

Clearing Information for Students RESULTS DAY IS THURSDAY 19 AUGUST 2010.

Adjustment

Applicants who pass their exams with better results than expected **and** who have exceeded the conditions for their firm choice will have the option to find an alternative place **whilst still holding the original offer**. This process is called 'Adjustment'. If you want to try to find an alternative course you must register to use Adjustment so universities and colleges can view your application. Register in Track by clicking on 'Register for Adjustment' on your 'Choices' screen.

Your individual Adjustment period starts on 19 August or when your Conditional Firm (CF) choice changes to Unconditional Firm (UF), whichever is later. You have five calendar days to use Adjustment within the period 19 to 31 August. Your Track 'Choices' page shows you when your Adjustment period ends. If you become eligible to use Adjustment less than five calendar days before 31 August, you have the remaining time before then to find an alternative place. For example, if you become Unconditional Firm on 29 August you will have three days to use the process. When contacting universities, make it clear you are applying through Adjustment and not Clearing. If you do not find a suitable place elsewhere you will remain accepted at your original choice. If you do change course during Adjustment you must also change your non-academic arrangements such as accommodation and student finance.

Clearing

You are eligible for Clearing if:

- you have not withdrawn from the UCAS scheme
- you are holding no offers
- your offers have not been confirmed because you haven't met the requirements
- you have declined all of your offers or applied after 30 June.

If your grades are lower than you have been asked for, use Track on www.ucas.com wherever possible to find out if your place has been confirmed. No letters will be sent by UCAS regarding your status. You can also telephone the university with whom you are holding your Conditional or Insurance offer to check. There is a chance that they may still take you. Indeed, you can't apply anywhere else if you have been accepted by your Conditional or Insurance institution (unless you ask them to release you). They may prefer to offer places at slightly lower grades to people who have originally shown an interest in, and applied to, them rather than to someone new. However, this will probably not happen if the course is popular and oversubscribed. The university where you are holding a Conditional or Insurance offer may make you an alternative offer but you don't have to accept this.

If there is a good reason why you did not get grades, your head of sixth form or tutor could telephone a university on your behalf. For all other enquiries, telephone yourself. Therefore, don't be on holiday when A level results come out! **You** (and not your parents'/carer/friend/ teacher) need to speak with admission tutors and be ready to make decisions. If it is absolutely impossible for you to be available, arrange with your school or college (this normally needs to be done in writing) for someone to collect your results and, if necessary, to negotiate with admissions staff on your behalf.

If you have registered with UCAS, and you are eligible for Clearing you don't need to contact UCAS – an 'Add Clearing choice' button will automatically appear on your Track 'choices' screen which you can use to apply for a course. If a university or college wants to offer you a place through Clearing and you want to accept it, click on your 'Add Clearing Choice' button and enter the institution and course details. UCAS will let the university or college know that you have entered their details on Track. If the university or college accepts you, the details will be displayed in the 'choices' section of Track and UCAS will send you a letter to let you know your place is confirmed.

Feel free to approach as many universities and colleges as you wish during Clearing. Your clearing number is displayed on the 'Welcome' page and 'Choices' page in track. When you contact a university or college they will ask for your Clearing number to confirm that they can consider you in Clearing. They can then view your complete application immediately on the UCAS secure online system.

Finding Suitable Courses

Start your research straight away, making sure you have your Clearing number to hand. Find out which courses have vacancies. Use the UCAS web site www.ucas.com to search for courses. The 'Independent' is the only official newspaper in England to carry details of courses although other newspapers also list vacancies – all updated daily – together with telephone numbers for institutions.

Find out as much as you can about the courses you are considering by using the relevant university websites and printing out course details to ensure that you will enjoy the course. Alternatively you could look at a prospectus. Course content is the most important consideration when choosing what and where to study as courses with the same title can vary widely in their content. You don't have to stick to the subject choices you made originally - there may be other areas which might suit you better. Ask what types of jobs the students have gone into who recently finished the course you are considering.

If you declined an offer from a university or college earlier in the year contact them again to see if they will accept you in Clearing, either for the same course or any other.

When enquiring about course places, be prepared for a brief interview over the telephone because you may be asked to speak to the course tutor.

Preparation for a telephone interview:

- Speak clearly
- Have two pens and paper ready to write notes
- Don't have noise in the background (eg. Hoover, television, dogs, etc)
- Have your UCAS Clearing number to hand
- Have your GCSE and A level/BTEC National grades to hand
- Research the course you are ringing about beforehand. Print course details from the website or read a prospectus in school or college.
- Make a checklist of selling points about you or phrases you want to use (it would be useful if you had a copy of your personal statement to hand)
- Show confidence, a 'can do' attitude and organisational ability/initiative

Try to prepare some answers for possible questions you may be asked. For example:

- Why are you interested in this university?
- What is it about this course that appeals to you?
- Why do you think you would do well studying here?
- Tell me a bit about yourself?
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
What do you like to do when you are not studying?
- Are there other courses you might be interested in if we can't accommodate you on this one?

Make a list of questions you need to ask. For example:

- Are there still vacancies on the course?
- Will you consider my grades suitable for entry?
- If you speak to a tutor, you can ask some questions about the course to show your interest.
Ask about the content of the course.
- Can you tell me what teaching methods are used?
- Can you tell me about assessment methods on the course (how many exams!).
- Would it be possible for me to visit you/the university in the next few days?
- Will the university be able to offer accommodation? How is this arranged?

Applicants can contact different universities and colleges to discuss vacancies and may be informally offered several places.. Don't panic and rush into the first offer you get although, for popular courses, you will need to be quick. There is no guarantee that places will be available on any particular course. At the same time, a course that is full may have vacancies later. New vacancies appear each day and clearing operates until 20 September. **Ask to be put on a priority waiting list at any of the universities you are interested in.**

Take the name, job title and telephone number of the person who makes an offer to you – you may need it later to verify your offer.

You will need to decide which offer to accept as you can only enter **one choice at a time** on Track. However, don't feel that you have to accept the first offer that you receive: remember that you will be spending at least three years studying the course, so make sure that the university or college and course are right for you before you accept a place

The best way to find out more about a university or college, its accommodation and social life, is to visit and have a good look around. Most are happy to make arrangements to meet applicants and show them around, and many will have open days in the week/s following the start of clearing. It is strongly advised that you do not accept a place at an institution you haven't visited as you may not like it there.

Before deciding, you can also talk to a Careers or Connexions Adviser at your school, college or local Connexions office. They can help you decide which courses and subjects will be most suitable for you.

If your grades are much lower than expected, search for higher education courses such as Extended Degree, Higher National Diploma (HND) and Foundation Degree that normally only require one A level or the equivalent or lower UCAS points. Upon successful completion of one of these courses, it is normally possible to progress onto an additional, top up course allowing students to achieve a full honours degree. You should always check this with the institution before starting a course although it may be possible to do the top up course at an alternative institution.

Finally

If a university or college provisionally offers you a place in Clearing, they will give you a date by which you must enter their course details on Track. If you want to be formally considered, you need to click on your 'Add Clearing Choice' button and enter the course details. You can only enter details for one choice. Only enter a Clearing choice if the university or college has provisionally offered you a place on the course and you want to accept it. If you enter a Clearing choice without discussing it with the university or college, this may delay the progress of your application.

UCAS will then let the university or college know that you have entered their details on Track. If the university or college accepts you, the acceptance will be displayed in the 'Choices' section of Track and UCAS will send you a letter to let you know your place is confirmed. This letter, known as a 'Confirmation Letter', will explain whether there is anything you need to do next. Once you receive this letter, you will be pleased to know that you have officially gained a place. If you are not accepted, the 'Add Clearing Choice' link in Track will be reactivated so that you can apply for another course in Clearing. By taking up this place, you accept the university or college's terms and conditions, so you must read all about them in their prospectus or other published materials. You cannot then apply to another university or college in the UCAS application cycle for 2010 entry. Also, clearing is not primarily intended for deferred entry and some institutions will not consider such applications.

Additionally, and very importantly – remember that if you are changing universities the change will affect your financial arrangements for higher education and you should make sure that **you notify the details of your new university** as quickly as possible. You should receive all the help you need with finance on www.direct.gov.uk/studentsupport or by using the helpline on 0845 300 50 90.

The UCAS helpline number for students: 0871 468 0468

If your results were higher or lower than expected you can get free advice from the BBC by telephoning: 0808 100 8000 or by using the website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/switch/surgery/advice/helplines/>

Contact details for clearing enquiries for local institutions:

University of East London: 020 8223 3333
Queen Mary University: 0800 376 1800

And finally help is available in the College Careers Centre at the following times:

Thursday 19th August: 7:30 am - 5:00 pm
Friday 20th August: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

The Careers Centre will also open on Monday 23rd August if subject to demand.