

UK UNIVERSITY APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All applications are made online through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service: UCAS. You do not apply to universities individually. Applications are made between September and January for the following year. Oxford and Cambridge* applications, and applications for medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, have to be made by mid-October.

* [note: you can only apply for **EITHER** Oxford **OR** Cambridge, but not both at the same time]

You need the school instructions to make an application.

General information about what courses exist and where they can be found:

- By consulting the UCAS website at **www.ucas.com** This will give you information about all the courses, and links to the universities' own websites. It also has information about finance and much more.
- By reading the prospectuses of individual universities. You can read and order them online, or by looking at the many which are kept on the bookshelves in the Study Area. However, you should also send for your own. All the addresses are on the UCAS website.
- By consulting the Brian Heap book and the guides on Economics, Engineering, health and Social Sciences which are kept in the Orientamento room.

How to apply

Applications are made on-line using the UCAS Apply system. You can use your own computer or one at school. There is a UCAS application fee of £23, or £12 if you make only one choice (2013 figures), payable on-line by Credit Card once you have completed your application

The school will provide detailed instructions on how to fill in the online application form. It is essential that you collect these instructions and follow them as a lot of time can be wasted otherwise.

Applications cannot be made until September of 7th year.

Procedure:

You can choose up to five courses, including more than one course at the same university if you wish. There is no order of preference.

Every applicant must have a **personal referee** who will discuss your application with you and give advice. The referee should be a teacher in the English section who teaches you at the moment, but does not have to teach the subject you are applying for. The application cannot be started until your referee has signed an agreement form, which must be returned to the Careers coordinator. Applications will not be processed without a referee agreement.

The referee writes a **reference** based on the comments of your teachers, and has to predict

the grades you are likely to get in your Bac subjects. Also on the form will be your **6th year end-of-year grades**

As part of the application, you will have to write a **personal statement** explaining why you have chosen your particular course(s) and why you think you deserve a place. Your referee will help you with this. Oxford, Cambridge and some other universities may also ask you later to send examples of written work, so save anything useful. A portfolio of art work is essential for art-based courses.

The universities will use the reference, your personal statement and your 6th year grades to decide whether to offer you a place. They may also use **extra tests** – see below.

You can follow the progress of your application online via the ‘Track’ system. This will be used by UCAS and the universities to contact you e.g. to invite you for an interview.

Extra tests

1. Subject tests

More and more universities/subjects are requiring extra tests. For Medicine and Law, in particular, you will probably be asked to take an extra test [BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT . . .] for which you will have to register as early as July in 6th year. Oxford and Cambridge also have their own tests for certain subjects. These tests are used to help assess your suitability for your chosen course. Some tests can be done at school, depending on dates, but for others you may have to travel to Milan.

All necessary tests are indicated on the universities' course details, and there is a reminder on the UCAS application form. It is **your responsibility** to find out if a test is needed and to take any steps necessary.

Please inform Mrs Pacitti if you are required to take a test by email at catherine.fodeypacitti@var-eursc.org.

2. English language tests

These tests are also increasingly required for non-native speakers. There is no standard policy; it depends on the university and the course. Sometimes a letter from the school can remove this requirement, but we cannot insist. L3 applicants are even more likely to be asked to provide a test result, typically Cambridge Advanced/Proficiency or IELTS, before taking up a place. The school can advise you where to take these tests, but we do not organise them.

What happens next ?

The universities receive your application from UCAS. (**Note:** a university only sees your application to its course – not to anywhere else.)

They may ask you to come to interview.

Then they either

- _make you an unconditional offer - only for people who already have their Bac!
- _make you a conditional offer (e.g. an overall grade X in the Bac with an Y in one or more subjects)
- _reject you

Each time a university makes a decision about you, you are informed directly by them and through UCAS, until you have heard from all your choices. You can follow the progress of your application online via the 'Track' system. This will be used by UCAS and the universities to contact you e.g. to invite you for an interview. Once all Universities have replied you have to decide which offers to keep and which to reject. You are allowed one Firm acceptance and one Insurance choice, and you have to let UCAS know by the beginning of May onwards, depending on when you get your final reply.

If you don't get any offers, or you have rejected any offers, you can use the 'UCAS Extra' system which sends your application to universities that still have places for the subject you've chosen. You apply to one extra university at a time. This process starts in February of 7th year.

When you get your Bac results there are at least 3 possibilities:

1. You get the grades for your Firm choice, and confirm that you will be going there. You decline your Insurance choice.
2. You don't get the grades for your Firm choice, but you do get the grades for your Insurance choice, and confirm that you will be going there. You decline your Firm choice.
3. You don't get the grades for either choice, and decide to go through Clearing in August. This is when all the remaining places are advertised by the universities.

NOTE: In case 1, you don't have the option of declining your Firm acceptance and choosing your Insurance offer. If you really wanted to go there you would have put it first.

In case 2, if you have only missed the required grades by a small margin, you may be able to negotiate with your Firm choice to take you anyway. You will have to contact them directly.

What you should be doing now you have read this is:

- thinking about career choices
- thinking about courses
- thinking about which universities or colleges have the best courses for you
- investigating www.ucas.com - there is a lot of useful information in addition to universities and courses
- deciding who you will ask to be your referee. It must be someone from the English section who teaches you at the moment
- contacting the universities you are interested in and ask for a prospectus (for entry in 2014)
- thinking about your personal statement