

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

AMBITION

PREPARE THEM FOR AN INSPIRING JOURNEY

Guide for parents and supporters

THE UNIVERSITY JOURNEY

Going to university is a life-changing step for your son or daughter, and a big investment in their future.

As a parent or guardian, you have a vital role to play in supporting and guiding them as they embark on this key stage of their life.

This guide is designed to answer some of the questions you may have about the application and selection process for UK universities.

APPLICATION TIMELINE



SEPTEMBER

Applications through UCAS begin from mid-September

EARLY JANUARY

UK or EU student applications for the majority of our courses must be submitted by 18:00 on the given date

EARLY JUNE

Applicants who have received all their university decisions by the beginning of May must reply by the beginning of June

LATE JUNE

Applicants who have received all their university decisions by the beginning of June must reply by the end of June. Deadline for international students to submit an application through UCAS for many courses

AUGUST

Results days for many qualifications

SEPTEMBER

Applicants arrive at their university

OCTOBER

Deadline for submitting applications through UCAS to study medicine

EARLY MAY

Applicants who have received all their university decisions by the end of March must reply by the beginning of May

LATE JULY

Applicants who have received all their university decisions by mid-July must reply by the end of July

LATE AUGUST

Applicants will be given a date by the universities to ensure all the conditions of their offer are met by, normally the Monday following results day

UCAS APPLICATIONS

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is the organisation that manages applications to higher education courses available across the UK. Prospective students usually start their UCAS application in the summer of the first year (year 12) of sixth form or college, before submitting their final version by 15 January the following year. However, most schools and colleges set their own internal deadline before Christmas. Applications for all courses at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and applications for all medicine, veterinary medicine/ science and dentistry courses, must be submitted before 15 October. Your son or daughter's UCAS application will consist of the qualifications they have already achieved and are currently undertaking, their course choices, a personal statement and a reference from their school or college. The universities your child applies to won't see which other institutions they have selected on their UCAS application.

UCAS FAIRS

UCAS fairs are held across the UK in March, April, June and July. Most UK universities are represented at these exhibitions, with staff available to talk to prospective students about the university and the courses they may be interested in. To get the most out of these fairs, it's a good idea for you and your child to do some prior research on the universities websites. Possible questions to ask on the day include the subjects available and flexible options within the course, strengths of the university, accommodation and transport.



COMPARING UNIVERSITIES

League tables can be a useful way to compare different institutions and identify the 'top' universities for particular courses. Other useful sources of information your child may find helpful include individual university websites, UCAS and Unistats.

OPEN DAYS

Most universities hold their open days during the summer and autumn terms. Open days give you and your child the chance to talk to current students and academic staff. It's also an opportunity to view teaching facilities, find out more about the courses, student life, graduate prospects, accommodation and any additional financial support available. There is always a lot to do on open days, so it's a good idea to make a plan beforehand to make sure you can get to all the events you are most interested in. You may also need to book in advance via the university's website.

 **Find out more**
www.ucas.com



PERSONAL STATEMENTS

The personal statement is one of the main tools universities use to select prospective students applying with similar grades, as most courses don't require applicants to attend an interview. Your child will only need to write one personal statement for their UCAS application, which will be viewed by all the universities they apply to. It should be around 600 words in length and focus on your child's chosen subject area.

Here are some ideas for topics to include:

- What has inspired them to study this subject?
- How have they engaged with this subject outside of their normal studies?
- What part of the course are they particularly interested in?
- What activities have they undertaken outside of school or college that can demonstrate other relevant skills?

Our undergraduate prospectus has more detailed advice on writing an effective personal statement.

SELECTION DAYS AND INTERVIEWS

Some courses such as medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine/science often ask shortlisted applicants to attend an interview or selection day before an offer is made. The format of these sessions varies according to the course and university. Some may be informal chats, while others may include tests, group activities and panel interviews. Medicine and law often require national aptitude tests such as the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) and the Law National Aptitude Test (LNAT).

VISIT DAYS

If your child receives an offer of a place to study at a university, they may be invited to attend a visit day, which will usually be held between October and April. Visit days provide more detailed information to help your child decide whether or not to accept an offer. Similar to an open day but more subject specific, they are another opportunity to visit the university. Your child may meet other applicants, participate in taster sessions, and see the teaching facilities first-hand. Like the open days, visit days offer a great opportunity to get to know local area as well as the university itself.

CONDITIONAL AND UNCONDITIONAL OFFERS

Universities often make a conditional offer, which means the applicant will secure a place on their chosen course when they meet certain criteria (for example specific results in their final exams). If your child has received all their exam results when they apply and meets all the entry requirements, they may be given an unconditional offer, which means that they have a place.

Once your child has received all their offers, they will need to decide which is their first university choice and what is their second, or insurance choice.

CONFIRMATION, ADJUSTMENT AND CLEARING

As soon as your child has met all the conditions of their offer it will become unconditional. This usually happens in the summer term when exam results are published. A level results are released in August, which marks the start of Clearing. Applicants who haven't received any offers or haven't achieved the results they need can use Clearing to find other courses that will accept their exam results. Some applicants who have achieved higher grades than they expected may also use this opportunity to apply for courses with higher entry criteria. This is known as Adjustment and relies on the university of their choice still having places available on the course they would like to study. Some prospective students choose to apply to university for the first time through Clearing, although this can be a risky strategy if they wish to secure a place on a particular course or university.

TUITION FEES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

UK and EU students don't have to pay tuition fees before or during their studies. Instead, they can take out a student loan for fees and borrow the full cost of the tuition fee charged for their course. UK students can also apply for a maintenance loan to help with living costs and the amount they can borrow depends on their circumstances. Both these loans are subject to repayment and interest rates. Student loans are issued by Student Finance on behalf of the UK government - they are not commercial loans. Once a student has finished their course and is earning over £21,000 a year, monthly repayments are nine per cent of anything they earn above this threshold:

Salary	Monthly repayments
£25,000	£30.00
£30,000	£67.50
£35,000	£105.00
£40,000	£142.50

After 30 years any outstanding balance is written off. Unlike commercial loans, if circumstances change and the student's income falls below £21,000 the repayments are put on hold. Depending on household income, a student may also be entitled to additional grants and bursaries, which are not subject to repayment. Universities may also offer scholarships and bursaries for particular courses. (Correct as of January 2016)

 **Find out more**
www.southampton.ac.uk/funding

A brief overview of the University of Southampton

We have over 24,500 students



24,500

Access to virtual learning

24 hours
a day



5 libraries
holding around
3 million
books and journals

Over 2,200
networked
computers for
student use

9 gyms
6 on campus and
3 more in the city

Over
350
undergraduate courses

17,000
undergraduate
students



Around
8,000
EU and
international
students



3 internationally
renowned
arts venues



94% of our full-time
graduates in 2013/14 were in
employment or progressed to
further study within 6 months*



53% female



47% male

World-leading
research facilities
include a wind tunnel
complex and 140m
towing tank



£25m
The amount the University is
fundraising for a world-leading
Centre for Cancer Immunology

137
nationalities



Over
6,500
members
of staff



More than 350
clubs and societies, with
over 12,000 members



6
UK
campuses

1
campus in
Malaysia

Over 150 volunteering
roles every year are
offered in over
130 organisations
such as the British Red Cross
and Save the Children

200,000
graduates



spanning 180
countries



Disclaimer

Relevant web links are shown throughout the Guide for parents and supporters. Please also consult www.southampton.ac.uk for further details and/or any changes which have appeared since first publication of the Guide for parents and supporters or phone 02380 599699 for more information. This document is for information purposes only and is prepared well in advance of publication. While the University of Southampton uses all reasonable efforts to ensure that all statements, information and data contained in this document are accurate as at the date

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* The latest Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) statistics, which is based on a survey of UK graduates. All facts correct as of January 2016

www.southampton.ac.uk/parents

UK and EU enquiries:

enquiry@southampton.ac.uk

+44 (0)23 8059 9699

International enquiries:

international@southampton.ac.uk

+44 (0)23 8059 9699



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