



University guide for students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL)



This leaflet covers aspects of the process of applying to University in England for students for whom English is an Additional Language and their families.

Top tips when choosing a university course

It is extremely helpful for young people to seek advice from a careers advisor.

Universities have their own specific entry requirements for each course they offer. Students should contact individual providers to find out what the entry requirements are.

Wherever possible, students should take up any opportunities available to visit a university before signing up, to see what the campus is like and to ask any questions.



University entry requirements

Universities set their own entry requirements for each course that they offer. These are grades and conditions that need to be met in order to apply for a course. It is important to research different universities and the courses that they offer to determine what the entry requirements are.

The entry requirements for a course might be listed in different ways:

- grades (typically for BTECs, A-Levels or T-Levels)
- UCAS tariff points
- UCAS tariff points with the additional requirement for a grade in a particular subject

How to apply for a University course

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is a UK-based organisation whose main role is to operate the application process for British universities. The UCAS tariff system assigns a points value to different grades for post-16 qualifications.

Applications for university are made via UCAS, on their online system called 'Apply'. Applications are typically made a year in advance of the start of the course. Full details about the application process can be found on the [UCAS website](#).

The UCAS website has a [tool](#) for calculating tariff points. This can be filled in using grades for qualifications that have already been completed or by using predicted grades for qualifications that are currently being completed.

Also on the UCAS website are [subject guides](#) to help explain what different subject areas have to offer, including possible jobs after graduation, entry requirements and personal statement tips.

Qualifications that are relevant when applying to University	
BTECs	BTEC stands for the Business and Technology Education Council. BTECs are specialist work-related qualifications which combine practical learning with subject and theory content. Universities tend to require students to have completed a BTEC National. This is a Level 3 qualification, a similar standard to A-Levels.
A-Levels	A-Levels (Advanced Level qualifications) are subject-based qualifications normally taken at a college or sixth form. The requirements needed to be able to take A-Levels will vary according to the provider. Students will typically take exams at the end of their A-Level courses to achieve this qualification. A* is the top grade and E is a pass.
T-Levels	T Levels are two-year technical courses designed with employers to give students skills for particular industries.

What courses are available at University?

Foundation courses are available for students who do not yet meet the requirements for a full undergraduate course. They can help students to build skills in the subject area and can be a good taster for students to see if they would like to go on to do the full undergraduate course.

There are many types of undergraduate courses, such as Bachelor degrees and degree level apprenticeships. There are over 50,000 undergraduate courses available at around 400 different providers in the UK.



Postgraduate courses such as Postgraduate Diplomas, Masters and PhDs can be taken once an undergraduate degree has been completed.

Further information about the various courses available can be found [here](#).

There are different ways of studying at a university. Some students live on campus; others continue to live at home and travel to the University when they need to be there eg for lectures, seminars and project work.

Some courses can be taken as either full-time or part-time, providing flexibility for those students who wish to find a job alongside their studies.

Fees

Universities charge two levels of fee: a lower fee for **home** students and a higher fee for **overseas** students. The criteria for who qualifies as a home student are set by the government of the country in which the university is situated. In the UK this could be England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Universities assess each student to determine if they are liable to pay the home or overseas fees. Generally in order to be classed as a home student, the following criteria must be met on the first day of the first academic year of the course:

- the student is settled in the UK with no immigration restriction on the length of their stay
- the student is ordinarily resident in the UK, and has been for the full three years before the first day of the academic year (ordinarily resident means that their main home is in the UK and they are choosing to live in the UK)
- the main reason for the student being in the UK is not to receive full-time education

Visit the [UK Council for International Student Affairs website](#) for further information.

Student loans and financial support

Students might be able to borrow money to help pay for tuition fees and living costs. Loans are repaid once a student earns a certain amount, and the size of the monthly repayment will depend on how much is earned. Interest is charged on the loan from the start.

Extra money might be available for those from a low income family, students who are disabled or those who have children. Further information about student finance, including a tool to work out how much could be borrowed, can be found on the government website.

Scholarships, bursaries and grants are sometimes available to help students in different situations. These do not need to be repaid. They tend to reward high achievement or support students with greater need, based on personal circumstances. Such financial support can be found by contacting UCAS or by looking at the websites and prospectuses of individual universities. Sometimes, charities and other organisations offer financial help too.

University hardship funds might also be available to those experiencing financial difficulties. Contact individual universities to check if they have a hardship fund.

English Language requirement for courses

As courses at universities in England are delivered in English (other than Modern Languages), students are required to have a sufficient level of English to be able to access the content of their chosen course. Students need to be able to attend and take part in lectures and seminars, submit assessments and complete coursework and examinations in English.



Universities have their own individual requirements for English Language, often varying according to the course. Check the course entry requirements for specific details.

Often, a GCSE in English Language (grade 4+) or a Functional Skills qualification in English (Level 2) will be sufficient evidence to demonstrate a student's command of English.

Otherwise, commonly recognised qualifications tend to include:

- International English Language Test System (IELTS)
- Pearson Test of English (PTE)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

Some universities also offer Pre-Sessional English Language courses designed to help students acquire the appropriate level of English prior to commencing an undergraduate course.

For further support

The [UCAS website](#) has a facility for young people to message current university students, to find out more about particular courses and universities, and to ask questions more generally about university life. The university students available to talk to can be filtered by university, course and home country.

There are **university open days** available to attend, offering prospective students a tour of the campus and facilities. This is also an opportunity for students to ask any questions they may have. Many universities offer virtual tours and open days too, if students are unable to attend in person.

Students can find out more about what a particular university or course is like by attending a **taster course**. Such courses can be for one day, a weekend, a whole week or even a few weeks over the summer. They provide students with the opportunity to experience what a course entails, students get to meet lecturers and other students already studying at the university, and the courses can offer an insight into the reality of life on campus.

Additionally, **UCAS hosts information events**, bringing together representatives from a range of universities and organisations. These events can help students with advice on applying for university, information on finance and general careers advice. Details of UCAS events can be found [here](#).

[Student Action for Refugees](#) offer information in other languages about degree study and bursaries aimed at refugee students.

For more information

Visit our website for our guidance on post-16 pathways: www.hants.gov.uk/emtas