



Midhurst Rother College Sixth Form

Replying to Offers on UCAS – A Guide for Students

This is a guide to support students in making decisions on UCAS after receiving all their offers.

Students apply to study at university through UCAS. It is an online system designed to streamline the application process and is designed to be user-friendly. However, there is a huge amount of information out there about how to choose courses and narrowing down your choices to a firm and insurance offer. Below is a summary of that information and should help you in your decisions. This decision has a huge impact on your future and many students find the process of making a choice very difficult. If you are stuck or unsure, you should speak to your tutor and the sixth form team before proceeding.

Most students apply to five different courses and receive one of the following responses from each:

Response	What this means:
Conditional	You can attend this university if you meet the conditions required by the offer. The conditions will normally consist of a series of grades or a UCAS tariff points offer. If the offer asks for AAB, then you must receive two A grades and one B grade in your A Levels. If it asks for 128 points, you must meet this requirement in your Level 3 exams. The tariff table is at the end of this guide. Sometimes, specific requirements will be stated by the university, such as 'A grade in Chemistry' – you must also meet these conditions.
Unconditional	This university will accept your application regardless. This is most common for students applying a year later – when they have already received their results.
Unsuccessful	Unfortunately, some students each year receive one or more unsuccessful responses. This is most common when applying for courses with high demand or when applying at very competitive universities.

Once you have received responses from all the courses to which you have applied, the options available to you will change. UCAS will email to say your last offer has been received. You will be able to reply to your offers and make your firm and insurance choices:

Choice	What this means:
Firm	This is your first choice – if you accept a conditional offer and then meet the requirements, you'll have a confirmed place.
Insurance	This is the choice you'd want if you didn't meet the conditions of your firm choice. If this is a conditional offer, you would still need to meet the conditions for your place to be confirmed.

Students can only accept two of the offers – one firm and one insurance. All other offers are declined. If you accept an unconditional offer as your firm choice, then that place is guaranteed, and you don't have an insurance offer. You must make both choices at the same time. If you make a mistake with your replies to offers, you must call UCAS immediately on 03714680468.

It is not a good idea to wait until the reply deadline to make your decision. However, the deadlines are late enough that you can see how you are likely to do in your exams beforehand.

Replies must be made by:

When you received your last offer by:	Your reply deadline is:
18 th May 2023	8 th June 2023
12 th July 2023	17 th July 2023

Advice on choices

Your firm choice should be that university which you really want to attend. You should consider distance from home; type of university; campus or city; academic reputation; accommodation; the course itself and teaching style.

Your insurance choice should be a second university which you think you would be happy to attend. Your insurance choice should have lower entry requirements: that way, if you don't get the grades on results day, you will still have a place where you would be happy.

Remember: you'll only attend your insurance choice if you don't meet the requirements of your firm choice university, so make sure you are happy with which is your firm and which is your insurance.

Declining choices

You will decline any other offers you receive. If you decide you don't want to accept any of your offers, you can decline them all and use the [Extra](#) service on UCAS to make more choices.

Alternatively, you can wait until [Clearing](#) is open and find what courses still have vacancies.

Once you have received offers from the courses which you are sure you want as your firm and insurance choices, you *can* decline all other courses before they give you an offer. We do **not** think this is a particularly good idea and would encourage all students to wait until they have received all their offers before deciding.

Things to remember before you reply:

- Once you've accepted an offer, you have entered a contract with that university – they have agreed to accept you if you meet their conditions, and you've agreed to attend the university.
- If a university says in their conditions that they will change their offer to unconditional if you accept them as your firm offer, consider it carefully. Some may offer guaranteed accommodation, or other incentives, but only accept it if you're happy to go there!
- Read the conditions of your offer carefully. If you are uncertain about any of the conditions, contact the university before deciding.
- Talk through your decision with tutors, parents, or any member of the sixth form team.
- Do your research before finalising your choices.

Further Resources

[The UniGuide](#) – guide to firm and insurance choices

[Newcastle University's](#) short video guide to choosing firm and insurance choices (2 min)

[The Student Room](#) – video guide to choosing firm and insurance choices (3 min)

[Loughborough University](#) – a useful quick tips guide on choosing your firm and insurance

[UCAS Online](#) – official webinar about choosing your firm and insurance choices (40 min)

[UCAS](#) – further information from UCAS on replying to offers.

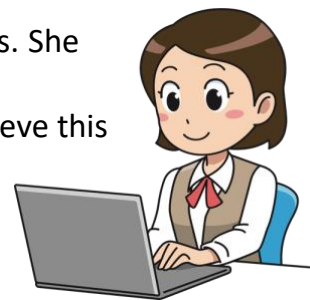
Ultimately, students should speak to their tutors, parents, or carers and the sixth form team for advice and if you are stuck, come and speak to us – sooner rather than later.

Worked Examples

Example 1 – Natasha

Natasha is an academic student who has predicted grades of AAB in her A Levels. She has applied to five universities and received five conditional offers. Her first-choice university has given her an offer of AAA. She thinks she can achieve this with some extra work, so she is going to put this as her firm choice. Her other offers are AAB, BBB, and BBC.

She thinks the BBC offer is too low and it wasn't somewhere she was interested in, but she wanted to apply to five universities, so she discounts that one. The AAB is right on her predicted grades, so she realises that if she doesn't get the grades she's hoping for, that's not really an insurance choice, so she chooses the BBB offer.



Example 2 - Chris

Chris has been studying two A Levels and has predicted grades of B and C. He also is predicted a Merit in his BTEC Business. This gives him a UCAS tariff point score of 104. He's received five conditional offers: 120, 104, 104, 96 and 80.

The 80-point offer includes a [Foundation Year](#) which he is not particularly happy about so he declines this offer immediately. The 120-point offer is a little too high and would mean he'd have to get two B grades and a Distinction.

Chris chooses the 104-point offer at the university he really liked the look of at an Open Day and then picks the 96-point offer as his insurance. He declines the others.

Example 3 – Ashleigh

Ashleigh has been studying Art, Textiles and Photography and had been predicted grades of BBB at A Level. However, she's recently lost her confidence a bit and although she has five offers on UCAS, she's worried that she might not be ready for university.

Her offers include AAB, BBB, BBC, CCC and 64 UCAS points. The lowest one includes a foundation year which Ashleigh considered because she wasn't sure her skills were enough yet for a full degree. After talking to her tutor and her parents, Ashleigh chose the BBC university which she had visited on an Open Day because it had a fantastic course. However, she put the foundation year course as her insurance option 'just in case' – she still liked the course, and this could be her way to prepare better and build confidence. Her adviser also suggested that if she really didn't feel ready, she should just accept these for now to keep her options open but look around for work experience or short courses which she could do in a gap year to build her confidence and then withdraw from UCAS on results day.



UCAS Tariff Points

A Level Grade	BTEC Grade	UCAS Tariff Points
A*	Distinction*	56
A	Distinction	48
B		40
C	Merit	32
D		24
E	Pass	16