UCAS

UNLOCKING UCAS

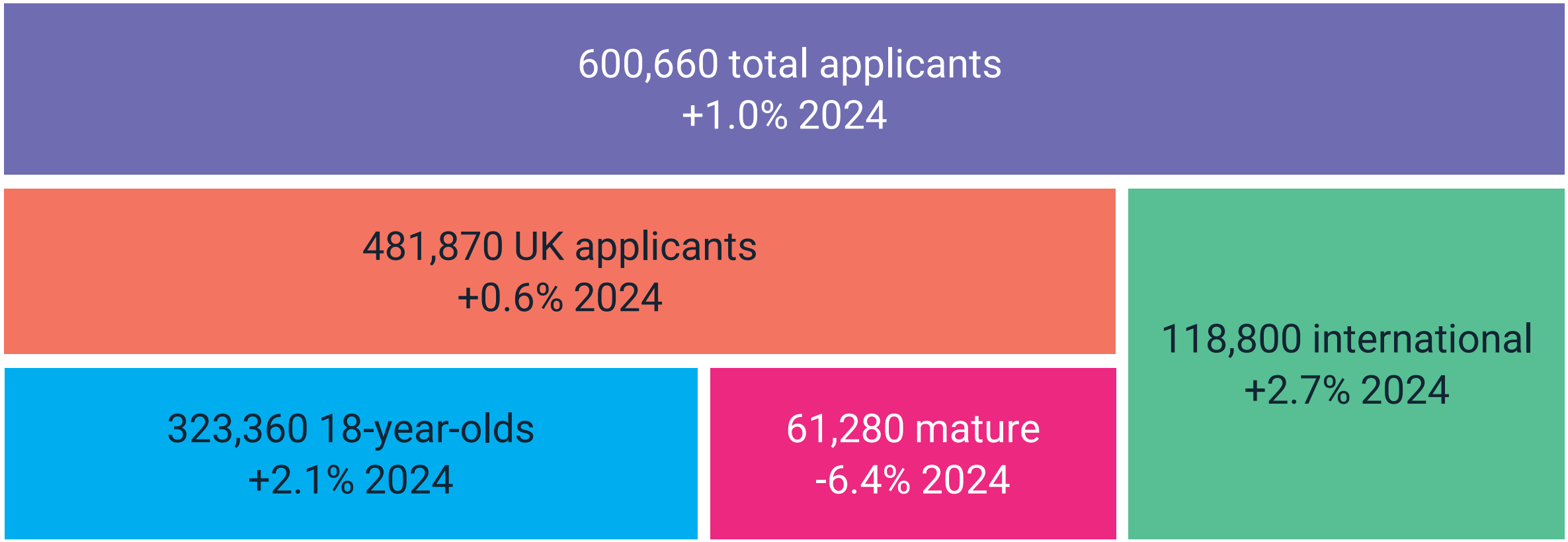
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

ELIZABETH LLOYD
ADVISER LEAD



Public

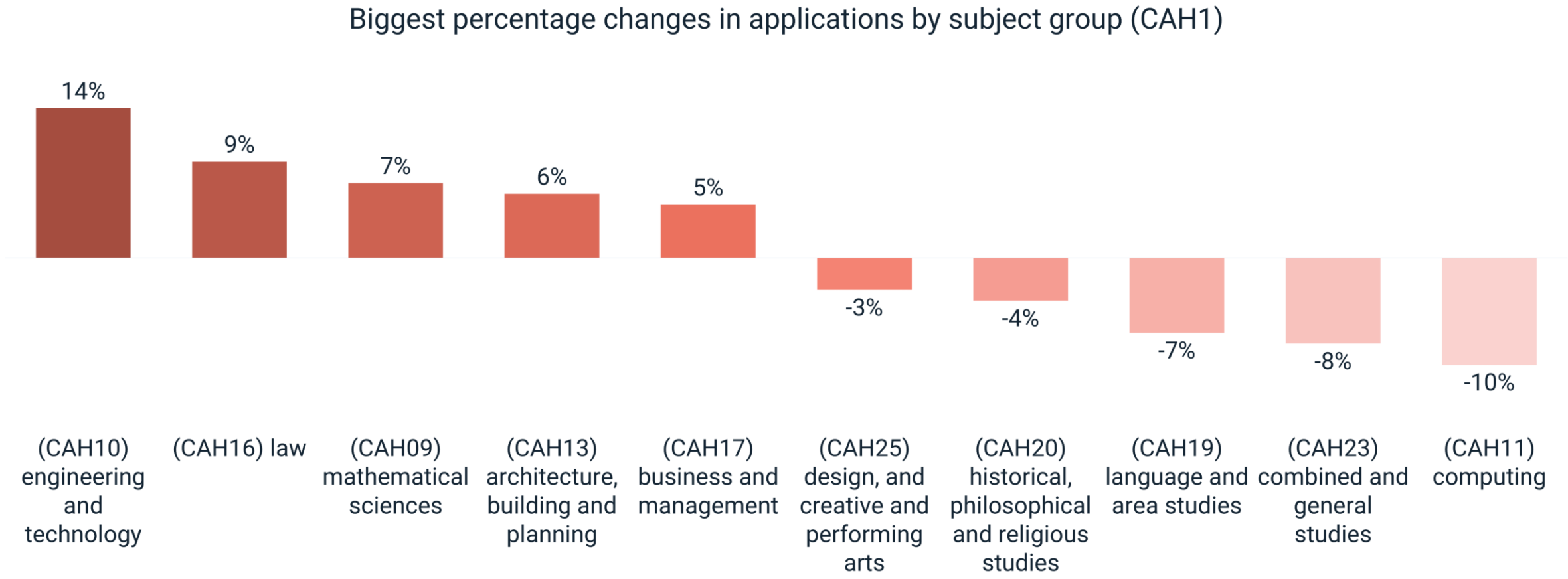
KEY FIGURES – APPLICANTS



A record high for international and UK 18-year-old applicants.

LARGEST GROWTH AND DECLINE SUBJECT AREAS

Top 5 and bottom 5 percentage changes against 2024 in applications by CAH1 subject grouping



VARIATION IN SUBJECT TRENDS – IMD (UK 18 YEAR OLDS)

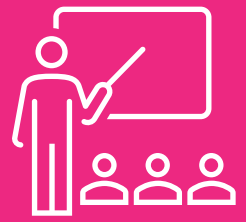
	IMD Q1	IMD Q5
Increasing long-term	architecture, building and planning **computing** engineering and technology	**media, journalism and communications** **law** engineering and technology
Increasing year-on-year	architecture, building and planning engineering and technology **veterinary sciences**	engineering and technology **business and management** **education and teaching**
Decreasing year-on-year	**computing** language and area studies **combined and general studies**	language and area studies **agriculture, food and related studies** **computing**
Decreasing long-term	**biological and sport sciences** **historical, philosophical and religious studies** language and area studies	**education and teaching** **historical, philosophical and religious studies** language and area studies

GETTING READY FOR 2026 CYCLE

2026 DATES AND DEADLINES



14 January 2026 is the equal consideration date.



Students to make replies by 6 May 2026.



UCAS is reintroducing the 31 March 2026 advisory date.



UCAS will send out dates and deadlines for 2027 entry before the end of this year.

COURSE CONTENT IS KEY, BUT FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND WAYS TO CUT COSTS ARE INCREASINGLY BEING FACTORED INTO UNIVERSITY SHORTLISTING DECISIONS

Factors important when researching/shortlisting universities
Year-on-Year rank importance (PAD)

	2022 rank	2023 rank	2024 rank
A course with content that is perfectly suited to me	1	1	1
Financial support available while studying	4	4	2
The cost of living support offered by universities	12	10	3
Universities that are close to home e.g. in my closest city	9	5	4
Universities/ courses with high graduate employment rates	3	2	5
Positive reviews from students	2	3	6
Universities with low cost accommodation	13	12	7
Mental health support while studying	8	11	8
Universities with a great social scene	7	7	9
Universities with good quality accommodation	5	8	10
Universities I can attend but still live with my parents	16	13	11
Courses with a placement year/ year in industry	10	9	12
Universities with a high ranking in the league tables	6	6	13
Other support while studying e.g manging workload	15	15	14
Courses with opportunities to study abroad	11	14	15
Universities with guaranteed places in accommodation	14	16	16
Universities recommended to me by family or friends	17	17	17

THE COURSE MATTERS

Teaching & learning

✓ Teaching hours, self-study, lectures, and group work.

Assessment & structure

✓ Coursework, exams, practical work, and module choices.

Entry requirements

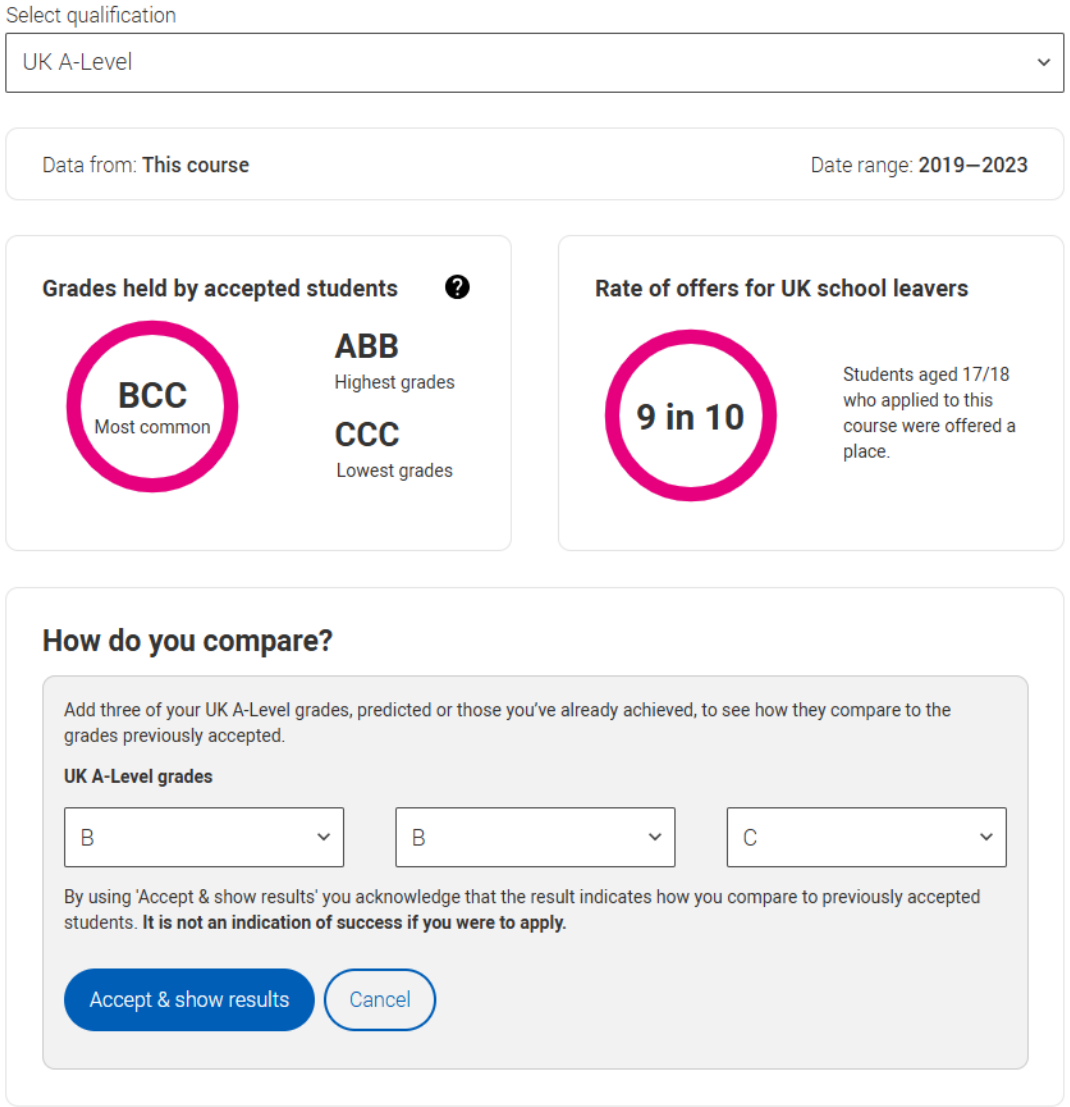
✓ Grades, skills, interviews, or auditions.

Career links

✓ Placements, internships and study abroad.

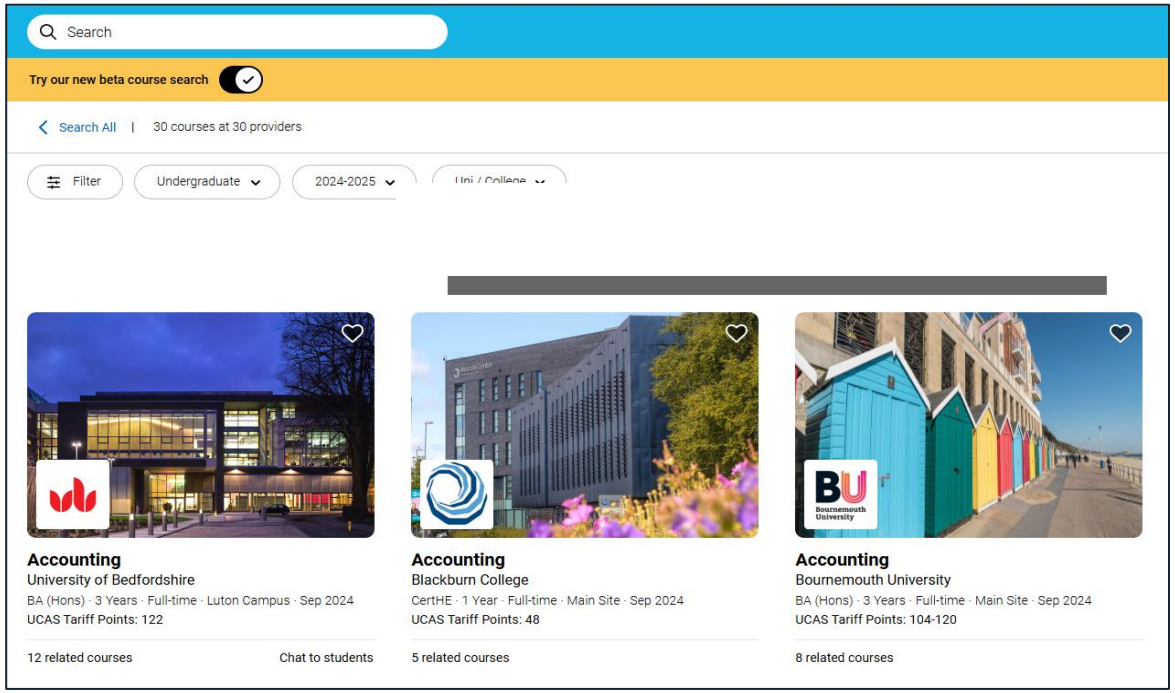
Class size & experience

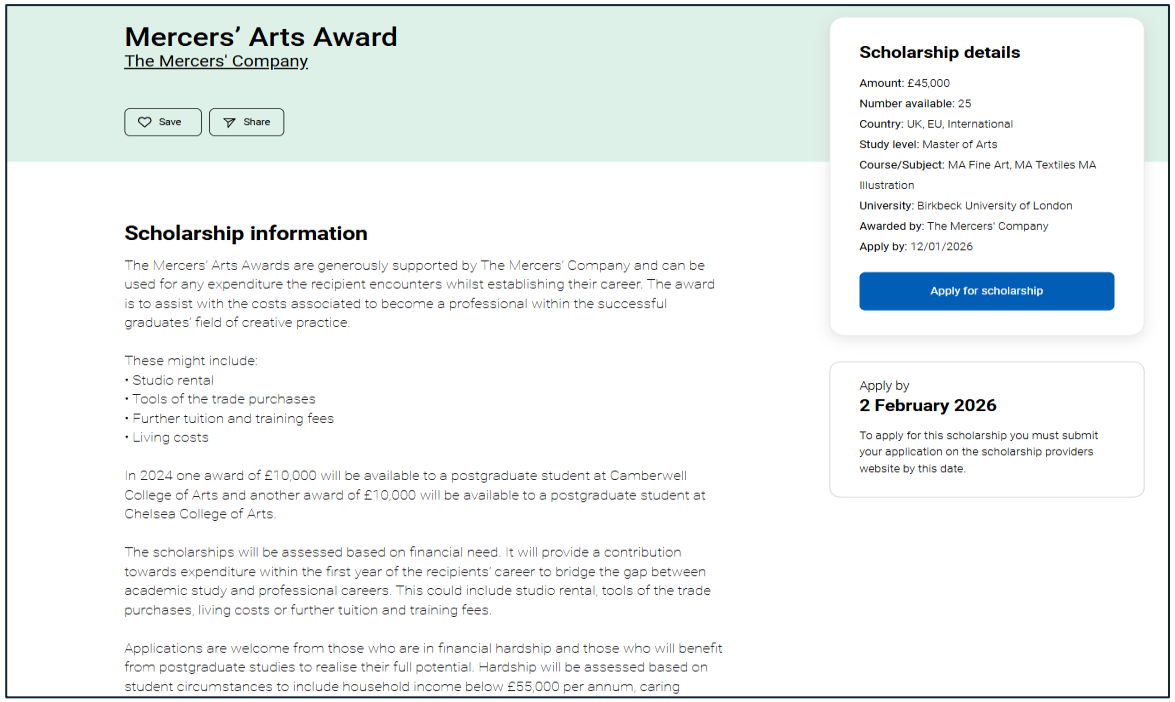
✓ Student numbers and learning environment



NEW LOOK COURSE SEARCH

- **Refined Course tiles** to improve browsing.
- **Updated filters** such as course duration.
- **New layout** to improve navigation.
- **Scholarships search** will also be added.

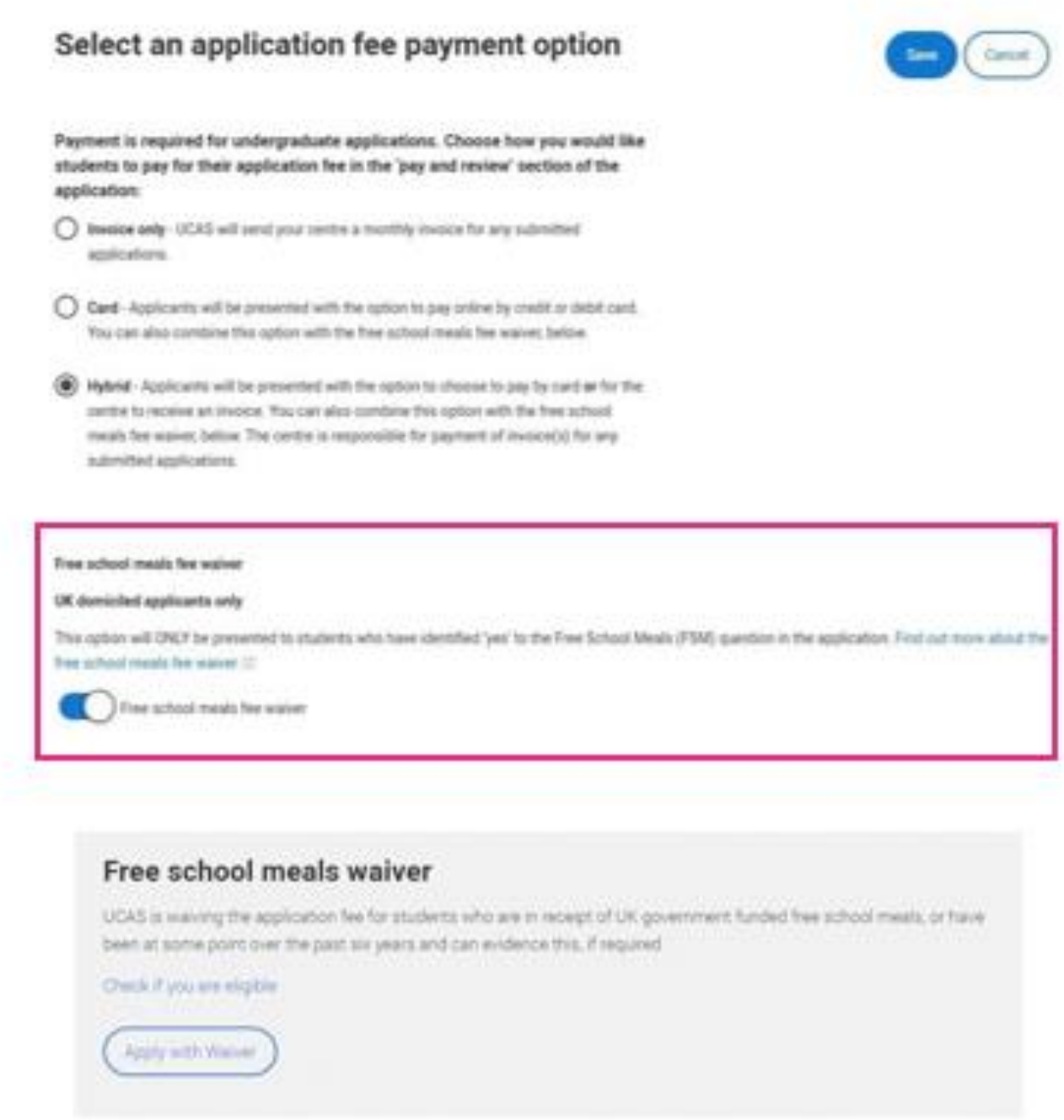




Public

NEW FSM PAYMENT OPTION

- New Free Schools Meals waiver payment option being introduced.
- Can be utilised alongside any payment option.
- Visible only to students who have selected 'yes' to the FSM question in 'More about you'.



Public

PERSONAL STATEMENT

PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR 2026

- Why do you want to study this course or subject?
- How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject
- What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

THE PRACTICALITIES



4,000-total character count split across sections.



Minimum character count 350 characters per section.



Similarity detection software will still be used.



Don’t waste characters listing grades and subjects.



Don’t repeat information across sections.

Q1: WHY DO YOU WANT TO STUDY THIS COURSE OR SUBJECT?

Students will want to show **evidence** of passion, curiosity and interest, this could include:

Motivations for studying this course(s):	Knowledge of this subject area and interests:	Future plans; demonstrate why this course/subject is a good fit:
• Have they been inspired by a key role model or moment in their life? • Is it a subject they love and want to pursue further? • What is their drive? • How has their path led them to this course or subject area?	• Is there a particular subject area they've researched? • Something they can't wait to learn more about? • What about a book or subject expert doing great things that's sparked their interest?	• Do they already have a particular profession in mind? • How might they use their studies to launch their career? • What's important to them and their future, and how might the knowledge gained from their chosen course(s) help them to achieve this?

Public

Q2: HOW HAVE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AND STUDIES HELPED YOU TO PREPARE FOR THIS COURSE OR SUBJECT?

Focus on what's most **recent** and **relevant** to the subject or course(s), examples could include:

How their studies or training relate to chosen course(s) or subject area:	What relevant or transferable skills they have that make them a great candidate:	Any relevant educational achievements
• This could be current or previous studies. • From any form of formal education – think school, college, training provider, or short online university course.	• Are there a couple of subjects that helped develop a core set of relevant skills required for their chosen course(s). • Maybe a particular module or project helped them understand where their interests and strengths lie.	• Universities and colleges will see grades on their application - don't waste space talking about these. • Focus on accomplishments like a competition, holding a position of responsibility or representing the school/college.

Q3: WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU DONE TO PREPARE OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION, AND WHY ARE THESE EXPERIENCES USEFUL?

Examples should be **reflective** and **demonstrate** further **suitability** for the subject or course(s), could include:

Work experience, employment, or volunteering	Personal life experiences or responsibilities:	Hobbies and any extracurricular or outreach activities:	Achievements outside of school or college
• In-person or virtual work experience. • Paid for work or volunteering. • The key thing is reflection on the experiences and the skills gained relevant to their chosen course(s).	• Is there a situation they've personally overcome that has influenced their decision? • Are there personal experiences that have helped them develop essential qualities for the course?	• Think sports, reading, community work, summer schools. • Any activities outside of core studies that help further showcase why they'd make a great student.	• This could be a position of responsibility for local clubs or groups, competitions, or qualifications they've attained outside of the classroom.

0 / 4000

UCAS

Why do you want to study this course or subject? *

This is your opportunity to showcase your passion and knowledge of your chosen subject area and to demonstrate to universities and colleges why they are a good fit for you and your future ambitions.

Please use a minimum of 350 characters in this section (350 needed)

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for th se or su ? *

This is your chance to shout about the relevant or transferab lls you g d from y ducatio d highlight your understanding of how they will help you suc ee his su t area

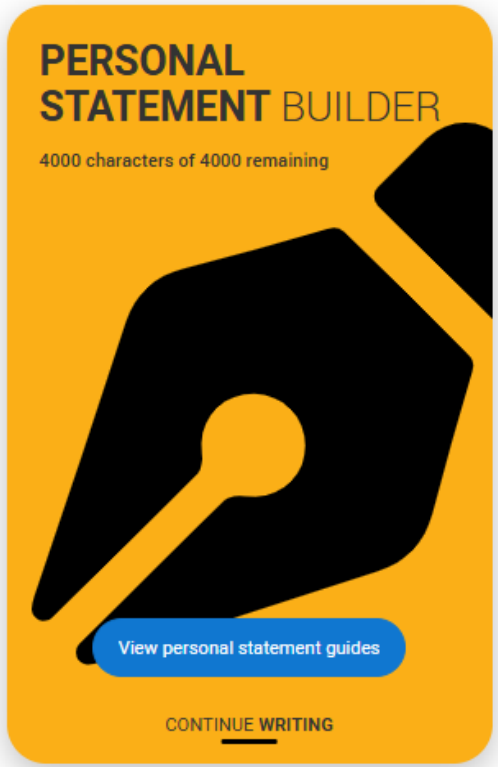
Ple se a minimu 350 ch ers in this section (350 needed)

What else ve y done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful? *

This is you e to reflect on any other activities you have undertaken outside of your education or personal experiences which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section is likely to be deeply personal to you, so anything you include should be meaningful and relevant to you.

Please use a minimum of 350 characters in this section (350 needed)

SO WHAT?



Public

Point
Evidence
Explain
Link

Why do you want to study this course or subject? *

This is your opportunity to showcase your passion and knowledge of your chosen subject area and to demonstrate to universities and colleges why they are a good fit for you and your future ambitions.

0 / 4000

Please use a minimum of 350 characters in this section (350 needed)

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject? *

This is your chance to shout about the relevant or transferable skills you've gained from your education and highlight your understanding of how they will help you succeed in this subject area.

Please use a minimum of 350 characters in this section (350 needed)

What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful? *

This is your chance to reflect on any other activities you have undertaken outside of your education or personal experiences which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section is likely to be deeply personal to you, so anything you include should be meaningful and relevant to you.

Please use a minimum of 350 characters in this section (350 needed)

THINK FAR AND WIDE

In person work experience	Blogs & vlogs	Positions of responsibility	Projects or essays	Mentoring
Virtual work experience	Documentaries	Awards	Books	Tutoring
Work shadowing	Podcasts	Challenges	Influencers	Online subject courses
Paid employment	TED Talks	Personal life experiences	Hobbies	Trips or visits
Volunteering	Articles	Work based learning / training	Clubs	Competitions

SUBJECT SPOTLIGHTS

UCAS

All filters | Subject | University or College | Reset filters | POWERED BY Springpod UCAS Media Service

- Anglia Ruskin University (20)
- Canterbury Christ Church University (4)
- City St George's, University of London (3)
- Coventry University (4)
- Coventry University London (2)
- Durham University (1)
- Leeds Arts University (3)
- Leeds Beckett University (4)
- Liverpool Hope University (3)
- Manchester Metropolitan University (3)
- Middlesex University London (1)
- Queen's University Belfast (1)
- Teesside University (5)
- The University of Law (8)
- UCL (4)

Show more



Teaching: A Profession And A P

with Damien Maguire from Liverpool Hope Un



lerstanding

ter Metropolitan



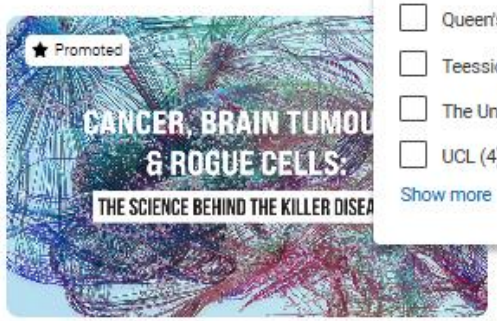
And Breathe: The Respiratory System Explained

with Charlotte Anderson from the University of Sunderland



Biotechnology: The Rise Of Radical Healthcare

with Prof. M. Safwan Akram from Teesside University



Cancer, Brain Tumours & Rogue Cells: The Science Behind The Killer Disease

with Dr Shafiq Ahmed from University of Sunderland



Computer Science: Is Generative AI The Problem Or The Solution?

with Dr Aminu Usman from the University of Sunderland



Computer Science: Space Exploration And Beyond

with Dr Paul Sant from The University of Law

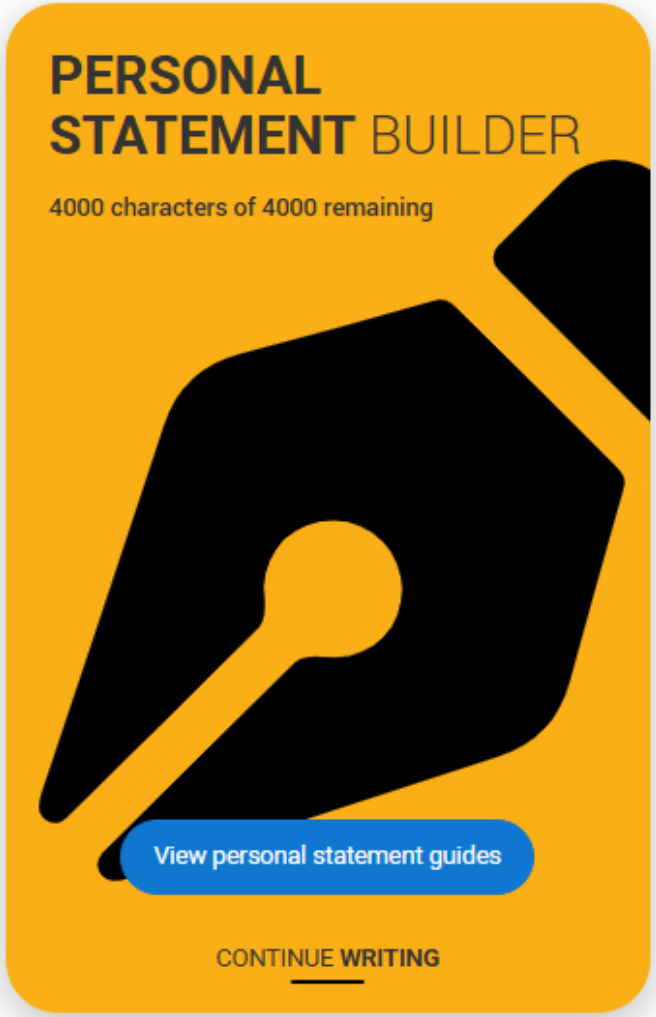


Covid: The Law And You

with Mike Meehan from University of Law

Your support on Subject Spotlights.

PERSONAL STATEMENT SUPPORT




What to include in your achitecture, planning or building personal statement


What to include in your animal science personal statement


What to include in your art and design personal statement


What to include in your biology personal statement


What to include in your business management personal statement


What to include in your chemistry personal statement


What to include in your computer science personal statement


What to include in your dance personal statement


What to include in your dentistry personal statement


What to include in your drama personal statement


What to include in your economics personal statement


What to include in your engineering personal statement

CONFIRMATION AND CLEARING 2025

MAKE A HEAD-START PLANNING FOR THIS SUMMER

- Scottish Qualifications Authority embargo:
  Monday 28 July 18.00 – Tuesday 5 August 09.00 (UK time)
- Level 3 (Joint Council for Qualifications) embargo:
  Friday 8 August 08.00 – Thursday 14 August 08:00 (UK time)
- Access our **Confirmation and Clearing Adviser Toolkit.**

CONFUSED ABOUT CLEARING? SHINE SOME LIGHT ON IT.

GET MORE HELP & ADVICE

ucas.com/clearing

WHAT YOUR APPLICATION STATUS MEANS

Understand what your application status means and what comes next.

HOLDING AN UNCONDITIONAL OFFER

Congratulations you're off to uni! You'll receive further info from UCAS and the uni about your next steps.

HOLDING A CONDITIONAL OFFER

We're still waiting for a final decision from your firm choice. Check your UCAS Hub for further info.

IF YOU'VE MET THE CONDITIONS OF YOUR OFFER

Your place is guaranteed. Check with the uni or college when they'll update your status.

YOU HAVE BEEN OFFERED A DIFFERENT COURSE AT ONE OF YOUR CHOICES

One of your choices has made a change to your offer. This could be a change of course, entry level or campus. Check your UCAS Hub for more info.

WANT TO ACCEPT THE CHANGE?

You may be able to accept this change on your UCAS Hub account. If not call UCAS on **0371 468 0468.**

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR CLEARING

You're not holding any offers and can apply elsewhere using Clearing. Check out **ucas.com/clearing** for vacancies.

CALL YOUR CHOICES

Ring the uni or college you're interested in to make sure they still have vacancies. Have your ID number, Clearing number, and qualifications to hand before ringing.

WHAT NEXT?

Once you've had confirmation the place is yours, sign into your UCAS Hub account to add the choice.

CONGRATULATIONS - YOU'RE IN!

The uni or college will accept your place and you'll receive further info from them and UCAS.

WANT TO APPLY ELSEWHERE?

If you've thought it through and want to apply to a different uni or college you'll need to apply through Clearing. Find out more at **ucas.com/clearing.**

VISIBILITY OF 'DECLINE MY PLACE' STUDENTS

Found 2 applications

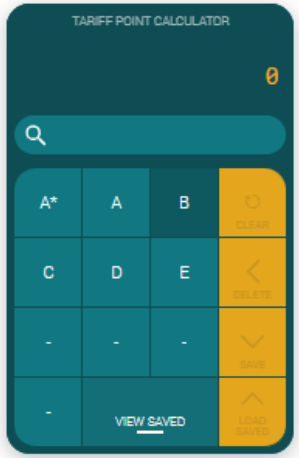
First names	Last name	Group	Status	Application reply deadline	Personal ID	Last updated	Send email
Type here	Type here	Type here	declined	Type here	Type here	Type here	All / none
Crewe	Kayston	Default Group	Eligible for Extra/Clearing/new choice(s) Place declined		1270099802	18 Feb 2025	☐
Taeson	Rikuto	Default Group	Eligible for Extra/Clearing/new choice(s) Place declined		1270159005	18 Feb 2025	☐

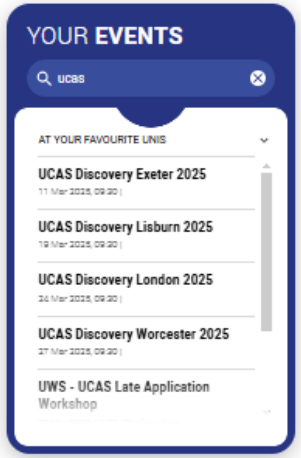
TOOLS TO USE EARLIER

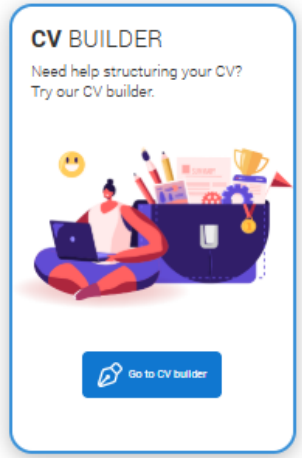
UCAS

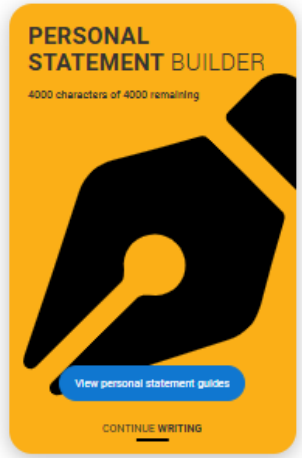
TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

- Explore the Careers Quiz, What to Study Next, Subject Spotlights and Virtual Work Experiences for **career and course inspiration.**
- Use the Tariff Calculator, Personal Statement Builder, and CV Builder to stay on track and **plan your path.**
- Search for events, open days, videos to get expert help and **questions answered.**



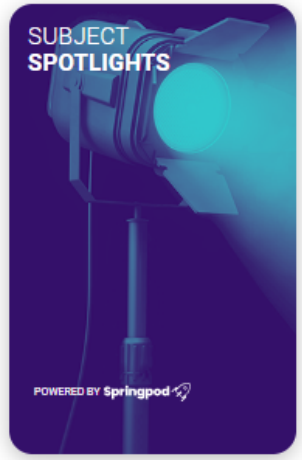


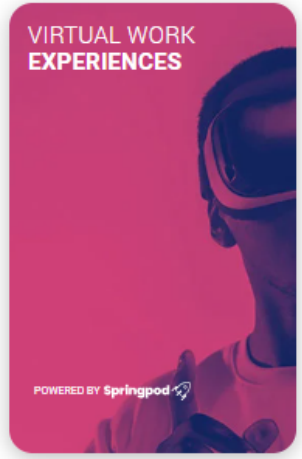


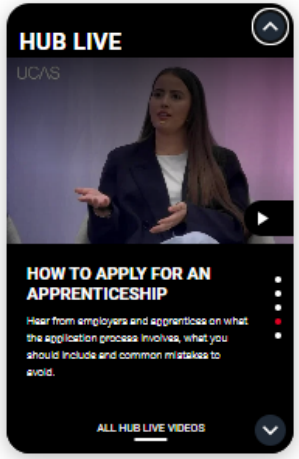


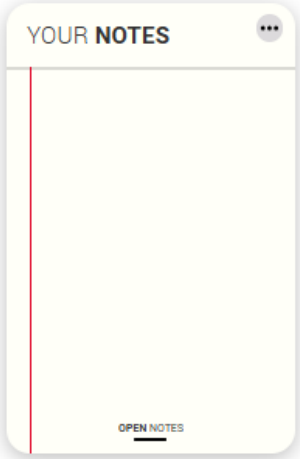




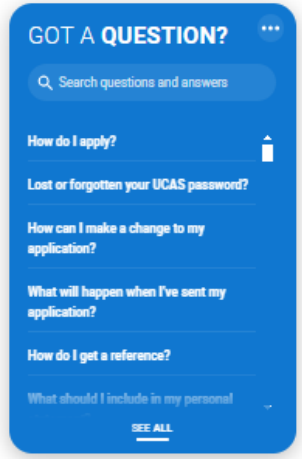












Public

YOUR HUB JOURNEY

UCAS



1 GET STARTED: REGISTER ON THE HUB

2 BUILD YOUR PROFILE

Explore your favourite subjects, universities, employers, courses, apprenticeships, and more. Create a list of all your options.

3 TAKE THE CAREERS QUIZ

What would you like to do? Find careers that match your personality, interests, and skills.

4 TRY SUBJECT TASTERS

Grab the popcorn and hear real lecturers covering topics you would actually study. Try before you apply. You even get a certificate at the end!

5 EXPLORE THE WORLD OF WORK

Get work experience with top employers like Airbus, the Met Office, and Amazon Future Engineer. Perfect for CVs, applications, and personal statements.





6 FAVOURITE YOUR TOP CAREERS

Click or tap the heart to save what you love as favourites. Not sure which is right for you? We'll show you what's out there.

7 UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OR APPRENTICESHIP?

Compare all your options side-by-side. Take a closer look at apprenticeships, courses, and job opportunities.

8 DIVE INTO SUBJECT AND INDUSTRY GUIDES

Discover what it's like to study a subject, the career and salary opportunities available, and see what current students and apprentices think.

9 CHAT TO CURRENT STUDENTS

Get messaging! Ask questions, get advice, and see if the university, subject, and location are a good fit for you.



10 ATTEND A LOCAL UCAS DISCOVERY EVENT

Chat with people from different universities and companies. Open your eyes to new options and grab some giveaways.

11 KNOW YOUR FINANCE OPTIONS

Learn about potential study costs and funding options, including student loans and scholarships.

12 BOOK AN OPEN DAY

Get ready for a great day out! You'll get to see the facilities on campus, speak to current staff and students, and explore the local area.

13 MAKE A SHORTLIST

Shortlist your favourite options: university courses, apprenticeship pathways, and further education. Use the Historical Entry Grades Tool to understand the grade profiles previously accepted by universities.

14 STILL DECIDING?

See if a gap year or internship is the best choice for you.

15 START YOUR APPLICATION

Clear on your next step? Then it's time to start applying!

EXPLORE THE HUB: UCAS.COM/HUB

UCAS News Events Help and training Guides, resources and training

S

S Sam
Edit your Account
Adviser Homepage
Adviser Dashboard
Student Hub
Sign out

Adviser portal

For registered centres supporting UG applications

Hi Sam

Adviser Reports are now available for subscribers to view and download. Centres that have chosen to participate in the UCAS Predicted Grades Report Pilot can also view and download via the Data and Reporting tile. Visit ucas.com/advisers/predicted-grades for more information

Student Hub activity
View your students' preparatory activity in the Hub

Go to student Hub activity

Application Management
View details of your students' progress, application details, and references

Go to 2025 applicant list

Go to 2026 applicant list

Tracking offers and decisions
View details of your students' offers and decisions

Go to 2025 tracking offers & decisions

Go to 2026 tracking offers & decisions

Outreach Connection Service
Search, find and filter for outreach opportunities

Go to Outreach Connection Service

Centre management
Here you can view and manage details about your centre(s) including buzzwords and groups

Go to 2025 centre management

Go to 2026 centre management

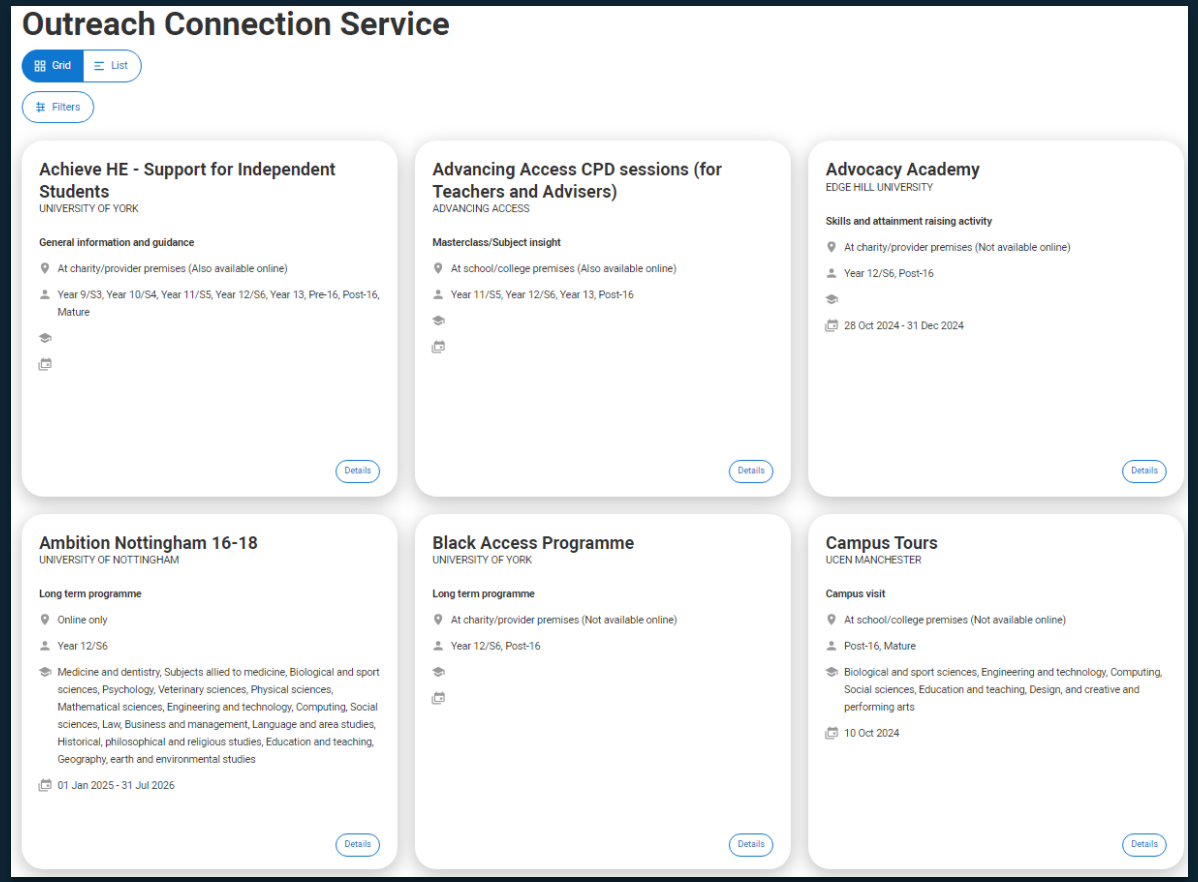
Data & reporting
Your paid for data and reports

View reports

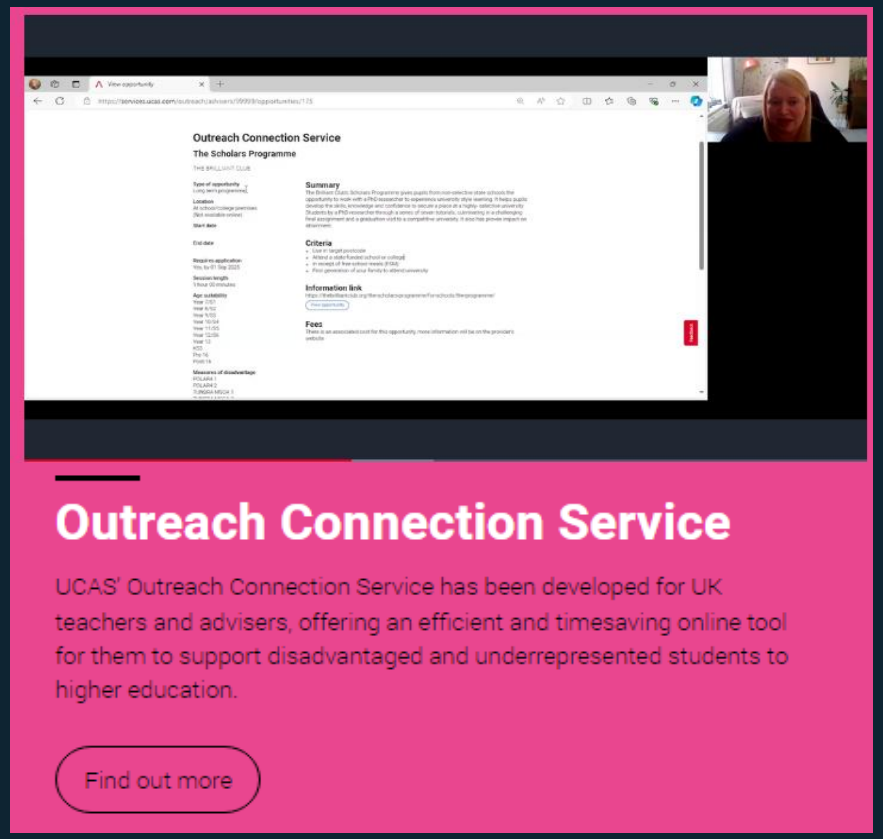
Staff management
Here you can view and manage staff and permissions at your centre(s)

Go to staff management

THE UCAS OUTREACH CONNECTION SERVICE



Connect your students to the right outreach.
Filter by circumstance.



Watch a recording of a recent 'ask us anything' session about the OCS

UCAS

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS PAGES

Link to the individual needs pages

Students from Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater (GTRSB) communities

Students from GTRSB communities who are considering higher education might find it useful to find out more about how they can be supported to apply to university, and to understand more about the support they may be able to receive on campus.

The GTRSB into Higher Education Pledge is a firm commitment by a university or college to support GTRSB students into and within higher education, and to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment.

More information and support can be found from:

- The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT) website
- The Friends, Families and Travellers website
- The Traveller Movement website.

Homeless students

People who are homeless and want to progress to higher education may find there are a number of challenges to overcome – such as qualifications, financial issues, and access to expert information, advice, and guidance.

- The Foyer Federation provides housing to young people aged 16-25, along with help to reconnect with learning and increase employability. If you've spent time in a foyer you may be able to access funding to help you go to university.
- Crisis Skylight centres across the UK can offer careers information, advice and guidance – including access to courses and qualifications.

If you're homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, the CentrePoint helpline is there for anyone aged 16-25 in England to get advice. They also offer careers support and training programmes to help you get to where you want to be.

Sharing your individual needs in the UCAS application

When you apply through UCAS, you will have the opportunity to share any individual needs or circumstances, including many of those listed above. Sharing this information helps the university connect you to the right support – they may send you more information or contact you to discuss what would help you succeed.

Universities are diverse and inclusive environments, and people from all backgrounds are welcomed – the support is available because they recognise some people may have different challenges and priorities, so this is in place to make sure you can make the most of your time. Visit the pages above to find out more about what may be available.

The information you share will always be treated sensitively, and only used by those responsible for arranging support and helping you with your application (e.g. the student support team). It is never used when universities decide whether to offer you a place, but it might be used to make you an offer that looks at your achievements in context.

We recommend that you read the relevant pages above and research what help the university can offer before making an application – it is important that you make a decision that is right for you.

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Channel Islands and the Isle of Man



Contextual admissions

Some students face additional challenges during their education which may impact their results. Universities recognise these challenges, and can make adjustments through 'contextual admissions'. Find out more about what this is, who is eligible, and how you qualify.

Refugees, asylum seekers or those with limited leave to remain who are considering applying to higher education, should always speak to the

Young people with one, or both, parents serving in the UK Armed Forces, should let the university or college know about their circumstances and

transition into civilian life, there are a number of resources and initiatives available to help with applying for a higher education course.

Public

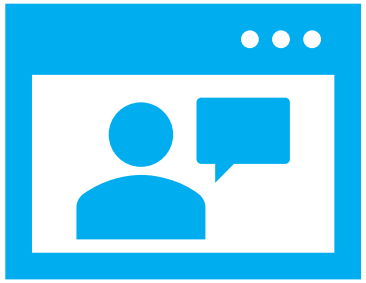
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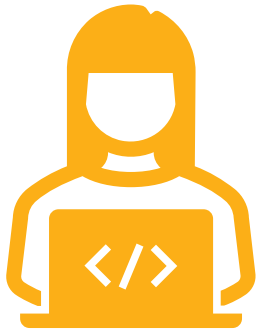
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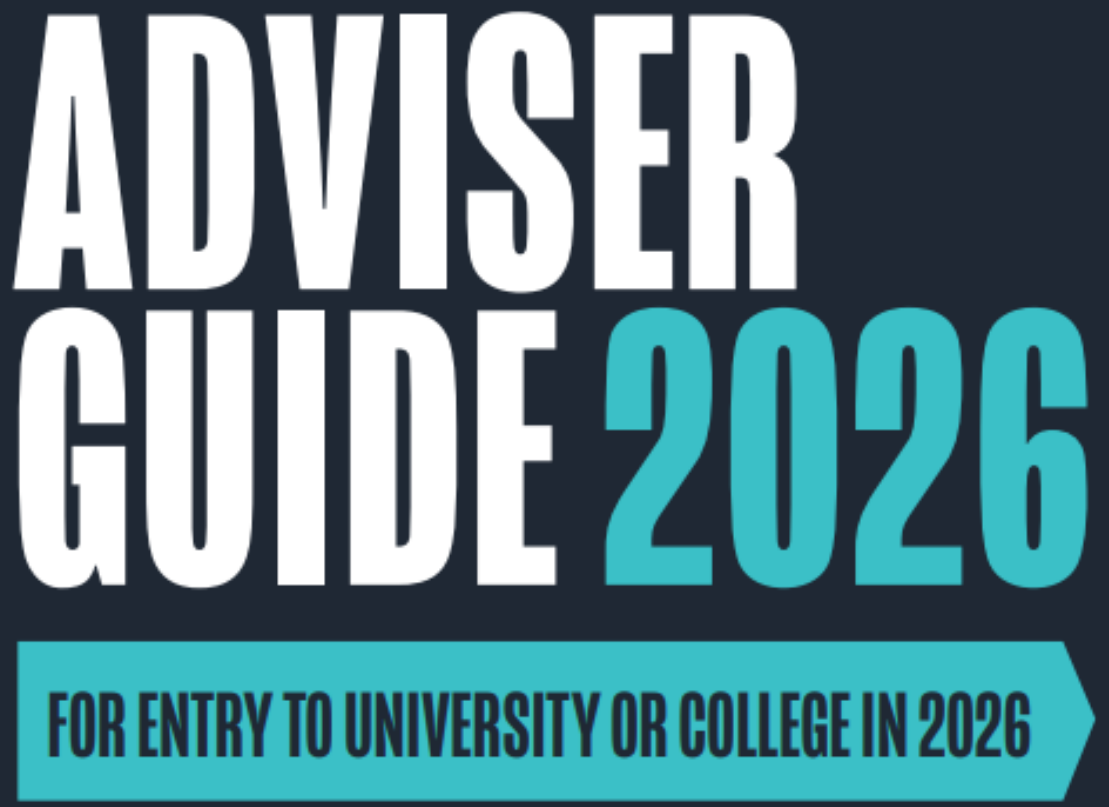
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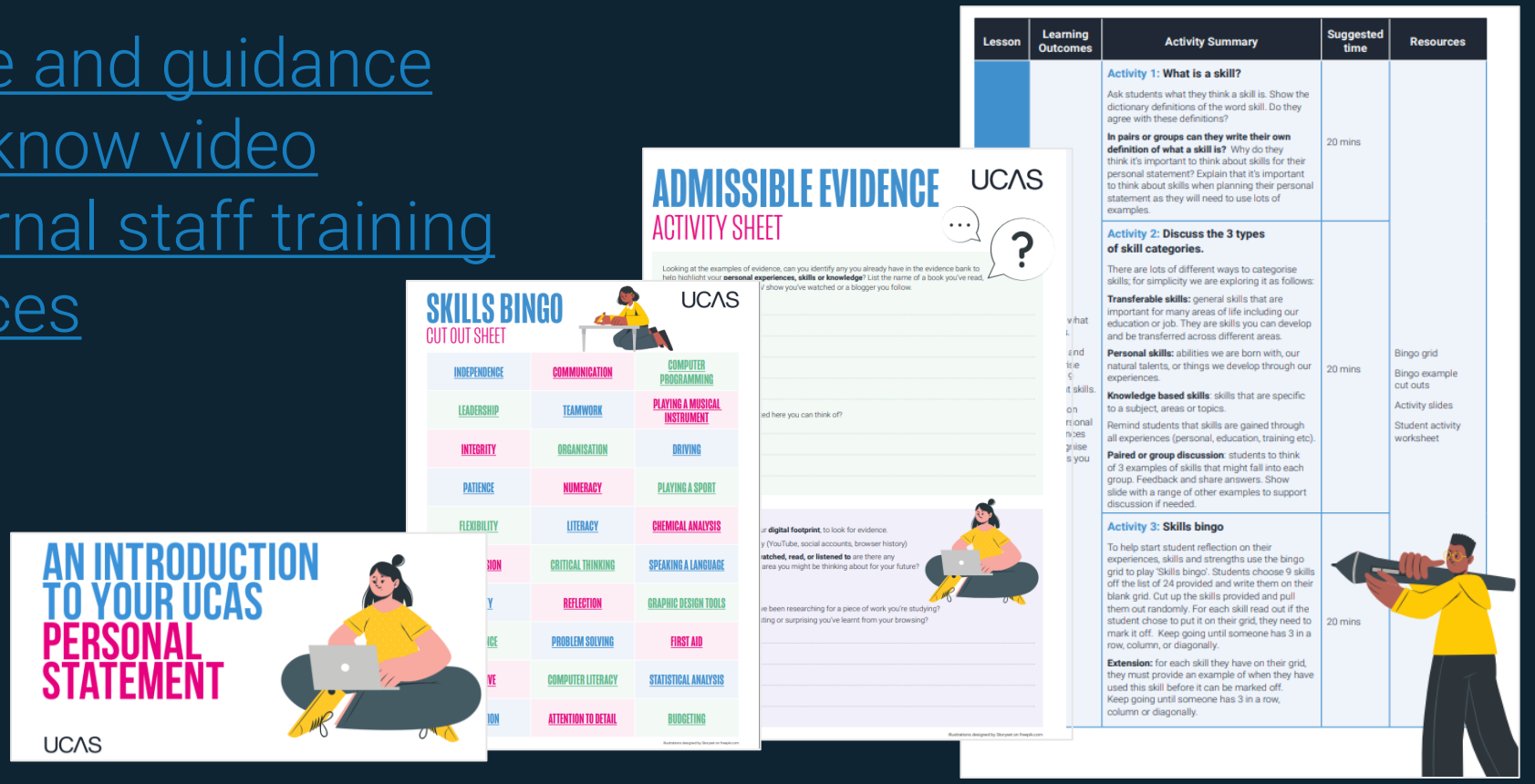
- Application Presentations
- Resources for parents
- Your guide to UCAS Hub
- The adviser guide
- Newsletters
- Adviser lives webinars
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PERSONAL STATEMENT 2026 CYCLE SUPPORT

- Information, advice and guidance
- What you need to know video
- Resources for internal staff training
- Classroom resources
- Checklists
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2026 cycle toolkit

Everything you need to prepare for the 2026 application cycle – all in one place.



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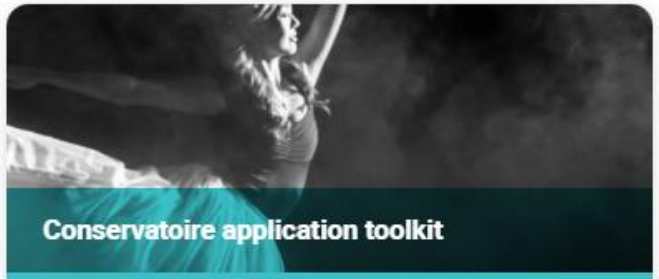
The 2025 cycle toolkit

Everything you need to prepare for the 2025 application cycle – all in one place.



Confirmation and Clearing adviser toolkit

Discover key dates, essentials and guidance for Confirmation and Clearing in our adviser toolkit.



Conservatoire application toolkit

This toolkit includes information and resources to help you support students applying to conservatoires.



Students with individual support needs toolkit

For some students, their individual circumstances can have a significant impact on their decision to go to university or college – and on their ability to succeed when they are there. To make sure they're aware of the range of support available, we've pulled together some tips and key resources for you to share with them throughout the different stages of the application process.



UCAS/Discovery toolkit

We have a range of resources for you, including event activities, posters, and videos to help you and your students get the most out of UCAS/Discovery Week.



Personal statement toolkit

We've created a suite of internal training, classroom resources, and student-facing resources, so you have everything in one place that you might need to help support your students with their personal statements.

WWW.UCAS.COM/PARENTS

Parent, Guardian and Carer Guide

Download our free guide, containing everything you need to support a young person with their options and decision-making, and help them through the UCAS application process.

Parent, Guardian and Carer Guide





Sign up for our parent newsletter

Whether your child is set on going to uni, or still looking into their options – including apprenticeships, gap years, or conservatoire courses – we can help. Sign up and we'll send you everything you need to help them make an informed decision.