

How can you support them?

Research

Use the parents/guardians' section of the UCAS website at www.ucas.com/parents.

Sign up

Sign up for updates from UCAS, and get everything you need to know about the application process direct to your inbox.

Open days

Attend virtual events and open days – you may have a different perspective.

Be proactive

Make sure they read everything carefully that is sent to them and don't book family holidays at key times!

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Respectful

Creative

Relentless

Aspirational

Resilient

Shirley High Sixth Form Futures Evening

Ms Brown Assistant Principal KS5
Mr Lewis Head of Sixth Form

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Higher education



Apprenticeships



Studying abroad



Gap year



Getting a job

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Careers Support

- Comprehensive careers programme
- Bespoke support
- 1-1 careers guidance
- Support for a wide range of options
- UCAS application support
- Oxbridge/Medicine/Law application support
- Apprenticeship Academy
- Regular career talks
- Finance workshops
- Trips to University/careers fairs



unifrog
the universal destinations platform

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Option 1 – Higher Education

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Why Higher Education?

Opportunities while studying:

- Chance to study a subject they are passionate about.
- Achieve a qualification that could lead to their chosen career.
- Grow in confidence, make lifelong friends, and gain independence and important life skills that will widen their prospects.

With a degree, they'll have:

- The opportunity to follow their career path
- Better job prospects, as many employers target graduates
- Higher earning potential

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UCAS – an independent charity

-  • It's an online application.
-  • Maximum of five choices.
-  • Choice restrictions:
 - medicine, veterinary, medicine/science, dentistry
(maximum of four)
 - Oxford or Cambridge
-  • Simple application cost:
 - one choice – £22
 - two to five choices – £26

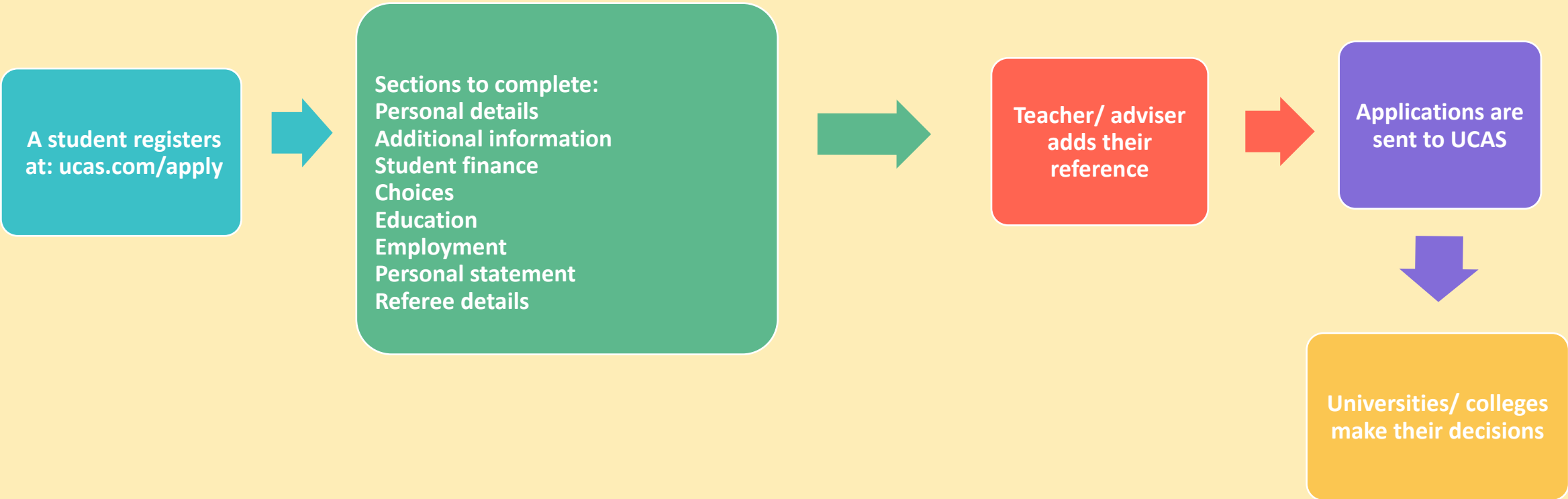
UCAS does:

- ✓ Process applications
- ✓ Provide information, advice, and training
- ✓ Have a Fraud and Verification Team
- ✓ Take part in education sector engagement

UCAS doesn't:

- Suggest courses or universities
- Make decisions or offers
- Advise on finance, immigration, or visas for individuals

The Application Process



When to apply for 2026 entry

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| May | Students can start their applications. |
| 2 September | First day for receipt of completed applications. |
| 2 October | Application deadline for conservator and music applications |
| 15 October | Application deadline for courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/science, and dentistry, and courses at Oxford or Cambridge. |
| 14 January | Equal consideration application deadline. |
| 26 February | UCAS Extra Opens - Applicants who have used all five choices and are not holding any offers may be able to add another choice. |
| 5 July | Clearing opens. |

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Universities - key questions

Why do you want to go?

- Many jobs require you to have a degree, often at a grade 2.1
 - Grades go from 1st, 2.1, 2.2, 3rd, fail
- Your desired job requires a specific degree
- Really interested in a subject

When do you want to go?

- Enter at **first year**
- Enter with **Foundation Year** (an extra year, sometimes free)
- Enter **deferred** (start a year later, but apply this year)

Where do you want to go?

- Russell Group University or other?
- Location - living at home or far away?
- Type of course:
 - Sandwich course
 - Placement year
 - College based
 - Lectures

General rules of thumb for applying...

- Universities will look mainly at your predicted grades, but MAY look at your GCSE grades.
- Very competitive courses include most Medicine, Law and Engineering.
- You don't always need to be studying the direct subject you want to do at university.
- Often you will be required to have a grade 4 in English Language (you will need to check for each course and university).
- Some courses will require you to do extra assessments:
 - Law = LNAT
 - Medicine = BMAT,
 - History = HNAT
- Performing Arts and Creative Arts- some institutions have application processes outside of UCAS

Russell Group Universities

These are the 24 best universities in the country. Attendance at Russell Group universities are very competitive, but will enable you to get into top jobs and companies in the future.

Top universities: Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, LSE, Imperial
- Typical offer: A*AA

Others: AAB / BBC (with Foundation year)

All offer **contextual offers** - we are eligible for them!!

RUSSELL

University of Birmingham
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge
Cardiff University
Durham University
University of Edinburgh
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
Imperial College London
King's College London
University of Leeds
University of Liverpool
London School of Economics
and Political Science
University of Manchester
Newcastle University
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
Queen Mary University of London
Queen's University Belfast
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University College London
University of Warwick
University of York

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Entry requirements

Universities will either offer you specific grades you need to get (e.g. AAB) or they will ask for tariff points.

EVERY GRADE COUNTS AS A PASS - THIS DOES NOT MAKE IT GOOD.

| A Level |
|---------|
| A* = 56 |
| A = 48 |
| B = 40 |
| C = 32 |
| D = 24 |
| E = 16 |

| National Extended Certificate | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| D* | 56 |
| D | 48 |
| M | 32 |
| P | 16 |

UCAS References include...



Enter a general statement about your school/college/centre.



If applicable, enter any information about extenuating circumstances which may have impacted the applicant's education and achievement.



Outline any other supportive information specific to the applicant and relevant to the course(s) applied for that you think universities/colleges should be aware of.

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Contextual offers

Aimed at making it a level playing field across the country.

Often universities will lower their offer **by at least 2 grades**, sometimes making them unconditional if the application is strong enough.

Contextual offers usually based upon:

- ❑ FSM / PP status
- ❑ First in family to go to university
- ❑ EAL
- ❑ School OFSTED grade / Average progress score
- ❑ Teacher / cover situation in subjects they have studied
- ❑ Personal circumstances which could have affected their GCSEs / predicted grades

Psychology, Anglia Ruskin -
Unconditional offer

Geology, Bristol - **BBC**; UCL - **CCC**

Medicine, King's College - **ABB**

Foundation Years

The majority of university courses now offer Foundation years. These are an extra year of study acting as a bridge between A Levels and university. Offers for these are much lower than for first year entry.

Courses on the Astrophoria Foundation Year



CEMS

Chemistry, Engineering and Materials Science Foundation Year at the University of Oxford

[Find out more >](#)



Humanities

Humanities Foundation Year at the University of Oxford

[Find out more >](#)



Law

Law Foundation Year at the University of Oxford

[Find out more >](#)



PPE

Philosophy, Politics and Economics Foundation Year at the University of Oxford

[Find out more >](#)

A screenshot of the University of Cambridge website's Foundation Year page. The page features a dark purple header with the University of Cambridge logo and navigation links: 'Study at Cambridge', 'About the University', 'Research at Cambridge', and 'Quick links'. Below the header, the title 'Foundation Year' is displayed in white. A secondary navigation bar includes links for 'Home', 'Meet the team', 'Foundation Year Course', 'Applying', 'Events', 'Teachers and Advisors', 'News', and 'Contact'. The main content area features three circular icons: a brain with a downward arrow, a stack of books labeled 'SOCIAL SCIENCES', 'HUMANITIES', and 'ARTS', and a graduation cap. At the bottom, there is a dark grey bar with the text 'Interested in applying for 2024 entry?' and '1 of 3'.

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Personal statement - what do you need to have?

75% super curricular focussed

The New Personal Statement Questions

- 1) Why do you want to study this course or subject
- 1) How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject
- 1) What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

Link for further detail.

<https://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-to-university/writing-your-personal-statement/the-new-personal-statement-for-2026#the-new-personal-statement-questions>

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What should students be doing now for University Applicants?

Write Their personal Statement



The only section you have full control over



Your only chance to market themselves individually



The same for all of your choices



A maximum of 4,000 characters, or 47 lines



A minimum of 1,000 characters



There isn't a spelling or grammar check



No formatting is allowed

They therefore need to be doing...

- Research - Universities & courses
- Super curricular activities - Use Uniforg
- Work experience (14th - 18th July)
- Focus on this year's studies

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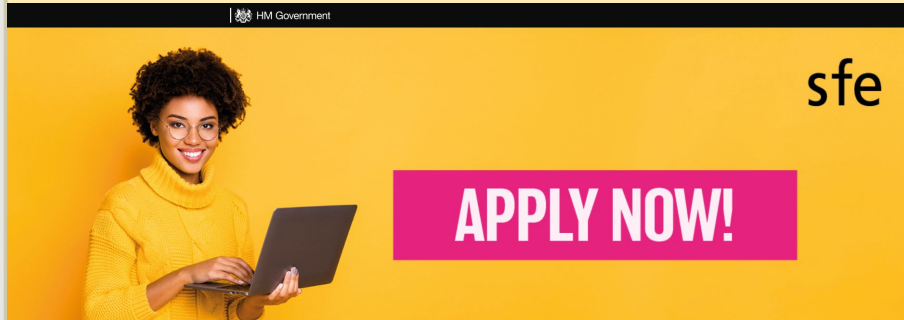
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Student Finance The student's debt, not parents/carers!



Students apply for
Tuition fee loans
Living Cost loans
Reapply each year

Parent(s)/Carer(s) support the application

The amount available to be borrowed is based on parental/ carer income, where the university is, the university fees, whether the university is publicly or privately funded, if the course is accelerated, the year of the course.
Note some courses are part or wholly bursary funded.

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Option 2 - Apprenticeships



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WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

- A combination of work and study
- Various models of delivery
 - Day Release / Block Release / Remote Study / In House Study
- Various programme levels to suit you, with progression routes
- Supported by an Assessor from the College
- 3-6 year programmes

THE PERKS OF BEING AN APPRENTICE?

- Earn while you learn.
- Being paid as an employee, even when you attend college
- Apprentice Minimum Wage for Level 3 is £7.55ph.
- No tuition fees. Costs are covered by the employer (with government funding)
- Debt Free! The average University students debt is over £50,000.

However- They are very competitive, expect to apply to at least 20

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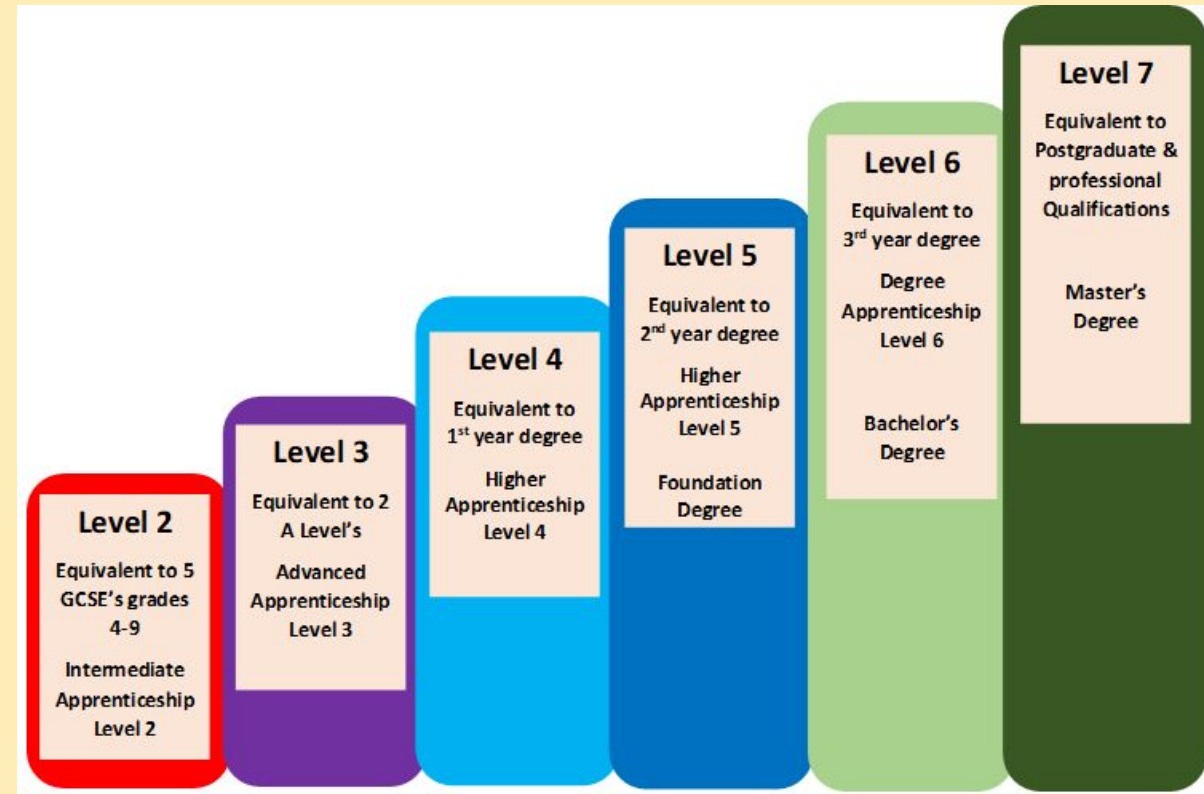
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Dispelling the myths

1) *Apprenticeships are only available in manual industries*

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Accountancy | Countryside Management |
| Agriculture | Early Years & Childcare |
| Animal Care & Management | Electrical & Plumbing |
| Art, Design & Media | Equine Studies |
| Automotive | Fashion & Textiles |
| Business, Management & Human Resources | Food Manufacturing & Technology |
| Catering & Hospitality | Horticulture & Landscape Design |
| Civil Engineering | Health & Social Care |
| Computing & IT | Nuclear |
| Construction | Sports Coaching & Fitness |

2) *Apprenticeships are for people who don't do well at school*



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3) You can only start an Apprenticeships in September

This all depends on the curriculum delivery. A number of Apprenticeship run a Roll On/Roll Off model, which means you can start your Apprenticeship at various times in the year.

4) Apprenticeships are only for School Leavers

Apprenticeships are for anyone over the age of 16.

National Apprenticeship Service

 GOV.UK

Find an apprenticeship

[Sign in / Create account](#)

Find an apprenticeship

Search and apply for an apprenticeship in England

Search [Browse](#)

Keywords (optional)

Can include job title, employer or reference number

All

Your location

Enter postcode, town or city or [use current location](#)

Within

5 miles

Apprenticeship level

All levels

Help

[How to search for an apprenticeship](#) (interactive walkthrough)

0800 015 0400

[Contact us](#)

[About apprenticeships](#)

[Find a traineeship](#)

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

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Option 3 - The World of Work

- Students will need to have a CV (and covering letter) to support an application.
- Unifrog can support students with how to structure a CV.
- We can support students for interview preparation should they need it.
- As it stands, students should **not** be working for more than 10 hours a week - they must be prioritising their studies!

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