



DSL V

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An E-ACT academy

2015 – 2016 Student Guide to UCAS Applications

The UCAS logo consists of the letters 'UCAS' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter 'A' is stylized, with its top bar and right side in red, while the left side and bottom are black.

Name:

Tutor Group:

RECORD YOUR DETAILS HERE

Username:	
Password:	
School Buzzword:	DSL2016
Security Questions:	
1.	
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Personal ID No:	
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UCAS Customer Service Unit Tel. No.	0871 468 0468

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to help you through the process of applying to Universities through UCAS. The APPLY system is simple to follow, but help is always on hand if you have any difficulties.

Your tutor should always be the first port of call as they not only know how the system works, but know you and will be able to help with writing personal statements. They should be involved at every stage of the process and are more than willing to offer advice on courses and institutions where they can, or to point you in the right direction if they themselves do not have the necessary knowledge. It is also important for you to remember that they will be the ones writing your reference!

Further assistance and advice can be obtained from your teachers, tutors and Mr Ellis. The onus is on you to make the most of the help that is on offer. If you do, the chances are you will end up with the strongest application possible. Good Luck!

CHOOSING UNIVERSITIES AND COURSES

You can use a number of resources to help you decide on career/course/university. You can use the Stamford Test on the UCAS website or a website such as www.fasttomato.com and subject teachers may have been doing a good deal of work to help you fully appreciate the array of choices in their subject area.

Careers – Naturally course choice may well be governed by career choice and it is essential to leave options open if you are unsure. Remember, 60% of all graduate jobs are open to applicants regardless of subject studied.

You will find some useful resources in the library to help you when looking for the right University and course. There's the 'Heap Guide to University Courses, the Times Good University Guide and others. There are also many University prospectuses in the black magazine files in the Study Centre, but they can also be obtained by ordering them directly from the institution or from the website.

Look at the entry requirements for any courses that you're interested in and then ask yourself whether you're likely to achieve those grades. Set your sights high, but do not set yourself unrealistic goals. If in doubt, talk to subject teachers about predicted A level grades.

The best way of finding out whether you're going to like a University or not is to visit it. Arrange to attend an open day and make sure you talk to as many people, especially students, as you can.

Three or four open days are enough for anybody and in fact any more can be counter-productive. The following websites lists the open days for Universities: www.opendays.com, <http://www.universitytasterdays.com/>.

MY A LEVEL SUBJECTS

Complete the following table with details of your A Levels:

Subject	Target Grade	Expected Grade	UCAS Points	AS Grade

Use the following table to work out UCAS points:

AS	A2	TARIFF POINTS
	A*	140
	A	120
		110
	B	100
		90
	C	80
		70
A	D	60
B		50
C	E	40
D		30
E		20

Key Terms:

UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
Russell Group	An association of 24 top research universities, e.g. Durham Uni
BSc, BA, B.Ed.	Type of degree course, e.g. Bachelor of Science
Undergraduate	What you are before you graduate at the end of your degree
Tariff Points	Points awarded for AS/A2 grades (see table above)
Firm Choice	Your first choice of university from those you applied to
Insurance Choice	Your back up choice (which should have a lower offer)
HEI	Higher Education Institution

MAKING CHOICES

A maximum of five choices is available. Some students make just one choice at a local university; others go for two different courses; the majority of students pick the same subject at five different places. Students applying for Medicine / Veterinary - related courses can only apply to four, with the fifth choice being unrelated to this.

Tip: Making the right choices matters - students should only apply to places they want to go to. If they have not used all their choices, they might be able to add another later, depending on their status.

With over 50,000 courses in the UCAS system, and each with a unique code, it is very important that you double-check that you are applying for the correct course.

Tip: Once you have found a course that you really like, similar courses at other universities will have the same course code (e.g. CM89 = Psychology and Criminology)

Each university can view the application at the same time; choices are not listed in preference order.

Universities cannot see where else you have applied. They will only see any other choices after you have replied to your offers.

The distance between the chosen university and your family home will affect you as well as your parents.

Making your five UCAS course choices – top tips

Always refer to the entry requirements

Are your choices all achievable? It's a good idea to have a mix of ambitious, on target and safe course choices based on your predicted grades.

If you're predicted to achieve a BBC at A-level, for instance, try and pick five UCAS choices with entry requirements ranging from around BBB through to CCC. That will mean you'll be able to use your insurance choice wisely later on and have a 'best case scenario' option available if you feel over the course of your A2s that you could achieve better grades than you've been predicted.

If all your five choices are asking for the same entry requirements, it means you won't have any insurance choice if you don't get the grades later on. It also means you're increasing your chances of not receiving any offers, if the entry requirements are the same - or higher - than your predictions.

Keep your options open

Think it's a waste of time to choose courses with lower entry requirements? Ok – but it's a risky tactic, and could mean you're left high and dry later down the line if things don't work out.

For more inspiration when picking alternative courses, try looking at related or joint honours courses at a university you're keen on, or take a fresh look into a university you've not considered (or perhaps not even heard of) before – there are more than 300 universities and colleges to choose from!

Research, research, research

You can read about courses in detail on the university and UCAS websites, and compare different courses right here on Which? University.

Things to compare include:

- course modules.
- student satisfaction scores.
- graduate employment stats.
- the location and type of university.

Choose carefully

Pick five course choices based on places you'd actually, realistically, be happy to go to – not two or three you like and a couple of 'filler' courses you've not properly researched.

You don't know which universities will go on to make you an offer, and can't guarantee that your favourites will come back with the positive news you want.

THE FINAL 5

Use the table below to record your final 5 choices that will form your UCAS application:

University	Course	Course Code	UCAS Tariff	Expected A2 Grades	AS Grades Achieved

THE APPLICATION FEE

2016 entry: the application fee is £23 for a maximum of five choices and £12 for a single choice

You will be responsible for paying the UCAS fee yourself. You do this towards the end of the APPLY process. You can do this by debit/credit card.

The school will not make UCAS payments for you.

THE APPLICATION JOURNEY

	Who Responsible?	Details
1	Student	Applicant researches and finds courses
2	Student	Register online with UCAS Apply (July)
3	Student	Completes form and processes payment (September)
4	School	Academic reference added by school
5	School	School sends form electronically to UCAS
6	UCAS	UCAS processes form (including personal statement similarity detection) and forwards to chosen HEIs
7	Universities	HEIs submit decisions (offer or unsuccessful). This can take from a few weeks to several months
8	Student	Applicant views decisions on UCAS Track
9	Student	Applicant replies to offers on Track (Firm / Insurance)
10	Universities	HEIs confirm places when results are released

- HEI = Higher Education Institution
- You have a maximum of 5 choices
- Medicine/Veterinary/Dentistry = 4 choices (can put a fifth, different choice, e.g. Biochemistry)
- 'Invisibility' – Universities do not know where else you have applied until you make your firm/insurance choice

UCAS Extra

- Operates from January until the end of June
- This is for unsuccessful applicants who have **no offers** from HEIs
- You can only make one choice at a time through UCAS Extra but can keep re-applying

The process post application – Applicant replies

- When you have decisions from **ALL** of your choices, if you have offers you will be asked to make replies (and you'll be given a date to reply by on Track) – you do not have to reply to universities until you've heard from all five of your choices
- UCAS will send you reminders but if you fail to reply by your reply date your offers will be declined by default
- You will be able to hold a maximum of 2 offers (others **declined**):
 - **Firm** (This is the main choice/place where you want to go. If you meet the grade conditions you will be placed there)
 - **Insurance** (This is your second choice and only comes into play if you are not placed with your firm choice.) Your insurance choice must have lower entrance requirements than the Firm choice – over 40% of applicants get this the wrong way round! However, if you are applying to a Russell Group University with AAB requirements, you could apply to a non-Russell Group university with AAB requirements too

Clearing

- Clearing operates from mid July to mid September
- Clearing course vacancies are listed on the UCAS website
- On A Level results day, if you do not get in to your firm or insurance choice university, you will spend the day on the phone to universities looking for places
- When you are offered a place you go into UCAS Track and add your clearing place
- If you have any offers pending you must get rid of this offer first by contacting that university and **asking to be declined** which can take universities a while to do

Adjustment

- Adjustment is for applicants who have had their FIRM choice place accepted and who have MET all conditions of the offer or have EXCEEDED at least one condition
- You can hold on to a confirmed place whilst seeking a more aspirational one for UP TO 5 DAYS
- There is no vacancies list, you must contact and liaise with universities directly who will then make you an offer
- When ringing a university in this situation you would explain to them that you are an 'adjustment student' and 'have they got a place for you on this course'
- You can even enquire / apply for a different course and ask the university if they'll accept a new Personal Statement in support

THE UCAS PROCESS

TIME	STUDENT	TEACHER / TUTOR
June / July	Students receive UCAS APPLY training during UCAS presentation as well as during the Curriculum Enrichment Day on the 10 th July	Training on the UCAS APPLY process given to all staff involved
July	Register with UCAS APPLY and start to complete the form by filling in the 'Personal Details' section	
July	Complete 'Personal Details' section of the UCAS form by the 14 th July. First draft of personal statement to your tutor by the last week of term in July. Students will collect (from their tutor) a subject reference sheet for each of their subjects. They will fill in Part A then hand it to their subject teachers to complete Part B	Subject teachers begin to write references on 'Word' documents and email them to tutors
September	Complete the rest of the UCAS application form with the help of your tutor. Once the personal statement is completed, the student proof reads and prints off a copy for the tutor to check and use to write the reference	Tutors start to write the references. Deadline for reference completion for Oxbridge and Medicine/Veterinary Science/Dentistry students is 19th September and for all other applications is 3rd November. Tutors will check student progress regularly on APPLY using Advisor Track
September / October	Student receives the go-ahead to put personal statement onto APPLY	Once personal statement has been seen and all subject references are received, Tutor completes reference and adds to the application and emails notification of this to Mrs Waugh. Tutor checks completed application form and gives OK to student
October / November	Student makes payment online and clicks ' Send to Referee '	Tutor notifies Mrs Waugh when references are complete for checking
October / November	Student is informed that the application form has been sent to the tutor	Application and reference checked. Any issues are taken up with Tutor/Student. Tutor approves UCAS form and refers application to Mrs Waugh
October / November	Student receives confirmation from UCAS of received application	Mrs Waugh checks UCAS application and reference and once satisfied SENDS TO UCAS
December onwards (Application deadline 15 th December)	Wait for decisions from universities who will reply to you by March 31 st	

HOW TO USE THE APPLY SYSTEM

The APPLY system is available for use wherever there is internet access. The following guide should take you through all the necessary steps to make a successful application.

Go to <http://www.ucas.com/>



Click on Apply 2016



Click on Register/Log-in to use Apply



Click on Register and follow the on-screen instructions (your username is allocated by UCAS and is case sensitive)



After entering your Personal Details, you will be asked to choose a password, which must 6-14 characters long, must have at least one lowercase letter (a-z) and one uppercase letter (A-Z). It must also contain at least one number (0-9)



Answer the 4 Security Questions
(Remember you may be asked to disclose your answers verbally to UCAS)



Record your Password (and your answers to the Security Questions) **now** as you will need them every time you log in to Apply. Remember that Passwords are case sensitive



You are then allocated a Username. Record your Username **now** as this will not be displayed again and you will need this to log in to APPLY



Check your email for your email verification code



Start filling in your application form now by clicking **log-in** or return later when you will need your **Username** and **Password** to log in



When you click log-in for the first time, you will be asked how you are applying. You must click on '**through my School/College**'

Enter the school buzzword: **DSL2016**



WARNING

If you haven't been asked for a buzzword, you have not followed the correct procedure. You must register with DSLV, otherwise we will be unable to access your application form to add your reference and you will have to redo it!



Select your **Tutor Group** from the drop down menu. If you don't put yourself in the correct group your tutor will be unable to access your application form



You are now ready to start completing your application form



If you haven't already verified your email, you will get a notice (in green) asking you to do so. Follow the directions



Remember to record your **Personal ID Number**. You will need this number if you have to contact UCAS

Make a note of username password and security questions at the front of this booklet.

Buzzword: DSLV2016

REMEMBER

- Don't worry it is impossible to accidentally send the form to UCAS!
- You can word process your personal statement offline and then paste it in to your application
- **Make sure you print off a copy to give to your tutor/parents for checking before sending to the Sixth Form Administrator**
- Payment is to be made by credit/debit card on-line
- Only when you are completely satisfied that the form is complete and accurate should you click on the '**declaration/send to Administrator**' circle. At this point, your form goes to your Tutor who can send it back if there are any problems

COMMON MISTAKES

Personal Details

- E-mail address – no stupid e-mail addresses; e.g. love2party@bt.com
- Name and Age – often entered incorrectly. You must use your formal name including middle names.
- Occupational Background – this is the occupation of one of your parents

Choices and Predicted Grades

- Check you have applied for **appropriate courses** – talk to tutors/teachers about grades required and whether you are likely to get some achievable offers. There is no point in applying to HEIs whose course entry requirements are AAB if you are predicted CCC – it would be a wasted choice. **Know your target grades and apply to appropriate universities / courses.**
- Check you have/have not deferred entry.

Employment

- Check you have listed all employment. If you have only done babysitting, this is valid employment and should be listed. Obviously if the list is long you may need to be more selective

Personal Statement

- The personal statement is supposed to be just that – personal. Spelling and Grammar are important, as is layout and structure
- Leave a space between paragraphs – easier for the reader
- Make sure you have sold yourself and focused on the skills and attributes you have gained rather than just listing experience

- Don't start with 'My name is
- You have 4000 characters or 47 lines of text – whichever comes first
- You cannot use bold, italics or underline

AFTER APPLYING

- After you've sent the application form to the referee, your tutor will write their reference about you based on the references from your subject teachers. Tutors will add this to your application form. Mrs Waugh will check the reference
- Mrs Waugh cannot process the application until payment has been made
- Mrs Waugh will carry out a final check on the form before the form is finally sent to UCAS
- UCAS will notify you by post/email and through 'Track' to confirm receipt of your application. This letter will also include your personal UCAS number
- You can check on the progress of your application at any time by visiting the UCAS website (www.ucas.com) and using your Personal ID number
- Once you have received a reply from all of the institutions you have to decide on a first (firm) choice and an insurance choice – this has to be done by a date in early May

TIMETABLE FOR 2015 APPLICATIONS

Mid-September 2015	2016 entry applications can be sent to us.
10 October 2015	DSLVL deadline for applications to Oxford or Cambridge, and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine/Science courses
15 October 2015	Deadline for receipt at UCAS of applications to the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, and all with choices for courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science to reach UCAS.
15 December 2015	DSLVL deadline for the completion of all applications by students
15 January 2016	Deadline for receipt of applications at UCAS for all courses except those listed with a 15 October deadline and art and design courses with 24 March deadline. Go to Course Search to check application deadlines for courses.
25 February 2016	If you are eligible to use Extra, you can refer yourself to another choice.
24 March 2016	Deadline for the receipt of applications at UCAS for art and design courses except those listed with a 15 January deadline. Go to Course Search to check application deadlines for courses.
31 March 2016	If we receive your application by 15 January, the universities and colleges should aim to have sent us their decisions by this date (but they can take longer).

6 May 2016	If we receive all decisions from your universities/colleges by 31 March, you need to reply to any offers by this date (unless you are applying through Extra). If we don't receive your replies, we will decline your offers on your behalf.
7 May 2016	If you applied by 15 January and are waiting for decisions, universities and colleges need to send us their decisions by this date. If they don't, we will make any outstanding choices unsuccessful on their behalf.
6 June 2016	If we receive all decisions from your universities/colleges by 9 May, you need to reply to any offers by this date (unless you are applying through Extra). If we don't receive your replies, we will decline your offers on your behalf.
25 June 2016	If we receive all decisions from your universities or colleges by 7 June, you need to reply to any offers by this date (unless you are applying through Extra). If we don't receive your replies, we will decline the offers on your behalf.
30 June 2016	If you send your application to us by this date, we will send it to your chosen universities and colleges. If we receive your application after this date, you'll be entered into Clearing.
2 July 2016	Last date to apply through Extra.
16 July 2016	If you applied by 30 June and are waiting for decisions, universities and colleges need to send us their decisions by this date. If they don't, we will make any outstanding choices unsuccessful on their behalf.
23 July 2016	If we receive all decisions from your universities/colleges by 18 July, you need to reply to any offers by this date (this includes if you are applying through Extra). If we don't receive your replies, we will decline your offers on your behalf.
August 2015 to be confirmed	SQA results are published and the Scottish Clearing vacancy information service starts.
18 August 2016	A Level results are published and the full Clearing vacancy information service starts. Adjustment opens for registration.
31 August 2016	Adjustment closes.
21 September 2016	Last date we will accept applications for courses starting in 2015.

30 September 2016	The Clearing vacancy search is closed after this date. You should contact universities direct to discuss vacancies. Clearing choices can still be added in Track.
21 October 2016	Last date to add a Clearing choice. This is the last date a university or college can accept an applicant in Clearing.

STUDENT AND TUTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for:

- Seeking advice about institutions and courses they are interested in
- Attending open days at institutions as part of their research, but not attending more than four
- Completing their UCAS application form online
- Collecting subject reference forms (from their tutor) and requesting the reference from each of their subject teachers
- Writing their personal statements with assistance from their Tutor/Parents/Subject Teachers
- **Thoroughly** checking their completed form with the final checklist before giving a printed copy to their Tutor for checking
- Only sending their UCAS form to the referee **AFTER** being given the go ahead by their tutor
- Making payment on-line using a debit/credit card
- Making decisions, with help, of firm acceptance and insurance by the date given by UCAS

Subject teachers are responsible for:

- Writing a subject reference for any students in their A Level class that are applying to University

Tutors are responsible for:

- Giving impartial advice on institutions and courses where they can or pointing their tutees in the right direction for advice e.g. subject teachers, Sixth Form Centre resources, Mr Ellis etc.
- Assisting tutees with their personal statements and their UCAS forms
- Checking that the details are correct on their tutees' application forms
- Checking progress of the students on the APPLY / TRACK system
- Encouraging students to start/complete their UCAS forms
- Writing the school reference for their tutees and adding it to the application form
- Monitoring the offers received by their tutees

RESOURCES

There is a huge selection of information to help you decide on your next step. The Study Centre has an expanding bank of resources / books about applying to university and writing personal statements etc. and there is information on the Sixth Form Website. Staff are here to help you and your parents also may be able to give you invaluable advice.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Higher Education

<p>www.ucas.com – info on HE courses</p> <p>www.tqi.ac.uk – information on the quality of higher education institutions in the UK</p> <p>www.scit.wlv.ac.uk/ukinfo - Maps all Universities</p> <p>www.gaa.ac.uk – Quality Assurance Agency for HE</p> <p>www.qca.org.uk – all about qualifications</p> <p>www.niss.ac.uk/sites - info about UK HE institutions</p> <p>www.educationguardian.co.uk – League Tables</p> <p>www.thetimes.co.uk – League Tables</p>	<p>www.dfes.gov.uk/recognisedukdegrees - information about degree courses in the UK</p> <p>www.studentuk.com – UCAS student site</p> <p>www.opendays.com – Open Days</p> <p>www.push.co.uk – finding the right university</p> <p>www.universityoptions.co.uk – making the move</p> <p>www.panicover.com – Clearing site</p> <p>www.uniserve.co.uk – Alternative views</p> <p>www.ukcoursefinder.com – advice on choosing a course</p>
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Finance

<p>www.nusonline.co.uk – National Union of Students</p> <p>www.studentzone.org.uk – student life</p> <p>www.studentunion.co.uk – financial support</p>	<p>www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport - financial support</p> <p>www.slco.co.uk – student loan company</p> <p>www.studentfinance.direct.gov.uk – where you apply for student finance</p>
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Employment / Careers

<p>www.careers.portal.com - courses/jobs/CVs</p> <p>www.monster.co.uk – vacancies</p> <p>www.gti.co.uk – graduate jobs/work experience</p> <p>www.doctorjob.com</p>	<p>www.prospects.csu.ac.uk – graduate careers</p> <p>www.realworkrealpay.info – modern apprenticeships</p> <p>www.careersoft.co.uk – helps you make career choices</p>
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Gap Years

<p>www.bunac.org.uk – gap year with BUNAC (USA)</p> <p>www.yini.org.uk – Year in Industry</p> <p>www.csv.org.uk – volunteering opportunities</p>	<p>www.gapyear.com – year out ideas</p> <p>www.gap.org.uk – planning a gap year</p> <p>www.worldwidevolunteering.org.uk – volunteering opportunities</p>
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Student Accommodation

<p>www.bunk.com</p> <p>www.thestudentvillage.co.uk</p>	<p>www.unilodge.com</p> <p>www.anythingstudent.com</p>
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Study Centre Library

<p>The Times: Good University Guide 2014</p> <p>Heap 2014: University Degree Course Offers</p> <p>How To Books: Going to University</p> <p>The Daily Telegraph: Guide to Student Money</p> <p>MPW: How to Complete Your UCAS Application 2014</p> <p>How to Write a Winning UCAS Personal Statement</p> <p>COA: Degree Course Descriptions</p>
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So you Want to go to Oxbridge: Written by Oxbridge Students

Oxbridge Entrance: The Real Rules

The Gap Year Guidebook

Studying Abroad

Student Finance

What do Graduates do? Career planning for HE and Beyond

Medical School Interviews

Succeeding in your Medical School Interview

Succeeding in your Medical School Application

Getting into Medical School – 400 BMAT Practice Questions

Succeeding in the UKCAT

Becoming a Nurse, Midwife, Accountant, Psychologist

Getting into Business and Economics, Law, Dental School, Veterinary School, Oxford and Cambridge, Physiotherapy, Psychology courses, Engineering, Medical School, Art and Design

Careers with An Arts or Humanities Degree, a Science Degree