

This guide provides an overview of the UCAS application process for applying to university, as well as information about student finance. **UCAS applications for 2026 entry open on: Tuesday 13 May 2025.** To apply, go to: www.ucas.com/students. Select 'Register' to create an account. When signed in, there will be an option to apply for 2028 entry. When you begin an application, select the option to apply via an institution (**not** as an individual), and type the buzzword **AstonAcademy2026** to link your application to the school. Save your progress as you go along. You can send your application from **2 September 2025**. **The deadline for applications to Music Conservatoire courses is 2 October 2025 and for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine/Science courses is 15 October 2024.** The deadline for other courses is **14 January 2026** but it is best to apply before this date. You cannot accidentally send your application to UCAS without it being approved by the Post 16 Team. The cost of a UCAS application is £28.95. This can apply for free if you are eligible for free school meals and can be reimbursed if you claim the Post-16 bursary.

Your application will contain the following information

- Your personal details: name, date of birth and gender
- Contact and residency details: nationality, address, mobile number, email address and whether you want to allow someone else to act or speak on your behalf to universities (*we recommend you select yes and state the name and relationship of one of your parents/carers*).
- Education: add all your previous qualifications (GCSEs and Cambridge National Level 1/2s) and grades with the month (June) and year (2024) of award. Add the qualifications you are currently taking with the grade listed as 'pending' and June 2026 as the date of award.
- Employment: list any paid part time work you have done with start and end dates.
- Nationality details: state your nationality.
- Supporting information: state whether you or your parents have ever lived or worked in the EU or Switzerland.
- English language skills: state whether English is your first language. If it is not, you will be asked for evidence of your English language skills.
- Finance and funding: when asked what will be your main source of funding for your studies, select *UK, ChI, IoM or EU student finance services* unless you want to pay your fees upfront without taking out any loans. We recommend applying for student finance so select the option above and your local council in the drop-down box below this question.
- Personal statement: outline why you are applying for your courses (see the next page for further advice)
- Choices: choose between 1 and 5 courses to apply for.
- Reference and Predicted Grades: this section is completed by your teachers, tutor and Post-16 team.

Tips for completing the application

1. When asked to select your **Area of Permanent Residency** – choose your local Council (usually Rotherham or Sheffield).
2. Under **Finance and funding**, select the place your parents pay council tax to (Rotherham or Sheffield).
3. When completing the **Education** section, enter all your GCSE and equivalent qualifications (ask your teachers/post 16 team for the exam board or use your GCSE certificates). Ask your tutor or Post-16 team for your Unique Learner Number (ULN).
4. Below are the correct names of vocational courses:
Applied Science: Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Cert (360) (2016 to Present) in (Applied Science)
Forensic and Criminal Investigation: Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma (720)
Single Health and Social Care: OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical National Extended Certificate in (Health & Social Care)
Double Health and Social Care: OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma in (Health & Social Care)
Single Sport and Physical Activity: OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity
Double Sport and Physical Activity: OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity
5. Please click 'Review and Send' once your application is complete and checked. This sends the application to school (not to UCAS). You will pay for the application at this point. Then drop into the Post-16 office to arrange a time to send the application. We cannot send the application to UCAS until you have paid for it.

Personal Statements

The personal statement is the section of your university application where you explain why you are applying for your chosen courses. You can write up to a maximum of 4000 characters to explain your reasons for applying and persuade the universities that you are a strong applicant for the courses.

In the personal statement, you respond to the three questions below. Remember to proofread your answers carefully so the spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct before submitting. It is a good idea to ask a parent, another student or teacher to check your statement once you have checked it and to also run it through an online grammar checker such as Grammarly. The personal statement is your chance to express why you should get a place on the course over other candidates so how you write it should be specific to you.

1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?

Explain in a few sentences why you are applying for the course(s). Your course choice(s) might be related to a career you would like to work in. If so, explain why you want to work in this career and how the course will help you achieve this career. Alternatively, you may want to explore a subject in more depth. If so, explain why the subject inspires your interest. Your answer should demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to the course, without being overstated or clichéd.

2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

Explain how your education has given you knowledge and skills that you need to succeed on the course. Consider the courses you are currently studying; are there topics within the courses that link directly to the course you are applying for? What skills will you need to succeed on your courses? (*consider clear written communication skills, verbal communication, research, data analysis, critical thinking, time management, referencing, ability to cope under pressure...*) How has your education helped you demonstrate/develop these skills? The more specific your examples, the better.

3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

Explain how other experiences have given you knowledge and skills that you need to succeed on the course. The experiences may include self-directed super-curricular learning, research, involvement in sports or social clubs, employment or work experience. You should explain what you learned from the experience, what skills you developed or what interest was sparked. Explain how the experience will help you succeed on the course(s) you are applying for.

Student Finance

Student finance applications should be completed by May 2026. Students can apply for a tuition fee loan, which covers the full cost of tuition and is paid directly to the university. All students are also eligible for a maintenance loan to cover living costs while at university, which is based on your parents' household income. To see how much you would be eligible to receive, search for **Student Finance England calculator**. For more information, search for **Student Finance England**. As schools do not have access to student finance applications and they are calculated based on household income, student finance applications should be completed with parents rather than in school. If there is any way we can help with the student finance application though, do let us know.

