ESSENTIAL GUIDE





ESSENTIAL GUIDE

Going to University







INDEX



Introduction 3

CHOOSING

Staying on in education 4

Choosing what to study 5

Choosing where to study ..... 6 - 7

Making the most of open days 8

Alternatives to full time study 9

Studying abroad 10

APPLYING AND GETTING IN

Applying through UCAS ..... 11 - 12

Applying through UCAS Conservatoires 13

Writing your UCAS personal statement 14

Applying to dental and medical school 15

Admission tests for medical and dental degrees 16

Admission tests for law degrees 17

Applied to UCAS – next steps 18

University interviews ..... 19 - 20

University preparation courses and summer schools 21

Gap years and deferred entry 22

FUNDING, MONEY AND WORKING

Funding full time higher education ..... 23 - 25

Funding part time study 26

Internships and work experience 27

INTRODUCTION

So, you want to go to university? Our guide is here to help you think about important decisions and be informed about what is involved in going to university.

You can pick and choose what you want to read using the links in the index, or just browse through.

To begin with, it's good to understand the differences between studying at school and university.



TEACHING METHODS

Rather than just referring to study periods as lessons, there are different types at university.

- Lectures – course content is delivered to a large group (bigger than school classes), with students taking notes on the subject.
- Tutorials – these are small groups, with in-depth analysis and interaction between lecturer and students on a specific topic.

Depending on the course you study, you may also take part in practical workshops or field visits.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

There is structured learning at university, teaching you the basics of a subject, but you are expected to do much more independent study than at school. This involves reading and researching to fill out your knowledge.

Academic staff won't prompt you to do this, so you need to be self-motivated. Tutors are there to support you though if you need help.

TIME MANAGEMENT

In line with the independent study, you take more responsibility for managing your time and your course work. You must be aware of deadlines and stick to them, otherwise this could affect your grades. Tutors won't constantly remind you when work is due, but they are there to help if you have any issues.

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

This is very different to school. Even if you go to a large school, university is much bigger, with more people and larger campuses. Sometimes more than one campus.

There will be bigger and more facilities available than at school – IT centres, specialist training areas such as NHS simulation wards and fully equipped laboratories, plus sports centres, cafes, bars and arts facilities.

UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

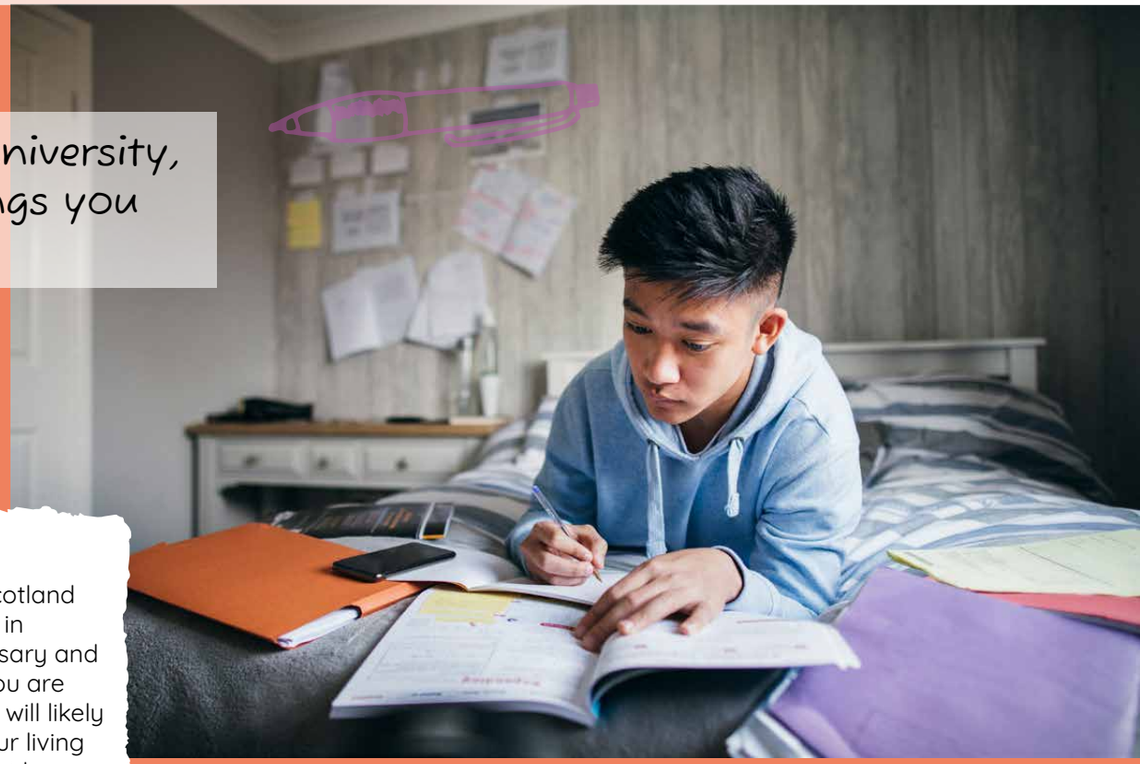
This is very different from your experience at school, in an exciting way.

- It is a more adult environment.
- You'll meet a diverse range of people from different countries and cultures.
- You'll feel more independent.
- You'll learn different life skills, such as money management.
- There are more opportunities to try something new, with lots of clubs and societies to join.

Any big life changes can be daunting at first. It does take a while to settle in, but everyone starting university feels nervous, so you're not alone.

STAYING ON IN EDUCATION

Whether you are planning on going to college or university, you should be aware of the main benefits and things you need to consider – it pays to be prepared!



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF STAYING ON IN EDUCATION?

Better career or pay prospects – formal qualifications can lead to jobs in higher paid professions, for example, engineering, health and medicine and law.

Greater independence - you can learn to make your own decisions and start taking responsibility for your own life, especially if you live away from home.

Gaining new and important life skills - communication, technical, social and analytical skills that enhance both your personal and working life.

Self-discovery - you might learn new things about yourself on the way, such as a passion for student politics or natural leadership ability.

Good social life - you can meet interesting people, form new and lasting friendships, try new activities and visit new places.

Daily variety - with different classes and lectures to attend, and learning about different subjects at different levels, you can enjoy a varied experience before settling into a specific career.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO CONSIDER?

The cost of studying

If eligible, the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) will pay your tuition fees (if studying in Scotland) and you may be eligible for a bursary and other allowances. However, particularly if you are planning on studying away from home, you will likely need to take out a student loan to cover your living costs, including accommodation. Think about how much this could amount to over the course of your studies. Many students have a part time job to help with costs.



Long-term commitment

You need to be sure that you have the enthusiasm and drive to commit to further study, which could be from one to four years (sometimes longer), depending on the course. When doing your research, find out how much study time is involved in a course – not just in terms of attendance, but work you'll need to do outside of taught hours.

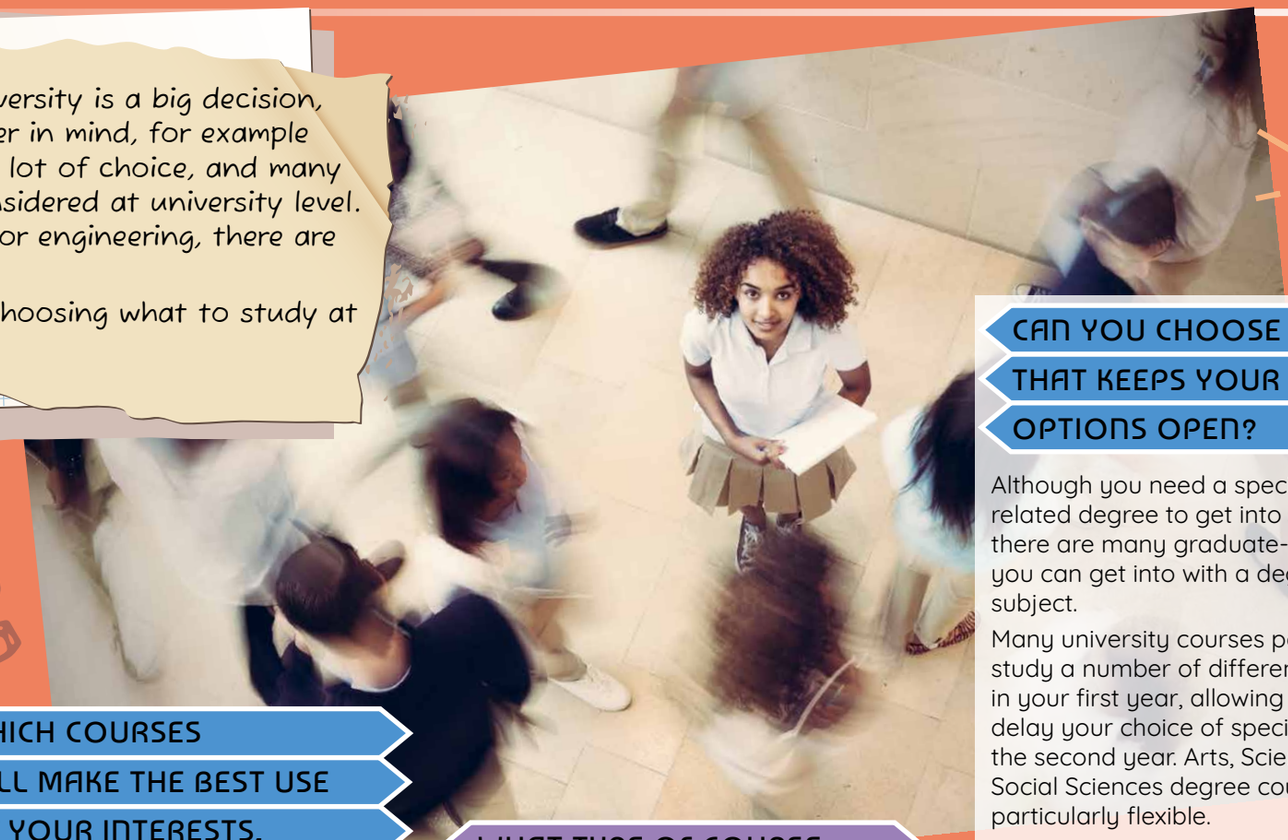
Being responsible for your own time

You'll need to be disciplined with your time management as there will be deadlines to meet, lessons/lectures to attend and you may need to juggle this with a part time job. You also need time for a social life, so you have to find the right balance, otherwise you could fall behind with your studies.

CHOOSING WHAT TO STUDY

Choosing what to study at university is a big decision, unless you have a definite career in mind, for example medicine or dentistry. There's a lot of choice, and many subjects you may not have considered at university level. Even within areas like business or engineering, there are many courses to choose from.

Consider the following before choosing what to study at university.



WHAT ARE YOU GOOD AT?

Studying a subject that you regularly get good grades in is an excellent starting point. Remember that when you move onto university, you'll be studying at a more advanced level, so you may find it difficult if the course includes a subject you struggle with.

WHAT SUBJECTS WOULD MOTIVATE YOU TO STUDY FOR AT LEAST FOUR YEARS OF STUDY?

Even if you are good at a subject, you still have to be interested in it, because you will be committing to at least three to four more years of study. However, don't rule out a subject if you find bits of it boring - that's normal, and something that all students and professionals alike learn to deal with.

WHICH COURSES WILL MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR INTERESTS, ABILITIES AND STRENGTHS?

In addition to your school subjects, have a think about yourself in terms of what you like to do, your skills and personal qualities. These aspects include things like communication and analytical skills, patience and confidence, plus what you enjoy doing in your free time. If you need some help to work these out, have a go at the interactive tools in the 'My Profile' section of the Planit Portfolio.

WHAT TYPE OF COURSE WILL HELP YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

There are many different types of courses on offer at university. It could be a mainly academic based subject such as social sciences, or subjects with practical elements such as music or nursing. If you are unsure which would be best for you, try the CareerMatch and CourseMatch quizzes in Planit. These will give you suggestions based on your interests. You can also explore the UCAS subject guides.

CAN YOU CHOOSE A COURSE THAT KEEPS YOUR CAREER OPTIONS OPEN?

Although you need a specific work-related degree to get into some careers, there are many graduate-entry jobs you can get into with a degree in any subject.

Many university courses permit you to study a number of different subjects in your first year, allowing you to delay your choice of specialism until the second year. Arts, Science and Social Sciences degree courses are particularly flexible.

There is also the option of studying a combined degree. For example, you could study languages with law, or geography with chemistry.

Remember these tips

- Speak to teachers, guardian or a careers adviser to get their feedback.
- Take your time to figure out what you want to achieve career-wise.
- Research universities and courses.
- Don't stress – there is plenty of help and support!

CHOOSING WHERE TO STUDY

With thousands of courses to choose from, choosing the right university can be difficult. Each institution differs in how and what they teach on each subject. Depending on where you live and if you're willing to live away from home, you may have one local university or several to choose from.

Firstly, you should research which universities offer the subject you want to study. You can use the Planit website, which lists all the full time courses in Scotland, as well as the UCAS Search tool.

Make sure to compare the courses, as subjects and course content will vary, as will the structure and teaching methods. Some universities offer specific courses with industrial experience, or more academic courses so it's important to look at each in detail.



Once you have decided which universities you are interested in, take a look at their websites to get as much information as you can. This will tell you about the institution's history, student life, facilities and student and staff numbers. This will give you a good idea of whether you would like it there or not. Many universities also offer a virtual campus tour on their website.



OPEN DAYS

If you can, get along to open days and tour the campus and facilities. This will give you a feel of the place and the chance to talk to students and lecturers. Having the opportunity to speak to current students will give you an insight into how well organised the course is, the quality of the teaching and what the lecturers are like. You may have to book a place to attend. These events are popular so try and book early. You can find out more from the **Making the Most of Open Days** section in this guide as well as a list of open days under Upcoming Events on Planit. There is more information on open days on page 8.

REPUTATION

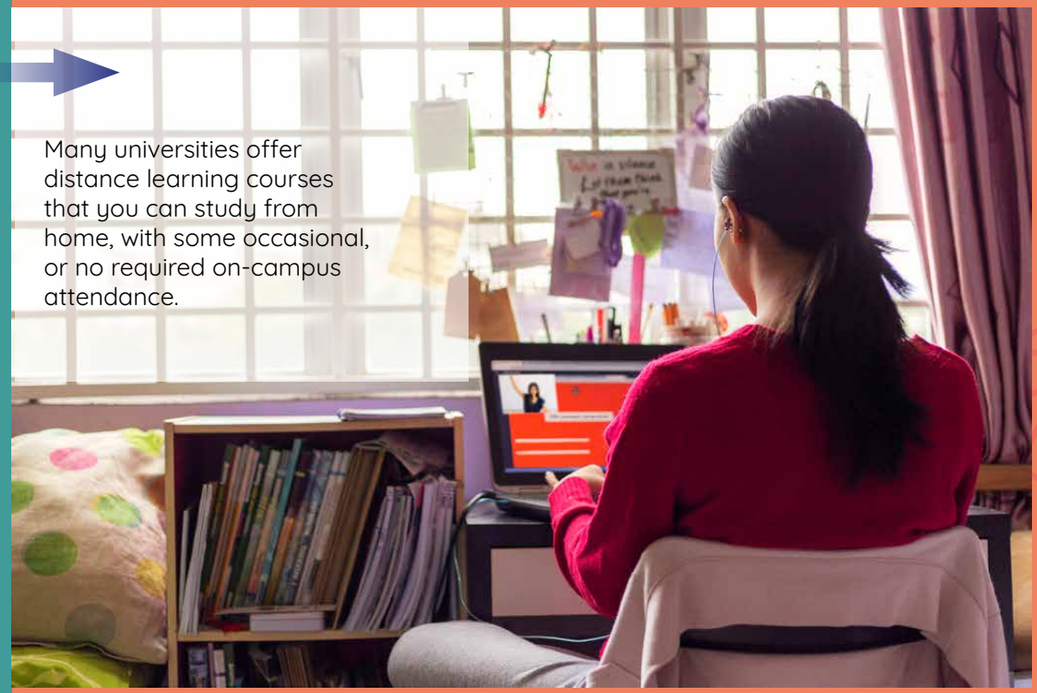
You should also explore the reputation of the universities you are considering. Some institutions are renowned for having excellent links with industry and big employers, which is good for making contacts with potential employers. Others are better known for their academic reputation.

You should also look at the success rates of students at the university by taking a look at employment rates after graduation. These statistics are likely to be advertised on the university's website.

LOCATION

Wherever you are going to study, there are some things you need to consider, such as transport links to the campus. If you are moving away from home, you'll need to think about accommodation and living costs.

CHOOSING WHERE TO STUDY



Many universities offer distance learning courses that you can study from home, with some occasional, or no required on-campus attendance.

FACILITIES

The facilities available are also something you should consider when choosing a university. Particularly if you are studying a subject with practical elements, you'll want to consider the availability of specialist equipment, such as medical training or engineering facilities. Other important facilities include access to IT equipment, library and student support services.

TASTER COURSES AND SUMMER SCHOOLS

Many universities offer short taster courses which give you the chance to get an idea of student life. Some are aimed at people who have no previous knowledge or family history of university. Others are designed to give students an insight into a particular subject or industry. These courses are a fantastic way to get some experience of what it's like to study at university. These tend to be very popular so be sure to book early to avoid disappointment!

ACCOMMODATION

If you are planning to study away from home, one of the deciding factors will be the cost of student or privately rented accommodation and the cost of living in the locations you are considering. Accommodation can vary from place to place and each institution can provide details of the types available. Take a look at your chosen university's website for advice on the costs of living and budgeting.









MAKING THE MOST OF OPEN DAYS

Open days are really useful in helping you to choose a place of study. They are a great opportunity to visit the different institutions you are interested in and find out what life would be like there.

You will likely attend a few open days so you can compare institutions and see which one you think fits best. Have a look at prospectuses and websites to see which places teach your subject. Make a list of places you'd like to visit and then check to see when open days are happening and whether you need to book a place. For help deciding where and what to study have a look at the 'Choosing where to study' and 'Choosing what to study' sections.

Some open days are subject area specific so make sure you pick the right open day for your chosen course. Open days are usually advertised on college and university websites, but you can also find them on the Upcoming Events calendar on Planit.

PLAN AHEAD

Once you've decided which open days you want to attend, take a more in depth look at each institution and what is happening during the open day. Have a look at their prospectus, website and social media. Some institutions now have apps for their open days, with information like maps and timetables.









MAKE SURE THAT YOU:

- read up on where the college or university is – especially if you're considering moving away from home
- take a look at any timetables for the open day as there might be tours and presentations
- make a note of anything you want to see as well as the times and venues
- make a list of any questions you have – this could be about the course, the institution, the facilities or even the town or city
- plan your journey and arrive in plenty of time to make sure you get the chance to see and do everything you want to.



Top tips

If you get the opportunity, try talking to current students. You can find out what it's like studying at the college/university, what the facilities are like and what the course is like.

You should also talk to tutors or lecturers as this will give you the chance to find out as much as you can about the course and the people who teach it.

Find out about the student union and any clubs or societies available – you might want to get involved in something outside your studies.

Make sure to explore the campus, either with an organised tour or by yourself.

If studying at the institution will mean moving away from home, make sure that as well as exploring the campus you also explore the town or city. You could be living there for at least three years so you need to make sure you like it.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL TIME STUDY

You might decide you don't want to study full time, or you may be in a situation that makes full time study difficult. This could be lack of financial support, health issues or care commitments. Here are some alternative options.

PART TIME STUDY

Most colleges and universities offer part time study options alongside their full time programmes. These can range from anything up to 16 hours per week, depending on the course. You could attend classes during the day or evening. This means you have better access to tutors, can attend lectures at a suitable time and use the institution's facilities, such as the library and IT suite.

OPEN LEARNING

If attending classes at the same time each week does not suit you, open learning could be an alternative. There are two main options:

Flexible Learning

This gives you the ability to choose where, when and how you learn, meaning you can study around other commitments, and go at your own pace.



Distance Learning

This would mean studying mostly at home via an online portal. You will be able to contact tutors by phone or email and you may occasionally have meetings or seminars to attend.

A number of institutions also offer courses online. This is done through an online virtual learning environment (VLE) provided by the institution, so you need access to a computer and the internet. You will get access to materials and tutor support. You can also get in contact with other students through chat rooms and discussion boards.

Taking an online learning course allows you to learn at a pace that suits you. For further information contact individual colleges and universities.

Open learning is not always easy. You need to be organised, self-motivated and good at managing your time.

WHO PROVIDES OPEN LEARNING COURSES?

The Open University (OU) is the largest university for part time higher education in the UK.

You would study part time, mainly from home with full tutor support. You don't need formal entry requirements for most undergraduate courses. You can study a single course or work towards a Certificate, Diploma, BA/BSc degree, higher degree or professional qualification.



The OU offers over 200 qualifications in a wide range of subjects, including business, health and social care, information technology and computing, social sciences, humanities, science and technology. They also offer short, pre-entry introductory courses known as Access modules.

Depending on how many hours of learning you do, you may be eligible for a part time fee grant from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS).

They also have hundreds of free courses available on their learning website OpenLearn. The courses cover a wide variety of subjects from business to languages.

Students with an HNC or HND can progress to OU degree-level study. The OU gives students credit points for their previous HNC/D qualifications. This process of credit transfer can help you get a degree in less time than it would normally take.

For more information, visit the OU website.

STUDYING ABROAD

Studying in another country appeals to many students for a variety of reasons, the main ones being learning a new language, gaining more independence and meeting different people. Another good reason is knowing it can make your CV stand out to prospective employers.

Students of all subject areas can take part in these schemes. Subjects offered range from engineering to the history of art. However, you will need to check with your academic department which universities abroad are participating.





THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

The UK is rejoining the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme in academic year 2027/28.

The scheme supports international study, training and exchange opportunities, helping students to gain academic and cultural experience abroad.

Here are some of the main points regarding the scheme for HE students.

- You should apply through your university. They will be able to tell you what funding is available, which can vary depending on the type of placement you do and the country you visit.
- You will not need to pay additional tuition fees, as it is expected that the partner university abroad will waive fees for the placement.
- Placements may last between two and twelve months.
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds can receive additional financial support.
- Students with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can also apply for additional funding to cover up to 100% of costs directly related to their special requirements.

Speak to your university and visit the GOV.UK website.

INDEPENDENTLY ARRANGED STUDY PLACEMENTS

You don't need to go through an official exchange programme if you want to study abroad. For example, you might like the idea of a longer stay, and studying the whole degree abroad. This has its advantages in that you have more control over choosing the place you study at, course content and your length of stay.

However independent study abroad means lots of discipline and funding your own studies and expenses – including medical insurance. You will have to either take out a loan or secure a scholarship from your chosen institution or from home. You may have to find a part time job when you are there, however some countries may not allow students to work off campus, even part time.

Take a look at the following useful links

StudyAbroad
British Council
Prospects
The Complete University Guide
The Fulbright Commission

APPLYING THROUGH UCAS



If you intend to go to university, or other higher education institution in the UK, you apply through UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.

The UCAS website has lots of information and guidance on how to use UCAS Hub for applying. There are a number of video guides to help.

Here are some important dates for 2027 entry, along with a brief outline of the application process.

12 May 2026

Undergraduate applications open, so you can begin to make choices and start filling in your application through UCAS Hub.

1 September 2026

You can start submitting your application.

15 October 2026

If you're applying for Oxford or Cambridge universities and most courses in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine, apply to UCAS by 6.00pm on 15 October 2026.

13 January 2027

For the majority of courses apply to UCAS by 6.00pm on 13 January 2027. Always check course details for the correct closing date.

Applications received after this date may not be considered and some popular courses may not have places after that date. Check with individual institutions.

25 February 2027

Extra opens - If all your decisions are in and you didn't get any offers, or you want to decline those you have, you can apply to more choices for free with Extra.

30 June 2027

Deadline for late applications before the Clearing system begins. Applications received after this date are entered into Clearing.

2 July 2027

The Clearing system opens and you can search for and choose courses. Contact institutions to discuss your application before you add your choices to UCAS Hub.

23 September 2027

If you haven't already made an application to UCAS, this is the last date that you can submit one to go into Clearing.

18 October 2027

Clearing vacancy search system closes; you can still use UCAS Hub to add Clearing choices but contact institutions to discuss course places.

APPLYING THROUGH UCAS

USING UCAS Hub

You can use UCAS Hub anywhere with internet access and you do not have to complete the form in one sitting. The following sections should be completed.

REGISTRATION

Register to use the system – add some personal details, get a username, create a password and establish your security questions. Your school, college or centre will give you a buzzword before you register; this links your application to the school or college and allows staff to add your reference.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Fill in your first and last name, date of birth and gender. Make sure your first and middle name(s) are exactly as they are on official documents such as birth certificate. It's important your date of birth is formatted as day/month/year.

NATIONALITY DETAILS

Provide details about your ethnic origin, and where you were born. You can add up to two nationalities in case you have dual citizenship.

WHERE YOU LIVE

You will need to provide your current address. If you have stayed here less than three years, you may need to input more than one address. Your home address will be used to confirm your fee status.

CONTACT DETAILS

Here you would add your phone number, email address and postal address. You can also nominate access, allowing someone else, for example a parent or teacher, to talk to UCAS and manage your application on your behalf.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

You would add any additional information here about parents who have lived and worked in the EU, EEA or Switzerland.

FINANCE AND FUNDING

How do you plan to pay for your studies. Most Scottish students will have their fees paid throud the Students Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

You will be asked some personal details and it's up to you if you answer. These include ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, care support information and parental information.

MORE ABOUT YOU

You would add any supporting information here. This would not decide your place, it is used to make everyone aware of any additional support you may need at university. This could include physical or mental health conditions, learning needs, estranged from both parents, unpaid caring responsibilities, official refugee status.

EDUCATION

Provide details of schools you have attended since you were 11, where you are currently studying and what qualifications you have – do not send certificates. You will also need to know your Scottish Candidate Number.

EMPLOYMENT

Provide information on any full time or part time jobs you've had.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Make your application stand out. Add any additional courses, summer courses, taster courses you have completed.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is your chance to explain why you should get a place on the course – the UCAS website provides a lot of guidance on writing your personal statement and there are some tips in the '**Writing your personal statement**' section of this guide.

REFERENCES

One of your teachers will add this to back up your application.

VIEW ALL DETAILS

You can access the complete form at any point during the application stage and make amendments. If you're satisfied with it, mark it as complete.



CHOICES

Insert up to five course choices or four if applying for medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science courses – plus one other subject. Note that you can only apply for one course at either the University of Cambridge or the University of Oxford.

DECLARATION

Provide confirmation that you've completed the form accurately and honestly and agree for UCAS to share the information with HE institutions and your school.

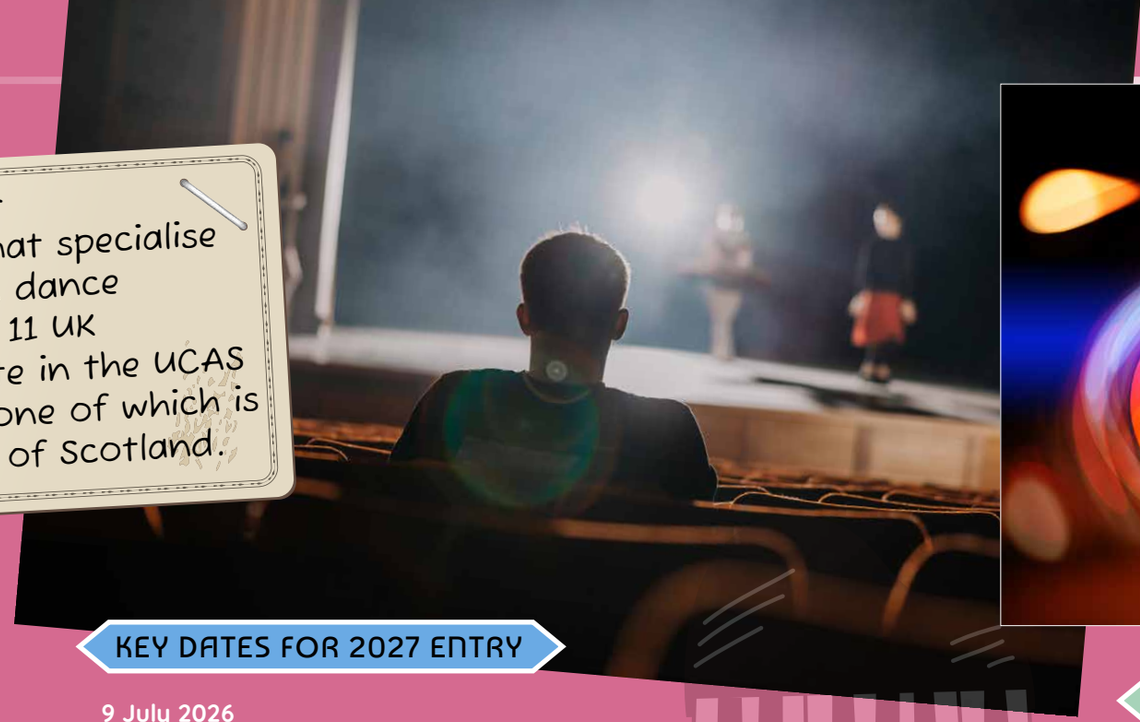
PAY/SEND

The application fee for 2027 entry is £34.50 This is a one-off application fee.

Full information and guidance is available on the UCAS website

APPLYING THROUGH UCAS CONSERVATOIRES

Conservatoires are higher education institutions that specialise in the teaching of music, dance and drama; 9 out of the 11 UK conservatoires participate in the UCAS Conservatoires scheme, one of which is the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.





For entry to any of the nine participating conservatoires listed, apply through the online system, UCAS Hub.

You can apply to up to six conservatoires at one time. The application fee for 2027 entry is £34.50, regardless of whether you apply for one course or six.

There are also audition fees, which vary depending on the conservatoire. You may have to pay these at the same time as your application fee. Visit the UCAS Conservatoires website for more information.



KEY DATES FOR 2027 ENTRY

9 July 2026

UCAS Hub for undergraduate courses opens, so you can start making choices and filling in your application.

1 October 2026

This is the deadline for music courses. If you want to apply after this date you must check with the conservatoire directly if they have any places left.

13 January 2027

This is the deadline date for undergraduate arts with community, dance, drama, education and musical theatre courses.

If you miss the deadline for your course, you must ask the conservatories whether they have any places before applying.

AUDITIONS

For information about audition dates, visit the conservatoires' websites or contact them directly.

TRACK

When UCAS receives your application, it sends you a welcome email that lists your choices. Use your personal ID (confirmed in the welcome email), username and password (that you used to make your application) to view your application on your UCAS Hub.

CONSERVATOIRES

The following UK conservatoires take part in UCAS Conservatoires:

- LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art)
- Leeds Conservatoire
- Royal Academy of Music
- Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
- Royal College of Music
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- Royal Northern College of Music
- Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama
- Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.

WRITING YOUR UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENT

The purpose of the personal statement is to show course providers why you want to study a course and what makes you a great student.

You should aim to highlight your skills, knowledge, achievements and experience and link them to the course you want to study. Places are competitive, so you are trying to persuade the admissions tutor to offer you a place.

PLAN YOUR STATEMENT

Firstly, you should find out when you need to complete your UCAS application. The UCAS closing date for 2027 entry is 13 January 2027 (15 October 2026 for medicine, veterinary medicine and veterinary science) but your school or college will have a deadline date for forms to be completed.

The personal statement consists of three set questions:

Question 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?
Question 2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
Question 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

Give yourself plenty of time to prepare and write your answers. The UCAS website has lots of information and advice on completing your personal statement.

Do make sure the final statement is your own work because UCAS will check for AI generated content and plargiarism.

UCAS website

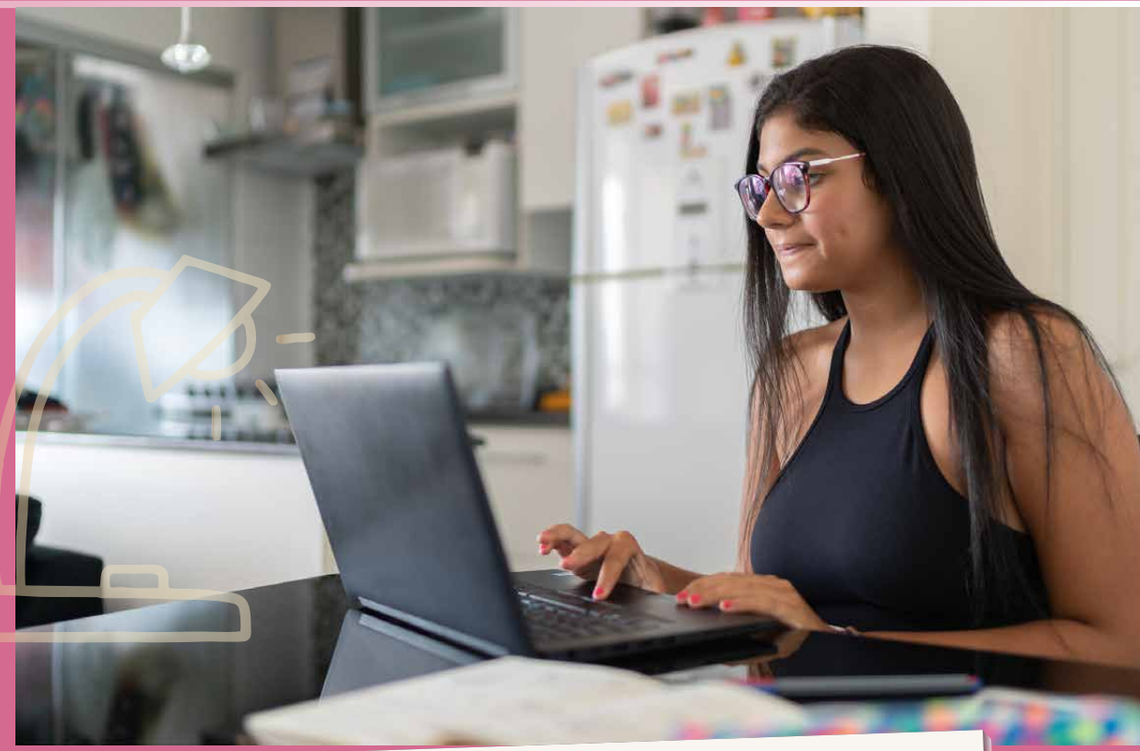
YOUR COURSE CHOICE

Explain why you're applying for the course you've selected. Highlight the reasons why the subjects interest you and include examples which demonstrate you understand what's involved in the course.

WHY SHOULD A UNIVERSITY CHOOSE YOU?

Think about your strengths academically. What do your interests say about you? Are you creative, reliable, practical or ambitious? Writing about yourself is not something you do often so you will complete a few versions before you are happy with it.

Also think about your skills, work experience, hobbies and achievements. Use these to demonstrate your interest in the courses you're applying for and to explain why you're a strong candidate.



Remember!

- It is one personal statement for all courses so do not mention universities by name. Try to select similar courses. If your choices are varied then write about common skills and experience like problem solving and communication.
- Write a draft and ask your friends, family or teachers to read it. They might think of other information to include.
- You can enter up to 4,000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines of texts (including blank lines). You cannot use italics, bold, underlining, tables or bullet points.
- Make sure to check spelling, grammar and punctuation. Ask someone you trust to check it again. Remember you are competing for a place against other applicants and your use of English and grammar should be at a standard appropriate for entry to higher education.
- When you are satisfied with your statement, copy and paste it into the online system.

APPLYING TO DENTAL & MEDICAL SCHOOL

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for dental or medical school you need to apply through UCAS by the 15 October of the year before entry. (This is an earlier deadline than most other undergraduate courses). You can apply to a maximum of four courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science. A fifth course with a different deadline can be applied for later.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Getting into medical courses is highly competitive, so the entry criteria are very high. Potential candidates are usually required to have 2 Advanced Highers at BB plus 5 Highers at AAAAB. Some universities offer widening access entry, which requires slightly lower grades, so if applicants meet the criteria, they can apply by that route. To find out more about entry requirements for individual institutions, see the Planit list of courses for Dentistry and Medicine and Surgery.

Admission tests

As part of the selection process to all Scottish dental and medical school, applicants are required to pass an admission test. See the **Admission tests for medical and dental degrees** section of this guide for more details.

NON-ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Securing a place on a course requires more than academic ability. Competition is high and universities are looking for candidates who can match the academic requirements, but also demonstrate they are involved in a variety of other activities.

Your personal statement should include details about your:

- commitment to the dental or medical profession
- awareness of the qualities and commitment required of a dentist or doctor
- involvement in teamwork.

You should also tell them about yourself, why you want to study dentistry or medicine and your career aspirations. You should also remember to research the training and work involved in becoming a dentist or doctor.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Voluntary work, shadowing in a hospital or with a dentist or GP is desirable, but universities recognise that opportunities vary across the country. Some voluntary work in a caring environment would be beneficial. You should try to develop personal qualities such as communication, teamwork and flexibility while on work placement, as these will be assessed at interview. Rather than listing all the work experience you have undertaken, try and describe what you have learned about a medical career and its implications.

OPEN DAYS

Contact admissions departments as admissions criteria varies between schools. Make sure to visit the institution to ensure you are making a suitable choice. Explore the location, the school facilities and talk to staff and current students. It's also important to attend any open days, which will tell you a lot more about that particular school. Take a look at the Upcoming Events Calendar on Planit, which has details of open days and other useful events.



PERSONAL STATEMENT

A good personal statement will demonstrate what you think a dentist's or doctor's core qualities are and how you display these. There are certain activities that you can get involved in, which you can use when answering the personal statement questions.

Examples include:

- gaining an appreciation of the concerns of patients
- undertaking paid or unpaid work of a caring nature
- undertaking work which benefits school colleagues
- getting involved in caring/charity groups
- gaining personal experience of using 'people skills' in social/work situations
- getting experience of working in a team
- gaining experience in managing your time effectively.

It's also a good idea to show you have developed your sense of social awareness and demonstrate you can shoulder responsibilities, such as getting involved with school life, mentoring, attending clubs, buddy and anti-bullying campaigns or undertaking paid part time work.

USEFUL WEBSITES

NHS Medical Careers – everything you need to know about considering a role in the NHS.

NHS Scotland Careers – information on careers in NHS Scotland and what you need to get in.

British Medical Association – advice about careers in medicine.

British Dental Association – advice on careers in dentistry.

ADMISSION TESTS FOR MEDICAL & DENTAL DEGREES

In Scotland, admission tests are used by some universities as part of the application process for medical and dentistry degrees.

UNIVERSITY CLINICAL APTITUDE TEST (UCAT)

UCAT is used by universities to assist with choosing applicants for medical and dentistry programmes. The focus is not on academic ability, but on the other aptitudes required to succeed in these fields of work, such as mental ability and professionalism. It is also intended to promote fairness in the selection process, by widening the participation of under-represented social groups within these professions.

You need to check with the universities you have applied to whether you are required to sit the UCAT.

THE TEST

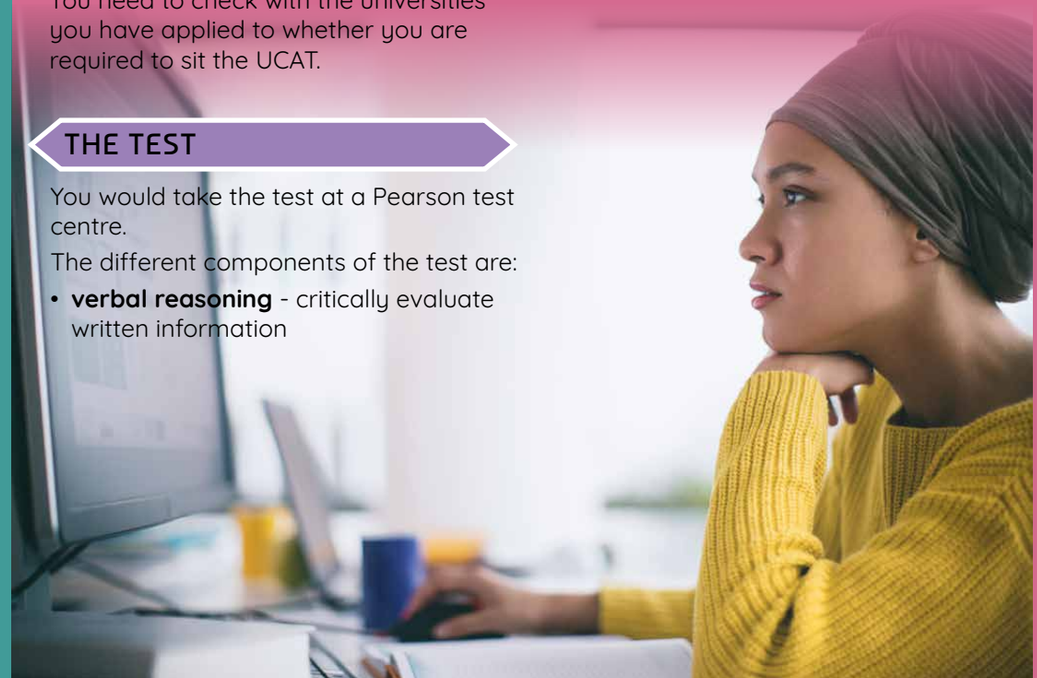
You would take the test at a Pearson test centre.

The different components of the test are:

- **verbal reasoning** - critically evaluate written information
- **quantitative reasoning** - critically evaluate information in numerical form
- **decision making** - make sound decisions and judgements using complex information
- **situational judgement** - understand real world situations and identify critical factors and behaviour in dealing with them.

Each section is in multiple choice format and is separately timed.

You can try practice tests on the UCAT website.



IMPORTANT DATES

If you do need to sit the test, be aware of the key dates. For those sitting the test in 2026 for course entry in 2027, the following dates have been published:

- **registration** for the test - open from 20 May 2026
- **deadline** for booking the test - 16 September 2026
- **sitting** the test - 13 July to 24 September 2026
- **UCAS application** deadline date - 15 October 2026.

The fee for the 2026 test is £70 if taken in the UK and £115 if taken outside the UK. UK candidates in financial need can apply for a UCAT Bursary to cover the full test fee.

RESULTS

Once you have sat the test you are given a copy of the result to take away with you. This is just for your information and you do not need to send it to your chosen universities. Once the UCAS application deadline passes, UCAT liaise with UCAS and your chosen universities and pass the results to them in the first week of November.

For more detailed information, including information on applying for a bursary to cover the test fee, how to reschedule your test and help preparing, visit the UCAT website.

SCOTTISH GRADUATE ENTRY MEDICAL PROGRAMME (ScotGEM)

This course is offered by the University of Dundee and University of St Andrews. The application requirements include:

- academic qualifications
- personal statement and reference
- the Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT).

GAMSAT

The purpose of GAMSAT is to assess the ability to understand and analyse written and graphically presented material. It also measures the ability to reason, make logical conclusions and form judgements.

The GAMSAT Humanities and Biological Sciences test sections are split over two sessions making up 4 hours 10 mins of test time, but you should expect to be at the test centre for six hours.

The test is offered twice a year, in March and September. The fee is £296.

You receive an email when your results are ready and these are sent directly to your universities of choice.

For detailed information, see the GAMSAT website.

ADMISSION TESTS FOR LAW DEGREES

In Scotland, admissions tests are used by some universities as part of the application process for law degrees. The information below outlines what these tests are and where you can find more details.

THE LAW NATIONAL APTITUDE TEST (LNAT)

Currently, the only university in Scotland that uses this test is the University of Glasgow.

This test isn't concerned with your academic knowledge. Rather, it assesses your aptitude for the skills you need to study law.

TEST FORMAT

The LNAT consists of two sections.

Section A is a multiple-choice exam, which involves reading passages of text and answering questions based on your understanding of them. You have 95 minutes for this section and you are given a mark out of 42. This is referred to as your LNAT score.

Section B involves writing one essay from a list of three proposed subjects. You are given 40 minutes for this. This section isn't marked by the test centre, so doesn't contribute to your score, but it is used by the university to see your ability to construct persuasive arguments and draw conclusions.

IMPORTANT DATES

You need to sit the LNAT in the year you are applying to the university and can only sit the test once in that period.

The important dates for 2026-27 cycle, for entry to university in autumn 2027 are:

- **registration** and booking the test – 1 August 2026 to 20 January 2027
- **UCAS application** deadline – 13 January 2027
- **sitting** the test – 1 September 2026 to 25 January 2027.

There are other deadlines up to 31 July 2027 for late applications, but these usually only apply to international applicants. The fee for sitting the test is £75. Applicants on certain state benefits may be eligible for an LNAT Bursary to cover the fee.

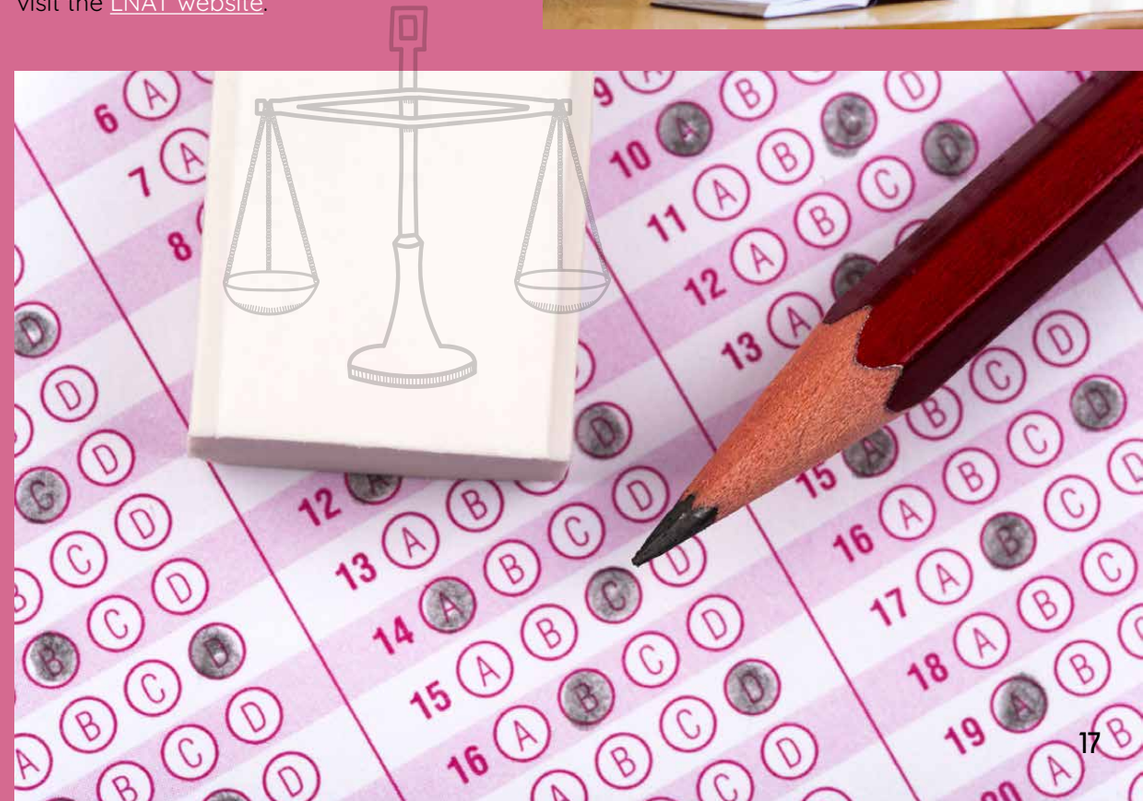
RESULTS

If you sit the test on or before 26 January 2027, you should receive your results in mid-February. For dates after that, you will receive your results in mid August.

Starting on 21 October 2026, the first batch of results (for tests taken between 1 September and 20 October) are released to universities. Following that date, your LNAT score and essay are made available to your chosen universities within 24 hours of you completing the test. They see your score before you do.

For more detailed information, including information on applying for a bursary to cover the test fee and rescheduling you test, visit the LNAT website.



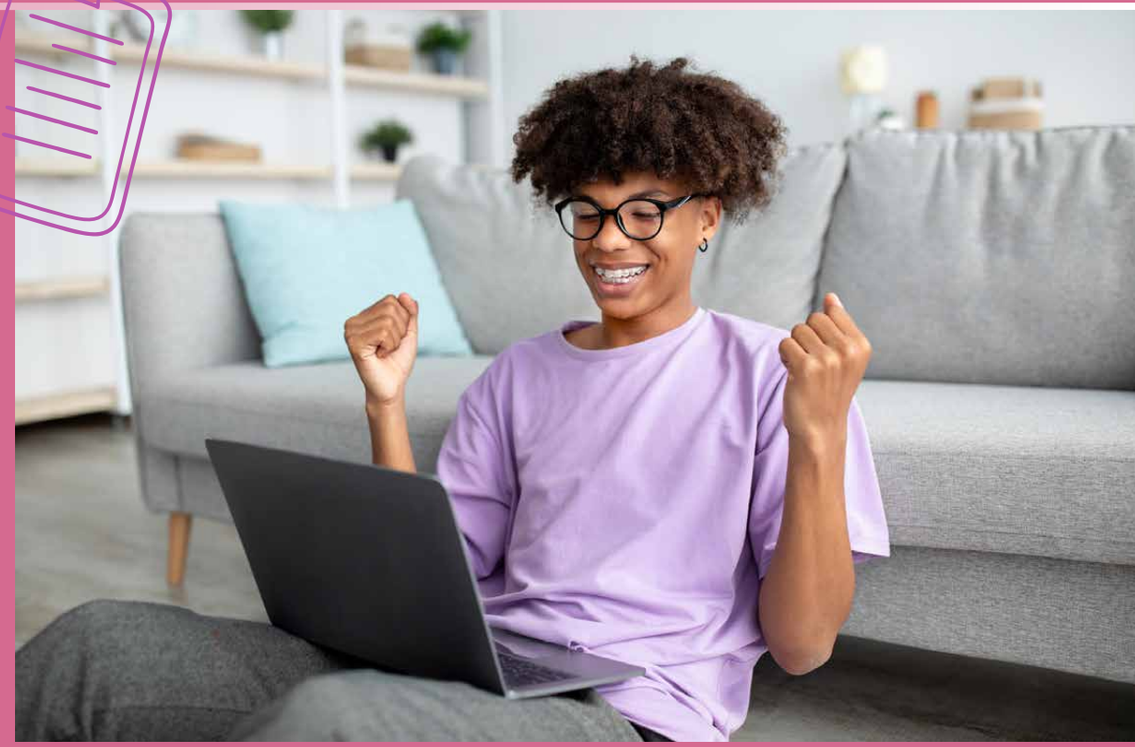


APPLIED TO UCAS – NEXT STEPS

When UCAS receives your application, it sends you a welcome email that lists your choices.

Use your personal ID (confirmed in the welcome email) and password (which you created when you registered) to view your application on Track, the system that allows you to see its progress.

UCAS gives your chosen institutions access to your application form – they do not know where else you have applied.



OFFERS

Each institution then decides whether to offer you a place. They may ask you to achieve certain exam results – a conditional offer, or you could be given an unconditional offer, which isn't dependent on your results.

Provided your application is in by the January deadline in the year you wish to enter, the institutions you applied to will reply from March onwards and by early May at the latest.

When you have heard from all your institutions, choose two offers to hold until you get your exam results. Choose one as your first choice - firm acceptance, and a second as a back-up choice – insurance acceptance. If you accept an unconditional offer, you cannot hold any other offers.

Use UCAS Hub to reply to offers. Make sure you meet the deadlines shown on the UCAS website.

GAP YEAR

If you intend to take a gap year, check that the university or college will accept a 'deferred entry' application. There is an option on the UCAS application form for this. You must still meet the entry requirements as stated when you apply, even if starting the following year.



UCAS EXTRA

If you have no offers, you can apply for other courses through this service, which opens in February each year. You apply for one course at a time, through UCAS Hub.

CLEARING

When the exam results come out in August, if you still have no offers, or do not get the required exam results, apply for other courses through Clearing. The UCAS website lists courses with places.

You need a Clearing Number to apply – you will find it through UCAS Hub. There is lots of guidance on the UCAS website.

Look through the courses, find one that interests you and contact the university or college to ask if they will accept you.

The admissions tutor you speak to will tell you what to do next.

When you get your exam results in August, be prepared to act fast with clearing applications. The Clearing system closes mid October. If you get a place through Clearing, UCAS will send you an official letter confirming it.

UNIVERSITY INTERVIEWS

Some universities use interviews as part of their selection process. You'll receive an invitation for interview either in UCAS Hub or by letter from the university.



Interviews can last from 15 minutes to an hour. They can vary from subject to subject for example, for Maths or a science subject you may be asked to solve a problem or demonstrate your understanding of a topic. For some courses, a portfolio of your work will be considered.

As part of the interview, you may be asked to:

- write an essay
- deliver a presentation
- take a test
- take part in a group discussion
- answer an unexpected question to see how you react.

Find out beforehand what is involved, so that you can prepare. Ask if there are sample tests available. Always take paper copies of your presentation as backup in case of any technical problems on the day.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE?

The key to a successful interview is to prepare well.

Research the course and university - the more you know about the course and the university the more enthusiastic and well informed you'll appear.

Think about your reasons for applying for that course, at that university - list your skills, personal qualities, previous employment/relevant experience and future career aims and think how best to demonstrate these at the interview.

Read your UCAS application, particularly the personal statement - the content of your statement will form part of the interview so you need to be ready to discuss and expand on it.

Be in the know - show you keep up to date with the latest news in your subject area as they might ask your views.

Practise - arrange a mock interview with a teacher or careers adviser.

Interview tips

Dress appropriately – your school uniform or smart clothes shows you are treating the interview seriously.

Good body language – smile, speak clearly, sit up, be alert and make eye contact.

Ask questions - prepare questions to ask, to demonstrate your interest in the course and university.

Know where you're going - check out the location of the interview and how to get there in advance.



UNIVERSITY INTERVIEWS



WHAT WILL I BE ASKED?

- Why you want to do a degree?
- Why this particular course and what aspects of it interest you most?
- Why you want to study at this university?
- Why you would be a good student on the course?
- How will you manage your time, fitting in study around everything else in your life?
- What are your short-term and long-term goals?
- How you think you will adapt to the difference between school and university?

If your interview is for a vocational course such as medicine, vet medicine, nursing, architecture, law, teacher training or social work you'll likely need to discuss relevant work experience, or visits/work shadowing to show your understanding and commitment to this career.

Be prepared to talk about yourself – your interests, the courses or work you are doing now. For example, what you enjoy most about the subjects/course you're currently studying.

SHOULD I TAKE ANYTHING TO THE INTERVIEW?

For some courses such as art and design, the university will usually ask for a portfolio of your work. They will give you detailed advice on the required content of the portfolio. If you have interesting and relevant evidence such as reports from your work experience or previous coursework, take it with you to the interview.





AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Shortly after the interview make notes of the questions you were asked and your answers. Reflect on what you answered well and what could be improved. Carry out further research on questions you found difficult to answer. This will help if you have other interviews to attend.

Your application status will update in UCAS Hub to inform you of the outcome of your interview. This could be a conditional offer (dependent on your exam results), unconditional offer or unsuccessful.

Further help

Use the UCAS website for further help about attending a university interview.



UNIVERSITY SUMMER SCHOOLS & TASTER COURSES

Summer schools and taster courses are offered by most universities, giving you a chance to experience academic and social life at university. You also get a first hand insight into the subjects you're interested in.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

These opportunities vary in length – they could be a one-day course, take place over a weekend or up to two weeks (sometimes longer).

There are opportunities open to everyone and some aimed at pupils applying for widening access entry.

Content and activities will vary between universities, but generally you will take part in lectures, discussions and tutorials. This allows you to get an insight into the subjects, meet academic staff and experience all the facilities.

You will also find out about other aspects of student life, such as the clubs or societies you could join, cultural and sports activities and, in some cases, what it's like to live away from home in university accommodation.

Some summer schools and taster courses have fees. Check university websites and speak to advisers to find out if you can get financial help to cover these.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

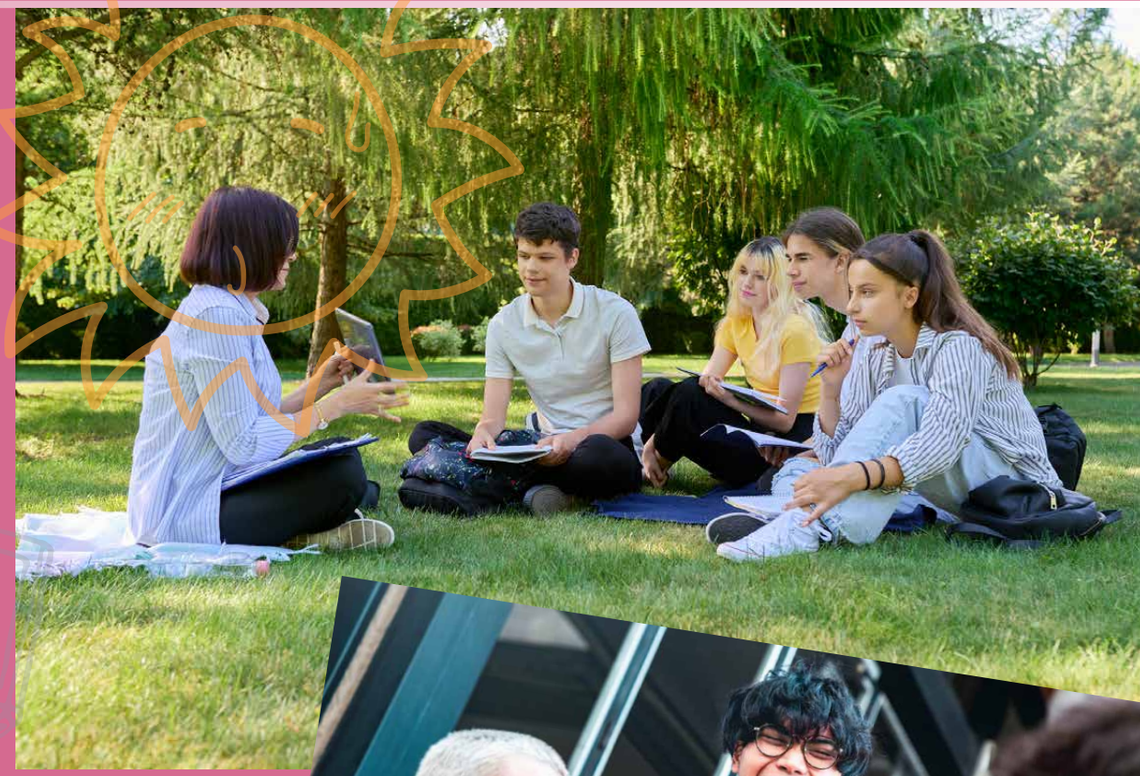
There are many positive reasons for attending a summer school or taster course.

- You can gain knowledge in your subject of interest and decide if it's for you.
- You can find out if you like the university and what it has to offer.
- It can help prepare you for studying at higher education level.
- You can include your experience on your UCAS application.
- It can prepare you for moving from school to university.
- You get to meet other like-minded students in a new environment.

WHO CAN GO TO SUMMER SCHOOL?

Many universities offering summer schools or taster courses usually have specific criteria for you to meet. For most, you need to be (either one or more):

- in S5 or S6
- recommended by your teacher





- meet widening access criteria
- a college leaver
- waiting on an offer from university or be planning to apply
- attending as a condition of your UCAS offer.

All universities offering these schemes offer residential accommodation during your stay if you live too far away to travel every day.

Check with individual universities for application requirements and deadlines.

GAP YEARS AND DEFERRED ENTRY

Taking a gap year can provide the chance to travel, learn new skills or languages, do something charitable and enhance your CV. It can help you to improve confidence, maturity and give you a taste of independence.

It's important to be clear about why you want to take a gap year and decide if it's right for you.



WHY TAKE A GAP YEAR?

Before deciding whether to take a gap year, think about the reasons why you want to do it. It's important to have goals in mind about what you want to achieve so that you can get the most out of it. This may be:

- gaining valuable 'real' work experience
- learning a language
- experiencing new countries and cultures
- learning new skills, such as diving or teaching English as a foreign language
- learning more about yourself as a person
- earning money
- taking time to reflect and focus on your next steps.

This is important as a wasted year won't look good on university applications.

Important further information and resources for gap years

There are lots of websites with advice and organisations who arrange gap years. Here are some get you started.

- Year Out Group
- BUNAC
- Volunteer Scotland

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Once you have decided the reasons you want to take a gap year, think about what you want to do.

- Voluntary work, at home or abroad – you can gain valuable experience and support a worthy cause.
- Paid employment, at home or abroad – get experience and get paid.
- An internship or work placement – you could get experience in the career that you are aiming for.
- Travel – learn about diverse cultures, learn a new language, develop independent living skills.

After you graduate, the experience of having had a worthwhile year out can impress employers. If you work in industry, the company may sponsor you during your degree and employ you after you graduate. Your work contacts can help open doors.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

If you decide to spend your gap year abroad, there are many gap year providers you can use. Make sure that you choose a reputable one. Research providers carefully to make sure that your year out is well planned, and that you will receive appropriate support and assistance throughout your programme.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website has guidance on gap years, volunteering overseas and adventure travelling.

FINANCING A GAP YEAR

In most cases, if you plan a gap year abroad, you will have to fund it yourself. You might get some help from charitable institutions and grant-making trusts.

Make a list of everything that you need to cover, such as flights, visas, accommodation and living costs, then produce a realistic budget that you can stick to. Consider the living costs of the countries you intend to visit. This will help you work out how much you need to save.

DEFERRING YOUR YEAR OF ENTRY

If you intend to defer entry to university for a year, you should apply in the normal way but indicate clearly on your UCAS form that you wish to enter in the following year. Give details of how you intend to spend the year.

Check that your institution of choice will accept a deferred application. Some departments do not accept deferred applications.

A properly structured gap year can improve your chances of being accepted at university. The personal qualities and skills highlighted by a year-out experience can make a difference when universities are trying to distinguish amongst applicants.

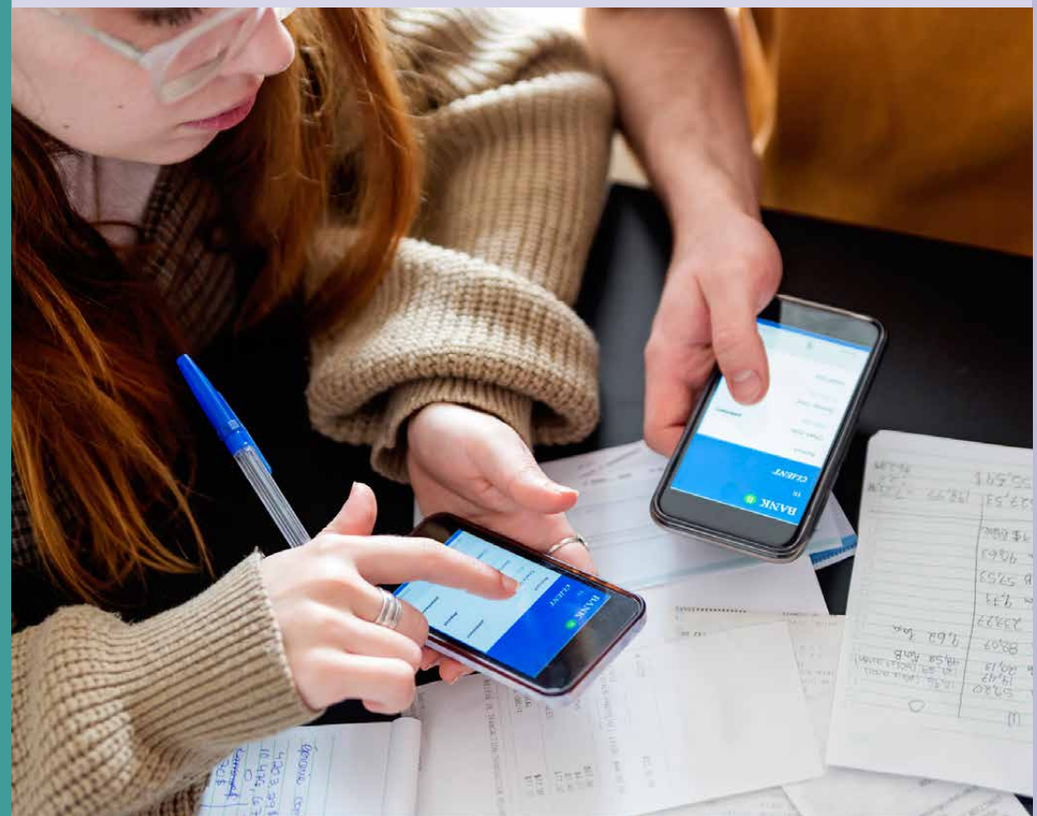
The UCAS website has more information.

FUNDING FULL TIME HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education courses are those at HNC level (SCQF Level 7) through to degree level (SCQF Level 9-11).

Student finance is complex and depends on a range of factors including the type of course you are applying for, your age and personal circumstances.

Here we've outlined funding options that could be available to you.



TUITION FEES

If you meet certain residency requirements, the Scottish Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) will pay your tuition fees. You must apply to them each year to have your fees paid and all deadline dates are on the SAAS website.

If you live in Scotland but go to a university in England, Wales or Northern Ireland you may have to pay up to £9,790 towards your fees each year. You can take out a student loan to pay the fees and pay it back after you graduate.

Visit the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) website for full details.

YOUNG STUDENTS' BURSARY

You're a 'young student' if at the start of your course you're under 25, are not married, in a civil partnership or living with a partner and you've not been supporting yourself financially for three years. You should have no dependent children.

You don't have to pay back the Young Students' Bursary. How much you get depends on your household income. You must be studying in Scotland.

- If your household income is £20,999 a year or less, you should get the maximum bursary of £2,000 a year.
- If your household income is between £21,000 and £23,999 a year you will receive £1,125 a year.
- If your household income is between £24,000 and £33,999 a year you will receive £500 a year.
- If your household income is over £34,000 you won't be eligible for the bursary. You will be dependent on a student loan and contributions from your parents or guardians.

Apply online through SAAS as soon as you have an unconditional place on a course.

INDEPENDENT STUDENTS' BURSARY

If you don't meet the criteria for a Young Students' Bursary then you may be eligible for an Independent Students' Bursary. The amount you receive depends on your household income. If it is £20,999 or less a year, you are entitled to £1,000. If your income is more than that then you are not eligible, but can still apply for a student loan of between £8,400 and £10,400 depending on your income.

Specific details are available on the SAAS website.

CARE EXPERIENCED STUDENTS' BURSARY

If you have ever been looked after by a UK local authority, which started before age 18, then you could be eligible for a bursary of £9,000. This is not means tested.

Specific details are available on the SAAS website at www.saas.gov.uk.

FUNDING FULL TIME HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENT LOANS

A student loan is to help with your day-to-day living costs, such as accommodation and food.

For 2026-2027 the maximum loan available for someone studying a course in Scotland that lasts 30 weeks and who lives at their parents' home is:

- £9,400 for household income of up to £33,999 a year
- £8,400 for household income of £34,000 or more a year.

For independent students, the amounts are:

- £10,400 for household income of up to £23,999 a year
- £9,900 for household income of between £24,000 and £33,999 a year
- £8,400 for household income of £34,000 or more a year.

You should apply to the SAAS as early as you can before the closing dates.

(Note: The above amounts include a £2,400 Special Support Loan, available for the 2026-2027 academic session.)

You don't repay your loan until the April after you have graduated or left your course. You start paying when you're earning over £33,795.



PARAMEDIC, NURSING AND MIDWIFERY BURSARY

You should apply online for a Paramedic, Nursing and Midwifery Student Bursary (PNMSB) through the SAAS website. Apply as soon as you have a place on a course.

You get £10,000 for the first three years and £7,500 in your fourth year.

You also get an extra Initial Expenses Allowance of £60 in your first year of study and may also be eligible for other allowances, depending on your circumstances. Contact SAAS at 0300 555 0505 for information and advice.



MEDICINE

You will get the same support as most other students. If you are studying medicine in the rest of the UK you can apply to have your tuition fees paid from the fifth year of study. (Medicine students at the University of St Andrews pay for their fourth year if studying outside Scotland, but can reapply for funding years 5 and 6.)

DENTAL STUDENT SUPPORT GRANT

If you are enrolled for the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) at the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee or Glasgow, you can apply for the Dental Student Support Grant (DSSG). This provides £4,000 each year for those whose annual household income is less than £34,000 a year. You must commit to working in NHS Dentistry in Scotland after graduation. Full information is available on the MyGov website.

PROFESSIONAL GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION (PGDE) STUDENTS

If you are studying for a PGDE, you will receive the same funding as an undergraduate student regardless of any previous postgraduate study. Depending on the teaching subject you study, you may be eligible for a Teaching Bursary of £12,500. See the Teaching Bursary in Scotland website for more information.

FUNDING FULL TIME HIGHER EDUCATION



SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS, ALLOWANCES AND OTHER SOURCES

These allowances may be available if you need extra financial help because of your circumstances. You don't have to pay them back. Except for the Disabled Students' Allowance, how much you get depends on your circumstances. Contact the relevant organisation for information on the following funding.

- Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) - SAAS website.
- Care Experienced Accommodation Grant - SAAS website.
- Estranged Students' Grant - SAAS website.
- Travelling Expenses – your university student support team.
- Discretionary funds – your university student support team.
- Childcare funds – your university student support team.
- Universal Credit – GOV.UK website

WORKING WHILE STUDYING

Many students work part time while studying. You may need to pay tax depending on how much you earn. Employers use the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) process to deduct tax and National Insurance (NI) from your earnings. You will only pay NI Contributions (NICs) if you earn more than £242 a week.

If you need any advice or guidance on finding a job, see our Job Seeking Skills Modules on Planit.

SPONSORSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Many big companies and other organisations, including universities, have schemes for helping students. These usually include work experience and training as well as funding.

Sponsorship schemes vary so it's important to read the relevant information carefully. You normally need to apply early in the year before you start your course, and at least by the time you apply through UCAS.

This can be a great way to bring in extra money and get valuable work experience. SAAS do not consider any income from scholarships or sponsorships, so it doesn't affect your eligibility for other funding.

You can find information on scholarships and bursaries on individual university websites or visit the Scholarship Hub website, where you can register for free and search what is available.



FUNDING PART TIME STUDY

If you plan to study part time (up to 16 hours a week) you will usually have to pay course tuition fees, but there are exceptions, such as:

- **you are on a low income**
- **you are claiming certain benefits**
- **you have a disability**
- **you are an asylum seeker or refugee who wants to take a non-advanced course or a course in English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL).**

If you have to pay, there are several ways to fund part time study.

PART TIME FEE GRANT (PTFG)

If you want to study a part time higher education course (HNC up to degree level) at a college, university or private training provider and your income is £25,000 a year or less you might qualify for a grant towards your tuition fees. The amount depends on the qualification you are studying and the number of credits it is worth. Contact your learning provider to find out if they are approved to offer the grant by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). You can find more information on the SAAS website.

DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

These funds are run by individual institutions on a discretionary basis, so apply directly to your college or university. The funds are limited. How much you get depends on your circumstances.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

You may be able to claim Universal Credit if you are studying part time. You'll need to meet other eligibility criteria, like being available for work.

Contact the Universal Credit helpline on 0800 328 5644 for more information or see the GOV.UK website.

WORKING WHILE STUDYING

You may need to work part time while studying. If so, you might need to pay tax depending on how much you earn. Employers use the Paye As You Earn (PAYE) process to deduct tax and National Insurance (NI) from your earnings. You will only pay NI Contributions (NICs) if you earn more than £242 a week.

If you need any advice or guidance on finding a job, see our Job Seeking Skills Modules on Planit







Useful links

There is more information on the Student Information Scotland website.

INTERNSHIPS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Doing an internship or work experience has many benefits. Some employers prefer work experience and in certain career areas it is expected. Whichever career you are aiming for, by doing this you could:

- gain an insight into working in that industry or that particular role
- learn the skills, knowledge and training you need to get into a specific career
- find out if a job 'fits', or if you want to work in that industry, or career
- make important contacts who could help you into a job when you graduate
- add to your CV and stand out from the crowd
- earn some money on the way, though some internship roles are unpaid.

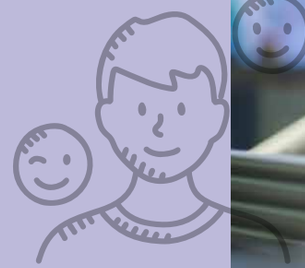
Work experience and internships come in many shapes and forms; it can be a year in the industry as part of an on-course placement or it could be a summer spent working in a business. Some employers, such as the BBC and finance companies, run recruitment schemes offering work experience and internships, although they are often highly competitive.

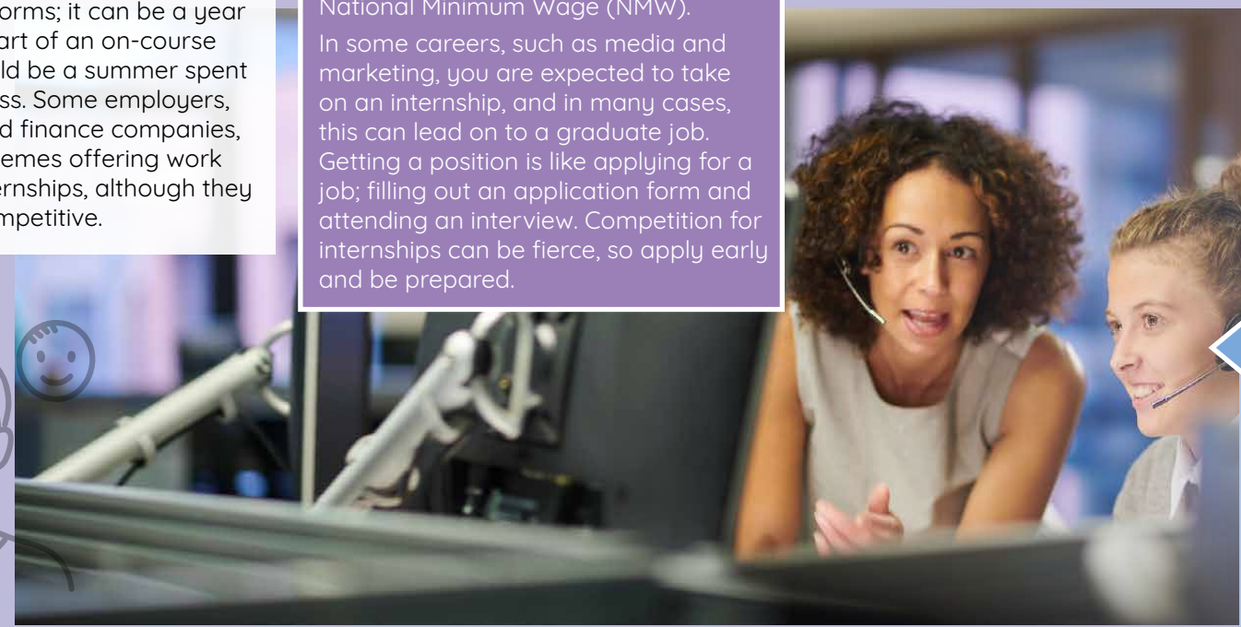
INTERNSHIPS

Internships are formal placements working in a particular role, where you learn the right skills in the right job. They are usually offered by large companies or organisations and can last anywhere between a week and a year.

There are two types - student and graduate. Student internships usually take place in the second last year of your studies. These can be paid or unpaid, although often on an organised placement, you should receive the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

In some careers, such as media and marketing, you are expected to take on an internship, and in many cases, this can lead on to a graduate job. Getting a position is like applying for a job; filling out an application form and attending an interview. Competition for internships can be fierce, so apply early and be prepared.





WORK EXPERIENCE

This is usually a shorter-term placement, with the exception of degrees that include a sandwich placement (in between years of study), which can last anything between three days to a month or more. Work experience is beneficial as it helps you assess what skills you already have and which ones you need to gain for your preferred line of work.

Here are some of the more common types of experience you can get.

- Work placements while at school can last up to one week, or could follow a pattern such as half a day a week for the school year. You attend a place of business to get a taste of the world of work and gain some insight into the career that you might be interested in. You can even get accreditation for your work placement, for example the Qualifications Scotland Work Placement Unit (SCQF Levels 3 - 6).
- Work placements as part of a higher education course may last a part of a semester or it may be a year spent in industry, built in as part of your course (known as a sandwich placement). This is normally between your second and final year.
- Unpaid or voluntary work provides a bit more freedom of choice, since an employer, especially a small company who usually can't afford a paid placement, will offer free experience for a short spell. You can approach an employer directly as placements are usually only advertised when required.
- Temporary or temp work, which can range from working in a supermarket to admin work, can be valuable work experience even if it is not related to your studies. As well as earning money, you will learn valuable transferable skills that employers want, which could also be indirectly relevant to your chosen career. Registering with a recruitment agency is the best way to find temporary work.
- Work shadowing usually lasts only a few days. You're not actually doing any work, but as the name suggests, you watch a professional work to see what a typical day in their job entails. You should research and look for the person you would prefer to shadow for maximum benefit.

WHAT SHOULD I THINK ABOUT?

Before arranging a work experience placement there are some things you should think about.

- How much time do you want to spend?
- Where do you want to work?
- What do you want to learn?
- What skills do you want to develop?