

UCAS application: step-by-step guide

All applications to UK universities (except for some Foundation courses and a few universities that accept direct applications) must be made via UCAS. UCAS stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. It is the government agency that processes university applications in the UK.

Deadlines:

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| 30 September | FIS deadline for students to complete UCAS application, pay and send to referee (Oxford/Cambridge/Medicine/Vet Science/Dentistry) |
| 15 October | Official UCAS deadline (Oxford/Cambridge/Medicine/Vet Science/Dentistry) |
| 15 November | FIS deadline for student to complete regular UCAS application, pay and send to referee (Intl. Stream) |
| 30 November | FIS deadline for student to complete regular UCAS application, pay and send to referee (French Stream) |
| 15 January | Official UCAS deadline (regular application) |

UK Fee Status: before you start...

As the UK has left the EU, there will be changes to the fee status system for 2021 entry onwards. Previously, EU nationals had a chance of securing the cheaper EU fee status (around 9,000 pounds). This will be phased out. This means that EU nationals will have to pay the full international fees. These vary by degree and university, with degrees involving laboratories/equipment (eg science, engineering and medical degrees) being the most expensive. You will find fee details on individual universities' websites. Universities may find some ways to alleviate this - e.g. through bursaries and scholarships, but these are unlikely to cover the difference between the old EU fees and the international fees.

Universities in Scotland: the same applies to EU nationals. However, there is a small silver lining - previously, EU status fees were free, and consequentially, because there was a strict EU quota, offer conditions were set very high. Under the new rules, offers made to EU nationals are likely to be the same as those made to non EU/non Scottish students.

If you are a UK national, you may be able to secure Home status. Each university makes its own decision on this, and they will weigh up various factors. One key issue they look at is the applicant's ordinary place of residence during the 3 years preceding entry to university. Obviously, for most of our applicants, it's HK. A UK passport, or ownership of property in the UK, or payment of taxes there, are not necessarily enough to gain Home fee status.

If a university makes an offer based on overseas fee status, and you think you have a case for claiming Home status, you can request a "fee status review" from the university that made the offer. The university will send a form for parents to fill out with details of employment contracts, taxes paid in the UK, how frequently the family returns to the UK, etc. In some cases they will change the status.

For overseas students, apart from for Medicine/Dentistry degrees, there are generally no quotas.

If you want to maximise your chance of receiving Home fee status, there are some initial signals that you can send out in the UCAS application.

In the personal details section you can (even though some of these may go against the standard UCAS guidelines):

1. For *postal address*, enter your HK address
2. For *home address*, you can enter your address in the UK (if the property is owned by Mum or Dad – relatives don't count)
3. *Area of permanent residence*: you can select the UK (you're arguing that even though you've been living in HK, you still consider your permanent residence to be in the UK)
4. *Residential category*: you can select a specific option, e.g. "UK Citizen" as opposed to the standard "Other" mentioned below.

Visas

For degrees starting in 2021 onwards, EU nationals will need to apply for a visa to study in the UK. This was previously called a Tier 4 Visa, and will now be called "Student Route". Students will apply for it via the UK Government website, and will need to present documents at an office in North Point, Hong Kong. A CAS letter from their university will be needed. This is a letter confirming that the student has a place at the university, and will be issued by the university in summer, after reception of IB/Bac results. The application is fairly straightforward, and takes 15 working days (5 days for more expensive Priority Service). Details: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/apply> (note that this website has not yet been updated for the new Student Route visa).

The UK is also introducing a new "Graduate Route". This will allow Bachelor and Master's degree graduates to stay in the UK for 2 years after graduation to look for employment.

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| 1: Register | <p>Register for 2021 entry: https://2021.undergrad.apply.ucas.com/appreg/SecurityServlet</p> <p>Complete basic personal details, set security questions and make a password. Note down the username that UCAS will create, and your password.</p> <p>Use capital letters as appropriate – e.g. for addresses. Don't be lazy!</p> <p>When asked "How are you applying?", select "Through my school/college". Then enter the FIS buzzword (for applications from Sept 2020, it is Bonjour2020 – note upper case B). The buzzword links you application to FIS so that the Guidance Dept can complete their side of the application (reference and predicted grades) and can check that everything is ok.</p> <p>UCAS will generate a 10-digit Personal ID. Note it down: you must also include it in the subject line of any emails you send to universities.</p> |
| 2: Personal Details | <p>*at every stage of the application, you can click on the red question mark icon for help</p> <p><i>Postal address</i> - where mail is sent (i.e. your address in HK).</p> <p><i>Home address</i> – Usually the same HK address. Can enter EU/UK address if your family own property there and consider it the main home.</p> <p><i>Email address</i> - best to use personal address as FIS address may not be valid if communication needed after leaving FIS.</p> <p><i>Permanent home in UK</i> – can select yes if have a home in the UK.</p> <p><i>Date of entry to UK</i> – leave blank if born in UK. If not, put 1 Sept 2021 (indication of future date when you would enter the UK for university study).</p> <p><i>Area of permanent residence</i> – usually Hong Kong, if you didn't state above that your permanent home is in the UK.</p> <p><i>Residential category</i> – Normally "Other" if you haven't lived in the UK or EU for the past 3 years. Click on the red question mark, scroll down and follow the flow chart to be sure. You could select "EU National (non-UK Citizen)", "UK Citizen – England" etc if you are pushing for Home/EU fees.</p> <p><i>Reference Numbers</i> - enter your IELTS TRF number if you have already taken IELTS (French Stream). It's the long series of letters and numbers at the bottom right of your results sheet.</p> <p><i>Passport Details</i> - cannot enter if you entered an EU or UK nationality.</p> <p><i>Do you require a student visa?</i> - you will if you have a non-UK passport (see visa info above). But if you entered an EU nationality, this box is blanked out. Don't worry - won't be a problem.</p> <p><i>Student support</i> – Fee code "Private Finance". This means that your parents agree to pay for the degree themselves (as opposed to applying for UK government loans).</p> <p><i>Nominated access</i> – You can enter details of a person/persons who would be able to enter into correspondence with universities on your behalf, if needed, after you've applied. Best to enter Mr. Hammond or Mrs. McCarthy (title: University Counsellor), plus a parent or guardian.</p> |
| 3. Student Finance | <p>Read the details and check the box at the bottom.</p> |
| 4. Choices | <p><i>5 maximum – usually the same, or very similar, degrees at 5 different universities. You can in fact apply for more than one degree at one university, but if they are too different in nature remember that it will be hard to focus your personal statement.</i></p> <p><i>Medicine/Vet Science/Dentistry</i> – you can make only 4 choices. Often the 5th is Biomedical Science, Medical Science, Biochemistry or similar.</p> <p>Enter Institution code, Course Code, and Campus Code (click the "See List" button). Many universities have only 1 campus, so for most it will be "Main Site".</p> <p><i>Start date</i> – make sure you enter the right year. If you are going to take a gap year, adapt the date.</p> <p><i>Point of entry</i> – leave blank if you are applying to enter the 1st year of the degree (likely to be all of you).</p> |

5. Education

Enter all the **secondary** schools you've attended (i.e. from Year 7/6ème), making sure you get the month/year correct. Click on "Find" and "Search" to produce your school or college, and the exam centre number if there is one. Many schools will not appear. No problem – just enter the name **and the country** manually.

Choose "Yes" for "Did you / will you receive any qualifications at this centre?"
You can leave the exam centre number blank.

"Please state the highest level of qualification you expect to have before you start your course." Select "[Below](#) honours degree level qualifications".

IB students

- Click "Add Qualification", then choose "International GCSE" from the list of "Popular Qualifications". Add IGCSEs (with date (June + year) and grade) if you took any. English IGCSE: make sure you enter the correct syllabus (check your certificate). For English Language, make sure you choose "First Language" or "Foreign Language" as appropriate.
- Choose "International Baccalaureate Diploma" from the shortlist of "Popular Qualifications".
- Qualification date: June of the year you will graduate.
- *Grade* - Pending (you haven't finished IB yet).
- IB: Enter your 3 HLs and 3 SLs, with qualification date June of the year you will take them. Then choose the **subject area** of your Extended Essay and select "Extended Essay". Then choose "Theory of Knowledge". So you should end up with 8 entries in total: 6 main subjects, plus EE and TOK.
- Remember to save.

French Stream students

- Type "France" in the qualification search box, and choose "France-Brevet des Collèges" – June + the year you did it. Most UK universities will not include it in the admissions process, as they don't consider it an equivalent of the IGCSE. But for some highly selective degrees, it may be a consideration. Just enter the main examined subjects and scores, plus the maximum score possible. List the subjects in English. Don't enter a huge list of contrôles continus (Continuous Assessment"). Don't include an overall numerical score by calculating an average, as there isn't one! You can however enter a « mention » - e.g. « Très bien ».
- Example of Brevet entry:

| France-Brevet des Colleges in France-Brevet des Colleges | | |
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| Grade: Mention Tres Bien | Date: June 2017 | |
| Module name | Module date | Module grade |
| Mathematics + Science | June 2017 | 61/100 |
| French, Geography, History | June 2017 | 76/100 |
| Interdisciplinary Research Project | June 2017 | 100/100 |
| Continuous Assessment | June 2017 | 380/400 |

- The new French Bac does not appear in the shortlist. Click "Add Qualification", type "France" in the search box, and choose either "[France - Baccalaureat General \(from 2021\)](#)" or "[France - Option Internationale du Baccalauréat \(from 2021\)](#)".
- *Qualification date*: June of the year you will graduate.
- *Grade* - leave blank (you haven't finished the Bac yet).

Entering Bac subjects

You need to enter, manually, your Epreuves Anticipées du Bac AND your current Bac subjects. List the 3 Epreuves Anticipées at the top, with the qualification date from June last summer, and your current Bac subjects underneath, with the qualification date the following summer (June of the year you will graduate).

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| | <p>French Bac: translations of subjects Some of the French names used for subjects may not be understood by anglophone admissions officers. Therefore you must write English translations. Write just the English as below, including the title "Specialism/Core/Option", Do not include the French. Remember to include any extra options. Do not include "Grand Oral" or "EMC".</p> <p>Epreuves Anticipées du Bac - these 3 only with the scores you got. Other subjects have not had final assessment yet and you cannot enter a score yet. French (Written) (also enter score /20) French (Oral) (also enter score /20) <u>Specialism dropped at end of 1ère</u> (choose from list below and also enter score /20)</p> <p>Specialisms (enter the 2 you are taking in Terminale) : Specialism: History, Geography + Political Science Specialism: Humanities, Literature + Philosophy Specialism: Foreign Language, Literature + Culture (English) Specialism: Mathematics Specialism: Information Technology Specialism: Physics-Chemistry Specialism: Biology + Earth Sciences (SVT) Specialism: Economics + Social Sciences Specialism: Visual Arts</p> <p>Other Subjects (enter the ones you're taking in Terminale): Core: English or Core: English Language + Literature (OIB) Core: History-Geography or Core: History-Geography (OIB) Core: Philosophy Core: Science Core: Physical Education Option: Mandarin Option: Spanish Option: German Option: Other language (CNED) - enter as appropriate Option: Latin Option: European Section Option: Oriental Section Option: Visual Arts Option: Mathematics "Expertes" (Higher Level) Option: Mathematics "Complémentaires" (Standard Level) Option: Law + Challenges of The Contemporary World</p> <p>Remember to save.</p> |
| 6. Employment | This section is really for adults who have already had paid jobs. Most of you should leave this blank. If you have done a job (e.g. tutoring or restaurant work) over an extended period, you can enter this. But if you only did a week or so of work, leave it blank. |
| 7. Statement | You will paste your personal statement here. Maximum 4,000 characters including spaces, or 47 lines – whichever comes first. It may not be possible to keep spaces between paragraphs. In this case, try not to fill the last line in each paragraph, so that it is clear to the reader that a new paragraph is starting. |
| 8. View all details | Check everything carefully. |
| 9. Pay/Send | <p>You will need to ask Mum or Dad to pay the UCAS fee, using a credit card (18 pounds for 1 university choice; 24 pounds for multiple choices up to max. 5).</p> <p>When you complete the "Pay/Send" section, this does not send to UCAS. It sends to the referee (Mr. Hammond or Mrs. McCarthy), so that they can complete your reference. They will then email you to get your permission to do the final sending.</p> |
| <p>What happens next?</p> <p>You will receive a welcome letter from UCAS. Your "Apply" account will change to "Track" (same logins). Check your email and log on to Track regularly to check for updates. Offers and messages from universities will appear in Track, but you will get an email telling you that there has been an update.</p> <p>Universities should respond by 6th May. Once all universities have responded (with either an offer or a rejection), UCAS will give you a date by which you will need to choose your Firm choice (this is the university you really want to go to). You can also choose an Insurance choice (logically, this should have easier conditions). Therefore you can only keep 2 offers.</p> | |

Reply dates for 2021 entry:

| Last decision received on or before... | Means your reply deadline is... |
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| 20 May 2021 | 10 June 2021 |
| 13 July 2021 | 14 July 2021 |

If, in the final IB/Bac, you get the results for your Firm, your offer will become unconditional, and you are expected to go to that university. If you miss the conditions for your Firm, wait to see if they will still accept you. Sometimes narrow misses are accepted, but this is unlikely for highly selective universities (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, LSE, UCL, King's College, Warwick). After the IB/Bac results come out, please do not ask teachers or counselling staff to submit "appeal letters" on your behalf. We know through direct consultation with universities that these letters from school do not work. Students who miss their offer conditions can contact the university themselves to request consideration, as at this late stage universities want to deal directly with the applicant. In general, universities will make their own decisions on whether to reject or accept based on the grades achieved and the original UCAS application, and will not be influenced by extra "begging letters".

If you are not accepted by your Firm choice, but meet the grades for your Insurance choice, you are expected to go to that university. If you are not accepted by your Insurance, you will be entered automatically into Clearing. You can then look at a list of universities that still have vacancies, and can negotiate a place in person, by telephone call directly to that university's admissions officers. Details: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/results/no-offers-use-clearing>