

## Applying to college

Once you've chosen the course and college that you're interested in, you'll need to put some thought into your application. You don't want to make mistakes, miss out important information or even miss the deadline!

### How to apply

For most courses, you apply direct to each college you are interested in. The typical process involves a few steps and doesn't differ too much between colleges. Usually:

- you apply using the college's online application system or by downloading an online application form
- the college will acknowledge receipt of your application, which could be by email or letter
- once your application has been considered the college will send you a letter or email either offering you an interview (if this is one of the course entry requirements), a conditional place or declining your application
- the interview offer will contain details of any items you need to take with you or any work you must prepare. You will need to confirm your attendance. See our ['College interviews'](#) article for some useful information and tips
- following an interview the college will send an email or letter either offering you a conditional or unconditional place, or declining your application
- if you are offered a place, with or without an interview, you will need to confirm whether you are accepting it.

### Exceptions

There are some exceptions where you should apply for courses through UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service).

- Some full time degree, HND and HNC courses at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). Check the SRUC website for details.
- Full time degree, HND and HNC courses at colleges which are academic partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). Phone the UHI Course Information Line on 01463 279190 for more information. See our article ['Applying through UCAS'](#) for more details of how and when to apply using this method.

### When to apply

It's a good idea to apply early. Apply before March for courses starting in August and by November for courses starting in January. Most colleges deal with applications on a first come first served basis, so apply as early as you can. It is possible to make a late application, but many courses could already be full.

For the exceptions mentioned earlier about higher education courses with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and the academic partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), applications for entry in 2022 should reach UCAS between 7 September 2021 and 26 January 2022.

## Filling in the college form

Depending on the college, you might fill in a form using an online application system or download an application form from the college website, complete it and send it to the college.

Some colleges have online forms that need to be completed in one sitting, so it's useful to have all the information you need to hand. This usually includes:

- all your personal information (such as SQA Scottish Candidate Number, your National Insurance Number)
- qualifications/exam results and dates
- work experience dates and descriptions.

You will usually need to write a short personal statement setting out why you want to do the course and why you think you are suitable (this is the bit where you sell yourself!). You should get your personal statement ready **before** you apply. Prepare a draft version as a Word document and then cut and paste it into the online application form.

Other colleges allow you to create a login so that you can complete different sections of the form at different times and save your progress as you go.

Remember to use a sensible email address for setting up the account for the online application system.

Whatever type of form you use remember to check it over to make sure you haven't missed anything out or made any mistakes.

It's also useful to keep a copy of the form or a note of the information that you have included in an online form. If you go for an interview you don't want an embarrassing moment where you can't remember what you put on your form!

## Where can you get more information?

Visit the college website or phone them to ask for a prospectus or specific course information. Careers libraries in schools, colleges and local Skills Development Scotland Centres also have prospectuses available for reference.

It's a good idea to go along to the college open day and local careers exhibitions. You may find that your school or college organises group visits to these events. Check out our [Upcoming Events Calendar](#), which has details of open days and other useful events.

Also look out for the book 'Careers in Scotland', published by Gateway Shared Services. Most schools, colleges and local libraries will have a copy.

Remember that you can talk to your career adviser, guidance or pastoral care teacher or student adviser about which course is right for you.