



Understanding the UCAS application process A UCL Horizons advice sheet

Universities select candidates by looking at:

- Your GCSE grades and predicted A level grades
- Your personal statement
- Your teacher's reference

Timeline

March to July	Research courses and universities; finalise five choices
Summer	Write personal statement
September	Final improvements to personal statement
Mid September	UCAS opens for applications
15 October	DEADLINE for medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, Oxbridge
15 January	FINAL UCAS deadline for all courses
Mid August	A level results day: confirmation
September	Start university!

Key points

- **You have up to five choices:** you don't have to use all of them but its strongly advised to do so
- **Choose one subject and find five different institutions** that offer that subject. It is not recommended to apply for a mix of subjects, as your personal statement needs to relate clearly to one subject.
- **Invisible applications:** universities can't see which other universities you applied to, until after all the decisions and offers have been made. Your choices aren't ranked in order of preference on the system.
- If applying for medicine, **you can only apply to four medicine courses.** Your fifth choice is reserved for an insurance application to another science subject (for example, biomedical sciences). If you are unsuccessful for medical school you may end up on this course, so pick it carefully. Admissions tutors for your fifth option will understand that you are applying for medicine, but you are advised to approach them directly and offer to send in a second personal statement tailored to the subject.
- You can apply to **Oxford OR Cambridge**, but not both!
- It is recommended to **apply well before the January deadline.** Your school may have their own internal deadlines.
- **You must be able to meet all minimum entry requirements for all five courses you apply for.**
Some examples: if a course requires minimum Grade B for Maths GCSE and you apply with a Grade C, you will be rejected.
UCL BSci Maths requires Maths AND Further Maths A levels – if you aren't doing Further Maths A level, you will be rejected.

- You should **apply to a spread of universities in term of their A level entry requirements**, so you have some insurance if you get lower grades than you hoped. For example, if you are predicted ABB you should apply to some ABB courses and some BBB / BBC courses as a back up.
- **Don't apply to a university that you would have no interest in going to**; they should all be courses you are genuinely happy to do. You can't predict what will happen with your offers and your A level results.
- **Deferring**: if you want a year out, you pick next year's entry on the UCAS application. Explain your gap year plans in personal statement and relate them to the course.
- It costs £22 to apply for 2 or more courses and £11 to apply for only one course.
- For some courses you may need to register for **additional aptitude tests**, like [BMAT](#) (required for UCL medicine) and [LNAT](#) (required for UCL Law). These will have their own registration deadlines and it is your responsibility to get organised for these tests. You can do practise tests on the internet.
- If you are unsure about something to do with your application to a specific course, contact the [Admissions Tutor](#) for the course directly. Their details will be in the course entry in the prospectus.

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February 2012