

Higher Education: Why, what, where, how?



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Pat Reid
Widening Participation Manager

Why go to uni?



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Study a subject they love

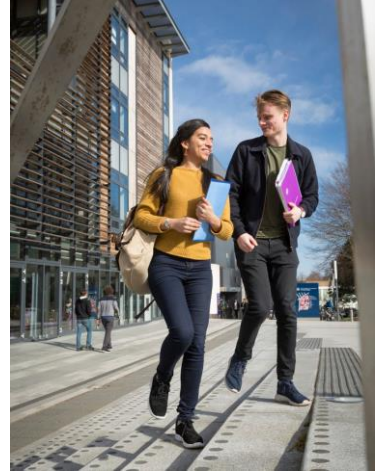
Employability

- Improve career prospects
 - Higher average life-time earnings (ONS)
 - More likely to be in skilled employment (DFE)
 - Only route to some careers
 - Transferrable skills
-

Gain independence

- Move away from home?
 - Learn to work independently
 - Discover new talents
-

Meet people from all over the world





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Which subject?

Over 50,000 courses to choose from:

- Take a school subject to the next level?
- Related subjects?
- Something completely new?
- Vocational courses?

A degree takes a long time – needs to be something they enjoy!





Which course?

Research:

- Course content
- Flexibility
- Teaching and assessment methods
- Quality of teaching and research
- Professional accreditation
- Placements / study abroad?
- Future career paths





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Which university?

- Location
- Academic facilities and resources
- Accommodation options
- Student support and welfare
- Scholarships or bursaries
- Social and sports facilities/clubs



Applying & Personal Statements



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Research

Research chosen course(s) and key skills required

University prospectuses, course leaflets, websites

Higher Education Exhibitions

Work experience/shadowing

Open Days

Careers library

Email universities with questions if necessary



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Entry requirements

Entry requirements are complicated!

- General entry requirements / contextual admissions
- Subject requirements
- Recommended vs required
- Qualifications over multiple years
- Work experience
- Additional requirements e.g. portfolio, interview, UCAT

If in doubt – check with universities!



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The logo for Unifrog, featuring the word "unifrog" in a lowercase, rounded, teal-colored font.

Where students will start the process including;

- Researching universities and courses
- Building content for personal statement

The logo for UCAS, featuring the letters "UCAS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "A" is stylized with a red triangle pointing upwards.

Where students need to complete and submit their application for all universities.
Strict deadlines and requirements.



The UCAS system

Apply to:

- Universities
- Some college courses
- Conservatoires

One application, 5 choices

- Maximum 4 for medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine
- Back up choices

Deadlines:

15 October 2022 18:00

- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Veterinary medicine
- Oxford/Cambridge

25 January 2023 18:00

- All other courses
- The school deadline is 5th December – students need to get applications into the school by this date!



UCAS application

My profile

Personal details > Name, age, title and gender Start this section	Contact and residency details > Address, email, telephone and where you live Start this section	Education > Qualifications and periods of study Start this section
Employment > Paid employment Start this section	Nationality details > Birthplace and nationalities Start this section	Supporting information > So that providers know how to support you during your studies Start this section
English language skills > Is English your first language? Start this section	Finance and funding > Tell us how you'll fund your study Start this section	



UCAS application

The screenshot shows the UCAS application dashboard. At the top, the UCAS logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Further education', 'Undergraduate', 'Postgraduate', 'Apprenticeships', and 'Careers' are on the right. A search icon and a red profile icon are also present. Below the navigation, the main heading is 'UCAS APPLICATION' with the subtitle '2022 Undergraduate application'. On the right side of this section, it says 'Your Personal ID number'. A breadcrumb trail shows 'Home / UCAS application'. The main content area is titled 'Application status' and includes a 'Centre information' section with the text: 'You are not linked to a centre. Use the link below to link your application to your centre. Link to a school, college, or centre'. To the right of this text are five progress indicators: 'CHOICES' (0/5), 'PROFILE' (0%), 'PERSONAL STATEMENT' (NOT STARTED), 'REFERENCE' (NOT STARTED), and 'REFERENCE' (0%). A 'Review and submit' button is located below the progress indicators. Below the 'Application status' section is a 'Your choices' section with a large blue button that says '+ Add choice'. To the right of this button is a 'Search for courses' box with the text 'Find courses and providers'.



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UCAS application

The screenshot displays the UCAS application interface with a dark blue background. At the top, there are four white cards with rounded corners, each containing a title, a question, and a 'Start this section' link. The first card is for 'English language skills' with the question 'Is English your first language?'. The second is for 'Finance and funding' with 'Tell us how you'll fund your study'. The third is for 'Personal statement' with 'Why do you want to study this subject?'. The fourth is for 'Reference' with 'Provide details of your referees'. Below these cards, the text 'Your personal statement and references' is displayed. At the bottom of the interface, there is a purple footer containing navigation links, social media icons, and the UCAS logo.

English language skills >
Is English your first language?
[Start this section](#)

Finance and funding >
Tell us how you'll fund your study
[Start this section](#)

Your **personal statement and references**

Personal statement >
Why do you want to study this subject?
[Start this section](#)

Reference >
Provide details of your referees
[Start this section](#)

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UCAS © UCAS 2021



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Personal statement: Why is it important?

- Growing applicant numbers
- Competition for places
- Most options won't interview
- Opportunity for applicants to tell us why they would be a great student
- A good personal statement can be the difference between a successful and unsuccessful application.



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Personal statement: The Basics

- One personal statement for five choices
- All choices must have a common theme
- No half-and-half statements
- Back up choices
- Max 4,000 characters or 47 lines
- Limit includes punctuation, spaces and blank lines
- Plagiarism check (Copycatch)



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Personal statement: What are universities looking for?

Why is the student applying to us/for this course?

Students need to show us:

- Motivation and commitment
- Enthusiasm
- Preparation
- Skills
- Suitability
- Interest in the programme
- Understanding of the subject
- Understanding of profession for vocational programmes



Personal statement: Starting points



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- The first line is the hardest to write
- What have you done? Make a list!
- Not everything has to be directly related
- Start to write more about each item (**Action – Benefit – Course relevance**). Students should cover:
 - What they actually do?
 - What they gain from it?
 - What did they achieve eg. an award?
 - How does it relate to their application?





Personal statement: Writing style

- Formal style
- Concise – if you are reading a draft, suggest words to cut
- Discourage using synonyms!
- Positive tone
- Focus on the student e.g. “I did” not “we did”
- Avoid using lists
- Quotes use up characters and are often unnecessary

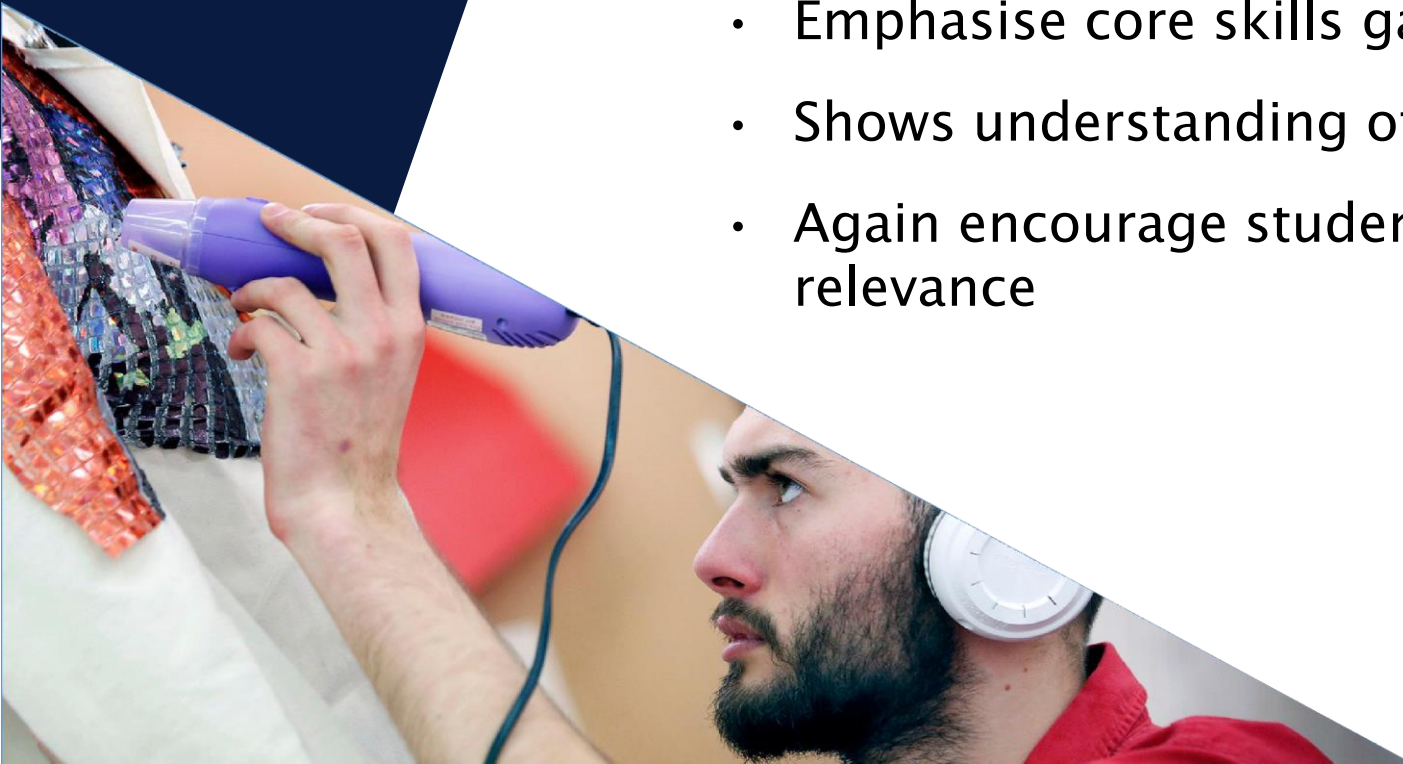




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Personal statement: Work experience

- Work experience section of form – more depth in personal statement
- Any work experience can be relevant
- Emphasise core skills gained or developed
- Shows understanding of career
- Again encourage students to use **Action – Benefit – Course** relevance





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Personal statement: Qualities and Achievements

- Showing a university the student beyond the grades, how will they contribute to university life?
 - Additional achievements
 - Awards gained
 - Positions of leadership and responsibility
- More than just the outcome
- Again encourage students to use **Action – Benefit – Course relevance**





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Personal statement: Key facts

- Can be the reason a student receives an offer
- One statement for up to five choices
- Research required! Cannot write a personal statement without it
- No lists or bullet points
- **Action – Benefit – Course relevance** – it isn't just including things because they sounds good!
- A good personal statement will take multiple redrafts to get right. Encourage students to dedicate enough time to the process and make sure they are letting someone else read it.



UCAS: The next steps



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UCAS distributes applications to universities

Monitor progress of application through UCAS Hub

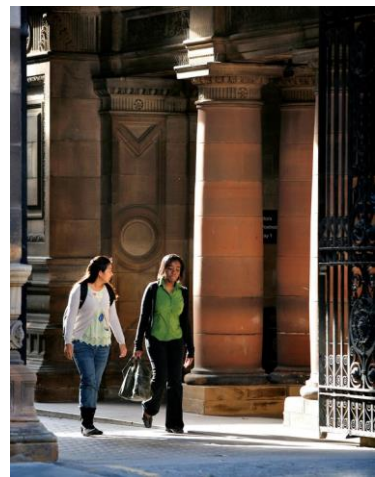
The University response:

- Conditional offer
 - Unconditional offer
 - Unsuccessful application
-

Only have to respond after all offers have been made

Can hold a maximum of 2 conditional offers (Firm or Insurance)

Much thought required before responding to offers – insurance choice should be realistic



futurestudents@ed.ac.uk

Any questions?

UCAS
ucas.com



The University of Edinburgh
ed.ac.uk



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Open to
the world