

APPLYING TO UK UNIVERSITIES

Notes for students applying in 2020-21, to start in September 2021

DEADLINE: We recommend applications are complete by November 30th 2020
(For Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine by October 1st 2020)

APPLY ONLINE: at home or school, through www.ucas.com/apply
Applications open in June, for submission after September 1st.

COST: £25 by credit card, paid online with your application

BUZZWORD: You must use the school buzzword eea2021

COURSE CHOICES

Choose your subject or subjects, making a coherent set of choices. There are a vast number of subjects, and combinations, to study in the UK. Often you don't need prior knowledge of the subject. Most UK jobs are open to all graduates: your choice of subject is of secondary importance to your general ability, skills, motivation and personality. Going to a prestigious University is also very important in terms of future career prospects. If you're returning to Spain or another country later, choose a course with a straightforward title which another country will understand and accept. Some students take a 'gap year': they can apply in 2020-21 for a place for Sept 2022, or they can wait for their BAC mark and make a post-BAC application. UK Universities are very happy about 'gap years' as students often make a better choice of course and are more mature.

UNIVERSITIES

You can only apply to FIVE University courses. Make a shortlist of five Universities, usually FOUR which you really like, and ONE which is a reserve if you get low grades. Consider location, prestige, facilities, size, costs, exchange programmes, specializations, etc.

PREPARATION

Start by using Course Search on the www.ucas.com: there are links from here to all University courses. Courses sometimes give an indication of the marks required in the European Baccalaureate but you may need to search carefully. If not, send a quick email asking what their EBac requirements are. Follow the useful Unistats links too. You may also use some (virtual) University Open Days, often in late June and September. You can consult 'League Tables' but their value depends on their methodology and guessing whether the rankings will change or not. Look at The Guardian Guide on guardian.co.uk/education, or at The Times, or at QS World. Both also rank individual faculties. If you write to, phone, or email individual UK Universities they will send you a copy of their prospectus, and they also answer questions.

POINTS SCORE

Your choices should require a BAC score of roughly what you expect to get – and one choice should be a lower (reserve) choice. The school will not support unrealistic applications. In past years, final BAC grades have differed from Yr 6 final grades by an average (downwards) of 1%. Remember: students are selected for their overall ability, experience, motivation, and profile: just getting the exam points is not enough (they are not *notas de corte*).

REFERENCE

Choose an Anglophone teacher to be your referee. They prepare a 500 word reference in support of your application highlighting your good points. They also give your predicted marks, based on teacher estimates and your Yr 6 final marks. The reference is 'open'.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is limited to around 600 words, and can be pasted in from Word. Content includes:

1. Your motivation for the degree course and future career ambitions
2. Your academic interests and books read to show your motivation and preparation
3. Relevant work experience and what you gained from it
4. Why you want to study in UK (especially if you're not a UK national)
5. Participation in activities, leadership roles, and why you're a nice person

TESTS (mainly Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, and Law students)

Register for BMAT and Oxford / Cambridge tests through Mr Roe (exams in November in school). For UKCAT (Medicine) and LNAT (Law) you must make your own arrangements.

INTERVIEWS

Most courses no longer interview students, for logistical reasons. But you can expect (virtual) interviews for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Nursing, Teaching, and some Art and Design courses.

GRADE COMPARISON

BAC	A LEVEL	RANGE OF UNIVERSITIES
8.5+	AAA/A*AA	Oxford, Cambridge, most medical schools
8.0	AAB	Other top Universities
7.7	ABB	Other good Universities
7.5	BBB	Good/middle ranking Universities
7.3	BBC	Middle-ranking Universities
7.0	BCC	Middle-ranking Universities
6.5	DDD	Lower-ranking Universities
6.0	DD	Lower-ranking Universities

BUT NOTE that this not a legal or a mathematical calculation. It will differ from one University to another. In many courses, you will also be asked for specific subject scores.

LEVEL OF ENGLISH

UK universities accept L1 and L2 from European Schools as sufficient evidence of English. They may ask for a specific mark in L1 or L2, such as 7.5. You do not normally need any other evidence of your level of English for a UK university course.

CONDITIONAL OFFERS and ACCEPTANCE

Each University will make you an offer, or reject you: the offer is normally based on overall BAC mark, but may include grades for particular subjects as well. By May, you usually hold two offers: one firm, one as insurance (lower mark). Your 'firm' university will always sort out accommodation for your first year. In July, you get your BAC mark, send it to the University and off you go! If you fail to reach your offer, you go to your second choice or you apply through 'Extra' for the empty places still available. Life will be easier if you are realistic!

FINANCE

Fees change for 2021. If you are an EU national, you will now pay international fees, which vary between £14,000 and £65,000, and no UK government loans are available. UK nationals and/or residents continue to pay £9,250 fees and loans are available for this and for help with living expenses. Your total overall living expenses will be about £10,000 (12.000€) per year, more in London. Most students in the UK work part-time and/or in the holidays to help meet this cost.