

# UCAS Information

## UK UNIVERSITY APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All applications are made online through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service: UCAS. You do not apply to universities individually. Applications are made between September and January for the following year. Oxford and Cambridge applications, and applications for medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, have to be made by mid-October. [note: you cannot apply for Oxford and Cambridge]\*

### **You need to follow the school instructions to make an application.**

Our deadlines at school are as follows:

**September 30th** for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science

**December 1st** for all other courses.

General information about what courses exist and where, can be found by

- consulting the UCAS website at **www.ucas.com** This will give you information about all the courses, and links to the universities' own websites. It also has information about finance and much more, including the Stamford test, which is an interest questionnaire to help you decide on an area of study.
- reading the prospectuses of individual universities. You can read and order them online, and they can usually be found in room 103. However, you should also send for your own. All the addresses are on the UCAS website.
- looking at the individual subject guides for specific subjects

### **How to apply**

Applications are made by internet using the UCAS apply system. You can use your own computer or one at school. There is an application fee of £21. You can register in June at the end of Year 6 during the Careers Seminar. The school will provide detailed instructions on how to fill in the online application form. It is essential that you collect these instructions and follow them as a lot of time can be wasted otherwise. Applications cannot be made until September of 7th year. In September teacher subject comment forms and application instructions are handed out.

### **The online application**

You can choose up to five courses, including more than one course at the same university if you wish. There is no order of preference. Every applicant must have a **personal referee** who will discuss your application with you and give advice. The referee should be a teacher in the English section who preferably teaches you at the moment, but does not have to teach the subject you are applying for.

The referee writes a **reference** based on the comments of your teachers, and has to predict the grades you are likely to get in your Bac subjects. Also on the form will be your **6th year end-of year grades**. As part of the application, you will have to write a **personal statement** explaining why you have chosen your particular course(s) and why you think you deserve a place. Your referee will

help you with this. Oxford and Cambridge may also ask you to send examples of written work, so save anything useful. The universities will use the reference, your personal statement and your 6th year grades to decide whether to offer you a place. They may also use **extra tests** – see below.

## Extra tests

### 1. Subject tests

More and more universities/subjects are requiring extra tests. For Medicine and Law, in particular, you will probably be asked to take an extra test [BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT . . .] for which you will have to register as early as July in 6th year. Oxford and Cambridge also have their own tests for certain subjects. These tests are used to help assess your suitability for your chosen course. Some tests are done at school, but for others you may have to travel away from Munich. All necessary tests are indicated on the universities' course details, and there is a reminder on the UCAS application form. It is **your responsibility** to find out if a test is needed and to take any steps necessary.

### 2. English language tests

These tests are also increasingly required for non-native speakers. There is no standard policy; it depends on the university and the course. Sometimes a letter from the school can remove this requirement, but we cannot insist. L3 applicants are even more likely to be asked to provide a test result, typically Cambridge Advanced/Proficiency or IELTS, before taking up a place. The school can advise you where to take these tests, but we do not organise them.

## What happens next

The universities receive your application from UCAS. **Note:** a university only sees your application to its course – not to anywhere else. They may ask you to come to interview. Then they either

- make you an unconditional offer - only for people who already have their Bac!
- make you a conditional offer e.g. an overall grade 75% in the Bac with an 8.0 in one or more subjects
- reject you

Each time a university makes a decision about you, you are informed directly by them and through UCAS, until you have heard from all your choices. You can follow the progress of your application online. Then you have to decide which offers to keep and which to reject. You are allowed one **Firm Acceptance** and one **Insurance Choice**, and usually you have to let UCAS know by late April or May (they will send you a deadline).

If you don't get any offers, or you have rejected any offers, you can use the 'UCAS Extra' system which sends your application to universities that still have places for the subject you've chosen. You apply to one extra university at a time. This process starts in February of 7th year.

**When you get your Bac results** there are at least 3 possibilities:

1. You get the grades for your **Firm Choice**, and confirm that you will be going there. You decline your **Insurance Choice**.

2. You don't get the grades for your **Firm Choice**, but you do get the grades for your **Insurance Choice**, and confirm that you will be going there. You decline your **Firm Choice**.

3. You don't get the grades for either choice, and decide to go through Clearing in August. This is when all the remaining places are advertised by the universities.

**NOTE:** In case 1, you don't have the option of declining your **Firm Acceptance** and choosing your **Insurance Offer**. If you really wanted to go there you would have put it first.

In case 2, if you have only missed the required grades by a small margin, you may be able to negotiate with your **Firm Choice** to take you anyway. You will have to contact them directly.

**Please note: the application process is quite complicated and time-consuming. Many people are involved. So do not begin it if you are not serious.**

\*Oxford and Cambridge: many students have a mistaken idea about these universities. They are famous, and parents in particular often think it is a good idea to apply to one of them. But they are **extremely** competitive and usually only one or two students per year from our school are accepted. If you apply you will have to make up your mind about all your other choices by the end of September; you may also have to take extra exams, and spend several days being interviewed. It is a lot of work. Unless you confidently expect a Bac average of at least 85%, with 9 in some subjects, and your teachers encourage you, it may not be worth it. There are many other excellent universities whose courses may suit you better.

What you should do now:

- think about career choices
- think about courses
- think about which universities or colleges have the best courses for you
- investigate [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) - there is a lot of useful information in addition to universities and courses
- decide who you will ask to be your referee. It must be someone from the English section who teaches you at the moment
- contact the universities you are interested in and ask for a prospectus (for entry in 2012)
- think about your personal statement
- plan university visits in the UK (see below)

## UK UNIVERSITIES : Frequently asked questions

### *1. How do I apply to university in the UK?*

Details of how to apply will be on the school website under secondary school/careers guidance

<http://www.esmunich.de/english/hoehereschule/berufsberatung.php>

See also the UCAS website, [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

### *2. When is the deadline for completing my application?*

**For 2012 entry.** Corresponding dates for subsequent years.

Early applications – for Oxford/Cambridge and Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary Science – must be finished by **the end of September 2011.**

All other applications must be finished by 1st **December 2011.**

These are not the same as the UCAS deadlines but allow time for the application to be checked, corrected if necessary, and the reference to be added.

**It is highly advisable to submit your application as early as possible.**

Universities start processing applications as soon as they are received.

### *3. Can I apply after the Bac, if I'm taking a gap year?*

Yes. You can either apply with everyone else before your Bac and ask for Deferred Entry, in which case you will receive an offer requiring certain grades, or you can wait until you have your Bac, apply giving your results and wait for a yes or no answer.

**The instructions for ex-students are different from those for current students. Make sure you get the right ones.**

### *4. What extra tests must I take?*

There are an increasing number of extra tests required by particular courses. All the details are on the UCAS website (go to 'Students' then 'Before you apply').

**It is your responsibility to find out whether you need to take a test and when/where you need to take it. Be particularly careful about registration dates.**

### *5. What about English language tests?*

Many universities will ask for an EFL qualification (IELTS, Cambridge . . .) if English isn't your first language. If you are taking L2 English, a letter from your referee may remove this requirement. It is less likely if you are taking L3 English, but it can be done. Each university makes its own decision.

If you have to take a test, the most convenient one is the IELTS test, which can be taken at the Cambridge Institute in Munich.

**It is your responsibility to organise a test.**

**6. Does the school tell the universities about my Bac results?**

No. When you get your Bac Diploma at the Proclamation, you must send an official copy to your Firm Offer university and to the Insurance one if necessary. You will be given a document explaining all of this.

**7. Do UK universities know about the European Baccalaureate?**

Yes, the universities all know what the EB is, or if they do not are easily told. Pupils from our schools have been going to the UK to study for many years, and the number continues to grow. Information about the EB is available on the Department for Education website as well as on the European School Munich website. Referees are careful to mention aspects of our courses that might need explanation, such as the different levels of Maths.

**8. Why isn't the European Baccalaureate on the UCAS tariff?**

This was a decision taken by all the European Schools. Apart from the cost factor and the very longwinded procedure for getting all the national systems to agree, we are actually better off as we are. In almost all cases the universities' offers to our applicants are reasonable. If there is a problem with an offer the referee discusses it with the university concerned. There is no 'standard equivalence' with A-level grades because many university departments use their own experience of our students to decide on offers. Many also say they ignore the UCAS tariff anyway.

**9. Where can I find out more?**

Answers to most questions can be found on the UCAS website or on the websites of individual universities. At school, contact the careers co-ordinator Graham Johnstone.

## Visiting Universities in the UK

This is essential to get a feel for the nature of universities. They vary enormously!

**When?** The May holiday is ideal since students are still there although they may have started exams. But other times are also possible. Start by checking the university website for information about visit. Some websites have virtual tours which can be a good start. Find out who to contact. Make it clear that you are from a European School in Munich. Universities arrange visits in different ways.

Possible methods are:

- **Open days.** Check to see if these coincide with your planned visits to the UK.
- **Campus tours.** May be offered on a daily or weekly basis. Check the University website for details. Often led by students who give you a realistic appraisal of university life.

**Self guided tours.** Usually available from admissions offices. You collect a map and walk round at your own pace.

**Visit the admissions office.** These are open on weekdays and a member of the admissions staff should be able to talk to you. Sometimes, you may be seen by someone who deals with EU students. Most of you are NOT International students but may be seen by the International Office.

**Departmental visits.** If you contact admissions, they may suggest that you contact the department who offer the course that you are considering. It can be very helpful to visit a department but you usually need to arrange this before your visit. You can often contact departments directly.

**Friends. Acquaintances.** If you know somebody at a university you are considering, contact them and ask to be shown round.

### What to look for

- University
- Transport to and from Munich
- Appearance of university
- Architecture
- Location
- Campus
- City
- Size
- Location of department
- Where do lectures take place?
- Specialist facilities?
- Accommodation
- What are Halls of Residence like?
- Where do most students live after year 1?
- Sports facilities
- What is the range on offer (pool, gyms, sports fields)
- Cultural activities; theatre, music

- Social life
- Union facilities
- Eat there; it is usually very cheap
- Types of students
- Is there a good percentage of International/ EU students who cannot easily go home at weekends and who share more in common with you?
- What sort of people go there?
- Local town/ city
- Have a good and critical look round
- What is it like by day and night?

Graham Johnstone  
Email: [grahamcjohnstone@yahoo.ie](mailto:grahamcjohnstone@yahoo.ie)

UCAS Information