

Parents' and Carers' Guide to Higher Education

Tuesday 10 March 2026

Anna Young

Director of Careers
and Progression Guidance



Tonight's programme

1. Tom O'Dea (Esher Sixth Form College Alumnus) from our work experience partners 8 Billion Ideas: The Internship 2026
2. Anna Young, Esher Sixth Form College: Applying to university - context & Higher Education in the UK 2027
3. Martin Bancroft, *Schools and Colleges Liaison Officer, Nottingham Trent University*: How to support your student to choose a university and course
4. Anna Young, The UCAS application process at Esher Sixth Form College

Time allowing, we will take quick questions at the end

Slides will be sent out to all parents



Ticket sales
close on
Monday
13 April

01/02/03 JUNE

2026

THE INTERNSHIP

MEET 3 INFLUENTIAL GUEST
SPEAKERS OVER 3 INSPIRING DAYS



Tickets available NOW on College Shop

Tom O'Dea - 8 Billionideas

Higher Education in 2027: Context



Anna Young

Director of Progression Guidance

APPLICANTS AT THE EQUAL CONSIDERATION DATE

+3.1%

TOTAL APPLICANTS

619,360 applicants
+18,700 vs 2025

+4.8%

UK 18-YEAR-OLDS

338,940 applicants
+15,580 vs 2025

+0.9%

UK 19 and 20

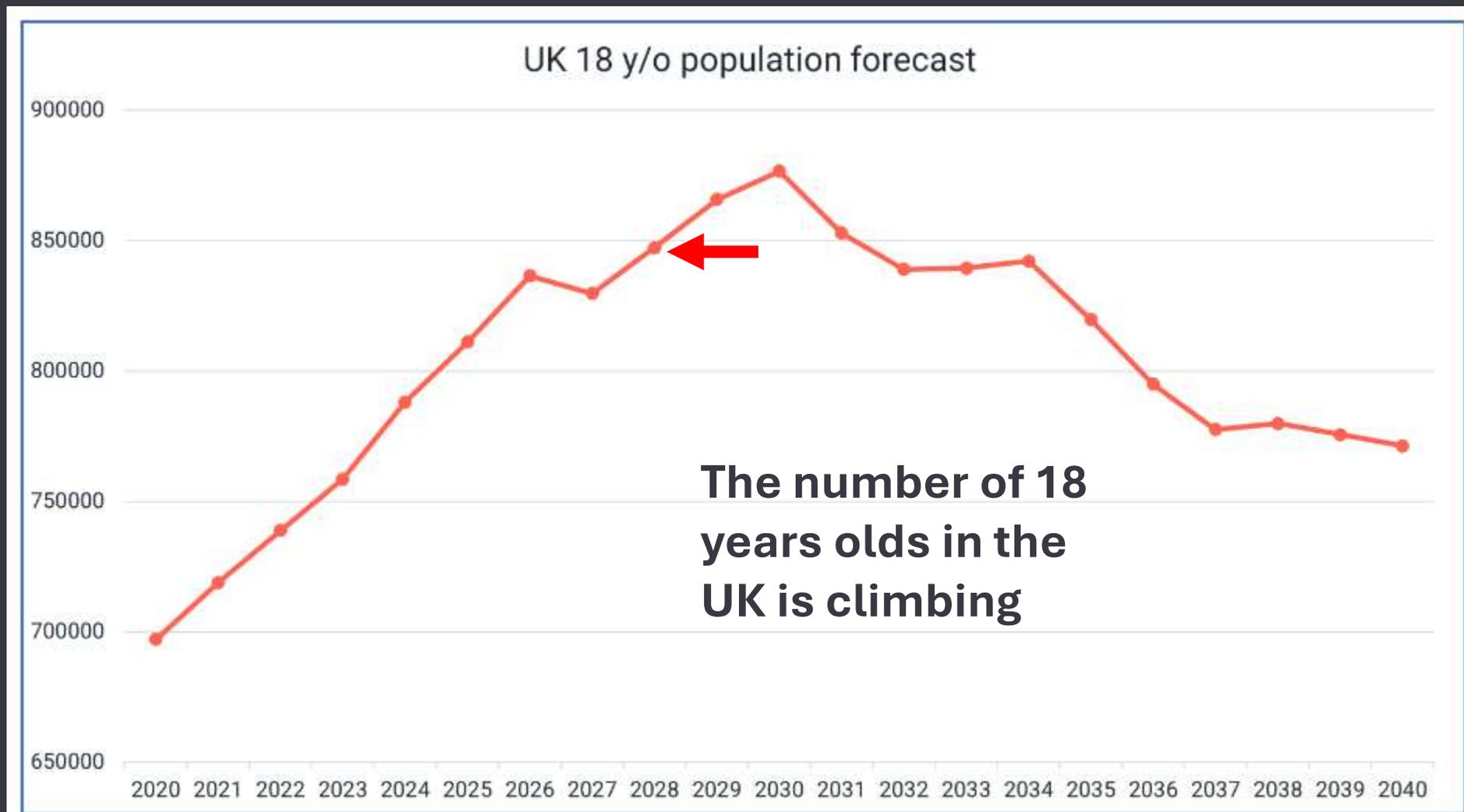
95,980 applicants
+890 vs 2025

-6.1%

UK 21 AND OVER

57,570 applicants
-3,710 vs 2025

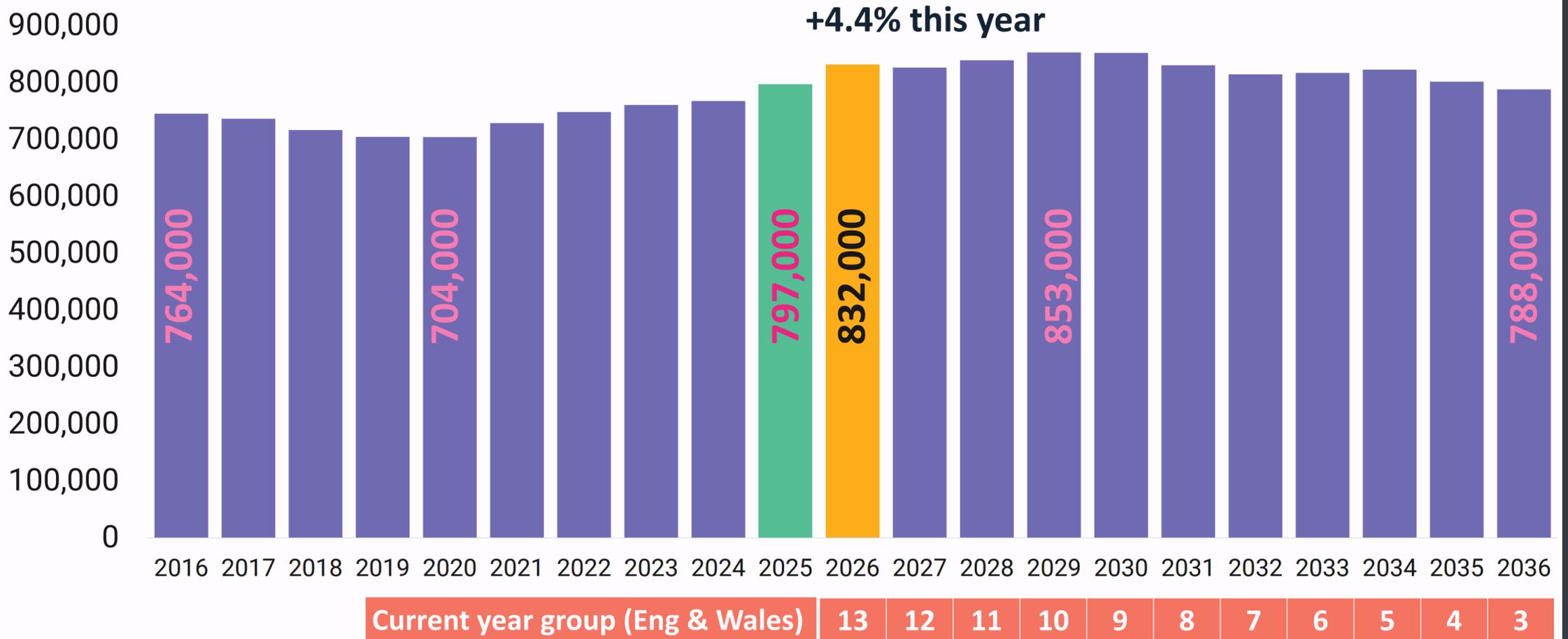
The current Higher Education climate



Source: HESA

HOW MANY UK 18-YEAR-OLDS EACH YEAR?

UCA



HOW LIKELY ARE UK 18 TO BE PLACED OR TO REAPPLY?

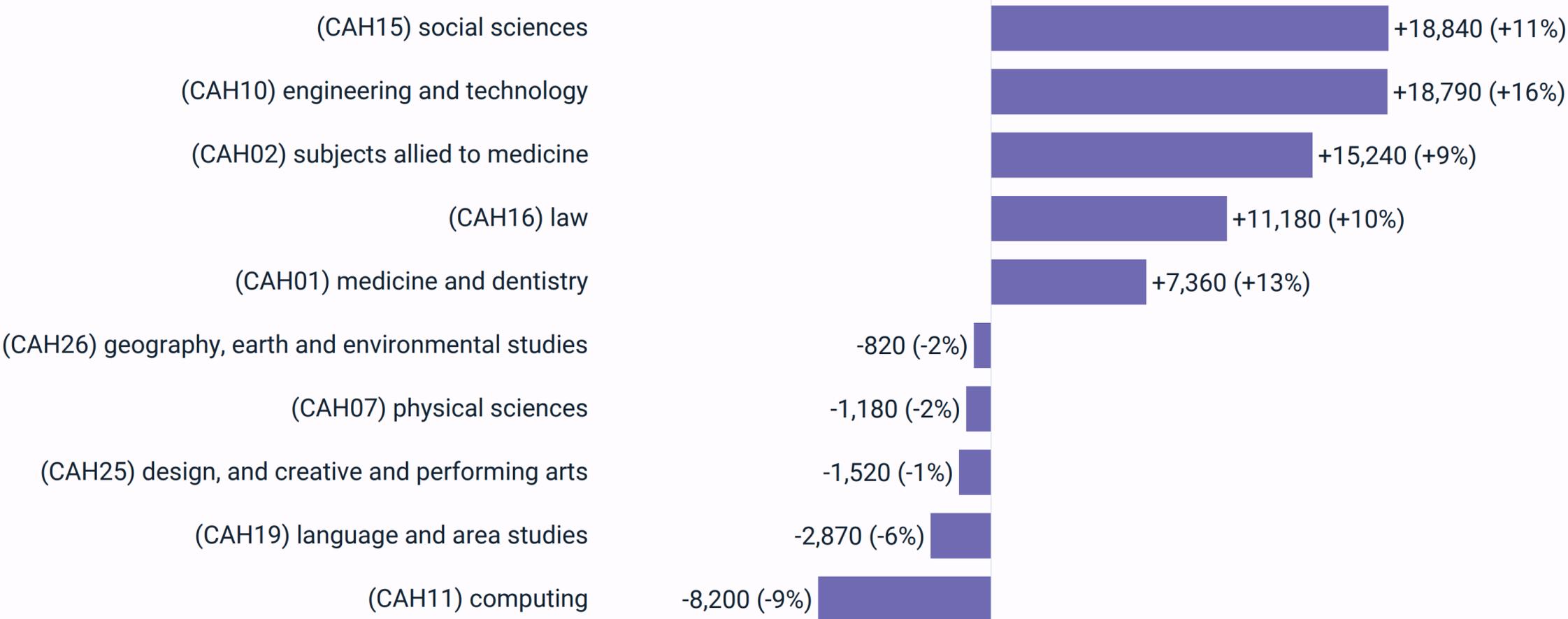
86% are placed
at the end of the
cycle

57% of those
who are unplaced
reapply the next
year at 19

94% of those
who apply at 18
are either placed
or apply the next
year at 19.

BIGGEST CHANGES IN APPLICATIONS BY SUBJECT

Applications by subject group - five biggest increases and decreases (UK 18)



Current Higher Education climate

- Numbers of 18 year olds peak in 2029/30
- Places at top universities are competitive
- Plan 2 student loans in the news – concerns about student finance
- There are many careers which still require a degree
- Graduates earn more: HESA reports the median average between £30,000 - £32,999
- You enjoy studying and want to continue!

MARTIN LEWIS:
Student Loans Decoded

How much does it cost
to go to university?

MoneySavingExpert.com



SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES SEARCH TOOL

Search

Scholarships, bursaries & grants

ⓘ Not all scholarships, bursaries, and grants are on UCAS.com. Check directly with your chosen university for all available options.

< [Search All](#) | 852 results | Page 1 of 43

All filters



Estranged student bursary

Oxford Brookes University



Details

Amount: £2,000.00
Domicile: UK
Study level: Undergraduate
Awarded by: Oxford Brookes University
Funding application deadline: None

[Apply](#)

Scholarship information

If you are irreconcilably estranged from both your parents, you are a UK student who is under 25 and you are considering full-time undergraduate study at Oxford Brookes, you could be eligible for an additional bursary to support you while studying.

The bursary is worth £2,000 per academic year to eligible full-time study students. Applications must be received during the Academic Year and no bursary can be paid retrospectively for previous years of study. The bursary is paid in 2 equal instalment of £1,000, normally in November and February.

Global Futures Scholarships - North America - Undergraduate

Funding application deadline: 05 Mar 2026

University of Manchester
£10,000.00

Rest of UK (RUK) Bursary 2026-27

Funding application deadline: 27 Aug 2026

University of Dundee
£2,000.00

1st Formations Business Scholarship

Funding application deadline: 31 Jan 2026

Bristol, UWE
£500.00

2025-26 Business Scholarships

Funding application deadline: None

Hartpury University
Between £2,000 to £3,500

Funding application deadline: None

Hartpury University
Up to £5,000

Funding application deadline: None

Northumbria University, Newcastle
20%

Talks on Finance coming up

- Monday 23 March – Applying to University with Additional Needs and Disabilities, Harriet Canon, Leeds University, 5pm TEAMS.
- Monday May 4 – Student Finance Talk for 6.1 parents, link will be sent after Easter

How to support your student to choose a university and a course

Martin Bancroft, Nottingham Trent University



The UCAS application process at Esher Sixth Form College



Anna Young

Director of Progression Guidance

UCAS DESTINATIONS 2025

Of the 918 UCAS applications made by Esher Sixth Form College students, 91% accepted their first or insurance choice. This map highlights where in the UK they have gone on to study, with the most popular subjects for 2025 being Psychology, Sociology, Design Studies, Economics and Law.

Scotland — Total Students — 12

The University of Edinburgh — 9
University of St Andrews — 2
Glasgow School of Art — 1

North West — Total Students — 104

● University of Liverpool — 33
● University of Manchester — 30
● Manchester Metropolitan University — 26
Lancaster University — 8
Liverpool John Moores University — 5
Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts — 1
LMA — 1

North East — Total Students — 32

Newcastle University — 16
Durham University — 14
Northumbria University, Newcastle — 2

Yorkshire and The Humber — Total Students — 74

● University of Leeds — 43
University of York — 14
University of Sheffield — 9
Leeds Beckett University — 8

East Midlands — Total Students — 69

● Nottingham Trent University — 31
University of Nottingham — 19
Loughborough University — 11
University of Leicester — 6
De Montfort University — 2

Northern Ireland — Total Students — 2

Queen's University Belfast — 1
Ulster University — 1

Wales — Total Students — 31

Cardiff University — 16
Swansea University — 6
Cardiff Metropolitan University — 4
Aberystwyth University — 2
University of South Wales — 2
Bangor University — 1

East of England — Total Students — 12

University of Essex — 5
University of Hertfordshire — 4
University of Cambridge — 2
Anglia Ruskin University — 1

London — Total Students — 104

St Mary's University, Twickenham — 18
Kingston University — 16
King's College London, University of London — 12
University of the Arts London — 9
City St George's, University of London — 7
London South Bank University — 6
Queen Mary University of London — 6
UCFB — 5
UCL (University College London) — 4
London School of Economics and Political Sci (UOL) — 3
University of Roehampton — 3
University of East London — 2
University of Greenwich — 2
Imperial College London — 2
University of West London — 2
Fashion Retail Academy — 1
Goldsmiths, University of London — 1
Middlesex University — 1
Pointblank Music School — 1
Royal Veterinary College, University of London — 1
SOAS University of London — 1
University of Westminster, London — 1

South West — Total Students — 134

● University of Bristol — 35
● University of Exeter — 27
Bournemouth University — 21
University of Bath — 16
Bristol, UWE — 13
Bath Spa University — 8
Falmouth University — 5
Arts University Bournemouth — 4
University of Plymouth — 2
University of Gloucestershire — 1
Hartpury University — 1
Norland — 1

South East — Total Students — 199

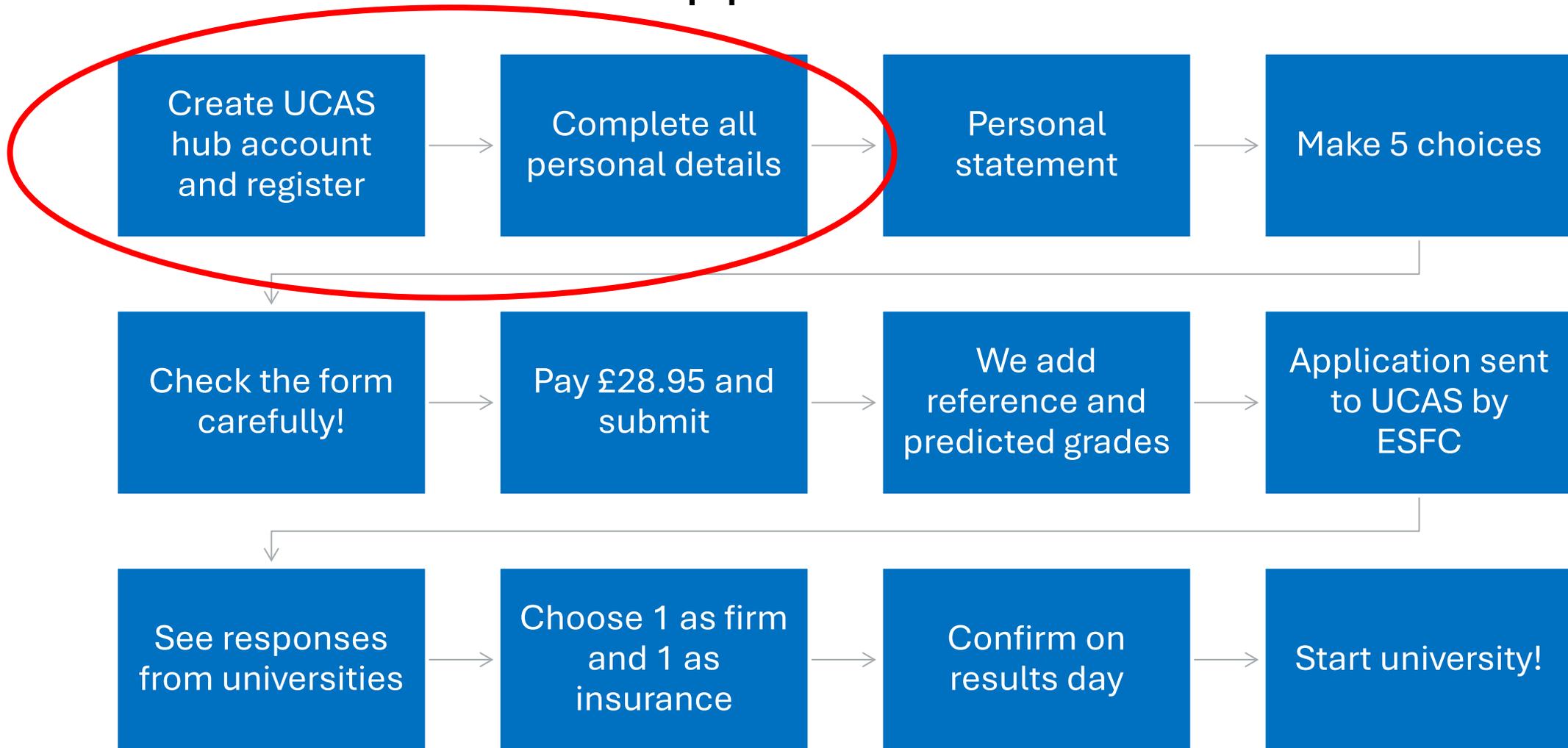
● Royal Holloway, University of London — 36
● University of Surrey — 27
● University of Sussex — 26
University of Southampton — 21
Oxford Brookes University — 20
University of Reading — 15
University of Portsmouth — 14
University of Brighton — 13
University of Kent — 7
University of Winchester — 7
University of Oxford — 4
BIMM University — 3
University of Chichester — 3
Southampton Solent University — 2
University for the Creative Arts — 1



Top 10 Universities

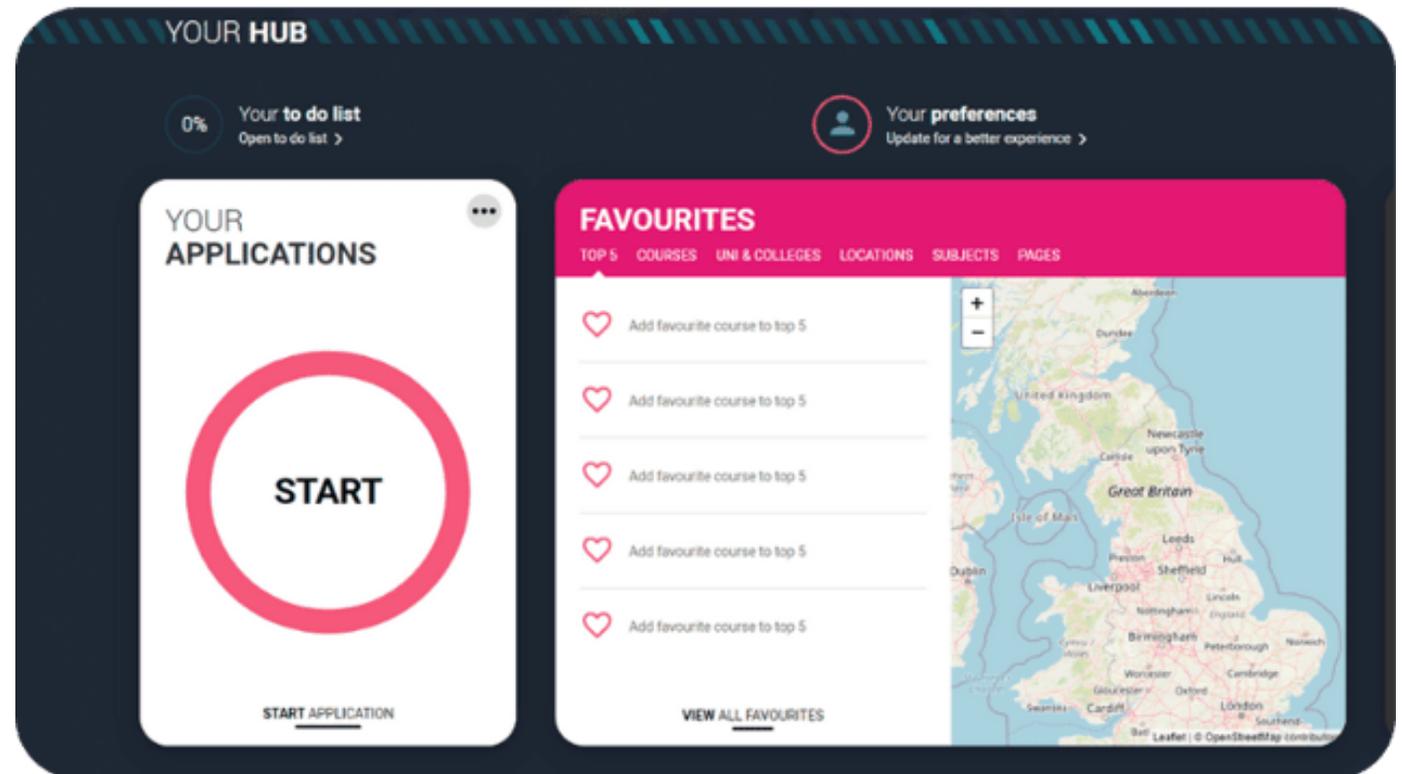
1. University of Leeds
2. Royal Holloway, University of London
3. University of Bristol
4. University of Liverpool
5. Nottingham Trent University
6. University of Manchester
7. University of Exeter
7. University of Surrey
9. University of Sussex
9. Manchester Metropolitan University

How does Esher SFC support students?



UCAS Hub

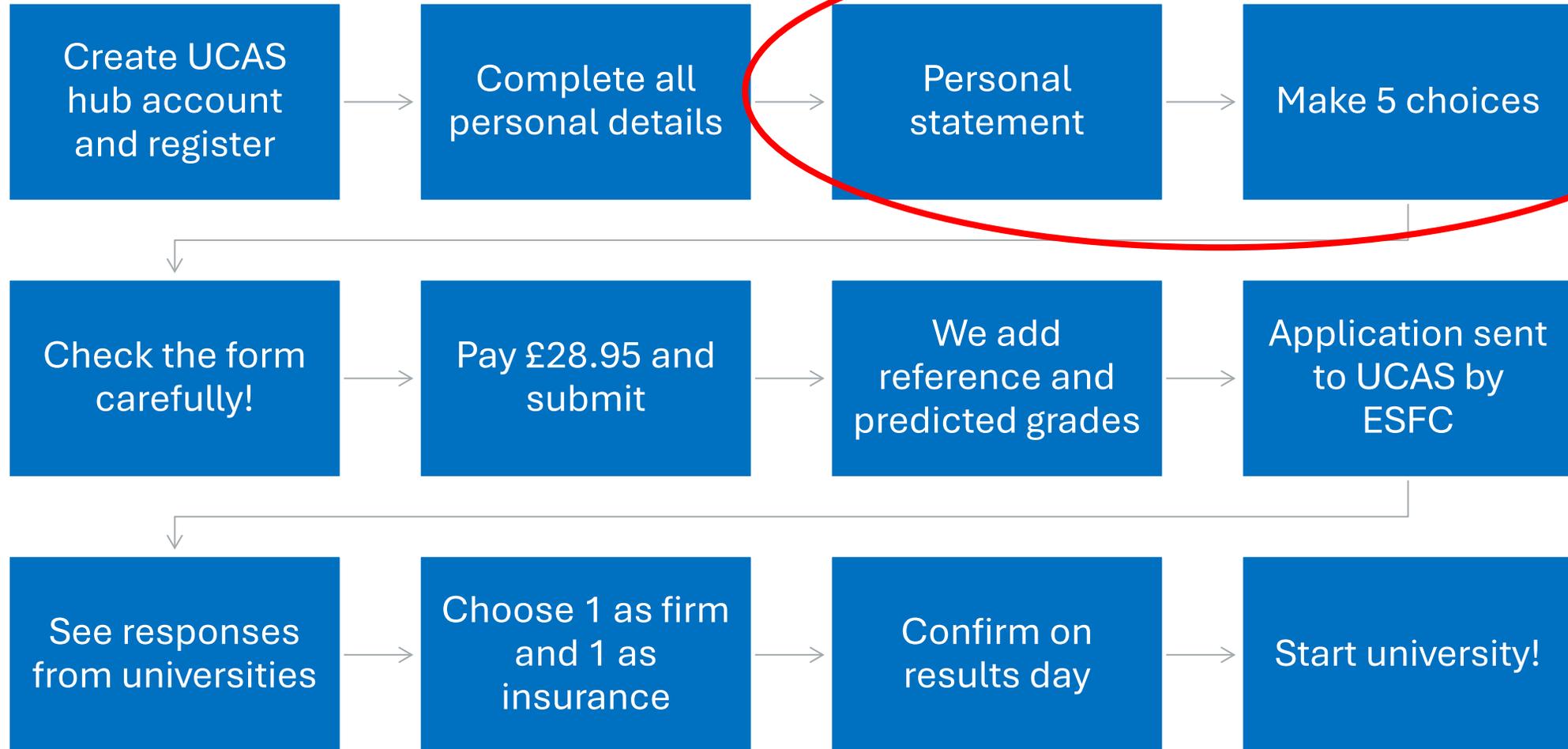
- An invaluable source of information, as well as the method by which applications are made



Create UCAS hub account and register

- On After Esher Day (2 July 2026)
- Create a UCAS hub account
- Link application to ESFC with a buzzword
- Complete all personal details (*harder than you think!*) - *this includes entering qualifications accurately!*
- *Students must carefully check their form – there is help available but it is their responsibility*

How does Esher SFC support students?



Personal statement

- Last year saw the implementation of new personal statement guidance
- Little/no material difference in content, but students are being given more help with structure
- Use personal statement tool on Unifrog (destinations platform)
- Every draft saved so tutor can see it to give feedback
- Students will get input on this on After Esher Day (2 July)
- First part of 6.2 autumn term tutorial sessions are focused on the personal statement

New style personal statement

The new personal statement questions:

- Question 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?
- Question 2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
- Question 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

Beware!



Do not be tempted to 'buy' a personal statement – plagiarism software will detect

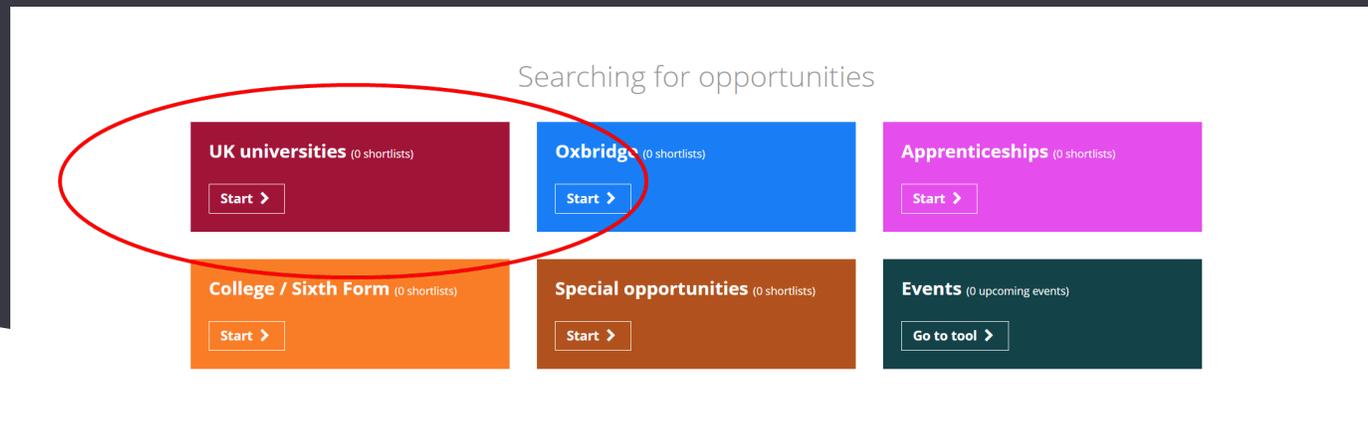
AI can be used responsibly to provide a framework or to check grammar– however it can produce vague, inaccurate material and there are privacy concerns. Admissions tutors say they can tell!



It is a **personal** statement

Help to choose

- 5 choices – except for medicine and vets (4 +1)
- Some choices can be added later but we generally advise against this
- Advice: 2 or 3 aspirational, 1 or 2 solid and 1 safe (UCAS grades \hat{y} after summer exams)
- If you are overly aspirational you might be disappointed
- Historic entry grades data can be very useful as is the Unifrog 'UK Universities tool'
- Subjects and institutions vary – research is essential



UCAS Historic entry data tool

Biomedical Sciences at Bath

A level - Typical offer

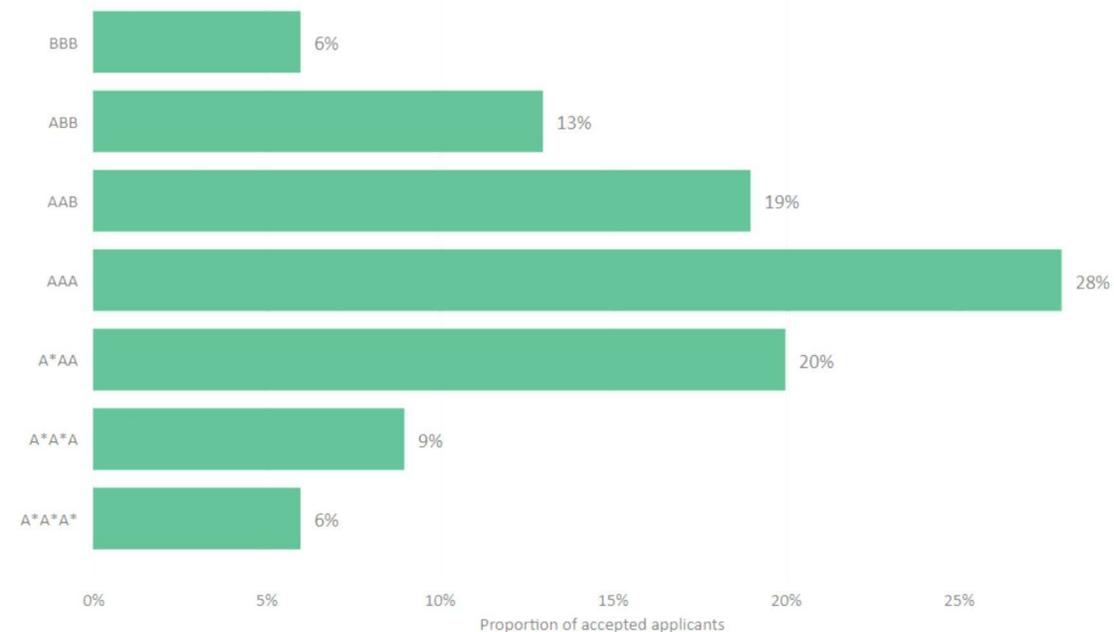
AAA or A*AB

AAA or A*AB in three A levels including A in Biology and A in Chemistry

A level - Alternative offer

AAB

Most of our students will join us with three A levels, but you may have study beyond this (such as a project qualification or additional study in maths) which demonstrates your individual talents that will help you with your degree. We recognise these studies through our alternative offers.



Qualification type: A level

[Change course selection](#)

Minimum grade held by accepted applicants (excluding outliers):

BBB

Most common grade held by accepted applicants (mode):

AAA

Maximum grade held by accepted applicants (excluding outliers):

A*A*A*

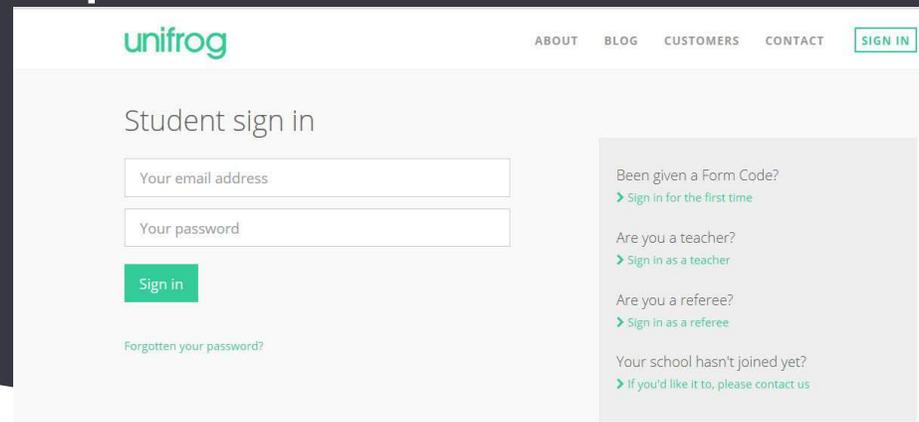
*To remove outliers the top and bottom 5% of accepted applicants have been removed.

UCAS Historic entry data tool

- Published entry requirement may be different to grades on entry
- Modern Languages at Leeds: offer ABB; only 42% of students starting gained this grade or above
- Maths at Imperial College, London: offer A*A*A; All students met or exceeded this (80% of students had A*A*A*!)
- Fashion Marketing and Comms at AUB: offer 120 UCAS points (BBB); 52% met or exceeded this
- Use UCAS historic entry grades data tool or Unifrog UK Universities too to help

Unifrog → our destinations platform

- Unifrog is our main research tool
- Unifrog was launched to students before Christmas
- Unifrog parent access – permissions needed, request next week
- Students can research options and record what they have done to help with personal statement



The screenshot shows the Unifrog website's student sign-in interface. At the top, the Unifrog logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'ABOUT', 'BLOG', 'CUSTOMERS', 'CONTACT', and 'SIGN IN' are on the right. The main heading is 'Student sign in'. Below this, there are two input fields: 'Your email address' and 'Your password'. A green 'Sign in' button is positioned below the password field. To the right of the sign-in form, there are four links with right-pointing chevrons: 'Sign in for the first time' (under 'Been given a Form Code?'), 'Sign in as a teacher' (under 'Are you a teacher?'), 'Sign in as a referee' (under 'Are you a referee?'), and 'If you'd like it to, please contact us' (under 'Your school hasn't joined yet?'). A link for 'Forgotten your password?' is located below the 'Sign in' button.

UK universities (0 shortlists)

Start >

unirog

HOME SHORTLISTS LOCKER APPLY HELP   TEACH

1 Start 2 Subjects 3 Longlist 4 Shortlist 5 Complete

What are the **best grades** you're likely to get by the time you leave school / college?

* Qualification 1	<input type="text" value="A Level"/>	<input type="text" value="B (40 points)"/>
Qualification 2	<input type="text" value="A Level"/>	<input type="text" value="B (40 points)"/>
Qualification 3	<input type="text" value="A Level"/>	<input type="text" value="C (32 points)"/>
Qualification 4	<input type="text" value="Extended Project (stand alone)"/>	<input type="text" value="B (20 points)"/>
Qualification 5	<input type="text" value="--- please select a qualification ---"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>
Qualification 6	<input type="text" value="--- please select a qualification ---"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>



1 Start

2 **Subjects**

3 Longlist

4 Shortlist

5 Complete

What do you want to study at university?

* Subject

next ▶

or go back

Rank ▾ Filter ▾ Search ▾

Aspirational (117)

 **Psychology - 3FT BSc (Hons)** 
 University of Birmingham
RG A Level: A,A,A

 **Psychology - 4FT MPsych** 
 Lancaster University
TT A Level: A,A,A

 **Psychological Sciences - 4FT MPsycholSc** 
 University of Liverpool
RG A Level: A,A,A

 **Psychology with a Placement Year - 4FT BSc (Hons)** 
 University of Kent
A Level: A,A,A

 **Psychology - 4FT MA (Hons)** 
 University of St Andrews
TT A Level: A,A,B

 **Psychology - 4FT BSc (Hons)** 
 University of St Andrews

Solid (189)

 **Psychology and Sociology - 3FT/4SW + Abroad BSc (Hons)**
 Keele University
A Level: A,B,C-B,B,B

 **Psychology - 3FT BSc (Hons)**
 University of Gloucestershire
A Level: B,B,B

 **Forensic Psychology - 3FT/4SW BSc (Hons)**
 University of Portsmouth
UCAS Points: 120

 **Psychology - 3FT/4SW BSc (Hons)**
 University of Portsmouth
UCAS Points: 120

 **Criminology and Criminal Psychology - 3FT BSc (Hons)**
 University of Greenwich
UCAS Points: 120

 **Psychology and Criminology - 3FT**

Safe (180)

A Level: B,C,C

 **Criminology with Psychology - 3FT BA (Hons)**
 De Montfort University
UCAS Points: 104

 **Psychology/Criminology - 3FT BA (Hons)**
 University of Northampton
A Level: B,C,C

 **Criminology with Psychology - 3FT BA (Hons)**
 University of Winchester
UCAS Points: 104-120

 **Criminology with Psychology - 3FT BA (Hons)**
 Leeds Beckett University
UCAS Points: 104

 **Sociology/Psychology - 3FT BA (Hons)**
 University of Northampton

[next ▶](#) or [go back](#)

[org/student/universities/long-list?course=254397&frog=2](https://www.thefrog.com/student/universities/long-list?course=254397&frog=2)

Rank ▲ Filter ▼ Search ▼

Entry requirements	Average points	% Graduate jobs	Fees	Starting salary	Dropout rate	Hours of lectures	Hours of tutorials
Hours of workshops	% Satisfaction	% Application success (Overall)		% Application success (UK)		Size of uni	% international
Guardian rank	Guardian Psychology rank	Guardian Education rank	QS world rank	Accommodation cost	Distance from home	Social life	
Spend on Access							

Aspirational (117)

Solid (189)

Safe (180)

 Psychological Sciences - 4FT MPsycholSc   University of Liverpool RG A Level: A,A,A	A Level: B,B,B	 (Hons) University of Northampton A Level: B,C,C
 Psychology with a Placement Year - 4FT BSc (Hons)   University of Kent A Level: A,A,A	 Forensic Psychology - 3FT/4SW BSc (Hons)  University of Portsmouth UCAS Points: 120	 Criminology with Psychology - 3FT BA (Hons)  University of Winchester UCAS Points: 104-120
 Psychology - 4FT MA (Hons)   University of St Andrews TT A Level: A,A,B	 Psychology - 3FT/4SW BSc (Hons)  University of Portsmouth UCAS Points: 120	 Criminology with Psychology - 3FT BA (Hons)  Leeds Beckett University UCAS Points: 104
 Psychology - 4FT BSc (Hons)   University of St Andrews	 Criminology and Criminal Psychology - 3FT BSc (Hons)  University of Greenwich UCAS Points: 120	 Sociology/Psychology - 3FT BA (Hons)  University of Northampton
	 Psychology and Criminology - 3FT	

next ▶ or go back

Rank Filter Search

All distances | 10 miles | 20 miles | 50 miles | 100 miles | 200 miles | 300 miles | Big cities | Scotland | Wales | City | Campus

All modes | Full time | Part time | Sandwich | Foundation | No Foundation | Full degrees | **W/ study abroad** | W/out study abroad

All types | Russell Group (RG) | Top Third (TT) | Art Foundation | Joint Honours | No unis that prefer A levels, IB, Pre-U | TEF Gold | TEF Silver

TEF Bronze

All entry requirements | **No courses out of my range**

Aspirational (4)

Solid (11)

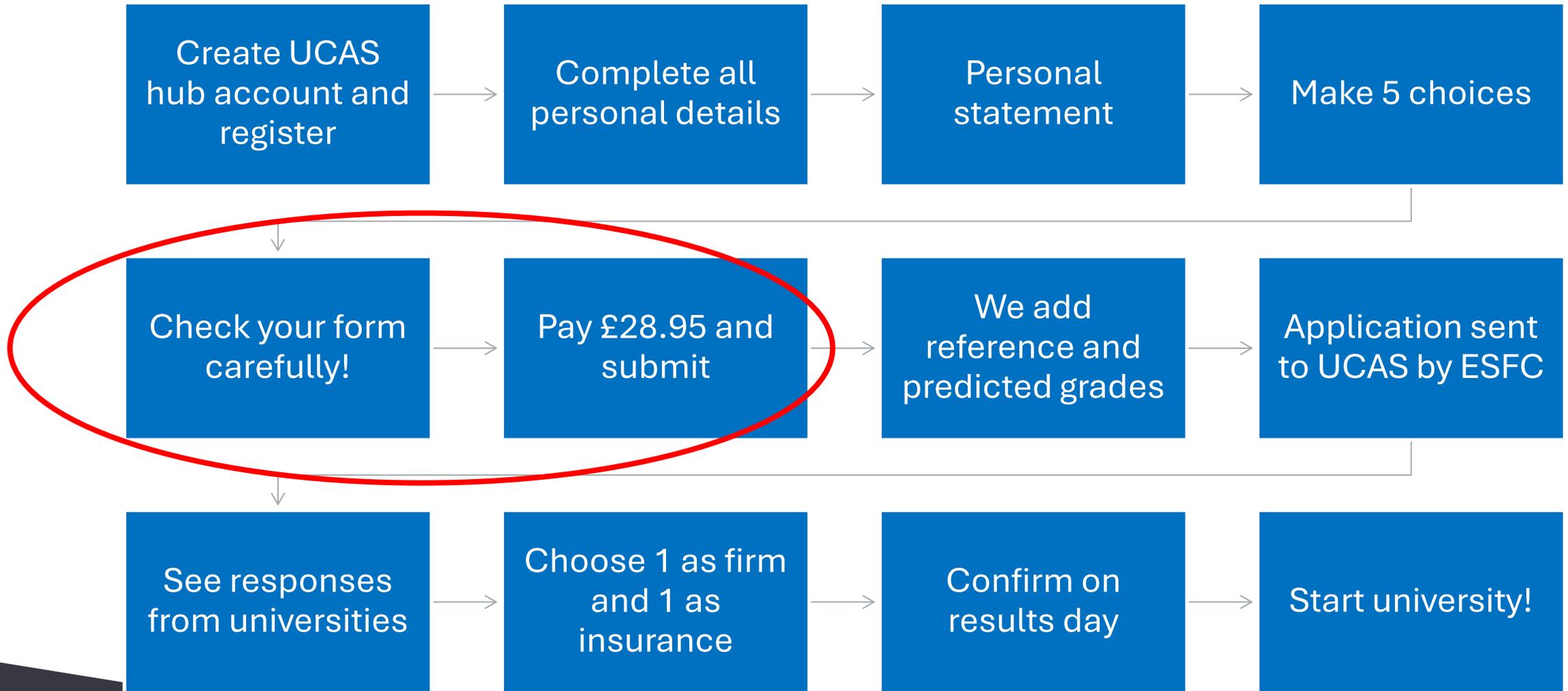
Safe (1)

Psychology with a Year Abroad - 4FT + Abroad BSc (Hons) University of East Anglia UEA TT A Level: A,B,B	Psychology - 3FT/4SW + Abroad BSc (Hons) Keele University A Level: A,B,C-B,B,B	Psychology with Science Foundation Year - 4FT + Abroad BSc (Hons) Keele University Foundation year UCAS Points: 64
Cognitive Psychology with a Year Abroad - 4FT + Abroad BSc (Hons) University of East Anglia UEA TT A Level: A,B,B	Criminology and Psychology - 3FT/4SW + Abroad BSc (Hons) Keele University A Level: A,B,C-B,B,B	
Psychology - 4FT + Abroad BSc (Hons) Northumbria University, Newcastle	Psychology and Sociology - 3FT/4SW + Abroad BSc (Hons) Keele University	

next

or go back

How does Esher SFC support students?





Esher Sixth Form College 2027 UCAS Apply deadlines

Students must carefully check their UCAS form is correct before paying and submitting their form. Resources are available on Teams to support with this, or you can visit progression guidance to have your form checked. Please note our 'turn around' time commitment is only valid for forms submitted **without errors**. These deadlines apply to post-results ('6.3') applicants also.

Applications can be submitted from the start of teaching in the autumn term, Monday 7 September 2026.

Type of application	You must submit your form beforeand we will send your form to UCAS
Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry and Oxbridge applications	8am on Monday 21 September 2026	by the UCAS early deadline of 15 October 2026
Priority deadline (for those wishing to make an early application)	8am on Monday 5 October 2026	By Friday 6 November 2026
General applications	8am on Monday 2 November 2026	by the end of the autumn term, Friday 18 December 2026
Final deadline	8am on Monday 16 November 2026	by the UCAS final 'equal consideration' deadline, 13 January 2027

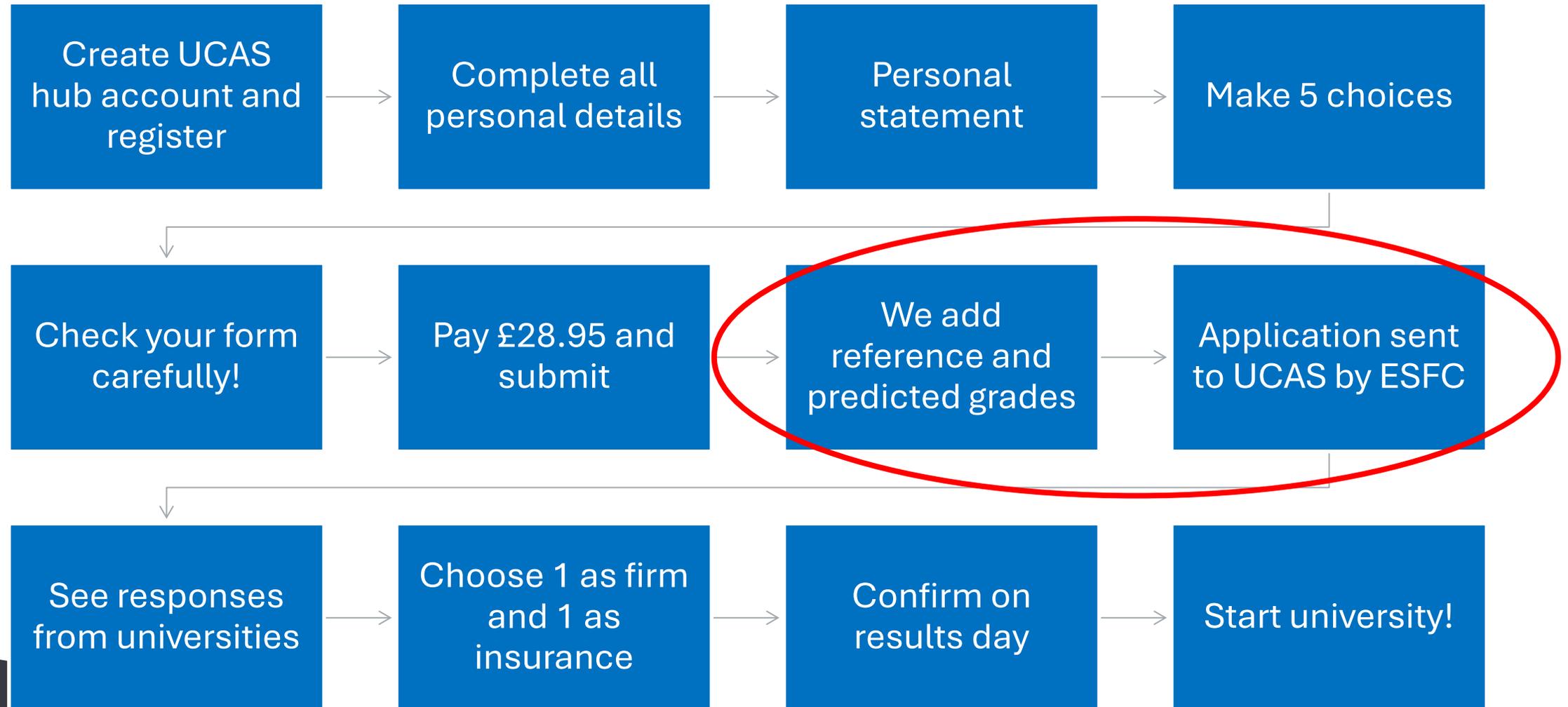
We cannot guarantee that forms submitted after Monday 16 November 2026 will meet the UCAS equal consideration deadline.

Some universities operate a policy of '**first come, first served**'. An **early application** for any course at any institution **optimises** the chance of receiving an offer.

Sources of support with the UCAS application form **BEFORE SUBMISSION**

- After Esher Day – essential that they attend (it is the last day of term....)
- Teams resources
- PDP sessions on personal statement
- Progression guidance team G011 / progression@esher.ac.uk
- There is help available but students must take responsibility for the accuracy of their own UCAS application

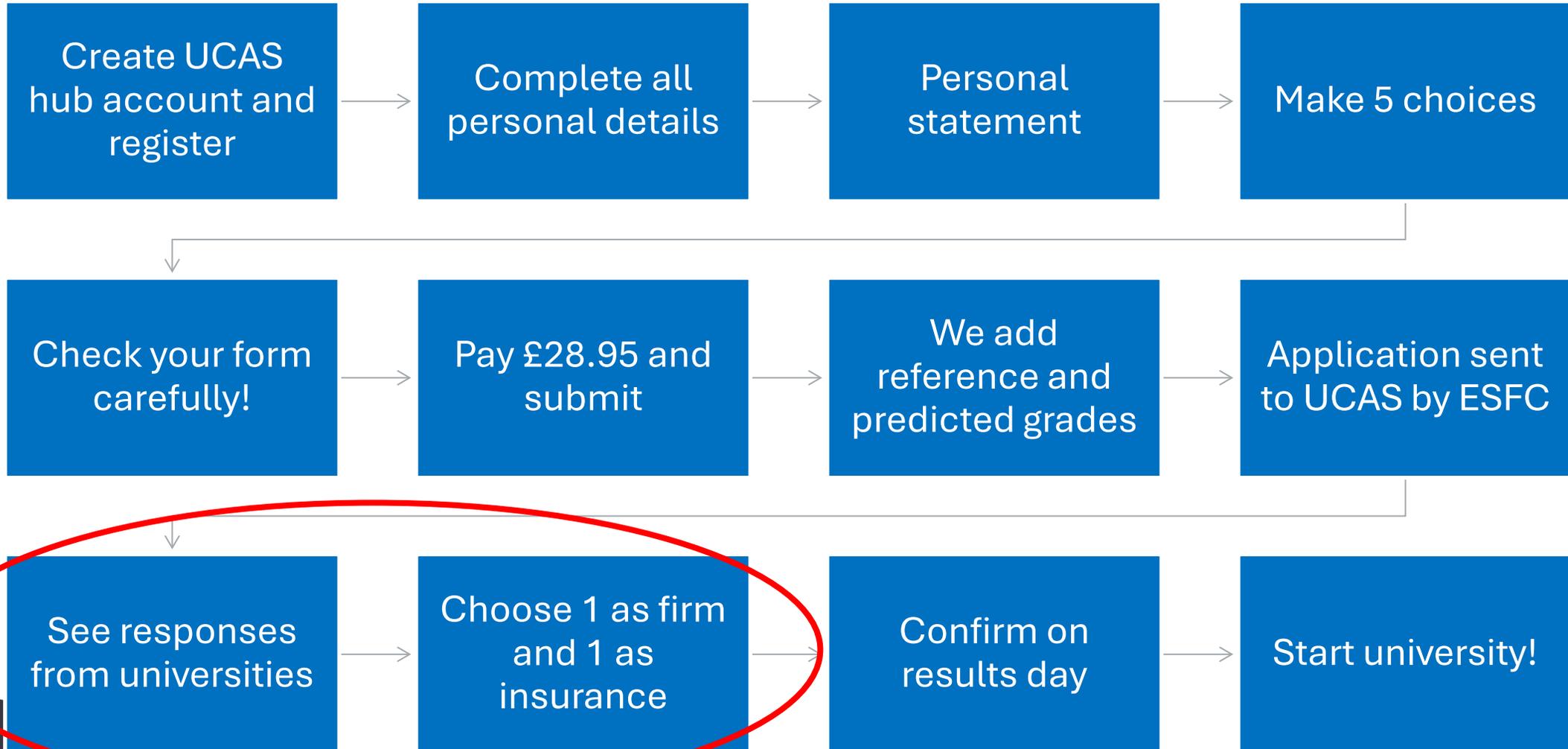
How does Esher SFC support students?



UCAS grades

- We add predicted grades (UCAS grades)
- Based on a variety of information, but especially 6.1 Formal Exams
- UCAS grades released on student and parent portal after the summer exams
- Opportunity to increase in Autumn term but there will be a deadline (November 13)
- Students should apply aspirationally but not unrealistically!

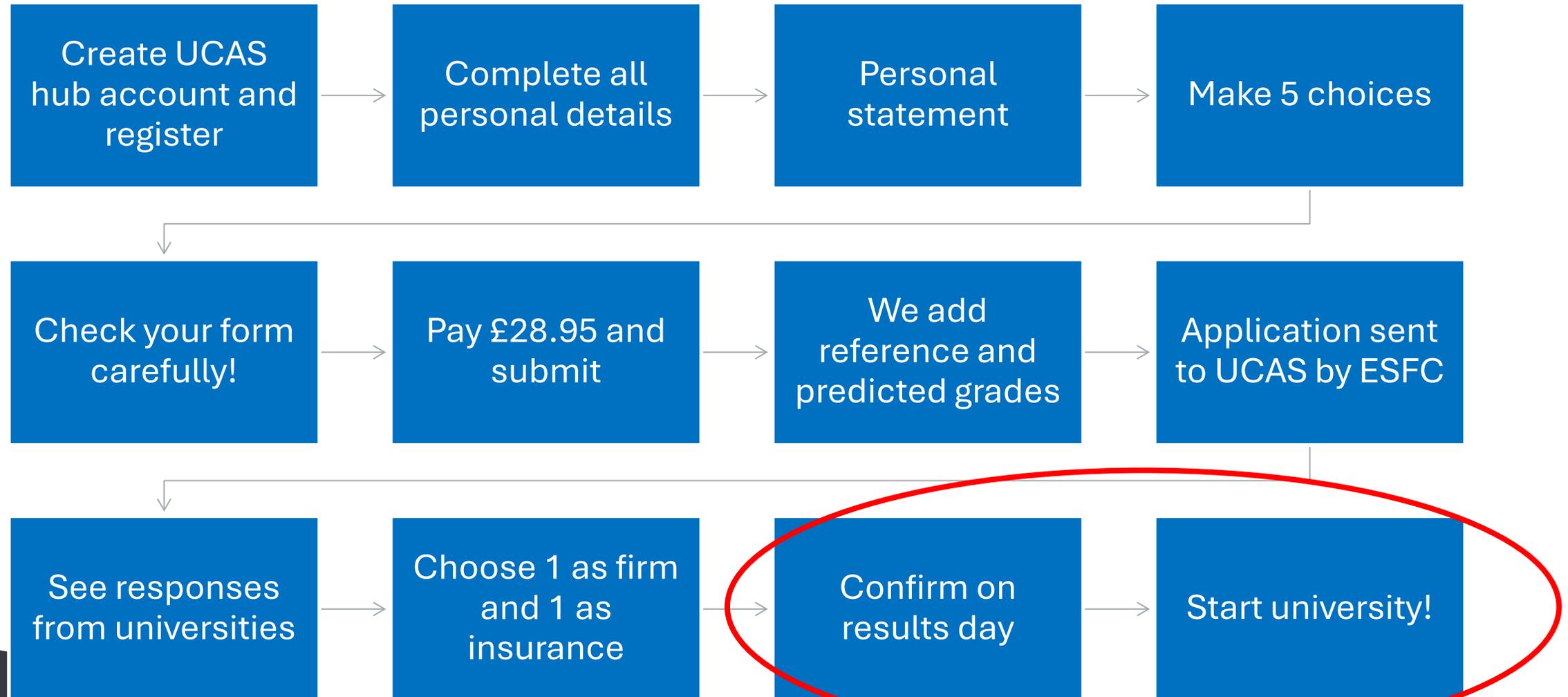
How does Esher SFC support students?



What happens after universities receive the application?

- Sometimes additional tests, interviews, auditions, portfolios necessary
- Unis make offers or rejections – ongoing until May
- Offers - grades or UCAS tariff points
- Students decide which offers to accept and reject the others – by early June
- Firm offer – top / best / most aspirational
- Insurance offer - usually lower or more flexible

How does Esher SFC support students?



Confirmation and Clearing

- Results issued in mid August; offers are confirmed on Results Day
- If student meets firm offer they go to their firm choice university
- If student misses firm offer but meets conditional offer they go to their insurance choice university
- If they miss both, they are automatically in Clearing
- Students can also enter Clearing by releasing themselves
- Last year there were 39,000 places in clearing including places in Medicine and Law!

Oxbridge applications and specialist subjects

- Oxbridge, Medicine / Veterinary Science / Dentistry, Art Foundation courses, Conservatoire applications (music / performing arts), Law – specialist application support is available
- Students should attend relevant sessions when advertised (HE&Day, After Esher Day)
- Presentation on applying to Oxbridge at Higher Education Day next week
- Early deadline, tests, interviews etc
- Typical GCSE profile 8 x grades 8-9s
- Typical A level offer A*AA, typical achievement A*A*A
- Note ÷ Art Foundation is free if under 19 at the start of the course ÷ so worth considering

Higher Education and Apprenticeship Day 2026 – Thursday 19 March



Period 4 (1pm) onwards

1pm: Introductory tutor session

Afternoon - 4 sessions, rotating

Selecting a 6.2
Extension Studies
option

Student life talk

How to choose
a university and
course talk

Higher Education and
Apprenticeship
exhibition in Sports
Hall and Drama studio

Evening: 6.15 - 8.00 pm including further talks for parents and student
5.45pm Quiet Session (email Anna for code to purchase)

Help is available!
Careers advice discussions
(careers interviews) with a
qualified adviser



- Maximise the chances of getting into competitive degree courses
- Explore the best universities for your chosen subjects
- Find out about alternatives to university
- Discuss which careers might be best suited to your personality and interests
- Plan how to use your gap year



Our careers advisers are fully qualified, trained and highly experienced. Please email progression@esher.ac.uk to book or attend your appointment when offered!

And finally

- Thursday 12 August 2027 – Results Day
- Please don't be away on holiday!
- College staff available on the Thursday and Friday for assistance with Clearing
- Questions?
- Please email progression@esher.ac.uk