

ST LOUIS GRAMMAR SCHOOL · CAREERS / CEIAG

Year 14 Information Evening for Parents & Students

UCAS – Student Finance – St Mary's University College Belfast – CAO – Higher Level Apprenticeships

2027 Entry Cycle · Mrs C McDonnell, Head of CEIAG



An Overview of our UCAS Information Evening



How UCAS works: choices, the application form and the personal statement



Tracking your application: offers, firm and insurance choices



Key dates and deadlines for the 2027 cycle



Student Finance NI



Support for students with SEN and disabilities



Results Day and Clearing



Alternative routes: St Mary's University College Belfast, CAO and HLAs



Staying informed



Post 16 Destinations

- A large majority of our students progress to university, most through UCAS, some through CAO (South of Ireland) or St Mary's University College Belfast.
- A smaller, growing number secure a Higher Level Apprenticeship, earning a wage while training toward a degree-level qualification.
- A few take a planned gap year, move into employment, or begin further training elsewhere.
- **CEIAG in Year 14 provides support for every one of these routes.**



UCAS

UK universities & colleges



CAO

Republic of Ireland



St Mary's UCB

Teaching & Liberal Arts

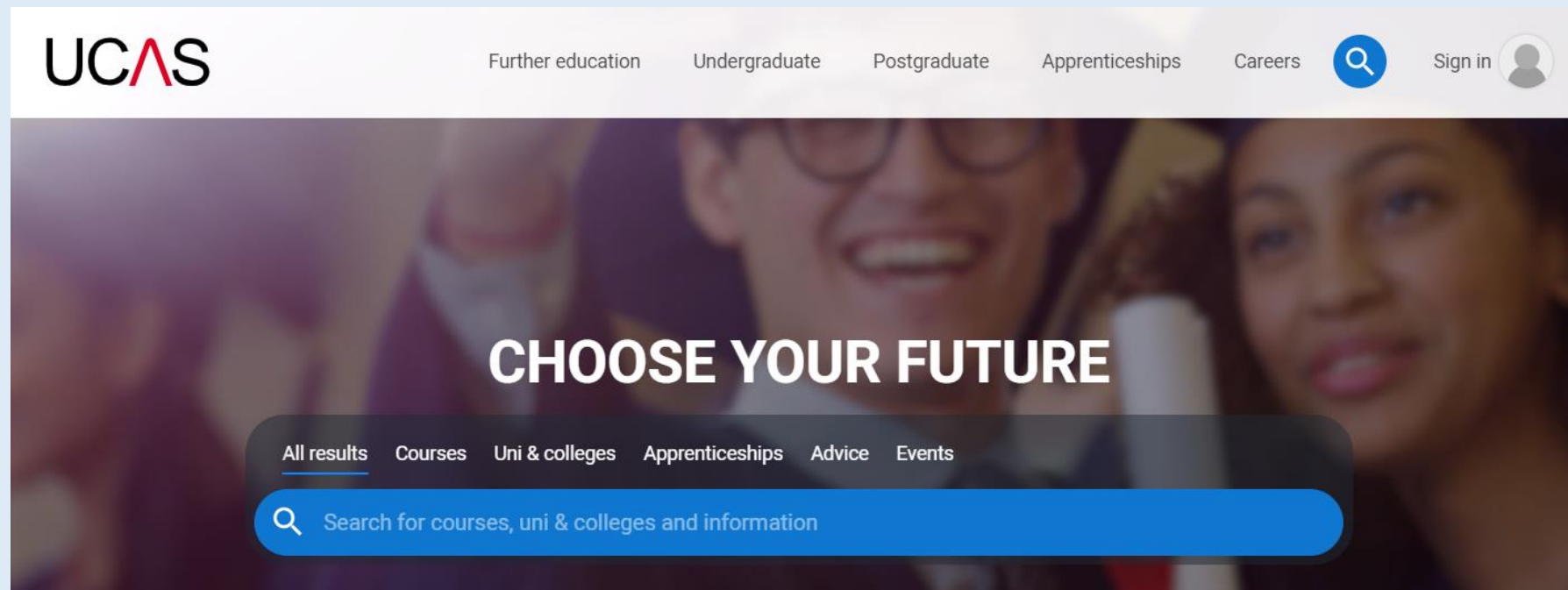


HLA

Higher Level Apprenticeship

What is UCAS?

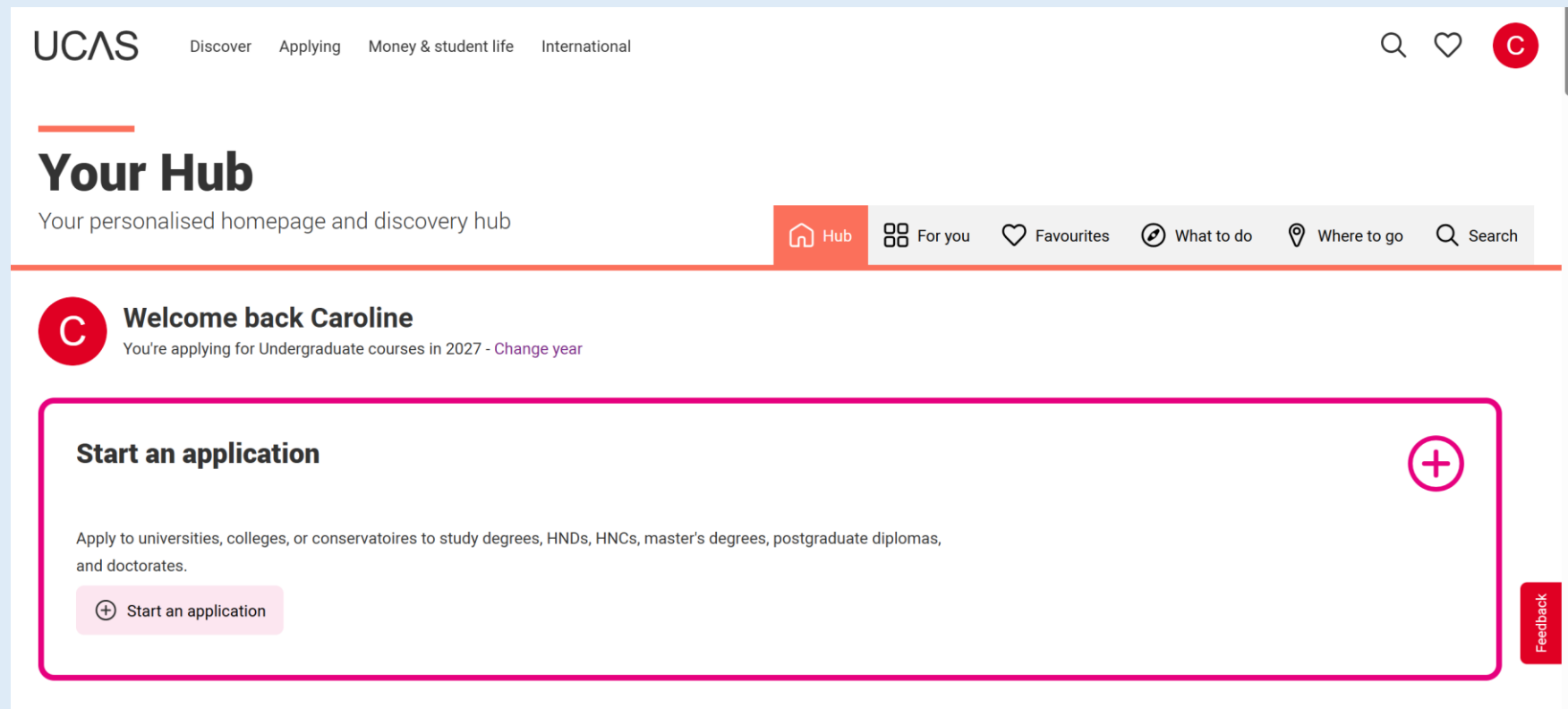
- UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) is the single online system which every application to a UK university must go through.
- **Application fee: £34.50**



ucas.com

UCAS Account Registration

- Students register for an account on their own UCAS Hub using a personal email.
- **Universities and UCAS communicate almost entirely by email.** Checking your inbox regularly matters from this point on.



Completing UCAS Form

Profile

Search for courses
Find courses and providers

Personal details
Name, age, title and gender
Start this section

Nationality details
Birthplace and nationalities
Start this section

Where you live
Tell us about your address history
Start this section

Contact details
Address, email and telephone
Start this section

Supporting information
So that providers know how to support you during your studies
Start this section

Finance & funding
Tell us how you'll fund your study
Start this section

Feedback

?

Education
Qualifications and periods of study
Start this section

Employment
Recent and relevant employment
Start this section

Search for courses
Find courses and providers

Personal Statement & References

Personal statement
Why do you want to study this subject?
Start this section

References
Provide details of your referee. This section will complete once your chosen referee completes your reference online.
Start this section

Reference status
☐ Referee details added

Feedback

?

- Students complete personal details, nationality, address, contact details, supporting information, finance and funding, education, employment, and personal statement.
- Majority of sections are short and factual.
- Names should match official documents exactly (passport, birth certificate). A small discrepancy can cause delays.

Tracking Progress of UCAS Application

The screenshot shows the UCAS application progress tracking interface. At the top, the UCAS logo is on the left, and navigation links for News, Events, Help and training, and Guides, resources and training are in the center. On the right, there are icons for search, a heart, and a red circle with a 'C'. Below the navigation bar, the main heading 'UCAS APPLICATION' is displayed, followed by '2027 Undergraduate application'. To the right of this, the 'Your Personal ID number' is shown as 2150512604. A dark blue breadcrumb bar contains a home icon and the text '/ UCAS application'. The main content area features a white box with the title 'Application status'. Inside this box, on the left, is the 'Centre information' section with a text prompt and an 'Add buzzword' button. To the right of this are five circular progress indicators for different stages: CHOICES (0/5), PROFILE (0%), PERSONAL STATEMENT (NOT STARTED), REFERENCE (ADD REFEREE), and a final 'Review and submit' button (0%). A red 'Feedback' button is positioned vertically to the right of the progress indicators. A blue circle with a question mark is located at the bottom right of the progress bar.

UCAS News Events Help and training Guides, resources and training

UCAS APPLICATION
2027 Undergraduate application

Your Personal ID number
2150512604

🏠 / UCAS application

Application status

Centre information
If you are applying through a school, college or centre, and have been given a buzzword, please enter it here (optional)

Add buzzword

0/5
CHOICES

0%
PROFILE

NOT STARTED
PERSONAL STATEMENT

ADD REFEREE
REFERENCE

0%
Review and submit >

Feedback

?

Finance & Funding

What will be your main source of funding for your studies? *

Select an option from the drop-down list to tell us how you expect to pay for your tuition fees. Most applicants from the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and those eligible EU students under the EU Settlement Scheme will be in the category UK, ChI, IoM, or EU student finance.

This guidance has been created based on [eligibility advice](#) from the Student Loans Company, and you should give your answer as guided. Universities and colleges are aware that EU applicants will be selecting the UK, ChI, IoM or EU student finance option.

If you require additional guidance, we recommend contacting [the UK Council for International Student Affairs](#).

UK, ChI, IoM or EU student finance services ▾

Student support arrangements

Tell us who will assess you for tuition fees, or how you will pay for your course. Please select the option which best describes your situation.

NIBD North Eastern

Need some help?

Questions from this page that you might need help with:

[What will be your main source of funding for your studies?](#)

[Student support arrangements](#)

Need some more general help with your application?

[Guide to completing your UCAS application](#) 

Feedback

- The form asks how tuition fees will be funded. For the vast majority of our students, this is Student Finance NI.
- Students do not need a confirmed place, or even a completed Student Finance application, to answer this section.

I have included here the details students should use to complete this section

Adding a Choice

- The 'Add choice' button stays available until all five choices are used. Choices can be added at different times, and they do not need to be entered all at once.
- **Some courses show extra information: admissions tests, interviews, or portfolio requirements**
 - worth checking when each choice is added.
- There is no need to list choices in order of priority.
- Choices are not visible to other universities. All 5 choices go via UCAS to universities at the same time.

Your **choices**

+
Add choice

Medicine (A100)
University of Anywhere (A99)
Location: Christ Church
Start date: 01 October 2022
Further details: *Not provided*
Point of entry: 1st year
Deferred entry: Yes
Live at home while studying: No
Criminal convictions declaration: Undeclared

INFO

You may need to take an admissions test

As part of the application process for this course you may need to sit the following admissions tests: Bio-Medical Admissions Test (BMAT)

There may be an assessment

You may be required to attend an interview or audition or provide a portfolio, essay or other piece of work to help the course tutor decide if you're suitable for this course.

Maximum of 5 Choices

5

maximum course choices

4

max. for Medicine, Dentistry
or Veterinary courses

1

max. for Oxford
or Cambridge

- **Aim for a realistic spread:**
 - 1–2 ambitious / aspirational choices
 - 2–3 choices well matched to AS grades already achieved
 - at least 1 safer choice with lower entry requirements

Your choices



Medicine (A100)

University of Anywhere (A99)

Location: Christ Church

Start date: 01 October 2022

Further details: *Not provided*

Point of entry: 1st year

Deferred entry: Yes

Live at home while studying: No

Criminal convictions declaration: Undeclared

INFO

1 You may need to take an admissions test

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Entry Requirements: QUB

Queen's University Belfast

STUDY RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ABOUT

HOME / COURSES / UNDERGRADUATE 2027 / ACTUARIAL SCIENCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT (BSC)

BSc | Undergraduate

ACTUARIAL SCIENCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

APPLY VIA UCAS REGISTER INTEREST

Entry year	Entry requirements	Attendance	UCAS Code	Placement
Academic Year 2027/28	A*AA/AAA + A in a 4th AS-level subject	4 years (Full-time)	N323	Yes

Overview Course content Modules **Entry requirements** Careers Fees and funding Apply

Entrance requirements

A level requirements

A*AA including Mathematics

OR

AAA + A (AS) including A-level Mathematics

- Every course page has its own Entry Requirements tab on the university website.
- This is where the exact grades and any admissions tests are listed
- Course Finder: qub.ac.uk/courses

Entrance requirements

A level requirements

A*AA including Mathematics

OR

AAA + A (AS) including A-level Mathematics

Entry Requirements: Ulster University

The screenshot shows the Ulster University website's Course Finder interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Global Students', 'Staff Links', 'Students', 'Staff', 'Portal', 'News', 'Events', and 'Ulster Homepage'. Below this is a search bar with the text 'Search across all Ulster University websites'. A filter bar shows options: 'Undergraduate', 'Postgraduate', 'Part-time', 'Online', 'Short Courses', and 'PG Research'. A banner image features a student in a white lab coat. Overlaid on the banner is a course card for 'Physiotherapy BSc (Hons)', an undergraduate full-time course with UCAS Code B160, starting in September 2027. The card includes an 'Apply' button and a 'Watch Course Videos' link. Below the banner, a filter bar shows: 'UCAS Code B160', 'Qualification Type(s) Bachelor of Science with Honours', 'Location Derry-Londonderry', 'Start Date September 2027', 'Study Mode Full-time', and 'Professional Recognition Industry Endorsed'. On the left, a sidebar lists navigation options: Overview, About, Campus, Modules, Standard Entry Conditions, Health Requirements, Careers and Opportunities, Professional Recognition, Fees and Funding, and Sustainability. The main content area shows 'A Level Grades' as BBB and 'A Level Subject Requirements' as 'One of the following: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, CCEA Single Award Life & Health Sciences or Double Award Life & Health Sciences (Grade BB)'. A blue arrow points from the 'One of the following:' text in the screenshot to a callout box on the right.

- Search by course name or subject on the Course Finder, every result links through to a full course page.
- Course Finder: ulster.ac.uk/courses

A Level Subject Requirements

One of the following;

Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, CCEA Single Award Life & Health Sciences or Double Award Life & Health Sciences (Grade BB).

Qualification Checker

Ulster University

Study with Ulster

Global Students

Staff Links

Students

Staff

Portal

News

Events

Ulster Homepage

Search across all Ulster University websites

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

Part-time

Online

Short Courses

PG Research

Study with Ulster > Entrance requirements

Qualification Checker

Check if a certain qualification is accepted at Ulster University.

Why Study in Northern Ireland?

Part-time study

Entrance requirements

Undergraduate Entry Requirements

Postgraduate Entry Requirements

Qualification Checker

Healthcare and Social Work Students - Fitness to Train

Postgraduate research

Online courses and eLearning

Short and Professional Development Courses

International students

Scholarships

Bursaries

Check if you can apply with your Level 3 qualifications

Using the lists below check if a certain qualification is accepted at Ulster University. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and decisions on which qualifications satisfy Ulster's entry requirements have been taken by the university's Qualification Advisory Group.

The University will continue to accept older legacy qualifications on older frameworks such as QCF and NQF.

If taking an older QCF or NQF qualification, please check with the admissions team regarding eligibility.

If you are studying a qualification that is on the RQF and not included in this page, please check with the admissions team about suitability.

Please provide a copy of the QAN and programme specification so that the qualification can be assessed.

Agriculture, Horticulture, Food and Related Studies

Animal Studies

Architecture, Building and Planning

Sport and Activity

Science

Queen's University Belfast

HELPFUL LINKS

STAFF

STUDENTS

ALUMNI

STUDY

RESEARCH

INTERNATIONAL

BUSINESS

ABOUT

Acceptable Qualification Combinations*

A-level 1	A-level 2	A-level 3	✓
A-level 1	A-level 2	BTEC/OCR equivalent to one A-level (L3)	✓
A-level 1	BTEC/OCR equivalent to two A-levels (L3)		✓
BTEC/OCR equivalent to one A-level (L3)		BTEC/OCR equivalent to two A-levels (L3)	✓
BTEC/OCR equivalent to three A-levels (L3)			✓
A-level 1	BTEC/OCR equivalent to one A-level (L3)	BTEC/OCR equivalent to one A-level (L3)	✗
BTEC/OCR equivalent to one A-level (L3)	BTEC/OCR equivalent to one A-level (L3)	BTEC/OCR equivalent to one A-level (L3)	✗

Researching courses

Year 14 Information Evening

14

Personal Statement

- The final section in the UCAS application.
- Three questions, 4,000 characters total (minimum 350 per section):
 - Why do you want to study this course or subject?
 - Your motivation
 - How have your qualifications and studies helped you prepare?
 - Aspects of A Levels studies are discussed
 - Wider reading and learning should be included
 - What else have you done to prepare, and why is it useful?
 - This is where work experience and extra-curricular activities can be discussed.

Why do you want to study this course or subject? *
This is your opportunity to showcase your passion and knowledge of your chosen subject area and to demonstrate to universities and colleges why they are a good fit for you and your future ambitions.

Overall character count
0 / 4000

Please use a minimum of 350 characters in this section (350 needed)

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject? *
This is your chance to shout about the relevant or transferable skills you've gained from your education and highlight your understanding of how they will help you succeed in this subject area.

Please use a minimum of 350 characters in this section (350 needed)

What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful? *
This is your chance to reflect on any other activities you have undertaken outside of your education or personal experiences which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section is likely to be deeply personal to you, so anything you include should be meaningful and relevant to you.

Please use a minimum of 350 characters in this section (350 needed)

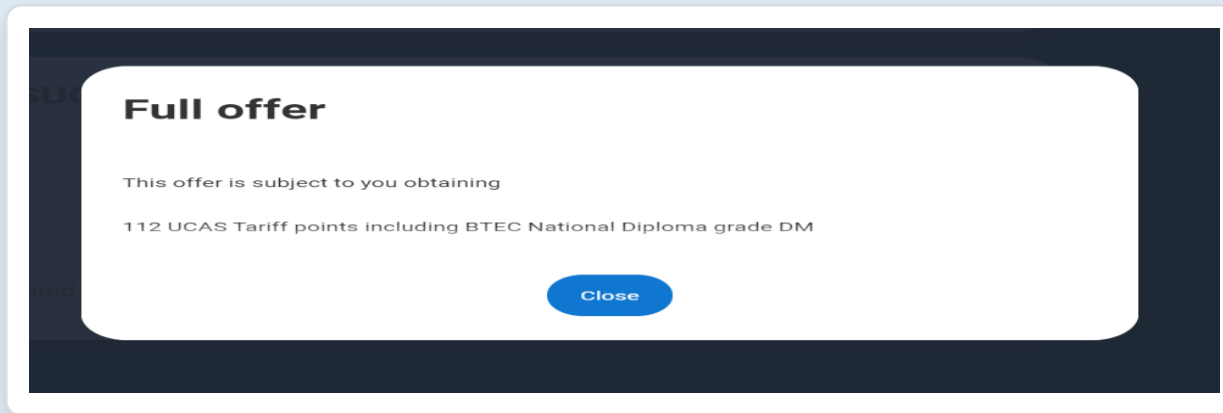
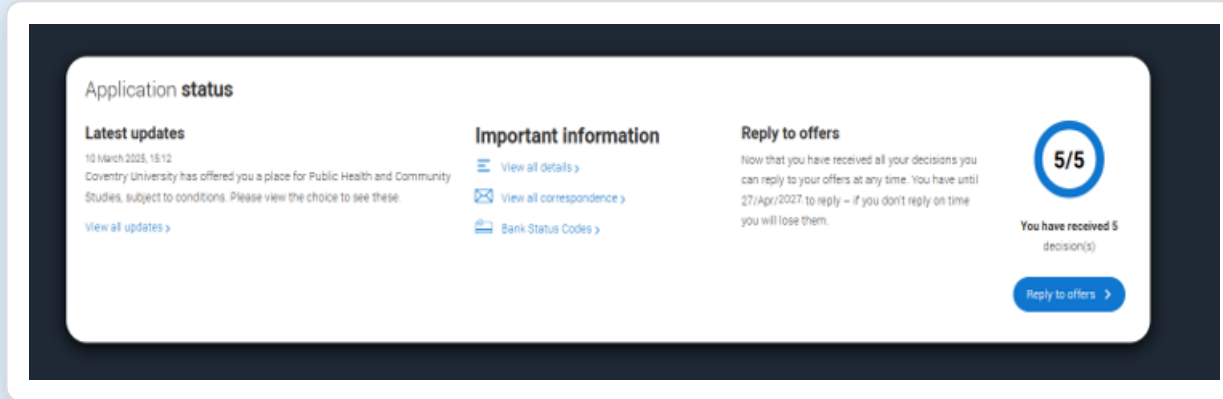
- A plagiarism checker runs on every statement submitted. AI tools may help with structure, but the writing must be the student's own work and personal statement.

Fee & Submission

- Three steps:
 - check the full application
 - agree the terms and conditions
 - pay and submit.
- Fee: **£34.50** by card
- A fee waiver is available for students who have been entitled to Free School Meals and for eligible young people leaving care

The image shows two overlapping screenshots of the UCAS application process. The top screenshot is titled 'Pay and submit' and asks 'Which payment option should I choose?'. It includes a progress bar at the top with three steps: 1. Check your application, 2. Terms and conditions, and 3. Pay and submit. The bottom screenshot is also titled 'Pay and submit' and asks 'Which payment option should I choose?'. It includes a progress bar at the top with three steps: 1. Check your application, 2. Terms and conditions, and 3. Pay and submit. The bottom screenshot also shows a section for 'Paying for your application' with an 'Invoice' button.

Tracking Your Application



- UCAS Hub shows live status for every choice, offers, rejections all in one place.
- **Offers come in two forms:**
 - **Unconditional:** the place on the course is secured outright.
 - **Conditional:** the place on the course depends on meeting stated grades shown clearly on the offer.
- Replies to every offer are due by a set date once all decisions are in.

Firm and Insurance Choices

CONFIRM YOUR CHOICES
2026 undergraduate application

Home / Overview / Confirm Your Choices

Select your firm choice
Note: You are making a commitment when you choose a firm choice. If the offer is conditional, you are agreeing to take up the place if you meet the conditions of the offer. If the offer is unconditional, you are agreeing that you will attend the course at the university or college.

Your choices

- Psychology with Neuroscience with Foundation Year (C833)**
Keele University (K12)
Location: Van 216
Start date: 01 January 2027
The university or college has offered you a place subject to conditions.
This offer is subject to you achieving:
A minimum of 200 UCAS Tariff points.
See www.ucas.com/students/ucas-tariff-points for Tariff points.
[Make this my firm choice](#)
- Economics, Politics and International Relations (LL21)**
Oxford Brookes University (O88)
Location: Van 216
Start date: 01 January 2026
The university or college has offered you a place subject to conditions.
This offer is subject to you achieving:
A minimum of 100 UCAS Tariff points.
See www.ucas.com/students/ucas-tariff-points for Tariff points.
[Make this my firm choice](#)
- Zoology (C300)**
University of Leeds (L22)
Location: Van 216
Start date: 10 September 2026
The university or college has offered you a place subject to conditions.
This offer is subject to you achieving:
A minimum of 200 UCAS Tariff points.
See www.ucas.com/students/ucas-tariff-points for Tariff points.
[Make this my firm choice](#)
- Public Health and Community Studies (LL45)**
Cranfield University (C85)
Location: 5
Start date: 01 January 2027
The university or college has offered you a place subject to conditions.
This offer is subject to you achieving:
A minimum of 200 UCAS Tariff points.
See www.ucas.com/students/ucas-tariff-points for Tariff points.
[Make this my firm choice](#)

Decline all offers
You may then be able to add an extra choice or try to secure a place through Clearing.
[Decline all offers](#)

- **Firm choice:**

- The student's first preference. Accepting a conditional firm offer is a commitment to attend that course if the conditions are met.

- **Insurance choice:**

- An optional back-up, used only if the firm choice falls through. Its entry requirements should be lower than the firm choice.

- This decision can be made once all offers are in (March/April).

KEY DATES

2027 Entry Cycle



** Mrs McDonnell will confirm exact dates with students. They will also be provided via the Careers Bulletin and Year Group TEAMS.*



Student Finance NI

www.studentfinancenl.co.uk



Tuition Fee Loan

Covers course tuition fees:

NI: £4,985

Rest of UK: £9,790

Not means-tested, all students can apply.

Paid directly to the university.



Maintenance Loan/Grant

For living costs.

The Grant is means-tested against household income.

The Loan is not means-tested.

Paid directly to the student each term.



When to apply

Applications open in spring (Mar/Apr) for the following September.

Apply as early as possible, even before a place is confirmed.

Apply every year whilst at university.



Advice for Students with SEN Moving from School to University

Students with SEN, disabilities or additional study needs can access **two** types of support at university:

- **Academic reasonable adjustments** eg extra time in exams, accessible room or consideration for spelling and grammar (internal)
- **Funded disability support eg Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)** that can cover Assistive Technology equipment and software or NMH Support Providers (external)
- Students need to tick the Disability Box on their UCAS application.



Funded Disability Support (DSA)

- Students need to apply via www.studentfinancenl.co.uk and will receive a **DSA1 form** via email if approved.
- **UU Needs Assessment Centre** also receive this form and will match the student with a freelance Needs Assessor, who will meet to discuss the student's individual challenges and needs.
- They will produce a report, that UU will check prior to submitting to the Education Authority for funding approval.
- The student will receive a **DSA2 form** via email with confirmation of funded support and instructions to arrange delivery of any AT equipment.
- **Do not wait** until after exam results to start this process – if students decide to go to another university, this support can go with them!



Results Day & Clearing

- If grades meet the firm choice, the place is confirmed automatically by the university.
- If grades do not meet the firm choice but meet the insurance choice, then the place is confirmed automatically by the university.
- Sometimes the university will offer a different course.
- Check if there is a deadline to reply by – this will be on your UCAS Track
 - **UU gave offer holders with confirmed places a deadline to accept their place by Thursday 27 August.**
- If grades don't meet firm or insurance courses - Clearing opens and courses in Clearing can be applied to.

Alternative routes

- St Mary's University College/CAO/Higher Level Apprenticeships



St Mary's University College Belfast

- A separate application system, not through UCAS.
 - Direct entry via St Mary's website
- Offers Bachelor of Education (BEd) and BA Liberal Arts degrees, training primary and post-primary teachers.

BEd (Hons) Primary Degree Programme (Primary School Teacher)

Main subject study: either English, History, Irish, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Religious Studies, or Science

BEd (Hons) Post-Primary Degree Programme (Post-Primary School Teacher)

Main subject study: either Business Studies, Mathematics, Religious Studies, or Technology & Design

BA (Hons) Liberal Arts Degree



St Mary's University College Belfast

- Students can apply for more than one BEd and more than one BA choice
 - listed in order of preference
 - this order matters when places are decided in August.
- Applications open: 1 October 2026
- Closing date: **Wednesday 20th January 2027**
- **Cost: free to apply**

CAO (Central Applications Office) Studying in the South of Ireland

10

maximum course choices

€35

discounted fee
(before 20 Jan 2027)

€50

standard fee
(before 1 Feb 2027)

- The single biggest difference from UCAS: choices are ranked in strict order of preference, and there is no conditional offer system.
- Places are awarded on preference order once results are known, so the order a student lists courses in genuinely decides the outcome.
- Applications open: **5th November 2026**
- Apply before **20th January 2027**: there is a discounted fee €35
- Normal closing date for online applications is **1 February 2027**: fee of €50

Higher Level Apprenticeships

- Earn a salary while working toward a degree-level qualification, no tuition fees.
- Combines paid employment with structured study, usually one day a week at a university or college.
- **Apply via:**
 - UCAS (some HLAs are listed as course choices)
 - Individual university or employer websites
 - Workplus (workplus.app), opens in January
 - Job vacancy workshops e.g. Indeed.co.uk

10

SLG students secured a HLA
last year

Keeping Informed



Microsoft Teams

Year group TEAMS:
Careers channel



SLG Careers Bulletin

- weekly bulletin
 - posted on the school app
- Covering:
- events
 - open days
 - apprenticeship opportunities



School website

Careers section has resources
and guidance documents for
reference

Thank you

Questions are welcome any time.

Mrs C McDonnell · Head of CEIAG & LLW
St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena

