

Guide to UCAS

What is UCAS?

Applications to all Universities in Great Britain occur through a centralised application portal called UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). All undergraduate courses (similar to Swedish ‘program’ where a ‘kandidatprogram’ is equivalent to a Bachelor’s degree) are listed in the UCAS database. Creating an account on UCAS is free and is done through the website (www.ucas.com), saving you time as only one application is needed and then sent to all the courses you are interested in.

Each course has different grade requirements, which should be researched beforehand. Good ways to do this is to visit individual university websites and the courses that you are interested in applying to, asking for a university prospectus and comparing courses. Make sure that you include courses that you are fairly certain you will get into (back-up courses), as well as courses that you aim to get into (reach courses) in your maximum five allocated slots.

When to apply?

Universities in Great Britain will review your application as soon as they are received through UCAS. This means that it will not be useful to wait until the last application deadline before sending your application, as you may be competing for fewer spaces than would be the case earlier in the year. This also means if you decide to apply earlier, you will receive a decision earlier in the year. Mid-October is the deadline for early applicants; this means students who want to study medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine/science, or apply to Oxbridge. Mid-January is the deadline for all remaining courses.



Part 1: The Personal Statement

The UCAS Profile:

For a strong application it is important for you to consider your strengths, weaknesses and academic interests, and how you want to communicate this through your personal statement and other parts of your UCAS form. A strong profile will stand out from the thousands of applications universities receive, and will continue to develop throughout your life. Practically, the subjects you have chosen to study at school and the extracurricular activities you partake in should reflect who you are and who you want to become. You should have a clear understanding of what “edge” you can provide to the course and why the university should offer you a place. Try to find connections between your profile and the profile of your university’s course.

Personal Statement:

The personal statement is the only way for universities to get to know you and is therefore an immensely important component of the application process. You are given 4,000 characters, including spaces, and it is recommended to keep your statement short and concise.

“For applicants from Sweden, the personal statement becomes particularly important, since it's an opportunity to gain better understanding of their academic interests and profiles, which might be quite different from British students”

- Royal Holloway's School of Management.



Part 2: Reference Letter and Interviews

Reference Letter:

The reference letter is of the same length as your personal statement and should be written by someone you believe can make a good impression of you and the school that you are coming from. Considering the experience British teachers will have in writing reference letters, it is important for YOU to provide support to your Swedish teacher in writing the letter. For example, if your teacher would more successfully convey themselves in Swedish, then organise so that it can later be translated by your English teacher or another adult confident in English. You want a teacher who can describe your positive attributes and ideally give concrete examples of situations into which these characteristics were put into play.

Interviews:

Early applicants (i.e. medics, Oxbridge, etc.) will be required to attend an interview, and other competitive universities like UCL and Durham may request for you to be interviewed. Once asked to attend an interview, ensure that you do some practice runs in the situation at school. Things like body language, formulation and expressing enthusiasm will all become essential, as well as practice speaking English as much as possible!



Part 3: Funding

For Swedish citizens, we have the great benefit of having support from CSN in funding our studies, even if we choose to study abroad. In the UK, Swedish students are currently classified as Home students and therefore will have to pay a likely annual amount of up to £9,340 towards tuition. It is likely that these figures will change in coming years due to Brexit, and will most likely increase significantly.

Currently CSN can offer covering the entire tuition fee for Swedish students studying abroad if you have met certain requirements, such has having been registered as living in Sweden for the last three years. This is set up as a loan, which means that repayment will be required once you have graduated and are earning over a certain amount. You will also be able to receive a certain amount of money paid to you as a grant from CSN, which won't need to be paid back. This amount will vary from person to person depending on your pre-existing financial situation.

It is also likely that you will have to take a loan of similar size to your tuition fee in addition to fund your living and maintenance costs. Keep in mind when looking at universities what your budget is and whether you would be happy and willing to pay the extra amount it will cost to live in a more expensive city such as Oxford or London. Make sure that you have a budget of what you are able and willing to spend on a monthly basis while undertaking your studies. Some universities will not allow you to undertake part-time employment while studying (Oxbridge is an example of this) so finding "extraknäck" may not always be a viable option. You don't want to have to forfeit your degree because you have not budgeted your living expenditures accordingly!

Important Links

<http://www.ucas.com/>

<http://www.stipendier.se/>

<http://www.csn.se/>

Grade Conversion Resource: <http://ecctis.co.uk/naric/>

<http://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/>

<http://www.britishcouncil.se/>

<http://www.hotcourses.com/>

<http://allastudier.se/tips-o-fakta/16-studera-i-storbritannien/>

<http://unistats.ac.uk/>

<http://www.gov.uk/education/funding-and-finance-for-students>

<http://sweisa.se/storbritannien-ansokningsguide/>

<http://www.gov.uk/world/sweden>

And remember... get in touch with us for personal and free mentorship schemes, webinars and resource database!



About Us

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