

UCAS 2023 EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

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What's new for 2023?

- UCAS advisers will be able to access the adviser portal from 07:00 (UK time) on 17 August, during embargo, to identify those students who may need extra support and guidance.
- Students will be able to access their application from 08:00 (UK time) on JCQ results day.
- Applicants will be able to add a Clearing Choice to their application from 13:00 (UK time) on JCQ results day.
- Universities and colleges will be able to add a reason, or reasons, to explain to applicants why their conditional offer is still conditional in the Hub.

Confirmation of places

Confirmation of university and college places mostly happens following the release of summer results. Applicants will receive details of what they need to do, and when, through their application, or directly from their university or college.

Confirmation decisions and the CU12 Confirmation letter for UCAS Conservatoires applicants are shown in their application.

While universities and colleges receive grades and make their decisions, we enter into an embargo period...

What is the embargo?

Each year, UCAS and 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.

Centres may also receive examination results from awarding organisations prior to the publication dates. In many cases these will be issued under a separate embargo between the awarding organisation and the centre which must also be upheld.

The JCQ results embargo periods for 2023 are:

11 August at 14:00 (UK time) – 17 August at 08:00 (UK time)

During the results embargo periods:

- Applications will not be updated.
- Universities and colleges cannot discuss an applicant's individual status with them, or with an adviser.
- The adviser portal will not be updated until 07:00 (UK time) on 17 August when advisers will have access to updated applicant statuses. Advisers must follow the embargo terms

What your status in your application means and what to do next

Waiting for confirmation

You're waiting for confirmation of your choices. If you meet the offer conditions, the university/college will confirm your place. Send them your results if requested.

UCAS are waiting for your university or college to let us know if you've met the conditions and have been accepted.

If you meet the conditions of your offer(s), the university or college will confirm your place in your application. (You then might need to send them details of your results if they ask for them.)

Congratulations - you've been placed at your firm choice [university or college] to study [course]!

You'll soon hear from [university or college] with some next steps, make sure you check the details carefully.

Great news! You're in. You've been firmly accepted at the university or college shown

Make sure you check the details carefully in your application.

Then you should receive details from the university or college about what to do next.

Congratulations - you've been placed at your insurance choice [university or college] to study [course]!

You'll soon hear from [university or college] with some next steps, make sure you check the details carefully.

You have a place at your insurance choice but unfortunately haven't met the conditions for your firm choice.

Check the details of the course you have been placed on at your insurance choice university or college.

If this is definitely the course you would like to study, you don't need to do anything. You'll hear from the university or college with next steps shortly.

However, if you do not think your insurance choice is right for you, you have two options:

- you can contact your insurance choice university or college to discuss options
- you can use the 'Decline my place' button in your application to apply somewhere else through Clearing.

You've not been placed at your firm or insurance choices.

You are now in Clearing. We've matched you to similar courses to help you explore some options.

Unfortunately you didn't meet the conditions of the offers you received.

Don't worry, you can now find another course with the Clearing service.

Remember, if you're waiting for exam results, you won't be able to use Clearing until you receive them.

You can now apply for a course available in Clearing.

Look for courses when the Clearing vacancy search becomes live within the search tool, then contact the university or college to discuss your options.

Then if you get permission you can add the Clearing choice in your application.

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 their application. When they do this, they'll be asked why they've changed their mind.

Changed course offers - what do they mean and what to do next

If you log into your UCAS Hub and find that your chosen uni or college has offered you a place on a different course (or with substantial changes to what you originally applied for), don't panic.

Firstly, you're not the only one to receive this (many people receive changed course offers), and in fact it can turn out to be a good thing. Your chosen university or college still wishes to make you an offer, it's just for a different course, or it could be the same course with a different start date or point of entry.

You've been offered a place for a different course at your firm choice [university or college name]

- *You can accept this offer and be placed on the changed course, or*
- *Decline this offer and be placed with your insurance choice.*
- *Go to your application to check the details.*

This means your firm choice university or college has offered you a changed course, but your insurance choice has offered you an unconditional place for the course you applied to.

The changed course offer could be a change to the course itself, the start date or the point of entry. This is usually if you didn't meet the conditions but the university or college wants to offer you an alternative place anyway.

Check the details of the changed course offer in your application.

If the changed course is one you would like to study, accept the offer in your application.

Or decline the offer in your application and you'll be placed at your insurance choice.

You've been offered a place for a different course at your firm choice [university or college name]

- *If you are happy with the changes to your firm choice, call UCAS on 0371 4680 468 to accept the offer.*
- *Alternatively, wait for your insurance choice to make a decision, before deciding whether to accept or decline the offer from your firm choice.*
- *Go to your application to check the details.*

This means your firm choice university or college has offered you a changed course, but your insurance choice hasn't made a decision yet.

The changed course offer could be a change to the course itself, the start date or the point of entry. This is usually if you didn't meet the conditions but the university or college wants to offer you an alternative place anyway.

Check the details of the changed course offer in your application.

If the changed course is one you would like to study, call UCAS on 0371 4680 468 to accept the offer.

Or you can wait for your insurance choice to make a decision, before deciding whether to accept or decline the offer from your firm choice.

You've been offered a place for a different course at both your firm and insurance choices.

- *You can choose which of these changed courses to accept*
- *Go to your application to review the changes.*

This means your firm AND insurance choices have offered you a changed course.

The changed course offer could be a change to the course itself, the start date or the point of entry. This is usually if you didn't meet the conditions but the universities or colleges want to offer you an alternative place anyway.

Check the details of the changed course offers in your application.

Accept the course you would like to study in your application.

Or if neither appeal to you, you can decline both in your application and you will need to use Clearing to apply to a new course.

You've been offered a place for a different course at your firm choice [university or college name]

- *You can accept or decline this changed course offer.*
- *If you decline you will need to use Clearing to apply to a new course.*
- *Go to your application to review the changes.*

This means your firm choice university or college has offered you a changed course and you don't have an insurance choice.

This could be a change to the course, start date or point of entry.

This is usually if you didn't meet the conditions but the university or college wants to offer you an alternative place anyway.

Check the details of the changed course offer in your application.

If the changed course is one you would like to study, accept the offer in your application.

Or decline the offer in your application and you will need to use Clearing to apply to a new course.

IMPORTANT: If you want to accept an offer, you'll need to reply in your application within five days or you will lose the offer(s).

Clearing

Clearing is how unis and colleges fill any places they still have on their courses.

From 5 July – 17 October 2023, you can apply for a course using Clearing if you're not already holding an offer from a university or college, and the course still has places.

You can use Clearing if:

- you're applying after 30 June
- you didn't receive any offers (or none you wanted to accept)
- you didn't meet the conditions of your offers
- you've paid the multiple choice application fee of £27
- you've declined your firm place using the 'decline my place' button in your application

Official Clearing course vacancy information is only published by UCAS in their search tool from 5 July.

There are approximately 35,000 courses for students to choose from.

When an applicant finds a course they're interested in, they should talk to the uni 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 their application.

More information is available on the UCAS Clearing page.

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've personally been matched to in their application – all they need to do is click the 'View matches' button.
- Applicants can browse from a list of courses they've been matched to based on their application and the students universities and colleges have told us they're looking for.
- Applicants can 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.
- Applicants can make up to five expressions of interest at any one time. If the university or college still has places, they may reach out to discuss things further and make an offer.
- If applicants receive an offer, all that's left to do is to add it as a Clearing choice in their application so their place can be confirmed.

Don't worry, if you want to apply for something different, you can still find courses available in Clearing using the search tool.

How do your Clearing matches work?

Clearing matches are only available if you're unsuccessful with your application or are applying for the first time for a place in Clearing. You'll be able to 'view your matches' in your UCAS Hub.

Here's how it works:

1. First, we look at the original choices you applied for, combined with your qualifications and grades.
2. Universities and colleges have already told us what courses they'd like to make available (only relevant courses are included in your matches), and the entry requirements for them.
3. Then, we analyse what students in Clearing went on to study in previous years.
4. The UCAS team then matches your profile to each course.

Remember, courses in Clearing fill up quickly, and you may not always receive a call, so we recommend you also keep your options open and look for courses using Clearing.

How do I apply using Clearing?

1. Ask for advice

Talk to an adviser at your school, college, centre, or careers office – they can talk you through alternative courses/subjects. If you're applying independently, you'll find everything you need to know about the Clearing process here, on ucas.com.

2. See what courses are available

Use the search tool to find courses – it's the only official vacancy list, so it's the most up-to-date. If you can't find the course you're looking for:

- consider different subjects – you don't have to stick with your original idea. You could also look at joint honours courses, so you can study a mix of subjects
- keep checking – unis update their course information regularly. You might not find the exact unis/colleges/courses you were looking for – some might be full, but some might get vacancies later on
- check the course details – how is it structured each year? What modules make up each year? What are the entry requirements?

3. Contact any unis or colleges you're interested in

Before you add a Clearing choice in your application, you need to contact the university/college and give them your Clearing number (you can find this in your application), and Personal ID, so they can look it up.

- Ask if they'd accept you – they might reconsider you (maybe for the same course) even if you applied to them earlier in the year.
- Get informal offers – maybe from a variety of universities and colleges – then decide which one you want to accept.
- Ask about accommodation options – are there any on-campus?
- Take a look around the campus – if you have the time, it's the best way to see what a university/college is like – most will be happy to meet you and show you around. Alternatively, see if they have a virtual tour or a virtual open day.

4. Add your Clearing choice in your application

Only add a Clearing choice once you have permission from the university or college.

- Click 'Add Clearing choice', and fill in the course details by the date the university/college gave you.
- This counts as you definitely accepting the offer, so if they confirm, it'll show as an acceptance on your 'Choices' page in your application.
- You can only add one choice at a time, but if the university/college doesn't confirm your place, you'll be able to add another.
- If the university/college confirms your place, find your student accommodation and then make sure you get everything ready to start your studies.

Decline my place

Last year over 37,000 applicants used the functionality to withdraw from their confirmed place and use the 'decline my place' button to 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

How it works:

- Applicants click the 'Decline my place' button in their application.
- They're taken to a page which explains what they're about to do, and a drop-down question which they must complete – this is where we'll capture their reason for releasing – before confirming.
- The applicant will then receive a notification to confirm they're in Clearing, and advising them to phone the university or college they declined if they've made a mistake.

As in previous years, if applicants want to stay at the same university or college but swap the course they're studying, they should contact the provider as they may be able to arrange the swap without declining their place.

The options presented to an applicant after clicking 'decline my place' are:

- I want to go to my insurance choice.

As the applicant is now placed at their firm choice, their insurance choice has automatically been declined. However, their insurance choice might still be able to offer them a place through Clearing. They'll need to contact their insurance choice to discuss their options. If they have places available, and give permission,

the applicant will need to select 'I want to apply somewhere else'. They will then be able to add a Clearing choice.

- I no longer wish to go to university this year.

If the applicant doesn't want to go to university this year, they might be able to defer their place until next year – they'll need to contact their firm choice to discuss this. If they are sure they do not want to defer their place until next year, they can use the 'decline your place' button and select 'I want to apply somewhere else'. If they change their mind, they can still use Clearing to apply elsewhere.

- I want to apply somewhere else.

The applicant will be ending the contract they have with their unconditional firm choice university or college. They cannot undo this action. If they change their mind, they will still be able to use Clearing to apply elsewhere.

- I have done better in my exams than I expected and want to change my course.

If the applicant's exam results turn out better than expected and they not only meet but exceed the conditions of their conditional firm offer, they can decline their place and apply through Clearing. If they use Clearing Plus, they will be signposted to relevant universities with spaces whose entry requirements match their results

- I want to change to a different course at the same uni/college.

If they are happy with the uni or college they are placed with but wish to change the course they'll be studying, the best thing to do is to give the uni or college a call. If they agree, they will send an updated offer for the new course.

The 'decline my place' reasons are:

- I have changed my mind, and no longer want to attend my current course and university.
- I have received an alternative offer elsewhere, and I prefer the content of the other course.
- I have received an alternative offer elsewhere, and I prefer the alternative university or college.
- I have received an alternative offer elsewhere, and have been offered a scholarship.
- I am unable to secure accommodation.
- I am unable/I do not want to relocate
- I am unable to pay the fees required to study here

Key Dates: 2023 dates

11 August at 14:00 – 17 August at 08:00 - Results embargo – during this time:

- applications will not be updated
- universities and colleges cannot discuss any applicants' individual status with them, or with an adviser
- the adviser portal will not be updated until 07:00 (UK time) on 17 August when advisers will have access to updated applicant statuses, so they can identify those who may need support. Advisers must not under any circumstances disclose the details relating to exam results, application status or mention anything which could be used to infer that information to applicants, parents, guardians, universities and colleges, or with any colleagues, who don't have access to this information through the adviser portal, until the embargo has lifted at 08:00 (UK time) on JCQ results day.

17 August - Publication of JCQ results.

- 07:00: UCAS Customer Success Team opens for advisers.
 - The adviser portal opens to allow you to check the status of your applicants and identify those who may need your support. If you go straight to the Tracking offers and decisions section for 2023 you will see the different confirmation decisions for your students. This status list will help you know the next steps for your students.
 - In the staff management section of the adviser portal, please review who has permission to view offers and decisions at your school or centre. It is important that anyone who can access this embargoed information is aware of the serious implications of breaching the embargo. In the staff management section of the adviser portal, please review who has permission to view offers and decisions at your school or centre. It is important that anyone who can access this embargoed information is aware of the serious implications of breaching the embargo.
- 08:00:
 - UCAS Customer Experience Centre and social media support opens for applicants.
 - UCAS Hub is open and students can access their applications.
- 13:00: Eligible applicants can add a Clearing choice.
- 18:00: UCAS Customer Success Team, social media support, and Customer Experience Centre closes.

24 August - Publication of GCSE results.

Applicants with outstanding GCSE results will need to send these directly to their chosen universities or colleges.

28 August at 18:00 - Last date for receipt of 2023 entry UCAS Conservatoires applications.

6 September - Remaining offer conditions must be met.

Last date for applicants to use the 'Decline my place' button in their application.

21 September at 18:00 - Last date for receipt of 2023 entry UCAS Undergraduate applications.

17 October - Last date to add Clearing choices and for unis/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 application sign in details handy and update your contact details if you need to.
- Make sure you're available on results day, because we can't 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 us from the awarding organisations, and we send them on to your choices. But if not, you just send your exam results to your universities or colleges yourself.

Have your documents ready

- What you really need: your UCAS number, your Clearing number, and results. The last two are particularly important if you enter Clearing to begin your uni search.
- Your Clearing number will be available on UCAS Hub if you've been rejected by your firm and insurance offer, or declined all your offers.

Get some support

- Don't underestimate the power of having a good support system. Have your close friends or family members go with you when it's time to collect your results at school.

Have a Plan B

- Your results might turn out differently than you expected. Having a Plan B, such as listing alternative degree and university choices with their contact details, is something you want to have, so you can swiftly take action once all your feelings have settled.

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.

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! We'll let you know in your application when your place is confirmed, and your chosen uni will send you details of what you need to do next.

Clearing Guide for Parents

Supporting someone in Clearing

As a parent supporting a student, here are some top tips when helping someone using Clearing, both before and after results day.

Before results day

Before results day is all about getting prepared. Make sure you're informed about what's going on and help your child to get organised for the big day.

- Know the process: Understanding what Clearing is all about will help you give any support your child needs. Read through the UCAS guide about how Clearing works.
- See what's available: When clearing opens on 5 July, there's no harm in seeing what's available before results day. Remember, official Clearing vacancies are only available in the UCAS search tool and are updated based on the places universities and colleges have available.
- Keep checking: Encourage your child to check their application regularly in the lead-up to Clearing. This is where students can find the latest updates and reply to their offers. Make sure they can access their UCAS account before results day and that all their contact details are right, so they don't miss important updates.
- Talk about plan B: Make sure they know what grades they need for their choices before results are released so they can make the right decisions when exam results are published. It might be helpful to have a back-up plan in case they need to choose a different option.
- Talk to current students: Encourage your child to chat to current students to learn more about their experiences and get an inside view.
- Check how they'll receive results: Exam results aren't shown in the UCAS application. It only shows if the application has been successful or not. Students will receive their results from their exam centre, so make sure you're clear on the process.

When results are released

When results are released, focus on providing all the reassurance you can. Make sure you're there to support and listen – it's the most important thing you can do.

- Be positive and supportive: Remember, there's no need to panic or rush into a decision. It's OK to take a step back and figure it all out. Give reassurance, stay calm, and remain positive.
- Get prepared: Make sure they have everything in front of them. Clearing often involves speaking to different universities over the phone – having grades and personal details written down can help them keep calm. Encourage them to take regular breaks, as it can be a long day.
- If they no longer want to go to their firm choice: If they've changed their mind about where they want to go, they can use the 'Decline my place' button in their application to release themselves into Clearing from a firm unconditional place. More about declining their firm place.
- Review their matches in Clearing Plus: Applicants in Clearing can click the 'My matches' button in their application, to see a list of courses they've been personally matched to. They can tell universities and courses if they're 'interested' and their details will be passed to the provider to consider. If the provider has places, they'll be in touch.
- Use the search tool to browse courses: It's the only official vacancy list, so it's the most up-to-date on results day. Here you can view the entire range of courses on offer if they want to consider different subjects or course types.

- Take a virtual tour: These are perfect if they're looking at universities they've not been able to visit and are a great way to get a feel for a place.
- Add their Clearing choice in their application: If they've been in touch with a uni and secured a place, make sure they add it as their Clearing choice in their application. Once it's confirmed they can get ready to study.

After they've made their decision

Once the Clearing process is over, you can still provide helpful support and advice to guide them through their next steps.

- Help them prepare: If your child managed to get a place in Clearing, it's an exciting time and they're off to uni. Guide them through it by looking at some of our resources like how to prepare for uni and what to pack.
- Support mind changes: If they didn't get or want a place through Clearing, or decided to take a different route altogether, keep an open mind and continue to be supportive. You could help them apply again in 2024 or look at alternative options such as apprenticeships if that would be better suited to their learning styles.