

# EDUCATION: UNIVERSITIES

The UK is well known for the quality of its further and higher education programmes. Degrees last three or four years. Medicine, dentistry and architecture courses are longer. The universities range from 30,000 or more students, to small with fewer than 1,000 students.

All Students have to apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service known as UCAS. The scheme covers over 50,000 programmes of study in over 330 member institutions.

A short guide to higher education in the UK is available on the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) website [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/HEinUK](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/HEinUK), and the British Council also produces some useful information for international students on its website [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

The UK has a long history of welcoming international students to study in its universities and colleges. In the UK there are 1.8 million full-time and part-time students in higher education, with over 300,000 international students, with numbers increasing annually. Useful general information, including contact details for universities and colleges, is available from the UCAS site [wwwucas.co.uk/instit/index.html](http://wwwucas.co.uk/instit/index.html)

There are people at each university and college who are there to help while you are in the UK. Many organise a programme of events before you start your course to welcome you. Social and cultural activities are run for international students throughout the year. Universities and colleges also provide a variety of clubs and societies. Information about the subject provision offered by all universities and colleges within the UCAS scheme is available on the UCAS website [wwwucas.co.uk/ucc/index.html](http://wwwucas.co.uk/ucc/index.html)

## **Before applying you need to think through the following:**

- The entry requirements for each course help universities and colleges choose students who will be successful. You can find them in each university and college prospectus

- The entry requirements will be described in terms of UK exams either as grades or increasingly as a Tariff point score. There is no official list of how UK grades or tariff points compare with other countries' qualifications. Each university or college will decide whether or not your qualifications meet its entry requirements and you must check your qualifications with the universities you want to apply to.

Further advice and information about qualifications for entry to UK higher education institutions can be obtained from the UCAS qualifications hotline +44 (0)1242 544900 email: [quals@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:quals@ucas.ac.uk) or the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) website [www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)

The admissions tutor for each course you have applied for (a maximum of 5 courses in total) will look at your UCAS application form, and particularly your personal statement, to make sure that you can meet the entry requirements by the time you start your course. The requirements may include academic and professional qualifications, such as exam passes in stated subjects and particular grades. They may also include specified work experience or even financial or medical conditions.

You may be qualified by the time you fill in your application form or in the process of gaining the qualifications. In the latter case, universities will most often give you a conditional offer. You will then need to meet the entry requirements by 31 August 2008 for courses that start in September or October 2008.

You can apply for entry with credit (to start a course at year two, three or four), but you must have the university's agreement that it will consider you for this before you fill in a UCAS application form.

UK qualifications are accepted and highly regarded throughout the world. However, you should check that employers and professional organisations in your country (or the country where you want to work) will accept the course and qualification you have chosen and the course

content covers the areas of the subject that you want to study and that you need in order to follow your chosen career.

Make sure that you have answers to all the questions that are important to you before you choose where to live and the college or university at which you want to study.

You will be asked for certificates showing that you have passed all the exams that you need for entry to your course and also certificates of your qualifications in English; you will need either the originals or certified photocopies.

You will need a valid passport and from certain countries you will need to get visas before coming to the UK. You should contact the British Embassy or the High Commission in the country where you live to find out whether you have to fill in an application form at the British Embassy or High Commission to show that you meet the student requirements for receiving a visa. Even if you do not need a visa check with the British Embassy or High Commission to confirm you will be able to come to the UK as a student. When you arrive in the UK all students need:

- a valid passport
- a letter from the institution that confirms you have been accepted unconditionally for a full-time course
- evidence that you have enough money to pay for your course.

It may take you some time to get the right documents. You should start as early as possible by asking your local British Embassy or High Commission what documents you will need, and how and where you can get them. The local British Council and your UK university or college will be able to give you advice and help. The guidance information for international students from UKCOSA site is very helpful [www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/advice.htm](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/advice.htm)

Your application through UCAS offers some significant advantages for international students:

- all UK universities, except the Open University, most colleges of higher education, and an increasing number of further education colleges offering HE programmes are members of UCAS and are recognised by the UK Government, or offer courses that are validated by Government-recognised universities

- UCAS is the only impartial centre with up-to-date information about higher education courses, universities and colleges
- you complete only one application form for up to five different courses
- UCAS has regular contact with admissions staff and is familiar with their requirements
- UCAS monitors the progress of your application from start to finish.

## How to apply

You must apply online. To do so, you will need to go to: [www.ucas.co.uk/students/apply](http://www.ucas.co.uk/students/apply). You can then register and have access to the appropriate online application form.

Your school, college or local British Council office can help you with your application form. You can also contact UCAS or the admissions tutors for the courses you have chosen at anytime for help. The UCAS website has all the information you should require to make an application.

The reference on your application form should be completed by someone who knows you well enough to write about you but is not a member of your family, a relative or a friend. It needs to be a full written reference talking largely about your academic merits. If you are at school or college, or you have left recently, you should ask your head teacher, principal, teacher or tutor. If you are a mature student ask a responsible person who knows you to be your referee, such as a senior colleague in employment or voluntary work.

## Students from EU countries

UCAS should have received your application form by 15 January, for entry in the year 2008. The closing date for applications to Oxford and Cambridge, and for applications to medicine, dentistry and veterinary science/medicine was 15 October 2007, for entry in the year 2008. Forms received after these dates will be treated as late. Any application forms received after 30 June 2007 will go through the Clearing process.

## Students from outside the EU

If you are a student of any nationality applying from a non-EU country, UCAS will process your application and send copies to the universities and colleges you have chosen at any time

between now and 30 June 2008 for entry in the year 2008. For applications to courses in art and design, please see below.

Most applicants apply well before 30 June and in many cases it is highly advisable to meet the 15 January deadline regardless of nationality.

If you think that you may be assessed as a 'home' student (UK or EU) for fee purposes, you should have applied by 15 January 2008, exactly the same as if you were applying from an EU country.

If you are a student from a non-EU country wishing to apply to one choice only, and you already have the necessary qualifications, you may apply at any time in the applications cycle, although early applications to top universities are encouraged. However, before completing an application form you should contact UCAS or your chosen university or college for advice.

Any applications received after 30 June 2008 will go through the Clearing process. UCAS run a special service called 'Clearing' in August and September. This allows students to find a suitable place on courses which are not yet full.

There are special rules for Art and Design courses and students for these must seek advice. Although the application process is also through UCAS there are crucial differences and deadlines.

Your completed application form is sent to each of the universities and colleges that you list, who will make a decision after carefully considering your application. UCAS will send you information on how they process your application and tell you what you need to do at each stage.

The universities and colleges decide whether or not to offer you a place and then send their decisions to UCAS who will then tell you and ask you to accept or decline the offers you have received and will inform the universities and colleges what you have decided.

When a university or college knows that you have accepted a place, it will contact you and send you all the information you need about coming to the UK and arrangements for your arrival and registration.

To avoid financial problems, you need to be sure that you can pay the full cost of:

- your tuition fees
- the everyday living expenses of you and your family for the whole time that you are in the

UK, including accommodation, food, heat, light, clothes and travel

- books and equipment for your course.

Regarding part-time work as a student – check out the following website [www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students/wituk.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students/wituk.shtml)

If you are British but live outside the UK or you are an EU national you may be able to get a student loan and other help with your fees. If you would like to know more about the financial support that you might be able to get, you should contact the Student Support Division of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) at the address/telephone number below:

Student Support Division  
[www.studentsupportdirect.co.uk](http://www.studentsupportdirect.co.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0) 0845 077577

If you are a EU student you should contact the EU Customer Services Team and the DfES Higher Education Branch at the telephone number below for general information about fees:  
Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington DL3 9BG Tel: +44 (0) 141 243 3570

If you want precise information on the fees that you will be charged for your course and how and when to pay them, you should contact the university or college.

For assistance with Higher Education Placement and all aspects of the UK University application process, Humphrys Education recommends the services of Dr. Lewis Owens of EdmissionUK, +44 (0) 7739 568455, Fax +44 (0) 208 423 3934, Mobile +44 (0) 7739 568 455, [www.edmissionuk.co.uk](http://www.edmissionuk.co.uk).

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