

Going to university

1 Reading

How do you apply to university in your country? What are the steps and things you have to do?

Do you know anything about the British system?

Read the text and find out about the British application system.

Uni-bound? Here's how to get there

1 You are 17 years old and in your final year of school. When you finish, what are you going to do? If you are thinking of going to university, then you really need to think about applying as soon as you can as the process is long and quite complicated. Here is a step-by-step guide to help you get it right.

The first thing you need to do is decide exactly what it is you want to study. You've probably got an idea already as you've been thinking about what subjects you enjoy at school and also what career you might like. But now you need to find out more about the different courses available. For example, at school maybe you enjoyed English and you liked watching TV, reading newspapers and so on. When it comes to a career, you think it would be nice to work in media, but what exactly does that mean? You look at the options and find courses on media studies, digital media, journalism, production and many more. In order to make a decision, you should try and find out more about each course by talking to your teachers and reading the information on the university websites.

The next step is to decide where you want to go to university. There are lots of things to consider here, including whether the university offers the specific course you want to do, what the reputation of the university is for that particular course, what the entry requirements are and also whether or not you fancy living in that town or city for the next three or four years of your life!

Now you can start applying. To do this, you need to complete an UCAS application form. UCAS is the organisation that deals with all the universities in Britain.

On the form you can make up to six choices of where to study and the exact course. So, perhaps you decide to apply for media studies at three universities and digital media at three others. You must send your completed application to UCAS before the closing date in January. Your information is then sent to the universities you have expressed an interest in.

The universities will look at all the applications they receive. If the universities are interested in you, they will ask you to go to an interview. Here, they will ask all sorts of questions, not only about your academic studies, but also about your interests and what you do outside school. At this stage, they will decide if they want to offer you a place.

If they think you will be a wonderful student, they offer you an unconditional offer. This means you have a place at that university if you decide to accept. However, it is more usual to be given a conditional offer. This means that the university asks you for certain grades in the subjects you are studying, or a number of points (each grade is worth a certain number of points, so an A grade will be worth more points than a C).

After you are offered a place, you can decide to accept or decline. If you have been given an unconditional offer, then congratulations! You've got a place. You still have to try your best in your A-level exams, but you are under less pressure. If you've got a conditional offer, keep working hard, cross your fingers and just hope that you get the results you need.



2 Comprehension

Read the text again. Number these steps in the order they take place when applying for a university place in Britain.

- a Choose which universities to apply to.
- b Take your (A-level) exams.
- c Complete your application form.
- d Go for interviews.
- e Decide what subject to study.
- f Receive an offer.

Read the sentences and write *T* (True) or *F* (False).

- 1 There are lots of different types of courses in the same subject area.
- 2 You can't find information about the courses on the Internet.
- 3 You can apply for as many courses as you want on the UCAS form.
- 4 Not everyone will get an interview.
- 5 It's better to get a conditional offer than an unconditional offer.
- 6 You have to accept the first offer you get.

3 Vocabulary

Match the words (1–9) with the synonyms (a–i).

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------|
| 1 complicated | — | a choices |
| 2 career | — | b difficult |
| 3 options | | c exact |
| 4 consider | | d good name |
| 5 specific | | e job |
| 6 reputation | | f say no |
| 7 expressed | | g shown |
| 8 unconditional | | h think about |
| 9 decline | | i without limits |

4 Speaking

Work in groups and discuss these questions.

- 1 What would you like to study at university? Why?
- 2 Is the process for applying to university in your country similar to the one used in Britain?
- 3 What is the process? Can you describe it?

5 Writing

Write a letter to a friend who wants to study at a university in your country. Explain what the process is and what they should do to be successful.