

UCAS END OF CYCLE REPORT 2019

GLOSSARY



UCAS



30 June application deadline	The final date by which an applicant can submit up to five applications to study on a course of higher education through the UCAS main scheme. Applicants who apply after this date go directly into Clearing.
A level	GCE Advanced level, the most common Level 3 qualification taken by young people in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
A level points	A level grades are assigned points, such that A* is six points, A is five, B is four, C is three, D is two, and E is one. Achieved A level grade profiles of applicants are assigned the total number of points of their best three achieved grades – for example, a grade profile of AAB would be worth 14 points.
Acceptance	An applicant who, at the end of the cycle, has been placed for entry into higher education.
Acceptance rate	The number of acceptances divided by the number of applicants.
Acceptance route	This is the route by which a placed applicant has been accepted. This comprises Firm Choice, Insurance Choice, Other main scheme choice, Main scheme Clearing, Direct Clearing, Adjustment, Extra and RPA.
Adjustment	An acceptance route where applicants who have met or exceeded the conditions of their firm choice choose to take up an alternative offer.
Age	This analysis uses country-specific age definitions that align with the cut-off points for school and college cohorts in the different administrations of the UK. For England and Wales, ages are defined on 31 August, for Northern Ireland on 1 July, and for Scotland on 28 February of the following year. Defining ages in this way matches the assignment of children to school cohorts. For applicants outside the UK, a cohort cut-off of 31 August has been used.

Agent	Commercial organisation that submits applications on behalf of applicants.
Applicant	A person who has made an application in the UCAS system. Counts of applicants include those applying through the main scheme, applicants who apply directly to Clearing, and Records of Prior Acceptance (RPAs).
Application	Refers to each course choice made by an applicant. In the UCAS main scheme each applicant can make up to five applications.
Applied General	Common type of vocational qualification studied at Level 3. Their purpose is to provide a broader vocational learning in an applied context. They 'are designed for students wanting to continue their education through applied learning.' These qualifications must meet a number of criteria relating to their content and assessment, as well as endorsement by at least three universities and colleges.
Apply independently	Refers to applicants applying through UCAS, where the application is not linked to a school, agent, or other registered organisation.
AS level	GCE Advanced Subsidiary level, a Level 3 qualification taken by young people in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.



Base population estimate	<p>The population estimates are based on Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates, and national population projections (published in June 2019). For 16 to 20 year olds, the estimates are obtained by ageing 15 year olds from the appropriate number of years earlier. This approach avoids the estimates being susceptible to changes in net migration (including overseas students) during these ages. Older ages are obtained from the midyear estimates and national population projections without ageing. In both cases, the estimates are adjusted from age at mid-year to age on the country-specific reference dates, using the monthly distribution of births. Analysis of application and entry rates by area-based background are supported through small area population estimates, available from the Office for National Statistics, National Records for Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. These small area population estimates have been revised to be consistent with the national level population estimates.</p>
BTEC	<p>Originally Business and Technician Education Council, BTECs are qualifications now offered by Pearson. These come in various sizes, with the Extended Diploma being the largest.</p>
Clearing	<p>An acceptance route available from July through until mid-October.</p>
Cohort	<p>A group of the population all born in the same academic year, who are, for example, all aged 18 on a specific reference date.</p>
Cohort entry rate	<p>The cohort entry rate combines the proportion of the 18 year old population who were accepted for entry at age 18, with the proportion of that same population who were accepted for entry at age 19, a year later. These rates have the drawback that they cannot yet be reported for the cohort that was aged 18 in 2019, since they have not yet had the opportunity to apply at age 19.</p>



Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH)	Developed to provide standard subject groupings that can be applied to both HECoS and JACS subjects: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos
Conditional firm offer	Offer which is conditional on 30 June, at an applicant's firm choice.
Conditional offer	Offers where certain conditions, usually related to the attainment of specific qualifications and examination results, which need to be satisfied for the applicant to be accepted onto a course.
Conditional unconditional offer	Offers which are conditional at the point of offer, and adjusted by the provider from conditional to unconditional if selected as an applicant's firm choice. These are identified in the admissions system through free text fields providers can use to communicate any additional information to applicants.
Contextualised admissions	Contextualised admissions makes use of contextual data and information about an applicant to assess their prior attainment and potential, in the context of their individual circumstances.
Contextual offer	As part of their contextualised admissions policy, universities and colleges may make contextual (lower) offers to students identified using contextual data and information.
Decline	The decision by an applicant to decline an offer, and as such, not select it as either their firm or insurance choice.





Deferred status	This indicates if an application is deferred. Most applications are accepted into the academic year that starts immediately at the end of the cycle, for example into the 2019/20 academic year from the 2019 application cycle. Applications can also be deferred for entry into the following academic year, for example into the academic 2020/21 year from the 2019 cycle. These are called deferred applications.
Direct to Clearing	Where the applicant has applied through Clearing without an initial application through the main scheme (i.e. prior to the 30 June deadline).
Direct unconditional offer	Offers which are unconditional at the point of offer.
Disability	Disability as declared on the application form by selecting from a list of available options.
Domicile	Declared area of permanent residence.
Entry rate	Number of acceptances from a UCAS application cycle divided by the estimated base population.
Entry rate ratio	Also called 'equality gap'. For a particular equality variable (e.g. POLAR4 quintile), this is the ratio of the entry rate of the group that is most likely to enter higher education (the 'advantaged' group in this context), to the entry rate of the group that is least likely to enter higher education (the 'disadvantaged' group in this context). The value of the entry rate ratio indicates how many times more likely the advantaged group is to enter higher education than the disadvantaged group. A value of 1 indicates the disadvantaged group is as likely to enter higher education as the advantaged group, and as such there is no 'equality gap' between the two groups. Examples of equality gaps are the 'POLAR4 equality gap', which is the entry rate ratio of POLAR4 quintile 5 to POLAR4 quintile 1, and the 'gender equality gap', which is the entry rate ratio of women to men.

Ethnicity	Grouping of ethnic origin as declared by the applicant.
Extra	An acceptance route where applicants holding no offers after using all five main scheme choices can make additional choices.
Firm choice	<p>An offer made by a provider which has been confirmed by the applicant as their first choice. These can be either conditional (dependent on achieving specified conditions) or unconditional (applicant has met specific conditions and assumed to be accepted or placed at the provider).</p> <p>As an acceptance route, this refers to where an applicant has been accepted to their first choice.</p>
Free school meals (FSM)	A means-tested benefit that can be used as an indicator of low household income (source: National Pupil Database [NPD] and School Census, Department for Education).
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education, commonly taken by students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland at the age of 16. The grading of these qualification differs across the UK, with England using a 9-1 grading scale.
GOR	Government Office Region – the highest tier of sub-national division in England.
HE	Higher education.
Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS)	A new subject coding system: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos





Higher tariff provider

A provider that belongs to the higher tariff group, from the grouping of providers based on the average levels of attainment of their UK 18 year old accepted applicants (summarised through UCAS Tariff points) in recent cycles. The other two groups are medium tariff providers, and lower tariff providers. Each group of providers accounted for around a third of all UK 18 year old acceptances in recent cycles.

Highers

The most common SCQF Level 6 qualification taken by students in Scotland.

IB

International Baccalaureate Diploma.

IMD 2015

The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2015 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of England, providing a relative measure of deprivation amongst small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas). When reporting by IMD 2015, it is used to group areas in each year in the time series.

Incentivised offer

An offer where an incentive is given to encourage the applicant to select the offer as their firm choice.

Insurance choice

An offer made by a provider which has been confirmed by the applicant as their second choice, in case the conditions of their firm choice are not met. These can be either conditional (dependent on achieving specified requirements) or unconditional (no further requirements to be met).

As an acceptance route, this refers to when an applicant has been accepted to their insurance choice.

Joint Academic Coding System (JACS)	Method of classifying academic subjects and modules (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/jacs). Unless otherwise specified, refers to the JACS 3.0 specification.
Level 3 qualifications	There are nine qualification levels in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Level 3 qualifications include A level, AS level, Applied General, International Baccalaureate diploma, and other qualifications specified here: https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels
Main scheme	The main UCAS Undergraduate application scheme through which up to five course choices can be applied for. This opens in September, and closes to new applications on 30 June the following year.
Main scheme acceptance route	Firm choice, insurance choice, and other main scheme choice acceptance routes are included in this category.
Main scheme Clearing	As an acceptance route, refers to an applicant who has applied before the 30 June deadline and subsequently found a place through Clearing.
Multiple equality measure (MEM)	The multiple equality measure (MEM) is UCAS' principal measure of equality. It brings together several equality dimensions, for which large differences in the probability of progression into higher education exist. These equality dimensions include sex, ethnic group, where people live (using the POLAR3 and IMD classifications), secondary education school type, and income background (as measured by whether a person was in receipt of free school meals [FSM], a means-tested benefit while at school).
National 5	Common SCQF Level 5 qualification taken by students in Scotland.





NIMDM 2017	The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure for 2017 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Northern Ireland, providing a relative measure of deprivation amongst small areas (Super Output Areas). When reporting by NIMDM 2017, it is used to group areas in each year in the times series.
Non-EU	Countries outside the European Union, including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
Nursing Applicant	An applicant that has applied for at least one course with the JACS subject code B7 Nursing.
Offer	Provider decision to grant a place to an applicant. May be subject to the applicant satisfying academic and/or other criteria.
Offer description	Description of the offer, as communicated by the provider to the applicant through UCAS.
Offer rate	The proportion of applications receiving an offer. Note that each applicant may make up to five applications in the main scheme.
Offer with an unconditional component	Any offer identified as an other unconditional offer, a conditional unconditional offer, or a direct unconditional offer.
Online self-release	Refers to the ability for anyone with a confirmed place to release themselves into Clearing online. This was first available in the 2019 cycle.
Other main scheme choice	As an acceptance route, refers to an acceptance to a main scheme choice where the applicant has not responded, or is awaiting an offer, by the June deadline.

Other unconditional offer	Offer which is conditional at the point of offer and becomes unconditional on or before June 30 – the final date on which main scheme applications can be submitted, and is not identified as a conditional unconditional offer.
POLAR4	Developed by the Office for Students (OfS), and classifies small areas across the UK into five groups, according to their level of young participation in HE. Each of these groups represents around 20 per cent of young people, and is ranked from quintile 1 (areas with the lowest young participation rates, considered as the most disadvantaged), to quintile 5 (highest young participation rates, considered most advantaged). POLAR4 is the successor to POLAR3.
Predicted A level points	When an applicant applies with pending A levels, their school or college submits predicted grades. A level grades are assigned points, such that A* is six points, A is five, B is four, C is three, D is two, and E is one. Predicted A level grade profiles of applicants are assigned the total number of points of their best three predicted grades – for example, a grade profile of AAB would be worth 14 points.
Provider	A higher education provider – a university or college.
Rate of uptake	The proportion of main scheme applicants holding at least one offer, who select one of those offers as their firm (or first) choice. May also be described as the ‘uptake rate.’
Record of Prior Acceptance (RPA)	Where an application is submitted to UCAS by an institution when an unconditional firm offer has already been offered and accepted by the applicant.
Reply	Applicant response to any offers received – this could be firm, insurance, or decline.





School type	The secondary school type the applicant applied from.
Self-release	See 'online self-release.'
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)	Identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland, providing a relative measure of deprivation among small areas (data zones). In this report, a combination of the SIMD measures created in 2012 and 2016 has been used. SIMD 2012 is applied to all years before 2017, and SIMD 2016 is applied to years 2017 and onwards.
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	Qualification regulator and awarding body in Scotland.
Tariff group	Provider tariff groups are based on the average levels of attainment of their UK 18 year old acceptances (summarised through UCAS Tariff points). There are three tariff groups: lower tariff, medium tariff, and higher tariff. Each group of providers account for around a third of all UK 18 year old acceptances.
UK	United Kingdom. Excludes the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
Unconditional firm offer	Offer which is unconditional on 30 June, at an applicant's firm choice.
WIMD 2014	The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Wales, providing a relative measure of deprivation among small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas). This cycle, the WIMD 2014 has been used to group areas in each year in the times series.



© UCAS 2019

All rights reserved.

UCAS is a registered trade mark.

UCAS, a company limited by guarantee, is registered in England and Wales.
Registered number: 2839815.

Registered charity number:
1024741 (England and Wales) and SC038598 (Scotland)

Publication reference: MD-5994

Published by: UCAS, Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, GL52 3LZ.