

# A Guide to UCAS Applications 2023-24



# Why go to university?

Choosing higher education has many benefits. These include:

- developing valuable skills to give you wider opportunities
- studying a subject you're passionate about
- gaining a qualification to help you follow your chosen career
- higher earning potential

With a huge range of courses available, it's important to do your research to decide what's right for you.

## Getting Started

1. You need to know:

- Desired Course
- Predicted Grades

EPQ	AS level	A level	Tariff points	BTEC Extended Diploma	BTEC Diploma	BTEC Extended certificate
			168	D*D*D*		
			160	D*D*D		
			152	D*DD		
			144	DDD		
			128	DDM		
			112	DMM	D*D*	
			104		D*D	
			96	MMM	DD	
			80	MMP	DM	
			64	MPP	MM	
		A*	56			D*
		A	48	PPP	MP	D
		B	40			
		C	32		PP	M
A*			28			
A		D	24			
B	A		20			
C	B	E	16			P
D	C		12			
	D		10			
E			8			
	E		6			

# Process for Research

1. Research universities doing the course and make a list.

Unifrog

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

[www.whatuni.com](http://www.whatuni.com)

2. Make eliminations.

- City/Campus University
- Distance from home
- Rankings for subject
  - [University and Leagues Rankings for 2024](#)
- Grade requirements

3. Research details of your short list.

Check the specific course content.

4. Decide whether to visit.

- Open Days/ Virtual Open Days
- Campus Tours

5. Decide whether to put on UCAS application form.

# University Research Grid

University	Location	Course code	Course Title	Open Day/Campus Tour	Entry Requirements	Misc	Y/N

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University	Location	Course code	Course Title	Open Day/Campus Tour	Entry Requirements	Misc	Y/N

## Journey of Application

**Register on Apply**  
July Year 12



**Prepare Personal Statement**  
Deadline October Half term Year 13



**Complete the Application Form**  
Deadline December Year 13



**Submit the application**  
(Button Day date agreed with Sixth Form Team)



**Post Submission**  
Universities will make offers  
Extra available  
Exam results sent to universities



**Confirmation and Clearing**

\* deadline for Medicine/Veterinary/Oxbridge is mid October Year 13

# MAKING YOUR APPLICATION

1. Start by registering for your Apply account at [www.ucas.com/apply](http://www.ucas.com/apply), add some personal details, get a username, create a password, and set your security questions. •
2. Add the **buzzword** for Bishop's to link you application so the school can add you reference and predicted grades etc. (This is [queenelizabeth \(odd year entry\)](#) or [hatfieldhouse \(even year entry\)](#))
3. Complete the rest of your details:
  - a. **You must complete all mandatory questions and you can't skip any sections.** These must all be complete before your application can be sent. But you don't have to do it all at once – sign in and save your progress at any time.
  - b. You **must** add your **UNIQUE LEARNER NUMBER (ULN)** - you will find it on your GCSE slips or you can ask one of the sixth form team to look it up on SIMS.
  - c. **Make sure your email address is always up-to-date** – so you don't miss important updates on your application.
  - d. **It asks for your residency status** – if you're from outside the UK and need clarification on this, [visit the UKCISA website](#) for detailed information.
  - e. **There are questions specifically for UK students** – these are about your ethnic origin, national identity, and occupational background. These are mandatory questions used for monitoring purposes. This information will only be shared with universities and colleges after you have secured a place and will not influence any decision regarding your application.
  - f. **It asks for information about personal circumstances** – such as your parental education, [if you've been in care](#), or involved in widening participation activities, so universities and colleges can form a more complete understanding of you as an individual. While this information is optional, it can help universities and colleges better understand your background, and provide support.
  - g. **If you're applying with the support of a school and you didn't enter your buzzword during registration** – you can do this at any time from your application. This will link your application to your school or college, so they can track your progress and provide support, including adding your reference.
  - h. **It asks how you plan to fund your studies** – but UCAS does not manage student finance applications. [Find out more about funding and finance](#). If you are planning and eligible (UK Citizen or have lived in the UK for at least 3 years) to get student finance and live in Hertfordshire, add Fee Code: 02. Student Support: Hertfordshire (or Bedfordshire/London depending on where you live). If you are not eligible for student finance enter "01".
  - i. **You can give a parent, guardian, or adviser nominated access** – if you'd like them to be able to speak to UCAS on your behalf. UCAS will be able to discuss your application with them, but for security reasons, they can't share your login details (for example, if you need to change your password). Most people put one of their parents, but you can put Mrs James down as your nominated access
4. Add your **education history**

- a. Your end date for Bishop's 31st July of Year 13.
- b. You must enter all your qualifications from secondary education onwards – whether you have the result (even any that were ungraded) or you're still awaiting exams and results (put as "pending"). This helps uni and colleges to understand if you meet their entry requirements. However, sometimes a uni or college will make you an offer even if you don't meet the exact grades they're asking for. If you have any questions about entry requirements, speak to the uni/college before you apply.
- c. If you studied at a uni or college but didn't finish the course, you still need to enter these details. Include the start and finish date, and state that you didn't receive any qualifications there.
- d. It's really important you enter the right qualifications on your application – especially if you're taking a vocational qualification, such as a BTEC – as there are a number of different options to choose from in the application, depending on the size and type of qualification you're taking. If you're not sure which version of a qualification you're taking, talk to your school or college, or contact us for advice.
  - i. Make sure you put correct exam boards (from GCSE sheet or ask your subject teacher if unsure about your A Level or BTEC); and year (June 2020 for GCSE and June 2022 for A Level).
  - ii. For **L2 BTEC** (Year 11)
    1. H&SC BTEC choose "BTEC Technical Award"
    2. Sport BTEC choose "BTEC First Award in Sport"
  - iii. **A Levels** are GCE Advanced; **AS Levels** are GCE Advanced Subsidiary.
  - iv. For **L3 BTECs (sixth form)**
    1. **Health and Social Care:**
      - a. If you are doing **Single** H&SC choose "Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate (360) (First teaching Sept 2016)"
      - b. **Double** H&SC is "Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma (720) (First teaching Sept 2016)"
      - c. You need to put modules in; with grades for those that have been certificated; pending results for all others - even if you have been awarded a grade internally.
    2. **Information technology** and **Digital Media** will be "Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate (360) (First teaching Sept 2016)"
    3. **Business BTEC** - Level 3 Extended Certificate Business (single option); BTEC Level 3 Diploma Business (double option)
    4. **CTEC Business** is Business CTEC Level 3 extended certificate (Cambridge Technical) - exam board OCR.



5. **Digital Media** is also CTEC Level 3 extended certificate (Cambridge Technical) - exam board OCR
6. **Criminology** is Criminology (WJEC) Level 3 Applied Diploma

- v. **Childcare** is: “NCFE CACHE L3 Applied General Certificate for Early Years, Childcare & Education”
- vi. **Financial Studies LIBF** is Financial Studies - LIBF Level 3 Certificate if single / Diploma if double
- vii. **Core Maths** is shown as “AQA Level 3 certificate in Mathematical Studies (Core Maths)”.

## 5. Complete your **employment history**

- a. If you've had any paid jobs – full-time or part-time – here's where you can enter details for up to five of them. Include company names, addresses, job descriptions, and start/finish dates.
- b. Any unpaid or voluntary work shouldn't be included here – mention that in your personal statement. If you've not had any paid work experience, just leave this section blank, and mark it as complete.

## 6. Course choices

- You can choose up to five courses. Pick no more than 2 “stretch or top” choices - 1 grade above your predicted grades; 2 “realistic or middle” choices - matching your predicted grades and 1 “backup or bottom” choice - one grade below your predictions)
- There's no preference order and your chosen universities/colleges won't see where else you've applied.
- Applying to medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or veterinary science? You can only apply to a maximum of four courses in any one of these subjects.
- Applying to the universities of Oxford or Cambridge? You can only apply to one course at either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge.
- If you are applying for colleges in the Arts, you need to check whether the course is part of a UCAS application or an independent application direct to the college. Costs of courses may vary according to the college requirements.
- For Arts courses, you may be required to audition, provide a portfolio of evidence, etc.; you need to make sure that you understand the process and relevant dates for when your prepared piece is required.
- Applying for deferred entry? Make sure you've checked the university or college accepts deferred entry applications for the course you're interested in.

- Make sure you're familiar with the application deadline(s) for the courses you want to apply for – visit [www.ucas.com/whentoapply](http://www.ucas.com/whentoapply).

## 7. Write a personal statement

- a. This is your chance to show universities and colleges why you want to study the course and why you'd make a great student.
- b. Start early – it might take a while until you're happy with it and you've checked it through with teachers, advisers, or family.
- c. Speak to your tutor about your personal statement well in advance of your application; in most cases, the tutor will write your reference and these two sections should not contradict each other.
- d. Do not give your draft personal statement to many people to review at the same time, it will then cause confusion and hold up the timeframe for completion.
- e. For detailed advice on how to write your personal statement, head to [www.ucas.com/personalstatement](http://www.ucas.com/personalstatement).

## 8. Take a final look at your application

- a. See if you need to make any edits, then mark it as complete and save it.
- b. Once you've marked all previous sections as complete, you'll be able to read and agree to the declaration – this allows UCAS to process your information and send it to your chosen universities/colleges.
- c. Pay your fee, and send your application. The application fee is £22 if you're applying to just one course, or £27.50 for multiple courses and for late applications sent after 30 June. You can pay UCAS directly by credit/debit card (preferred option) or pay the school.
- d. Make sure you give the school permission to track your application before you send.
- e. The school will then send the application (button day)

# Personal Statement Planning Sheet or use UNIFROG

Writing about the course

**Why are you applying for your chosen course?**

**Why does this subject interest you? Include evidence that you understand what's required to study the course.**

**Why do you think you are suitable for the course? Do you have any particular skills or experience that will help you to succeed on the course?**

**Do your current or previous studies relate to the course? If so how?**

**Have you taken part in any other activities that demonstrate your interest in the course?**

#### **Skills and achievements**

**Universities like to know the skills that you have that will help you on the course, or generally with life at university.**

**Also think about any other achievements you're proud of, positions of responsibility that you have held both in and out of school and attributes that make you interesting, special or unique.**

### **Hobbies and interests**

**Make a list of your hobbies, interests and social activities. Then think about how they demonstrate your personality, skills and abilities. Try to link them to the skills and experience required for your course.**

### **Work Experience**

**Include details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work, particularly if it is relevant to your course. Try to link any experience/skills/qualities related to the course.**

### **Future plans**

**If you know what you'd like to achieve after completing the course, explain how you want to use the knowledge and experience that you gain. How does the course relate to what you want to do in the future?**

### **Dos when writing your personal statement**

- Do use your best English and don't let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement.
- Do show that you know your strengths and can outline your ideas clearly. Use words you know will be understood by the person reading your statement.
- Do be enthusiastic – if you show your interest in the course, it may help you get a place.
- Do expect to produce several drafts of your personal statement before being totally happy with it.
- Do ask people you trust for their feedback

### **Don'ts when writing your personal statement**

- Don't exaggerate – if you do you may get caught out at an interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.
- Don't rely on a spellchecker as it will not pick up everything – Proof-read as many times as possible.
- Don't leave it to the last minute – your statement will seem rushed and important information could be left out.

### **How to write it**

**There's no right answer for how to write it, or any definite formula you should follow** – just take your time and don't worry if it doesn't sound right on your first attempt. Even the best writers in the world redraft their work!

#### **1. Structure**

- In the course listings see which skills and qualities the universities or colleges value most.
- Then structure your info into an order that's most relevant to them.

#### **2. Style**

- Write in English and avoid italics, bold or underlining.
- Use an enthusiastic and concise tone of voice – nothing too complex – just what comes naturally.
- Be careful with humour, quotes or anything unusual – you do want to be individual, but if the admissions tutor doesn't have the same sense of humour as you, it might not work.
- Get the grammar, spelling and punctuation right, and redraft your statement until you're happy with it.
- Proofread and read it aloud to hear what it sounds like. Ask advisers/family members to check it too.

#### **3. Format**

- You can use up to 4,000 characters or 47 lines of text (including spaces and blank lines).
- We recommend you write your statement first and then copy and paste into your online application (but watch out for the character and line count – the processor might get different values because it doesn't count tabs or paragraphs).

- When you add to your online application click 'save' regularly because it will time out after 35 minutes of inactivity.

If you want to send any more information you can ask unis and colleges if they'll accept further details – if they say yes you should send it direct to them once UCAS have sent you your Welcome letter (so you can include your Personal ID).

#### **4. Don't copy!**

- Don't copy anyone else's personal statement or from personal statements posted on the internet. Make sure your personal statement is all your own work.
- UCAS screen all personal statements across their Copyscatch similarity detection system. If you are found to have similarity in your personal statement, your application will be flagged, you, together with your choices will receive an email alert and this could have serious consequences for your application.

## Personal Statement Checklist

(Please read this before you give your statement to a teacher to read!)

### 1. Intro:

- Why do you want to study this subject? – show your enthusiasm (passion, excitement, fascination, intrigue etc.)
- Sound like you are genuinely keen and interested

### 2. Unique selling point (leave this bit out if you can't think of anything):

- Do you have a USP that makes you particularly stand out for this course? – some particular relevant work experience? - a visit? - a qualification? – something that no/few other people can say?
- E.g. you are applying for Business and you have already set up your own business, met Lord Sugar, worked for Richard Branson etc.

### 3. Your academic enthusiasm/record:

- Start with the A level that is most relevant to your course (e.g. for English, start with English)
- Mention the parts of your A Level that you have most enjoyed
- Mention 'extras' – wider reading; lectures; visits; talks; conferences etc.
- Say something about each of the A Levels/BTECs you study (either they have given you knowledge or skills that will help you in this course)
- If you have done especially well in a unit (e.g. got full marks) then say so

### 4. Other 'academic' stuff:

- Extended Project
- Other qualifications

### 5. Work experience/hobbies/voluntary work/responsibilities:

- Ideally show a link between your w/exp and your course
- Show that you are enthusiastic – a 'rounded' person
- Give examples of things that you have done
- What else can you offer to university life?

### 6. Conclusion:

- Why would you make a good student? – commitment, hard work, enthusiasm, dedication etc.



### Final Checklist before you Pay and Send

- Check personal details are correct
- Fee code should be 02
- You have added you Unique Learner Number
- You have added your nominated access (usually a parent)
- You have entered all your GCSEs with the correct grades
- You have entered your A levels and/or BTECs etc as pending
- YOU HAVE PROOFREAD YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT