



Applying to the UK

July 2014

APPLYING TO THE UK

Applying to the UK is done primarily through the UCAS online system (www.ucas.com) but some universities may also accept direct applications from candidates. Candidates are encouraged to use the UCAS website extensively as it offers comprehensive assistance and information about the university/course selection process as well as the application process. Please remember that counselors and school publications are there to guide you through the application process.

Here is a suggested set of steps that you may follow to apply through UCAS:

1. Research universities and available courses
2. Shortlist five universities where you wish to apply
3. Determine when you should start your application
4. Set up a UCAS account at www.ucas.ac.uk
5. Link the account to your school using the selected buzzword
6. Complete the UCAS online form
7. Pay for your UCAS application online using a credit card
8. Submit your UCAS application to your counselor
9. Review any university offers that you receive using the UCAS Track system
10. Reply to all university offers
11. Use Extra to apply to additional universities (if necessary)
12. After the final CIE results, confirm admission to your university
13. If necessary, look for alternative offers through Clearing
14. Once your university choice is finalized, begin the UK visa process
15. Get ready for university

1. Research universities and available courses

Research a wide variety of universities and available courses using:

- a. The UCAS and university websites (e.g. www.ucas.com, www.lse.ac.uk)
- b. External websites (e.g. www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk, www.push.co.uk, www.universitiesuk.ac.uk, unistats.direct.gov.uk, www.studento.com)
- c. Publications (e.g. The Times Good University Guide¹, The Guardian University Guide², The Virgin Guide to British Universities, Big Guide: For Entry to University or College, The UCAS Guide to Getting into University and College)
- d. Friends and family, preferably alumni of UK universities

¹ Online version is also available at <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/gug/>

² Online version is also available at <http://www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide>

Please remember that every source has its own methodology for recommending universities and presenting information. It is up to you to sift through all the information to determine what is accurate and relevant to your needs.

Many of these publications are available in the Southshore library as reference materials so while you may not borrow them to take home, you can certainly use them in school. Also, your counselor will have similar publications and access to university catalogs. Select at least ten universities in this initial phase so that you can research them in-depth before deciding on the final five where you will apply.

2. Shortlist five universities where you wish to apply

Review the university information that you gather with your counselor keeping in mind your course preferences, family finances, university reputation, admissions standards (UCAS tariff points) and other relevant information.

You should select a university that meets or exceeds your criteria while maintaining close awareness of their admissions standards. Select universities based on your expected A-Level grades and the corresponding UCAS tariff points. Of your five choices, there should be two where you are sure you will achieve their tariff points (**safety**), two where you may feel that it is more than likely that you will meet their offer requirements (**competitive**) and finally, one that may be a “reach” for you but that if you work really hard for exceptional grades, you may be able to meet their admissions standards (**reach**).

Being realistic about your expected grades will play an enormous role in how accurately you are able to estimate your chance of admission to particular universities. That said, remain hopeful but do not expect to be certain of university admissions offers or of meeting those offers until that actually occurs!

Once you have selected the final five universities upon the completion of your research and with the help and advice of your parents, counselors and others, you must enter them into the UCAS system accurately with all the proper course codes and other relevant information.

From the UCAS Website:

The UCAS Tariff is the system for allocating points to qualifications used for entry to higher education. It allows students to use a range of different qualifications to help secure a place on an undergraduate course.

Universities and colleges use the UCAS Tariff to make comparisons between applicants with different qualifications. Tariff points are often used in entry requirements, although other factors are often taken into account. However, not all universities and colleges use the UCAS Tariff.

The Tariff helps universities and colleges when deciding on course entry requirements and making conditional offers. Entry requirements and conditional offers that use tariff points will often require a minimum level of achievement in a specified subject (e.g. '300 points to include grade A at A level Chemistry' or '260 points including grade B in Mathematics').

Use of the Tariff may also vary from department to department within any one university or college, and may in some cases be dependent on the program being offered.

There is no ceiling to the number of points that can be accumulated. There is no double counting. Certain qualifications within the tariff build on qualifications in the same subject. In these cases only the qualification with the higher tariff score will be counted. This principle applies to GCE Advanced Subsidiary level and GCE Advanced level. Although tariff points can be accumulated in a variety of ways, not all of these will necessarily be acceptable for entry to a particular course.

The achievement of a points score therefore does not give an automatic entitlement to entry, and many other factors are taken into account in the admissions process.

UCAS Tariff Point Table

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
A Level	140	120	100	80	60	40	0
		a	b	c	d	E	U
A/S Level		60	50	40	30	20	0

3. Determine when you should start your application

The first counseling meeting will be held early in the second term of your A1 year and follow up meetings will be held throughout the year. It is your responsibility to know the accurate deadlines for universities to which you are applying and ensure that you meet with your counselor to submit all required information well in advance of these deadlines.

From the UCAS Website:

There are **three** application deadlines for courses through UCAS - 15 October, 15 January and 24 March - it is important to check the deadline for your chosen course(s).

If you are applying from outside the UK or EU, whatever your nationality, you need to be aware of the three application deadlines but many universities and colleges will consider your application up until 30 June. This does not apply to applications for the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science. For all of these, you must apply by 15 October.

Universities and colleges do not guarantee to consider applications they receive after 15 January, and some popular courses may not have vacancies after that date. Please check with individual universities and colleges if you are not sure. You are advised to apply as early as possible.

If you apply for art and design courses with different deadlines, you can submit your application before 15 January for courses with that deadline, then add further choices before the 24 March deadline using Track (as long as you haven't used all five choices).

Applications received by the above deadlines are guaranteed to be considered by the universities and colleges. Applications received at UCAS after the deadlines, up until 30 June, will only be considered by the universities and colleges if they still have vacancies for the course(s) you have selected.

If you're applying through a school or college, you need to send your application to them early enough so that they have time to write your reference and send your completed application to us before our deadline.

4. Set up a UCAS account at www.ucas.com

The best information on setting up a UCAS account is available from the website. A brief summary is provided below:

From the UCAS Website:

Apply is an application system that allows you to apply online for courses at universities and colleges in the UK. You'll be asked to complete the following sections.

- * Registration
- * Personal details
- * Additional information (UK applicants only)
- * Choices
- * Education
- * Employment
- * Personal statement

- * Reference
- * Declaration
- * Pay and send

Please make sure that you complete all sections of the online UCAS form carefully and accurately. Spelling errors and careless form completion can have serious consequences on your admissions review. UCAS has proven to be diligent about checking what you enter into the application so be very careful about making any claims that you cannot substantiate as they are likely to be verified.

The education section requires that you provide details about all your schools (class 9 onwards), O Level grades by subject, A/S and A Level grades already received by subject as well as any pending examinations for which grades will be available later. If you are retaking any subject, you must show the original grade and then show that you are repeating the course to ensure that you have provided a complete academic history.

All personal statements are reviewed for plagiarism and it is in your best interests to follow the simple guidelines provided by UCAS when writing your own. A personal statement copied from someone else's may result in your application being disqualified, in the worst case.

The personal statement is your opportunity to speak to the universities about your strengths as a person and a student; why you have chosen a particular educational path; how your educational choices fit into future career plans; and to highlight any major accomplishments.

DO NOT use this as a chance to provide a laundry list of activities or fill it with large words. The best personal statements are simple, direct and informative while highlighting a few things that distinguish you from the thousands of other applications that they will be reading. So it is best to be selective in what you put forward so that the person reviewing your application can focus on what is special about you and why you deserve a chance to attend that university.

5. Link the account to your school using the selected buzzword

Once you have put in your personal details, you can enter the name of the school and link your account to your school using a unique buzzword that is changed every year. Your counselor will provide you with the buzzword and thereafter will be able to review your online application from their UCAS ID. This will also enable the process of uploading your recommendations and ensure that your application to UCAS is submitted through your school.

6. Complete the UCAS online form

From the UCAS Website:

Declaration

Once each section has been marked as complete, you'll be asked to agree to the declaration. Please read the information carefully and, once you've agreed to its terms, you can go to the payment section.

Please remember that you must provide truthful and accurate information throughout the form. Omissions will also be construed as falsifying responses and can result in negative action or the disqualification of your entire UCAS application form.

7. Pay for your UCAS application online using a credit or debit card

From the UCAS Website:

The application fee is £12 for a single course and £23 for two to five courses. The cost for applications we receive after 30 June is £23 because these applications will be entered into Clearing. The application fee includes VAT.

You will pay online using a credit or debit card. The card doesn't have to be in your name, but you will require the consent of the cardholder. **If you pay your fee using a credit or debit card that you do not have permission to use, we will cancel your application.**

We accept UK and international Visa, Visa Debit, Delta, MasterCard, JCB, Maestro, Solo and Electron credit or debit cards. At the moment we do not accept American Express or Diners Club cards.

If you're having trouble paying for your application, please contact our Customer Service Unit for information on alternative methods of payment.

You pay after you have completed your application and are in the process of sending it to us (or to your referee). If you're paying by card, you'll be asked for your card details once you have agreed to the terms of the declaration and data protection statement.

Once you've paid, your application will be sent to us or to your school (if you're applying through a school or college). If you have a verified email address, we will send you an email when you successfully send your application to UCAS, or to your school or college, which will explain what

happens next. If you send it to a school or college, you will also receive an email when they send the completed application to us.

Once we receive your application, either from you or your referee, we'll process it, send it to each of your chosen universities and colleges and send you a welcome letter.

You can only send us one application in each year's application cycle. If you send a second application, it will be cancelled and you will not receive a refund.

8. Submit your UCAS application to your counselor

Please be sure to submit your UCAS application well before the deadline required by your counselor. Also, ensure that you meet all documentation deadlines for having your reference written by your counselor or teacher so that there are no problems when the time comes to send your application to UCAS. Remember, if you are late and there is limited time, your reference is likely to be written in a hurry and your referee is likely to be less than happy with you while writing on your behalf, neither of which are good for you!

From the UCAS Website:

Who should write the reference?

- Your referee should know you well enough, in an official capacity, to write about you and your suitability for higher education.
- If you're at school or college, or left recently, ask your principal, head teacher or tutor.
- If you left school or college several years ago, ask your current or previous employer or in the case of voluntary work, your supervisor.

Who should not write the reference?

- It is not permitted for family, friends, partners or ex-partners to write your reference. If we find this to be the case, your application may be cancelled.

A full written reference is required. The name and address of the referee is not sufficient, unless all your chosen universities and colleges have already agreed that no reference is required on your application. You won't have access to your reference. This will be completed on your behalf by your centre.

- Check that each section of your application is correct and mark them all as complete.
- Pay for your application (if applicable) and send it online to your referee.

- Your referee will check and approve your application.
- Your referee will write the reference.
- Your centre will approve the reference and send it to us.
- We'll then process your application.

When we receive your completed application, we begin to process the details. If we have to query anything, we will contact you to find out more information.

After processing your application, we will send you a welcome letter that lists your choices. Please check the information carefully and let us know immediately if anything is not correct by contacting our Customer Service Unit. If your address is in the UK, it can take up to a week to receive the welcome letter. If you live outside the UK, it can take around three weeks to reach you.

You can view your application in Track using your Personal ID and the same username and password you used to apply. Your username is printed on your welcome letter.

Once your application is processed, universities and colleges can access it online. They can view your application, but they will not see where else you have applied. They will only see any other choices after you have replied to your offers. Universities and colleges may contact you to tell you that they are considering your application. Not all of them do this, so don't worry if you don't hear from some of your choices.

The universities and colleges will consider your application against their own admissions criteria. Each has their own criteria and their own ways of working, so you can expect to hear from them at different times: you may be contacted within a very short period of time or it may be some months before you hear anything. They will decide whether to offer you a place or not and will send their decision to us. Decisions will be displayed in Track as soon as we receive them.

9. Review any university offers that you receive using the UCAS Track system

You and your counselor will use the online system and email to keep an eye on your offers from university. Every university has a different method and timeline for responding to their applications so you have to remain vigilant till you have all your responses. The offers are followed by a letter to you outlining the exact requirements and deadlines. You must read the entire letter carefully and should contact the university if you have any questions. Remember it is your responsibility to follow up with your universities and counselor during this very critical time in the application process.

It is possible to appeal offers and there have been rare cases where universities have made an error in the admissions offer or in denying admission. You must write or call the university directly to appeal and have your UCAS ID information on hand when you do so.

From the UCAS Website:

Track is an online system that allows you to follow the progress of your application. You can see what's happening with your application, like whether you've received any offers and the replies you've made.

You can use Track once you've received a welcome letter from us. We'll send it to you after we've processed your application. Log in to Track with your Personal ID, which is printed on your welcome letter, and the same username and password you used when completing your application in Apply.

Your choices may be displayed in a different order than you expected - this is because we generate a random order when we process your application. The displayed order of your choices does not indicate any preference order - your application will be sent to all your chosen universities and colleges at the same time.

When each university or college makes a decision about your application, the details will be shown on Track. If you supplied a valid email address on your application, we'll email you when a decision has been made. To protect confidential information, the email will not contain the actual decision: you'll still need to go to Track to check the details.

You can also use Track to accept or decline offers and change some personal details, such as your postal address, telephone number and email address.

Decisions sent by universities and colleges:

Conditional offer

A conditional offer means that the university or college will offer you a place if you meet certain conditions, which are usually based on your exams. You may be asked to achieve specific tariff points (e.g. 200 points from three A Levels) or grades in named subjects (e.g. B in Chemistry, C in Physics). You might need to get specific grades in the individual units that make up these subjects.

You must meet the conditions of your offer by 31 August, unless otherwise agreed by the university. If you're taking a winter exam, the offer may ask you to meet the conditions by an earlier date. Each offer is specific to your qualifications and circumstances.

Unconditional offer

An unconditional offer means that you have met all the academic requirements and the university or college is happy to accept you. The university or college will contact you if they need proof of your qualifications. They might have other requirements, like financial or medical conditions, that you need to meet before you can start the course.

Withdrawn application

A choice can be withdrawn by you or the university or college. The reason will be displayed in Track. It may be withdrawn because you didn't respond to any letters or emails from the university or college, or because you didn't attend an interview.

Unsuccessful application

This means that the university or college has decided not to offer you a place on the course. Universities and colleges can decline an applicant for many reasons, one of which could be that the course is full, so it may not be based on the quality of your application. The university or college may provide a reason for their decision either when they send the decision through, or at a later date. If no reason is shown in Track, you can contact the university or college to see if they will discuss why you were unsuccessful.

As you go through the application cycle, you will receive standard letters depending on the status of your choices, decisions and replies.

Some of these letters are as follows:

- Welcome letter (AS2) - sent to you when we receive your application. You'll also be sent a copy of the Applicant Welcome Guide.
- Offer letter (AS3) - sent to you when a university or college makes you an offer
- Unsuccessful letter (AS4) - sent to you when your application to a university or college has been unsuccessful.
- Replying to Offers letter (AS6) - sent to you when you have received decisions from all your choices and have received at least one offer. It asks you to reply to your offer(s) by a given date.
- Status Check letter (AS9) - sent to confirm that we have recorded your replies correctly.
- Confirmation letter (AS12) - sent to you if you firmly accept an unconditional offer, or if your place has been confirmed by your university or college once exam results are published.
- New Options letter (AS13) - sent to you with information about other options available if your place has not been confirmed.

If you've provided a verified email address, the AS3, AS4 and AS6 letters will be available online in Track instead of being sent in the post.

10. Reply to all university offers

Once you have your offers, you need to respond. Usually, the offers are conditional so you will have to select a firm offer and an insurance offer. The firm offer is usually your top choice while your insurance offer is your safety, i.e. an offer that you are very likely to meet.

It is possible to have an insurance offer that is almost or equally high as the insurance as long as you understand that if you do not meet either offer, it is likely that you will end up using the Clearing process. Universities usually do not compromise on offers but it does happen in rare cases where they will accept a slightly lower grade or offer you a different course.

Please remember to discuss your choices with your parents and counselor to ensure that you are on the right track before finalizing them. Also, be sure that you are meeting all the additional requirements listed in the offer letter (e.g. IELTS, financial documents etc.) before you make final decisions of replying to your offers.

From the UCAS Website:

Points to remember when replying to your offers

- Try to attend open days or visits before you decide, but remember to reply by the deadline. If you are visiting a university or college after your reply date, please contact the university or college for advice.
- Think carefully before you decide which offers to accept because once you accept an offer, including an insurance offer, you are committed to that course (or courses).
- You can reply to offers without waiting to hear back from all your choices. You can cancel all outstanding decisions and reply to the offers that you have received using Track. But you must be certain about which offers you wish to accept, as once you have made your replies you will not be able to reverse any withdrawals.

You reply to each offer in one of the following ways: firm acceptance, insurance acceptance or decline.

Firm acceptance

Your firm acceptance is your first choice - this is your preferred choice out of all the offers you have received. You can only have one firm acceptance.

If you accept an unconditional offer, you are agreeing that you will attend the course at that university or college, so you must decline any other offers. We'll send you a letter which will explain whether there is anything else you need to do.

If you accept a conditional offer, you are agreeing that you will attend the course at that university or college if you meet the conditions of the offer. You can accept another offer as an insurance choice.

Insurance acceptance

If your firm choice is a conditional offer, you can accept another offer as an insurance choice. Your insurance choice can be conditional or unconditional and acts as a back-up, so if you don't meet the conditions for your firm choice but meet the conditions for your insurance, you will be committed to the insurance choice. You can only have one insurance choice.

The conditions for your insurance choice can be higher than your firm choice, but be aware that if you're not accepted by your firm choice, it's unlikely that you will be accepted for an insurance choice that requests higher grades.

You don't have to accept an insurance choice - if you're not sure about any of your other choices once you have accepted a firm choice, you're not obliged to accept one as an insurance option.

Decline

Once you have decided which offer to accept firmly, and which (if any) to accept as an insurance, you must decline all other offers. If you don't want to accept any of the offers, you can decline them all. You will then be eligible to use Extra or Clearing, depending upon your circumstances.

There are four combinations of offers and replies

- Unconditional firm only - you've firmly accepted an unconditional offer. You cannot have an insurance choice.
- Conditional firm only - you've firmly accepted a conditional offer.
- Conditional firm + conditional insurance - you've firmly accepted one conditional offer and accepted another conditional offer as an insurance.

- Conditional firm + unconditional insurance - you've firmly accepted a conditional offer and accepted an unconditional offer as an insurance.

Use Track to reply to your offers. Your reply date will be displayed in Track. Your reply date is based on when we receive the last decision from your choices, so it might be different to other people's reply dates.

If you don't reply by the date given, your offers will be declined. If this happens, call our Customer Service Unit to find out what you can do.

Reply dates are based on when we receive the last decision from your choices.

Last Decision Received	Reply Deadline
31 March 2014	7 May 2014
8 May 2014	5 June 2014
5 June 2014	26 June 2014
17 July 2014	24 July 2014

Please note that these dates are for the year 2014. You must continue to check the website for any changes (www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/undergraduate/tracking-your-application/replying-your-offers).

11. Use Extra to apply to additional universities (if necessary)

From the UCAS Website:

If you have applied through UCAS, used all five choices on your application and aren't holding any offers, you might be able to apply through Extra for another course. In Extra, you can apply for any course with vacancies. Extra is open between the end of February and early July. In Extra, you apply for one course at a time using Track.

To use Extra you need to have already made five choices; received decisions from all these choices, and either had no offers or declined all the offers you have received.

If you decline your offers and add an Extra choice, you will not be able to accept any of your original choices later.

If you are eligible for Extra, a button will appear on your Track screen which you can use to apply for a course in Extra. Course Search will tell you which courses have vacancies - an 'x' will be displayed

next to any available courses. Before you apply, try to contact the university or college to make sure that they can consider you.

Check Course Search to see if there is an Entry Profile for the course because some will tell you what the university or college looks for in their students and might also have case studies from students who have taken the course.

Choose a course and enter the details in Track. We'll then send your application to the university or college.

Research the courses before deciding which to apply for. If you applied for high-demand courses originally and were unsuccessful, you could consider related or alternative subjects. Your teachers or counselors, or the universities and colleges themselves, can provide useful guidance.

If you are offered a place, you can choose whether or not to accept it. If you accept an offer, you are committed to it, which means that you cannot apply anywhere else. You will need to reply to your offer by the date shown in Track.

If you decline an offer, or the university or college turns you down, you can apply for a different choice through Extra (time permitting). Your Extra button in Track will be reactivated. You can also apply for a different choice if you haven't received a decision from your Extra choice within 21 days of applying to them.

If you don't get an offer in Extra, don't worry! You can apply through our Clearing process, which gives you another opportunity to apply for vacancies.

If you cannot find the answers to your queries about Extra on the website, please contact our Customer Service Unit.

12. After the final CIE results, confirm admission to your university.

CIE results usually arrive in early August and will be available directly to UCAS as well as to your universities. You will need to focus on finalizing your admissions offers at this time. If you are not sure of your decision, discussion with your counselor and parents must happen immediately to ensure that you have a variety of options available to you.

From the UCAS Website:

If you're waiting for exam results that you need to get into university or college, be prepared for what happens next. Make sure you know your login details, as you'll need these to see if you've been accepted. Use the login reminder service on the Track page if you're not sure.

You need to be available when the results are published. You might have to make quick and perhaps difficult decisions about your future so be prepared to speak to universities and colleges yourself and not leave this to somebody else.

Check that your personal details are correct in Track - we and the universities and colleges contact you by email, letter and sometimes by phone so make sure that we have your up-to-date details. If you change your address, please arrange for your mail to be redirected in case letters have already been sent. If you want to make changes to your choices, check the making changes page which explains what to do.

What happens next depends on your exam results. If you meet all the conditions of your offer, you will be accepted by the university. Even if you have not quite met the requirements, the university or college may lower its offer and still accept you. Check Track to see their decisions.

Once you receive your results, you will be in one of the positions below.

- You are accepted by your firm choice
- You are accepted by your firm choice and you meet and exceed the conditions of the offer
- You receive a 'changed course' offer
- Your results don't meet the conditions of your firm choice but you are accepted by your insurance choice
- Your results don't meet the conditions of any of your choices
- You are not holding any offers

Read through the information below to see what happens next for each scenario. The details displayed on your Track 'choices' screen are exactly what we have been sent by your universities and colleges. If you have a query about any of your choice details, please contact the university or college directly.

You are accepted by your firm choice: If you are accepted, we will send you a Confirmation letter in the post. This letter confirms that you will be attending the university or college and will explain whether there is anything you need to do now. Once you receive this letter, you will be pleased to know that you have officially gained a place. The university or college will contact you with any further information.

You are accepted by your firm choice and you meet and exceed the conditions of the offer: If you meet and exceed the conditions of your conditional firm choice, you can apply for an alternative course / university through Adjustment if you wish. Find out more about Adjustment from the website (www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/undergraduate/results/better-than-expected). You will receive a Confirmation letter in the post. If you'd prefer to keep your firm choice offer, you should follow the instructions on the letter. This letter confirms that you will be attending the university or college and will explain whether there is anything you need to do now. Once you receive this letter, you will be pleased to know that you have officially gained a place. The university or college will contact you with any further information.

You receive a 'changed course' offer: If you receive a changed course offer, it means that your university or college has been unable to confirm your place on the course you accepted because you have not met the original conditions, but that they are willing to make an alternative offer. The change could be a change of course, start date or point of entry. Once we have heard from your firm choice and insurance choice you will be asked to reply to any changed course offer provided you are not holding a confirmed place (UF). At this stage you can reply to a changed course offer in Track and you will have five days to reply. After five days, the offer will be declined automatically.

If you applied for more than one course, but are holding only one offer, then you can either accept the change, or decline it and go into Clearing automatically.

If you applied for more than one course and are holding a firm and an insurance offer:

- You are offered a change by the firm choice - you must either accept or decline the revised firm offer. If you decline it, then you will either be placed with the insurance choice or, if they decline you, move automatically into Clearing.
- You are offered a change by the insurance choice - you will not be able to accept it unless and until the firm choice declines your place. You can however decline the insurance change. If you are also declined by the firm choice you will be automatically entered into Clearing.
- You are offered changes by both firm and insurance choices - you may accept either changes in Track, or decline both and move automatically into Clearing.

Your results don't meet the conditions of your firm choice but you are accepted by your insurance choice: If you do not meet the conditions set by your firm choice but you do meet the conditions set by your insurance choice, your place at your insurance choice will be confirmed (UF). We will send you a Confirmation letter in the post. This letter confirms that you will be attending the university or college and will explain whether there is anything you need to do now. Once you receive this letter, you will be pleased to know that you have officially gained a place. The university or college will contact you with any further information.

Your results don't meet the conditions of any of your choices: If you do not meet the conditions of any of the offers you have accepted and the university/universities cannot offer you a place you will be automatically be entered into Clearing. Log in to Track to view your Clearing Number - you can then start looking for another choice. Find out more about Clearing from the website (www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/undergraduate/results/if-you-have-no-offers).

You are not holding any offers: You may not have any offers because you were declined earlier in the year, you declined any offers received, or you applied after 30 June. If you are not holding any offers, you will be entered into Clearing automatically. Log in to Track to view your Clearing Number as above - you can then start looking for another choice. Find out more about Clearing from the website (www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/undergraduate/results/if-you-have-no-offers).

13. If necessary, look for alternative offers through Clearing

You must start considering other options if you are not in possession of a confirmed admissions offer immediately after results are published. Clearing is the best and most efficient way to find an alternative university place and is usually available to eligible candidates within 10 days of results being published. You should ensure that you know what date Clearing is going to begin so that you do not lose out to other candidates for available spaces at universities of interest to you.

As always, your parents and counselor should be involved in the discussion but most of the conversations with the universities will be done directly with you as things move extremely quickly during the Clearing process and if you delay your decisions, you will often miss an offered opportunity because someone else acted more swiftly.

From the UCAS Website:

Clearing is a service that operates between mid-July and September. You can take part in Clearing if you have already applied through UCAS and you are in one of the following categories.

- You have not received any offers
- You have declined all your offers or not responded by the due date.
- Your offers have not been confirmed because you have not met the conditions (e.g. you have not achieved the required grades).
- You have declined a changed course, a changed date of entry and/or changed point of entry offer.
- You applied for one course which has been declined/ unsuccessful and you have paid the application fee.

- We receive your application after 30 June. If we receive your application after this date, we will not send it to any universities and colleges.

If you only made a single choice on your original application, you can pay a further £10 and apply to other universities and colleges through Clearing. You can still complete an application until 20 September. If you apply after 30 June you will automatically be entered into Clearing so you should not fill in any choices on your application.

Course vacancies in Clearing are published on this site from mid-August until late-September. Check Track on our website to see if you're eligible to use Clearing. It is important that you check Track because we will not send you anything in the post to tell you if you are eligible. If you are eligible for Clearing an 'Add Clearing choice' button will appear on your Track 'choices' screen which you can use to apply for a course.

There is a process to applying through Clearing. Read through what you need to do to find out more (www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/undergraduate/results/if-you-have-no-offers).

Make sure that you're available to speak to universities and colleges: Treat your Clearing application like a job application - deal with it yourself! Don't leave it to your parents or friends to sort out. During Clearing, you need to be available in person to deal with admissions tutors and to make decisions. It is important to plan your summer holidays so that you are at home when your exam results come out.

Your chosen university or college needs evidence of your exam results: We receive many exam results direct from the awarding organizations - the exam results page contains a list of qualifications that we receive. If your qualification is listed, you don't need to send your results to UCAS or the universities and colleges. If not, you are responsible for advising your chosen universities and colleges of results for all other qualifications.

Foundation degrees

In some cases, a Foundation degree is a better option for students who have not performed as well as expected. Foundation degrees are designed and delivered in partnership with employers to equip people with the relevant knowledge and skills for business.

They are offered by universities in partnership with higher education colleges and further education colleges. The study methods can be very flexible, which means that they are available to people already in work, those wishing to embark on a career change and to those who have recently completed their A-Levels. A full-time foundation course usually takes two years. Part-time courses may take longer, although this is not always the case.

Universities and colleges set their own entry requirements for each course. Formal qualifications are not always necessary as appropriate commercial and industrial experience can be more relevant. Check with the institution concerned as some courses may have specific requirements.

Foundation degree graduates have a number of options. Employment may be your major focus after gaining your foundation degree. Many graduates choose to combine employment with further study and you will have the opportunity to progress to a full honours degree with around 12 months of further study (the time taken depends on how you choose to study). Alternatively, you may wish to progress to further professional qualifications.

14. Once your university choice is finalized, begin the UK visa process

There are many steps to follow when you are applying for your UK visa. The best resource for information is the UK Border Agency (www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa). The UK Border Agency provides extensive information about the visa process, English language testing and documentation requirements, eligible courses and universities.

In Pakistan, Gerry's (www.vfsglobal.co.uk/Pakistan/) handles the UK visa application process and while processing times are improving, it does still take time to get the visa. Information on how to apply can be found on Gerry's website (www.vfsglobal.co.uk/Pakistan/how_to_apply.html).

From the Gerry's website:

Visa duration for main applicants and their dependants is subject to length of study. Study below degree level is limited to three years maximum duration. The visa application fee for the year 2014 is £310. Please check for any changes on the UK Border Agency website (www.gov.uk/visa-fees).

Visa Fraud

If you provide false information, documents or passports in support of your visa application you will be prosecuted and all future applications will be refused for up to 10 years. You could even be fined and could go to prison. You should make sure the information given in your visa application is correct; the documents provided to support your application are not forged; your passport has not been altered and does not contain false stamps or visas. If any of the above applies, you will be reported to the Pakistani authorities and prosecuted.

You should submit the following documents:

- A valid passport or refugee travel document that contains at least 1 blank page on both sides so your visa can be inserted. Your passport should be signed by you and the name and

signature should correspond to the details given on your visa application form. Previous passport/s should also be submitted (if applicable).

- Your completed, signed and dated visa application form.
- Visa application fee or the demand draft. Applicants can pay in cash or by demand draft.
- Supporting documents relevant to the category you are applying for with photocopy of each original document and translations.
- Original NADRA NIC card with a photocopy.
- A valid tuberculosis certificate if you are planning to come to the UK for more than 6 months. Information on how to book tuberculosis screening appointments can be found on the UK Border Agency website (www.gov.uk/government/publications/tuberculosis-test-for-a-uk-visa-clinics-in-pakistan/tuberculosis-testing-in-pakistan).
- 2 recent passport-sized (45mm high x 35mm wide) colour photograph of yourself. The photograph should be:
 - a) Taken against a light grey or cream background. It should be in sharp focus, clear and of good quality, free from shadows.
 - b) Printed on normal photographic paper.
 - c) Taken with nothing covering the face, without sunglasses or tinted spectacles, or a head covering unless worn for religious or medical reasons. The subject should have their mouth closed (no grinning, frowning or raised eyebrows) and the applicant should be facing forward, looking straight ahead.
 - d) The photograph should be a recent true likeness and taken within the last 6 months.

The visa application centres in Mirpur, Islamabad and Lahore offer photograph services (fee payable) that meet UK Border Agency photograph requirements. More information on photograph requirements can be found on the UK Border Agency website (www.gov.uk/photos-for-passports).

Supporting documents guidance

Please see the UK Border Agency supporting documents guidance for information (www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/320815/documents-t4-gen.pdf) on the types of documents you might want to submit with your visa application. Applicants must submit as much evidence as they can of their personal circumstances.

Make an appointment

You must have an appointment to visit the visa application centre and you must attend in person. Information on booking an appointment can be found on Gerry's website (www.vfsglobal.co.uk/Pakistan/book_appointment.html). You should normally apply at the Gerry's visa application centre in, or closest to, the state in which you are documented as being resident.

Visit the visa application centre

You should remember to bring all required documents. All visa applicants (apart from exempt categories and children under 5 years) must apply in person at the visa application centre to submit their biometric information. A visa application can only be processed after your biometric information has been taken. If you refuse to submit your biometric information, your visa application cannot be processed.

Important note: You will not be able to submit further documents after you have submitted your application at the visa application centre. The documents you submit at the time you made your application are the only documents that can be considered.

Biometric information collection

Biometric information collection includes a digital finger scan (all 10 digits) and a digital photograph. The finger scan procedure uses an electronic scanner; no ink, liquid or chemical. You should ensure that your fingertips are free from any forms of decoration (for example, henna), cuts, abrasions or other markings as these may affect your ability to provide acceptable fingerprints. Your digital photograph must be taken with full face and without sunglasses or tinted spectacles, or head covering unless it is worn for religious or medical reasons. Your face should be clearly visible with no hair across the eyes. We cannot process your visa if you do not submit your biometric information.

Wait for a decision

Wait for a decision on your visa application. Information on visa processing times can be found on the UK Border Agency website (www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times). You can use this information as a guide, although it cannot be used as a guarantee of your individual visa application processing time. Visa applications are assessed individually and processing times may vary. You can use the SMS text service (fee payable) provided by Gerry's to receive texts about the progress of your visa application.

Interview procedures

Exceptionally, you may be asked to attend an interview. UK Border Agency visa staff reserve the right to make decisions based on the information and documents submitted with your application. It is essential that you submit all relevant documents with your visa application. If an interview is required you will be offered the first available interview date.

Collect the decision on your visa

Gerry's will inform you when your documents are ready for collection and arrange a collection date and time for you. A nominated person can also collect your documents on your behalf. Your nominated person will need to provide an authorised letter signed by you, a copy of the ID card of the applicant, and a copy of their own ID card.

If you are issued a visa, please check it. You should make sure that:

- Your personal details are correct
- It correctly states the purpose for which you want to come to the UK, and
- It is valid for the date on which you want to travel. (You can ask for it to be post-dated for up to three months if you do not plan to travel immediately)

If you think there is anything wrong with your visa, please contact the visa application centre immediately

Using agents and fraud

You may decide to get further immigration advice from an independent travel agent, immigration agent or consultant. These agents will charge for their services.

You should be careful when dealing with agents who make unrealistic claims. Agents cannot guarantee that they will be able to obtain a work or study visa for you. They cannot guarantee that your application will be resolved without an interview. They cannot guarantee the outcome of a visa application. They may be cheating you if they make these claims.

Many agents charge exorbitant fees for their services - often many times the actual cost of the visa. Agents have also been charging for appointments at the visa application centres and for visa application forms. Appointments and application forms are free of charge. If an agent charges you anything more than a small and reasonable service charge, they may be overcharging you or they may be supplying you with false documents and statements.

Visa officers will detect false documents and your visa application will be refused. If you provide false information, documents or passports in support of your visa application, you will be refused a visa and all future applications could be refused for up to 10 years. You may also be prosecuted and could face a fine or even go to prison.

Remember the visa application is your application. You are the owner of the information and any supporting documentation. A genuine agent will only be able to help you to complete the form and advise you what supporting documents you need to include. If you consider that you have been misled or cheated by an agent, then you should report the matter to the police.

Please also report visa fraud to the UK Border Agency by contacting The British High Commission, Islamabad via telephone (051 201 2000) or email (islamabad-general.enquiries@fco.gov.uk). The information you provide will be treated in confidence.

From the UK Border Agency Website:

Can You Apply?

This section explains whether you can apply to enter or remain in the UK as an adult student under the Tier 4 (General) category of our points-based system. As a Tier 4 (General) student, you must have 40 points in our points assessment. You can score:

- 30 points for having a valid confirmation of acceptance for studies, which you get for studying a course at an acceptable level with an approved education provider (also known as a 'Tier 4 sponsor'), and for having acceptable English language skills
- 10 points for having enough money (also known as maintenance or funds) to cover your course fees and living costs

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies

Before you can apply for permission to enter or remain in the UK under Tier 4 (General), your education provider must assign a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) to you. This confirms that you have been given an unconditional offer of a place on a course of study with a licensed Tier 4 sponsor.

If you have a valid CAS, you can score 30 points in our points assessment. However, this will not guarantee that your application will be successful - you will also need to meet the other Tier 4 (General) requirements.

A confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) is a 'virtual document' similar to a database record. Your education provider (also known as your 'Tier 4 sponsor') will assign a CAS to you when they give you an unconditional offer of a place on a course. Each CAS has a unique reference number, and contains information about the course of study and the student's personal details.

Your education provider will tell you your CAS reference number. They will also need to give you some of the information they used (such as the course details, the documents they used to assess your suitability, and the course fees) when they assigned the CAS to you. You will need this information when you apply to us.

A CAS is valid if it contains the same details as are in your passport; and was assigned no more than 6 months before the date when you apply to us; and has not been withdrawn or cancelled by your education provider or by us.

If you do not use your CAS to apply to us during the 6 months after it is assigned to you, it will expire and you will need to get a new CAS from your education provider. If you apply to us using a CAS that has expired, we will refuse your application.

You cannot use a CAS more than once. If we refuse your application, and you want to apply again, your education provider will need to assign another CAS to you.

We or your education provider can withdraw or cancel a CAS at any time. You cannot use a withdrawn or cancelled CAS in an application to us.

Evidence of Your Money

You will score 10 points if you provide evidence that you have enough money to pay your course fees and living costs. Information on how much money you need to cover your living costs can be found on the UK Border Agency website

(www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/320815/documents-t4-gen.pdf). To claim the 10 points, you must show evidence that you:

- Have paid all or part of your course fees and (if relevant) accommodation fees to your Tier 4 sponsor; and/or
- Are receiving official financial sponsorship; and/or
- Have enough money to cover your remaining course fees and living costs, if any

You must provide:

Evidence of money already paid to your education provider

When it assigns your confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS), your Tier 4 sponsor can include details of any money that you have already paid to it. If your CAS includes details of money paid to your Tier 4 sponsor, you do not need to provide any further documents to show that you have paid this money. If you do not know whether your CAS includes this information, you must ask your Tier 4 sponsor.

If you have paid any money to cover your course and accommodation fees to your Tier 4 sponsor, but your CAS does not indicate that this has been paid, you must include evidence of payment in your application. You must send an original paper receipt issued by your Tier 4 sponsor confirming that you have paid all of your fees; or the amount you have paid.

Evidence of an official financial sponsor or government sponsor

If your Tier 4 sponsor is giving you any official financial sponsorship, it can include details of this on your confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS). You do not need to provide any documents as evidence of this official financial sponsorship. If you do not know whether your CAS contains this information, you must ask your Tier 4 sponsor.

In any other circumstances where you are being given official financial sponsorship, you must provide send us a letter of confirmation from your official financial sponsor. The letter must be on the organisation's official letter-headed paper or stationery, and must bear the organisation's official stamp. It must show your name; the official financial sponsor's name and contact details; the date of the letter; the length of the sponsorship; and the amount of money that the official financial sponsor is giving to you, or a statement that it will cover all of your course fees and living costs.

Evidence of money that is available to you - general principles

You must show that you have held the required money for a consecutive 28-day period (finishing on the date of the closing balance) ending no more than one month before your application.

If you are providing your evidence of money from a single account, we will assess the funds available to you from the closing balance given on the document you provide as evidence. If you provide two or more pieces of evidence from a single account (e.g. two consecutive bank statements), we will assess the money available to you from the closing balance of the most recent document.

If you provide evidence from two or more accounts, we will assess the money available to you as being the closing balance of one account; plus any additional money available to you on the date of

that closing balance, for which you have provided the required evidence. We will always use the closing balance date from the account that most favours you.

If you are providing evidence of official financial sponsorship, in addition to evidence of your own money, any money paid to you by your official financial sponsor will not be considered as available money. Money cannot be counted twice.

You can use the following documents to show money that is available to you:

- Personal bank or building society statements, covering a consecutive 28-day period ending no more than one month before the date of your application.
- A building society pass book, covering a consecutive 28-day period ending no more than one month before the date of your application.
- A letter from a bank confirming that funds have been held for a consecutive 28-day period ending no more than one month before the date of your application.
- A letter from a financial institution confirming that funds have been held for a consecutive 28-day period ending no more than one month before the date of your application.
- A letter from a financial institution confirming a loan, dated no more than six months before the date of your application.

Evidence of money that is available to you - acceptable documents

The following documents, with the exception of the loan letter, must cover a consecutive 28-day period ending no more than a month before the date of your application.

Personal bank statements must show your name, or the name(s) of your parent(s) or legal guardian; the account number; the date of the statement; the financial institution's name and logo; and the amount of money available. You cannot use mini-statements from cash machines (ATMs) as evidence.

You can use electronic bank statements from an online account if they include all the information above. Each electronic statement should bear the bank's official stamp on every page, or you must provide a supporting letter from the bank, on company headed paper, confirming the statements' authenticity.

If you want to use a joint account as proof of your money, you must be named on the account along with at least one other person.

We will not accept statements that show the balance in the account on a particular day, as these do not show that you hold enough funds for the full 28-day period required.

A letter from a bank or financial institution confirming funds must show your name, or the name(s) of your parent(s) or legal guardian; the account number; the date of the letter; the financial institution's name and logo; the money in the account; and that there is enough money in the account to cover your course fees and living costs.

If a student is relying on money held by your parents(s) or legal guardian, you must show that you are related to your parent(s) or legal guardian. You must provide your birth certificate showing the names of your parent(s); or your certificate of adoption showing names of both parent(s) or legal guardian; or a court document naming your legal guardian.

You must provide the original legal document or a notarised copy.

You must also show that your parent(s) or legal guardian have given their permission for you to use this money. To do this, you must provide a letter from your parent(s) or legal guardian confirming your relationship with your parent(s) or legal guardian; and their permission for you to use their funds to study in the UK.

English Language Skills

You must have acceptable English language skills before you can apply to become an adult student under Tier 4 (General) of the points-based system.

Your education provider must ensure that you are competent in English at a minimum of level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), unless:

- Your course is at or above level 6 of the revised National Qualifications Framework (equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree); or
- Your course is a foundation degree, or an HND in Scotland; or
- Your course is a pre-sessional course that you will take before taking a degree course in the UK; or
- You are a government-sponsored student who wants to study an English language course; or
- You are a national of a majority English-speaking country

Approved English Language tests include TOEFL and IELTS and are listed on the UK Border Agency website:

(www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/325377/list_of_approved_english_language_tests_01_07_14.pdf).

Your Photographs

You must provide two recent passport photographs of yourself and any partners or children that are applying at the same time as you. All the photographs must have the name of the person in the picture written on the back.

All the photographs should:

- Measure 45mm x 35mm; and
- Be in colour; and
- Be taken against a light grey or cream background; and
- Be clear and of good quality; and
- Not be framed or backed; and
- Not be digitally altered, for example, you cannot use Photoshop to change anything in the image; and
- Be full face, without sunglasses, hat or head covering unless you wear this for religious reasons.

The photograph you send will be used on your visa (known as vignette) which is fixed in your passport if you are applying from outside the UK, or in your ID card if you are applying from inside the UK.

You must send your original passport or travel document and the original passport or travel document of all any partners, children or parents.

15. Get ready for university

Apart from your parents, friends and counselors, there are several online resources available to guide you through the process of getting ready for university.

A few points to remember, the list is never ending but this is a start:

- Obtain complete information about your responsibilities
- Make sure that you meet all required deadlines
- Be diligent and resourceful
- Pay attention to every detail, read the fine print. Before you sign anything or make a commitment, make sure you read it and discuss it with your parents
- Spend carefully, always keeping your budget in mind
- Remember cultural norms for your new country, things are likely to be very different from what you might be familiar with
- Be knowledgeable about changes in laws and societal expectations
- Know your rights as a student and individual within the university and beyond

- Be sure to know the location and contact information for your embassy in case you should ever need assistance from them
- Develop strong relationships with the International Student Office at your university
- Get familiar with your surroundings at university and the local area
- Find people who can be mentors and guides throughout your university years
- You will meet lots of new people and the important thing is to be open and friendly, while using good judgment about your associations
- Enjoy university but never lose sight of your primary purpose, i.e. to succeed at obtaining the best education possible
- Adjustment to the freedom of university is one of the biggest initial lessons you will learn so manage your time wisely and set your priorities well

From the UCAS Website:

Before you start at a university or college you need to make sure you have everything ready, such as accommodation, finances, travel arrangements, books and equipment required for the course. UCAS provides guidance to help you prepare for higher education and advice on where you can find further support (<http://www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/starting-your-studies>).

- Preparation: Things to think about before starting a higher education course.
- Managing money: Advice to help you manage your money successfully.
- Students' unions: What your students' union may be able to offer you and links to students' unions at UK universities and colleges.
- Getting support: Where you can find help and support when you're at university or college.
- Complaints: Procedures to follow if you have a complaint about a university or college.
- FAQs: Preparing for student life and making changes.

Other websites that might have useful information:



www.ukcisa.org.uk



www.educationuk.org



www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk



www.hostuk.org.uk



www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk