

UCAS

A  
student  
guide to  
the  
application  
process  
entry 2010

## The Application Procedure

### What is UCAS?

UCAS is the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. UCAS is based in Cheltenham and works as a centre for the collection, processing and distribution of university and college applications on behalf of the higher education institutions in Britain. **All** applications for higher education places **must** go through UCAS.

### How does the UCAS system work?

You complete a web-based application form. You can complete this anywhere you have access to the internet. This form is sent to UCAS, together with an application fee of £17 which is paid to the finance office before the form is sent. UCAS then send your application for out to the **FIVE** universities of your choice within a matter of days. All applicants have a maximum of 5 choices, but if you are doing dentistry, medicine or veterinary medicine/science you must make 1 of your choices a different course altogether (e.g. biomedical sciences).

### What do universities and colleges do? Make offers!

Once they have received your form, the universities and colleges will consider your application, looking at whether you are likely to make the grades, how interested you are in the subject, your potential for succeeding at degree level. If they want you, they'll send you an **OFFER**. This will either ask for certain grades (often in particular subjects), or for a total point score. For popular courses the university may invite you for an interview.

For dentistry, medicine and health related courses, veterinary medicine/sciences, Cambridge/Oxford, all teaching courses, they will definitely interview you and there are some tests for these courses.

Any of your chosen universities may instead reject you and this can sometimes be quite along time after you have submitted your form.

### What do I do next? Accept offers!

You should receive between one and five offers but in any case, you will receive a decision from all five. Decisions will be sent formally by post. Your next step is to choose two offers which you will hold. One is '**FIRM**'. This is your first choice. The other is '**INSURANCE**'. Your firm offer will probably be asking for good grades – the grades you realistically hope you will get if you work hard between now and June. The insurance offer you choose should be one which asks for lower grades – it really is insurance in case you do not perform as well as expected. An example might be a firm offer of BBC and an insurance offer of CCC.

## **What are the important deadlines?**

**15 October 2009** - application deadline for the receipt at UCAS of applications for all medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and veterinary science courses and for all courses at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

**15 January 2010** - application deadline for the receipt at UCAS of applications for all courses except those listed above with a 15 October deadline, and art and design courses with a 24 March deadline.

**24 March 2010** - application deadline for the receipt at UCAS of applications for art and design courses except those listed with a 15 January deadline.

### **30 June 2010**

Last date for the receipt of all other applications for immediate consideration. Those received after this date will be held for Clearing.

It is important you get your application in as soon as possible. Most universities fill up their places (i.e. make offers) as and when they receive applications from UCAS. So, the longer you leave it the fewer places there will be available.

**We aim to have all of our students application sent by October half term, 23/10/09.**

## **What if I want to take a gap year?**

If you are planning to take a gap year, you need to defer entry. It is best to make your application this year and choose the start date as **September 2011** in the course choice section of the form. This tells the universities that you want to start a year later. You are advised to check directly with your chosen institute that they are happy for you to take a year out – some maths and science departments are not keen on gap years!

## **Where can I get more information about UCAS?**

A good starting point is the advice centre in the UCAS website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). This website has the completed list of courses and is updated daily. The UCAS website has direct links to all the universities – these offer the most precise information about course requirements.

## **How do I know what the universities are looking for?**

The first thing to make very clear is that you have to do your own research on courses. Most teachers, even those who have graduated recently, can't possibly know what the enormous range of courses are, where they are and what they are asking for. After all, there are over 55,000 different courses! Teachers can, of course, advise you on whether you might get the grades for a particular course, what some universities are like and what some subjects are like.

**The real information finding has to be done by you!**

**PROFILES**, are available on their websites. These show you the desirable characteristics and qualifications needed for particular courses. Some faculties produce brochures and information leaflets which focus on particular courses. Universities with a collegiate system, for example, Cambridge, Oxford and Durham will also have individual college pamphlets. If you can't find them in school order them through the internet, or phone up – they are free and **ADMISSIONS OFFICES** are there specifically to help you. It's important to remember that the universities are in competition with each so it's in their best interest to provide you with glossy and often, persuasive, material!

Finally, visit the universities you are interested in. You will; be allowed to take some days off school to go too university **OPEN DAYS** (many of these happen after you have sent in your UCAS form),but if you have missed the open day, or you start to become concerned that you'll be missing important lessons, then go at the weekend. Phone Admissions Tutors in advance and ask for advice. You need to keep a balance. There's no point going to lots of open days in the week if it means you miss out on lessons and end up not getting the grades!

## **So, what do I do now?**

- Do the research and fill in the application form on the computer. We are using APPLY – the web based versions.
- The school **buzzword** is bowling.
- Write your personal statement in MSWord make sure you save a copy, then paste it into the UCAS form.
- E mail your mentor your personal statement and ask for advice.
- Make sure you check the spelling and grammar carefully on your personal statement.
- Once you are happy that you have completed the whole form ask your mentor, Mr Hill or Ms Hilleard to check it online.
- When you have completed your form, your mentor, Mr Hill, Ms Hilleard or Mr Lidstone will then complete a reference and the whole form will be sent via email to UCAS.
- Before you form will be sent you must make the £17 payment to the finance office. **No money, no send.**

## **Student finance**

From 2009 student finance applications are integrated with UCAS. During completion of the UCAS application elements of your data will be selected for your finance application. When you begin your application for finance after you have all of your offers, you will be offered the opportunity to integrate data from UCAS. Agreeing to this will save you a great deal of time and ensure correlation of information.

A full session on student finance will follow next year.

## **Art and Design students**

You can apply through Route A and Route B (i.e. courses displayed within blue boxes in the UCAS Directory). The Route B deadline is 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010, but the Route A deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010, so get them in together. Many people chose to do a foundation year first.....

## **Art Foundation**

Many students choose to do a one year foundation course before they go onto a degree programme. This course is classed as FE, further education, not HE. As a result, you do not apply through UCAS. Instead, phone the college you are interested in directly and ask for an application form ( each college has their own form). Work with your mentor on this in the same way that you would if you were applying to UCAS. Pass your completed form to your mentor, Ms Hilleard or Mr Hill.

## **Nursing**

There are two routes –

1. a degree course through UCAS, applying as for any other degree.
2. a diploma course through UCAS applying as for any other degree.

## **Music**

If you wish to apply to a music college, academy or conservatoire in the UK, you need to go through CUKAS – [www.cukas.as.uk](http://www.cukas.as.uk) . The following music schools recruit through CUKAS:

Birmingham Conservatoire	Leeds College of Music
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	Trinity College of Music
Royal College of Music	
Royal Northern College of Music	
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama	

The following **do not** recruit through CUKAS. Apply direct to these conservatoires.

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama  
Royal Academy of Music

**Closing dates are early 1 October 2009, so get started!**

**See Mrs William Jones or Mrs Boulton for help with Music courses.**

## **Useful websites**

[www.ucas.cu.uk](http://www.ucas.cu.uk) – guide to application process and typical offers. Links to universities.

[www.aimhigher.ac.uk](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk) – fantastic site covering every aspect of the higher education application process.

<http://www.ucas.ac.uk/foundation/index.html> - UCAS information on art foundation.

[www.cukas.ac.uk](http://www.cukas.ac.uk) - applications to all music colleges and conservatoires in the UK.