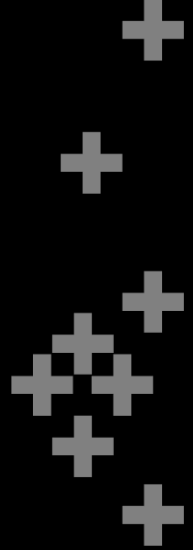


How to apply – tips for applying and how to write your personal statement

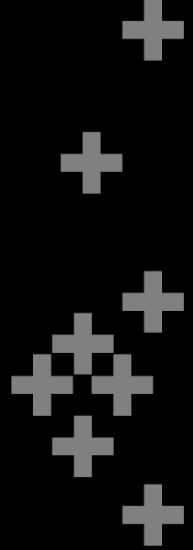


How to apply to study with UHI?

- + If you would like to study a degree, HNC or HND you will apply through UCAS
- + For everything else, you will apply via the UHI website



Your UCAS application



UCAS application – what, how and when?

Deadlines

- + Last Wednesday in January for the Equal consideration deadline (ECD) – 14 January 2026
 - + For Oxford, Cambridge and most medicine and dentistry courses 15 October 2025
- + UHI will accept applications until September if we still have places

Application form

- + Personal details; course(s); education; employment; personal statement; and referee
- + UCAS fee: £28.95 for up to five choices



UCAS application – what do I need to do?

- + Register with UCAS
- + Fill in your personal details
- + Add your education history
- + Complete your employment history
- + Select your course choices
- + Write your personal statement –
 - + 4,000 characters – divided into three answers questions, each with a 350 minimum character count
- + Submit your application
- + Get a reference, pay your application fee, and send your application to us



Personal statement

What, why, how

Why is personal statement important?

- + Sets you apart from other applicants
- + Gives you the opportunity to show how interested you are in the course
- + Shows your range of skills and abilities
- + For references written by a non-academic staff member – for example a current or previous employer – make sure to explain to them you're looking for an academic reference to study, so they know not to provide a standard HR reference
- + Enables you to detail relevant work experience – very important for vocational degrees
- + Show your suitability for the course
- + Many courses will not interview candidates – this is your opportunity to stand out from the crowd



Personal statement in a nutshell

1. Why are you applying?

Your personal and practical skills combined will create a unique picture of who you are and why you'll be a successful student, so definitely include both.

2. Do your studies relate?

Prove your enthusiasm for your current study and take the opportunity to demonstrate your skills and knowledge now and how you want to build on that.

3. Why are you interested?

This is your chance to show your passion and really demonstrate who you are. If you have hobbies or volunteering experiences related to the subject, include them here.

4. Why will you be great?

Your personal and practical skills combined will create a unique picture of who you are and why you'll be a successful student, so definitely include both.

New format of the personal statement

✚ For 2026 entry, the personal statement has changed from one longer piece of text to answering three separate questions. The goal for the change is that these three questions will help applicants to scaffold their answers and help them include exactly what universities and colleges want to see. Each answer will have a minimum character count of 350 characters, but the 4,000 overall character limit (including spaces) remains the same, as does what the applicants are expected to include.

- ✚ Question 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?
- ✚ Question 2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
- ✚ Question 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?



Prompts to get started

- + Why have you chosen this course?
- + What excites you about the subject?
- + Is my previous or current study relevant to the course?
- + Have you got any work experience that might help you?
- + What life experiences have you had that you could talk about?
- + What achievements are you proud of?
- + What skills do you have that make you perfect for the course?
- + What plans and ambitions do you have for your future career?

What else to include?

- + Positions of responsibility you may have held
- + Extra-curricular activities
- + Rationale behind any differing course choices
- + Reasons for deferred entry if applicable



Adding more detail:

Reasons for choosing the course

- + Why are you applying for the course?
- + How has your interest developed?
- + Do your current studies relate to the course chosen?
- + What has motivated you to consider taking the course at university level?

Rationale behind any differing course choices

- + Writing a personal statement for unrelated subjects can be difficult.
- + If you do consider applying for unrelated courses, try to pick out common themes and skills, such as writing ability or problem-solving skills.

Adding more detail:

Why you are right for the course

- + How do you meet the selection criteria?
- + Show how you are prepared for studying the subject at university level.
- + Also show that you're a critical thinker.
- + University is about being able to think independently and analytically so being able to demonstrate that you're working like this already is a big plus point. Briefly explaining how one of your higher subjects has made you think more critically could be a way of doing this.

Achievements

- + Universities like to know the skills you have that will help you on the course, or generally with life at university, such as accredited or non-accredited achievements.
- + Are you proud of passing, for example, grade A in piano or have you been selected for a sports team?
- + Include any awards you have done, such as Duke of Edinburgh

Adding more detail:

Any employment, work experience or voluntary work

- + Admission tutors want to hear about your ability for working independently, teamwork, good time management, problem-solving, leadership, listening or organisational skills
- + Show how this experience has developed any transferrable skills

Positions of responsibility

- + Have you taken on any extra responsibilities during voluntary or part time work?
- + Were you a prefect or have you helped young pupils during school?
- + Think about what the role entailed; what went well; and any challenges that you faced and why, and how did you overcome them?

Adding more detail:

Extra-curricular activities

- + Make a list of your social, sporting and other interests and activities
- + Think about how they show your skills and abilities
- + Reflect on your experiences, explaining what you've learned from them or how they've helped develop your interest in the subject
- + Try and link them to the skills and experience required for your chosen course

Career aspirations

- + Tell us about what you might like to do in the future as a career after completing your course
- + Explain how you would like to use the course to help you reach your goal

Reasons for deferred entry

- + Most universities are happy for you to take a gap year – but will want to know how you plan to spend it

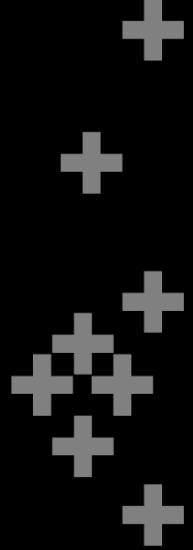
Personal statement Dos:

- + **Do** use positive language and check for spelling and grammar to make sure it is right.
- + **Do** be enthusiastic – if you show your interest in the course it will help you.
- + **Do** remember that everything you say should link to studying at university. This allows the course team to see why it is relevant and assess your suitability for the course.
- + **Do** ask people that you trust, like your teacher/adviser or parent/carer to read through what you have written and give you feedback.
- + **Do** develop your statement over several drafts.

Personal statement Don'ts:

- + **Don't** name universities – you can only write one personal statement, so avoid mentioning a university by name unless you are applying to only one
- + **Don't** use quotes in your personal statement – it's your voice they want to hear
- + **Don't** write irrelevant facts – if it doesn't make a useful contribution and help explain why you should be given a place on the course, don't write it
- + **Don't** exaggerate – you might be asked about what you have written if you attend an interview
- + **Don't** try to be funny – an admission officer is not guaranteed to have your sense of humour
- + **Don't** leave it until the last minute – give yourself time to think about what you want to write to make sure that you don't forget something important
- + **Don't** be tempted to copy a personal statement, UCAS has software that detects similarities which could jeopardise your application

What happens next?



What happens next?

4 possible responses from a university:

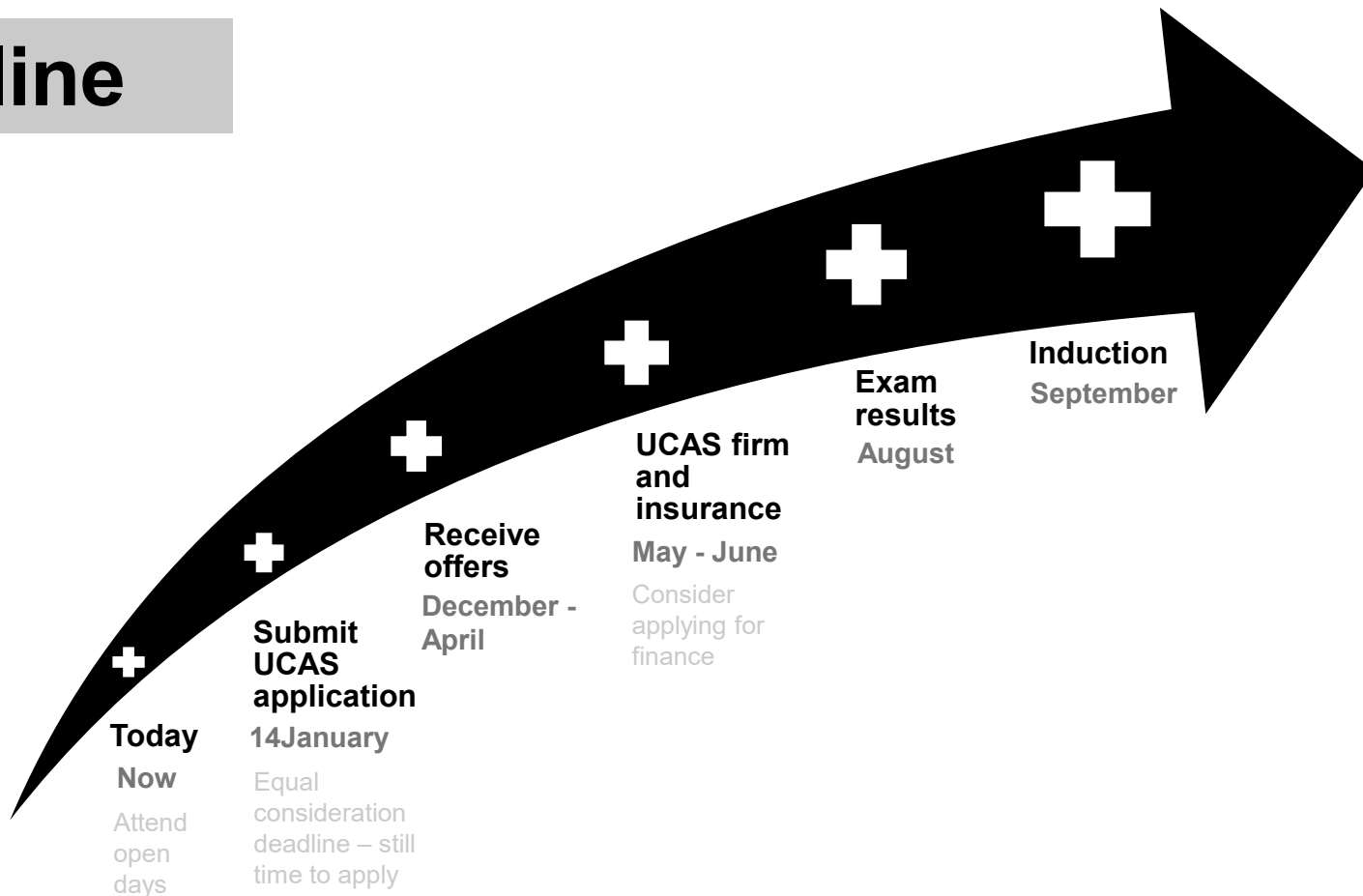
- + Unconditional offer
- + Conditional offer
- + Interview
- + Unable to make an offer

Once you hear back from ALL of your choices:

- + 1 x FIRM acceptance (1st choice)
- + 1 x INSURANCE choice
- + DECLINE all other offers



Timeline



Any questions? Get in touch

Recruitment team schools@uhi.ac.uk

Course information line courses@uhi.ac.uk

