



# **The Royal Belfast Academical Institution**

## **A Guide to Higher Education for Parents**

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# Foreword

Your son is now in Year 13 and will soon have to make crucial decisions about his education beyond school, including which course to pursue and where to pursue it. Such decisions, while they must be the pupil's, inevitably will, and should, be made after full consultation with parents. Although much of the emphasis in the Careers Programme for Sixth Form is on Higher Education (HE), we at RBAI realise that sometimes important information about the process is not relayed accurately, or even at all, by the boys to their parents, leading to some confusion. Therefore, the RBAI Careers Department has produced the following guide for parents with the aim of avoiding such confusion and, hopefully, any mistakes in the application process.

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*(Head of Careers)*

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*(Head of Higher Education)*

## Acknowledgements

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# Why Higher Education?

At a time when the increased costs of Higher Education may be causing some to have second thoughts about University, the above quote from a recent BBC News article and the graphs displayed below, should leave you in no doubt as to its true value. Time and time again, we are told by employers, economists and education experts that Higher Education is increasingly essential to young people today. Not only will a student's time at university be a very enjoyable and positive experience, it will also be an essential foundation for a future career. It is clear that in terms of pay potential and job security you are much more likely to succeed with a degree, rather than without one. This Higher Education Guide is therefore designed with this in mind, providing you with the essential information and guidance that you require in order to make an informed choice about Tertiary Education with your son. Should you require any further information not provided in this guide, please do not hesitate to contact either Mr Leathley or Mr O'Neill at the school.

## BBC November 2017 (Based on an Institute of Fiscal Studies Report)

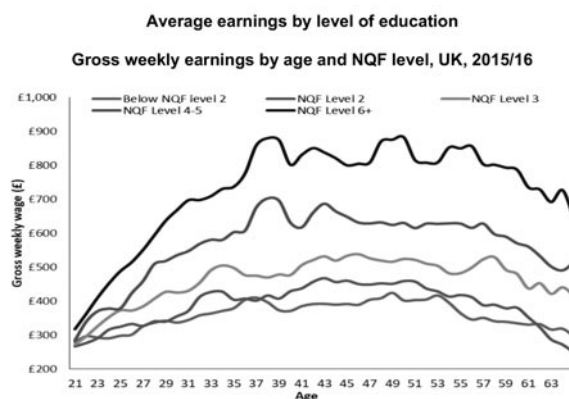
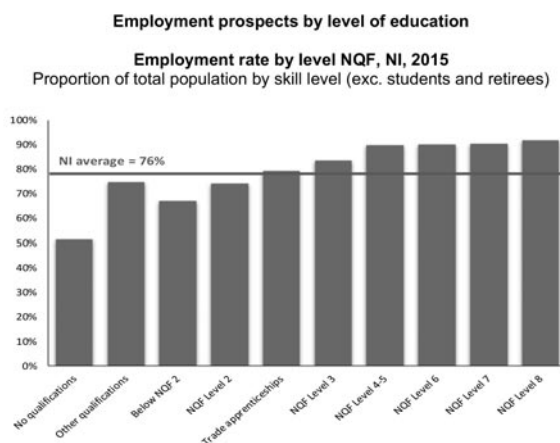
Over the course of a lifetime, estimates suggest women can expect to earn about £250,000 more if they have a degree, while the figure is roughly £170,000 for men.

Five years after graduation, average annual earnings for students who were taught at the London School of Economics, Imperial College London and University of Oxford are more than £40,000.

Graduates of the 24 Russell Group universities earn an average of £33,500 after five years - about 40% more than those who studied at other universities.

## BBC Sept 2019

Four-fifths of Russell Group graduates entered full-time work within weeks of leaving university compared with two-thirds of those from other institutions, a survey for graduate recruiter Milkround found.





# Complete University Guide Rankings 2024

1	Cambridge
2	Oxford
3	LSE
4	St Andrews
5	Bath
6	Imperial College London
7	Loughborough
8	Durham
9	UCL
10	Lancaster
27th	QUB

## The Russell Group is made up of 24 leading universities:

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

Five years after graduation, average annual earnings for students who were taught at the London School of Economics, Imperial College London and University of Oxford are more than £40,000.

Graduates of the 24 Russell Group universities earn an average of £33,500 after five years - about 40% more than those who studied at other universities. **(Source IFS 2017)**



# UCAS applicant journey

**STEP 1****1****Choosing courses**

Your Students use course Search at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to find out which courses might suit you and the universities and colleges that offer them.

**STEP 2****2****Applying**

Your students can apply for up to five courses using the online application system at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

**STEP 3****3****Offers**

Your students can check the progress of their applications using Track at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com), which will be updates as they receive decisions from universities and colleges. If they don't receive any offers, or decline all the offers they do receive, they may be able to use Extra, which allows eligible applicants to apply for a new choice.

**STEP 4****4****Results**

We receive many exam results direct from the exam boards - your students can check the list at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). If their qualifications are listed, they don't need to send their results to us or the universities and colleges. They can check Track at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to see if they've got a place on their chosen course.

**STEP 5****5****Next Steps**

Depending on your student's circumstances, they might use this step. If your students have received different grades than expected, or have changed their mind, there may be other options available. They need to look at Track and at course vacancies at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

**STEP 6****6****Starting university or college**

Your students need to make sure they have everything ready, such as accommodation, finances, travel arrangements, books and equipment required for the course.



# Applications for UCAS courses

## 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Deadline for receipt at UCAS of all applications, including the reference, for all medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and veterinary science courses and for all courses at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge

## 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025

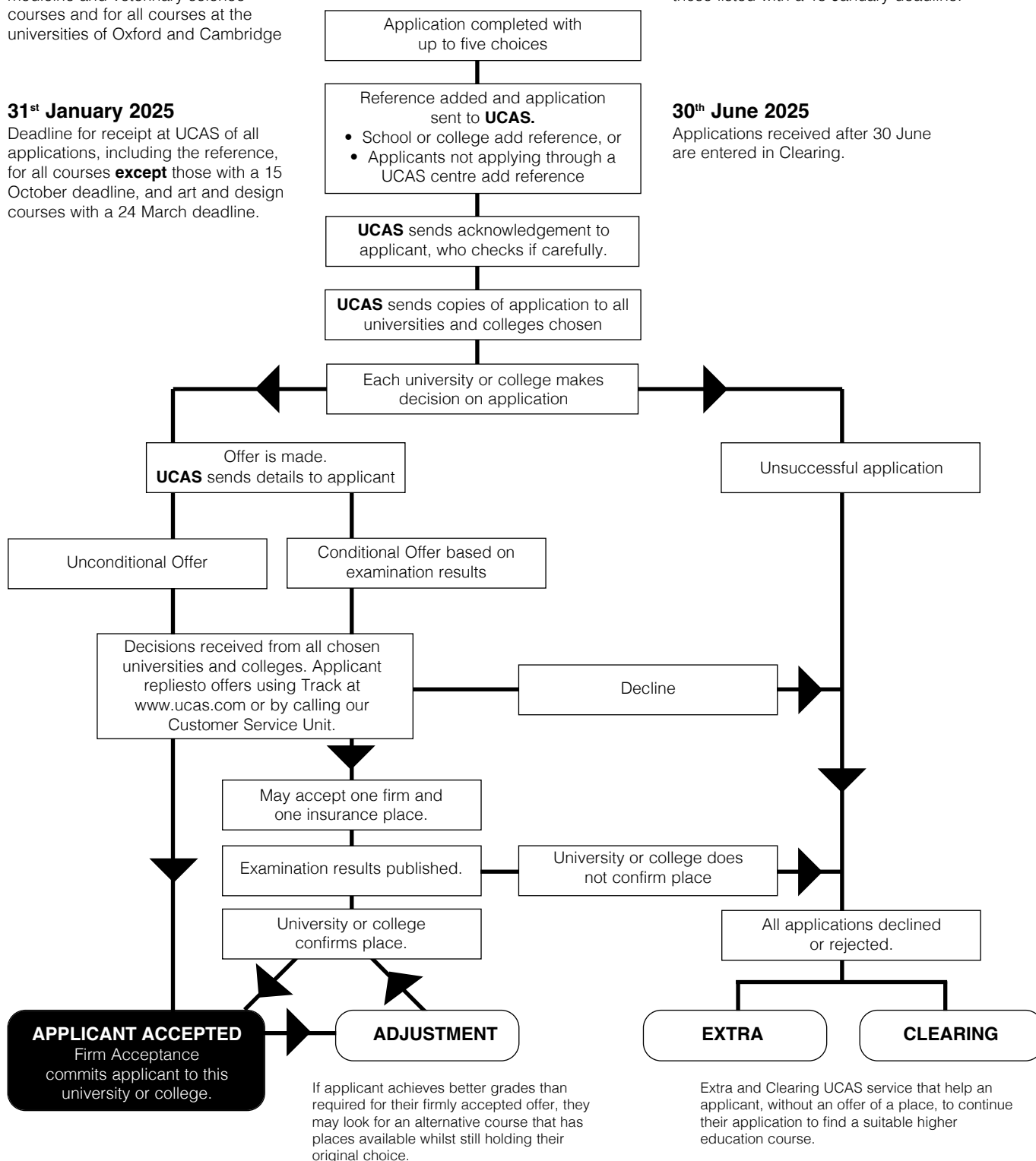
Deadline for receipt at UCAS of all applications, including the reference, for all courses **except** those with a 15 October deadline, and art and design courses with a 24 March deadline.

## 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Deadline for receipt at UCAS of all applications, including the reference, for some art and design courses **except** those listed with a 15 January deadline.

## 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025

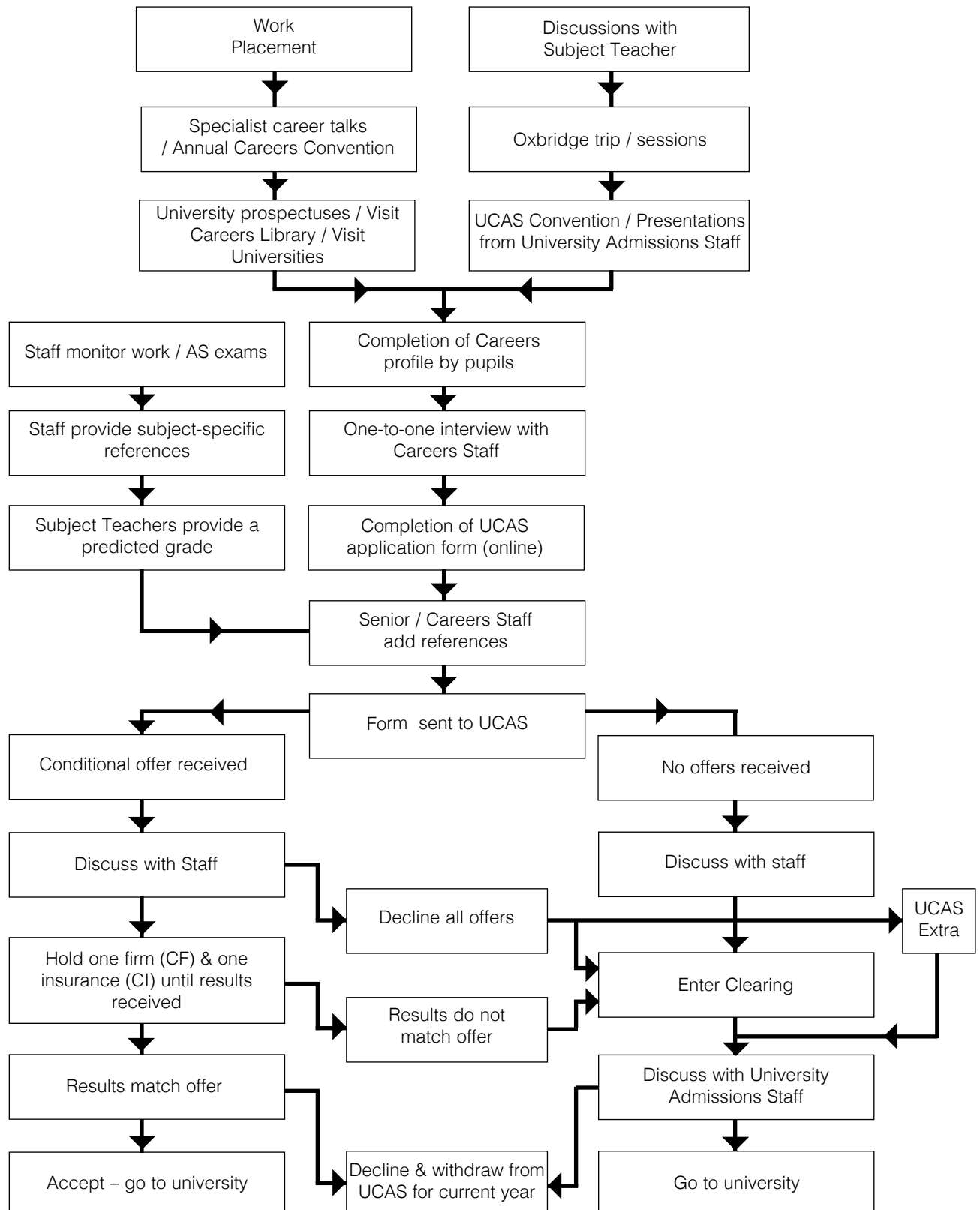
Applications received after 30 June are entered in Clearing.







# RBAI: Internal Procedures for Admission to University





# Important Deadlines

## Year 13

Easter 2024 -	Personal Statement Drafts to be handed in to Mr Leathley
June -	UCAS Registration for all Year 13

## Year 14

First day of Autumn Term -	Return of draft Personal Statement.
Mid-September -	Pupils provide relevant information to their Referee
13 <sup>th</sup> September -	Personal Statements of pupils applying to Oxbridge/Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary Science finalised & added to UCAS form
30 <sup>th</sup> September -	Remaining Personal Statements finalised & added to UCAS forms
15 <sup>th</sup> October -	Forms of pupils applying to Oxbridge / Medicine / Dentistry / Veterinary Science to be received by UCAS
15 <sup>th</sup> January -	Final deadline for UCAS forms to be received by UCAS
15 <sup>th</sup> January or 24 <sup>th</sup> March -	Deadlines for Art & Design courses <i>(N.B. Universities may have earlier deadlines for the uploading of photographs from the student's portfolio - check with each university)</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> February -	Closing date for CAO (Republic of Ireland) applications



# Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

One of the most popular websites in the UK, [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) has a comprehensive online database of over 50,000 HE courses available at more than 300 universities and colleges which are members of UCAS. This covers about 95% of all full-time HE undergraduate courses in the UK. Nearly 85% of courses on the **UCAS Course Search** have what are known as **Entry Profiles**. These are compiled by staff at each university or college, and provide information about the course, specific entry requirements and career possibilities, and about the qualities or experience admissions staff are looking for in applicants. Increasingly, they are also providing information about an institution's admission and selection criteria, fees, bursaries, and financial support, accommodation and access for students with special needs, Open Days and student life. **Entry Profiles make it easier to differentiate between courses which have similar names.** Applicants can search for courses in their chosen subject and/or institution or UK region.

## How UCAS works

### INVISIBILITY OF CHOICES

Each university or college has access to the information about their choice only. They must not ask applicants to reveal their other choices. Only much later in the application cycle, when an applicant has received decisions on all their choices, and has replied to all offers made, can each university or college find out details of the other choices. This ensures that each university or college decides independently whether to offer a place and what conditions, if any, to attach to an offer.

### DECISION MAKING

The time taken by universities and colleges to make a decision varies, depending on where and to what course the applicant has applied. Sometimes the applicant has to sit an **admissions test** or attend an **interview**, perhaps both, depending on the subject and popularity of the course. Art and design students in particular might need to present a **portfolio** of their work. Invitations to submit a portfolio or attend an interview may be sent via UCAS or direct, at the institution's discretion.

**The university or college sends their decision to UCAS (not to the applicant) and UCAS then notify the applicant of that decision. Applicants can use Track at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to find out the latest position on all their choices.**

All decisions are made at the universities and colleges. UCAS do not have any involvement in deciding to make offers or reject applications. An offer may be either unconditional or conditional, and will tell the applicant the year and month that their course starts, and the point of entry (for example, the second year of the course rather than the first).

**Unconditional offer (U)** – means that the applicant has met all the college's or university's academic entrance requirements. They might have still to meet other requirements, such as financial or medical conditions. This would only be the case for applicants who have completed their A levels, not those in sixth form who at the time of application have yet to complete their A levels.

**Conditional offer (C)** – means that the offer has certain conditions, for example the applicant has to achieve certain exam results. The conditions must be met by 31 August 2025 (even if entry is deferred to 2026), or if the applicant is taking a winter exam, they may have to meet the conditions by an earlier date. The conditions may include achievement of specific grades, possibly in named subjects, or a certain number of UCAS Tariff points. For details of the UCAS Tariff, visit the UCAS website.



## REPLYING TO OFFERS

For each applicant, when all decisions are in, UCAS send a letter explaining how to reply to offers. Sixth Formers at RBAI would expect to receive Conditional offers as they still have to sit their A level examinations. Applicants can accept one offer 'firmly' (**CF**) and they can also accept a second offer as an insurance choice (**CI**), in case they do not meet the conditions of the 'firmly accepted' offer. If an applicant firmly accepts an unconditional offer (**UF**), they are committing themselves to take up that place. These applicants cannot accept an insurance offer. It is important that pupils think very carefully when they choose their firm and insurance choices and should ensure that they do not accept an offer if they do not want to go there.

## EXTRA – THE WAY TO APPLY TO FURTHER UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

All is not lost if your son has been unsuccessful or declines offers from all five of their choices. Please encourage him to use the Extra process to apply to further universities and colleges. Pupils do not have to wait until Clearing to apply for more courses. Students who originally applied for high-demand courses could consider applying for courses in related or alternative subjects. The Extra process is a way of applying to further universities or colleges without having to wait for Clearing. Applicants who have already made five choices, received decisions from all these choices and who have declined any offers received can use Extra to apply for other courses that still have vacancies. **They can apply for several courses in Extra, but they can only apply for one course at a time.** The Extra process operates from late February to the end of June. Applicants use Course Search at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to find out which courses are advertising vacancies in Extra. They then need to confirm direct with the university or college whether they can consider them before making their applications on the Track service at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) or by calling the UCAS Customer Service Unit. From October until the end of June UCAS will notify applicants when they become eligible to use Extra. Applicants can apply for courses in Extra from late February to mid-July using a special button that appears on Track.

# Applying

When your son has completed his research he will have identified the courses for which he is going to apply. He is then ready to turn to the task of applying.

## NUMBER OF CHOICES ALLOWED

Remember that each student can make a maximum of **five choices** on their application, of which:

- no more than four choices in any one of the following three areas: medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine/veterinary science
- no more than one choice for Oxford University or the University of Cambridge

## WHEN TO APPLY

Universities and colleges try to give equal consideration to all applications received by the deadlines dates. They may consider late applications if they still have vacancies, but they do not have to. For all applications, we recommend that students do their research and complete their applications as soon as they can. Referees need time to write references.

**Referees should not be expected to do this just before the published closing dates.**

## OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

Applications for courses at Oxford University or the University of Cambridge should reach UCAS by 15 October.

## MEDICINE, DENTISTRY, VETERINARY MEDICINE OR VETERINARY SCIENCE

Applications for these subjects should reach UCAS by 15 October.

## ART AND DESIGN

Applications for art and design courses should reach UCAS by either 15 January or 24 March. The deadline applicable to each course is given in course search.



## EARLY START DATES

Applicants who want to accept an offer for a course with an early start date (ie before September 2025) should reply to the offer as soon as they can. They must not wait either for all of their decisions to come through or for their UCAS reply date, and must ensure they reply before the start date of the course. If they do not reply promptly to an offer they want to accept, they risk losing it.

## LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications reaching UCAS after 15 January deadline but before the end of June will be considered by the universities and colleges at their discretion, if they still have vacancies after considering all on-time applications. However, they may take until mid-July to make decisions on late applications. Students who apply late should explain any reasons for the delay in the personal statement section of the application. **IMPORTANT:** All new applications that UCAS receive after 30 June are entered directly into the **Clearing** system. Applicants should look at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to find out more about Clearing.

## DEFERRED APPLICATIONS

The same closing dates apply for deferred applications. **Before choosing to defer an application each student should contact individual universities or colleges direct to check that they would be willing to consider a deferred application.** In some cases, for example, the course may not be offered the following year. Students defer through Apply by choosing the appropriate start date for a future course. Students applying for deferred entry need to be aware that they will be expected to meet entry requirements by August of their U6 year (the same as an applicant applying for current year courses).

## APPLYING ONLINE

Apply is a secure web-based application system. The on-screen help text guides users through the application. RBAI pupils will apply through the school and will need to use the **buzzword** which will be provided in September of U6. On the first day of the Autumn term, pupils will be timetabled to 'register' for UCAS Apply and at this time, in addition to the buzzword, **will be provided with a step by step set of instructions**; these should be followed carefully. (See Appendix for examples).

Once they have registered, students can use Apply anywhere that has internet access. They can work and resave details on the application as often as necessary, before submitting the final version to their referee.

# Completing the Application

Pupils must ensure that they enter course and institution codes, and the education section details accurately. Qualifications must also be included accurately (subject name, examination board, grade). UCAS invite students to include their unit grades (module grades) for certificated Qualifications (AS levels that have been cashed in). This information is optional –but by disclosing their unit grades they may improve their chances of being offered a place.

## ART AND DESIGN COURSES

Art and design courses may use either of two application deadlines: 15 January or 24 March. The later closing date is to allow students taking a Diploma in Foundation Studies (Art and Design) time to identify their specialisation and put together a portfolio of work, which they will need to present at interview. **Students who want to apply for a mixture of courses with different deadlines should not delay submitting their applications beyond the normal closing date (15 January).** Provided they have left sufficient room for their further choices, these can be added later either online using Track or by calling the UCAS Customer Service Unit.

## DISABILITIES, SPECIAL NEEDS AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Universities and colleges welcome applications from people with disabilities, special needs or medical conditions, and try to provide as much support as possible. There is more information about this, including full contact details for Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, at :

[www.ucas.com/students/disabledstudents/](http://www.ucas.com/students/disabledstudents/) or go to [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk).



Applicants who need support in their studies, accommodation or daily living should contact their chosen universities and colleges, who will want to know:

- the course in which the applicant is interested;
- the nature and extent of the disability, special need or medical condition;
- any arrangements that the applicant has needed, or found helpful, in the past.

Universities and colleges will consider the application on the same academic criteria as any other, and any medical information will remain confidential. If a university or college cannot meet the applicant's needs, the applicant can ask UCAS to substitute another choice. Visit the student section of the UCAS website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) for more useful information for students with disabilities or special needs.

The **application fee** is currently £13 for one choice and £24 for more than one choice. UCAS will bill the school and then RBAI will bill you, the parents, for the appropriate fee once the application has been completed.

For each application, the student completes six sections:

- Personal Details
- Additional Information (UK applicants only)
- Choices
- Education
- Employment
- Statement

When each student marks their application as complete and sends it to the referee, it is ready for the reference to be added.

Under the Data Protection Act, applicants can contact UCAS and ask to see a copy of all information held about them.

## What happens when the application arrives at UCAS?

Generally speaking, there are no delays when UCAS receive online applications. Initial processing is normally completed within one working day and the relevant details are dispatched to universities and colleges. After UCAS have processed the application, they will send the applicant a welcome letter, giving applicants their personal ID, their personal details and a list of courses they have applied to. They should check this information immediately and let UCAS know at once if it is not correct. Applicants must keep all correspondence between themselves and UCAS/universities. With the welcome letter, UCAS also send a copy of the booklet *Applicant Welcome Guide*, which explains:

- what happens next in the application process
- how the applicant will receive notice of the universities' and colleges' decisions
- how to reply to any offers received
- how to tell us about changes to the applicant's details after the application has been submitted.

## Detecting fraud

- UCAS have a Verification Unit working to identify fraudulent applications. Any attempt by applicants to provide false or misleading information could lead to cancellation of their application. UCAS reserve the right to cancel an application without refunding the application fee.
- If UCAS, or a university or college, believe that an applicant or referee has left out any relevant information or given false or misleading information, they may take any necessary steps to check whether the information given is accurate and complete.
- UCAS, and the universities and colleges, may at any time ask the applicant, their referee or their employer to provide more information about the application (for example, proof of identity, status, qualifications or employment history). If they do not receive that information by a set date, or if the information is not satisfactory, UCAS can cancel the application without refunding the application fee.
- Along with other verification checks for identity and academic qualifications, UCAS carry out checks to verify that personal statements are the applicants' own work. If they have cause to question an application, UCAS will contact the applicant and at the same time inform all the universities and colleges to which the applicant has applied, who will then take any action they consider appropriate.

## How to add more information

If an applicant wants to add more information after submitting an application to UCAS, he should write direct to the chosen universities and colleges. Do not send anything to UCAS.



## Offers

When the universities and colleges have received and considered applications, they will start sending out their responses direct to applicants.

## Deadlines for Replying to Offers in 2024

The date by which an applicant must reply to their offers depends on when UCAS receive the last decision from those universities and colleges chosen by the applicant. (The table below illustrates how each applicant's deadline is worked out for this academic year.) Pupils need to understand that their dates could well be different from their friends' deadlines – there is no single date for all applicants.

**Students who submitted forms by the January deadline had to respond to offers by 6th June 2024.**

# UCAS Tariff points

Applicants may receive an offer of a place that is conditional on their achieving a certain number of UCAS Tariff points.

Qualification	Grade	UCAS Tariff points	Qualification	Grade	UCAS Points
<b>A2</b>	A*	56	BTEC Extended Certificate	D*	56 (A2 Equivalent= A*)
	A	48		D	48 (A2 Equivalent= A)
	B	40		M	32 (A2 Equivalent= C)
	C	32		P	16 (A2 Equivalent= E)
	D	24	BTEC Diploma	D*D*	112 (A2 Equivalent=A*A*)
	E	16		D*D	104 (A2 Equivalent=A*A)
<b>AS</b>	A	20		DD	96 (A2 Equivalent=AA)
	B	16		DM	80 (A2 Equivalent=BB)
	C	12		MM	64 (A2 Equivalent=CC)
	D	10		MP	48 (A2 Equivalent=DD)
	E	6		PP	32 (A2 Equivalent=EE)

For further information about the UCAS Tariff and a copy of the latest version, go to [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

N.B. Music examinations awarded at Grade 6 or above can contribute to the total. The new points system will give a 60% weighting to A2 grades and a 40% weighting to AS grades.

Pupils cannot 'double count' exams in the same subject. Points for Advanced Subsidiary (AS) qualifications cannot be included if an applicant has been assessed in the same subject at A level.

Here is an example of how an applicant would add up their Tariff points. Only the points shown in bold can be included in the total.

Subject	Level	Grade	Tariff
History	GCE A	B	<b>40</b>
English Literature	GCE A	A	<b>48</b>
French	GCE A	B	<b>40</b>
History	GCE AS	A	20
English Literature	GCE AS	B	16
French	GCE AS	B	16
Mathematics	GCE AS	C	<b>12</b>



# Elite Athlete Programmes

The University of Ulster has developed the Elite Athlete Entry scheme which recognises the sacrifice in time and effort which may result from participating in sport at the highest level. Under the scheme the university accepts reduced academic entrance requirements than are normal for entry to full time undergraduate courses. The reduction in entrance requirements under the new UCAS Tariff system is still to be determined. Further details on the criteria to be used in the determination of elite athlete status can be obtained from the website [www.ulster.ac.uk/sportscentre/elite\\_athlete.html](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/sportscentre/elite_athlete.html). Please note that the elite athlete status does not apply to other universities in the UCAS system.

Students may also apply to the Elite Athlete Programme at Queen's University. They should do so if they have attained sporting success at Provincial, National or International level. This programme provides fee relief, financial assistance and access to coaching and sporting facilities.

# Exam Results and Confirmation

When universities and colleges receive exam results, they decide whether or not to confirm conditional offers. If a university or college confirms a 'firmly accepted' offer, the applicant is committed to taking up that place. The insurance choice, if any, becomes redundant. If a university or college does not confirm a 'firmly accepted' offer, the insurance choice is up-rated to firm acceptance. If the applicant meets all the conditions of the uprated offer, they are committed to take up the place.

Please note however that if an applicant has achieved better than expected results they will have a short time to research alternative courses.

## ADJUSTMENT

If an applicant has both met and exceeded the conditions of their firmly accepted offer, they will have up to five calendar days from the time their place was confirmed (or A level results day, whichever is the later) to research places more appropriate to their performance. **Applicants will have to nominate themselves for this system**, and their eligibility will be confirmed by the institution they apply to adjust to. This period is known as the **Adjustment period**. It is available for two weeks only and was introduced for the first time in 2009. Participation is entirely the choice and responsibility of the applicant.

The system works as follows:

- 1 The applicant holds a firmly accepted conditional offer.
- 2 On results day, the applicant meets and exceeds the terms of their offer and the offer is confirmed.
- 3 They decide to research alternative courses and register this intention on Track.
- 4 They have up to five days (120 hours) in which to research alternative courses while holding their confirmed offer.
- 5 They speak to universities and colleges to explore what places are available and whether their application may be of interest.
- 6 The university they have approached checks their eligibility for the scheme and may offer them an unconditional place which the applicant may accept, or the applicant decides to stay with their original offer.

Points for applicants to consider:

- Adjustment is entirely optional, and not everyone will want to try to find an alternative place. Nothing really beats the careful research they did before they made their application to find the right courses for them.
- There is no guarantee there will be any vacancies on the course they decide they want to be considered for, and it is unlikely that the most competitive courses will have any places available. If other applicants decide to adjust their places, the vacancy situation may change on a daily basis.
- Some applicants may be better advised to consider applying again in the following year when many more vacancies will be available.
- Before deciding to use Adjustment, applicants must also consider non-academic arrangements such as accommodation and student finance. These may be difficult to secure or there may be delays if changes





are made at short notice.

- If they register to use Adjustment, the university or college will check that their results were higher than those they needed to meet the conditions of their firm choice. Please make sure they understand exactly what this means.

## CHANGED OFFERS

If a university or college offers a place on an alternative basis to the applicant's original choice, such as:

- a different course, or
- a deferred entry (2026 instead of 2025), or
- a different point of entry (a 'year zero' foundation year instead of year 1 of a degree course)

the applicant must let UCAS know whether they decline or accept it. UCAS will write to the applicant explaining their options.

## CLEARING

If an applicant doesn't get the exam grades he hoped for and his place (CF or CI) are not confirmed, there is a chance that he could find another course through Clearing. The Clearing process runs from mid-July and helps students who have not got the right grades (or who have applied late) to find courses where there are still places available. [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) will list courses available in Clearing as follows: from Scottish results day for vacancies in Scotland, and from A level results day for vacancies in the rest of the UK.

**Pupils need to be available in person to deal with admissions tutors and make decisions. They should plan their summer holiday so they are at home when their exam results come out.**

In Clearing, applicants can apply for any course that has places left. They don't have to keep to the same subjects that they first applied for. If applicants only made one choice on their original application and paid the reduced fee of £12, they can go through Clearing if they pay UCAS an extra £11.

Pupils will be able to go through Clearing if one of the following situations applies:

- they hold no offers and they have not withdrawn from the UCAS scheme
- their offers have not been confirmed because they have not met the conditions
- they decline or do not reply to a confirmed offer of a changed course and, as a result, hold no offers.

UCAS use the Track service to tell applicants when and how they can use Clearing and to give them their Clearing Numbers. Lists of courses with places in Clearing (including their entry requirements where possible) will be published until late September at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and in some national newspapers and the Belfast Telegraph. Pupils should check the lists for suitable courses and then contact universities and college to confirm their interest in a place. They should do this themselves as admissions tutors will want to speak to them personally, not through their parents or teachers. As of 2009 Clearing Passports have been discontinued. After speaking to admissions tutors and being offered a place, the student must enter details of the institution and course into Track, and the university or college will then confirm the place provided it is still available. If the student is unsuccessful, they may repeat the process.

# The Personal Statement

The personal statement is very important. It may be the only contact which the applicant has with the admissions tutor or selector. Please assist your son to complete their personal statement by checking content, spelling and grammar. For example pupils should not use 'text speak' and must ensure they use capital letters to start Proper Nouns. A check list is provided in the Appendix of this booklet to help ensure that the UCAS form is completed accurately. A copy of this will be provided to pupils prior to submitting their form. **This should be signed by both pupil and a parent when you are both happy that all sections have been completed.**

Lots of students apply with the predicted grades necessary for the course, so **why offer a place to your son?**

Pupils should contact course tutors to ensure that they meet the entrance requirements for their chosen course and to request department materials. It is also important to discuss the implications of making applications to universities away from home and whether or not they would consider an application to a local institution. Pupils can often change their minds about going away from home.

It is not advisable to apply only to high demand universities such as Oxbridge, Bristol, Durham and Edinburgh as they receive a huge number of applications for many courses.



The **personal statement** should be clearly written with no spelling or grammatical errors. It should deal with the choice of course (e.g. Business Studies), and provide details about why the applicant wishes to study this course at university. It should also include details about relevant experiences such as the Young Enterprise scheme e.g. what was the product being marketed/why did the person enjoy the opportunity? The statement should not simply be a list of points but rather should provide more depth to a selected range of issues. This gives the opportunity for the applicant to have been more personal about the areas mentioned, e.g. explaining what they enjoyed. Some courses require particular skills or qualities which can only be assessed in the personal statement of the form. For example, social skills, work experience, team work, wider involvement with people, sporting ability. Pupils shouldn't just list membership of a team; they should say what skills they have gained from their involvement. In summary in their personal statement pupils should include sections about:

- Course choice (the most important section),
- A section about them (including information about activities both inside and outside school,
- Concluding Statement.

More advice on personal statements can be found at the following website address:

**[www.ucas.com/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement](http://www.ucas.com/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement)**

## Admissions Tests

In addition to meeting grades required for their conditional offers, it may be necessary for pupils to complete an aptitude test:

- UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude test)
- BMAT (BioMedical Admissions test)
- LNAT (Law National Aptitude test)
- HPAT (Health Professions Admission Test)

Information on Admissions tests can be found on the site index of the main UCAS website. In particular, **pupils must check application deadlines. They must apply on line individually – the school cannot do this on their behalf.** They sit the exam at their chosen test centre well in advance of the deadline. Note: only one sitting per application cycle.

## Teacher Training

### Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College

St Mary's and Stranmillis University Colleges have a distinguished track record in teacher education in Northern Ireland and both institutions are designated Colleges of Queen's University Belfast. This means that all degrees awarded by the Colleges are validated by Queen's University.

There are two routes into teaching in Northern Ireland. On the one hand pupils might, after GCE A Levels, enrol directly in a teacher training college and follow a course involving the concurrent study of a subject and professional preparation, leading to the degree of Bachelor of Education. Alternatively pupils might, after GCE A Levels, take a primary degree in a specific subject area, after which they could apply for an intensive Postgraduate Certificate in Education course.

### Stranmillis University College

Entry is competitive and the University College Selection Committee will take account of the nature and level of academic performance and potential as evidenced by examination results and reports from school, and personal suitability for the course and for teaching as evidenced by reports as above and the reports of interviews held in the College.

### Entrance Requirements

All entrants to courses of initial teacher education are required to have achieved a good GCSE profile including minimum standards in English and Mathematics. These standards are normally expressed as Grade C at GCSE level. Entrants who wish to prepare for teaching in the Primary sector will also be required to have achieved GCSE Grade C in a single or combined science subject.



**The Bachelor of Education degree (BEd)** The BEd degree which is taken over four years devotes a significant amount of time to professional preparation and the delivery of the Revised NI Curriculum. Application for the BEd should be made through **UCAS**. At minimum, entrants must be able to satisfy the General Entrance Requirements of Queen's University. These are normally expressed as passes in two subjects at GCE A Level and grades A, B or C in three other subjects in the GCSE. However, competition for the places available is such that entrants normally have three passes (around AAB) in GCE A Level, including at least one A Level from the following list of subjects: Art, English, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Religious Studies or Science. Due to demand for places, grade requirements are often higher.

## St. Mary's University College

For Undergraduate entry, applicants **should apply directly to the College and not UCAS**. This means that applicants may apply for courses in St. Mary's in addition to applying for other courses through UCAS. They have introduced a new electronic system for application to undergraduate courses which can be accessed within their web site [www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk](http://www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk). Further details of how to apply to St Mary's courses including academic requirements are contained in the Application Procedure section of the website.

# Applications to the Republic of Ireland

These are made through the Central Applications Office (**CAO**) which is totally separate from UCAS.

Applicants may hold two offers from UCAS and apply for up to 10 courses in CAO from the degree list.

**Unlike UCAS, courses must however be listed in order of preference.** There is no personal statement by the applicant and no academic reference. Conditional offers are not made and acceptance for a course is made solely on A level grades. The closing date for applications is 1 February prior to starting the course. Application is also made on-line at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

When A level results are published in mid-August a first round of offers are made and this is followed by a second round of offers late in August. The applicants may be offered a place in the highest of his preferences to which he is entitled. An offer of a place will lapse unless accepted within a specified time period and unless a deposit is received by CAO before 5.15 pm on the stated reply date.

This year the CAO have revised the points allocation for A2 and AS grades. This is designed to increase the numbers of applicants from the North. This should, in theory, remove the need for students to complete 4 A Levels to A2 except for the most competitive courses (such as Medicine). Finally, universities like Trinity College Dublin, now run a Feasibility Study, which allows students from NI to potentially gain a place with just 3 A Levels regardless of their points tally. Details can be found on the university websites of institutions like Trinity.

Grade	First 3 A-Levels	4th A-Level	or AS Level
A*	180	60	
A	150	50	30
B	130	45	25
C	100	35	20
D	65	20	15
E	45	15	10

Applicants are scored on the basis of their best four A levels or three A levels and an AS level in a different subject from the same or preceding year. The maximum number of points that can be achieved is 600.

Note: Applicants presenting Grade E or above in one of A-Level Mathematics, Further Mathematics or Pure Mathematics will have 25 points added to their score for that subject. The bonus points will only be relevant where that subject is scored as one of the applicant's best four subjects for points purposes. This gives a maximum possible score of 625.

AS Levels can only be counted if they are in different subjects to those taken at A-Level.

Applicants for Medicine in CAO courses are required to sit the HPAT-Ireland Admissions test in February (in Dublin or one of 4 other test centres in the Republic of Ireland) prior to starting the course. More details on this test can be found on the website [www.hpat-ireland.acer.edu.au](http://www.hpat-ireland.acer.edu.au).



If you were born outside the Republic of Ireland you do not require Irish as a subject for entry. Candidates from Northern Ireland and Great Britain presenting GCE/GCSE qualifications will automatically be granted exemption from Irish, and do not need to apply for any exemption.

Please note, all applicants must check the matriculation and minimum entry requirements for all courses.

## Student Finance

Finance is obviously a major consideration when choosing courses. Student Finance NI gives a presentation to pupils during January of their U6 year explaining the application process.

Remember that help is available in a number of ways:

N.B. Figures are accurate at time of press but are subject to change

### Tuition Fees Explained

All students can take out a Student Loan for Fees for the amount charged by the institution. This is paid direct to the institution by the Student Loans Company (SLC). No income assessment involved.

### Tuition fees in Northern Ireland

For students studying in Northern Ireland in 2024/25 the fee will be £4,750.

This fee does not need to be paid up front.

Eligible students will be able to cover the full cost through a tuition fee loan

Eligible students will be able to cover the full cost through a tuition fee loan of up to **£4,750**.

Eligible students should apply through Student Finance NI at their local Education and Library Board.

### Students from Northern Ireland studying in England, Scotland or Wales

Students starting courses should check with the relevant institution to find out the fee for the course they want to study. In England, Scotland and Wales the maximum fee that can be charged is £9,250. Eligible students will be able to apply for a maximum loan to cover the cost of the fee charged up to a maximum of £9,250. Tuition fee loans are not means-tested.

There will not be a waiver or grant available to offset the higher amount of fees that will apply outside Northern Ireland. You will be entitled to a maximum tuition fee loan of up to £9,250. However, institutions charging fees may be offering bursaries/scholarships to students from low income backgrounds. You should contact the institution to find out what additional support may be available.

### Students from Northern Ireland studying in the Republic of Ireland

If you're going to study in the Republic of Ireland, then your university or college will charge you an annual fee contribution. The maximum amount for **2024/25 is currently €3000**.

To cover this upfront cost, you can apply for a Student Contribution Loan when you complete your PN1 or PR1 application form. This will pay up to the full amount of the fee contribution. If you don't take the Student Contribution Loan or you take less than the full amount you're entitled to, you'll need to pay all or the difference directly to the university or college you are attending. If you need to change the amount of Student Contribution Loan you are taking out, contact your ELB.

Student Contribution Loans need to be paid back. Interest is applied to your Student Contribution Loan balance from the date payment is made to your university or college until the loan is repaid in full. The exchange rate used to determine the Sterling equivalent of €3000 is based on an HMRC average for the last full calendar year.

You may also be entitled to a Maintenance Loan to help with living costs.



## Fees in other EU Countries

If you live in Northern Ireland and want to study an undergraduate degree course in the EU, outside the UK and ROI you should check with the relevant institution and authorities in the particular country. Under EU law, you should be treated the same as a national from the country you wish to study in and eligible for the same level of fee support where applicable.

The Department for the Economy does not fund any financial support for study outside the UK in any EU country, other than the Republic of Ireland.

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## Student Finance Contact Details

**No** paper applications will be issued to any grammar/secondary schools across all of Northern Ireland. Applications can be made online. Any students wishing to use the paper PN1 application can do so by downloading the forms. All forms, notes and guides are available on the website [www.studentfinancenl.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancenl.co.uk). Failure to submit forms by the deadlines could result in delay to payments.

### Student Finance

[www.studentfinancenl.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancenl.co.uk)

**0300 100 0077**

All applications in Northern Ireland are assessed by your local Student Finance NI Office. Contact the EA on 028 90566200 if you need further information on this."

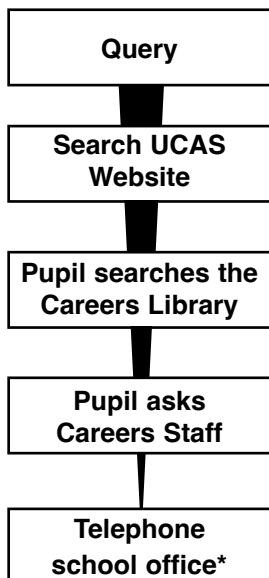
## Repaying your student loan

To find out more about repaying your student loan visit  
**[www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan](http://www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan)**



# Have you any queries?

If you have any queries please follow the steps outlined below before contacting the school:



\* Please provide specific details about your query. Depending on the nature of the query, we will either ring you back or give feedback to your son.

All the information you need to support your son with his choices and application can be found in the parents' section of the UCAS website along with the opportunity to register for free monthly newsletters. Use the following website link: [www.ucas.com/parents](http://www.ucas.com/parents)

## Important Events

**The Annual RBAI Careers Convention**

**Date: Thursday 7th March 2024**

**Time: 7.00 – 9.00pm**

**Venue: RBAI Common Hall & Large Gym**

This event is attended by a large number of local and national advisers from universities, colleges and a wide range of occupations. It is a fantastic opportunity for all Year 13 pupils to research possible career options, universities, degree courses and finance issues.



# Alternatives to University

## Foundation Degrees (Level 5 Courses)

Foundation degrees are higher education qualifications, mainly taught in Further Education (FE) colleges. They mix academic and work related learning and offer a clear route to university or into employment. They are a Level 5 qualification, compared to University level degrees, which are Level 6 courses.

## Foundation degrees explained

A Foundation degree will give you the technical skills and academic knowledge needed to progress in the workplace whilst gaining a higher education qualification such as a Foundation degree in Art (FdA), a Foundation degree in Engineering (FdEng), or a Foundation degree in Science (FdSc).

Employers, universities and FE colleges work together to develop Foundation degrees so that you gain the specific skills that employers need, making you more employable.

## Examples

Accountancy- BMC  
Applied and Medical Sciences- SERC  
Civil Engineering- BMC and UU/QUB  
Computing/Software Development- NWRC  
Computing- NRC  
Cyber Security or Cloud Applications or Software engineering-BMC  
Electrical and Electronic Engineering- NWRC  
Food, Nutrition and Health- CAFRE

# Apprenticeships

As an apprentice you will be a new or existing employee of a company, working with experienced staff to learn and develop your skills. So you have to either already be employed or have an employer who is willing to take you on as an apprentice in their company!

An apprenticeship can give you the training and qualifications you need to help you get ahead in your chosen career. There are currently three levels to choose from.

## Apprenticeship qualifications

Apprenticeships are currently available at:

- Level 2
- Level 3
- Higher Level Apprenticeships from Level 4 upwards (see section 3 for more details)

Level 2 is the first level and the one that most new apprentices choose.

You can either progress from Level 2 to Level 3 or go straight in at Level 3, depending on your ability and the qualifications you already have.

It usually takes up to two years to complete one level and up to four years to finish the two levels depending on their complexity and your ability.

Higher Level Apprenticeships offer qualifications from Level 4 to Level 8 and will take a minimum of two years to complete.



## How to search for Apprenticeships

### For UK Wide opportunities go to:

1. [www.targetcareers.co.uk](http://www.targetcareers.co.uk) – Excellent website! Register, then:
  - Put down during the registration the career areas you are interested in. (You can put down as many career areas as you like)
  - They will send you job opportunities in these areas, including apprenticeship opportunities.
  - You can get notification through email or any form of social media.

2. [https://careerfinderucas.com/?utm\\_source=adviseradhoc](https://careerfinderucas.com/?utm_source=adviseradhoc)  
Excellent website! This is a new search engine run by UCAS that includes Degree Apprenticeships, Apprenticeships, Internships and Graduate jobs that are available throughout the UK.

### For Northern Ireland opportunities only:

For an extensive list of opportunities start your search via the following link:  
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships>

For the latest apprenticeship opportunities in Northern Ireland use the following links:

1. Work+ -Applications open every January, with applicants applying for a career area they are interested in. Go to <https://www.workplus.app/>
2. Go to [www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/careers](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/careers)
  - scroll down and click on “Skills to Succeed”
  - click on “Apprenticeship”
3. Go to [www.nijobs.com](http://www.nijobs.com) and search apprenticeships.
4. [www.indeed.co.uk](http://www.indeed.co.uk) and search apprenticeships.





# Higher Level Apprenticeships

If you've completed A Levels or equivalent, you may be interested in a Higher Level Apprenticeship, which offers the opportunity to gain quality training and a recognized higher qualification while in paid employment.

## Higher Level Apprenticeship qualifications

Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) currently offer you qualifications from Level 4 to Level 6 (Honours degree). The majority are at Level 5 (Foundation degree).

The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme you chose, but will be a minimum of two years.

For more details and an extensive list of opportunities start your search via the following link:  
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeships>

Opportunities are extensive throughout Northern Ireland and indeed the rest of the UK and Republic of Ireland. Pupils must carry out their own research via the above website, social media, websites such as [nijos.com](http://nijos.com) and individual company websites.

**Examples of opportunities are set out below.** The links below are for 2021, so please check individual company websites and their social media outlets for up-to-date information:

- **Deloitte - Brightstart Programme.**  
[https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/careers/articles/selection-process.html?icid=top\\_selection-process](https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/careers/articles/selection-process.html?icid=top_selection-process)
- **Kainos** - 'Earn as you Learn' Programme (Apprenticeship in Software Engineering).  
<https://www.kainos.com/careers/earn-as-you-learn>
- **PWC** - <https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/student-careers/school-careers.html>
- **BT** - <https://bt.com/apprentices>. These include full degree apprenticeships in Finance, Software, Network Engineering and Cyber Security

**Cyber Security** - Degree Apprenticeship / Bursary go to - [ncsc.gov.uk/new-talent](https://ncsc.gov.uk/new-talent)

## For UK Wide opportunities go to:

[www.targetcareers.co.uk](http://www.targetcareers.co.uk) – Excellent website! Register, then:

- Put down during the registration the career areas you are interested in. (You can put down as many career areas as you like)
- They will send you job opportunities in these areas, including apprenticeship opportunities.
- You can get notification through email or any form of social media.





# Glossary

<b>Adjustment:</b>	a period of up to five days after A level results day during which candidates whose results meet and exceed their firmly accepted conditional offer may research alternative courses without relinquishing their confirmed place.
<b>Applicant:</b>	a person who has submitted an application to UCAS.
<b>Apply:</b>	the UCAS online application system for applying for full-time higher education.
<b>Centre:</b>	an organisation advising students in their application to HE (i.e. the school).
<b>Clearing:</b>	the system used towards the end of the application cycle. If students have not yet secured a place, it enables them to apply electronically for course vacancies.
<b>Conditional offer:</b>	an offer made by a university or college, whereby the applicant must fulfil certain criteria before he/she can be accepted on the relevant course.
<b>Confirmation:</b>	when conditional offers that have been accepted become unconditional or are declined. Confirmation is dependent on applicants' qualification/exam results.
<b>Course Search:</b>	UCAS online provision to search for courses at the institutions. Extensively used by applicants, parents and advisers.
<b>Deferral:</b>	holding an offer until the following year.
<b>Entry Profiles:</b>	primary source of information about individual courses and institutions, including statistics and entry requirements. Entry Profiles are found on Course Search and are provided by the HEIs.
<b>Extra:</b>	the opportunity to apply for another course if an applicant has used all five choices and not secured a place. It runs from 25 February to 6 July.
<b>Feedback:</b>	right of an unsuccessful applicant to seek a reason why an institution has declined to make an offer – viewable through Track.
<b>Firm offer:</b>	the offer that has been accepted as an applicant's first choice.
<b>Fraud:</b>	provision of false, incomplete or misleading information by applicant.
<b>HE:</b>	higher education.
<b>HEI/Institution:</b>	a university or college offering higher education courses.
<b>Insurance offer:</b>	the offer that has been accepted as a second choice (in case an applicant does not meet the requirements of his/her firm offer).
<b>Nominated access:</b>	the opportunity for an applicant to supply details of a third party (often a parent) to act on their behalf in contacting UCAS in their absence.
<b>Personal ID:</b>	a 10-digit individual number assigned to a student when they register to use Apply. It is printed on every letter we send them and is displayed in the format 123-456-7890. They will be asked to provide this number if they contact our Customer Service Unit.
<b>Point of entry:</b>	year of entry to the course; for example, 2 refers to the second year of the course.
<b>Student:</b>	means a person who is considering or is in the process of completing an application to UCAS.
<b>Tariff points:</b>	a system used to report achievement for entry to HE in a numerical format. It establishes agreed comparability between different types of qualifications and provides comparisons between applicants with different types and volumes of achievement.
<b>Track:</b>	a system where students can track the progress of their application online, reply to any offers received, and make certain amendments, for example, change of address or email.
<b>Unconditional offer:</b>	an offer given to students by a university or college if they have satisfied the entry criteria and can attend the course.
<b>Unistats:</b>	a website for students who want to research and compare subjects and universities before deciding where to apply. They can also look at student satisfaction ratings and explore the figures about getting a graduate job after completing a course.
<b>Unsuccessful:</b>	an application has not been accepted by the university or college concerned.
<b>Withdrawal:</b>	either a student or a university/college cancels a choice before a decision has been made - a reason will be included if the withdrawal was issued by an institution.



# Samples from the Instruction Booklet for Pupils

UCAS Apply 2010 Pupil Instructions

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UCAS Apply 2010 Pupil Instructions

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ucas.com - Personal details - Microsoft Internet Explorer

change my address ?

Is your permanent home in the UK? ☒ Yes ☐ No ?

Home address (if different from postal address) add/edit home address ?

Home telephone number 02890240461

Mobile number 012345678910

Email address notrudeaddress@hotmail.co.uk

Confirm email address notrudeaddress@hotmail.co.uk

Date of birth\* 25 December 1990 ?

Country of birth\* United Kingdom see list ?

Date of first entry to UK (if not born in the UK) Day Month Year ?

Nationality\* UK national see list ?

Local nationality see list ?

Area of permanent residence\* Belfast see list ?

Financial category\* AUK Citizen/EU National see list ?

UCAS Learner Number

Learner Number

**Select Yes for permanent home in the UK**

**Use lists to select country of birth & nationality**

**For area of residence select the appropriate County (Antrim/Down etc), or Belfast if you live in the city.**

**Personal details section**

Please ensure that all the details such as address/date of birth/telephone numbers are accurate.

Careers staff will NOT be checking these on your behalf!

UCAS Apply 2010 Pupil Instructions

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https://apply2.ucas.com - Personal details - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Student support

Fee code\* 02 LA, SAAS, NIBd, EU, CH, LoM or Student Finance England ?

Student support arrangements (This field is only available if you select fee code 02 LA, SAAS, NIBd, EU, CH, LoM or Student Finance England) NIBd - Belfast see list ?

Mailings from UCAS

Tick the box if you want to receive information by first message to your ☐ ?

Relationship to you ?

Criminal convictions

Criminal convictions Please read the help text. You should tick the box only if you have a relevant criminal conviction. ☐ ?

Disability/Special needs

Category\* Please select ?

**Select 02 option from the list for Fee code**

**Select the appropriate education & library board from the drop down list FOR THE AREA WHERE YOU LIVE.**

UCAS Apply 2010 Pupil Instructions

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## CHECK CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION. MISTAKES WILL LEAD TO DELAYS IN SENDING IT TO UCAS.

- ☐ Ensure that you meet the entrance requirements for the universities you are applying to
- ☐ Does your personal statement justify your choice (why do you want to study this subject?)

### Personal details

- ☐ Make sure your name is how it appears on your exam entries and certificates, to avoid any issues later.  
(This year you can also enter a preferred name, e.g if you are David John Brown and are known as John, then you can make this clear.)
- ☐ Use capital letters at the start of Proper nouns (your name, street name, town name)
- ☐ Your mobile number and email address are useful to include, as both universities and UCAS increasingly use these to contact you. Make sure you have typed them in correctly!
- ☐ **Take note of your username and password. You will need this for Track.**
- ☐ Have you verified your email?
  - o The code email sometimes does not come through immediately, so patience may be required;
  - o If you're completing at school or college and using your personal email address, bear in mind that you may not be able to access the reply until you get home.

This section also covers information about where you live, your nationality and your status for assessing your entitlement to student grants, loans and fees payment. The drop-down menus are clear enough, but here are a few things that may help:

- ☐ Nationality: having a UK passport means you select "UK National";
- ☐ Residential category: if unsure, answer the questions in the help box;
- ☐ Student support: most home students should choose **02 (Local Education Authority)**;
- ☐ Then select the **education & library board for where you live** (listed under **NiBd**).
- ☐ Unique Learner Number: leave blank.
- ☐ "nominated access" – in case you need somebody (usually a parent) to act on your behalf at any stage.
- ☐ You must complete the disability/special needs section even if you don't have a disability (in which case choose "none"). Consider this question carefully - if there is anything to identify (eg dyslexia) it should go in this section.

### Education

Complete this section before adding your choices and the personal statement. It's easy to make mistakes or miss things out, and the drop-down menus won't always correct errors. Here you'll record:

- All post primary schools attended,
- All qualifications you have gained
- All qualifications you are currently studying for.
- ☐ Include all GCSE results, not just the As to Cs;
- ☐ **"Advanced Subsidiary"** for AS levels
- ☐ **"Advanced GCE"** for their A-levels. For these exams (still to be taken), put "pending" in the result box.
- ☐ If re-sitting AS levels you should include the grade you have already been awarded and re-enter the AS as 'pending' for the same time as your A levels.
- ☐ You can include modules and units - Hints: have your certificates or result slips in front of you so there's no confusion about exam boards or dates.
- ☐ You may have to include additional entrance tests in this section, such as BMAT or UKCAT for Medicine/Vet Medicine, LNAT for Law and HPAT for Physiotherapy.



## Choices

- ☐ You can enter your choices in any order here - there is no preference order as they will be automatically sorted alphabetically. It's a good idea to put in and save those choices that are definite in your mind first and add the others later.
- ☐ **Make sure you're choosing both the correct institution and the course when you click, and pay close attention to the campus code.**
- ☐ Those intending to take a gap year and go for deferred entry can identify their intentions here. Remember to outline your plans for the gap year in your personal statement.

## Employment

- ☐ This section is all about paid work (part-time or full-time jobs, past and present) not voluntary or work experience. These can be included in your personal statement, especially if relevant to your chosen course and career plans.

## Personal statement

- ☐ **Don't type straight into the "Apply" section** - use a word processor, using the spell-check facility, and copy and paste over when you're ready.
- ☐ For the sake of compatibility, use **Times New Roman font, size 12**. No more than 4,000 characters or 47 lines, but UCAS advises that the last line can go missing in transmission to the universities, so be aware of this.
- ☐ **Make sure it's all your own work. UCAS have software to check for plagiarism.**
- ☐ When you think it's finished, click "Preview" to see what it will look like when an admissions selector sees it. Click on "Edit" if you want to make any changes.

# Some general hints

- Save as you go
- At any stage, you can check your progress by clicking "View All Details";
- Mark each section off as **"complete"** when you're ready.

## Common mistakes to look out for

- Previous surname at 16th birthday - don't fill in if it's the same as now
- Home address: don't fill in if it's the same as your postal address
- Email address: remember - a university selector will see this, so avoid anything rude/crude
- Dual nationality: only fill in if you have a passport of a second country
- Fee code: usually **02**. Common mistakes are people selecting 01 (private finance) and 99 (other)
- Student support: the Education & Library Board for where you live e.g. NiBd.SouthEastern
- Education: check for missing exams, including those to be taken, and ensure that all dates are included
- Nominated Access is often left blank by students. You must include the name of a parent or guardian here who can deal with UCAS on your behalf, should the need arise.
- When entering exam results for January modules, the date of award should be March.
- When entering exam results for Summer modules, the date of award should be August.

# Application for Student Finance 2024/2025

Form

# PN1

You can also apply online at [www.studentfinancenl.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancenl.co.uk)

Forename(s):

Surname:

If you have applied for student finance before, please  
provide your Customer Reference Number:

You should complete this form if you are a new student studying one of the following courses:

- A full-time or sandwich course of higher education
- A full-time Initial Teacher Training (ITT) course
- A part-time ITT course
- A flexible ITT course that lasts at least 6 weeks
- A diploma or degree course in a health related discipline and you will, or are likely to receive an **income-assessed** bursary from the National Health Service (NHS), Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSS&PS) or the Scottish Government Health Directorate Bursary (Scottish Healthcare Allowance)
- A full-time or sandwich course of higher education at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) that was previously funded by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)

**You should use the PN1 notes when completing this form. The notes will give you extra information to help you complete the form correctly so that there are no delays with processing your application due to incorrect answers, missing information or lack of evidence.**

## Deadline

**Deadline:** To make sure you receive your first payment at the start of term, you must return this form and all of the evidence we need by 15 April 2024.

**If your application form is returned more than 9 months from the start of your academic year it won't be processed, and you may lose your full entitlement to student finance.**





## Notes



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## Notes





## **Royal Belfast Academical Institution**

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