



UCAS APPLICATIONS

Student & Tutor Pack

Entry 2009

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Introduction – The UCAS Procedure

As you will be aware, the UCAS procedure is all carried online.

As a tutor, you are responsible for providing help and guidance to your tutee(s) in the completion of their application form.

At the end of the last academic year, each Yr12 student attended a HE Conference Day, part of which involved registering with UCAS online.

This ensured that each Yr12 student had a Username and Password. Please check the last page of this booklet to see if your tutee has registered with UCAS.

Using their Username and Password should have been actively engaged in filling in the application form online.

The sections are:

About You > Qualifications > Courses > Employment > Personal Statement

Students were also given exemplar personal statements to assist them in creating their own.

As a form tutor, you are also required to write a reference for your tutee(s). You can only do this once your tutee(s) has:

- 1) Collected reference forms from the Post16 area of the library (one for each main subject teacher). An example of this is contained in this booklet.
- 2) Handed the forms to their subject teachers
- 3) Retrieved the forms and handed them to you / Have asked the teachers to forward the forms on to you.

As a form tutor, you are required to write a reference of your tutee(s) based on the information obtained on the reference request forms. Please see the, “How to write an open reference”, section of this booklet.

Once the reference has been completed, email this to myself at aat@leighacademy.org.uk and your college principal and vice principal. At the same time your tutee(s) must submit their completed UCAS application form.

I will only finally submit your tutee(s) application to UCAS once they have paid the £15 UCAS application fee. This needs to be paid into finance and the receipt submitted to me.

Important Dates

September 2008	Application processing begins.
15 October 2008	Last date for receipt of on-time applications to Oxford University, University of Cambridge and courses in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science or veterinary medicine.
15 January 2009	Deadline for on-time applications from UK and EU students to be guaranteed equal academic consideration.
26 February 2009	Applicants can refer themselves through Extra for the first time.
31 March 2009	Universities and colleges should aim to have sent decisions on all applications received by 15 January.
5 May 2009	Outstanding replies from applicants declined by default where the last decision from universities and colleges was received by 31 March (except those living outside the EU, those governed by the Route B timetable or Extra).
8 May 2009	Outstanding decisions from universities and colleges on applications received by 15 January are rejected by default.
5 June 2009	Outstanding replies from applicants declined by default where the last decision from universities and colleges was received by 8 May (except those governed by Route B timetable or Extra).
30 June 2009	Final deadline for receipt of applications for immediate consideration. Those received after this date held for Clearing.
6 July 2009	Outstanding replies from applicants declined by default where the last decision from universities and colleges was received by 12 June (except those living outside the EU whose last decision reached UCAS after 8 May, those governed by Route B timetable or Extra).
	Last date for applicants to refer themselves through Extra.
14 July 2009	Outstanding replies declined by default where last decision received by 12 June (all applicants except Extra).
20 July 2009	Outstanding decisions on applications received by 30 June and Extra referrals rejected by default.
31 July 2009	Outstanding replies declined by default where last decision received by 20 July (except those living outside the EU).
5 August 2009	Publication of SQA results. Start of Scottish Clearing vacancy information service.
6 August 2009	All outstanding replies declined by default.

20 August 2009	Publication of GCE results. Start of English, Welsh and Northern Irish Clearing vacancy information service.
21 September 2009	Last date for receipt of applications for 2009 entry.

Applications through Route B

12 February 2009	First date UCAS send applications for art and design Route B Round 1 to universities and colleges.
26 February 2009	Applicants can refer themselves through Extra for the first time.
6 March 2009	Advisory closing date for applications to reach UCAS.
24 March 2009	Last date for receipt of applications to be considered in first round of interviews.
30 March 2009	First date UCAS send applications for art and design Route B Round 2 to universities and colleges.
8 May 2009	Outstanding decisions for the first round rejected by default.
22 May 2009	First date UCAS send applications for art and design Route B Round 3 to universities and colleges.
5 June 2009	Outstanding decisions for the second round rejected by default.
11 June 2009	Last date for receipt of applications for immediate consideration. Any applications received after this date are held for Clearing.
6 July 2009	Outstanding decisions rejected by default. Last date for applicants to refer themselves through Extra.

Extra and Clearing

If you have applied through UCAS and are not holding any offers, you may be able to apply through Extra for another course. Extra allows you to apply for courses with vacancies between the end of February and the end of June. In Extra, you apply for one course at a time using the Track service on this website.

To use Extra you need to have:

- * already made five choices;
- * received decisions from all these choices; and
- * either had no offers or declined all the offers you have received.

If you decline your offers and add an Extra choice, you will not be able to accept any of your original choices later.

If you become eligible for Extra, a button will appear on your Track screen which you can use to apply for a course in Extra. Course Search will tell you which courses have vacancies - an 'x' will be displayed next to any available courses. Before you apply, UCAS recommend that you contact the university or college to make sure that they can consider you.

Check Course Search to see if there is an Entry Profile for the course because it can provide useful advice about what the university or college looks for in their students as well as case studies from students who have taken the course.

Choose a course and enter the details on your Track screen. UCAS will then send your application to the university or college.

It makes sense to do some careful research and seek guidance on your Extra choice(s).

If you applied for high-demand courses in your original application and were unsuccessful, you could consider related or alternative subjects.

If you are made an offer, you can choose whether or not to accept it. If you decide to accept an offer, you are committed to it, which means that you cannot apply anywhere else. You will need to reply to your offer by the date shown on Track.

If you decline an offer, or the university or college turns you down, you can apply for a different course through Extra (time permitting). Your Extra button on Track will be reactivated.

If you do not get an offer in Extra, don't worry! You will be able to apply through our Clearing process, which gives you another opportunity to apply for vacancies.

Clearing is used by applicants who have not managed to secure a place at university or college for the current year. It begins in August and it can help people to find suitable vacancies on higher education courses: more than 30,000 people gain a place during Clearing every year.

If you are flexible and you have reasonable exam results, there is still a good chance you will find another course.

You are eligible for Clearing if you have applied in the current application year and if:

- * you have not withdrawn your application;
- * you hold no offers; or
- * your offers have not been confirmed because you have not met the conditions (eg you have not achieved the required grades); or
- * you have declined your offers or not responded by the due date; or
- * your offers have not been confirmed, and you have declined any alternative offers from the same university; or
- * you have applied after 30 June (11 June for Route B art and design courses). If we received your application after these dates, we will not have sent it to any universities and colleges.

Course vacancies in Clearing are published on this site from mid-August until late-September. Further information about how to apply will be available nearer the time.

Payment

UCAS charge a one off administration fee of £15 to process each application. Completed applications will not be submitted by AAT or Principals until students have paid their £15 into the Finance Office and produced their receipt.

The UCAS Tariff

The UCAS tariff allows you to see if your achievements meet the qualification requirements for a particular course.

For example, a C grade at A level is (currently) equal to 80 points on the tariff. So if a course asks for 160 points as a minimum entry requirement, you'll need the equivalent of two C grades at A level to apply.

GCE and VCE

Grade					Tariff points
GCE & AVCE Double Award	A level with additional AS (9 units)	GCE A level and AVCE	GCE AS Double Award	GCE AS & AS VCE	
AA					240
AB					220
BB					200
BC	AA				180
	AB				170
CC					160
	BB				150
CD	BC				140
DD	CC	A	AA		120

The tariff covers A-levels, AS-levels, and BTEC qualifications, and new qualifications are being added all the time. It is important that you do your research before applying for any course at University.

Liaise with your subject staff to find out what your predicted A2 results are.

Use the UCAS website to locate the entry requirements for the course you are applying for.

Institute of Financial Services

Grade		Tariff points
Certificate in Financial Studies*	Diploma in Financial Studies**	
A	A	60
B	B	50
C	C	40
D	D	30
E	E	20

Personal Statement

Many universities don't interview applicants, so the only information they have about you is your UCAS form. Most of the UCAS form only contains your details, the bits the universities are interested in is your grades, your references and your personal statement. The personal statement is the only bit you really have control over, so this is your chance to present a good image to the admissions tutor, even if your grades don't really reflect that image.

If you are applying to an oversubscribed university course, and everyone applying is likely to have good grades, the personal statement is the only thing that tells you apart from other applicants, so you want to try and make yours as good as possible.

When the admissions and subject tutors look at your personal statement, they are likely to be asking two main questions:

1. Do we want this student on this course?
2. Do we want this student at this university?

These can be broken down into a number of easier to answer questions:

Is the student suited to the course that they are applying for?

Does the student have the necessary qualifications and qualities for the course?

Is the student conscientious, hardworking and unlikely to drop out?

Will the student do their best and cope with the demands of the course?

Can the student work under pressure?

Will the student be able to adjust to their new environment at university?

What are their communication skills like?

Are they dedicated to this course and have researched it well?

Do they have a genuine interest in the subject and a desire to learn more about it?

These are the sort of questions you need to answer in your personal statement. Unfortunately you cannot answer them directly, you need to provide evidence and make it sound believable.

Ultimately, admissions tutors are human too, and may well have hundreds of personal statements to shift through, so even if you think you've answered all these questions really well you may still be unlucky. There are other techniques you can use to make your statement stand out and appeal to admissions tutors, but remember they are all different and may have different ideas about what they look for in a prospective student. Some of these techniques are discussed in the personal goals section.

Notes about yourself

Now you have some idea of why you're writing a personal statement you need to think about what you're going to write in it. You don't need to start thinking about the wording or structure yet, just get down some ideas of the things you think you could put down.

The best way to do this is to use a set of headings and write bullet points about how you relate to these headings. Here are some headings to think about.

What you want to study at university and why
Specific aspects of the courses that interest you
Examples of coursework you have completed
Practical work you have enjoyed
Things you have read related to the subject area
Work experience or voluntary work in this area
Conferences you have attended
Personal experiences which lead to the decision to take this subject
Where you hope a degree in this subject will lead.

Experiences which show you are a reliable and responsible person

Part-time job

Business enterprise

Community and charity work

Sixth form committee

Helping out at school events and open days.

Young Enterprise, World Challenge, Duke of Edinburgh award, Asdan Award Debating societies and what you've gained from these experiences.

Your interests and skills

What you like to do in your free time

Sport and leisure activities

Subjects you study which are not examined

Musical instrument which you play

Languages which you speak

Prizes you have won or positions achieved in your interests

Why you're taking a Gap year (if you are)

Why you want to take a gap year

What you plan to do

How this may relate to your course

If you're not taking a gap year avoid this section. If you are it could still be left out, but you may be asked why you're taking it at an interview.

You should now have lots of bullet points about yourself, all of which will be useful in preparing your personal statement. Don't worry too much if you don't seem to have done much off the list, just think about things you've done which show all your good qualities, or could be written as to show your good qualities.

The important thing is that you have a good reason for why you want to study the course, it doesn't matter if the reason sounds stupid at the moment - you can work on the language later. All admissions tutors will be looking for people who are enthusiastic and passionate about the subjects they want to study, so make sure you really are. If you're choosing this course just because you can't think of anything better to do, that's not a good enough reason, and maybe you should consider looking for a course you enjoy more.

Now you've got some ideas together it's time to think about turning them into a personal statement - almost.

Saying why you want to take your course is possibly the most important part of your personal statement. You can have perfect grades, great extra curricular activities and be a really great person, but if admissions tutors feel you aren't committed to your course, you won't get a place.

Hopefully the notes you have written for the section above have already given you a good idea of what to write about why you want to take your course. If not then you should at least be sure you want to take that subject - writing a personal statement is a lot of work, and you don't really want to get to the end of it and decide you want to study a different subject, so before you go much further be sure you have chosen the right subject for you. Remember you don't actually have to choose the course you want to take yet, just have a rough idea of the subject area or areas you might be interested in.

Now you need to think about exactly why you want to take this subject. Even if you are 100% sure that this is the course for you, you still need to get this idea across to the admissions tutors. If they accept you, you are going to be studying this course for at least the next three years, and you need to convince them that you are committed to it. Have a think about exactly why the subject appeals to you, and write down as much as you can about it. It doesn't matter if you only scribble a few notes, you can modify them before you write the statement, the important thing is you can be sure of the key reasons why you want to take the subject. Write down as many as you can, if you have too many you can always just pick the best. Other than that I can't give you much more advice - only you know exactly why you want to take your chosen course, but bear in mind, if you can't think of any good reasons - should you really be taking that subject?

You need to use language which makes you sound enthusiastic about your courses and an interesting person. If you're still wondering what sort of language to use look at existing personal statements, prospectuses and on the web to find sentences which you think fit your views.

University prospectuses are a good place to look, find your course, see how it is described and see if you can work anything similar into your personal statement. Write down a list of words or sentences you would like to use like this:

to gain greater understanding of the world around you.
sends a signal to prospective employers and graduate schools
students of economics become problem-solvers.
the fact is economics affects our daily lives.
a challenging and diverse discipline
develops analytical skills, quantitative skills, research skills

Don't copy the sentences you find outright, change them or write your own sentence in a similar style. If you can't find any sentences you like try and write your own - it is a personal statement after all.

Most statements are written in an essay format, but you don't have to do yours like this. I wouldn't recommend writing it as one large block of text. Even though you can fit more words in, this just makes it hard to read. You could however use headings rather than write in an essay style. I haven't seen many statements which do this but if you think yours would work better like that then do it.

A starting guideline is to spend half the statement talking about the course and why you want to take it, and spend the other half writing about yourself and your own abilities, though one you get into it this can be easily changed. Another approach is to split up your notes into a few categories and write a paragraph on each category. For example:

Paragraph 1: Introduction to my subject, the parts I'm interested in and why

Paragraph 2: What I had done related to my subject which wasn't on the UCAS form

Paragraphs 3 and 4: work experience and things I had done in school

Paragraph 5: My interests outside of school (also contained my responsibilities)

Paragraph 6: My goal of going to university and closing comment

Again this is only a guideline, and depending on yourself and your course you may want to change things. The last option is to simply find a statement you like and use it as a template. Take its structure and write your personal statement using this structure, being careful that you don't use any of the language mentioned there.

Spend most of your time on the start and finish of the personal statement. A good start will interest the reader and cause them to read the statement properly rather than just scanning it. A good ending will mean the reader remembers what you wrote, and hopefully will recommend you. In my opinion it's a good idea to start with why you want to take your subject, and finish with why you want to go to university or what you want to do next.

Writing the statement

Ok, hopefully you now have your notes ready, you've thought about how you want your language and structure and the goals of your statement. You are almost ready to start writing it, here are a few things to bear in mind before you start.

Remember the aims of a personal statement. You need to show the admissions tutor why you should be accepted on your chosen course at your chosen university. In addition to what you say in your statement, the language you use and the way it is laid out will be judged as well.

Remember you only have a limited amount of space, but don't let this put you off too much. A long personal statement can easily be trimmed down. It's harder to increase the length of a short personal statement, but if yours is too short don't worry. There is no requirement that you fill the entire space, it's better to have a short and well written statement than a long and irrelevant one.

Be positive and interesting, if there is something you are unhappy about, try to portray it in an attractive light. You can find more information about how to write about bad things in your personal statement [here](#) (link)

Before you go, have a look at the websites and prospectuses of universities you are applying for, and see if they say anything about writing personal statements. This information would probably be written by the admissions tutors, and would give you a much better idea of what sort of things to put down.

Now you're ready to go. You want to write in a way that is informative, interesting and useful. Along with writing about what you've done, try and explain why you did it, or what you think you learned from it. For example:

I currently have a part time job and this has taught me much about teamwork, responsibility and time management in the workplace.

Ok from this point your on your own, move on to the next section when you've got a complete (draft) statement.

After writing the statement

Ok, by now you should have a pretty much complete first draft of your statement. Don't worry if it sounds disjointed, you've missed bits out or it's too long or too short, you can correct things like this later.

First read through what you've written slowly and try to read it from someone else's point of view. Make sure it's easy to read and not confusing, make sure you've said everything you want to say and not under or oversold yourself - if you are confused by reading your own personal statement, it is likely anyone else reading it will be too.

Next get other people to read it, mainly your family, friends, teachers and anyone else who you think will be able to give you a good opinion. As well as checking for spelling and grammar mistakes, they will be able to tell you if they think there is anything you've missed out.

Hopefully by looking at your statement again and showing to other people you should have a whole bunch of changes to make to your original statement. Before making these changes, save a copy of your original statement so you can go back to it if you need too. Keep making changes, showing people your statement, and making more changes - it's not unusual for people to have done 10-20 drafts (though many do much less) before they are happy with their statement.

UCAS Tutor Reference

As a TUTOR you will need to provide a general reference for each student in your form group who is looking to make an application to university.

The reference will be based on the information, which will be provided to you by your tutees SUBJECT teachers. This will include a predicted grade for that subject.

The students take the reference request form to their MAIN teacher for each subject, who will then fill in the form. The form can then either be sent to the form tutor who will be writing the reference OR handed back to the student.

It is the responsibility of the FORM tutor then to collate the information, write the reference with predicted grades and email onto myself.

An example of a reference request form follows the information in this section along with an example of a reference written for a former student.

Each reference begins with a standard opening paragraph which is as follows:

The Leigh Technology Academy was inaugurated in September 2007 following 16 successful years as The Leigh City Technology College. It has a current post 16 roll of 300. It is an all-ability, learning organisation of secondary education funded by the Kent Education. Kent maintains a grammar school system based upon an entry exam. The Leigh Technology Academy has traditionally taken on-roll students who choose not to attend, or who were not accepted by, local grammar schools. As such the ability profile has been skewed to the lower end of the ability range. This is substantially changing as it becomes the school of choice for parents and students and as educational indicators continue to rise to well above national averages. The number of students gaining university places has steadily increased, this from a student body where there has been traditionally little family history of entry into Higher Education.

Practical advice on writing informative references

UCAS references are designed to provide universities and colleges with an informed and academic assessment of an applicant's suitability for further study. It is the only part of the application that the applicants do not write themselves. Universities and colleges are looking for the following key facts about a student:

- * The student's academic performance in their post-16 education
- * Their potential for academic success in higher education
- * Why the course they have chosen is suited to them
- * Any personal qualities which will benefit them at university, such as skills, aptitude, enthusiasm
- * What they can bring to the university, such as extra-curricular activities and interests.

Read the whole application so that you can understand the applicant's intended career direction, chosen courses and preferred places of study. When writing your reference, you do not need to repeat any of the information that the student has given, unless you want to comment on it. Please note that you should not include a direct reference to any particular university or college, because at this stage we do not allow them to see the identity of the other institutions to which an applicant has applied and they will all read your reference.

The most important part of your reference is your assessment of the applicant's suitability for the higher education courses they have chosen. We recommend that you consider including the following points.

- * Proposed career ambitions, attitude, motivation and commitment. If relevant, your opinion on their suitability for this career path
- * Past achievement and current activities, with particular reference to subjects relating to the courses for which they are applying
- * Any supplementary information about their qualifications and study which they have not already described in their application
- * Relevant curriculum enrichment and related skills such as work experience, voluntary work
- * If applicable, how your school or college is involved in Widening Access, Gifted and Talented initiatives or Partnerships for Progression. If applicants have mentioned any of these activities in their personal statement, your comments on their involvement may also be helpful
- * Any commitments (for example, January AS assessments) that might prevent the applicant from attending an interview on a particular day
- * Any factors, such as personal circumstances, that may have affected, or might affect their performance. Information about any special needs and other requirements. Do not give information about an applicant's health or disability without their agreement.

Students are asked to state any disabilities or special needs in a separate part of the application. Students are not obliged to disclose such information on their application; however, early disclosure gives the universities and colleges more time to prepare and arrange the support that a student may need. Some referees may wish to mention the student's learning difference or disability in an academic context, such as how they currently cope at school or college.

Many courses provide details of the selection criteria and attributes they are looking for in their prospectuses, websites, or Entry Profiles. This may be a helpful starting point, particularly if you are constructing a reference for a course that you have little prior experience in recommending an applicant for.

When writing a reference for any applicant, including those outside the UK, please remember that, under the Data Protection Act, the applicant can ask for a copy of the reference and any other personal information that we have about them.

If the application, including the reference, has any information missing, or has any false or misleading information, we and the universities and colleges have the right to cancel the application and withdraw any offers without reimbursing the application fee.

Predicted grades

You only need to enter information in this section if the applicant is currently studying or is awaiting results. Each pending qualification that the applicant has entered on their application will be listed in the reference section. Please select / enter the predicted grade for each qualification listed. If you cannot provide predicted grades, this section can be left blank.

It is helpful if referees are honest and clear about particular subjects students are having difficulty with. If a low predicted grade is accompanied by a glowing reference it can be difficult to see the relationship between the two. Therefore it is useful if referees are able to say in the reference why a student is achieving this grade, whether a higher grade is within their grasp and whether they have the potential and/or motivation to reach this higher grade. This can help universities and colleges take into account a student's potential as well as their previous performance.

If a student's predicted grade is not a reflection of their true abilities, it is useful to state why the student has been disadvantaged and what their intellectual potential ought to allow them to get. This is also true in cases where a student is likely to improve in the time between the application being made and the exams taken.

How to provide the reference

The reference should be written using a standard word-processing package and should not exceed 4,000 characters (this includes spaces) or 47 lines (this includes blank lines), whichever is the shorter. Unfortunately, you cannot use bold, italics, underlining or foreign characters (such as á, ë, ð) in the reference. If these types of formatting or foreign characters are used, they will be removed from the text when your reference is pasted onto the application and saved.

If you are entering the reference into the application system, we recommend that you save your contact details before adding your reference. Please make sure that you save your reference at regular intervals because the application system will time-out after 35 minutes of inactivity and any unsaved material will be lost.

Checklist

- ✓ Your tutee(s) has/have registered with UCAS online and have log in details regardless of whether they are going to university or not.
- ✓ You and your tutee(s) are aware that the deadline for UCAS submission is December 15th.
- ✓ Your tutee(s) is/are aware that before their application form is sent off they must pay the £15 UCAS application fee into the Finance Office. They must keep their receipt as evidence of payment.
- ✓ Your tutee(s) is/are actively engaged in completing sections of the application form.
- ✓ You have checked through the personal statement of your tutee(s)
- ✓ You are aware of the courses that your tutee(s) is/are applying for and have given guidance
- ✓ Your tutee(s) has/have collected reference request forms from the Library and have distributed them to their subject teachers.
- ✓ Your tutee(s) has/have collected the reference request forms they gave to their subject teachers and handed them to you to enable you to write their reference.
- ✓ You have typed up your tutees reference(s) and have emailed this to Mr Attra (AAT) and the relevant Principal and Vice Principal of your college.