

A Parent's Guide to The University Application Process



Introduction

Going to university is a big step in a students' life and can be quite a daunting prospect. Making choices which will have a major impact on their lives is stressful and without guidance and support it is easy to see how the wrong choices could be made. We aim to support the students in school when making decisions about degree courses, countries to study in and the final choice of which universities to apply to. As a parent this is a stressful time as well and we hope that this booklet will give you some useful information and the tools to help support your son/daughter through this process so that they can go to university confident that they have made the right choices for themselves.

Choosing a degree course

Deciding on a course can be simple for some people as they know exactly what they want to do and why. For others they might not know where to start. If your son/daughter is just beginning their search then the whole process might seem overwhelming — after all, this is the start of a long journey. Research, decision-making, applying and preparing for study are all ahead of your son/daughter, and the finish line (graduation) might seem like a long way off.

Rest assured that no matter what your circumstance, the right course and institution is out there waiting for them.

Useful links:

Which University - Not sure what course to study? The subject guides reveal everything you need to know about studying different subjects at university, from typical entry requirements to career prospects.

Prospects - A great site to explore different job profiles and careers

A Level explorer - where can your A levels take you? Explore this great tool

Careers Choices - An interactive quiz from Edexcel to help research different career options

UCAS The Buzz Quiz - Find out what you are like and what you could do!

Apprenticeships can be a good alternative to going straight to university. There are different types of apprenticeships and many employers will support an apprentice to complete their degree whilst being an apprentice. To find out more go to: www.ucas.com .

Applying to University

How do they know where to apply? Which country will they study in?

This section will give you information about applying to different countries and links to websites where you can find more information to help you support your child in making this important decision.

The process of applying to university can seem quite daunting at first, but the advice and information provided here should set you on the right path.

Higher Education has gone through a massive expansion in recent years, and there are now many thousands of courses and thousands of institutions at which to study. All of this just makes the task of narrowing down to one course and a few universities seem so much harder. The key is to start researching and investigating sooner rather than later, and this research needs to be purposeful. If your son/daughter is fairly sure about what they want to study they may still find that there are different courses that cover their field of study and they need to find the exact course they want to study. (Note that this may be slightly different at different universities as course content and structure will be unique to each university.)

Some students choose to take a gap year and this is considered to be good only if the student can explain exactly what their plans are for the year – our advice is that the gap year needs to be purposeful.

Whilst universities require evidence of academic ability, successful applicants are also those who can prove their motivation, commitment to, and understanding of, their selected course choice. In order to provide evidence of this we suggest reading at least one high quality magazine, academic journal or newspaper every week. It is important to be able to start to make links between academic subjects and developments in current affairs, and to be able to note relevant developments in the specific area of academic interest.

Universities and employers like to see well rounded individuals who are able to cope with academic commitments alongside living a full and varied life. Developing interests beyond academic study can provide interesting opportunities, new friendships and a good relief from study and is encouraged. Enrichment activities can also help to develop confidence, leadership skills and a sense of responsibility; lifelong skills.

There are many enrichment activities available such as Debating, MUN, Medical Club, Robotics Club, The International Duke of Edinburgh Award Program, as well as many sporting activities.

Independent research which extends beyond the curriculum is an important factor universities look for in an applicant. This shows initiative, intellectual curiosity and it proves keen interest in a particular area of study and provides evidence of transferable skills necessary to enter higher education.

We advise close collaboration with Tutors, Head of Sixth Form and our University and Careers Guidance Counsellor throughout the duration of the Sixth Form. Success is dependent on maturity, diligence, self-discipline, motivation, initiative, organisation and time management skills.

Applying to Australia

Deadlines for applications

The academic year starts in January/February in Australia, however some universities allow an intake in the second semester which is in July. Students can apply up to 18 months before the start of their course and no later than 3 months before the start. Note – for competitive courses (medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy, fine arts and performance) the deadlines are likely to be earlier. You will need to contact the individual universities to find out what their deadline is. You cannot apply to university in Australia before you have your predicted A level grades.

What you need to do – if you do not hold an Australian passport

- Research the different universities to shortlist the universities your child can apply to.
- Find out if the university you have chosen has a representative from your country.
- If your child will apply as an international student with a UK passport, then you can apply to the university through the UK representative of the university – note that these representatives are based in the UK so you would need to visit them in person to submit original documents.
- If your child is an international student without a UK passport, then you will need to apply to the International Students Admissions Office.
- The UK representative will send you the forms needed to make your application, offer advice about the course and the university, certify your documents and liaise with the admissions departments for you.
- If you apply through the UK representative then your application will be fast tracked.
- If you apply through the International Students Admission Office then you will receive support and guidance from them.
- You will need to complete the application form.
- If your child applies before their results are published, then you will need a letter from school stating the predicted grades. They will need to provide original exam certificates for GCSE and AS and A level results. These can be copied and the copies certified by a lawyer so that you can send the certified copies rather than the original documents.
- You will need to provide a copy of your child's passport – photo page.
- They do not have to submit a personal statement but are recommended to do so.
- They do not usually have to sit any admissions tests except for certain courses like Medicine and Dentistry, the university will advise you of these requirements so find out early on in the process.
- If they are applying for arts courses, then they will need to submit a portfolio of work.

- The average time for an application to be processed is 4 to 6 weeks.
- Any offers would be conditional until your child receives his/her exam results and then the offer would become unconditional if they have reached the grades of the conditional offer.

What you need to do – if you do hold an Australian passport

- If they hold Australian or New Zealand citizenship then your child will be classed as a domestic student in both Australia and New Zealand, even if they have UK qualifications.
- If they are a domestic student and you want to apply to go to university in Australia, they apply through the state tertiary admissions centres.

These are as follows:

- Queensland: **Queensland Tertiary Admission Centre (QTAC)**
- New South Wales & Australian Capital Territory: **Admissions Centre (UAC)**
- Victoria: **Victoria Tertiary Admission Centre (VTAC)**
- Tasmania: **University of Tasmania**
- South Australia: **South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC)**
- Northern Territory: **Charles Darwin University**
- Western Australia: **Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC)**

Useful websites

All of the following websites give you information and guidance about the process of applying to Australian universities.

<http://www.universityinaustralia.co.uk/how-do-i-apply-australian-university>

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/oceania/australia/>

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/oceania/australia/>

Applying to Canada

Deadlines:

Applications are made to each university individually and each university will have its own deadline. Typically, applications open in October of the year before entry to university and the general advice is to start early. Deadlines for final applications vary from January to June – you need to check the individual university deadlines.

What you need to do:

- Find out which province the universities you have chosen are in.
- There is one procedure for universities in Ontario and another procedure for all universities not in Ontario.
- The university chosen **MUST** be on the designated learning institutions list for an international student to be able to study there. If it is not on the list then your child won't get a student visa <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study-institutions-list.asp>
- To apply to universities in Ontario applications are made through The **Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC)**; a website that is the direct link between you and the universities across Ontario.
- Using the OUAC students can apply to 3 universities for one fee, an extra fee will be charged for each extra university you apply to through this system. There is no upper limit but they should choose carefully and limit the number of applications they make.
- To apply to universities outside Ontario students must apply to each university individually through their admissions office. They will charge a fee and you can complete the application online.
- The online application form can be completed in approximately one hour and does not usually require references, personal statements and transcripts.
- They may however contact the school for further information so make sure your child have included the email address of their tutor or Mrs Allen-
Lyvica.allen@parkhouseschool.com
- or You can apply through the **CUAC service (Canadian University Application Centre)** who have offices in various countries around the world – the nearest office is in Dubai. Their representatives will help your child to choose the right course, university, visa application and getting ready to study in Canada. This service is free. Visit the website for more information. <http://www.canada123.org/free-counselling/>
- There are two types of application processes; the rolling admission will consider the application once submitted and your child may receive a decision in two weeks or

the competitive admission which will only consider applications after an application deadline.

- Offers are usually conditional on grades but may also stipulate other conditions. Be sure to read the offer letter carefully.

Applying for a Student Visa

- Once you have an offer letter you can apply for your student visa. Visit <http://www.cic.gc.ca/> for more information on student visas.

Useful Websites:

For information about how to apply the following websites will give you useful information:

- <http://www.wesstudentadvisor.org/2014/03/5-steps-to-apply-to-canadian-university.html>
- <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/schools.asp>
- <http://www.canadian-universities.net/Campus/Applications.html>
- <http://www.canadian-universities.net/Student-Information/index.html>
- <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/north-america/canada/>

For information about the universities in Canada:

- <http://www.univcan.ca/>
- <http://www.educationau-incanada.ca/educationau-incanada/template-gabarit/program-programme.aspx?view=d&lang=eng>
- <http://www.universitiesintheusa.com/>

Applying to Europe

The application process is different for the different European countries as are the tuition fees and the language of delivery of the course. Many European universities now offer courses delivered in English and other languages as well as the country's own language.

Tuition fees are generally lower than in the UK and for **EU applicants**, in some countries, there are no tuition fees.

The deadlines for applications differs from country to country but there are some organisations which will help with the application.

Useful Websites

There are a number of websites which give good, clear information about studying at university in Europe. Use these to start your research.

<http://www.studyineurope.eu/>

<http://www.studyportals.com/>

<http://www.topuniversities.com/where-to-study/region/europe/guide>

Your child can register with EUNiCAS which is a central application support service they can register with and who will then help them to complete their application, giving advice on how to apply, what documentation is needed and the deadlines for different countries. There is a small fee (28 Euro for 2020 entry), for their service. www.eunicas.ie

Top Tips – things to encourage your son/daughter to look into

- Do your research on the course, university and country.
- When do you need to apply?
- What are the entry requirements?
- Do you need to sit any admissions tests?
- What language is the course delivered in?
- What documents will you need to provide to support your application?
- What are the tuition fees?
- What type of accommodation is available?
- How much will the accommodation cost?
- What are the travel links like – you might want to travel home at the end of the semester, what will it cost and how easy will the journey be?

Applying to New Zealand

Deadlines for applications

New Zealand university courses start in February and end in November, usually on a two semester year. It is possible to enter NZ universities in both February and July – you need to check with the university. Students must apply at least 4 months before the start of the course.

What students need to do:

- They will need to apply to each university individually and they will be able to provide information about the application process.
- A personal statement of intent. Why do they want to attend university in New Zealand instead of their home country? What do they plan to do upon completing the degree program?
- All of their transcripts from secondary school, including any university courses that they may have taken during secondary schooling or at the school they were attending before transferring to a university in New Zealand.
- Any relevant exam results or predicted grades. Note any documents sent will need to be certified copies (a copy which a lawyer has signed as being a true copy of the original)
- Proof of funding, or intent to apply for funding for tuition. The financial aid office at the university they are seeking to attend and the immigration department of New Zealand can help you with these requirements.
- Most universities require some sort of application fee that is paid when they application is submitted. These run anywhere from NZ\$25 to NZ\$50, depending on which school you are looking to attend. Sometimes, you can get a waiver on the fees (especially if the application is sent via air mail, which can be pricey).
- Financial aid applications. You may be able to fill one out through the country that you currently reside in, depending on their rules and that country's relationship with New Zealand in terms of educational programs. There are actually a number of countries that work with New Zealand and each other in order to help fund education for students that may be traveling between those countries in order to study.
- **NZ universities accept A levels as being equivalent to their NCEA level 3 qualification.** They will expect 3 A levels at grade C or above as equivalent. Students will need to ask the university admissions office before they apply what their minimum A level grades would be.
- They will need to sit an IELTS or TOEFL test and achieve a score 6.0 and 78-80 respectively to be offered place at a NZ university. You need to check with the

university to see which test they require or if you need to prove your English proficiency.

Student Visa

- The student will require a visa to study in NZ.
- The student will need an offer of a place to apply for a visa
- Evidence that the student can pay the tuition fees
- Evidence of financial support – that the student will be able to pay for accommodation, food etc.
- Evidence that the student can travel home from NZ, either a ticket, or the funds to pay for one.
- Insurance – often obtained through the university

For more information visit <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/NR/ronlyres/8D76710A-1F4A-452F-8C5D-8663738F560A/0/INZ1013.pdf>

Useful websites:

General information:

<http://studylink.com/blog/new-zealand-student-visa-news/>

<http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/>

<http://www.education-newzealand.org/how-to-apply/>

<http://www.topuniversities.com/where-to-study/oceania/new-zealand/guide#tab=2>

<http://www.studyoptions.com/how-make-application>

<http://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/studying-in-nz/international>

For Information about student visas:

<http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/canistudyinnewzealand/allaboutvisas/>

<http://www.immigration.govt.nz/NR/ronlyres/8D76710A-1F4A-452F-8C5D-8663738F560A/0/INZ1013.pdf>

Applying to Qatar

There are a number of Universities in Qatar which consider applications from both Qataris and International Students. These can be classified into two different groups, Qatari Universities and Foreign Universities.

Qatari Universities:

- Hamad bin Khalifa University
- Qatar University
- Community College of Qatar

Foreign University Campuses:

- Academic Bridge Programme
- Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar
- College of North Atlantic Qatar
- Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar
- HEC Paris
- Northwestern University in Qatar
- Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community
- Stenden University Qatar
- Syscoms Institute
- Texas A&M University at Qatar
- University of Aberdeen with AFG college
- University College London Qatar
- University of Calgary Qatar
- Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar
- Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

There are a very broad range of courses offered between these universities and as with any application, they will need to research the university, the course, the fees and the entry requirements before applying. The general requirements of these universities is that a student should be able to offer the highest qualification that is available in the school that they attend.

Applying to South Africa

There are different types of universities in South Africa, public and private. Private universities tend to be very specialised and so will not offer a broad range of courses. Public universities are then divided into 3 categories: traditional offering typical university degrees, technological offering vocational degrees and comprehensive which offer a combination of the two.

Deadlines

The academic year starts in February and is divided into 2 semesters. Closing date for applications for February entry is usually September of the previous year. Some universities will have an entry at the start of the second semester and the deadline will be much earlier for this. You should however note that most universities will consider applications when they are submitted and so the earlier your child applies the greater their chance of being offered a place.

Points to note:

- Research the universities and courses to help you make your choice.
- Apply to each university individually.
- Each university will have a different application process and it may be possible to apply online or by post.
- Universities will require confirmation of your predicted A level grades.
- There will be minimum entry requirements and offers may be conditional or unconditional.
- International students must apply to get a Matriculation Exemption, which confirms that their foreign certificates meet the legal minimum requirements.
- Some universities may require students to write an essay or give questions to answer which will allow your child to show why they have chosen their university and the particular course and career path.
- For specific information regarding the application process and the entry requirements for your chosen course your child will need to contact the universities admissions office directly.

Accommodation

Universities in South Africa offer student accommodation on campus and you would be advised to apply to the University for this accommodation in your first year of study.

Student Visa

All international students require a student visa to study in South Africa and this can only be applied for after your child has received an offer of a place at university.

The application must be made at the South African High Commission, Embassy, Consulate or Trade Mission in the country of residence.

- It will normally take 6 weeks to process your visa application.
- There are many documents which have to be supplied to support and gain approval for your student visa.

You can find more information about this

at <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/africa/south-africa/>

Useful Websites:

For information about studying in South Africa and applying to universities:

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/africa/south-africa/>

<http://www.southafrica.info/about/education/universities.htm#.VzHIFGccROw>

For visa information:

http://southafricahouseuk.com/visas/vis_studyprmt.html

<http://www.southafrica.info/travel/documents/studypermits.htm#.VzHm4WccROw>

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/africa/south-africa/>

Applying to the UK

Applications to UK universities are made through a central admissions agency called UCAS. This makes the system more streamlined and easier, all applications are made online and all decisions about applications can be tracked by your son/daughter online.

Applying through UCAS for September 2020 entry

Deadlines for applications:

Oxbridge, Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry:		15 October 2019
All other courses:	UCAS deadline	15 January 2019
	School deadline	22 November 2019

What your child needs to do:

- Research the course they want to study and the universities they would like to attend.
- Find out the entrance requirements including any admissions tests the university requires for the course extra to their A levels, e.g. UKCAT for medicine, other courses do require admissions tests as well, make sure they know what these requirements are and when they can sit the exams. If they are an international student, then they may need to sit an admissions test to prove your English language skills. The university websites should be able to give them this information.
- Attend University Open days if possible in the summer holidays
- Start their application.
- Visit UCAS website, www.ucas.com and register their details on Apply (online application system)
- Create an account, **they will need the buzzword given to by us**, then they can complete the different sections – they do not have to complete everything all at once. There are help videos on the UCAS website which can guide them through this process it would be useful for them to watch them **first**.
- They should create your account and fill in their personal details **before** the start of the academic year (September 2019) – they **DO NOT** have to have decided on the course they want to study to do this part of the application.

- Write a personal statement to support their application – they have been given guidance by their tutor who will work with them to develop a final version.
- Once their personal statement is finished they should be able to complete the application and submit it to UCAS
- They will receive emails about their applications to each university either to inform them of any offers, interviews or rejections
- Once they have been notified of application to each university they will be able to reply to their offers – see key dates to find out the deadline for this.
- If they did not receive any offers then they may be able to apply to other universities through extra which opens on 25th February 2020.

Key Dates:

24.05.19	Apply opens
06.09.19	First date applications can be submitted
15.10.19	Deadline for applications for Oxbridge, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine/Science & Dentistry
22.11.19	School deadline for completion of all UCAS applications
15.01.20	UCAS deadline for completion of applications
25.02.20	Extra opens (applicable if you haven't received any offers)
04.05.20	Deadline to reply to offers you have received by 31.03.20 (if postal address is within EU)
05.05.20	University decisions on all applications submitted by 15.01.19
08.06.20	Deadline to reply to offers you have received by 5.5.20
22.06.20	Deadline to reply to offers received by 8.06.20
01.07.20	All applications received after this time are entered into clearing
04.07.20	Last day to apply through extra
05.07.20	Clearing opens
13.08.20	A level Results Day

Visa applications

As an international student, your child will need to obtain a student visa once they have accepted your offer. There is information on the UCAS website to help them get started on this process:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/conservatoires/getting-started/international-students/student-visas-and-immigration>

The UCAS website has many videos to give students guidance and advice on all aspects of the application process. They also have a parent's guide which you can access via this link:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/ucas-undergraduate-parents-and-guardians>

Applying to the US

How to Apply

Applying to universities in the USA can be as an application directly to the university or through the Common Application. There are now 600 universities which use the Common Application so when you do your child does their research they need to know which method to use to apply to the universities of their choice.

For more information about the Common App go to:

<https://www.commonapp.org/>

Deadlines

Typically 1 – 5 January 2020

However there are different types of applications, these are:

- *Early Decision/Early Action* - Deadline is usually around November 1st however, if your child is applying for Early Decision, and is offered a place this constitutes a binding agreement that they must withdraw all other applications (worldwide) and enroll at the university.
- *Regular Decision* - Most students apply for this; the deadline is around the 1st of January and applicants can expect to hear back by around the 1st April.
- *Rolling Admissions*- Only some universities offer this where students can apply any time before the term starts and they will hear back a certain number of days after submitting an application.

What your child needs to do:

- Research the universities - when you apply to a university in the USA you do not apply to a faculty within the university but to the university as a whole.
- Find out the entrance requirements including any admissions tests the university requires for the course extra to their A levels. Most USA universities require students

to sit admissions tests, e.g SAT, ACT, IELTS or TOEFL. Some will require students to sit subject specific SATs as well as the general SAT tests, make sure your child knows what these requirements are and when you can sit the exams. These tests can usually be sat more than once and most pupils will do this to improve their score. The university websites should be able to give you this information.

- Entrance tests. Your child is responsible for arranging to sit these tests and for arranging for the test scores to be sent to the universities they are applying to. For more information about the SAT go to www.collegeboard.com and for ACT go to www.act.org For information about the TOEFL exam go to www.ets.org this test is to show your English proficiency.
- USA universities usually require a transcript of all exam grades and school reports which will need to be sent directly from the school. **DO NOT leave this until the last minute they will need to let Mrs Allen-Adekunle know well in advance to allow time for the information to be collated and sent.**
- Start their research and application process early.
- Look at what they also need to provide as part of their application. Most universities require applicants to submit a personal statement in the form of an essay about why the school should accept them, it has to make them stand out. This is very similar to the personal statement written for UCAS entries to UK universities. Some universities will also require applicants to write an essay and if this is the case they will provide an essay title.
- Letters of recommendation – students usually require two of these from teachers within the school. In the USA system this would be their counsellor and a teacher.
- Find out what the fee will be for their application; this will vary from university to university.
- Find out what the fees are at the universities you have chosen as they may want to see that the fees can be paid before they consider your application.
- Some universities offer scholarships which your child may be eligible to apply for.
- Once your child has submitted their application it can take several weeks or even months before they hear back from the university. The earlier they apply the sooner they will receive a reply. Once they receive an offer they will need to accept or decline the offer, make sure they reply before the deadline.
- USA universities are most likely to make an offer which is not conditional. However, they will expect the student to reach their predicted grades, which is what they will have used as part to their decision process. **If their results do not match these grades, then their place at the university can be withdrawn – this does happen!**

Accommodation

- You need to think about accommodation, as soon as your child accepts their offers you can start to sort this out with the university. Contact the university directly to find out what you need to do to secure a place in university accommodation.

Visa applications

Once your child has applied for a university, they will hopefully send you all the information on how to sort out their visa.

You'll be issued with a form called an I-20, along with their acceptance letter and you will need to use this I-20 form in order to apply for an international student visa (F-1).

When your child apply for their visa to study in America they will have to prove to the immigration office that they are planning to leave after their studies.

Useful websites:

For information about the Common Application:

<https://www.commonapp.org/>

General advice on all aspects of studying in the USA:

<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges>

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/north-america/united-states/>

<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/content.php?r=1310-How-to-apply-to-university-in-the-USA>

<http://www.savesthestudent.org/study-abroad/america/how-to-apply-for-american-universities.html>

<http://www.fulbright.org.uk/study-in-the-usa/undergraduate-study/applying>

Guides on the process of applying as well as information about university fairs and finance.

<https://educationusa.state.gov>

A website which you can register with to make your application:

<http://www.universitiesintheusa.com/admissions/how-to-apply>