



If you've heard about Higher Education and have decided it is something you want to apply for then your next step is to make some decisions and start your application form.

As a reminder, Higher Education is a level of education above BTEC Level 3 or A levels. You will generally be at least 18 to study at this level and can go to any University or Institute of Higher Education offering the course you want with entry requirements that you can achieve. It can be good to understand your own reasons for going as it may influence your course and location choices.

## What happens next? Where do I start?

In Year 12, start to explore your options ready to make your application in Year 13 (or beyond).

Explore courses available and apply to Higher Education through UCAS – [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

**UCAS = University and Colleges Admissions Service, the central organisation that processes applications for undergraduate courses at UK universities and colleges.**

- UCAS is the hub for all information about university courses
- There are useful videos and other resources on the website to help guide you through this process

### TASK 1

- Spend a little time becoming familiar with [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).
- Can you find where to search for courses and the application page?
- Explore some of the useful information and resources, such as the UCAS Hub page.

## Choices to make

What to study?

- More than 50,000 full-time courses, part-time courses, degree apprenticeships and more

Where to study?

- Nearly 200 places to choose from all over the UK

## Choosing your course

You will notice some different course types – you will be exploring undergraduate degree courses.

- Foundation degrees are a useful stepping stone if your grades don't go according to plan or you haven't quite got the right combination.





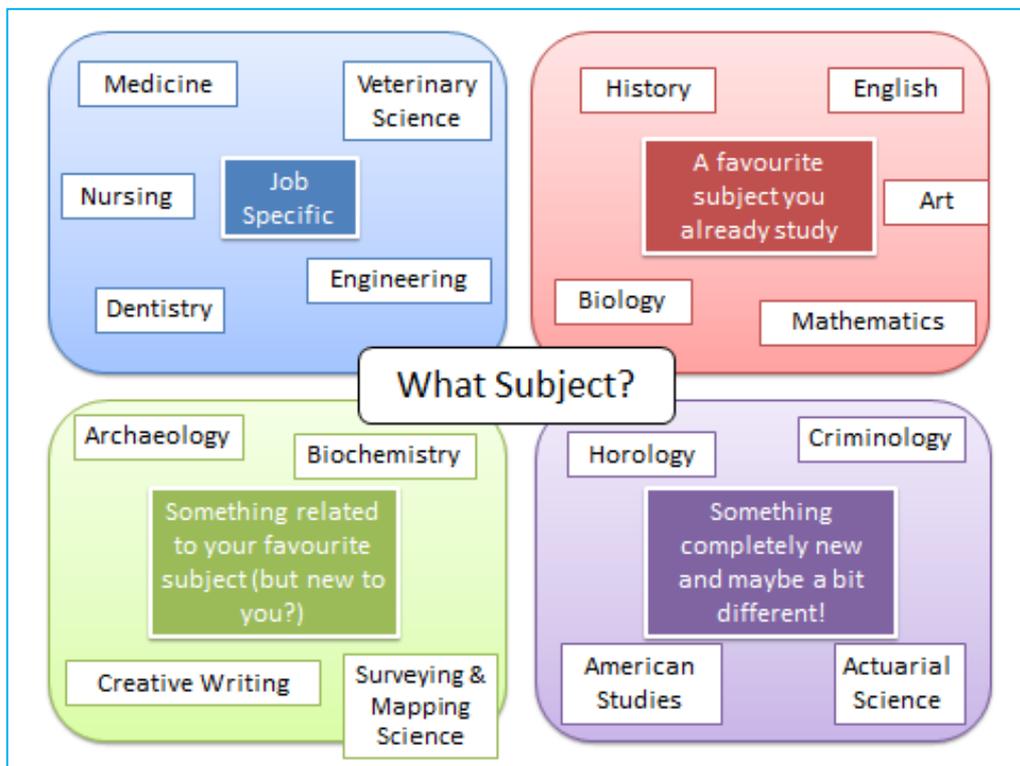
- You may take a single subject or combine 2 or more in varying proportions
- Consider other aspects, e.g. take a course with an extra year in industry to gain valuable experience.

You may already have a clear picture in your mind of your future and the course needed to achieve your goal, or a subject you love that you want to carry on studying.

## If you don't know where to start with your course choice

- Start with the things you enjoy as you are more likely to do well
  - the most successful students enjoy what they are studying which then motivates them to learn.
- Think about your current courses
  - Which are your favourite subjects?
  - What particular topics have you enjoyed or done well in?
  - What other subjects could you do linked to those?
- Maybe think about whether any of your interests or hobbies could be something you explore instead

This diagram offers some ideas about different ways to look at courses on UCAS to see what is available.





## What could affect your decision?

- Future plans – is your course dictated by your career goals?
- Entry requirements – these will vary
  - Grades and points asked for - universities offer by grade, UCAS points or a combination
  - Each grade at A Level or BTEC will give you points e.g. BBB = 120, DMM = 112

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/entry-requirements/ucas-tariff-points>

- You should apply to universities close to your predicted grade profile

### TASK 2

- On [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) in the course search box type a subject you enjoy or are interested in studying
- See how many different courses there are! Look through some of the pages and note down any that sound interesting.
- Are there courses you haven't heard of or places that intrigue you?
- Write down 5 courses/universities you are interested in based on this search

## Where will you go?

You also need to think about the kind of place you would like to go. Think carefully about the sort of person you are and the activities you enjoy or would like to try. Here are some things you could think about:

- Are you ok with being far from home?
- How easy is it to get there or get around?
- Do you want to be near a big city or somewhere smaller?
  - If not a city, maybe somewhere more rural or near the coast?
  - Do you want to be based on a campus or in a city or a bit of both?
- How big do you want the university to be?
  - How many people on your course?
- What about clubs, societies, student's union, local entertainment?
- Where could I live?
  - What is the local or wider area like?

Once you've chosen possible subjects you can also look at aspects of the universities relating to your course:

- What is the content of the course?
  - Will you be able to study areas that interest you?
  - How much choice is there in what modules you can take?
  - How is it assessed?





- Equipment and facilities available to use
- What different types of teaching are used, e.g. online lectures or talks, tutorials, big lectures, reading, field work/trips
- What are the teaching staff like?
- What support is available for study or for other more general needs?
- Is there any work experience available?

It is really important to do research to start to narrow your choices down to a selection you can visit

### TASK 3

- Write down some ideas about what kind of university and student lifestyle *you* would like
- Write down some of the things *you* would be looking for in your chosen course

## How will you find out more to help you make these decisions?

When second year students were asked what advice they would give their 18 year old selves, all of them said 'do more research.'

There are lots of resources to support your research:

- HE fairs, UCAS fairs, Careers fairs – in school, online, elsewhere
- Prospectuses – order online or collect at fairs
- Websites – most up to date and comprehensive information on individual university websites. Also use UCAS, Student room, social media
- Subject leaflets/brochures – collect more detailed information at open events or by contacting the university online
- Friends, Family
- Current/past students
- **Open days**
  - The best way to get a feel for a place is to visit in person or take part in a virtual visit.
  - Individual university websites or social media feeds will tell you when these are taking place and how to get involved.





## TASK 4

- Choose 1 of the courses and universities you wrote down at the end of task 2
- Use websites and other available resources to find out as much as you can about this university and the course you are interested in
  - Note down some of the things you discover as you go along
  - How close does it match to the ideas you had in task 3?
- Do the same for your other choices

## Choices made.....time to apply

- Before you apply, research and narrow down your choices in Year 12/ 1<sup>st</sup> year level 3
- Be aware of the **key dates** in the application process

When:	What:
5 May	UCAS undergraduate search tool goes live for next application cycle
May/June	Applicants can register and start to complete their application.
8 September	Schools can start to submit completed applications to UCAS.
15 October	Medicine, dentistry, veterinary science/medicine and Oxbridge (Oxford or Cambridge).
15 January	Application deadline for most courses.

## Making a UCAS Online Application

- You can start your application in Year 12, but not submit until Year 13
- Be aware of early deadlines if applying for Medicine, Dentistry, Vet Science, Oxbridge
- 5 Choices – make each one count!
  - 4 for some courses such as medicine
- Compare entry requirements with your expected results
  - Don't apply for something that is unrealistic – it could be a wasted choice
- Mistakes cause delays





Begin your application at [www.ucas.com/apply](http://www.ucas.com/apply)

- Click on “Undergraduate” and then “apply” for the year you are wanting to go
- If you are applying through a school/college you will be asked to use the buzzword provided by them
- Once you have completed the registration, a username will be automatically generated. You will be asked to create a password. Please **make a note of these details as you will need them to log back in to your application later**

There are seven sections to complete:

- Personal details
- Student finance (UK and EU only)
- Choices
- Education
- Employment – paid only
- Personal statement
- A reference

You do not have to complete your application in one go, you can save it and go back to it later.

References are provided by your school or college, usually written by a tutor or teacher who knows you.

## Key Points

- All key information is available at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)
- Work with your teachers
- Do your research
- Choose your firm and insurance universities carefully
- Go to Open Days and UCAS events (in person or on using virtual platforms)
- Meet all the deadlines - they are non-negotiable

