**BEDFORD COLLEGE**
Part of The Bedford College Group

# The Little Book of

# UCAS

# Essentials

## 2018 entry

# Contents

## Who's here to help?

Your UCAS coordinators are:

The careers team: Sharma Abora, Russell George, Francis Kauffmann, Michael Worthington.

The personal tutor team will also be supporting and monitoring applications and will liaise between the teaching staff and UCAS coordinators. Use the **Little Book of Personal Statements** to write an outstanding personal statement for your UCAS application!

**Deadlines**

UCAS will accept applications from early September. Most applications go to UCAS between November and December.

**Medicine, Veterinary courses, Dentistry, Oxford and Cambridge applications:**

- Students to complete their application by Internal deadline of **October 1**
- Applications sent to UCAS by deadline of **October 15**

**All other HE courses (except some Art and Design):**

- Students to complete their application by internal deadline of **November 15**
- Applications sent to UCAS by deadline of **January 15**

**Some Art and Design courses may have a later deadline : March 24**
- Please check your dates

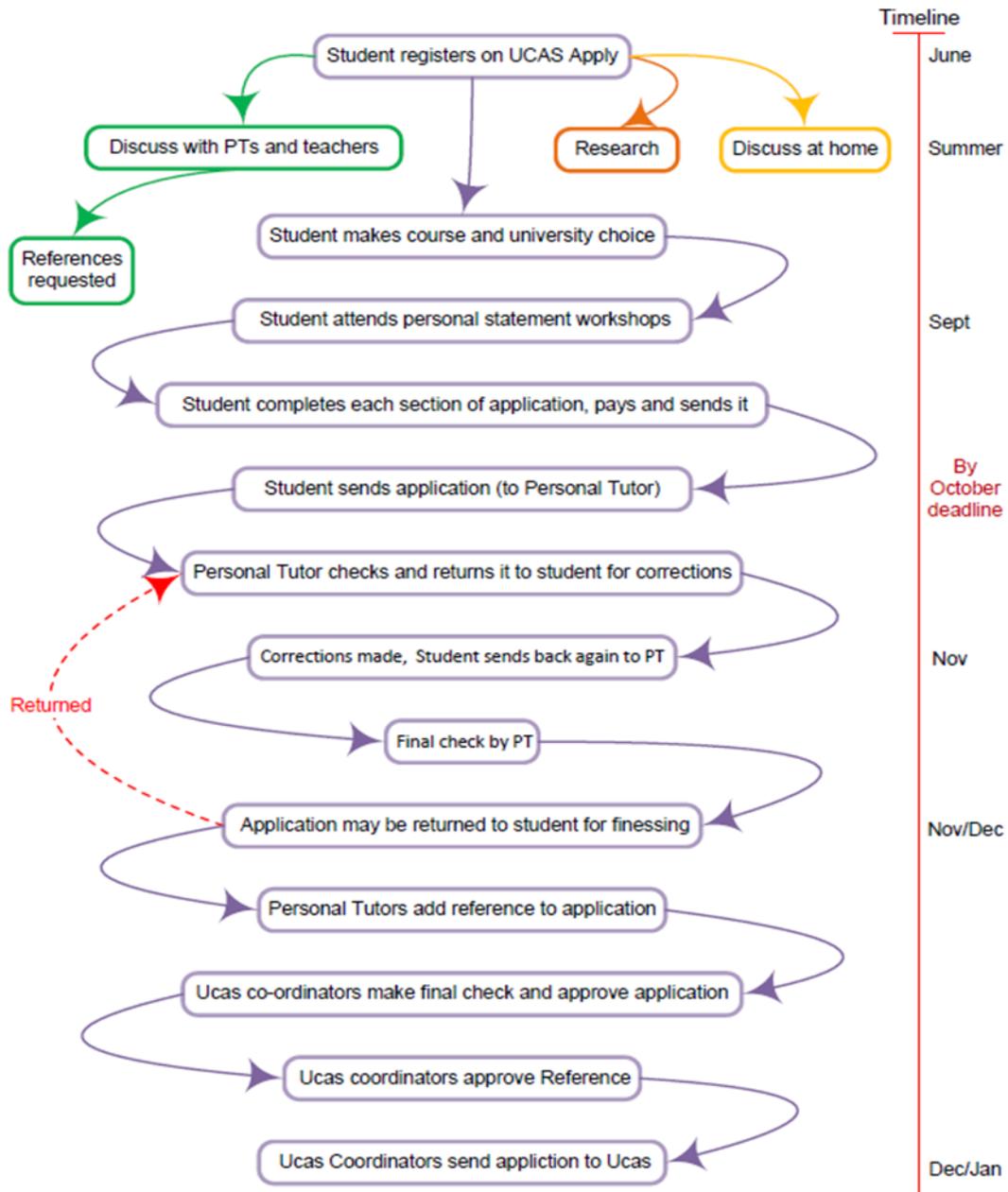**Reply to Offers deadlines** – individual dates between April and May

'**But what if I make a last minute decision to apply?'**

UCAS will continue to accept applications after their January 15 deadline, but these will be considered **'late applications'**. Universities are under no obligation to consider these, and many don't as they have lots of strong applications which are 'on time'.

**'But what if I change my mind?'**

Applicants have a short period after applying to change their course choices. This is currently 14 days after receiving their welcome email. After this, they cannot change university or course without withdrawing either the application or a course choice. This is not advisable, so students should be committed to their choices when they apply.

# The UCAS application process



Timeline

Student registers on UCAS Apply — June

Discuss with PTs and teachers — Summer
Research
Discuss at home

References requested

Student makes course and university choice

Student attends personal statement workshops — Sept

Student completes each section of application, pays and sends it

Student sends application (to Personal Tutor) — By October deadline

Personal Tutor checks and returns it to student for corrections

Returned

Corrections made, Student sends back again to PT — Nov

Final check by PT

Application may be returned to student for finessing — Nov/Dec

Personal Tutors add reference to application

Ucas co-ordinators make final check and approve application

Ucas coordinators approve Reference

Ucas Coordinators send appliction to Ucas — Dec/Jan

**Getting organised**

- Find your GCSE certificates, and other qualifications as you will have to provide all the details on your application form

- Talk to your teachers about what you are applying for, so they can refer to it in your reference

- Plan your free time in the summer and into the autumn constructively to maximise your opportunities to fill your personal statement with fascinating and relevant facts

- Familiarise yourself with information on **Ucas.com**, saving the login page to your favourites for speedy access
.
- Spend time on the course search pages, varying your search criteria. New courses get added or changed occasionally so keep up to date

- Make your own timetable to ensure you meet the college deadlines

- Give your PTs and UCAS Coordinators plenty of time to check your application and listen to their suggestions – we all want the best possible application from you, and we will suggest improvements

- Use the UCAS points calculator to find out how many UCAS tariff points you may be able to achieve

- Use the UCAS support available in college – there are experienced UCAS advisers who can help:

o     lunchtime Personal Statement workshops
o     drop-in to Student Services to speak to a Careers Adviser
o     make a careers appointment
o     talk to the UCAS coordinators
o     discuss in tutorials and get PT support
o     ask your PT for UCAS topics in group tutorials,
o     talk to the Student Finance Adviser in Student Services
o     talk to teachers for their subject knowledge
o     use diagnostic software on [www.yourspace.net](www.yourspace.net)

# UCAS student phone line: 0371 468 0468

**Making decisions**

Find out as much as possible about the universities and courses which interest you, making a shortlist of those which appeal to you.

Go to university open days, talk to the students and staff in the relevant faculties.

www.opendays.com

**Find out about:**
- course content and structure

- facilities and resources

- success rates

- accommodation

- employment destinations

- bursaries and support available

- links to industry

Check university websites, student blogs and forums   www.ucas.com
www.thestudentroom.co.uk

Use the Higher Ideas programme on the careers software section of www.yourspaceonline.net

Do as much research as you can to find out if the courses and universities are right for you.

Check the entry requirements for each course – they can vary a lot!

Talk to your teachers, Personal Tutors, our Careers Advisers and UCAS coordinators, your friends and family who will all have useful information to help you make your choices.

# Useful websites

## University information

www.ucas.com

www.unistats.direct.gov.uk

www.university.which.co.uk

www.yourspaceonline.net/jobs__careers/applying_for_university.aspx

www.fulbright.org.uk   (for study in USA)

www.thestudentroom.co.uk

## Gap year

www.projects-abroad.co.uk/

www.i-to-i.com/

www.frontier.ac.uk/

www.realgap.co.uk/

## Alternatives to University

www.bedford.ac.uk/jobshop

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/

www.getingofar.gov.uk

## Careers software – Higher Ideas

www.yourspaceonline.net/jobs__careers/careers_software__info_websit.aspx

# Your Personal Statement - Have you got interesting stuff to write about?

Many students struggle to provide evidence that they are committed to the courses they have chosen. Do something worthwhile to gain new skills and experiences, and have something interesting to write about in your Personal Statement which relates to the courses you're applying for.

**Have a go at…**

- Volunteering – www.volunteeringbedford.org.uk to find voluntary opportunities near you

- Finding a job – register with the Job Shop www.bedford.ac.uk/jobshop and search the Jobs Bulletin on www.yourspaceonline.net

- Finding a work experience placement or short term internship. Some courses expect you to have a minimum period of relevant work experience e.g. teaching, nursing, social care

- Networking – talk to friends, parents, your parents' friends, your friends' parents, relatives, neighbours to find out if they know of any opportunities

- Developing a new interest or pastime which relates to your future study and career plans

- Developing a new skill e.g. learning how to build a website

- Approaching an organisation/business/charity to offer your time freely in return for specific experience e.g. photographing items for a charity newsletter

- Organising a day shadowing a professional in their workplace

- Getting involved in local community activities, organising a local event

- Getting involved in local politics

- Visiting museums and art galleries to deepen your knowledge of an aspect of your current studies

- Exploring  your career ideas in depth – find out what people do every day in their job

# What you could ask your family to do

- Ensure they familiarise themselves with the parents' section of the UCAS website – there's lots to read there, particularly the Parents' Guide on www.ucas.com

- Parents and carers can register for the monthly e-newsletter, which keeps them informed and helps them to support you.

- Ask your parents and carers to take you to open days. Maybe you can arrange to do this in small groups, to spread the cost and time between several parents.

- Ensure they understand how the financial support system works, and what financial evidence they may need to provide www.gov.uk/studentfinance

- Ensure they understand how Extra and Clearing work, and why you might need to use them.

- Make sure they know **YOUR** deadlines. They will talk to other parents and carers and hear about different Reply to Offers deadlines, so keep them updated about your status on Track. Your **Reply to Offer** deadline is triggered by the last university to respond to you.

- Talk to their friends, colleagues, neighbours and relatives to investigate relevant work experience opportunities

- Ask their opinion about what they know you are interested in or good at, it might generate new course or career ideas.

- Discuss **'nominated access'** with your parents and carers. If you want them to be able to get into your application in your absence, you will need to give permission on your UCAS application and give them your log in details.

- Remember – the more parents and carers know about the process, and where you are in it, the less they will worry!  Keep parents informed.

# Student Finance – how do you afford to go to university?

These are the arrangements for the *current* academic year

- Finance Applications open in January, you should apply by May

- No tuition fees are paid up front

- Fees are up to £9,250 per year, paid by **Tuition Fee loan**

- **Maintenance Loan** (up to £8,430) for all students for living costs

- Use student finance calculator tool on **www.gov.uk/studentfinance**

- Loans are repaid over 30 years once you are earning £21,000
  Repayment is 9% of salary over £21,000 annually
  (So £75 monthly repayment when earning £31,000)

- Other bursaries and extra support funds direct from universities

- On-line finance applications open in January, you should apply before May

- See www.moneysavingexpert.co.uk for further advice

**Remember…..**

Always include all your GCSEs and their grades in your application.

Make sure you have the GCSE grades that universities are asking for in their entry requirements.

Include your current course and any unit grades that you have already achieved.

For results and unit grades not yet achieved select 'pending' from the drop down menu.

When you have completed all sections, paid your fee and 'sent' it, it is checked by the coordinator before being sent to UCAS. **Many applications are sent back to students to make changes or improvements.** You will get a message to tell you what to do. Please action this quickly then send it back again.

# Getting started – Apply 2018

Go to the UCAS website www.ucas.com and to **Apply and Track**

You will need to register first, so follow the steps below to do this:

       Click on **Start an Undergraduate Application**

       Click on **Register/Log for 2018 entry**

       On Register and Login page, click on **Register**

       Complete your details

       Choose a password and answer security questions

       UCAS will then generate your Username

## Make a note of your Username and Password below and on your mobile

**Log in** for the first time – you will then be asked a few more questions. When asked if you are registering through a **School or College,** use our unique Buzzword to link your application to Bedford College.

### Buzzword = Bedford College2018

Choose your Personal Tutor's name from the drop down box. If their name is not there, select 'don't know' and inform your tutor. You can work on your UCAS application on any computer/smartphone/tablet with internet access.

**No one in College has access to your Username or Password. You will need to use the Username and Password every time you log on to Apply 2018 to work on your application. Always 'save' after you work on your application.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **USERNAME** | |
| **PASSWORD** | |
| **UCAS ID** | |

**Updated July 2017 by Francis Kauffmann**