Parent and Carer Resources

Application Process

Once your young person knows what degree options interest them, the next step will be thinking about the university application.

In the UK, all full-time university applications are made through the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). The [‘Applying to Uni’](https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university) page on the UCAS website provides helpful resources for familiarising yourself with UCAS and the [key dates](https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/ucas-undergraduate-when-apply) in the university application calendar. It is important to note that the deadline for applying to Oxford and Cambridge and most courses in medicine, veterinary/medicine, and dentistry is in October, a few months before the deadline for applications to other universities and courses.

A key component of the UCAS application is the personal statement, which gives applicants the chance to explain why they are a strong candidate for the degrees they are applying for. Applicants can use the personal statement to show their passion for their subject, give examples of academic or work experience and reference extra-curricular activities they are involved in.

UCAS applications require a reference, which is usually provided by a teacher. It is worth encouraging your child to share their personal statement with their referee with plenty of notice. This will help the referee produce a reference which complements your child’s application. If you’ve experienced any challenges that have affected your exam results, you may want this context to be included in your reference if you feel comfortable.

For further information on personal statements, have a look at this [UCAS guide](https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement) to writing a personal statement and our Brilliant Club [Snapshot Session](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aew9cQit9fo) on this topic. It’s important to note that you start writing your personal statement in the year you are going to apply for university, which is often Year 13 in England and Wales. [The Student Room Personal Statement Builder](https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/personal_statement_help) is a helpful resource for supporting applicants with the structure of their statements.

If your young person took part in The Scholars Programme, have a look at our [guidance](https://thebrilliantclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/The-Scholars-Programme-and-your-personal-statement.pdf) on talking about this experience in the personal statement. There is also an option for our former scholars to add The Scholars Programme as an activity on their UCAS application form (find out more [here](https://thebrilliantclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/UCAS-Application-form-support.pdf)).

Some universities and colleges set further entry requirements for admission to their courses following a UCAS application, such as an interview. Applicants are very likely to be invited to an interview for courses such as Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Education and Art & Design. Some universities like The University of Oxford and The University of Cambridge require all applicants to complete an interview before offering them a place. Applicants for creative arts courses are usually asked to submit a portfolio of their work as part of their application.

It is also common for universities make applicants a ‘conditional offer’ based on the applicant achieving certain grades in forthcoming examinations, such as A Levels and Highers. Candidates may also be required to complete a check if this is relevant to their course, such as a health or Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, applying to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme or AccessNI depending on the country you are studying in. You can find further information on UCAS undergraduate entry requirements [here](https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/ucas-undergraduate-entry-requirements).

Some universities offer ‘contextual admissions’ when considering applications. This means they factor an applicant’s personal circumstances into their decision making when considering an application. You can find more information about contextual admissions [here](https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/what-contextual-admissions).