

UCAS 2020 EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

Chiltern Hills Academy
Chartridge Lane, Chesham
Buckinghamshire HP5 2RG
Telephone 01494 782066
office@chilternhillsacademy.co.uk
www.chilternhillsacademy.co.uk

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Confirmation

Confirmation of university and college places mostly happens following the release of Summer results. Confirmation decisions and letters (AS12 for UCAS Undergraduate applicants, CU12 for UCAS Conservatoires applicants) are shown in Track. While universities and colleges receive grades and make their decisions, we enter into an embargo period...

What is the embargo?

Each year UCAS, universities and colleges are given early access to results under strict embargo arrangements with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). An embargo period covers the defined period of time where early access to embargoed examination results is given. This allows universities and colleges to prepare and make decisions by the official publication dates of exam results

The embargo period for 2020 is:

JCQ results embargo period – 7 August at 14:00 until 13 August at 08:00.

During both embargo periods:

Track and the Adviser Portal will not be updated.

Universities and colleges cannot discuss any applicant's individual status with them, or with an adviser.

Different Confirmation decisions

There are a number of decisions universities and colleges can make:

a) Conditions of offer have been met - applicants who have met the conditions of their firm choice will be placed there (UF). Track will display a Confirmation letter, which will advise the applicant if they need to take any further action.

Applicants who are placed at their insurance choice (UI) or firm choice (UF) are shown in the Adviser Portal under the 'Final Place Accepted' status. Use the 'Search for Applicant' feature and choose this status to show you a list of those applicants.

For applicants with GCE grades, Confirmation letters can be viewed in Track from the day results are published.

b) Conditions of offer have been met and exceeded - applicants who meet and exceed the conditions of their conditional firm (CF) choice have the option to try to find an alternative place through Adjustment, while still holding their original confirmed offer. Those who originally applied for one choice and paid £20, need to make the additional payment of £5 if they wish to use Adjustment. This can be done in Track using a debit or credit card.

c) Conditions of offer have not been met - applicants who have not met the conditions of their offer:

- May still be accepted by the university or college and may need to wait a few days for them to make a final decision. The university or college may be waiting for some information (confirmation of exam results, non-academic information, etc.) to make a final decision.
- May be given a change of course, date of entry, or point of entry offer, which will be shown in Track. Applicants are not obliged to accept this. Track will display a Confirmation change letter (AS12C) outlining the available options, when all Confirmation decisions have been made. They must then accept or decline the change within five calendar days

d) Unsuccessful applicants - applicants who have been unsuccessful will be in Clearing.

Applicants can use Clearing Plus to view a list of courses they have personally been matched to in Track by clicking the 'view matches' button - alongside the search tool, which will still have over 30,000 course options.

Applicants who are unsuccessful and have paid the full application fee (£25) are eligible for Clearing. Those who originally applied for one choice, paid £20 and are not holding an offer, need to make the additional payment of £5, if they wish to enter Clearing. This can be done in Track using a debit or credit card.

Commitments during Confirmation

Applicants are expected to honour their Confirmation commitments. However, should an applicant find they no longer wish to take up their confirmed place, they need to contact the university or college to either withdraw from the UCAS application system completely, or release themselves into Clearing using the 'Decline my place' button in Track. When they do this, they have be asked why they have changed their mind.

Clearing

If students do not get the exam grades they hoped for and their places are not confirmed, they can try to find another course through Clearing.

The Clearing process runs from 6 July and helps students without a confirmed place, and those who apply late, to find courses where there are still places available.

Applicants become eligible for Clearing at different times and it is available for those who:

- Apply after 30 June 2020
- Have not received any offers
- Declined any offers they received.

How do applicants use Clearing?

From 6 July if an applicant is eligible, they can add a Clearing choice in Track.

- Applicants do not need to contact UCAS to request entry into Clearing.
- Applicants should wait until they have any pending exam results before contacting universities and colleges about possible vacancies.
- Applicants should regularly check the status of their application in Track to find out if they are eligible for Clearing.

On A Level results day (13 August), eligible applicants will be able to add choices from 15:00 (UK time). Applicants who have conditional firm (CF) and conditional insurance (CI) choices are not eligible for Clearing until both the CF and CI universities/colleges have confirmed they will not offer places. Applicants sometimes know informally that they have been unsuccessful before we receive the official decision. In these circumstances, they should allow a little time for the decision to be processed. If there is a significant delay, they should contact the universities or colleges directly to discuss this.

There are two ways for students to find places:

Clearing Plus - with Clearing Plus, finding the right match has never been easier:

- Applicants in Clearing can view a list of courses they have personally been matched to in Track - all they need to do is click the 'View matches' button.
- They can browse from a list of courses they have been matched to based on their application and what the universities and colleges have told us what they are looking for.
- If they find a course they want to be considered for, they should click the 'I'm interested' button and their details will be passed to the university or college.
- If the university or college still has places, they may reach out to discuss things further and make an offer.
- If a student receives an offer, they should add it as a Clearing choice so their place can be confirmed.

Searching for courses - official Clearing course vacancy information is only published by UCAS in their search tool from 6 July. There are over 35,000 courses for students to choose from.

When an applicant finds a course they are interested in, they should talk to the university or college - if they share their Clearing number the provider can look up their application. If they then secure a verbal offer, the applicant can then add the choice in Track.

More information is available on the UCAS Clearing page.

Adjustment

Adjustment is an optional service for applicants who meet and exceed the conditions of their firm choice. It gives them an opportunity to reconsider where and what to study, without losing their secured place.

Adjustment is open from 08:00 on 15 August until 31 August. During this time, applicants can register for Adjustment in Track.

They then have five days to secure an alternative place. If they do not, they remain accepted at their original confirmed place.

For more information visit the UCAS Adjustment page.

A summary of adjustment:

- It is optional.
- Adjustment allows applicants to seek an alternative course without losing their secured place.
- The Adjustment process runs from 08:00 on 15 August until 31 August.
- An applicant has five calendar days to use Adjustment, from 15 August, or the day their status changes from CF to UF.
- If an applicant registers for Adjustment in error, please do not worry, and do not take any further action.
- When the five day period is over, their original place will remain unchanged.
- There are no Adjustment vacancy lists. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact a university or college to discuss an Adjustment place.
- To secure an Adjustment place, the applicant must have received an alternative offer through UCAS before the five day period ends.
- If an applicant does not receive an alternative place, they remain accepted at their current university or college.
- Single entry applicants need to pay an additional application fee of £5 to use Adjustment.
- Applicants who are in Adjustment should make it clear when contacting universities or colleges whether they are enquiring or agreeing to accept an offer. If the applicant is 'claimed' in Adjustment, they will not be able to keep their previous UF choice.

Introduction of Clearing Plus

For the first time, from 6 July, students who find themselves in Clearing can view a list of courses they have personally been matched to in Track – alongside the search tool, which contains over 30,000 course options.

How will it work?

If students find themselves unplaced, there are still plenty of universities and colleges looking for students just like them. Clearing Plus means finding the right alternative has never been easier:

1. If students find themselves in Clearing, there will be a new 'View matches' button in Track.
2. Once they click this they can start browsing courses they have been matched to based on their application and what universities and colleges have told us they are looking for. Student lists are dynamic and will update as their application updates. For example, when students get their grades and depending on the spaces universities and colleges have remaining.
3. If they find a course they want to be considered for, they should click the 'I'm interested' button and their details will be passed to the relevant university/college.

4. If the university or college still has places, they may reach out to discuss things further and make an offer.
5. If your students receive an offer, they just need to add it as a Clearing choice in Track so their place can be confirmed.

Although Clearing Plus is designed to enhance the process of finding another place, it is important unplaced students remain proactive. They can still also use the search tool to browse all official Clearing vacancies and contact universities and colleges directly to discuss options, as they usually would in Clearing.

Awarding of results

As you will know, the Summer exam series has not taken place and grades will be awarded differently. UCAS are closely monitoring the situation and have collated information on how the UK is intending to award results on their Corona virus hub.

Although the process for awarding grades may be different, the admissions process to confirm students' places will remain broadly similar to previous years. UCAS are expecting to receive the calculated results from many awarding bodies and will process those in the normal way and pass them on to the universities and colleges to confirm places.

EU and international students receiving calculated grades should follow the normal processes and confirm their results with their chosen universities and colleges. There is more information for international students on the Corona virus hub.

Embargo timings

JCQ has changed their 2020 results embargo timings. This is the period before A Level results day, where early access to embargoed examination results is given. This allows universities and colleges to prepare and make decisions by the official publication dates of exam results. It also gives teachers, advisers and exam centres time to plan for the publication dates. Results cannot be shared or discussed with applicants.

Instead of lifting at 06:00 (UK time), the JCQ results embargo has been extended until 08:00 (UK time) on A Level results day, 13 August 2020.

Once the embargo has lifted at 08:00 (UK time) on A Level results day, Thursday 13 August:

- Results can be shared with students and they will be able to access UCAS Track to check the status of their application.
- Universities and colleges can start contacting applicants and are able to discuss an individual's status with them.

To see the full list of qualifications under embargo, take a look at JCQ's website.

Self-release insights

Last year 28,000 applicants used the functionality to withdraw from their confirmed place and release themselves into Clearing, saving time and giving them direct control over their application.

The same functionality will be available again this year for all placed applicants and UCAS will also be capturing the reasons students release in Track, to provide greater insight.

Here is a recap on how it works:

- In Track, applicants click the 'Decline my place' button on their homepage.
- They are taken to a page which explains what they are about to do and to a drop-down question which they must complete. This is where UCAS will capture their reason for releasing, before confirming.
- The applicant will then receive an email to confirm they are in Clearing and advising them to phone the university or college they declined if they have made a mistake.

As with last year, if applicants want to stay at the same university or college but swap the course they are studying, they should contact the provider as they may be able to arrange the swap without declining their place.

Key dates and deadlines

Dates	What you can expect (UK times provided)
18:00 on 30 June	UCAS Undergraduate applications received after 30 June are entered into Clearing.
5 July	Last day for applicants to add an Extra choice in Track.
5 July	Publication of International Baccalaureate results.
6 July onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing opens and vacancies are displayed in the search tool. • Clearing Plus matches will be available to all unplaced applicants. • Clearing numbers automatically show in Track for eligible applicants. • Applicants holding a place can release themselves into Clearing, using the 'Decline my place' button in Track.
7 July	UCAS provides International Baccalaureate results to universities and colleges for processing.

7 August at 14:00 – 13 August at 08:00	<p>JCQ results embargo, during this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track for applicants will not be updated • Adviser Portal will not be updated. Universities and colleges cannot discuss any applicants' individual status with them, or with an adviser.
13 August	<p>Publication of GCE AS and A Level results. Publication of reformed BTEC results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 06:30: UCAS social media support available. • 07:30 (TBC): UCAS Schools Team available for advisers. • 08:00: 'Not placed' applicant status email will be sent to Adviser Portal users. • 08:00: Adviser Portal available. • 08:00: UCAS Customer Experience Centre opens for applicants. • 08:00: UCAS Undergraduate Track available. • 08:00: Adjustment opens and runs until 31 August. • 15:00: Eligible applicants can add a Clearing choice in Track. • 19:00: UCAS Customer Experience Centre, social media support, and Schools Team closes.
20 August	Publication of GCSE results. Applicants awaiting GCSE results will need to send these directly to their chosen universities or colleges.
28 August at 18:00	Last date for receipt of 2020 entry UCAS Conservatoires applications.
31 August	Adjustment closes.
7 September	Remaining offer conditions must be met.
20 September at 18:00	Last date for receipt of 2020 entry UCAS Undergraduate applications.
30 September	Clearing vacancy information closes.
20 October	Last date to add Clearing choices in Track and for universities/colleges to make decisions.

Preparing for results day

Have everything ready

Results day can be stressful, so make sure you know how it works and what to expect.

- Have your Track sign in details handy and update your contact details if you need to.
- Make sure you are available on results day, because UCAS cannot speak to anyone else about your application details unless you give them nominated access to speak on your behalf.
- Check how your exam results get to your universities/colleges, most come directly to UCAS from the awarding organisations and they send them on to your choices. But if not, you just send your exam results to your universities or colleges yourself.

What happens?

Hopefully you will get the exam grades you need, but if you just miss out, the university or college might accept you anyway.

- You might get a place on either your firm or insurance choice, depending how well your exams go.
- You might be offered an alternative by the university/college - a 'changed course offer' (which you will need to accept or decline).
- You might not get a place, but you can search through the Clearing service to see what courses still have vacancies.

If no decisions are showing, give your universities or colleges a call to find out more.

Other options

If you do better than expected...

- If you had a conditional firm offer you met and exceeded, you might be curious about courses with higher entry requirements.
- If so, you can see what's available in the Adjustment service.

If things don't go to plan...

- Find info about exam reviews and appeals. You will need to try to arrange the review as quickly as possible and keep in touch with your university or college to keep them up-to-date.
- Look for course vacancies in the Clearing service, or look into other options like a gap year, work or an apprenticeship, either instead of higher education, or just while you reapply for next year.

Then if you've got a place...

Congratulations! Your Confirmation letter should appear in Track five to seven days after your place is confirmed (your letter is not emailed or posted to you).

Make sure you check your Confirmation letter carefully, it will say if there is anything else you need to do, or if your university or college will be in touch with further instructions; maybe to provide proof of your qualifications or medical requirements for example.

Clearing Guide for Parents

Need to know:

- UCAS does not send results to students, they come from the exam board either via school, by post, or online.
- Due to the cancellation of Summer exams, this year's grades will be 'calculated'. UCAS have collated information from awarding bodies across the UK to explain how this will work.
- UCAS will receive most calculated grades, check the list they receive which they will match to applicant records. These will be made available to universities and colleges. For qualifications UCAS does not match students will need to send their results direct to their choices.
- When universities have students' results they will check the offer details and confirm if the conditions have been met.
- If the university confirms a place, this will be shown clearly in Track for applicants.
- Students who find themselves without a place will be eligible to use Clearing.

Supporting someone in Clearing

From 6 July, Clearing is a chance for students to look for a place if they don't have one after they have received their exam results.

It is also the final chance for universities to fill any places they still have available.

There is lots of information on how Clearing works but as a parent supporting a student, here are our top tips when supporting someone using Clearing.

Before results...

- Use trusted sources - official Clearing vacancies are only available on ucas.com. These are updated throughout Clearing, based on the places universities and colleges have available.
- Do plenty of research, read UCAS' information on exam results including key timings, what to expect and how to prepare. Clearing courses are available in the UCAS search tool from 6 July, so there is no harm in looking to see what is available before results day.
- Regularly check Track, this is where students can find the latest updates on their application and can reply to their offers.
- Make sure we have the correct contact details, otherwise students could miss important updates.
- Go through offer conditions before results are released, so students are able to make the right decisions when their exam results are published.
- Check how students will receive results, as exam results are not shown in Track. It only shows if an application has been successful or not. Students will receive their results from their exam centre, and depending on social distancing guidelines there may be specific rules in places at schools and colleges. Make sure you are clear on the process.

When results are released...

- Stay positive, if your child does not get their place, there is no need to panic. There will be plenty of places available in Clearing, so encourage them to look at the options available.
- Review their matches in Track. Students in Clearing can click the 'My matches' button in Track, to see a list of courses they have been personally matched to based on their application. They are able to tell universities and courses if they are 'interested' and their details will be passed to the provider to consider. If the provider has places they will be in touch.

- Use the UCAS search tool to browse courses. It is the only official vacancy list, so it is the most up-to-date on results day. Here students can view the entire range of courses on offer, if they want consider different subjects or course types.
- Talk to current students. They can chat to current students through *Unibuddy*, to find out more about their experiences and get the inside view.
- Take a virtual tour. This is perfect if students are looking at different campuses they have not been able to visit.
- Add their Clearing choice in Track. If they have been in touch with a university and secured a place, make sure they add it as their Clearing choice in Track. Once it is confirmed they can get ready to study.

What happens if they change their mind?

It's not a problem. If students no longer want to go to their firm choice, they can use the 'decline your place' button in Track from 6 July. This will mean they will be entered into Clearing and can look for another place.

If their results are better than expected and they want to see if they can get a place on an alternative course, they can use Adjustment which allows them to look for alternatives while still holding their place.

Key timings on A Level results day

A level results day – 13 August (all UK times)

06:30	UCAS social media support available.
	UCAS Customer Experience Centre opens for applicants. Students can sign in to Track.
08:00	Adjustment opens and runs until 31 August.
15:00	Eligible applicants can add a Clearing choice in Track.
19:00	UCAS Customer Experience Centre and social media support closes.