



# My UCAS Booklet

**Name:**

**Form:**

**My progress through the application process (tick as you complete each task)**

Use UCAS Course Search	Complete cascade questions	UCAS Logged On	GCSEs Results Entered	University Choices Listed	Personal Statement Draft	Application Sent to Tutor	£23 fee Paid	Date Submitted To UCAS

## Key dates/deadlines

Mid June	UCAS.com opens for 2015 Apply
17 <sup>th</sup> June	UCAS Convention, University of Hertfordshire
30 <sup>th</sup> June	UCAS Information Evening for Parents
7 <sup>th</sup> July	Post 18 Conference
11 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Draft Oxbridge/Medicine Personal statement to Mrs Luckman
20 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Draft Personal Statement to Mrs Luckman/Tutor
5 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Medicine/Dentistry/Oxford/Cambridge applications must be submitted for approval
15 <sup>th</sup> Oct	UCAS deadline for Medicine/Dentistry/Oxford/Cambridge
30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	TPS deadline for all other applications
15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Final UCAS deadline (except a few Arts courses)

## Cascade Questions for University Choice

The purpose of these cascading questions is to help you make an informed choice about which university and course is right for you as an individual. You have to have five courses on your UCAS application, and ultimately you will need to choose to accept two: one as your first choice; the second as an 'insurance' offer in case you do not gain the grades required for your first choice. Work your way through the following questions by ticking the appropriate boxes, so that by the end you have a more focussed set of priorities to use when searching for a course. You might also want to discuss these questions with a parent.

### Section 1 – Location

Where do I want to live?	Yes	No
At home		
Away from home		

If living away from home:

How often do I want to go home	Yes	No
Each weekend		
Once a month		
During term time reading weeks		
At end of terms only		
At end of year only		

How close to home do I want to be?	Yes	No
Want to be within easy reach – 1 hour travelling distance from home		
Wants to be within 2-3 hours travelling distance from home		
Want to be OUT of easy reach of home		

### PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

Now refer to a university location map and find those institutions that suit your location needs.

## Section 2 – Institution

How large an institution would suit me?	Yes	No
Large institution, perhaps a number of different campuses (think about how you are going to get to different areas)		
Smaller institution with one central campus		

What campus type?	Yes	No
City (shops, facilities, night life etc)		
Town (smaller, pubs, societies etc)		
Country – self contained within its own grounds, possibly outside nearest population centre (entertainment is student/union based on campus)		

What student accommodation do I want?	Yes	No
1 <sup>st</sup> year in halls		
Student accommodation in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year		
Student accommodation for final year		
Food provided in cost of accommodation		
Self-catering units to use		
Don't want student accommodation (think about price and location if not student accommodation available)		

What transport will I use at university?	Yes	No
Walk/cycle		
Reliable bus/train service		
Own car (think about cost and availability of parking)		

### Further questions to think about:

What facilities are there on campus: shops, banks, medical centre, sports?

Are there opportunities to get a job to help with finances?

### PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

Carefully check individual university websites and find those that suit you

### Section 3 – Type of Course

What type of course do I want?	Yes	No
Single degree subject		
Joint degree subject (look at the options available)		
Sandwich course with a year out in industry or a year abroad		
½ Year Foundation Degrees		
HND courses available		

### Section 4 – Assessment Structure

What type of assessment suites me?	Yes	No
Assessment over all course		
End of year exams		
Mixture of 2 systems		

### Section 5 Your Fellow Students

How large an institution would suit me?	Yes	No
Male orientated (Aston has a 6/1/male/female ratio)		
Female orientated		
Mixed 50/50		
Foreign Student numbers		
Mature student numbers		

### PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

Use the information in the last five sections to narrow down your choice of institutions before moving on to consider course choices.

## Section 6 – Entry Qualifications

This is where you must be realistic about the qualifications you will have gained by the end of Year 13. Work through the online prospectuses of the universities that seem to be right for you and consider the following questions:

1. Is a Foundation Course needed (mainly for Art and Design subjects)?
2. Do you need a portfolio?
3. Is there an entry exam?
4. Are you studying the group of subjects they advise as a preparation for the course?
5. How many points is a typical offer is this within your range?
6. Do you need to look for some universities that do the same courses but on a lower point scale as insurance policy?
7. What is the scale of fees for the institution, are there top up fees?
8. What proportion of graduates get jobs form this university/course?
9. What careers help is available?

## Section 7 – Getting Information

There is a lot of help out there to enable you to make the right choice. Make sure you use the following sources:

- Prospectus on line
- Paper copies in the Sixth Form block
- <http://Unistat.direct.gov.uk/institutions>
- [www.whatuni.com](http://www.whatuni.com)
- [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)
- Asking around to see if others have applied
- Speaking to the current Year 13 about their applications
- Asking teaching staff of main subject for advice/information
- Using the specialist guides available for particular subjects
- 'Which University' a Students Guide
- Going to the Open Days. A full listing of university open days can be found on [www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com)
- **UCAS Higher Education Convention at Alexandra Palace on 17<sup>th</sup> June. Make the most of this by planning carefully so you can speak to staff on specific issues**
- **Connexions Fresh Horizons Convention at the University of Hertfordshire. (we visit on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July) Make the most of this by planning carefully so you can speak to staff on specific issues**

## Details of University and Course Choices

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Entry requirements including compulsory subjects and grades or UCAS Tariff points</b>	<b>Type of assessment, length of course, advantages and disadvantages</b>
<b>1</b>				
<b>2</b>				
<b>3</b>				
<b>4</b>				
<b>5</b>				

## Writing a Good Personal Statement

The personal statement is the one part of the UCAS form that you have total control over. You have 47 lines to sell yourself. This is your chance to outline your abilities, motivations and achievements, but, more importantly, show why they'll make you a fantastic undergraduate on your course.

Keep in mind who is going to read your prose. Imagine an admissions tutor with a stack of hundreds of UCAS forms. You are competing against other people for the same place. What are you going to do to make your form stand out? For a start avoid the following:

- Waffle
- Bluff
- Repetition
- Clichés (I've always wanted to study.)
- Immaturity
- Starting sentences with 'Also', 'I read that.' or 'I did this...'

Make it sharp, crisp, interesting, to the point and clear. Do the admissions tutor a favour and don't bore them! Remember, they have to want to teach you.

### A possible structure would be:

- Why you like the subject. What you've read around and beyond it. How your A-levels have fired interest in your subject. It is vital that you convey passion for the subject through your writing. **THIS SECTION SHOULD COVER AT LEAST 60% OF THE STATEMENT**
- What careers plans you have for when you finish university and how the subject will enhance these
- Achievements at school. Try to make your form stand out: it is important to list your prefecture or abilities in extra-curricular activities, but remember that the admissions tutors will have come across thousands of head-boys, basketball players and singers in their time – so be brief!
- Broader, out of school, achievements. This could include looking after your siblings or perhaps even having achieved good grades in spite of working at Waitrose for 15 hours a week. These are notable achievements but again be brief!

It is important that the last two sections relate back to the first. This statement is your chance to show your analytical skill and ability to organise material. Your ability to show how your personality makes you adept at your chosen subject is also a signal of your critical ability, which of course is relevant to how you will tackle your subject. A good way to start the personal statement is to explain why your subject interests you. Think about this point. Try to offer a unique reason as to why you want to study it for three years, that way you'll be remembered. You could use a quotation to get your reader's attention, although this is by no means compulsory; if you do, make sure it is relevant and you know the context that it is taken from. You must show your passion.

Admission tutors may well use an assessment sheet to mark your personal statement. Try to show evidence of the following criteria they might use:

- Passion for the subject – including reading and/or practical engagement beyond the curriculum
- Leadership skills
- Communication skills
- Work-social balance
- Commitment, dedication and enthusiasm
- Time management
- Teamwork
- Writing style
- Maturity of thought
- Sense of Responsibility

Keep in mind, through the whole drafting process, that tutors want applicants with the following:

- Intellectual ability
- Motivation
- Competitive streaks
- People who will make a contribution
- Those who will get the grades
- Those who will perform well on the course

Finally, it is important to remember the following when writing the personal statement:

- The impression being made
- Organise the material
- Don't put too much in so you can't write clearly
- Only have things you are willing to talk about at interview
- Check the spelling
- Don't repeat information
- Be specific about 'reading' or 'music' – what reading did you do?
- Give the interviewer plenty of leads. This is your chance to control your interview
- Show how you excel
- Show ability to analyse your current experiences and why they have led to your aspirations
- Avoid story telling

The more input and advice you can get the better. Show drafts to your friends and particularly your teachers; you may have missed a crucial part of your personality that makes you suited to the course, or a major achievement may have been overlooked.

Remember: maximum of 4,000 characters (including spaces) in total.

