

Did you know that you can still apply for a university place that starts this September?

This advice is for people who haven't already applied for a university place through UCAS.

If you have already applied via UCAS, you can start looking for courses and ringing universities.

See guidance at <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/results/no-offers-use-clearing>

How do I find out about course vacancies?

In 2015, more than 60,000 people found their university place through Clearing, which is when universities advertise their vacancies before the start of the new academic year. Not all universities offer places through Clearing, and very popular courses – such as Medicine and Dentistry – will already have waiting lists so won't appear.

To find out where the vacancies are, look at the Clearing section of the UCAS website: <https://www.ucas.com/>

How do I apply to university for the first time?

Once A level results are published, there are 2 ways you can apply for a university place for the first time.

Option 1: apply via UCAS

Complete a UCAS application form, specifying you're applying for 2016 entry, at:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/register>

Guidance to help you complete the form is available at:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/filling-your-application>

You will be asked whether you want to apply via your school/ college or as an individual:

- Before you decide, speak to your school/college. If you choose to apply via your school/college, you will need to know its unique UCAS 'buzzword' and be sure that a teacher/tutor can quickly add a reference to your online application.
- If you can't get hold of the school/college, or want to apply separately from them, then select the option of applying as an 'individual'.

IMPORTANT: When completing your form, do NOT add any university choices.

You will need to include a personal statement saying why you are suited to the course that you want to do e.g. your skills, relevant experience and career goals. Advice on writing a personal statement is shown at:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

You will also be asked for the name and email address of a referee - UCAS will send them a login and password so they can add an online reference. You need to be sure that your referee can add their reference very quickly so that you can start contacting universities. Guidance on selecting your referee is available at:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/how-get-reference>

They should know you academically, be able to talk about your work ethic, how you communicate with other students and your suitability for higher education/ a future career. They must NOT be a friend, partner or family member.

Give your referee a link to the UCAS guidance on reference writing:

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/references/how-write-ucas-undergraduate>

Even if you are applying to UCAS as an individual, you can still name a member of school/ college staff as your referee as long as they have agreed to give you the reference and you have their email address and the school/college 'buzzword'.

Once the reference has been added, UCAS will email you to ask for an online payment of £23 before your application can be submitted. This can be paid via one of the following debit/credit cards - UK and international Visa, Visa Debit, Delta, MasterCard, JCB, Maestro or Electron.

UCAS will then send you an email (this may take a few hours) containing your Personal ID and a Clearing Number.

What next?

Now you can start ringing universities, using their Clearing telephone number, to enquire about courses that interest you. Remember to have your UCAS Personal ID and Clearing Number to hand.

Before you start ringing around, check what courses are being offered through Clearing and look up ones that interest you on the university's website. It's important to do this as, if you get a telephone interview, you are likely to be asked what attracts you to that course.

Just because a course has the same title as a course at another university, don't assume the content will be the same as it won't! Check what modules are available, and which ones interest you.

The university will ask you for some information, and may also interview you over the telephone – be prepared to answer their questions.

If they offer you a place, and you want to accept it (which means that you can't accept any other offers), log into UCAS Track and add the university and course

Please note: There is one other reference option – if all the universities you want to go to have told you that they don't need a reference about you, then you can select the option on the Reference section of the form that says "I confirm that I have contacted every one of my choices to discuss the situation and that each of them has stated that I do not need to include a reference in my UCAS application."

Option 2: apply direct to your chosen university, if they allow "direct entry"

Not all universities offer 'direct entry' so ring to check.

- If a university does offer 'direct entry', and accepts you after a telephone interview, it will send you a Record of Prior Acceptance form which is an 'unconditional offer'.
- You need to complete and return the form within a set period of time (usually 24 or 48 hours).
- The university will then send the form to UCAS, who will register you at that institution and send you a confirmation letter.

Keep in mind...whilst this option might sound attractive, if you are accepted and complete and return the Record of Prior Acceptance form, then you are committed to that university and can't apply to another university for 2016 entry (either through the 'direct entry' route or via Option 1: UCAS). If you decide you don't want to go there after all, you will need to take a gap year and apply to higher education for 2017 entry.

It is generally advised that you apply via Option 1: UCAS

ONCE YOU'VE BEEN ACCEPTED ONTO A COURSE.....

- If you want to live in university accommodation, tell the university as quickly as possible.
- Contact Student Finance England to apply for funding – the application form takes some time to complete so the sooner you do this, the more likely you are to receive your loan by the time your course starts. The form will ask you for your bank account details, so make sure you have opened your own account.

If you are really not sure what to do get some advice! Ask at your school or college or contact the National Careers Service on 0800 100 900