

Higher Education 2025/26

Agenda

- Overview of the Higher Education sector
- Options and making choices
- Finance
- The application process
- Key dates and deadlines
- Costs
- Entry requirements and how predicted grades work



Changes to the Higher Education Landscape

- A range of outstanding courses available
- Many more students applying nationally than in previous years (we had 151 students applying for 2025 – a school record)
- Fewer unconditional offers, compared to pre-pandemic cohorts
- More applications to top-ranking universities, making them more competitive
- Predicted grades remain with us
- 2026 entry will see changes to the format of the personal statement



St Peter's

SIXTH FORM

Discover your potential



1.3 MILLION INDIVIDUALS

engage with UCAS each year
to discover **their next step**



MORE THAN 700,000

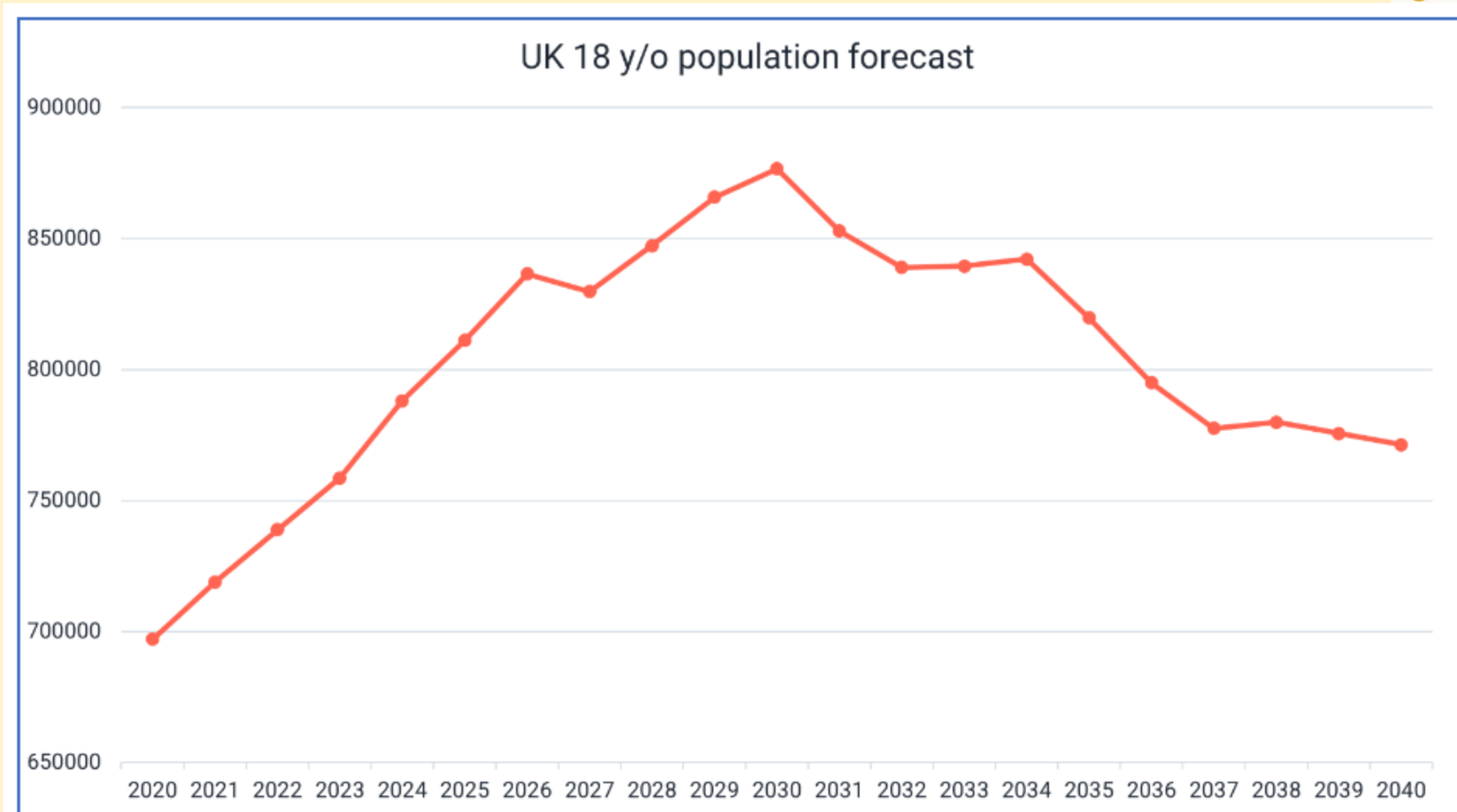
applicants apply **each year**



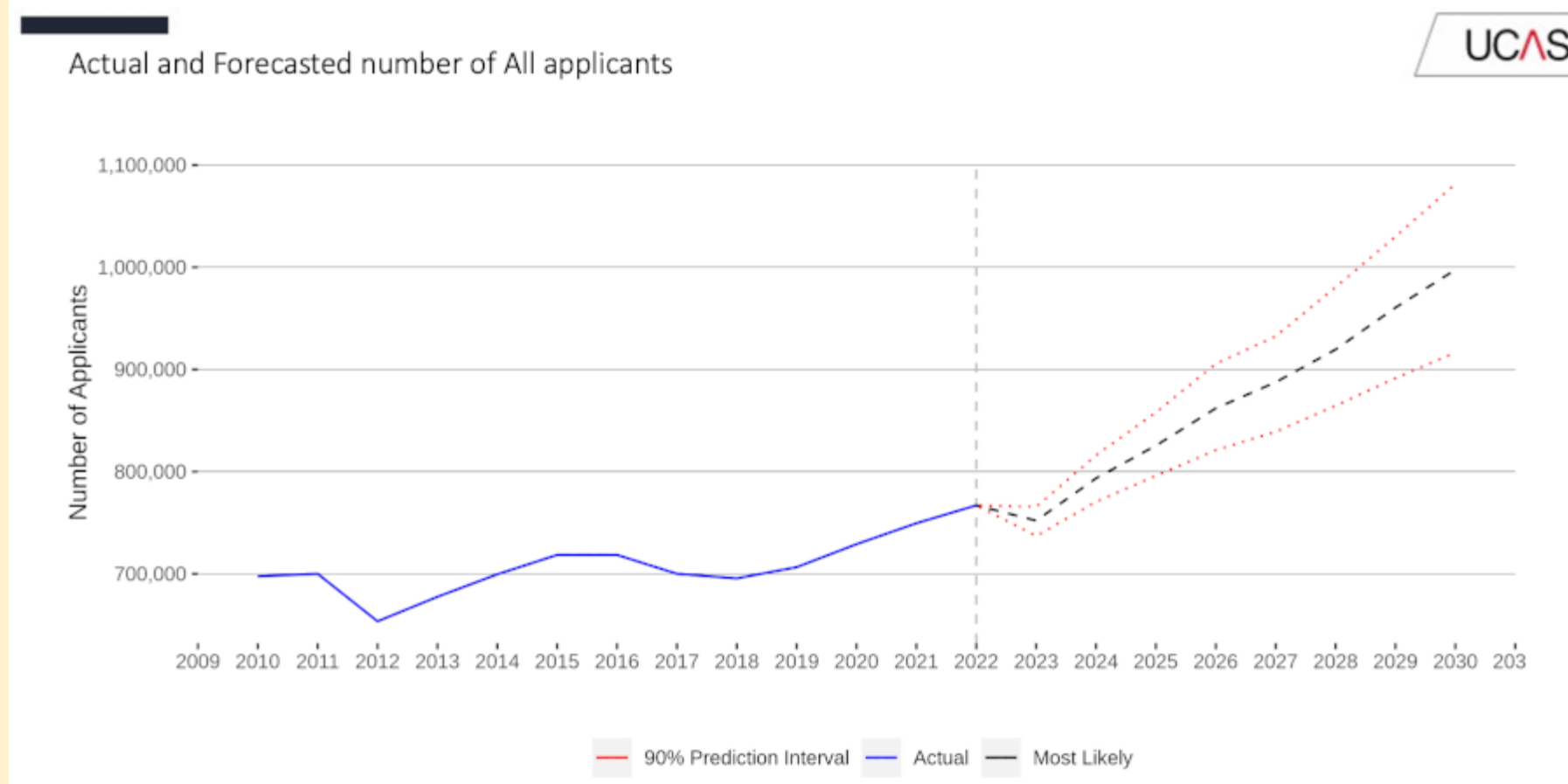
FROM 200

countries and territories with
over **1,000 qualifications**

UCAS

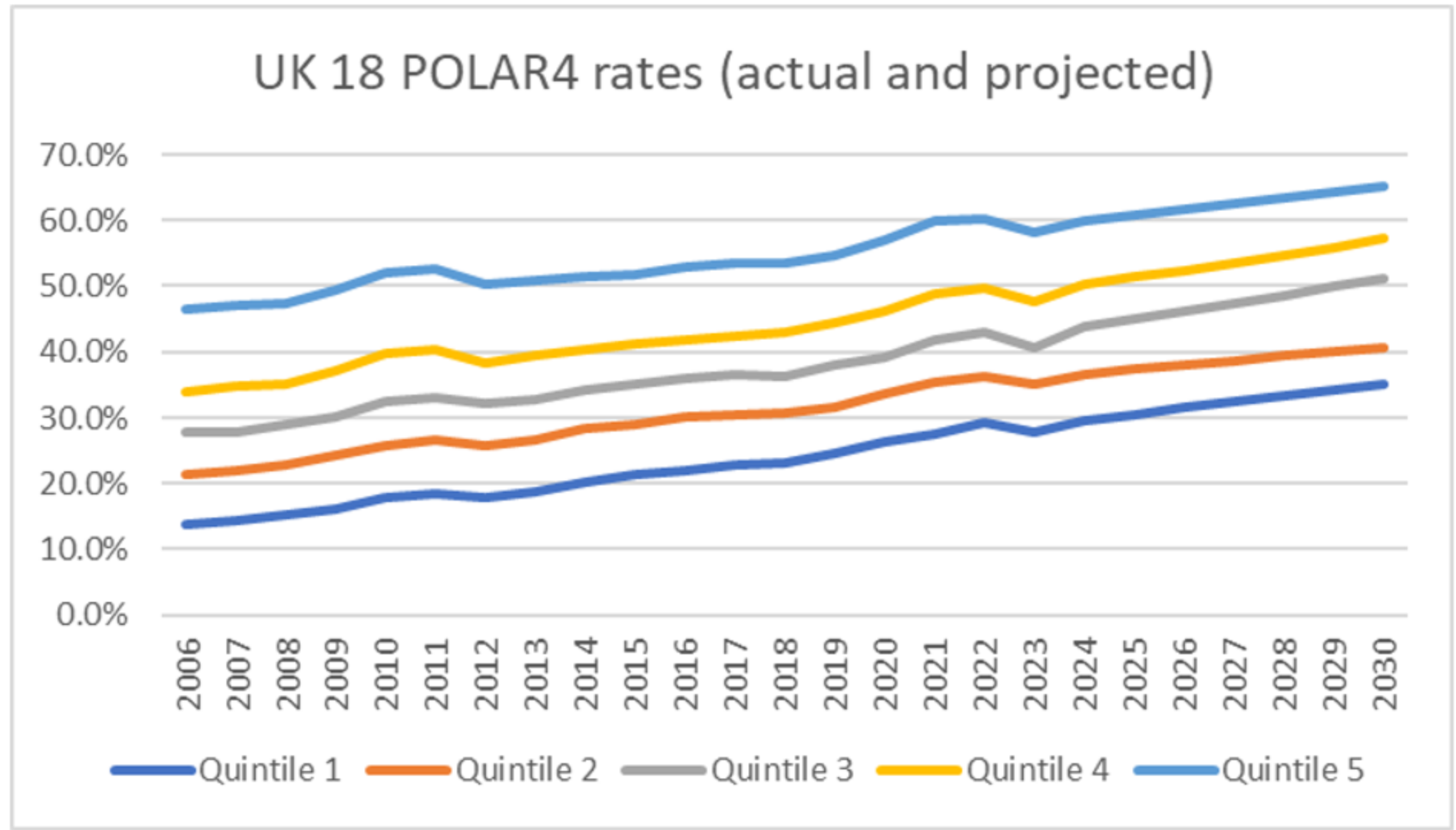


<https://www.ucas.com/about-us/journey-million>





Graph 4: Projected application rate by POLAR (using most likely projection)





ONE IN THREE STUDENTS

considers higher education as early as **primary school**, with advantaged students **40% more likely** to do so



ONE IN FIVE STUDENTS

couldn't study a **degree subject that interested them** because they didn't have the right subjects to progress



YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE

most advantaged backgrounds are **2.09 times more likely to enter higher education** than their disadvantaged peers

UCAS



Some context from the 2025 cycle

- 151 applicants making 727 choices between them
- 99 institutions received applications from St Peter's students
- 80 distinct subject areas
- 6 offers from Oxbridge – a new school record

HOWEVER

- 50% of applications are for just 15 institutions

The current Year 12s

- 137 responses
- 126 selected university as an option
- 41 selected apprenticeships
- 27 want gap years
- 30 interested in Oxbridge
- 14 interested in *Medicine / Dentistry / Veterinary Medicine*

Why choose Higher Education?

- Chance to study a subject they are passionate about.
- Achieve a qualification that will lead to their chosen career.
- Higher earning potential
- Gain confidence, independence, and important life skills that will widen their prospects.
- Making lifelong friends
- Many employers target graduates specifically

Career choices with mandatory Higher Education qualifications

- Medicine
- Nursing
- Dentistry
- Architecture
- Teaching
- Law
- Veterinary Science

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk>

Other options

- Degree apprenticeship
- Studying abroad
- Getting a job
- Gap year
- College options

Which subject to study?

- Think beyond just carrying on a favourite A Level subject. UCAS lists over 50,000 courses on their website
- Check career requirements
- Use the careers library, Mrs Calvert, Mr Martin or go online!
http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options_with_your_subject.htm
- Talk to teachers, tutors, family and friends. They are often good sources of advice.



Informed Choices



What you study at sixth form or college can affect your options at university and your future career. Use Informed Choices to help you understand which subjects open up different degrees, particularly at Russell Group universities.

I don't know what degree I would like to study

I know what degree I want to study



<https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

UCAS Search – 2026 course details go live on Tuesday 29th April

<https://www.ucas.com/explore>

UCAS

Further education

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

Apprenticeships

Careers



Sign in



EXPLORE

Not sure what to do? Explore subjects, locations, universities, and colleges.

Explore

Uni & colleges

For you

Favourites

Search

Explore **subject guides**

See all >



Explore **industry guides**

See all >

Paying for a degree

- Most institutions charge the full fee of £9,260 per year.
- Loan applications open in March of the year the course is to start

	2024 to 2025 academic year	2025 to 2026 academic year
Living with your parents	Up to £8,610	Up to £8,877
Living away from your parents, outside London	Up to £10,227	Up to £10,544
Living away from your parents, in London	Up to £13,348	Up to £13,762
You spend a year of a UK course studying abroad	Up to £11,713	Up to £12,076

Is it the right place?

- Read the prospectus and explore the website. They will spend a long time and a lot of money there. Make sure it is what they want.
- Visit open days. <http://opendays.com/>
- See for themselves how straightforward the journey is and whether they like the accommodation. They will need to reserve your open day place online.



Collegiate, campus or city university?



League tables

Data and league tables are available from:

Discover Uni

<https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

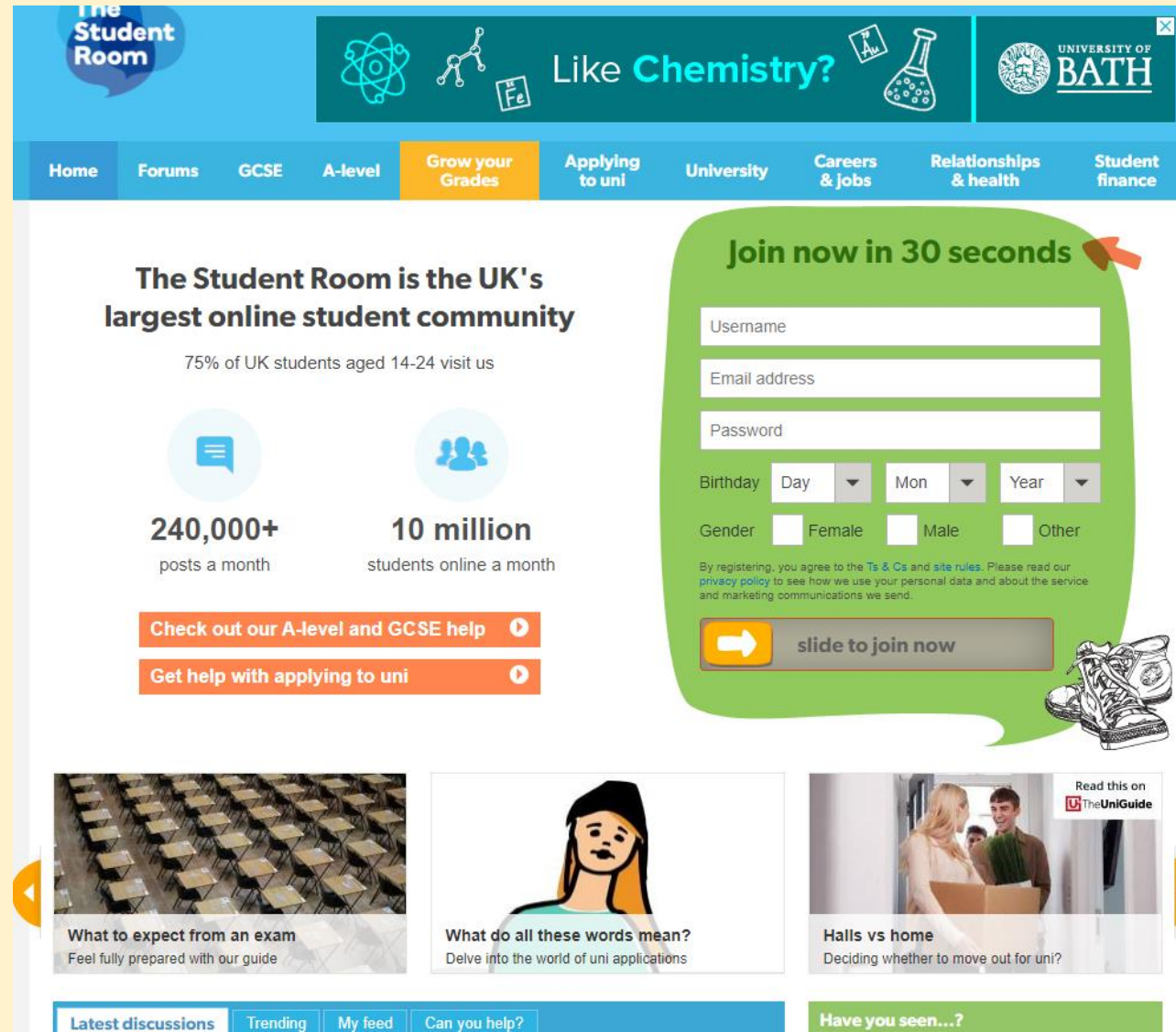
Newspapers e.g. the Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide>

Remember - they will be receiving teaching from the institutions. Look at this grade in particular and also the number of tuition hours.

2025 University Rankings: Quality of Education, Research, and Career Outcomes											
2025 Rank	2024 Rank	Institution	Academic Performance			Financial & Employment			Long-term Outcomes		
			Guardian score/100	Satisfied with teaching	Satisfied with feedback	Student to staff ratio	Spend per student/10	Average entry tariff	Value added score/10	Career after 15 months	Continuation
1	2	Oxford	100	94.3	75.6	10.3	10	203	6.1	93	98
2	1	St Andrews	98.6	92.6	80.9	11.9	6.1	212	6.4	91	97.2
3	3	Cambridge	94.5	n/a	n/a	11.6	9.8	208	5.5	94	99
4	4	London School of Economics	88.1	87	72.1	12.8	8.9	192	6.8	93	96.6
5	5	Imperial College	82.6	85.5	64.4	11.9	8.6	204	6.6	96	95.6
6	7	Durham	80.8	87.9	74.2	13.5	6.2	185	6.2	91	97.5
7	6	Bath	79.5	88	72.8	15.3	6.2	180	6	92	96.8
8	9	Warwick	75.2	88.5	76.1	13.9	7.4	179	4.1	89	96.3
9	8	UCL	74.8	84.2	69.7	10.9	7.2	183	5.9	90	96.4
10	10	Loughborough	74.6	87.6	75.6	14.1	4.5	162	5.5	89	96.6
11	11	Lancaster	73.5	87.4	76.5	14	6.7	154	5.7	86	96.8
12	12	Aberdeen	73.3	89	77.4	15.1	5.4	187	7.2	85	94.2
13	15	University of the Arts London	70.5	79.3	80.9	11.5	9.2	153	6.3	73	91.3
14	13	Glasgow	68.9	84.7	68.2	14.4	5.2	211	5.5	86	94.7
15	14	Edinburgh	68.4	83.5	61.4	12.3	8.1	197	6	86	97.1
16	17	Bristol	68.1	84.2	68.3	13.9	7.4	174	5.5	87	96.6
17	16	Strathclyde	67.2	88.7	75	18.8	7.2	210	4.2	86	93.6
18	18	Exeter	66.2	87	72.2	16.3	4.7	163	6.2	86	96.2
19	21	Surrey	65.4	87.7	80.5	14.4	5.4	142	4	88	93.7
20	21	Sheffield	65.3	86.4	78	14.4	5.7	157	5.2	86	95.7

Student forums



The Student Room

Like Chemistry?

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Home Forums GCSE A-level **Grow your Grades** Applying to uni University Careers & jobs Relationships & health Student finance

The Student Room is the UK's largest online student community

75% of UK students aged 14-24 visit us

240,000+ posts a month

10 million students online a month

[Check out our A-level and GCSE help](#)

[Get help with applying to uni](#)

Join now in 30 seconds

Username

Email address

Password

Birthday Day Mon Year

Gender Female Male Other

By registering, you agree to the [Ts & Cs](#) and [site rules](#). Please read our [privacy policy](#) to see how we use your personal data and about the service and marketing communications we send.

[slide to join now](#)

What to expect from an exam
Feel fully prepared with our guide

What do all these words mean?
Delve into the world of uni applications

Halls vs home
Deciding whether to move out for uni?

Read this on [TheUniGuide](#)

Latest discussions Trending My feed Can you help? Have you seen...?

Russell Group

- **University of Birmingham**
- **University of Bristol**
- **University of Cambridge**
- **Cardiff University**
- **Durham University**
- **University of Edinburgh**
- **University of Exeter**
- **University of Glasgow**
- **Imperial College London**
- **King's College London**
- **University of Leeds**
- **University of Liverpool**
- **London School of Economics & Political Science**
- **University of Manchester**
- **Newcastle University**
- **University of Nottingham**
- **University of Oxford**
- **Queen Mary University of London**
- **Queen's University Belfast**
- **University of Sheffield**
- **University of Southampton**
- **University College London**
- **University of Warwick**
- **University of York**

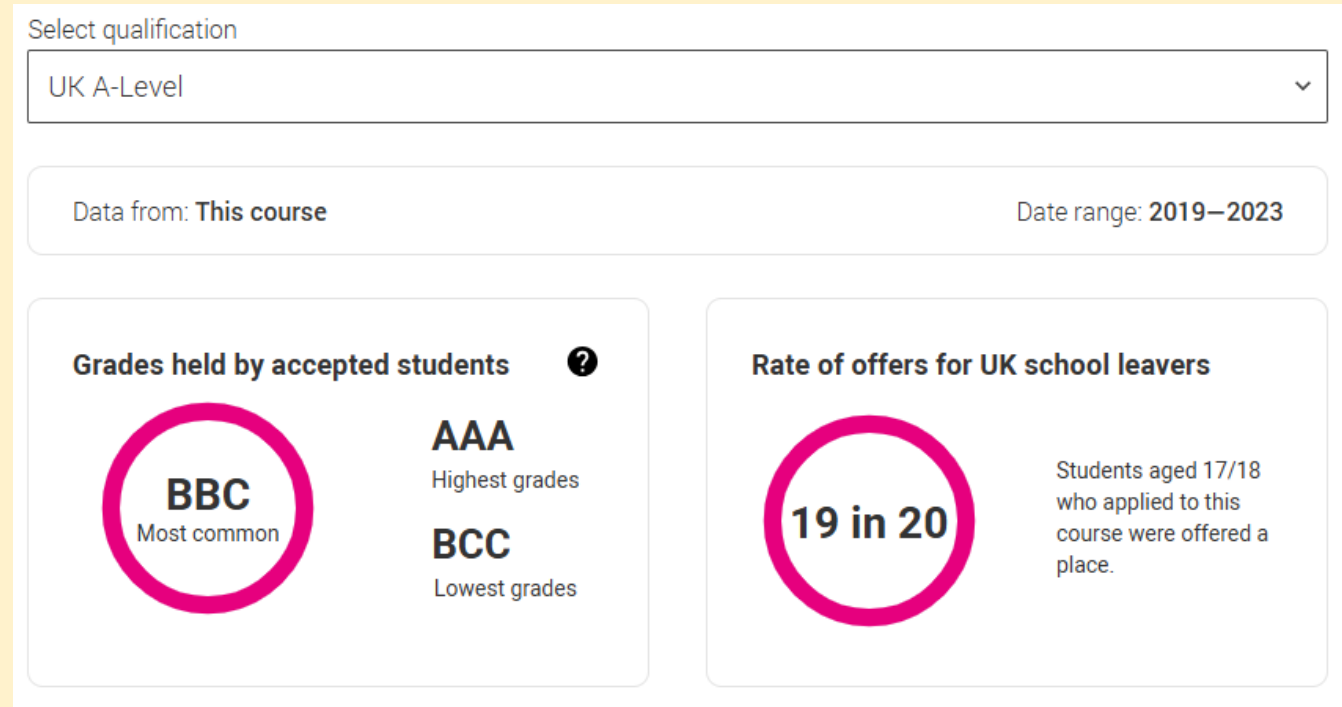
Entry requirements

- Look on <http://search.ucas.com/> or use the online or paper prospectus
- More competitive courses ask for higher grades
- Some courses, such as Nursing, require work experience.
- Some courses require you to take exams or tests in addition to your A Levels e.g. UCAT, LNAT, TSA
- Some courses require a portfolio of A Level work
- Vocational courses may place greater emphasis on interview performance
- **Highly oversubscribed courses don't look for reasons to make offers – they look for reasons to reject**

Access to Grades

The new tool will allow students to see not only universities' published entry requirements, but the actual grade profiles of successful students over a five-year period.

This improves transparency and allows students to consider choices they may not previously have thought viable.





Selection processes

What we look for – subject specific

Motivation to study the subject

Consideration of career options

Relevant work experience

Wider reading or research

What we look for – general skills

Analytical and problem solving

Communication skills

Independent thinking

Awareness of contemporary social and cultural issues

Where we find the evidence

Personal statement

References

Admissions tests

Interviews

Differentiation between
strong candidates

UCAS points

	EPQ	A Level Points	BTEC Extended Certificate
Grade A*	28	56	Distinction*
Grade A	26	48	Distinction
Grade B	20	40	
Grade C	16	32	Merit
Grade D	12	26	
Grade E	8	16	Pass

My qualifications

A level

Points 48

A level

Points 40

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate (first teaching from September 2016)

Points 48

Extended Project

Points 20

Total points 156

Use the UCAS tariff calculator to work out how specific combinations of qualifications translate to points

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>



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


Select courses then order by:

Course **Entry requirements** Reputation % Graduate jobs Fees Starting salary Dropout rate
 Hours of lectures Hours of tutorials % Assessed by exams % Assessed by coursework % S

Uni Guardian league table Accommodation cost Distance from home Sportiness Social life

Choose 1 Area below [WHAT'S AN AREA?](#) [WHERE'S THE DATA FROM?](#)

Order Areas by: **Alphabet** Salary Hours jobs Vacancies Employment Rate Apprenticeship completion rate

 Aspirational The top of your range	 Solid In the middle	 Safe At the bottom of your range
 History - 3FT BA (Hons)  University of Cambridge A-level: A*AA 	 American History - 6PT BA (Hons)  Manchester Metropolitan University UCAS Points: 260	 American Studies - 4FT BA (Hons)  University of East Anglia UEA A-level: CCC Foundation year
 History - 3FT/2PT BA (Hons)  Durham University A-level: A*AA 	 American Studies - 3FT/4PT BA (Hons)  University of Derby UCAS Points: 260	 History - 4FT BA (Hons)  University of East Anglia UEA A-level: CCC Foundation year
 History - 3FT BA (Hons)  University of Bristol A-level: AAA 	 History - 3FT/5PT BA (Hons)  York St John University UCAS Points: 260	 History - 3FT BA (Hons)  Bishop Grosseteste University UCAS Points: 240
 History - 4FT MA (Hons)  University of Edinburgh A-level: AAA-BBB 	 History - 3FT/4PT/4SW BA (Hons)  Coventry University A-level: BCC	 History - 3FT/4PT BA (Hons)  University Campus Suffolk UCAS Points: 240
 History - 3FT BA (Hons)  University of Liverpool A-level: AAA 	 History - 3FT BA (Hons)  Liverpool Hope University UCAS Points: 260	 History - 3FT BA (Hons)  University of East London UCAS Points: 240
 History - 3FT BA (Hons)  King's College London, University of London A-level: AAA 	 History - 3FT/5PT BA (Hons)	 History - 3FT BA (Hons)

A broad strategy

Choice 1	A*AA	Aspirational
Choice 2	AAA	Aspirational
Choice 3	136 points	Solid
Choice 4	128 points	Solid
Choice 5	120 points	Safe

2026 Entry – key dates

24th April 2025

UCAS Discovery Exhibition trip – Farnborough Airport

29th April 2025

UCAS search tool goes live for courses starting in September 2026

15th October 2025 (18:00)

Entry deadline for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science degrees

14th January 2026 (18:00)

General application deadline. All applications received by 18:00 must be given fair and equal consideration.



Resources for parents

UCAS UNDERGRADUATE: ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Explore this section ▾

We've got lots of resources and information dedicated to helping parents and guardians support students applying to uni.

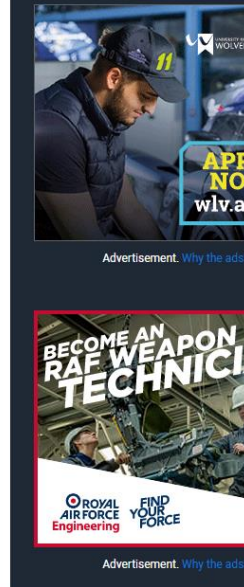
What's on this page?

- [Parent newsletters – sign up](#)
- [Top ten tips](#)
- [What you need to know about the application process](#)
- [Guides to help you](#)
- [Know your rights!](#)

Parent newsletters – sign up

Get updates and all the information you need, along with timely explanations of the application process.

[Sign up for our monthly parent newsletters](#)



<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/ucas-undergraduate-advice-parents-and-guardians>



Virtual tours

[Home](#) / [Undergraduate](#) / [What and where to study](#) / [Open days and events](#)

VIRTUAL TOURS

Explore this **section**

Here's a list of virtual tours and videos from universities and colleges, so you can see what it's like on campus and what facilities are available.

If the uni/college you're interested in isn't listed, take a look at their website or YouTube channel instead, or see if they're on Unibuddy.

[Speak to current undergraduate students on Unibuddy](#)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P
Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A

- [University of Aberdeen](#)
- [Abertay University](#)
- [Aberystwyth University](#)
- [Academy of Contemporary Music](#)
- [AFCO University College](#)

Completing the application

Maximum of five choices

Some choice restrictions:

- Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry – maximum of four
- Oxford **or** Cambridge

Application cost: **£28.50**. Students eligible for free school meals have the fee waived.

Institutions cannot see other choices

Choices are not ranked; firm and insurance choices are selected only once all university decisions are in.

The personal statement

- The only section the applicant has direct control over
- The applicant's opportunity to market themselves individually
- One personal statement for all five choices
- **Show, don't tell**
 - *Max. 4000 characters*
 - *No integrated spelling/grammar check*
 - *No formatting*

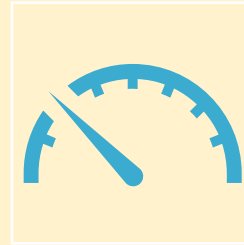
What's changing for 2026 entry



Format & structure

Move from one long piece of text to a scaffolded approach.

Three sections with question prompts.



Character Count

4000 total character count remains; includes spaces.

Minimum character count of 350 per section.



Support & advice

Clear links to guidance in the application for students.

Ongoing support ahead of the 2026 entry cycle going live.

Q1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?

Students will want to show **evidence** of passion, curiosity and interest, this could include:

Motivations for studying this course(s):

- Have they been inspired by a key role model or moment in their life?
- Is it a subject they love and want to pursue further?
- What is their drive?
- How has their path led them to this course or subject area?

Knowledge of this subject area and interests:

- Is there a particular subject area they've researched?
- Something they can't wait to learn more about?
- What about a book or subject expert doing great things that's sparked their interest?

Future plans; demonstrate why this course/subject is a good fit:

- Do they already have a particular profession in mind?
- How might they use their studies to launch their career?
- What's important to them and their future, and how might the knowledge gained from their chosen course(s) help them to achieve this?

Q2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

Focus on what's most **recent** and **relevant** to the subject or course(s), examples could include:

How their studies or training relate to chosen course(s) or subject area:

- This could be current or previous studies.
- From any form of formal education – think school, college, training provider, or short online university course.

What relevant or transferable skills they have that make them a great candidate:

- Are there a couple of subjects that helped develop a core set of relevant skills required for their chosen course(s).
- Maybe a particular module or project helped them understand where their interests and strengths lie.

Any relevant educational achievements

- Universities and colleges will see grades on their application - don't waste space talking about these.
- Focus on accomplishments like a competition, holding a position of responsibility or representing the school/college.

Q3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

Examples should be reflective and demonstrate further suitability for the subject or course(s), this could include:

Work experience, employment, or volunteering

- In-person or virtual work experience.
- Paid for work or volunteering.
- The key thing is reflection on the experiences and the skills gained relevant to their chosen course(s).

Personal life experiences or responsibilities:

- Is there a situation they've personally overcome that has influenced their decision?
- Are there personal experiences that have helped them develop essential qualities for the course?

Hobbies and any extracurricular or outreach activities:

- Think sports, reading, community work, summer schools.
- Any activities outside of core studies that help further showcase why they'd make a great student.

Achievements outside of school or college

- This could be a position of responsibility for local clubs or groups, competitions, or qualifications they've attained outside of the classroom.

Examples of evidence

In person work experience	Blogs & vlogs	Positions of responsibility	Projects or essays	Mentoring
Virtual work experience	Documentaries	Awards	Books	Tutoring
Work shadowing	Podcasts	Challenges	Influencers	Online subject courses
Paid employment	TED Talks	Personal life experiences	Hobbies	Trips or visits
Volunteering	Articles	Work based learning / training	Clubs	Competitions

Personal statement tips

Focus on the course

- Around 80% of the statement should be related to the subject you're applying for
- Remember that the statement will be read by an expert; don't be afraid to get technical

Don't write lists

- Explain how your achievements have benefited you and how they relate to the course you're applying for

Think super-curricular rather than extra-curricular

- In your own time, follow up interesting threads within your subjects
- Extra-curricular achievements still need to be related to the course you're applying for

Lay the groundwork now

- Don't wait until the summer holidays to start reading around your subject!
- Apply for summer schools and work experience

Three section approach to references



Enter a general statement about your school/college/centre.
(mandatory for applications sent via a registered centre)



Enter any information about extenuating circumstances which may affect this applicant's performance in examinations or other assessments
(optional)



Use this section to outline any other circumstances specific to the applicant that you think universities/colleges should be aware of, or how they can support the applicant
(optional)

Apprenticeships

- Advanced (level 3)
- Higher (level 4-5)
- Degree (level 5-6)

Search [Browse](#)

Keywords (optional)
Can include job title, employer or reference number

All

Your location
Enter postcode, town or city or [use current location](#)

Within

England

Apprenticeship level

All levels

Only show

Disability Confident

[Reset search options](#)

★ Promoted

Level 6 Applied Professional Engineering Programme Degree Apprenticeship – Manufacturing Pathway

Jlr

📍 Gaydon, Whitley, Coventry, Solihull

Apprenticeship level	Salary
England - Degree	£26,092.00
Apprenticeship - Level 6	

Industry	Apply by Start date
Engineering and manufacturing	03/03/2025 08/09/2025

★ Promoted

Apprentice - Civil Engineering

National Highways

📍 Bristol Or Exeter

Apprenticeship level	Salary
England - Degree	£24,000
Apprenticeship - Level 6	

Industry	Apply by Start date
Engineering and manufacturing	10/03/2025 01/09/2025

★ Promoted

Electrical Engineering Degree Apprenticeship

Babcock

📍 Cumbria, CA20 1PG

Apprenticeship level	Salary
England - Degree	22,008, rising annually to c.41,837 post-apprenticeship
Apprenticeship - Level 6	

Industry	Apply by Start date
Engineering and manufacturing	20/03/2025 01/09/2025

★ Promoted

Level 6 Applied Professional Engineering Programme Degree Apprenticeship – Control Technical Support Pathway

Jlr

📍 Gaydon, Whitley, Lyons Park.

Apprenticeship level	Salary
England - Degree	£26,093
Apprenticeship - Level 6	

Industry	Apply by Start date
Engineering and manufacturing	03/03/2025 08/09/2025

★ Promoted

Level 6 Applied Professional Engineering Programme Degree Apprenticeship – Product Design and Development Pathway

Jlr

📍 Gaydon

Apprenticeship level	Salary
England - Degree	£26,092.00
Apprenticeship - Level 6	

Industry	Apply by Start date
Engineering and manufacturing	03/03/2025 08/09/2025

★ Promoted

Mechanical Engineering Degree Apprentice - Asset

National Gas

📍 Warwick/Birmingham

Apprenticeship level	Salary
England - Degree	£29,607
Apprenticeship - Level 6	

Industry	Apply by Start date
Engineering and manufacturing	09/03/2025 01/09/2025

★ Promoted

Mechanical Engineering Degree Apprentice - Construction

National Gas

📍 Warwick With Travel Around Midlands & The North

Apprenticeship level	Salary
England - Degree	£29,607
Apprenticeship - Level 6	

Industry	Apply by Start date
Construction, architecture, and the built environment	01/09/2025 01/09/2025

★ Promoted

Mechanical Engineering Degree Apprentice - Operations

National Gas

📍 Churchover/Warrington/Wormington

Apprenticeship level	Salary
England - Degree	£29,607
Apprenticeship - Level 6	

Industry	Apply by Start date
Engineering and manufacturing	09/03/2025 01/09/2025



What You'll Need to Succeed

It takes all kinds of people to keep our roads moving. No matter what your background, if you have the passion and dedication to help connect the country and shape your future, you'll be a great match.

To be successful, you'll have:

- The ability to work effectively with others in a team
- The ability to work to timescales, understanding when and how to prioritise
- The ability to give and receive information effectively
- The ability to write clearly and concisely

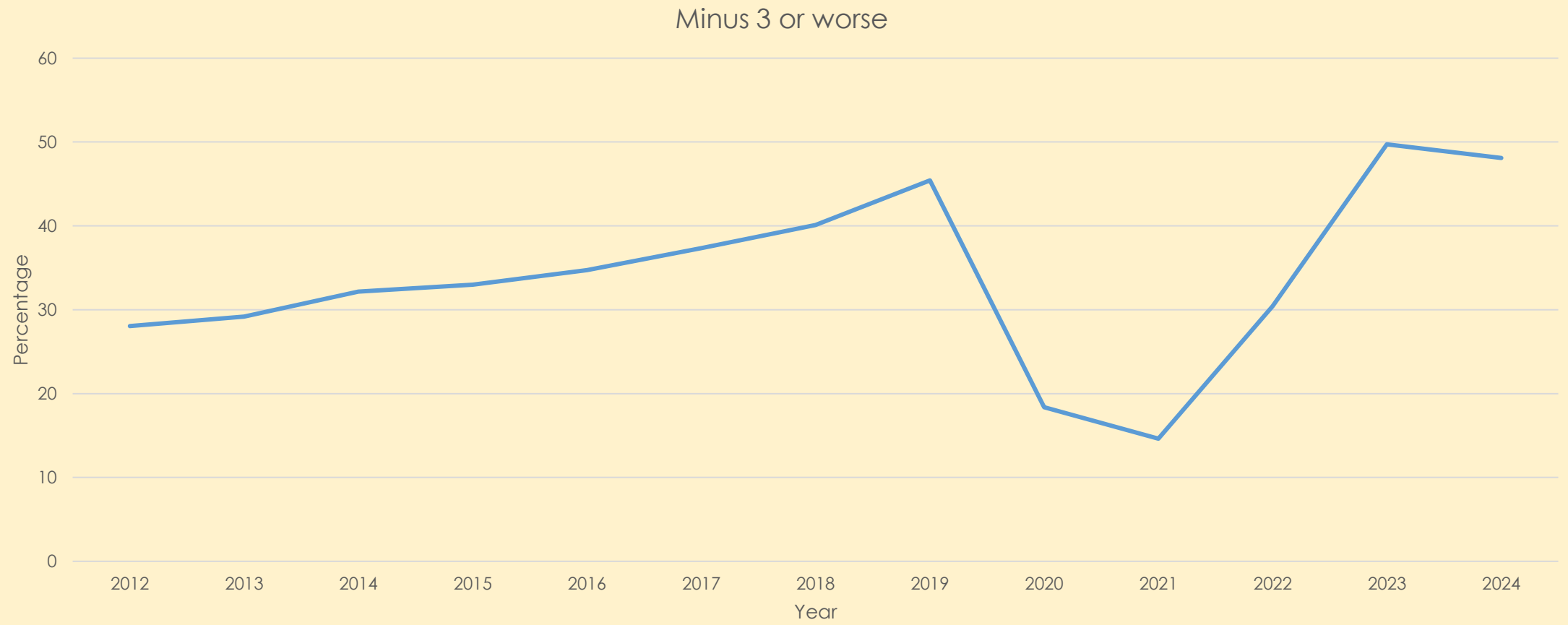


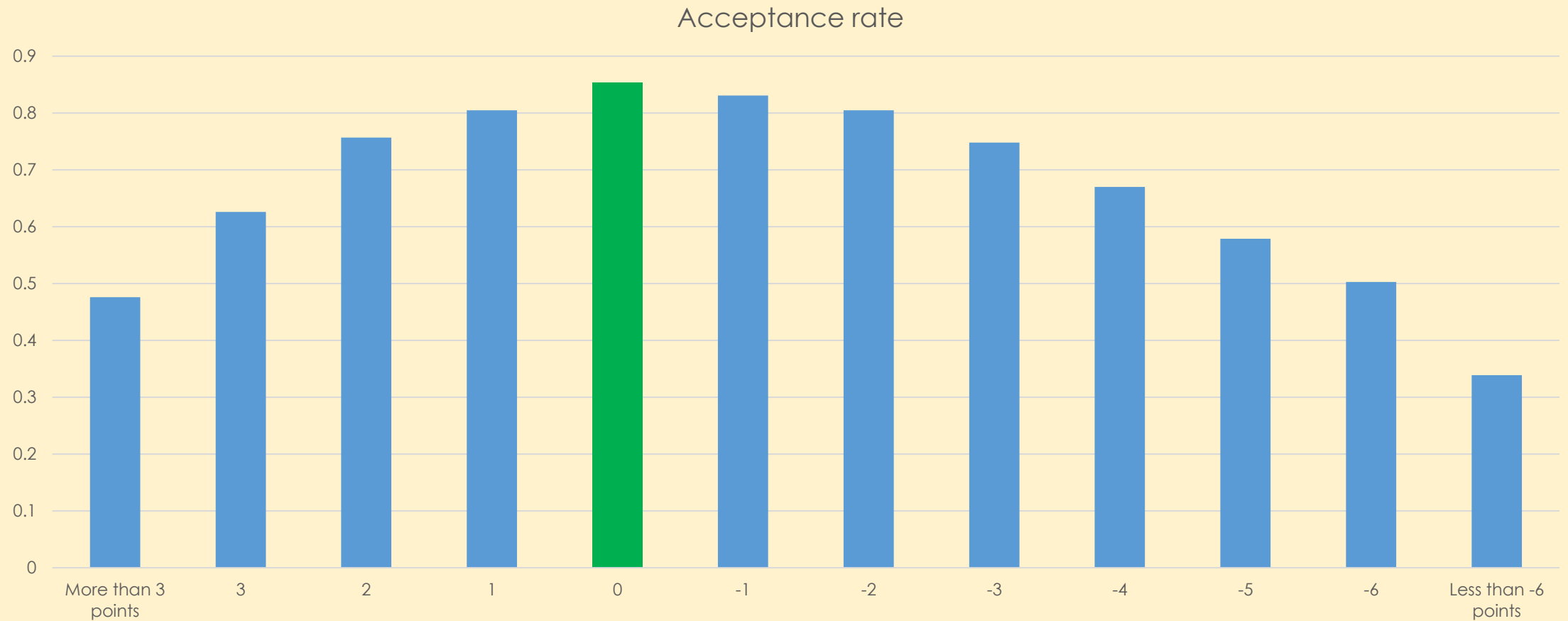
Benefits of a degree apprenticeship

- Apprentices are employed and paid a wage throughout the course.
- Apprentices will gain a full degree without needing to pay student fees.
- Apprentices will gain a head start in their chosen profession.
- Allows apprentices access to careers requiring graduate-level skills
- Employers can attract and retain new talent — particularly high calibre school-leavers who are keen to earn a degree in a work-based environment.
- Training costs are co-funded by the government and the employer.

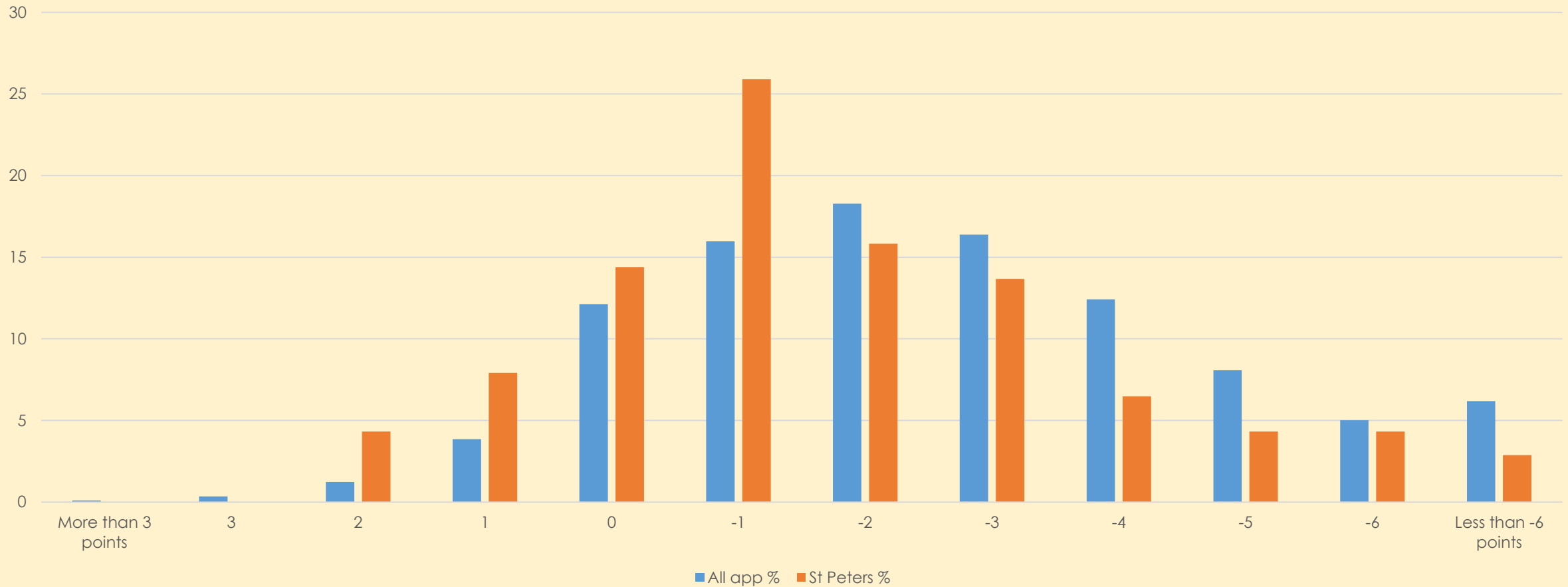
FAQs

- The UCAS form has an “employment” section – am I at a disadvantage if I don't have a job?
- Should I mention personal problems or health issues in my application?
- What if I just don't know what I want to do?
- What about predicted grades?





Predicted Grade Accuracy by Student Overall Residual



St Peter's approach to predicted grades

- Predicted grades come from subject teachers who have followed the applicant's progress from the start of Year 12. They are independent professional judgements
- We want predicted grades to allow students to follow their aspirations, but they need to be realistic too
- Predicted grades should be grounded in data
- Predicted grades will not be lower than the most recent published forecast grade
- Teachers have the opportunity to make changes to predicted grades up to the moment the form is sent
- Any changes must be evidence-based