



Brunel
University
of London

Introduction to Higher Education and Personal Statements

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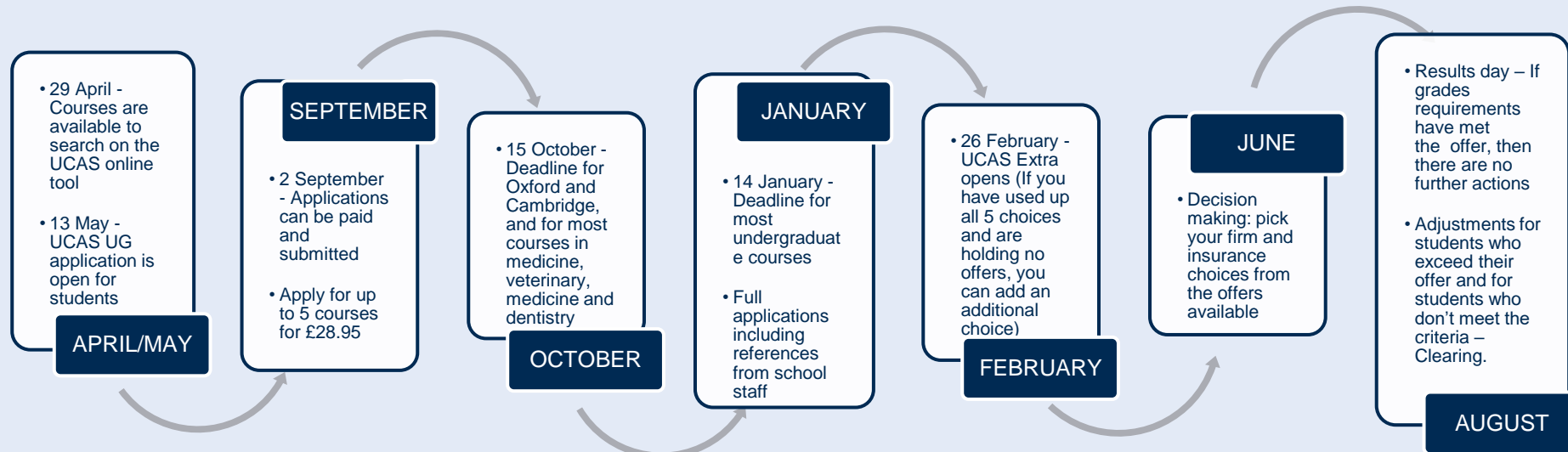


What we will cover today

- Understanding the UCAS process & University timeline
- Researching courses & universities
- Personal Statements
 - What to include in your Personal Statements
- What next – Offers, decisions & Student finance
- Questions



Application process



Researching universities & courses

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UCAS



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Questions to consider



Why do I want to go to university?



Where can I study?



What can I study?



How do I choose?

Choosing a course and university

- Study something you enjoy and want to research further
- Access careers that require a university-level education
- Access graduate jobs & career prospects
- Take advantage of placement, volunteering or study abroad opportunities
- A fresh start
- **Have I attended an Open day or Taster Day?**



Factors when choosing a course

Something you are interested in and can imagine studying for 3+ years

Something you find stimulating and prepared for

A course that allows for you to access your chosen career i.e. Medicine to become a doctor

Checking the modules to ensure the course suits your interests

Work placement opportunity as part of a degree course – is this important to you?

Style of teaching and assessment methods

What can I study?

- Accountancy
- Aerospace Engineering
- Anthropology
- Biomedical Sciences
- Brunel Business School
- Chemical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Communication and Media Studies
- Computer Science
- Creative Writing
- Criminology
- Design
- Digital Media
- Economics and Finance
- Education
- Electronic and Electrical Engineering
- English
- Film Studies
- Games Design
- Global Challenges
- History
- Journalism
- Law
- Life Sciences
- Mathematics
- Mechanical and Automotive Engineering
- Medicine
- Music
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Politics and International Relations
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Sport, Health and Exercise Science
- Theatre

Factors to consider when choosing a university



Does it offer the course I am looking for?



The location of the university



Graduate employability for the course or university



Does the university offer work placement or study abroad opportunities?



Campus university or city university



Student halls for first years

Researching universities & courses

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What is UCAS?

- [UCAS](#) is the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
- Independent organisation and centralised service for applying to higher education in the UK
- - All applications must go through **UCAS**
- Online-based – UCAS allows students to pick up to **five** university/course choices



Application – How to apply

- www.ucas.com/apply
 - Complete application form:
 - Personal Information
 - Nominated Access (Parents/Guardians)
 - Full Education History
 - Employment History
 - Extra Activities**
 - Course choices
 - Personal Statement**
 - Teacher reference

Buzzword’ – to link your application to your school/college



Personal Statements

- The personal statement is the **ONLY** place on the UCAS application where you can explain why you have chosen a course, demonstrate knowledge/enthusiasm and expand and focus on relevant qualities, skills, and experience.
- It is the same for all student choices
- There is a **4000-character** limit (including spaces and paragraphs) and a minimum character count of **250** per section)
- For 2026 entry, the personal statement focuses on **three structured questions** to help students clearly communicate their motivations and enthusiasm for the course.



What to include in your personal statement

Future
ambitions

Skills and
attributes

Demonstrate
your passion

'Cover letter'

Hobbies and
interests



Subject
modules

Positions of
responsibility

Part-time job

Outside
research

EPQ

Understanding the new personal statement format

Three Structured questions:

1. **Why do you want to study this course or subject?**
2. **How have your qualifications and studies helped you prepare for this course?**
3. **What else have you done to prepare, and why are these experiences useful?**



1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?

Show evidence of passion for the subject, how interest developed, and what you hope to achieve.

1. Motivations for studying this course

- Key role models or experiences
- What is your drive?
- How has your path led you to this course and will help with your future career?

2. Knowledge of this subject area and interests

- Previous research?
- Subject specific areas of interest?
- Authors and journal articles which have inspired you?

3. Future plans; demonstrate why this course/subject is a good fit

- What's your passion?
- How will the course aid your career?
- Knowledge that will help with your future priorities?

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

Link academic achievements to the skills needed for the course (Focus on what's most recent and relevant experience where possible).

1. How your studies or training relate to the chosen course(s) or subject area:

- This could be current or previous studies
- From any form of formal education – think school, college, training provider, or short online university course



2. What relevant or transferable skills you have that make you a great candidate:

- Any subjects that helped to develop a core set of relevant skills required for your course?
- Modules which helped you to understand where your interests and strengths lie

3. Any relevant educational achievements:

- Focus on accomplishments like a competition, holding a position of responsibility or representing your school/college e.g., *student ambassador*. Don't spend time on grades you already have, universities will know this already

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

To include any activities outside school—such as work experience, volunteering, or personal projects—and how these experiences have prepared them for university.

1. Work experience, employment or volunteering

- In-person/virtual work experience
- Paid work/voluntary
- Reflect on experience and skills gained

2. Life experiences or responsibilities

- Experience that have helped you to develop essential qualities/skills for the course?

3. Hobbies and any extracurricular or outreach activities

- Sports, reading, community work, summer schools
- Any activities outside of core studies that help further showcase why you'd make a great student.

4. Achievements outside of school or college

- Position of responsibility for local clubs or groups, competitions or qualifications you've attained outside of the classroom.

Think A.B.C



A **Activity**

I study Business Studies



B **Benefit**

Studying Business allowed me to develop my extended writing and analysis skills



C **Course**

During my studies I have had the opportunity to explore how business decisions impact all stakeholders, improving my research and evaluative skills in order to reach a solid conclusion which will help me in my degree course

What we see when providing feedback to students

- A lot of students have no idea of what they want to study
- Who they are writing for
- Have not visited any universities
- Do not know the character limit
- Checking grammar
- Have not checked the required grades/ UCAS Points
- Tell us a story



Do...

- Be positive
- Always link back to your course
- Keep it neutral
- Research the courses
- Sell yourself
- Make several drafts
- Proofread

Don't...

- Lie
- Plagiarise - **Chat GPT**
- Use fancy formatting
- Repeat information elsewhere on the form
- Make lists or overload with skills
- Use vague or generic statements
- Use clichéd quotes

What Happens Next?

- Once students have completed their application, they'll be shown their full application – make sure to review this carefully.
- There is an application fee of **£28.50** for up to five choices (excluding Free school meals application fee waiver)
 - To find out if you are eligible head to: [Students eligible for free school meals \(fsm\)](#)
- Once paid, your application will be sent to your school/college to check and submit.



Understanding offers and decisions

After receiving an application, universities will make a decision

- Unconditional
- Conditional
- Unsuccessful
- Withdrawn

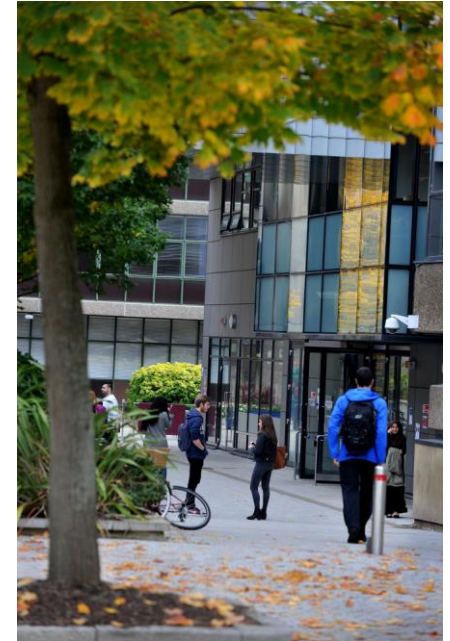
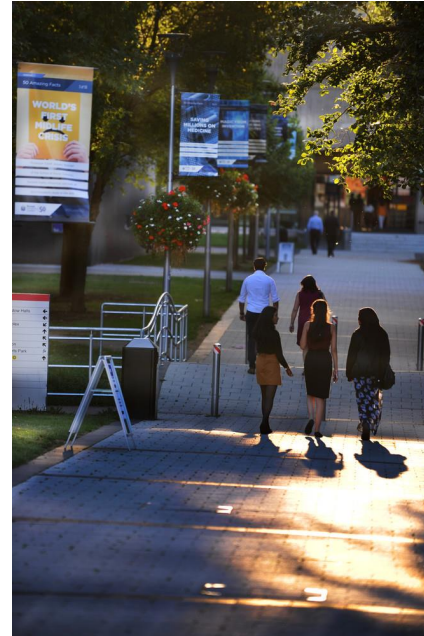
They can also

- Offer a place on a different course
- Request you attend an interview
- Ask to see your portfolio
- Ask you to take an admissions test



What to do with UCAS offers

- Once you have received decisions from all of your choices, you must narrow your choice to **TWO**:
 - **Firm** – your first choice
 - **Insurance** – your back-up
 - Any remaining offers must be declined
 - If you do not receive any offers, you may be able to use Extra or Clearing to find available places.
 - The deadline to reply to offers can depend on when they received the last one.
- E.g. University decision received on or before 14 May 2025, their reply date is early June



What can YOU be doing?

- Start early to avoid missing deadlines!
- Research
- Attending open days and university-led events
- Extracurricular activities, volunteering, and work experience
- Focus on their studies
- Discuss financial options with parents/guardians
- Ask questions



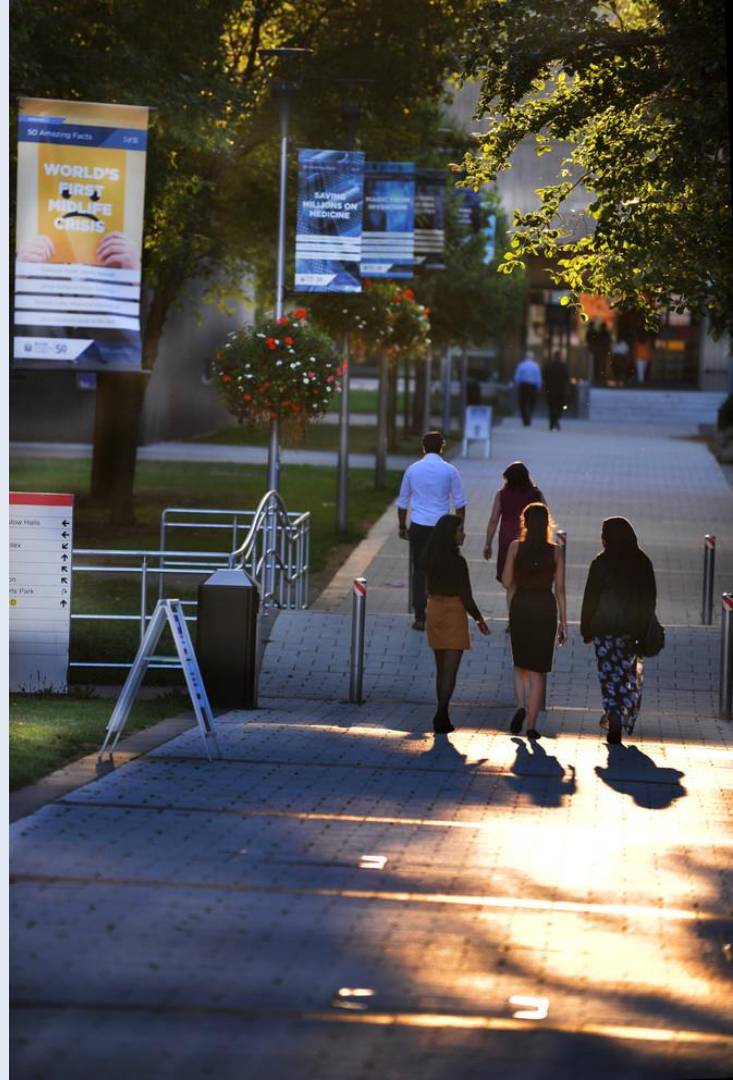
Useful Links

Brunel University of London

- Information for students – <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/study/applicants/undergraduate-courses-how-to-apply>
- Fees, funding and scholarships - <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/study/undergraduate-fees-and-funding>
- Open Days and Campus Tours – <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/study/open-days/undergraduate-open-days>

UCAS

- 2026 entry toolkit – <https://www.ucas.com/advisers/help-and-training/toolkits/2026-cycle-toolkit>
- Applying to university – <https://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university>





Any Questions?

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