



UCAS: Information for Parents



UCAS administer university admissions, enabling communication between applicants and universities. They also provide a great deal of information and advice regarding the application process, including how to decide which courses to apply for. Their undergraduate admissions pages can be found here:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university>

RMGS students have access to a range of resources from Unifrog to help them select courses, write their personal statements, and record useful information for teachers to use in academic references. Students can log in here once their account has been activated: <https://www.unifrog.org/>

University rankings are published every year and can be useful, undoubtedly some institutions have reputations for excellence in particular areas, but these can vary greatly within a short period of time. We recommend thorough research to find ideal courses, taking into consideration the variables that are most important to a particular student e.g. location or job prospects. Note that grade requirements reflect the competition to get into a course, not necessarily the quality or difficulty of the course. Most universities offer open days in order to help students make informed decisions.

The Application Process

Once students have created a UCAS account and linked themselves to the school, using the 'buzzword' we provide them with, they will need to complete the following sections. This process will be discussed in detail during PSHE lessons, however the UCAS website has been designed to make completing each element as straightforward as possible.

- Personal details
- Contact and residency
- Education
- Employment
- Nationality
- Supporting information
- English language skills
- Finance & funding
- Diversity & inclusion
- Personal statement
- Choices

We advise students to make applications as soon as they have decided on their courses/universities. It is possible to apply for up to five courses in most circumstances, though only four in the case of medicine, dentistry and veterinary (MDV). Note that students can only apply to *either* Oxford or Cambridge.

It is sensible for students to select courses with a range of entry requirements, based on their current working grades.

Upon completing their part of the application, students will have to pay an administration fee to UCAS (£27.50 for 2024 applications).

If a student wishes to take a gap year, they can defer their entry. This is often more sensible than trying to complete the application during a gap year if the student already knows which courses they wish to apply for.

It is important for students to ensure that they are certain about their chosen courses before submitting the application, as changes cannot easily be made later.

The Personal Statement

This is the most daunting and time-consuming part of the application, but it is a student's opportunity to convince the admissions tutor that they deserve a place on their chosen course.

During the summer term of Year 12, students take part in "Post-18 Day" to ensure they are informed about the UCAS and apprenticeship application processes. This includes a detailed discussion of how to write an outstanding personal statement. We subsequently provide additional resources via Teams and Unifrog, and the Sixth Form Team, including our careers advisor and form tutors, provide support as students refine their statement during the first two terms of Year 13.

The Academic Reference

Once a student has submitted their details, the school must add predicted grades and an academic reference before approving the application. The application is *not* sent to universities until this process is completed. The reference is prepared using comments from teachers and form tutors, in order to give a positive and detailed description of the student's achievements and character.

Key Dates

- **1st October** - internal deadline for students completing Oxbridge and MDV applications. In order to meet the official UCAS deadline, it is essential that we have sufficient time to complete the necessary administration.
- **16th October** – all Oxbridge and MDV applications must be completed and submitted to UCAS by this date.
- **1st December** - internal deadline. Students must complete all their sections, including the personal statement, by this date. In order to meet the official UCAS deadline, it is essential that we have sufficient time to complete the necessary administration.
- **31st January** - the official deadline for most courses. Applications submitted after this date will be processed but will be marked as late, which is likely to significantly affect the chances of receiving an offer.
- **February/March** – Student finance applications can be submitted.
- **May** – if the application was made by the 31st of January, all university decisions will have been issued by this point.
- **May/June** – Students will need to select *firm* and *insurance* choices.

The full list of dates for your child's academic year can be found here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/scheme/undergraduate/type/key-date>

Tests and Interviews

Some universities including Oxford and Cambridge require students to sit aptitude tests, as will medicine and law courses. Students need to ensure they research these and make any necessary administration arrangements. Most tests can be organised through our exams officer and completed in school, however the LNAT, for example, is booked and sat externally.

Interviews for Oxbridge colleges will usually begin in early December, with candidates notified in late November. Some other courses, including MDV, will also invite candidates to interview.

Oxford and Cambridge Applications

- Students are frequently asked to submit written work, usually by mid-November.
- Students applying to Cambridge will also need to complete a Supplementary Application Questionnaire. Details of how to do this can be found on the University of Cambridge website.
- An interview workshop will be delivered in school by an admissions tutor from one of the universities.
- Students are advised to carefully manage their application, following the advice given throughout Year 12 and 13; Oxbridge applications are more exacting than those made to other universities.

Communication with UCAS/Universities

- All progress can be tracked online via the UCAS Hub.
- Receipt of the application is acknowledged immediately via email.
- Applicants are given a unique reference number. Students must take note of this as it will be used in all UCAS related correspondence.
- A reduced copy of the application is sent by UCAS to the universities applied to and they consider each application simultaneously. Applications are “invisible” in that each institution cannot see which other courses the student has applied for.
- UCAS will email students with each university’s response. In some cases, usually when additional information is required, a university will also contact the applicant directly. The timing these responses can vary significantly, with some highly competitive courses taking far longer than others.

The Outcome of the Application

- Conditional offers dependent on certain A Level grade requirements are sent via UCAS. Students may keep **one firm** and **one insurance offer**. The firm offer should always be for the course the student really prefers, providing the requirements are realistic. The insurance offer is usually for lower grade requirements.
- Students may receive an unconditional offer, or a conditional offer which will be lowered by the university if the student makes them their firm choice. These are obviously incredibly tempting, and can be very advantageous, but can also result in students abandoning their aspirations and opting for courses that are not their preferred choice. We strongly advise students to be wary of such offers and make an informed decision.
- Students who do not receive any offers, or who reject all their offers at this stage, will be eligible for UCAS Extra. This allows them to apply for additional courses, one at a time, until they receive an offer.

Student Finance, Bursaries Scholarships and Awards

- Students can register for student finance here: www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login
- Each university has additional funding available for low-income students. Students should contact the student services department at their chosen universities for details (likely also available directly via their website).
- It is the student’s responsibility to complete the online form and send relevant information. All correspondence will be between Medway/Kent, the student, and their parents/carers.
- Documentation such as a birth certificate or passport (divorce papers etc. where relevant) may be requested and must be sent with the application.

Results, Clearing and Adjustment

- On A Level results day, students can see whether their offer has been confirmed via the UCAS Hub. If a student achieves the requirements of their firm choice, then they will automatically accept that offer. Sometimes a university will still confirm an offer even if the requirements are not quite achieved.
- If the requirements for the first firm offer are not fulfilled but those for the insurance choice are, then the student will automatically accept that offer.
- Students can reject either offer if they are pulling out of the UCAS process entirely. It is also possible to reject an offer to enter Clearing, however this requires a student to contact the university directly and request this. It is not guaranteed that a university will accept this arrangement.
- If a student does not achieve the grades required for either their firm or insurance choices, they will be entered into Clearing. This is accessible via the UCAS Hub. Universities with space on their courses will be listed and students will need to contact them directly to request a place.
- Students who achieve grades above the requirements for their firm offer can choose to enter Adjustment, allowing them to accept a place on a course with higher entry requirements if there are places available.

We hope you find this information helpful and will be able to follow the applications procedure with your child. If you need further advice, please do not hesitate to contact the school on 01634 364 151 or email any of us:

- Mr M McDowell (Assistant Head Teacher and Head of 6th Form) MMcDowell@rmet.org
- Mr J Twizell (Head of Year 13) jtwizell@rmet.org
- Mrs J Wilson (Head of Year 12) llacey@rmet.org

The logo for UCAS, consisting of the letters 'UCAS' in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter 'A' is colored red, while the letters 'U', 'C', and 'S' are black.