



Information for Students

September 2023

'The Blue Guide'

Introduction

Your route to university will involve many decisions and it is worth spending time and effort researching your options carefully. Ultimately you need to make an application and this is done through UCAS. UCAS is the national system through which all potential university students apply for their place on a course.

Getting your application right is very important; not only details such as course choices and qualifications, but also your personal statement. This booklet provides important information on how to complete your application and how to get it right first time. Please read this booklet carefully, keep it safe and have it with you to refer to as you complete your application.

Additional information can be found at
<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university>



The UCAS Hub system

Application to university is made through the UCAS Hub. The system is totally web based with your application and reference being held and processed by UCAS.

How does it work?

As a student you setup an account with UCAS, with your own login and password. Through a *buzzword* you link your application to the school. You then complete your application online, section by section. Once you have completed the application and have had it checked (through liaison with your form tutor) you 'send' it to the referee (Mr Armstrong). The school will then add your reference (prepared by your form tutor and finalised by Mr Armstrong) and check your form for errors.

There is an application fee made payable to UCAS when you submit your application. The 2023 price is £27.50 regardless of the number of choices. The payment of the fee is made directly to UCAS by credit or debit card. Please liaise with the Sixth Form team if there is a difficulty in doing this.

As this is an online application process, you can work on your application at school or at home, in fact, anywhere you have internet access, and that the processing of your form by the school and UCAS will be much quicker. .

How do I use the UCAS hub?

1. Through the website <https://www.ucas.com/students>
2. Scroll to 2024 entry and click on the link 'Create account'
3. The first time you'll need to select 'Register'
4. Work through the pages as required. Remember to note your *username* and *password*
5. After registering and you login for the first time you will be asked whether you are applying as an individual or through a school or college. It is essential that you choose the option of a school or college; otherwise we will not be able to provide you with a reference. You will be asked for a *buzzword*, and this is 'Button2024'. This is all one word. Capital 'B' is required

Making sure you get your form correct first time...

Every year less than 1 in 5 application forms are approved first time. Errors on application forms will not only delay your form being sent off, the additional administration time involved in returning and rechecking applications places delays on the whole school based UCAS application process.

Most of the errors were in the Education section or in the Finance and funding section. Please read the following information carefully to avoid making any errors yourself.

The normal/most common answers are listed below with sub-headings for each section:

Personal Details Section

. Everybody's circumstances are different and you will know if one of these responses is different for you. The '?' button on the bottom right provides useful contextual information and guidance.

- Previous name is **left blank** (unless you have changed your name)

Contact and Residency Section

- Postal Address: **UK address**
- Residential category is **UK Citizen- England**

Nationality details section

- Country of birth: **United Kingdom**
- Nationality: **UK National**

Finance and Funding section

- Main source of funding: **UK, ChI, IoM, or EU student finance**

Education Section

You must enter all your qualifications where you achieved a pass grade. Make sure you enter them under the correct heading... GCSEs, short course GCSEs, Double Award GCSEs, AS levels (full name is Advanced Subsidiary), A levels, or BTEC/OCR qualifications. Qualifications you are doing now and will complete in the summer of 2024, e.g. A levels, are left as 'pending'. Make sure you enter the exam boards correctly – this is your responsibility.

Entering your qualifications is the biggest area in which mistakes occur and for forms being returned for correction. Take care to enter them all carefully. Make sure you enter the exam boards correctly as these won't be checked as part of the approval process and UCAS and your universities may not be able to match up your results to your application on results day if you fail to enter them correctly.

After you have added Redborne as a school, Centre Number 15101, from September 2019 to July 2024 (or 2022 if you joined us from another school into the Sixth Form, you will need to add your previous school as well where you took your GCSEs), full-time, you will be able to enter your qualifications. Clicking on 'add qualification' will give you list of popular exam types. Follow the guidance below on how to add the different sorts there are.

When you click on 'add qualification' in the 'Education' section of your application, you will see a list of the most common qualifications you will have done or are doing now. You can also search by qualification type using the box just above this list.

The school has to tick a box on the application to say they have been checked as correct. Your form will not be approved and sent to UCAS until this can be done.

The information below is some general guidance on what you need to enter and how to enter it. Please check your own qualifications carefully, particularly if you completed some of your qualifications, e.g. GCSEs, in another school.

A Levels

A levels are entered as 'GCE Advanced Level' courses. Select the correct subject title, exam board and leave the grade as 'pending'. The date entered should be June 2024.

AS Levels

AS levels are entered as 'GCE Advanced Subsidiary'. Again, select the correct subject title, exam board and enter the grade you achieved. The date entered should be June 2023. If you are sitting an AS level in the summer of 2024, leave the grade as 'pending' and enter the date as June 2024.

If you are taking the EPQ, this is listed as the Extended Project (Level 3).

If you are taking the (1 Year) IFS finance course, enter it as IFS Certificate in Financial Studies.

Other A Level equivalent (Level 3) Subjects

Other A level equivalent (Level 3) courses such as Sport, ICT and Fashion and Clothing are entered separately from AS and A level subjects.

Follow the information in the table below to enter these subjects. In each case the qualification date is 'June 2024' and level, if applicable is '3'. The result should be left as 'pending'.

You will need to enter your BTEC number if you enter a BTEC subject. Your subject teacher will be able to tell you this if you don't already know it.

Subject	Qualification Type	UCAS Subject	Awarding Organisation
Agriculture	Subsidiary Diploma (QCF) in Agriculture	Agriculture	City & Guilds (enter as C & G)
Medical Science	WJEC Applied Applied A Level Medical Science.		WJEC
Childcare & Education	CACHE Technical Certificate	Child Development	NCFE CACHE
Fashion & Textiles	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma	Art & Design: Fashion Design & Production	Pearson
ICT	Level 3 OCR Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma	IT	OCR

Sport	Level 3 OCR Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity	Sport	OCR
HSC	BTEC National (2016) Extended Certificate (single)	HSC	Pearson
HSC	BTEC National (2016) Diploma (double)	HSC	Pearson

GCSEs and other Level 2 Subjects

GCSEs are entered under 'GCSE'. Once again, check that you select the correct subject title, grade, exam board and date (normally June 2022). For Combined Science You need to select *GCSE Double award (9-9 to 1-1)*

Other GCSE equivalent (Level 1/2) courses such as Sport, ICT and Music are entered separately from GCSE subjects.

Follow the information in the table below to enter these subjects. In each case the qualification date is 'June 2022' and level, if applicable, is normally '2'.

Subject	GCSE Equivalence	Qualification Type	UCAS Subject	Awarding Organisation
Agriculture	1	City & Guilds Level 2 Extended Certificate	Agriculture	City & Guilds
Creative Imedia	1	OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge National	Certificate in Creative Imedia	OCR
IT	1	OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge National	Certificate in Information Technologies	OCR
Music Technology	2	BTEC Level 1/2 First Award	Music	Edexcel
Sport Studies	1	OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge National	Certificate in Sport Studies	OCR
Fashion	1	BTEC Level 1 / Level 2 Tech Award	Art & Design Practice	Pearson
Child Development	1	OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge National	Certificate in Child Development	OCR

Your Unique Learner Number (ULN) will be on your exam statement of results from your GCSEs

The highest level of qualification you expect to have before you start your course is: **Below honours degree level qualifications**

What are the deadlines?

The final internal school deadline for most applications is Tuesday 31st October 2023.

Applications received before this date will receive priority treatment by the school in order to meet the UCAS deadline date of Wednesday 25th January 2023. There is no guarantee that applications will meet this deadline if they are sent to the referee after the final internal school deadline of 31st October 2023 and the longer the time, the less of a guarantee.

Note that the internal school deadline for Oxbridge, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science or veterinary medicine applications is earlier and it is Monday 2nd October 2023.

It is recommended that all other applications are completed by half term, as early applications generally are more successful.

The main key deadline dates set by UCAS are the 16th October 2023 for Oxbridge, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science or veterinary medicine applications and 31st January 2024 for all other applications. This means the date by which forms need to be sent to UCAS by the school/referee for processing and hence the need for earlier internal deadlines for students to meet to allow for the volume of applications which need to be checked, corrected where necessary and the references prepared and approved before being sent to UCAS.

Additional entrance tests

Some universities and courses demand that students take an additional entrance test as part of the application process to help them make decisions about offers. Examples include BMAT, LNAT, STEP, ELAT and TSA. You can find out about these through the UCAS website, university prospectuses and an internet search.

When you enter your course choices into your online application, UCAS will flag up any choices that will involve an additional entrance test. Think carefully and do your research about whether you wish to take them. Some tests can be taken through the school and others at external centres. **It is your responsibility to ensure that you are entered for any tests you need to take.** Liaise as appropriate with Mrs Nunn, the school's Exams Officer, about any school based tests you need to do and make sure you know the deadlines for entry, etc.

What about my reference?

Your reference is initially written by your form tutor. They will use a variety of sources to compile it including comments from your Year 12 report written by your subject teachers.

You will have got to know your form tutor over the course of year 12 and have been asked to provide information about your extra-curricular activities, interests, sporting activities, etc. This will help him or her to write a 'rounded' reference about you.

References in draft form are passed to Mrs Jones. All references are checked thoroughly and will meet a high minimum standard in terms of content, length and detail. The reference is then added into your online application along with predicted grades for your A level subjects.

What about the personal statement?

Your personal statement should be just as the title suggests; a statement written by you about yourself, your university course choice, your A level subjects, interests, career ambitions, etc.

No one likes to sit down with a completely blank sheet of paper and write a personal statement from scratch. Equally any personal statement should not be written by or copied from someone else. Looking at sample personal statements from outside sources can be helpful to provide ideas but ultimately it should be written by you. Please be aware that UCAS use sophisticated plagiarism software in an attempt to detect personal statements copied from sources such as the internet. Students making university applications with plagiarised personal statements may have their application withdrawn by UCAS.

One way to write a personal statement is to treat it as a series of 'boxes' in which you write a paragraph or two about various headings. Suggested headings are below. You do not have to include it all. The compiled paragraphs will make up a personal statement.

Content could include:

- Why you have applied for the course/subject
- What interests you about it
- What you have done to extend and enrich your interest in the subject
- Careers plans
- Which A levels you study and what you have gained from them
- Employment, work experience & voluntary work (especially if relevant)
- Extra-curricular activities (especially if for school teams or County teams, D of E, voluntary or charity work)
- Gap Year – plans for if taking one
- Social, sport or leisure interests
- Special circumstances relating to health, education or family.

A final summary paragraph stating a bit more about yourself and what you may be able to bring to a university whilst you study there is a good way to finish off a personal statement.

Your personal statement can be a maximum of 4000 characters or 47 lines. Set it out in sensible paragraphs with spaces between each paragraph. A personal statement that is one huge block of text is not easy to read and doesn't look appealing. Sometimes 'less is more' and additional detail doesn't always help or is unnecessary.

Don't overdo it, don't claim to have done things you haven't done or be too clever or funny unless it works well. Get family, friends, your form tutor and subject teachers to have a look at it as well. Check it carefully for spelling errors, grammatical mistakes, correct use of capitals and 'text speak'. These don't go down well in a formal document which will be read by someone who will be making a life changing decision about you and the possibility of an offer of a place at their university.

Other points to remember

- You should be liaising with your form tutor as you complete your application
- If you plan to defer your entry to 2025 then you should apply in the same way, but indicate in your application as required.

What happens after my application has been sent?

After you send your form for the reference to be added and that has been completed and sent to UCAS for processing, you will receive a welcome/acknowledgement letter. The letter will have an application number and password in it so that you can track your application through the UCAS website. This facility is called UCAS Hub and allows you to follow what decisions universities and colleges have made about your application. After you have received responses from each of your universities, you will accept/decline offers through UCAS Hub.

Remember it normally takes a *minimum* of 10 school days from you sending your form to the referee until it is sent to UCAS for processing. During this time your form is checked and returned for any corrections to be made if necessary. Please note that if your form is returned you will need to click 'pay and send' again once the corrections have been done but payment is only taken the first time you submit the form. A reference is requested from your form tutor, this is typed, added to the system, checked and finalised. When there are many applications to do, the time taken to complete this process will increase.

You will get emails keeping you informed on the progress of your application. It is important that you see your form tutor regularly and check your school email account for any updates or corrections that need to be made to your application.

Any Questions?

The UCAS website, www.ucas.com, has lots of information to help you and this includes the latest details on courses, or see Mrs Jones.

A time-line for the UCAS application process

Below is a summary time-line for the application process. It shows the part that you, the student, plays in the application process and also that of the school.

June/July 2023

September/October 2023
through to November /
December 2023 depending
on submission date

- Application status can be monitored via UCAS hub

Autumn 2023 to
Spring 2024

April / May 2024

August 2024