

# Admissions in a changing world

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UCAS

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# What is UCAS?

**26m**

visits to [ucas.com](https://ucas.com)  
each year



**Understanding demand**  
for higher education

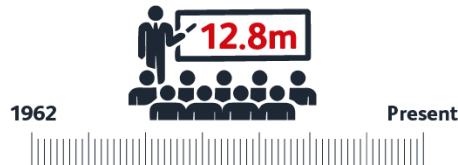


**we publish 2.5 million** data  
points, **freely available** to  
download and re-use

At the heart of **connecting people**  
to **higher education**



**Total number of placed applicants**  
through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme



**700k\***

applicants last year



**535k\***

accepted to a course



\*699,850 applications and 533,890 accepted into full time study in 2017.

UCAS is an  
**independent**  
charity



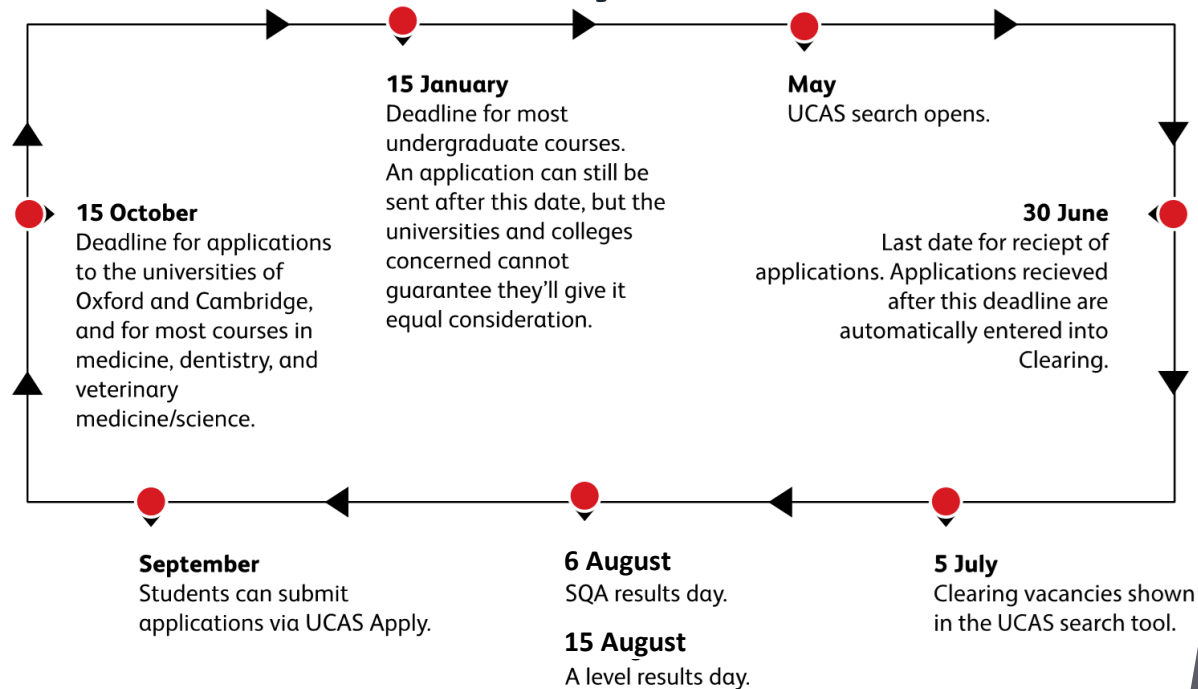
with a  
**commercial**  
subsidiary



**Profits from UCAS Media**  
**go back** into the charity

**UCAS**

# The admissions cycle



## How UCAS supports

- 35,000 courses on UCAS search
- 50+ exhibitions and events
- Information and advice for all post-18 options
- Tailored communications
- Social media support
- Serving over 200 countries
- Dual site customer experience centre
- Advice for teachers and parents

# Who is 'the applicant'?

We recognise that 'the applicant' is not one single person or identity. People will enter higher education from all walks of life, all with different starting points.



**62%** of 18 year old UK applicants hold **3 or more A levels**.



**12%** of UK applicants declare a **disability**.



**13%** of applicants are aged **25 and over**.



**12%** of UK 18 and 19 year old applicants are from **FE colleges**.



**13%** of accepted applicants are placed through **Clearing**.



**19%** of applicants are from **outside the UK**.




**26%** of applicants are from **POLAR4 Q1 and Q2**.

# Improvements in access and participation

 up  
**0.4**  
percentage  
points on 2017

**33%**   
of **18 year olds** in the  
UK were accepted

 **19.7%**  
of **young people**  
classified as living in the **most**  
**disadvantaged areas** of  
the **UK** (POLAR4 quintile 1)  
were **accepted in 2018**.

 up  
**0.4**  
percentage  
points

Disadvantaged young people are nearly  
**80% more likely**  
to go to university today than they were in 2006

# But there is more to be done ...

## 2.36 : 1

The current ratio of entry rates for Q5 : Q1 (POLAR4).



The proportion of 18 year olds living in the most advantaged areas, who have secured a place in HE through UCAS, is **more than double** that of their peers in the most disadvantaged areas.

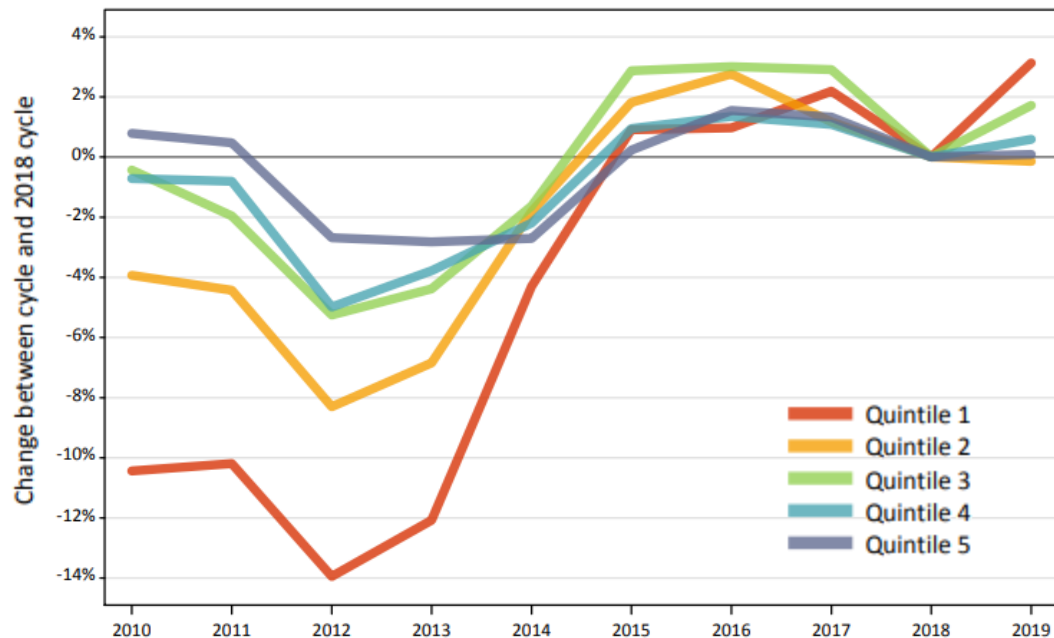


**Largest proportional increases** in entry rates are seen in the more disadvantaged quintiles (1 and 2).



Entry rates for quintiles 3 and 4 are **flat** vs. 2017.

# 15 January deadline: POLAR4



- The gap between the most and least advantaged applicants has narrowed
- A record 23.2% of young people living in the **most disadvantaged** areas of the UK (quintile 1) have applied - up 1.3 percentage points.
- 53.5% of those living in the **most advantaged** areas (quintile 5) applied – up one percentage point.

# Who is applying direct to Clearing?

67k via  
Clearing

17.5k  
direct

## UK-based

2.5% of all UK acceptances  
used this route



## Business and admin

Most popular subjects



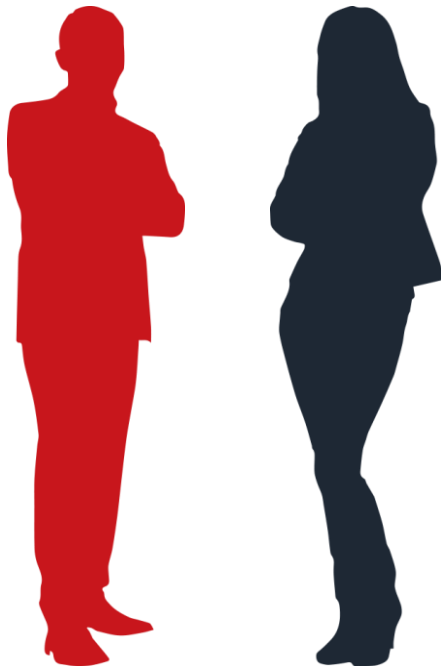
## Nursing

Made up almost half of  
Group B DTC acceptances



## Lower tariff

4% of all acceptances to these  
providers were DTC



## Mature

70% aged 20 and over



## English

91% English domiciled  
acceptances



## Close to home

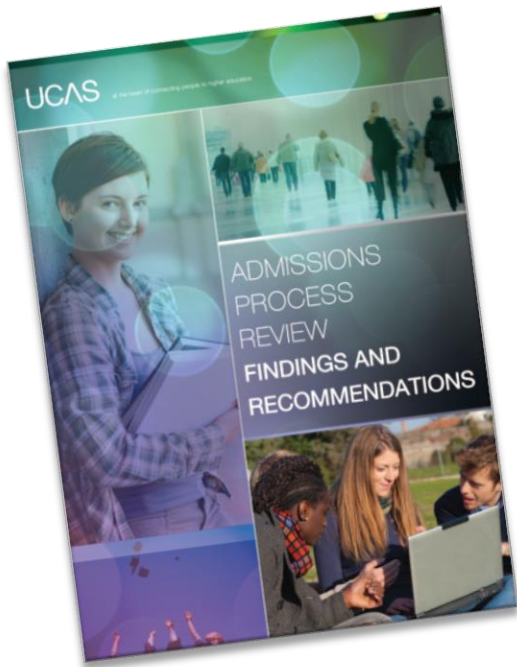
60% at providers under  
45 mins from home



## London

Almost a quarter from London





# Admissions Process Review

- In 2012, UCAS facilitated a comprehensive national consultation on introducing PQA.
- Found PQA to be theoretically attractive, but that it posed significant risk to disadvantaged groups without change to school or academic year.

## Key concerns included:

- Lack of **time**, **support** and **protections** for student decision making.
- Likelihood of a more **mechanistic** admissions process, lacking contextualisation.
- Lack of **time** to accommodate admissions tests, auditions and interviews.
- Range of **operational** challenges and dependencies.

**87%**

Satisfaction for those applying through Clearing



**92%**

Satisfaction with UCAS products and services

**Students**

**Customer satisfaction with UCAS products and services is high**

**Providers**

**90%**

Rated their experience of 2018 Clearing as 'great' or 'good'



**89%**

Satisfaction with UCAS products and services

**Advisers**

**95%**

Satisfaction with UCAS products and services



**UCAS**

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# Student decision-making is complex and individual – transparency is key

6,500 respondents to UCAS' [learner lens survey](#). Primary reasons for not applying to a higher tariff provider were:

49%

thought the entry requirements were too high

20%

thought it would be too expensive to live at these universities

41%

thought none of these universities offered the courses they were interested in

Applicants said they would appreciate more information about what grades are really needed to get in and the likelihood of getting a place if their grades fall slightly short of their offer.

**Focus group:** How do you feel about the idea of a PQA system?

- Too much pressure given the timescales between receiving results and starting uni - support from school is very important especially whilst they are also focusing on their studies.
- Not practical but it would remove uncertainty.
- Reduced support with PQA could lead to students making less aspirational choices.

# Current developments to enhance system



Greater support for predicted grades:  
good practice resources and centre-  
level accuracy reports



Open conversation about entry  
requirements



Innovative approach to I+A:  
personalisation and data-driven tools



New application management service  
– live for the 2021 entry cycle.



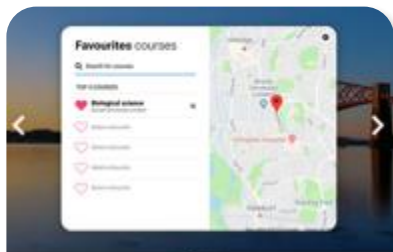
Advancements in support for  
widening access and participation:  
new questions and MEM



Enhancements to Clearing

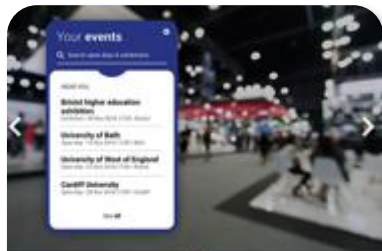
# The UCAS Hub

UCAS



## Search & favourite courses

Search for courses, view your top 5 choices, manage and edit your favourites.



## Your open days and UCAS events

Search for University open days and UCAS events. Keep track of all your events in one handy place.



## Welcome to your Dashboard

Stay organised, supported and informed from start to apply.

Thanks I've got it



## Explore & favourite options

Explore and favourite subjects, locations, Uni & colleges and courses.



## Turn your predicted grades into UCAS Tariff points

Easy way to calculate your Tariff points and store your predicted grades.

# The applicant of 2026

**+14%**  
(97,931)

The proportional difference in the  
number of

**UK 11 year olds**

compared to the number of

**UK 18 year olds**



Ratio of 1:1.14 (707,888: 805,819)



Demand for over 50,000 more HE  
places by 2030



Potential additional fee income of  
£1,387,500,000 based on current  
top rates

# As we shape our Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2025...

## What's next?



A two-way, year-round recruitment platform?



Further enhancements to Clearing?



Structural changes to the process:

- More choice?
- Greater flexibility?



Expansion of provision, including apprenticeships?



# Thank you

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