
PREPARING FOR UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE

2022-2023

A Step-by-step guide for pupils



**St Thomas of Aquin's High
School**

UCAS

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UCAS apply

UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES
ADMISSIONS SERVICE FOR THE UK

getting started
completing your application

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1. Features of Apply

- UCAS Apply is a secure, web-based online application system requiring no installation. You can use it wherever there is access to the internet.
- Applications are saved at UCAS; applicants can't save information to disks, but any information/important details or references can be changed at any time.
- Applications will only be sent to UCAS when everything is checked and accepted. Only your Pupil Support Leader (Guidance Teacher)/School Coordinator can submit applications to UCAS.
- You will receive a welcome letter from UCAS confirming your details and the courses you have applied to.
- This welcome letter also provides your application number which you will need to access **TRACK** where you can follow the progress of your application, respond to offers and amend your personal details.
- **YOU SHOULD KEEP ALL CORRESPONDENCE FROM UCAS – just in case!**
- If any password needs changing, you need to call UCAS with your UCAS I.D.

1. Registration Procedures

Go to www.ucas.com/apply and then Select 2023 entry click 'apply'

On your first visit, do not enter a username and password but select register; **click next; accept the conditions; click school or college; type in the buzzword - stthomas2023 – case sensitive.** Make a note of your username and password as the school does not receive a copy of these.

Tutor Group – select your Pupil Support Leader (Guidance Teacher) from the drop-down list of names. Your tutor will be writing your reference and checking your form on a continuous basis. At this stage you can enter your smart card code and your details should appear. If this is not operational you will need to re-enter your details. Finally, enter a personal password and security question/answer. Click on 'send'

Your personal username is then created for you. **Take a note of your username and password and keep these in a safe place.** You will not be able to re- enter the system without these details.

2. Logging on to the UCAS system

You can log on to 'UCAS apply' anywhere with access to the web. From the apply web page you will always be prompted to enter your username and password.

If you have attempted to log on unsuccessfully several times or have shut down the browser rather than using log out of apply, you may be locked out of your account, you can try to log in again in an hour. After an hour of inactivity, apply will time out for security reasons.

If you forget your username or password, please contact UCAS who will ask for your unique I.D. number.

3. Navigating around the UCAS Apply site

To navigate through the apply screens use the next and previous buttons on each screen. It is not possible to use the web browsers to navigate through apply. To access any section, click on the appropriate section on the header. When you have entered the appropriate section, follow the onscreen instructions.

Online help

Help can be accessed by selecting 'help' from any screen in the apply section. The help text displayed will relate directly to the task you are completing at the time and will help you to complete your application successfully. There is also a Guide called 'Applying Online' which is available as a pdf document and gives all the background information for all sections of Apply. There will be copies made available in the Library should you want to refer to.

4. Completing your application

To access any section, click on the section name in the header of the apply screen and follow the onscreen instructions. It is possible to leave a section partially completed and return to it later. The status of sections are shown in the main screen as (i) not started, (ii) in progress or (iii) complete.

After completing a section you will need to select 'section finished' to change the status of the section to be completed. Any inaccurate or compulsory data left out will be highlighted in red to indicate it needs completing. The sections you should complete are outlined on the next page:

MAKING YOURSELF STAND OUT some tips

| Section 1: Courses | Section 2: About you |
|--|--|
| 1. Select courses by either institution code and course code, or by institution name and course name and choose: | 1. Name, address, phone number(s) |
| 2. Year of entry <i>(if applicable)</i> | 2. Date of Birth |
| 3. Defer Entry? <i>(yes or no)</i> | 3. Fee Details |
| 4. Live at home? <i>(yes or no)</i> | 4. 02 LEA – <i>nearly all pupils choose this for fee details</i> |
| 5. Have you previously applied to this institution? <i>(yes or no)</i> | 5. SAAS |
| | 6. Special Needs Information |
| | 7. Criminal Convictions |
| | 8. Parental Occupation |

| Section 3: Education | Section4: Employment |
|---|--|
| 1. Enter school details 2. Enter qualifications passed and pending | Enter details of any employment past or present – this could include part-time jobs but NOT work experience |

Before submitting your application, students **need to opt in to share the progress of your application with your school/adviser on the declaration page**. This enables us to see your progress in Adviser Track and Applicant Status Reports.

You will be linked to our centre when you enter the buzzword when registering your application, but if you do not **tick this additional box on the declaration page**, we will not be able to see your application in Adviser Track.

5. Checking the status of your application

At any stage of the application process, you can view all; you can preview; and/or print a copy of your application. All incomplete sections will be highlighted in red as a prompt for your completion. Once you have finished and sent your application to the staff section, you can still view all, though no changes can be made.

6. Sending your application to your referee

Once all sections are complete ‘**select send to referee**’, and the form will be sent to your Guidance Teacher or a member of the senior management team. This does not mean that you have sent the application form to UCAS; and you can still make changes, but only if you ask your referee to unlock your application form.

Each applicant needs to agree to the UCAS declaration when sending their application to their referee. The system will ask you for credit or debit card details to pay the UCAS fee (£22.50 for a single application and £27.00 for up to 5 applications). **No UCAS form will be sent until your payment has been processed.**

7. Once your application is with the school

Once you have sent your application to your referee, information about the progress of your application will be displayed when you log on. The various stages involved are:

- a) *Application not checked*
- b) *Application checked*
- c) *Reference not yet started*
- d) *Reference in progress*
- e) *Reference awaiting approval*
- f) *Application sent to UCAS*
- g) *Your application number is*

8. Once the form is at UCAS

Once your application has been sent to UCAS, it will be processed overnight and normally an application number will be issued within one working day. This will be visible in the staff and applicant area of apply, indicating that the application is at UCAS and is being processed.

Once you've sent your application and received your welcome email, you can sign in at any time to see how your application is progressing. Once you've completed your application, UCAS pass it on to your chosen universities and colleges. They'll review and consider – and may invite you to an interview or audition - before deciding whether to make you an **offer**.

Applying for Conservatoires – Dance, Music, Drama

There is a separate process through UCAS for applying to Conservatoires.

www.ucas.com/conservatoires/how-apply-through-ucas-conservatoires

When you've [found a course](#) you want to apply to, there are a few key points to note before you start your application:

- You can only apply once in a cycle – don't apply more than once as you won't receive a refund for further applications.
- Check the application deadlines before you apply – [check the UCAS search tool](#) to find the date for your courses.
- If you've applied in previous cycles and want to apply again, you'll have to submit a new application.
- There's quite a bit to fill in, but you don't need do it all at once – you can save your application and sign back in at anytime.
- There's help text in the UCAS Apply system to give you a steer on what to include.

Go to <https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires/how-apply-through-ucas-conservatoires/ucas-conservatoires-when-apply>

1. Register to use Apply

2. Sign in to the welcome screen

3. Fill in the rest of your personal details - *You can also give a parent, guardian or adviser nominated access if you'd like them to speak on your behalf.*

4. Fill in some further details - *Nationality, residential category, student support arrangements etc.*

5. State your previous education - *include any conservatoire junior departments or academies you've attended too.*

6. State your previous qualifications – *include any qualifications where results are pending.*

7. Make your course choices - *You can choose up to six courses – in no preference order.*

8. Write a personal statement

9. Get two references – *An academic reference and a practical reference*

10. Read the declaration

11. Verify your email address

12. Pay application and assessment fees

UCAS application flowchart



UCAS

*If you miss these deadlines, we recommend you contact your chosen university or college to ask if you're allowed to apply late as some will accept applications up to 30 June. All applications submitted after 30 June are automatically entered into Clearing.

University Decisions & what they mean

As and when Universities make decisions about applications, they will write to individual students. This letter will tell you if the University or college is:

(a)

Offering you a place

OR

(b)

If you have been unsuccessful

You will also receive this information by e-mail if you ticked this box on your application form.



DON'T CONSIDER ANY OFFER RECEIVED FROM A UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE AS OFFICIAL UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE LETTER FROM UCAS DIRECTLY

Types of Offers from Universities

CONDITIONAL OFFER

A conditional offer means that a University or college is offering an applicant a place providing that certain conditions are met. Usually, the conditions are based on obtaining certain qualifications e.g. to get into your preferred course, you need to get an:

- **A Grade** in Chemistry Higher
- **B Grade** in Biology Advanced Higher

UNCONDITIONAL OFFER

An unconditional Offer means that an applicant has met all the entry requirements and the University is happy to offer them a place on the preferred course.

UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

This means that the University or College has decided not to admit you on the course

WITHDRAWN APPLICATION

This may be invoked at your own request, or because you have not communicated with the college and/or attended a University Interview.

The UCAS Tariff Point System

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- *The UCAS Tariff is a points based system which is used by Universities and Colleges to award numerical points for each level and grade of qualification awarded.*
- *It allows comparison across and between different types of qualifications.*
- *It allows Universities to compare students and their achievements*

Please note that achievement at the lower level will be subsumed into the Higher Level e.g. Higher points gained in Fifth Year will be subsumed into Advanced Higher points for the same subject gained in Sixth Year. You cannot combine both levels.

UCAS TARIFF POINT SYSTEM

| HIGHER | ADVANCED | POINTS |
|--------|----------|--------|
| | A | 56 |
| | B | 48 |
| | C | 40 |
| A | | 33 |
| | D | 32 |
| B | | 27 |
| C | | 21 |
| D | | 15 |

Universities may request different requirements:

The requirements for certain courses will usually be given in the form of grades expected e.g.

The probable going rate for Sociology post S6 at **Glasgow University is AAB**

The requirement for certain courses may also be given in the form of UCAS Tariff Points e.g.

The probable going rate for Sociology at **Glasgow University is 93 points**

**You can calculate your UCAS tariff online –
www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator**

STUDENT FINANCE: Financial Considerations

Going to University is one of the biggest investments you will make. There are many issues to consider before making a final decision on which University and what course you want to study at. Probably one of the most important issues which you must consider is finance and how it might affect you. For further details, log onto the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS).

The address for SAAS is <http://www.student-supportsaas.gov.uk>.

What financial support is available to students in Scotland?

Below is a summary of the financial support available. You can find out how we work out your support package based on your household income by going to SAAS's [support package](#) page.

Tuition fees

If you normally live in Scotland and intend studying in Scotland, then your fees will be paid for you. The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) will pay fees directly to the university on your behalf. Any application for SAAS to pay tuition fees is only valid for one academic session, so students must make sure they apply every year.

Student Loan

Students may be eligible to apply for a loan of up to £7,100 a year. The loan is means tested being dependant on:

- what course you are taking;
- where you live while you study; and
- your and your parents' or your husband's, wife's, civil partner's or partner's income

Remember Student Loans need to be repaid, but not until students have graduated and start earning a certain amount.

Young Students' Bursary

If you are under 25, you can apply for a Young Student's Bursary. Again, this is means tested (dependent upon personal circumstances) with the highest amount of £2000 a year being available if your household income is £20,999 or less a year, which will go down to zero for a household income over £34,000 a year. This money does NOT have to be repaid.

Parental Contributions

How much money parents can give students; depends on personal circumstances. If you stay at home, it will probably work out cheaper for everyone concerned.

Part-Time Employment

For many students, part-time employment will supplement their upkeep, but caution should be given to how many hours you devote to part-time employment. It is recommended that you do not commit more than 16+ hours part time employment while studying at University.

Planning your finances

- Do not wait until you have accepted a place at University before considering finances and how much it will cost to either stay at home or live in student halls or share a flat.
- Investigate how much halls of residence cost at the University before making any final decision
- It is substantially cheaper to stay at home when going to University – consider this
- You will have finance lessons from Stewart Ivory Finance during PSE this year to support you in planning your future finances

Consider the following costs before making any decision

Rent

Food

Heating & Lighting

Telephone Costs

Travel

Clothing/Toiletries

Course Costs

Social/Entertainment

Insurance Costs



These are examples of some costs you will encounter and costs will vary dependent upon your lifestyle and which university you intend to go to. It is important to note that even if you receive a full Student Loan, it will not cover the full costs.

UCAS Open Days at St Thomas of Aquin's High School

You should avoid attending Open Days during school time. Most Universities will have Saturday open days. Any pupil wishing to attend an Open Day during school time should provide a note from home detailing why they are unable to attend an evening or weekend open day.

*Part Time jobs will **not** be accepted as a reasonable excuse for attending an Open Day during school time.*

You should check University websites frequently for updates/changes to Open Day arrangements.

Open Days

Log onto <http://opendays.com/> and you will have access to details of all Open Days held in the United Kingdom.

Think of the course you want to study and the university and write down details of the Open Days in the space(s) below. You might need to book onto an Open Day and feel free to take a parent – very often your mum or dad will ask questions that you will not think of and an extra opinion from someone you trust is very important.

| University | Course Details (if known) | Open Day details |
|------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Go to: <https://www.ucas.com/events/exploring-university/open-days-tips> or
<http://www.opendays.com/advice/> for further advice on Open Days.

Payment, Number of Choices & Deadline Dates

PAYMENTS

If you apply for only **ONE** course it will cost £22.50

If you apply for between **2 and 5 courses**, it will cost £27.00

NUMBER OF CHOICES ALLOWED

You can apply for a maximum of 5 courses on your application form unless you are applying for the following:

- *No more than 4 choices in any of the following areas: medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science*
- *For Oxbridge Universities you must choose between Oxford **OR** Cambridge
You cannot apply to both in the same cycle*
- *No more than 3 choices for Art and Design route B*

Do not put all your eggs in one basket by applying for 5 courses at the same University

WHEN TO APPLY

Applications for 2023 Entry should reach UCAS between 6th September 2022 and 25 January 2023.

Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Science and Oxbridge applications should reach UCAS by **15 October 2022**.



UCAS LINKS & CAREER GUIDANCE WEBSITES

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| www.ucas.com UCAS processes UK university applications. The site has a search facility for the 'going rate' for courses and links to all participating HE & FE institutions. Online Stamford test helps identify subjects and course of interest. www.ucas.com/parents | www.opendays.com Guide to University Open Days in the United Kingdom | www.ucat.ac.uk UK Clinical Aptitude Test for Medicine |
| | www.planitplus.net Database of careers, education and training provision in Scotland. | www.bmat.org.uk Biomedical Admissions Test for medicine |
| www.findcourses.co.uk An excellent site for browsing through courses quickly. | www.saas.gov.uk Student Awards Agency for Scotland – information and advice about funding and financial support for HE & FE. | www.lnat.ac.uk National Admissions Test for Law |
| www.prospects.ac.uk Official site for jobs and careers information for graduates | www.yougoofurther.co.uk Student only community where you can ask questions, create a profile page and take part in discussion forum | www.officeforstudents.org.uk/ compare facts and figures on universities and courses www.morrisby.com – includes test to generate degree suggestions |
| www.leapsonline.org Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools | www.youtube.com/user/ucasonline see video clips of various UCAS related processes | enquiries@ucas.ac.uk UCAS Customer Service Unit |
| www.oxbridge-admissions.info Site ran by students who have applied to Oxford & Cambridge and provides useful advice and dispels long held myths | www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/open-days Official site for Cambridge University, including dates of Open Days. | https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/open-days-and-visits Official site for Oxford University, including dates of Open Days. |
| www.theleap.co.uk Gap Year information | www.xtremegapyear.co.uk Gap Year information | www.bestgapyear.co.uk Gap Year information |
| www.goabroad.com Gap Year information | www.missio.org.uk/volunteer-overseas/ Gap Year information | www.yearoutgroup.org Gap Year information |
| www.futureskillsscotland.org.uk Labour market information in Scotland and links to other areas. | www.targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice UK gateway to quality careers information on over 200 career sectors | www.learndirect.com Learning opportunities in Scotland. |
| www.edinburghguarantee.org Opportunities for Edinburgh school leavers | www.thescholarshipclub.org.uk Database summarising scholarship opportunities | www.myworldofwork.co.uk Information on choosing the right course for you, how to apply, application processes, financial support and useful links to web sites. |

Take a note of other important websites which you have found:

UCAS & Career Guidance Web Links

UCAS & our PSE Programme at St Thomas of Aquin's HS

Most S6 PSE lessons between June and the October Holiday will be dedicated to completing the UCAS application process where you will:

- *Research your preferred university course(s) and entrance requirements. There is an extensive selection of books based in the school library and on-line resources used for this purpose.*
- *Decide which Open Days you want to attend*
- *Attend workshops delivered by External Agency Speakers including presentations on 'LEAPS', Stewart Ivory Finance and Skills Development Scotland.*

Key Dates for 2023 Entry and Deferred 2024 Entry

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| June 2022 | In-School support to begin UCAS applications – 'Introduction and familiarisation with the UCAS process' |
| June 2022 | UCAS Apply 2023 opens – need school 'buzz' word to register (stthomas2023) – case sensitive and all one word |
| July/August 2022 | Gain relevant work experience vital for pupils applying to any medical, dental or veterinary course, law or teaching related subjects. |
| June – October 2022 | Structured lessons during PSE programme |
| September 2022 | Pupils to approach teaching staff and request academic references. Following agreement to provide a reference nominated staff names to be given to your Pupil support Leader. |
| Sept – Oct 2022 | Most Open Day visits take place at this time. Arrange Open Days to take place in the evening or on a Saturday where possible. |
| 11 July 2022 | UCAT Testing begins. Go to www.ucat.ac.uk to register and book a test for the 26 University Medical & Dental Schools which require this test as part of their admission process. The deadline for sitting the CAT Test is 29 th September 2022. CAT Test fee is £70. Registration for UCAT opened 20 th June and closes 22 nd September. |
| Early September 2022 | LNAT testing begins (Law Students at some Universities). If applying to Oxbridge, pupils are required to sit the LNAT by 15 th October 2022 at the latest. Registration for LNAT opened 1 st August. See https://lnat.ac.uk for specific dates and instructions. Test costs £75. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 6th Sept 2022 | Applications can start to be submitted to UCAS. |
| Wb 12 September 2022 | 1 st draft of Personal Statement for Early Entries (Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Oxbridge handed into the relevant Guidance Teacher. <i>Pupils are encouraged to hand drafts in as soon as possible.</i> |
| Wb 26 September 2022 | Final draft of Personal Statement for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Oxbridge submitted to Guidance Teachers. |
| Early- Mid October 2022 | <i>Deadline for registration for BMAT (Medical, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine), ELAT (English Literature Admission Test) & TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment exams). See https://www.admissionstesting.org/ for dates and fees.</i> |
| Wb 10 Oct 2022 | School deadline to send applications to Pupil Support for Oxbridge, Vet Med, Medicine and/or Dentistry by this final deadline date (15 October is during the October break). You are reminded to send completed applications as soon as possible. |
| 15 October 2022 | Application deadline (6:00pm) for all courses at the University of Cambridge and University of Oxford for 2021 entry. Application deadline for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine & Veterinary Science for 2023 entry. |
| Wb. 26 September 2022 | 1 st draft of personal statement to be submitted to Guidance Teacher. <i>Pupils are encouraged to hand drafts in as soon as possible.</i> |
| W.b. 31 October 2022 | 2 nd and final draft of Personal Statement to be submitted to Guidance Teacher |
| From 21 Nov 2022 | All UCAS applications should be submitted for final check by Pupil Support Leader. Applications will be sent as soon as checks are complete, subject teacher references and predicted grades are received and online payment made |
| 2 December 2022 | School deadline for UCAS applications |
| 26 January 2023 | UCAS Deadline for on time applications to be guaranteed equal academic consideration. Deadline time is 6:00pm. Applications (including some Art and Design courses) received after this date, but before 30 June, will be considered as late, and universities are not obliged to consider applications they receive (popular courses may not have vacancies after this date) |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 23 February 2022 | UCAS Extra opens. Applicants who have used all five choices and do not hold any offers can refer themselves through UCAS Extra for the first time |
| End March 2023 | Applicants prior to 26 January should have received decisions from all institutions |
| Early April 2023 | Applications for SAAS funding open |
| Early May 2023 | Students should have selected their firm and insurance choices. Any outstanding choices will be made unsuccessful on the student's behalf. |
| Early July 2023 | Application deadline (extra service) for immediate consideration for 2023 entry: after this, applications will be held for Clearing. |
| Early August 2023 | SQA results are published Clearing vacancy information service starts |