

APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY





WHERE DO I START?

To apply for university, search for courses, and find all the information you need, go to www.ucas.com. Current students and former students can register on the UCAS website using the Northampton College buzzword which is available on Moodle, from the Futures team or academic staff. Remember to keep a record of your ID and password!

HOW DO I CHOOSE A COURSE?

You will need to decide what you want to study and where before you apply, so it's important to spend as much time researching this as possible, as it can be a life-changing decision. This can seem daunting with so many courses available. When deciding on a course you should consider:

- ▶ Which subjects interest me?
- ▶ Which subjects do I enjoy?
- ▶ What are my talents?
- ▶ What are my career plans for the future?

There are three different types of qualification that may suit you:

- ▶ Higher National Certificate (HNC)/Higher National Diploma (HND)/Foundation degree: a one or two year course which, if completed with high grades, can lead to the third year of a degree
- ▶ Degree: usually a three or four year course, either a single subject or more than one (through a combined honours programme) where graduates obtain a degree
- ▶ Sandwich course: a degree with a year spent working in industry

UNDERSTANDING ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Each university or college has different requirements that their students need to meet before they can start a course – these can be particular subjects studied, exam grades, tariff points, or be non-academic requirements such as a health check.

Some courses require you to take an admissions test. If this is the case, you need to find out how to apply for it.

The requirements for your chosen course will be stated in the entry profile for each course on the UCAS website and will also be in universities' prospectuses and on their websites. Be realistic about what you may achieve and speak to tutors for advice if needed.

It is also important that you understand the UCAS tariff system, so you are aware of exactly what grades you need to meet a certain offer. If you are unsure, the tariff is explained on www.ucas.com, so be sure to check this carefully.

HOW DO I CHOOSE WHERE TO STUDY?

Choosing where to study may seem difficult with over 300 institutions in the UK!

Open days are a brilliant way to find out about courses and the place you will be studying, and whether you will be comfortable spending three or four years there. Different universities will suit different people, so take time deciding on the right one for you.

Consider:

- ▶ Where you will stay – would you like to stay close to home, in a different part of the country or a different country?
- ▶ Transport links – how easy will it be to get home and back? How expensive will this be?
- ▶ City/town – what is it like? What can it offer students?
- ▶ Location – would you like a campus based university, or a city based one?
- ▶ Facilities – what can the university offer you?
- ▶ Halls of residence and accommodation – what is it like? How much will it cost?
- ▶ Other commitments – is part time study an option for your chosen course? Would this be easier for you?

STILL NOT SURE?

There are many university prospectuses available in the Library which provide information about the institutions and the courses available, which can also be easily found on the institution website.

You can also access other useful books in the careers section of the Library to help you make your decision, such as student guides to universities.

COMPLETING THE ONLINE APPLICATION

Once you have registered on the UCAS website you can begin to complete the following sections.

There are ? symbols throughout to help you complete the form and lots of extra information on the UCAS website:

- ▶ Personal details – name, address, email address and basic personal information
- ▶ Additional information – optional information that could help with your application
- ▶ Choices – you can make up to five course choices, so choose wisely!
- ▶ Education – your educational background and qualifications
- ▶ Employment – your work experience, including all unpaid and voluntary work
- ▶ Personal Statement – your chance to sell yourself to your chosen institution(s), so it's important you spend time writing several drafts of this and asking a tutor and/or Futures staff to check this for you

There is a processing fee which is paid online at the time you submit your completed application.

Once you have paid online, your application is then sent to an administrator in your department here at College. A reference from your tutor is attached and the form is checked and approved, then sent to UCAS.

Be aware of the College deadline for submitting your application, which can be found on Moodle.

If you need to contact UCAS call 0371 468 0 468.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I'VE APPLIED?

Once UCAS has sent your application, you wait to hear from your chosen universities. UCASTrack is the online system that allows you to follow the progress of your application. With Track, you can see what's happening with your application, whether you've received any offers and the replies you've made.

You can use Track once your application has been submitted to UCAS. Log in to Track with your Personal ID, which is created when you register, and is in addition to the username and password you used when completing your application in the Apply section.

Remember to keep these details somewhere safe!



ACCEPTING OFFERS

You can only accept one firm and one insurance offer. Ensure you are happy with both choices as you are entering into an agreement with these universities.

You must decline all other offers.

Please be aware of the deadline to respond to offers; this will be made clear on your UCASTrack and will depend on when you received your replies from universities.

UCAS EXTRA AND CLEARING

You can make an additional choice in UCAS Extra if you do not receive any offers or choose to decline your offers.

You can apply to universities through clearing from July to September.

More details are available on the UCAS website.

**For help and support email
the Futures team:
futures@northamptoncollege.ac.uk**

Alternatively, you can visit the Futures Team based in The Lookout at Booth Lane, or pop in to Student Services at Lower Mounts or Daventry to make an appointment with an advisor.