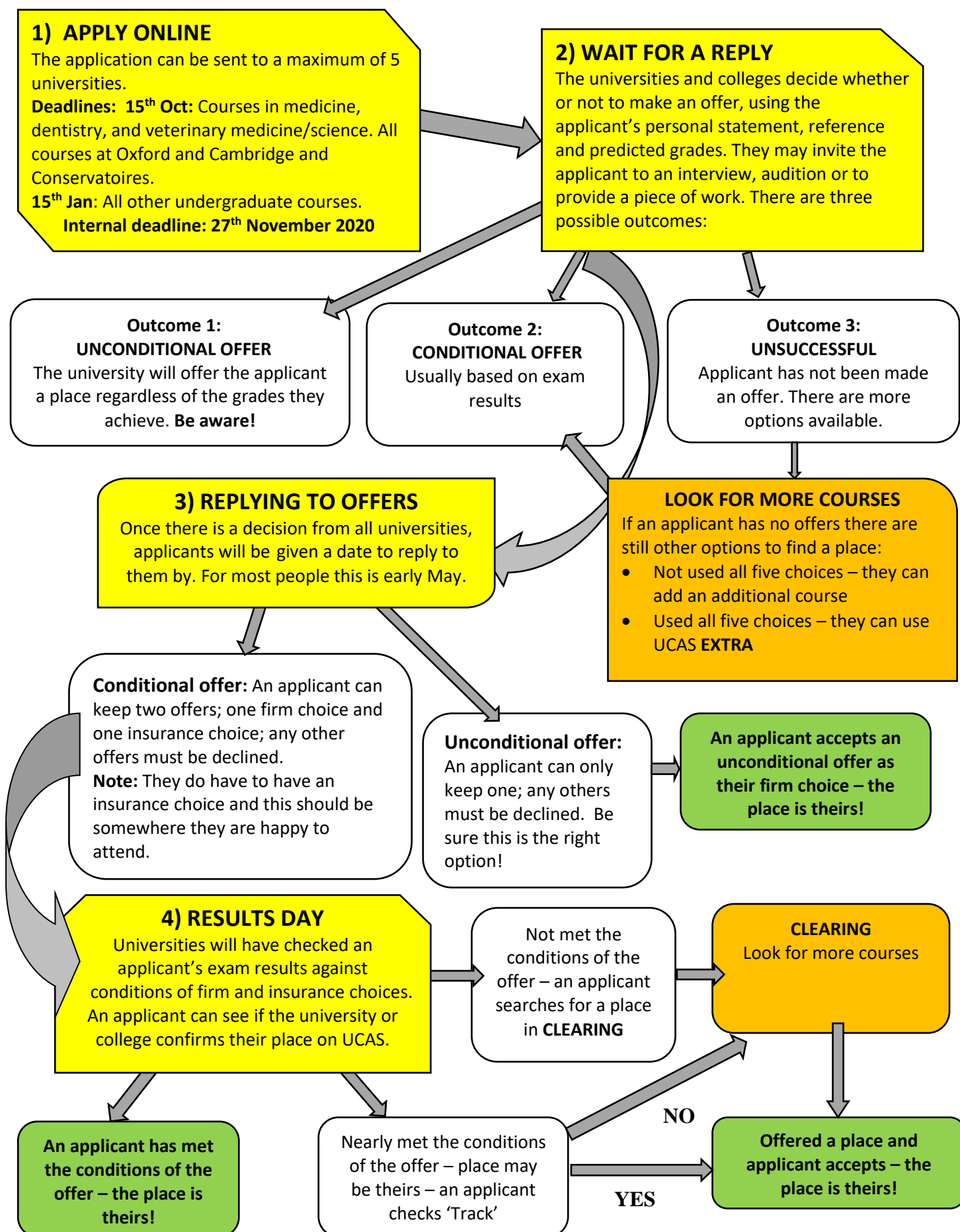




**UCAS APPLY  
A Parent/Carer  
Guide  
2020/21**

# Completing UCAS Applications Overview



## CHOOSING COURSES AND UNIVERSITIES

The hardest part of the process for many students is deciding what to study and where to study. Please rest assured that this is perfectly normal. Students need to think carefully about their skills, interests and strengths, as well as the type of learner they are. They are encouraged to consider the following:

- **WHAT TO STUDY**

- Think about what they really enjoy and will be interested in studying for the next few years.
- Remember a degree gives an indication of their ability to study at an advanced level, and for many career areas they do not have to have studied a specific subject.

- **TYPE OF COURSE**

What type of course will best suit them? Think about:

- The teaching methods used (e.g. formal lectures, smaller tutorial sessions.)
- The amount of 'contact' time (more is actually better if they are not good at independent study.)
- How courses are assessed (exams, coursework or a dissertation.)

- **OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDY ABROAD OR HAVE INDUSTRY WORK PLACEMENTS**

- Is this something that interests them or would benefit their career prospects?

- **THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

- What UCAS points/grades and experience are required to get onto the course? Students need to be *realistic* in their choices and have a range of grade requirements.

- **LOCATION**

- Too close/far from home? City/rural?
- Can they see themselves living there?

- **VALUE FOR MONEY**

- Fees charged and number of 'taught' hours
- Additional costs (materials, books, transport, trips?)
- Bursaries/scholarships available?

- **COST OF LIVING**

- This can vary a lot from one part of the country to another – big consideration.

- **SOCIAL LIFE**

- Clubs/societies, student unions, sports provision, male/female ratio.

- **LEARNING RESOURCES**

- How good is the library? What is the IT provision like?
- What are the facilities like in their subject area?

- **ACCOMMODATION**

- Are they guaranteed a place in Halls in their first year?
- What is the accommodation like? How much does it cost?
- Location – how far is it to their lecture rooms?

- **GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT**

- What is the employment rate of graduates in their subject? What types of jobs do they go into?

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

All applications for full time undergraduate courses are made online through [UCAS](#) who manage the whole process between universities and applicants. This website is full of very useful information, which will help students all the way through the process of making their decisions and completing their application.

We ask all students to register and complete the application process even if, in the end, they decide not to apply. Every year we have students who had no intention of applying and then change their mind closer to the deadline.

Students would usually use tutor time and study periods to complete their applications, however their tutor and the Sixth Form Team will be at the other end of an e-mail to help guide and support them through this process during this current period of school closure.

Although the final UCAS deadline is **January 15th**, students stand a much better chance of getting good offers if they send their application earlier. We would like students to complete and send it off by the **end of November**, where appropriate.

***If students are applying to Oxford or Cambridge, or to do Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary studies it must be sent by October 15th.***

***If students are applying to a Music Conservatoire, it must be sent by October 1<sup>st</sup>.***

Useful websites to help with the decision making process:

- [www.ukcoursefinder.com](http://www.ukcoursefinder.com)
- [www.whatuni.com](http://www.whatuni.com)
- [www.university.which.co.uk](http://www.university.which.co.uk)
- [www.unifrog.com](http://www.unifrog.com)

### **UCAS Tariff**

Most universities use UCAS points as entry requirements. UCAS points (also known as the UCAS Tariff) are a way of measuring the relative value of all post-16 qualifications in the UK. The UCAS Tariff assigns a numerical score to the possible grades that can be achieved in each type of qualification. The higher the grade students achieve, the higher the number of points.

We encourage students to choose:

- 2 aspirational courses
- 2 realistic courses
- 1 back-up option.

Other things to consider:

- Any specific subjects required? (some courses may not specify, but others may require a particular subject at a certain grade, e.g. Maths GCSE at grade 5 or above). This must be checked carefully.
- Any work experience required? Some courses have compulsory work experience requirements (e.g. many health care courses require a minimum of three relevant work placements), whilst others may just recommend experience.

A Level Grade	UCAS Points
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16
BTEC	UCAS Points
D*	56
D	48
M	32
P	24

## RESEARCHING

Once students have found courses and universities that interest them, they need to investigate these further. They should consider factors like:

- Tuition fees
- Availability of bursaries
- Typical accommodation costs
- Type of university (e.g. campus)
- University rating

Most of this information is available on the UCAS website. It is also available in the university prospectuses and the university guide, or on the university's own website. You can order prospectuses for yourself at [whatuni.com](http://whatuni.com)

### OPEN DAYS

It is a really good idea for applicants to visit the universities that interest them, to get a feel for the place and to talk to people about the courses. This year, they will need to be done virtually.

Dates for Virtual Open Days can be found online at [www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com) or by visiting university websites directly. Use this [link](#) for a virtual open days checklist and to search further open days.

## FINANCE

You can find out further information regarding Finance on the UCAS website, so that you are fully informed of what being a student involves financially.

Click on the link to find out more about:

- [Undergraduate Tuition Fees and Student Loans](#)
- [Additional Funding – Scholarships/Bursaries/Grants](#)
- [Managing money](#)

You can also investigate fees for individual universities, and the availability of bursaries, as this will vary considerably. This information can easily be found on each the university's website.

## THE APPLICATION

### **Remember:**

- If students are applying to **Oxford or Cambridge or to do Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary studies, or to a conservatoire** they will have to send their application by **October 15<sup>th</sup>**.
- For all other universities they should aim to send their application by the **end of November**, but by **Jan 15<sup>th</sup>** at the latest.

### REGISTERING

Registering is free, however, applicants will pay £26 to UCAS when they send their application online. **This only needs to be paid once they are sure they are ready to send off their application.** (Payments have to be made by debit/credit card). Students have been issued with their own guide on how to complete the application process, so please do support them with this if you can.

## COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The application consists of seven sections which can be completed in any order:

- Personal details
- Additional information
- Student finance
- Course Choices
- Education History
- Employment History
- Personal Statement

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is really the most important part of the application, so should be drafted, checked and re-drafted several times to get it right. It is the student's chance to really sell themselves. UCAS applications are judged not just on academic ability but also on personality, motivation, enthusiasm, research (knowing about the course, explaining why they chose the course) and having something to offer the wider community.

### The Latimer Arts College - 2020/21 Deadlines:

Draft 1: July 17<sup>th</sup> 2020  
Draft 2: September 18<sup>th</sup> 2020  
Draft 3: October 9<sup>th</sup> 2020  
Completed Version: October 15<sup>th</sup> 2020

There is a very useful guidance section on the [UCAS website](#).

## **ACCEPTING OFFERS**

Once a student has heard back from ALL of their choices, assuming they have received at least one offer, 'Track' will ask them to confirm their choices. At this point they need to think very carefully about any offers they have received.

Again, they need to be realistic about whether or not they are likely to achieve the points or grades being asked for.

**FIRM CHOICE:** This is their first choice out of all the offers they have received – the course they most want to do. If they gain the grades required, they are committed to take up this choice.

**INSURANCE CHOICE:** This is their back-up choice if outcomes are not as good as they had hoped. This should be a LOWER OFFER than their firm choice.

They can at any point decide to decline any of their offers, (for example if they already received good offers from other universities they would rather attend) but once they have done so they cannot change their mind!

**Once students have made their choices all other offers will automatically be declined**, so they must think carefully before deciding.

## UN-CONDITIONAL OFFERS – WARNING!

These mean that a student has already met the entry requirements, so the place is theirs if they want it! But first check the offer to see if there is anything else that they need to do.

Check the offer carefully. Even if they have already got their qualifications and have met the academic requirements, a student might still need to get a DBS or PVG check, provide proof of their results, or meet some financial/medical requirements. If it is not clear, contact the Uni or college.

Remember, by accepting an unconditional offer, a student is committing to go to that Uni or college, so they cannot make an insurance choice or be entered into Clearing.

## UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

As competition for university places is so fierce now, it is possible that a student may get some rejections. It is unlikely but if a student is unfortunate enough to get rejections from **ALL** of their choices this does not have to mean the end of their application. There are two further systems which may help them secure a place.

### UCAS EXTRA

UCAS Extra is for any students who have received rejections from all their choices or who have chosen to withdraw from, or decline, all of their original choices. **UCAS Track** will notify students if they become eligible to use Extra.

Extra allows applicants to go onto the UCAS website, identify courses which still have places available and then apply for **one additional course at a time**. This choice may be the same type of course that they applied for originally or it may be something which they feel may be less competitive. (Just be aware that the university will see the student's original personal statement!)

Once students have applied for one extra course they have to wait to see whether they have been successful and received an offer. If they do receive an offer, they have to decide whether to accept it or reject it and try again through Extra. If students do not receive an offer they become eligible again to make one more choice. Extra is normally available for use between February through to July.

### CLEARING

If a student does not secure a place through their original application and do not get an offer through UCAS Extra (or do not choose to use this option),

OR

They are unsuccessful in achieving the grades for either their firm or insurance choice, then they can use the clearing system. **This comes into action on results day and is a system whereby universities list any course vacancies which they have.**

To use the clearing system, the student (not the parent or carer or a teacher) will need to contact universities directly, thinking carefully beforehand about any questions they might wish to ask them.

## STUDENT DID BETTER THAN THEY THOUGHT!

### ADJUSTMENT

UCAS Adjustment kicks off on A-level results day and gives a student the chance to switch onto an alternative university or course should they wish to. It is essentially the opposite of Clearing!

Students can apply to a course through Adjustment if:

1. They have been accepted onto their firm choice and it is now an unconditional firm choice.
2. They have exceeded the conditions of their firm offer, including subject-specific grade requirements. So, for example, if their offer is for ABB but they end up getting AAB, they could use Adjustment to potentially find a place at another Uni instead.

#### **How Adjustment works:**

Students have got five days from results day (or whenever their firm offer becomes unconditional) to use Adjustment, so they have got to act fast. The 'trade up' system officially ends on 31 August.

- Students register for Adjustment in 'Track'. While they hunt for a new place, their original firm choice remains safe – and will do so unless they confirm they would like to go elsewhere.
- Unlike Clearing, there is no vacancy list for Adjustment, so they need to check university websites and contact admissions offices at the university they are interested in directly to discuss possible places. They need to have their personal ID number ready and tell them straight away that they are applying through Adjustment.
- Students can contact any university they like if they are using Adjustment, even if it is one that did not accept their application the first time round (although there is no guarantee they will have any spaces.)

#### **Switch courses: yes, or no?**

Before they dive in to find a course at a 'better' university, students should think carefully – just because they *can*, doesn't mean they *should*. Students will have put in a lot of prep work to get to where they are; they have got a confirmed place at a university they have most likely 'visited' and were excited about going to; they have looked into the course in detail; they have got their student finance and accommodation sorted. Basically, they have put a lot into this choice already.

Are they really ready to turn their back and seek a place elsewhere so quickly?