

## Year 13 – University application updates April 2020

I hope you are enjoying some free time at home and finding new hobbies or interests to keep you busy. Please be reassured Year 13s across the whole nation are all in the same position as you, so don't worry!

There is a whole section on the UCAS website dedicated to information and advice about how Coronavirus affects your university applications, this can be found at <https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus>.

### **UCAS are working with universities and colleges and the Government to support you in these unprecedented times**

The Government has asked universities and colleges across the UK to temporarily stop making unconditional offers to students that are yet to receive their results. This is because they are worried you'll feel pressured to accept these offers over others you might be better suited to.

UCAS advises students who have already received an unconditional offer to always consider whether this is the right provider and course for you, before you make any decision.

To give you time to make your decision – and to understand more about how qualifications will be awarded this summer, UCAS have extended their offer deadline for UCAS Undergraduate applicants to 18:00 (UK time) on 18 June.

During this time, it is important to remember that places are not decided on grades alone. Information in your personal statement and reference are part of the decision-making process along with your interview, portfolio, audition, and any other information that's relevant to your potential to succeed on an undergraduate course.

## **FAQs on University Offers and Admissions**

### **Accepting University Offers**

#### **I have heard from all my universities, should I accept my offers?**

There is no rush to accept your offers, indeed, if you heard from all universities by 31<sup>st</sup> March, the **deadline has been extended to 18<sup>th</sup> June**. Universities are very keen to reassure that there is no advantage to early acceptance – the only exception is when accommodation is distributed in application order – this is rare and you will need to check university accommodation pages for this.

Only accept your offers when you are clear on what your firm and insurance choices should be – use virtual tours, course guides to investigate the universities more.

**Do not be drawn in by unconditional offers, if they are not for your preferred universities.**

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/replying-your-ucas-undergraduate-offers>

**I am waiting to hear from one or more university(ies). Should I wait for them to reply before responding to my offers?**

If you know that you would not choose the university(ies) that you are yet to hear from as either a firm or insurance choice, there is no need to wait for them. On UCAS Track, withdraw from those specific universities and then you will be able to respond to offers. If you would consider the university(ies) you are yet to hear from, then do wait for them, **you have until 18<sup>th</sup> June to respond**. You do not lose out by waiting longer.

**How do I confirm my university choices?**

Logon to UCAS Track, click on the button/link that says “respond to offers”. Then select a firm choice. If this is unconditional, all others will be rejected. If it is a conditional offer, then you can then choose an insurance choice, after which all others will be rejected.

**Changing universities /courses**

**Can I change the course I am applying to but keep the university(ies) the same?**

This may be possible.

If you want to continue to apply to the same university(ies), then contact those universities and ask them if they would consider your application for the alternative course. If this is a minor change – e.g. within the same faculty, it is normally straightforward. Similarly, if it is at a less competitive institution, it is also normally more possible. It does not benefit the university to have students studying the wrong subject.

**Can I change my application to a different university?**

This may be possible. You need to use the process called UCAS Extra (or Clearing) which is available from 6<sup>th</sup> July.

First of all, check that the course you would like to apply to still has space – do this through UCAS.com and filter by courses with vacancies in the undergraduate search. Then contact the university you are interested in, and double check they have space and ask whether they will consider you.

If you have confirmed the vacancies elsewhere, then you need to withdraw from your other choices on UCAS. You will then be able to add choices one at a time (you cannot apply to multiple courses – you need to apply to one, wait to hear back, then if unsuccessful you can apply to another etc.) using UCAS Extra. For more information <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/extra-choices>

**Think carefully before doing this – you cannot undo the cancellation of the previous offers.** Bear in mind your personal statement will be gearing towards another course, but universities are understanding of this if you have good reason for changing the course.

## Changing start dates

### Can I defer my university place?

This is often possible but is at the discretion of the universities you have applied to or accepted offers from. Contact the university(ies) directly and ask if they will consider deferring your place to 2021. It is better if you have good reason for this, and you should always have a plan to make your gap year beneficial and purposeful.

### Can I bring my course start date from 2021 to 2020?

As with deferring places, this is at the is at the discretion of the universities you have applied to or accepted offers from. Contact the university(ies) directly and ask if they will consider bringing your place to 2020.

### Will universities be starting as normal in September/October?

It is impossible to say at this stage what university terms will look like in the Autumn and what form they will take. Universities are planning to start the year as normal. That said, they are putting in contingency plans for both remote starts, and (so we have heard) potentially January starts. **As it stands though, you should expect to start in Sept/Oct as currently planned.**

### I am concerned that the university experience I am looking forward to won't actually happen?

It is impossible to say what things will look like in the Autumn. You should expect to be starting university as expected in the Autumn and in location. Even if you the start is remote at that stage, there is no doubt that, when university life returns to normal, you will experience every aspect of university life to its full.

We would also ask – if you we are still socially distancing at that time, what else would you be doing? We would suggest it better to get on with studying, remotely if it is the case, knowing that the university life that you are looking forward to will come your way soon.

## Applying overseas

### Could I still apply for a university overseas?

If you would like to consider an overseas university, then it is certainly not too late. There remain many affordable universities across the globe which would suit many of you very well, with later deadlines and/or rolling admissions. Whilst a lot of scholarship deadlines will have passed, there remain excellent universities which are the same cost, if not better than UK universities. An advantage of these is that they will often consider applications more holistically and make unconditional offers, taking away the uncertainty of the summer grades.

Many universities overseas (and some in the UK) also offer starts at other dates during the year, which you could apply for.

## University grade offers

### Are universities likely to show flexibility on the summer grades and their entry offers?

In recent years universities, particularly the less competitive ones, have shown a fair degree of flexibility on the exam grades they will accept. This year, they are aware of the examination cancellations and the process of issuing grades, and we anticipate a similar flexibility, helped by being part of a smaller cohort of Year 13 students nationally and potential issues with international student numbers. There is no guarantee of this, however, and there have been some unconfirmed rumours of a cap on student numbers for universities this year, which could limit the flexibility. That said, we would be surprised if numbers in the quota would be lower than last year's intake (an opinion – not a fact), so we would expect a similar flexibility as normal.

### Are universities likely to make more offers unconditional?

Governments across the UK have asked universities to temporarily stop making unconditional offers to students that are yet to receive their results.

## Clearing

### What date does clearing open?

Clearing opens on 6<sup>th</sup> July, so you will be able to apply to it, if needed, once you have your results. **Please be aware, the Government have confirmed you will receive your results on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August, as originally planned.** You can view more information on Clearing here: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing>

## Accommodation and finance

### Should I be applying for accommodation as soon as the portals open?

All universities have different ways of allocating accommodation. The majority will consider all who apply by a certain date in random order, so there is no application date priority. However, you should check each individual university's undergraduate accommodation pages for direction on this. Remember – university YouTube channels and Virtual Tours are excellent ways to explore university accommodation and using UCAS Chat to Students is an excellent way to get the inside scoop on accommodation! (links below)

If you are taking a gap year, then you are unlikely to need to apply until Spring 2021, but do check your emails from your chosen universities to confirm this.

## Should I be applying for student finance?

Yes – it will probably take longer to process your student finance application this year as people are likely to be working remotely. Therefore, do apply for student finance if you are due to start university in the Autumn. Ideally you have made your firm and insurance choices when you apply, but you can still make the application before those choices have been made.

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance> and <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/student-finance/>

## Useful links:

### University Virtual Tours, Open Days and Videos:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/open-days-and-events/virtual-tours>

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/scheme/virtual-and-digital?keywords=> (specific to webinars and virtual open days)

<https://www.opendays.com/>

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/open-days/search>

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) – search for your chosen university

<https://www.ucas.com/chat-to-students> - chat to current students at a wide variety of universities

### UCAS Guides:

Responding to offers - <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/replying-your-ucas-undergraduate-offers>

UCAS Extra: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/extra-choices>

Making changes - <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/making-changes-your-ucas-undergraduate-application>

### Student Finance:

Student Finance application portal: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

Excellent guidance on Student Finance: <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/student-finance/>

### Overseas Universities:

Information on Netherlands universities including virtual open days for research and applied universities: <https://www.eunicas.ie/index.php/news-updates/>

Lots of US Colleges have virtual tours here: <https://www.youvisit.com/collegesearch/> and here <https://campustours.com/>

Watch webinars from universities across the globe here: <https://explore.cialfo.co/webinars>

Amazing set of webinars and podcasts here: <https://www.theuniversityguys.com/knowledge/>

**If you have any further queries or questions, please don't hesitate to contact me on [gjoyce@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:gjoyce@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk)**

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