS application process complies with consumer law and the Competition and Markets Authority's advice. This means that after they've sent their application to UCAS, they have 14 days in which to cancel their application and receive a full refund, should they wish to do so.

When they've replied to their offers, they have 14 days in which they can change their replies, but can only do so once.

PREPARING A PLAN B

Things don't always work out as expected, so it pays to spend time devising some alternative plans.

Competition can be tough, meaning even the best students don't always get the offers they'd hoped for. Alternatively, they might receive offers for courses they're no longer interested in.

So what can they do instead?

Extra

Extra is an opportunity for your child to apply for another course without waiting for Clearing. It doesn't cost anything, but they must be eligible to use Extra:

- All five choices must have been used.
- They must either have no offers, or have declined any offers they received.

Extra opens on 26 February 2026 and ends on 1 July 2026.

For more details, go to **ucas.com/extra**.

A year out

They may wish to reapply next year for slightly different courses or universities. Now is a good time to start thinking about what a productive gap year would look like, to make sure they get the most out of it.

An alternative path

Studying abroad might be a viable alternative – there may even be vacancies available on English-speaking courses at certain European unis. What about a different qualification entirely, or entering the world of work instead?

Look into all their other options at **ucas.com/what-can-i-do-next**.

Near miss on their grades

Think positively. Even in the event they don't achieve the grades they were expecting or needing, your child's firm choice university may still accept them.

Retakes

Depending on their results, they might also decide to resit a subject before reapplying. This means more exams next summer, finding somewhere to sit them, and probably some extra tuition.

Exam reviews and appeals

If your child is unhappy with an exam result, and feels it's been unfairly marked, they should first talk to their school or college about appealing the grade (they won't be able to enquire directly with the examining board themselves).

They will also be able to advise you based on outcomes for that exam across your child's year group. Head to **ucas.com/exam-reviews-and-appeals** for step-by-step advice on the grade appeals process.

GETTING EXAM RESULTS

Results day can be stressful, so make sure your child knows how it works and what to expect:

- UCAS receives exam results, matches them to applicants, and makes them available to universities and colleges.
- Universities then check the offer details and confirm if the conditions have been met.
- If the university has confirmed their place, this will be shown clearly in their application.

There is restricted access to applications in the lead up to SQA results day and A level results day, while UCAS processes results – details of when applications are affected will be clearly displayed on **ucas.com**.

Getting their results

UCAS doesn't send exam results to applicants – they come from the exam board, either via their school, by post, or online.

UCAS sends some results on to universities or colleges, but not all of them. Check if your child needs to send any of their results to their firm and insurance choices. If they do, they'll need to do this as soon as the results are available. You can check which results UCAS receives at **ucas.com/sending-exam-results**.

Try to be there when they get their exam results, so you can share in their excitement, or give them that extra bit of support if things don't go as planned.

It's strongly recommended that your child is in the country for results day, so avoid booking any holidays around that time. This way, should they need to speak to someone about their results or options on the day, they can do so.

What if they don't get the grades they were expecting?

- The university might still accept them, but there's no guarantee.
- They might offer your child a place on another course, or for a different year of entry.
- Your child could use Clearing, or reconsider their options.

Clearing

Clearing is a chance for students to look for a place if they don't have one after they get their exam results or they change their mind and no longer want their firm choice.

It's also the final chance for universities to fill any places they still have available.

To look for a Clearing place, your child must be eligible.

This means that either:

- they have no offers
- their firm and insurance choices have made them unsuccessful
- they applied after 30 June 2026
- they've declined their firm place using the 'decline my place' button in their application

There is no additional application fee to use Clearing.

Clearing officially starts on 2 July 2026. However, students must have all their exam results to be able to use it, so the majority of eligible students will use Clearing in August. To find out more, go to **ucas.com/clearing**.

FINDING UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION

The next big decision is choosing where they're going to live.

If your child has their heart set on university halls, they'll need to do their research and apply early. Places aren't always guaranteed, so it's important to encourage them to think about alternative accommodation, which can be equally fun and provide a safe living environment.

University halls

The traditional option for first year students, these are managed by the university and offer a good stepping stone from living at home to living independently.

Private student halls

A second option in some areas is a room in a purpose-built student living complex owned by a private company. Factor in which bills are included, what facilities are onsite, and how far it is from campus.

Private accommodation

A good option for mature students, and those who missed out on halls because they applied late or through Clearing, but it can be a big leap from living at home.

Staying at home

It can work out well for students to continue living at home – as long as you're happy for them to stay! They may need to make more effort to get out and socialise to meet other students, but they'll save money and avoid the hassle of moving.

Questions to ask about university halls

Try to see one or two halls of residence on an open day – you'll probably be taken to the best on offer, but it's a great time to do some fact finding.

Consider the following questions:

- Is a place in halls guaranteed? What accommodation is available off-campus?
- Would a place still be guaranteed if the uni is your child's insurance choice?
- What does it cost, and what's included in that cost?
- Do students have to move in and out each term?
- Are they catered or self-catered?
- How big are the rooms? Are some bigger than others?
- How quiet are they?
- Can you put stuff on the walls?
- How secure is it?
- What happens in years two and three?
- How far will you have to travel to get to uni and town?
- Can you bring a car?
- How close is it to lecture halls, town, etc.?
- Does the university have a dedicated housing service for finding accommodation on and off-campus?

What do they need to pack?

Must-take items

- **Clothes –** don't pack everything! Enough for that term will do.
- **Bedding –** duvet, sheets, pillows, and towels.
- **Bathroom –** toiletries, medication, and a small first aid kit.
- **Laundry –** washing products, laundry bag, and drying rack.
- **Electronics –** laptop, printer, extension leads, and chargers.
- **Kitchen –** cutlery, crockery, glasses, pots, pans, and basic gadgets such as a kettle and toaster, if these won't be provided (check with the accommodation first).
- **Admin –** passport, driving licence, NHS medical card, National Insurance number, and all-important correspondences with the university.
- **Food basics –** coffee, tea bags, cereal, cooking oil, tins, and condiments.
- **Some home comforts –** a few special extras reminding them of home can help them settle in.

Finding somewhere they'll be happy to live is an important consideration for your child when choosing where to study. Read our advice on different types of accommodation and their pros and cons, and use our search at **ucas.com/accommodation-advice**.

ACCOMMODATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Some universities have dedicated international halls or guaranteed accommodation places for international students, but this varies so check directly if your child is interested in this.

If you have family in the city where your child is going to study, they could consider living with them. Research transport options to ensure your child is able to get to their classes on time!

Most private accommodation providers require a financial guarantor based in the UK. If you don't have someone who can do this, there are companies that can do this for your child.

Top tips for arriving and the first few days

- Make sure your child's phone either has international data or is unlocked to take a UK sim card so they can contact you. Many phone companies offer special international data rates, or you can consider using a WiFi based service.
- If you plan to transfer money to your child, research good international transfer rates – your child can also check this when they set up their UK bank account. International students can usually only set up a student bank account in person once they've arrived in the UK, as the bank needs to see ID documents and a letter from their university.
- Many universities will offer an affordable 'starter pack' for international students with basic bedding and kitchen items that can be left for them in their accommodation.
- Bring relevant adaptors for electronics – UK plug sockets are type G.
- It's very important your child brings original copies of the documents used to gain entry onto the course (e.g. their exam certificates and language qualification) as the university needs to verify these at enrolment – they can't accept photocopies.
- Check the UK climate compared to your own country, although we would recommend buying bulky items after your child arrives. It's usually easier to find the right clothes in the UK as shops sell clothes designed for our weather! Also make sure your child understands the clothing size conversions.
- Make sure your child knows where they can go on campus for certain things, such as health services, the international office, and visa team. It's also good to know where the students' union is, for support on getting involved in activities and making friends!
- Speak to your child about the importance of turning up to any enrolment activities on their timetable (and all classes), as attendance is reported to the UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration service) as part of the agreement in issuing the visa.

Find more information and advice at **ucas.com/accommodation-international-students**.

BILLS, BUDGETING, AND PREPARING FOR UNI

For many students, uni will be the first time they will have budgeted and paid for bills. Start planning now to make sure they know what to do.

Student bills

Council tax – if everyone living in your child's household is a full-time student, they won't have to pay council tax. If someone in their household isn't a full-time student, they'll get a council tax bill, but will qualify for a discount.

Utility bills – if your child is moving into private accommodation, utility bills may not be included, so make sure they're aware of gas, electricity, and water bills.

Internet – probably a priority for your child! Many universities offer a free wireless connection in halls, so make sure they ask if this is included.

TV licence – students need a TV licence if they watch or record television programmes as they're being shown on TV, on any device. They don't need one to use a streaming service, such as Amazon Prime or Netflix, but a subscription may be required.

Insurance – check the small print of your home contents insurance, which may already cover your child's belongings when away from home, or see if this could be added on to your existing policy. If not, it may be worth getting them a separate policy.

Budgets and bank accounts

By now, you and your child should have a good idea of their budget per term. Give them some tips for cutting their living costs, and the tools to stay within their budget – a simple weekly expenditure spreadsheet could work wonders here!

Opening a student bank account before they head off is also a good idea, so they can take their time over comparing what's on offer. UCAS will send your child a status code in their newsletters, which can be used as proof of their status as a future student, to make the process of opening a student account quick and easy.

Banks are keen to entice students with freebies, but do look beyond student railcard or voucher incentives. It's often features such as the level of interest-free overdraft that may prove more essential. When you're comparing 0% overdraft facilities on offer, check whether the headline amount is guaranteed, or just 'up to', and if there are any other restrictions.

Teach them some independence

Spare your child some domestic disasters (and yourself some frantic messages or phone calls) by teaching them some simple recipes, how to do laundry without turning everything pink, and handy extras, like how to sew a button back on.

Encourage your child to see an overdraft as a helpful buffer rather than extra cash, and to always stick within their authorised limit to avoid hefty charges. Likewise, warn them of the pitfalls of high interest sources of credit, such as payday loans and credit cards.

Prepare yourself too

It's not all about them! This is a big change for you as well. Talk to other parents, carers, or guardians whose homes are also a bit quieter since their children have left for university.

Think about what you'd like to do with your extra time – perhaps taking up a hobby or spending more time with friends and other family members.

The end of their first term will come around before you know it.

Support with the cost of living: We have tips, tools, and resources from trusted sources to support you and your child on their journey to higher education at **ucas.com/cost-of-living**.

USEFUL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

There are many ways you can get help from UCAS.

UCAS

Sign up for our parent newsletters for all the information you need to support your child each step of the way.

Visit **ucas.com/parents** for handy resources and top tips.

You can call UCAS on 0371 468 0 468, Monday to Friday, 08:30 – 18:00 (UK time), or drop us a question on **Facebook**, **X** or **Instagram**.

If you want to keep up-to-date with everything we're up to, you can also follow us on:

- **TikTok**
- **YouTube**
- **Threads**

UCAS information and advice

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

Here is a quick guide to the information, advice, and resources on **ucas.com**.

Tools to help your child get started

- **Careers Quiz**
- **Search tool**
- **Subject guides**
- **Subject tasters**
- **City guides**
- **Discover hub**
- **The Ultimate Guides**
- **Apprenticeship search**

Higher education

- **Open days and events**
- **Choosing what to study**
- **Choosing where to study**
- **Entry requirements**
- **International students**
- **Supporting your child writing a 2026 personal statement**
- **2026 personal statement guides**
- **Applying to university**
- **Interviews and auditions**
- **Student fees and finance**
- **Support with the cost of living**
- **Accommodation advice**
- **Preparing to start**
- **Study at a conservatoire**

Students with individual support needs

- **Disabled students**
- **Support for disabled people taking apprenticeships**
- **Estranged students**
- **Students with caring responsibilities**
- **Students with parenting responsibilities**
- **Care experienced students**
- **Mental health and wellbeing support**
- **Refugees, asylum seekers and students with limited leave to remain**
- **Students from UK Armed Forces backgrounds**
- **UK Armed Forces Veterans and Service Leavers**

Apprenticeships

- **Apprenticeships**
- **Parent and guardian guide to apprenticeships**
- **Apprenticeships in England**
- **Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland**
- **Apprenticeships in Scotland**
- **Apprenticeships in Wales**
- **Apprenticeship search**
- **Industry guides**
- **Apprenticeship case studies**
- **Browse apprenticeship employers**
- **Applying for an apprenticeship**
- **Apprenticeship application guides**

Gap years

- **Gap years**

Going to work

- **How to get into work**
- **What are employers looking for?**
- **Tips on finding career ideas**
- **Internships**
- **Explore jobs and careers**
- **Is work experience important?**
- **Applying for jobs – tips**
- **How to write a CV**
- **CV Builder**
- **Working for yourself – self-employment and starting a business**
- **How you get paid at work**