



Learning in England ∞ Applying to Uni

19 > How do I apply to University in the UK?

UCAS - the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service is the organisation that deals with all applications to British Universities.

Most applicants will be A level pupils. During their Lower Sixth year/Year 12 year, if not before, the school will register the pupil with UCAS as a possible applicant for a University. The pupil will be given a password and can go online to the UCAS site to find out about courses. It is very important to do detailed research about

- > the entry requirements. Pupils will have to achieve Points. See the table at the bottom of this Information Document.
- > what will be taught. Each university course will be different. If you are called for interview, you need to be familiar with what you will be taught so you can talk about it in an informed and confident way.
- > how it will be taught. Will the course be taught mainly through lectures and seminars? How many hours of contact will you have with a lecturer or tutor? Some courses may be much more expensive than others because of the field trips that will be done.
- > what other students have done with their degree after graduating from that particular course.

Some courses and universities have additional requirements for example a level of competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening in English; or passing the UKCAT or BMAT for Medicine. We can advise on this aspect of your application. Please see our Information Documents on applying to study Law and Medicine.

All universities have Open Days, which pupils can attend during their Lower Sixth year/Year 12 year. Many of them will have subject specific days too. Most schools allow students to attend two or three during school time; others will require students to go to Open Days at weekends, so they do not miss valuable lesson time. When a pupil has undertaken all the research that is necessary, he or she can begin to make their application.



Most schools support the Application Process from June and July in the Lower Sixth year/Year 12 year. A great deal of personal information is required including GCSE results and the examination board for each subject. Information is saved and can be added to later.

The pupil must have a Reference. Each subject teacher gives a comment about how the pupil learns and the skills that have been developed along the way. It is likely that the pupil's Personal Tutor at school will collate the reference and add some personal comments about the pupil's extra-curricular activities and achievements and his or her expected ability in undertaking the degree course.

The pupil must write a Personal Statement. The author of this document has seen a remarkable range of Statements: banal or far-fetched, ridiculous or intense. The best provide an honest, if passionate, summary of why the pupil wants to study the chosen course, the evidence for making that choice, the achievements that show the pupil is fit to study the course, and the complementary range of extra-curricular activities and skills that demonstrate the pupil is not just an academic, but a person who is mature and socially adept to manage the new life at university, away from home and parents. We have much experience in supporting applications and pupils in their writing of their Personal Statement.

Generally speaking, pupils apply for one subject, to five different universities. Their applications can be uploaded from the beginning of the Upper Sixth year/Year 13 year; but must be uploaded to the UCAS website by 15 January in the calendar year in which they want to start studying. The academic year begins eight months later in late September. UCAS deals with University degree courses and Apprenticeships.

Offers will follow, through UCAS. In most cases offers are conditional on achieving the predicted grades or even better. The pupil must provisionally accept two offers with one in priority over the other: a Firm Choice and an Insurance Choice.

A Level results come out in mid-August. If a pupil does not achieve the grades on which the chosen offers were made, then the offers may be withdrawn. Please see our information documents on Clearing and Gap Years.

Q

I am studying Maths, Physics and Chemistry. Do I have to study one of these subjects at University in order to be an Engineer?

A

It rather depends on which aspect of Engineering you wish to pursue. A General Engineering degree at undergraduate level will have to be followed by a specialist MA. It would be possible to specialise in Chemical, Civil, Electronic/Electrical, Mechanical or Materials/Mineral Engineering.

Where the undergraduate course is pursued may determine what specialism is followed thereafter. Cambridge offers General and Chemical Engineering only, Imperial offers all six specialisms, Bristol offers General, Civil and Mechanical Engineering only.

See whether there are any linked Internships of Apprenticeships too.

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

Extended Project grade	UCAS Tariff Points
A*	28
A	24
B	20
C	16
D	12
E	8

“UCAS runs like a well-oiled machine. It is efficient and succeeds in placing an extraordinary number of students each year.”¹



Contact us at Paths to Learning by emailing felicitygunn@hotmail.com

¹ Head of Sixth Form at an independent school
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