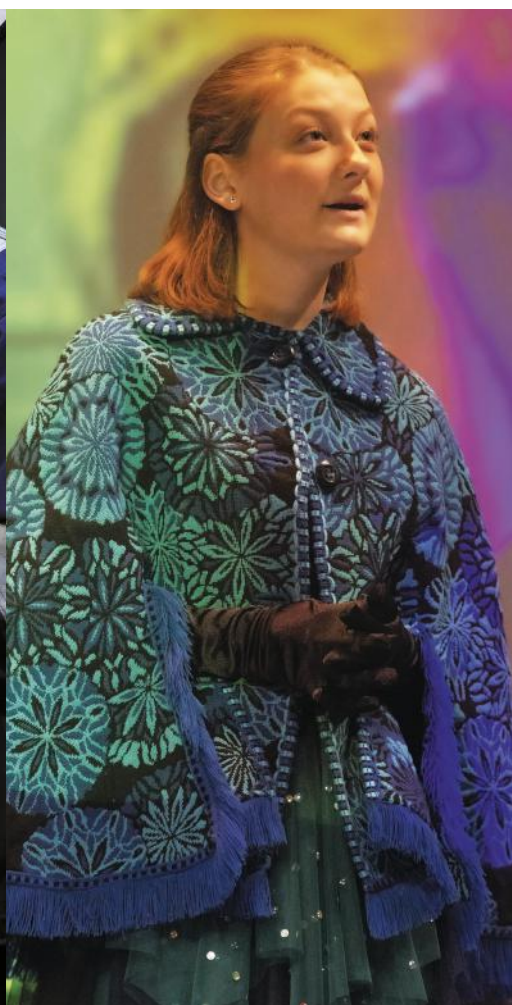




Middlesbrough College

Taking **you** higher



UCAS

Application guide

Applying to University
Writing your personal statement
For UCAS entry 2026



Applying to University can involve a lot of time, research, and careful planning. This booklet is designed to make the process easier by providing expert advice and guidance to help you along the way.

You can also access plenty of support in College. Your tutor and Careers Advisers in the Thrive Pod are all on hand to assist you with your application.

For further advice please use the additional sources available in this booklet.

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Essential sources of information

All students should consult the following guides prior to completing their UCAS applications:

Guides/Websites

UCAS website	www.ucas.com
Unifrog website	www.unifrog.org
Whatuni website	www.whatuni.com
Open days website	www.opendays.com
Compare worldwide qualifications using ENIC	www.enic.org.uk
See link for videos on every aspect of UCAS	www.ucas.com/connect/videos
Complete University Guide website	www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk
TheUniGuide website	www.theuniguide.co.uk
Student Finance England	www.studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk

UCAS Drop In

Need help with your UCAS application?

Drop into the Thrive Pod to see the Careers Team in College every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 11am – 1pm.

When applying online select the option '**Applying through a School or College**'.
The **BUZZWORD** you will need is **MBRO2026**





Important dates

August 2025	Consider a) sponsorships – or – b) year out
September 2025	Make final decisions on which institutions/courses to apply to
15th October 2025	Final deadline for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Sciences. NB: You can apply for a maximum of four Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary places. UCAS applications must be sent by this deadline.
October and November 2025	Form completion and personal statement
3rd December 2025	Middlesbrough College internal deadline
14th January 2026 UCAS DEADLINE	The UCAS final deadline for equal consideration for most undergraduate courses.
26th February 2026	UCAS Extra opens – make additional choice
March 2026	Deadline for some Art & Design applications. Application for Student Finance England opens.
7th April 2026	Decide on offers if all institutions have responded
3rd June 2026	Deadline for decisions on UCAS applications (except UCAS Extra)
June 2026	Hard at work with examinations. 30th June is the last date UCAS accepts applications
5th July 2026	UCAS Clearing opens
Mid August 2026	Exam results issued (you should be available). Clearing vacancies widely advertised. Vacancy information on the UCAS website.
End of August 2026	UCAS Clearing is ongoing
September 2026	Preparation for enrolment

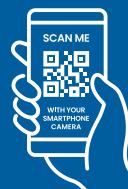
How many UCAS points can I get?

BTEC Qualifications (QCF)

Suite of qualifications known as nationals

GCE & VCE QUALIFICATIONS			TARIFF POINTS	NCFE			BTEC LEVEL 3 NATIONALS (QCF)				OCR QUALIFICATION	
EXTENDED PROJECT	AS LEVELS (AND CORE MATHS)	A LEVELS		CACHE LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA	T LEVELS	CACHE LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE	EXTENDED DIPLOMA	DIPLOMA	SUBSIDIARY DIPLOMA	BTEC (QCF) CERTIFICATE	CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL EXTENDED DIPLOMA	CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL SUBSIDIARY DIPLOMA
			168	A*	D*		D*D*D*				D*D*D*	
			160				D*D*D				D*D*D	
			152				D*DD				D*DD	
			144	A	D		DDD				DDD	
			128				DDM				DDM	
			120	B	M							
			112				DMM	D*D*			DMM	
			104					D*D				
			96	C	P(A*-C)		MMM	DD			MMM	
			84			A*						D*D*
			80				MMP	DM			MMP	
			78									D*D
			72	D	P(D or E)	A						DD
			64				MPP	MM			MMP	
			60			B						DM
	A*		56						D*			
	A		48			C	PPP	MP	D		PPP	MM
	B		40								D*D*D*	
			36			D						MP
	C		32					PP	M			
A*			28							D*		
A		D	24							D		PP
B	A		20									
C	B	E	16					P		M		
D	C		12									
	D		10									
E			8							P		
	E		6									

Scan the QR code to work out your UCAS points with your predicted grades using the tariff calculator



Our step-by-step guide

About UCAS

Applications to University in the UK are made through UCAS. UCAS provides a streamlined application process, allowing you to apply to multiple courses and institutions with a single online application.

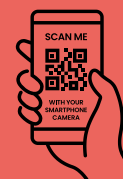
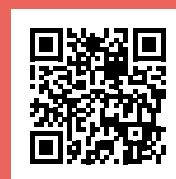
You complete one application form, which can be sent to up to five different courses or Universities. This guide will give you a step-by-step process of how to complete your UCAS application. To link yourself to Middlesbrough College, ensure you use the College Buzzword: **MBRO2026**. Ensure you select the option to apply '**Through a School or College**'.

The UCAS application form has different sections for completion. Once you have **REGISTERED** to use '**Apply**', you can use your log in details to start completing your actual application form online and you can save and re-save the details as many times as you need to.

Tips for a Successful Application

- **Start early:** Give yourself plenty of time to complete each section thoroughly
- **Stay organised:** Keep a checklist of required information and documents

Scan the QR code to register on the UCAS website



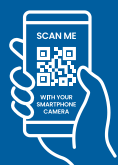
UCAS Apply allows you to fill in your UCAS form on any computer with internet access and send your application electronically. Using Apply means you can work on your application at home (providing you have internet access).

Internet access is available in the College Learning Resource Centre where staff can assist you. However, if you require advice or guidance in relation to your application, you should complete as much of your form as possible and take it along to the College's Careers Advisers for help. They are available for drop in and for bookable appointments throughout the week.

An appointment can be made by contacting the team by phone or emailing careers@mbro.ac.uk. Full instructions on completing your application can be found on the UCAS website.

- **Seek guidance:** Ask teachers, advisers, or family members to review your application
- **Be accurate:** Double-check all information, especially qualification details and personal information
- **Meet deadlines:** Be aware of all key dates and ensure your application and reference are submitted on time

Scan the QR code to search for courses on UCAS



Filling in the information

How to register

Visit the UCAS website and click on 'register' and then fill in your details and set a **password** to create your account. Once you have hit 'register', you will be asked to **verify your account**. An email will be sent to your email address to activate your account. The first time you log in to your account, you will be asked some **extra questions** to help you find the right info. You will then be able to link your application to Middlesbrough College by adding the **Buzzword MBRO2026**.

Add your choices

You can apply to **up to five Universities**. Enter the **course codes** and **institution codes** for each course, they can be listed in any order. You can change your choices until you send your application. There's no preference order and your Universities/Colleges won't see where else you've applied until after you reply to any offers.

If you are applying for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science, you can only apply for a **maximum of four courses** in any one of these course subjects. Be aware of early application deadlines and entry tests such as UCAT – do your research first. Applying to the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge? Usually you can only apply to one course at either University, which often have entry tests and early application deadlines.

Personal details

Complete your **name** and **date of birth**.

Nationality details

Please select **country of birth** and then **nationality**. If you're applying from outside the UK, choose your nationality as it appears on your passport. You will also be asked what your **UK visa** or **immigration status** is, and you can select start and end dates.

Where you live

This will ask you where you have physically **lived for the last three years**, when you started living there, and for what purpose. You will need to provide **all addresses** for the last three years and your residential status.

Contact details

Complete your **phone number** and **email address**. You are able to nominate access to act on your behalf if required.

Finance and funding

(**UK applicants only**) UCAS don't arrange student finance, but if you're looking for financial support, you can give UCAS permission here to share your info with the student loans/awards organisation you apply to – which should speed up the process. Please select **UK, CHI, IOM or EU Student Finance Service**.

Full education history

Add all the **secondary schools** you have attended, plus all achieved **GCSEs**, including dates and awarding bodies – check your certificates for this information.

Add all **colleges** you have attended. Enter **all your qualifications gained** (please make sure your course title is accurate by checking with your course tutor or Careers Team), **including completed and pending results**. From the date you started to completion date, this should include **full course title, all modules for each academic year** and **awarding body**, with overall grade and current year grade set as **pending**.

Also within the Education Section please include:

- Your Unique Learner Number
- If you have studied a BTEC qualification, you will need to also input your BTEC registration number.

Remember if in doubt, check

Please **speak to your tutor** or the **Careers Team** in College to get the information you need.

Your employment history

If you've had any **paid jobs** – full-time or part-time – here's where you can enter details for up to five of them. Include **company names, addresses, job descriptions** and **start/finish dates**.

Write a personal statement

Writing a personal statement is a crucial part of the University application process. It allows you to showcase your **personality, achievements, and ambitions**. Please find a step-by-step guide to complete your personal statement on the next page.

Obtain and submit a reference

Please ensure you have added the **Buzzword MBRO2026** – once you have submitted your application, this will be processed by Middlesbrough College and a reference will be provided by your tutor. Upon submission, please **allow 10 working days** for your tutor to complete a **reference** and your application to be submitted to UCAS.

Review and pay

Review each section of your application to ensure **all information is accurate** and marked as **complete** before you send your application.

Pay the application fee – £28.95 – when submitting your application.

Free school meals

UCAS will waive the application fee for any student who is in receipt of **free school meals**. If you are in receipt of free school meals, you can declare this in the **more about you** section. You will then be able to select free school meals fee waiver when you select your payment option when you submit your application. **This option is for learners in receipt of free school meals only.**

College Bursary

If you receive College Bursary, **you will not need to pay** the application fee. Please **speak with a member of the Careers Team** before you submit your application by calling into the UCAS drop in every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 11am – 1pm in the Thrive pod to process the payment for you.

Scan here for
help filling in
your UCAS
application



Personal statements

What should your statement include?

A personal statement is personal to you and should describe your ambitions, skills, experiences, and why you feel you are suitable for the course you are applying for.

As of September 2025, UCAS has introduced a new personal statement format for University applications, transitioning from a single 4,000-character essay to three structured questions.

Each question has a minimum character count of 350 characters. The total character count is 4,000 characters split across three sections with the three following questions:

Why do you want to study this course?

Begin by explaining what sparked your interest in the subject, what motivates you to study the course, your knowledge of the subject area, and how it can help you with your future plans.

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course?

Explain how your current studies have developed the skills required for your chosen course.

What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

This should show your suitability for the course including work experience, volunteering, achievements, personal experience and hobbies and interests.

Try not to waste characters listing grades and subjects and don't repeat information across sections

Use Microsoft Word to type up your statement and remember to check your spelling and grammar thoroughly.

Important information

Please note that UCAS now use Anti-plagiarism Software. The Similarity Detection Service is designed to ensure that every applicant's personal statement is their own work. So do not copy or share your statement with others.

When you complete your application, you now have to declare that your personal statement hasn't been copied or provided from another source, including artificial intelligence software.

Scan the QR code to see tips for writing a personal statement



STEP 1

Make a full list of your:

- Reasons for choosing your courses at University
- Skills (practical and academic)
- Personal qualities (communication, time management, team leading etc.)
- Interests outside of College
- Strengths and interests in current studies making a link between them and your University choices
- Work experiences including duties undertaken and transferable skills (working with others, meeting deadlines, dealing with difficult situations)
- Additional responsibilities at College or at work e.g. student representative, supervising new members of staff at work, organising an event or activity – detailing what you have learnt from these activities
- References to 'social action' e.g. fundraising, volunteering or campaigning

STEP 2

Draft a statement using all of the information from step 1, avoiding duplication and adding a closing statement.

STEP 3

Re-draft and re-check if necessary. Any improvements will benefit your application.

STEP 4

Get the draft checked by your tutor.

STEP 5

Double check:

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Presentation
- Punctuation
- That you are not underselling yourself
- That you are not being dishonest

STEP 6

Copy and paste your statement to the Personal Statement section of Apply.

Interviews and offers

University interviews

Help is available through your tutor and the College's Careers Advisers, for interview preparation sessions and mock interviews.

Choosing your firm and insurance offers

If you have applied for Higher Education through UCAS and haven't heard anything yet from any of your chosen Universities, don't be too concerned. As long as you receive an acknowledgment from UCAS, your application is being processed. If you are unsure about whether your form has been received by UCAS, speak to your Careers Adviser who will be able to help you.

You can check on the progress of your application by using the UCAS website at www.ucas.com and clicking on 'Track'.

All decisions will be fed back to you via UCAS, and they may come in any order.

An institution's decision will be one of:

1. An unconditional offer (if you already have all qualifications needed) and the institution wishes to offer you a place
2. A conditional offer (where the institution wishes to offer you a place subject to you achieving a specified standard in the forthcoming examinations)
3. Notification that you have been unsuccessful in this instance

You should wait until you have received all decisions before choosing what action to take (don't feel pressured into deciding too quickly). UCAS sends a statement of all the decisions with a reply slip for you to complete. At this point you will have to accept two offers, one firm and one insurance place. UCAS will send you notification of when you have to decide by and you can use this time to visit your preferred University and seek advice from your Course Tutor or College Careers Adviser. Ensure you read any correspondence carefully before replying to offers.

Narrowing your choices down to two can be difficult, so it's a good idea to get advice from your tutors.

Be realistic with the offers you choose

The final choice of your firm (first) offer and the insurance offer should be yours, not anyone else's. Your second acceptance is your insurance, which means it requires a lower grade. Applicants often fall into the trap of choosing an insurance offer only very slightly lower than their firm offer, in fact, it's probably wiser to pick one quite a bit lower for it to be a real insurance. If you miss your firm offer by one grade they might still accept you anyway, depending on the demand for the course. As long as you get advice and think carefully about your acceptances, your move to Higher Education should run smoothly and you should avoid having to go into Clearing.

Scan the QR code for further guidance through UCAS Extra



UCAS Extra – Begins February 2026

If you don't hold any offers after selecting your five choices, you can apply for another choice through UCAS Extra between 26th February and 4th July 2026.

If you do not hold any offers:

1. Make contact with all institutions that didn't offer you a place and ask for feedback. The advice they give may be useful later in helping you to put across your strengths when applying through Clearing

2. If the institution indicates the main reason you were rejected was simply due to a large number of applicants (e.g. your application was good, but there were better applicants), there is still a chance you could be placed with this institution during Clearing, if you show commitment and enthusiasm at this stage
3. Identify other courses you may be interested in and contact the Admissions Tutor by telephone now. Try to secure a place – be prepared to sell yourself over the phone

Important!

It is absolutely vital that you reply by the date UCAS give you for making your firm and insurance offer. If you do not keep to the deadlines, you will lose all your offers, which would be a major setback. Further information is available in the LRC, on Canvas, and by speaking to the Careers Team!

Confirmation of offers

When you get your results it should not be necessary for you to send them to the institutions at which you are holding offers. UCAS has an agreement with examination boards to enable institutions to access results directly. You can check on '**UCAS TRACK**' if you have been accepted on results day.

If you achieve the grades required by your firm (first) choice institution, then your place is confirmed and you should await written confirmation. If you do not achieve the grades for your first choice but meet the conditions for the insurance institution, then this place is confirmed and you

should await written confirmation. If you do not wish to take up a confirmed place then you must withdraw from the UCAS scheme and notify the institution concerned. If you choose to do this, you should not enter Clearing or deal with any other institutions in the UCAS scheme.

Seek the help of a Careers Adviser if in doubt.

If you just miss the grades required, telephone the institution as soon as possible. **Do not assume the worst.**

Admissions Tutors do not always reject every applicant who has

dropped a grade or two. Check your application status is on **TRACK** on the UCAS website before assuming you have not been successful. If you are unsuccessful in both your firm and insurance offer, you will automatically be sent details of Clearing.

Applicants to HNDs and Foundation Degrees who do better than expected in their examinations and who wish to consider degree-level courses in the light of their examination success can also use Clearing or a new system called 'Adjustment'.

You can seek advice on this from UCAS or College Careers Advisers.

Clearing

Clearing is a scheme that attempts to place applicants who have been unsuccessful either earlier in the year or at results time. It also serves as a very late application procedure for those whose applications are received by UCAS after 30th June.

Clearing PLUS is a new matching service to help you find a course that matches your original choices. If you are eligible, you will see a button on your **TRACK** – '**See matches**'.

Scan here to find out more on Clearing. Clearing opens on 5th July 2026.



You will be eligible for Clearing for one of the following reasons:

1. You do not hold any offers from institutions
2. Your offers are not confirmed by institutions following the publication of examination results
3. You decline a changed course offer
4. You decline the offer of a confirmed place on a Higher Education course
5. You apply too late for your application to be considered prior to Clearing

If you think you might need to enter Clearing after you have collected your exam results, remember there will be staff available to guide you through on results day and most students are able to secure a place at this point.



Student finance

You may be able to get student finance to help paying for tuition fees and living costs. To apply and check eligibility, use the Student Finance England website.

Steps to ensure timely application:

- **Monitor application open dates:** Keep an eye on the Student Finance England website or sign up for alerts so you know when applications open. This will usually be in March
- **Check your eligibility and register online:** Visit student finance calculator website: www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator
- **Prepare your documents:** Gather all necessary documents early (e.g. passport, National Insurance number, financial information)
- **Submit early:** Aim to submit your application well before the deadline to avoid any delays, ideally by the end of May



Scan here to learn everything about Student Finance



Parents, guardians and carers guide

What is UCAS?

UCAS is a charity that processes applications to study full-time courses at Universities, colleges and conservatories in the UK.

It's not just about processing applications, UCAS's aim is to help students make informed choices that are right for them through the entire Higher Education application process and beyond. To support this, UCAS provides a wide range of valuable information and services for applicants, their parents/carers and teachers.

www.ucas.com helps students get started, research their options, make their application and track its progress.

Parents information

- Sign up to receive UCAS emails
- Download the parent guide (QR code below)
- Use the parent information tool to guide you through the application process
- Check out the UCAS 90 second parent videos
- Get top tips for your child

Scan here to get advice on UCAS



Have a question?

Please feel free to contact the Careers team on 01642 333477.



Contacting a Careers Adviser

**Scan here to
book a careers
appointment**



Tel. **01642 333477**

Email. **careers@mbro.ac.uk**

Or call into the Careers Centre, above the Thrive Pod

Monday – Thursday 8:30am – 5:00pm

Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm

www.mbro.ac.uk

This guide is available in alternative formats. For information, please contact Student Services.

Middlesbrough College,
Dock Street,
Middlesbrough TS2 1AD
Tel. 01642 333333