UCAS & Clearing

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



Resources

Resources in student pack	Additional Resources	Useful webpages
1. Student pack	1. 60 second video	1. Register to UCAS: https://www.ucas.com/students and register
2. 10 min video	2. 5 top tips for...applying to Uni video	2. UCAS Course Finder: https://digital.ucas.com/search to find
3. UCAS PowerPoint	4. UCAS Factsheet	3. How to Apply to UCAS Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OW7aIoEZqo
4. Personal Statement marking	5. UCAS Scenarios	4. UCAS main page: https://www.ucas.com/
5. Making your firm and insurance choices	6. UCAS narrated PowerPoint	5. Royal Holloway main page: https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/
6. 5 min guide to clearing video		6. Royal Holloway Schools and Colleges page: https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/schools-and-colleges/
7. Clearing hand-out		7. Office for Student Main-Page: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/
8. You can UCAS Quiz		
9. UCAS Planner		

Today's session

A. To understand the UCAS process.

B. To be able to appraise what makes a good personal statement.

C. To be able to create a personal statement for own application to university.



What is UCAS?

Introduction to UCAS

- Stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
- Formed in 1992
- Runs the application service for
  - All UK undergraduate degrees
  - performing arts admissions at UK conservatoires
  - postgraduate teacher training schemes
  - some postgraduate courses
  - post-16 education and training
- Run UCAS conventions and other university related events.



UCAS

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- Welcome
- Personal details
- Additional information
- Choices
- Education
- Employment
- Statement
- Reference
- View all details
- Pay/Send
- Help
- Options/Opsiynau

Key

- Completed
- In progress
- Not started
- Help

Welcome

Welcome John,

Your Personal ID is: **114-123-6804**.

Please make a note of this number and keep it handy. You will need to quote this number if you call o
Customer Contact Centre.

Need guidance? Watch the video advice below [Hide video].

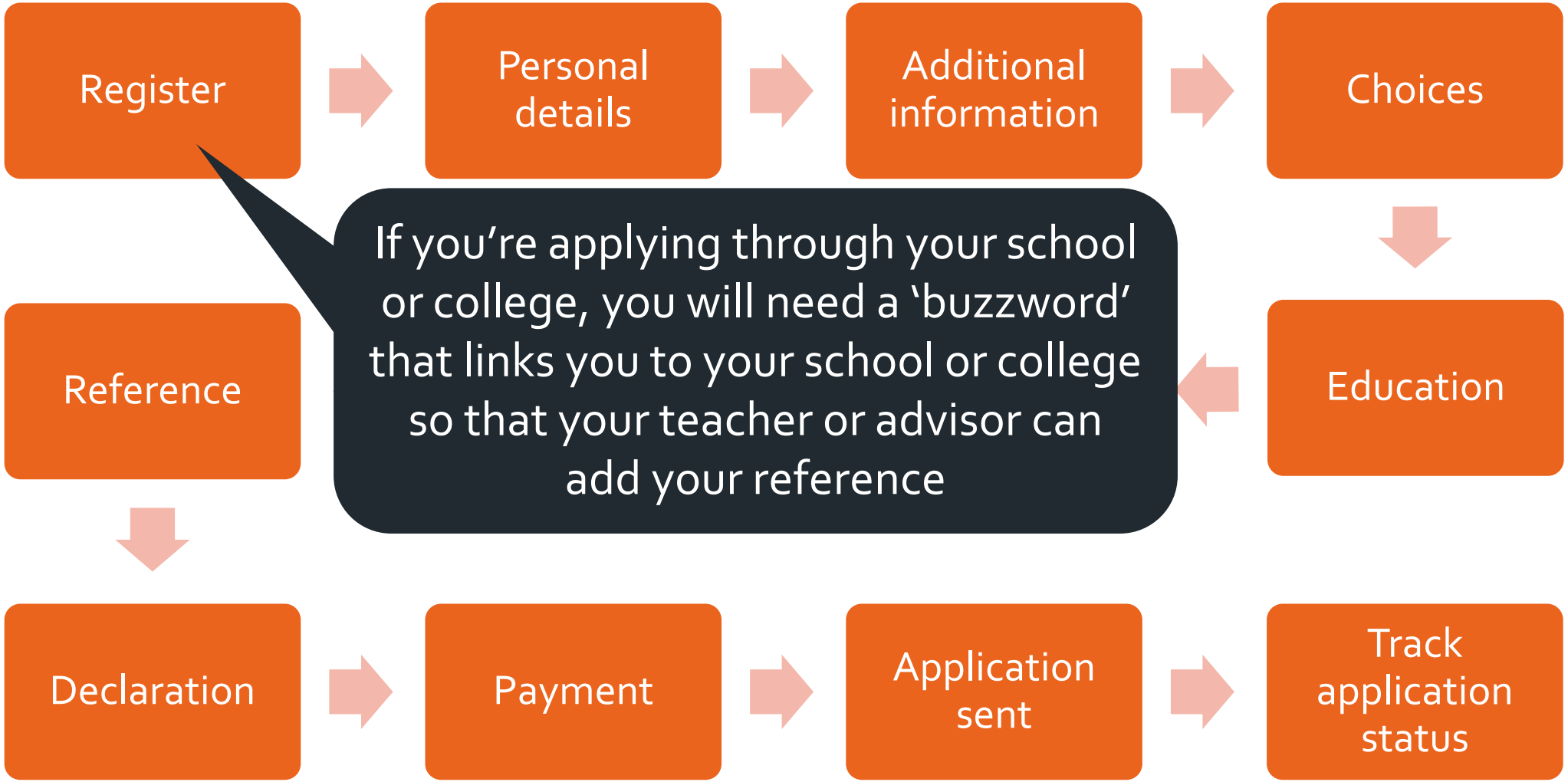


(Unable to view videos here? You can watch them at www.ucas.com/tv instead)

Verify your email address
Your email address needs to be verified as valid before you send your application to us.
Please click here to verify your email address

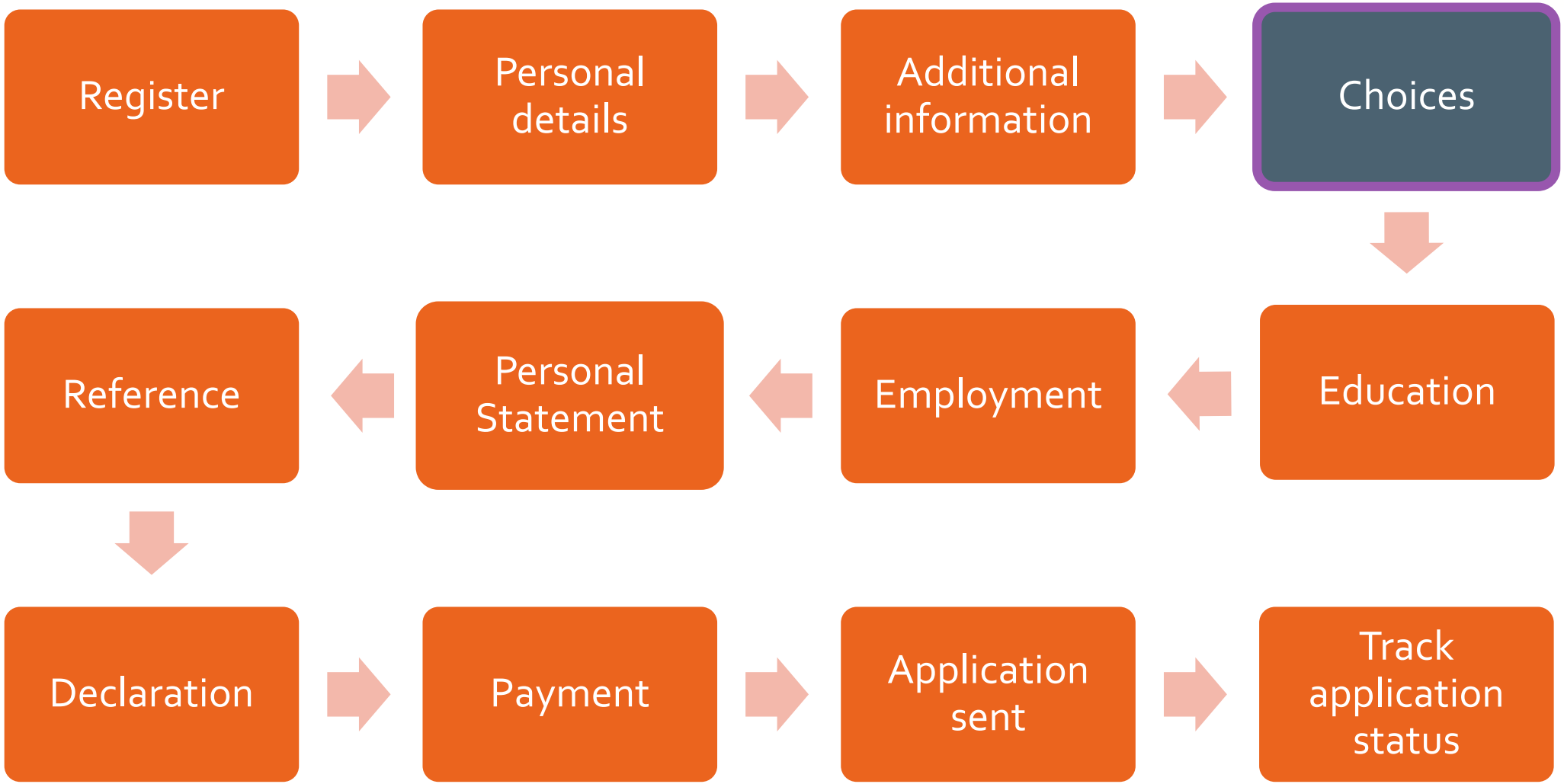


The UCAS process



Making your Choices

The UCAS process



Making your choices

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You have a maximum of five choices with UCAS

These choices can be at five individual institutions **or** can include multiple choices at the same institution. For example:

1. History at Royal Holloway
2. History at Queen Mary
3. History at Kings College London
4. History at Kingston University
5. History at Brunel University

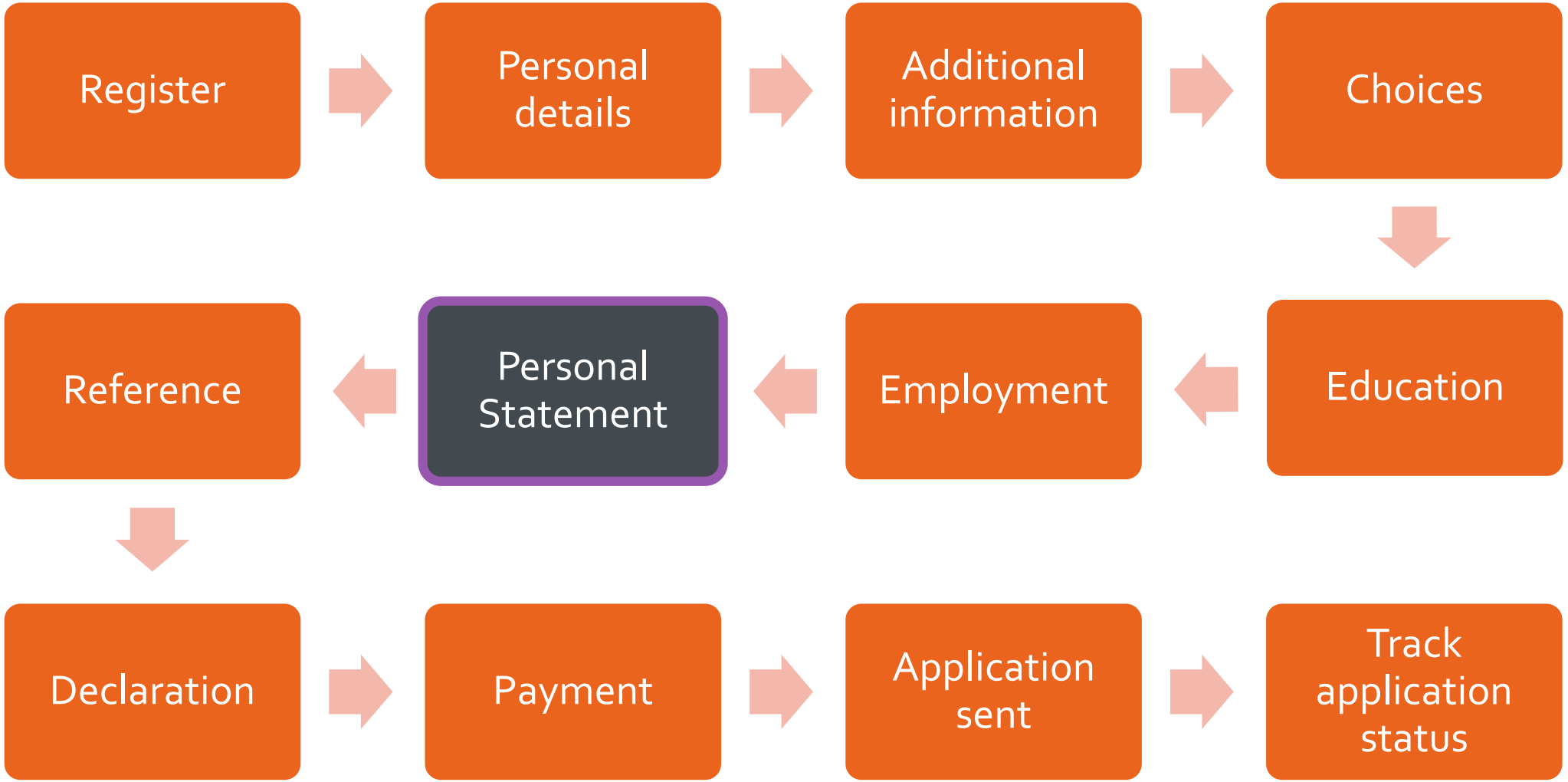
OR

1. History at Royal Holloway
2. Ancient History at Royal Holloway
3. Classics at Royal Holloway
4. History at Queen Mary
5. History at Kings College London

However, you only get one personal statement, where you will need to explain why you're passionate about the subject(s) you're applying for so it's advisable to keep the courses at least similar.

Personal Statements

The UCAS process



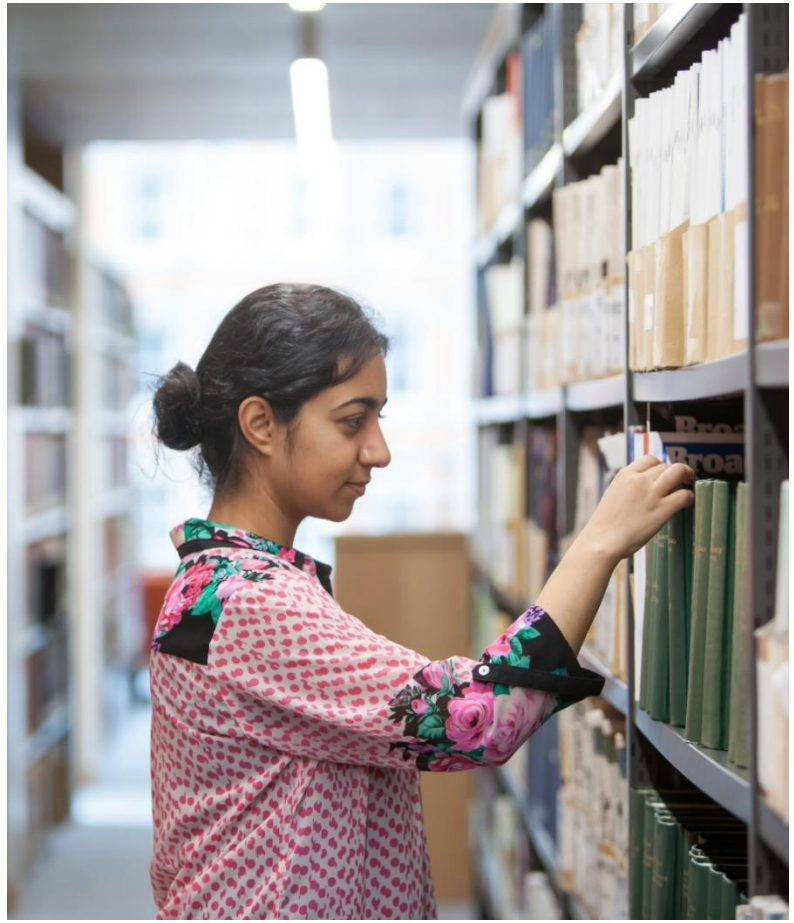
What are admissions specialists looking for?

Successful undergraduates are:

- Enthusiastic and passionate about their chosen subject
- Committed and dedicated to their studies
- Academically talented

Your UCAS form helps admissions specialists identify who will be successful.

- Predicted/achieved grades
- Teacher reference
- Personal statement



What is a personal statement?



- A reflective essay about why you are the best candidate for the course.
- Allows universities to get to know the person behind the grades.
- Use examples of your knowledge, skills and experience that show your passion for your chosen field.
- Strict limits:
  - 4,000 characters, 47 lines
- You only get **1** personal statement for your 5 choices. Make sure you do not mention any universities or courses by name.

Being the admissions specialist

The criteria admissions specialists are looking for



ABLE TO STUDY INDEPENDENTLY



CAN CONTRIBUTE TO UNIVERSITY LIFE



MOTIVATED AND HIGH ACHIEVING



INTELLECTUALLY CAPABLE



POTENTIAL TO SUCCEED



SIGNIFICANT SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE



INTEREST IN STUDYING SUBJECT

Depending on the university, the person reading your personal statement may teach you on your degree, so they are looking for students who they will want to teach.

Finding the balance…

70%

Academic: Focused on your chosen course(s):

- Why have you chosen this subject?
- What particularly interests you about this subject?
- Where has this interest come from?
- What independent reading or research have you done?

30%

Extracurricular: What other skills and experience do you have?

- Work experience
- Extra curricular activities
- Career aspirations
- Unrelated activities

Extra reading and research

An important way of demonstrating your interest in and knowledge of your subject is by completing extra reading and research and talking about this in your statement.

- **Books**
- **Journal Articles**
- **MOOCs**
- **Lectures**
- **Taster days**
- **EPQ**



Extracurricular activities

- For courses such as medicine and Veterinary Science, **work experience is really important to make your application as strong as possible.**
- Every UCAS application will benefit from wider interests outside your A levels.
- It also shows that you can work outside your school environment, and have developed your transferable skills.
- Research online and contact local businesses for relevant shadowing or work placement schemes.



Music



Hobbies



Sports



Travel



Work & Volunteering

Possible structure for a Personal Statement

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Part 1

- **Introduction**
- Why are you interested in this course? Why do you want to study it at degree level?

Part 2

- **Discuss your subject academically**
- How do your A-Levels link to your chosen course? What independent reading or research have you done? What other course-related activities have you taken part in?

70%

Part 3

- **Extra-curricular activities**
- What additional activities do you take part in? How could these show skills that are relevant for studying at university level?

30%

Part 4

- **Conclusion**
- Including career ambitions

S.T.A.R. Technique

This is a really handy way of ensuring you are fully explaining your point.

Situation

"We first studied "Goblin Market" by Christina Rosetti as part of my A Level in English Literature."

Task

"I was very interested in her writing and set out to enjoy more of her writing and find more about her background in my own time."

Action

"I conducted research on Rosetti and her work, reading books such as "*Learning Not to be First*" by Kathleen Jones", a biography of Rosetti."

Result

"This has greatly enhanced my knowledge of Gothic literature, a key area of English Literature and I am excited to pursue this interest further at undergraduate level"

S.T.A.R. Technique

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Situation

"As a result of my interest in paediatric medicine, I decided to try to gain work experience in this area."

Task

"I shadowed a consultant at Cambridge University Hospital for 1 week in August 2018."

Action

"This involved the observation of ward rounds and patient care and assisting with diagnostic processes."

Result

"This experience has developed my knowledge of this area of medicine and led to my interest in paediatric surgery as an area of specialism."

So what? test

- An alternative to the STAR technique is the ‘So what?’ test:
  - “At the weekends I play football and I am the captain of my local team”
  - “This has enabled me to develop skills in coaching, leadership and communication.”
  - “All of the skills will be useful as an undergraduate student, and I am keen to continue playing football at university.”

So what?

So what?

UCAS personal statement rules

Character / line limit

- UCAS has a limit of 4000 characters and 47 lines.
- The character limit includes apostrophes, spaces and other special characters.
- The line limit includes blank paragraphs.
- Anything over this limit is lost.
- It is possible to write a great personal statement within these limits- it is good practice for university and eliminates waffle.

Plagiarism

- UCAS is very strict on plagiarism. They use software to make sure your personal statement is unique and cannot be found anywhere else. Your personal statement is supposed to be personal- i.e. about you!
- If plagiarism is detected, this information is passed to universities.
- In 2007, plagiarism detectors found 234 personal statements for medicine contained a story about a dramatic incident involving "burning a hole in pyjamas at age eight". This was because the applicants had all used the same online example statement.

Tips for checking your personal statement:

- Try reading it aloud
- Utilise teachers / friends / family members
- Use spellcheck… but don't trust it completely! Avoid Americanisms and contractions.
- Make sure you check names, dates and technical language.
- Keep checking even when you are sick of it! You will thank yourself when you get your dream university place.



Your spelling, grammar and punctuation need to be perfect!

Top tips from Royal Holloway Admissions Specialists

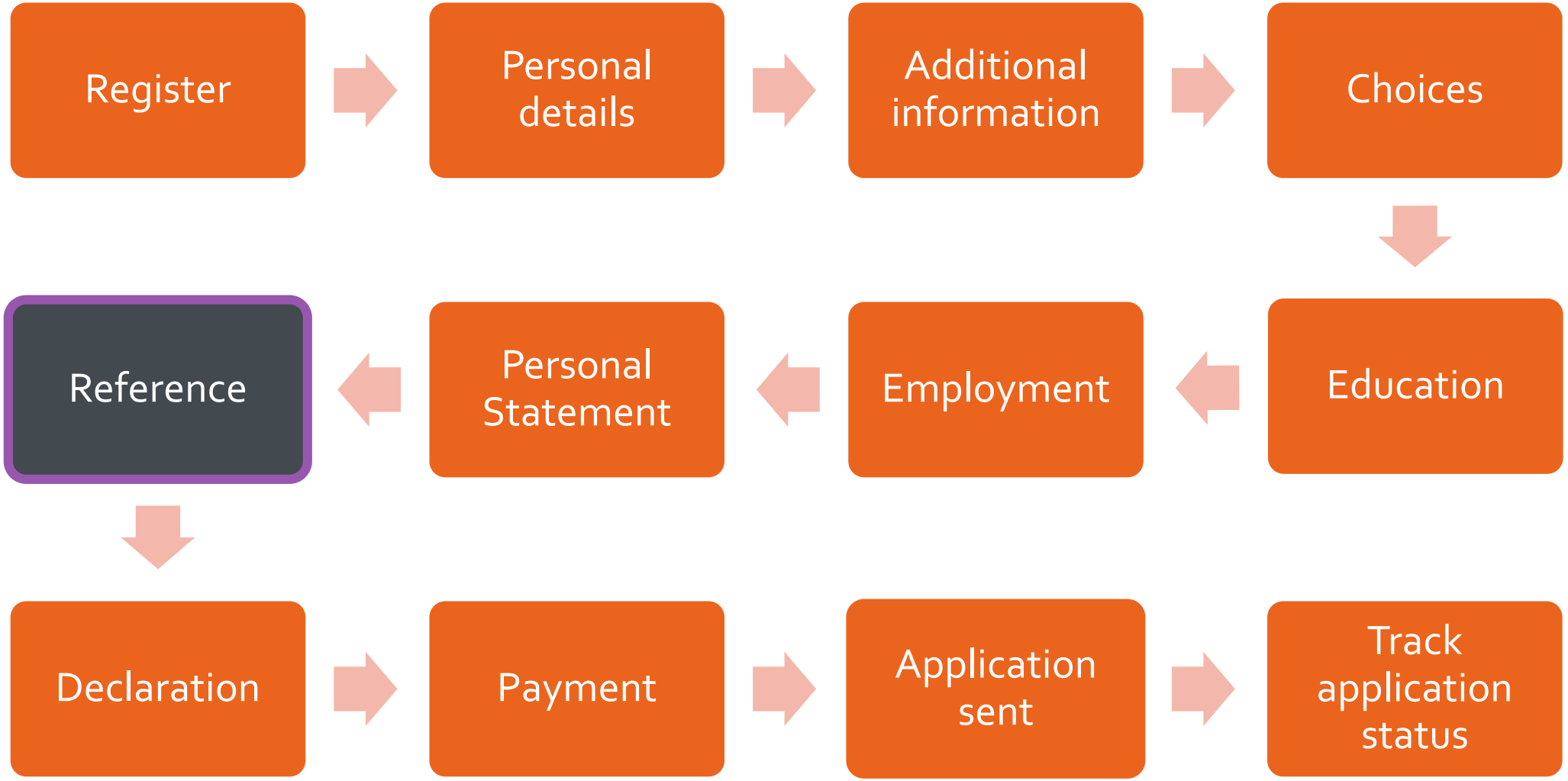
"It's not what you've done, it's how relevant you can make it. So, don't just tell me that you were captain of the school rugby team; explain **how** this activity has given you the leadership skills and drive to study here for three years."

"In personal statements we look for **potential**, and **enthusiasm for the subject** ranks high in our decisions on whether to make a student an offer."

"I always look for something that throws light on applicants as **individuals**, who have thought about why they want to study a subject and what they hope to get out of it. Anything that looks like it has been dictated or copied, wholly or in part, is an instant turn-off."

Teacher Reference

The UCAS process



Personal tutor

- Speak to your personal tutor regularly, either in designated 'Tutor Time' or in a one-to-one meeting.
- Let them know:
  - how you're getting on
  - what extracurricular activities you do
  - why you want to go to university and what you want to study
- Your personal tutor will probably write your UCAS reference, which all of your chosen universities will see.



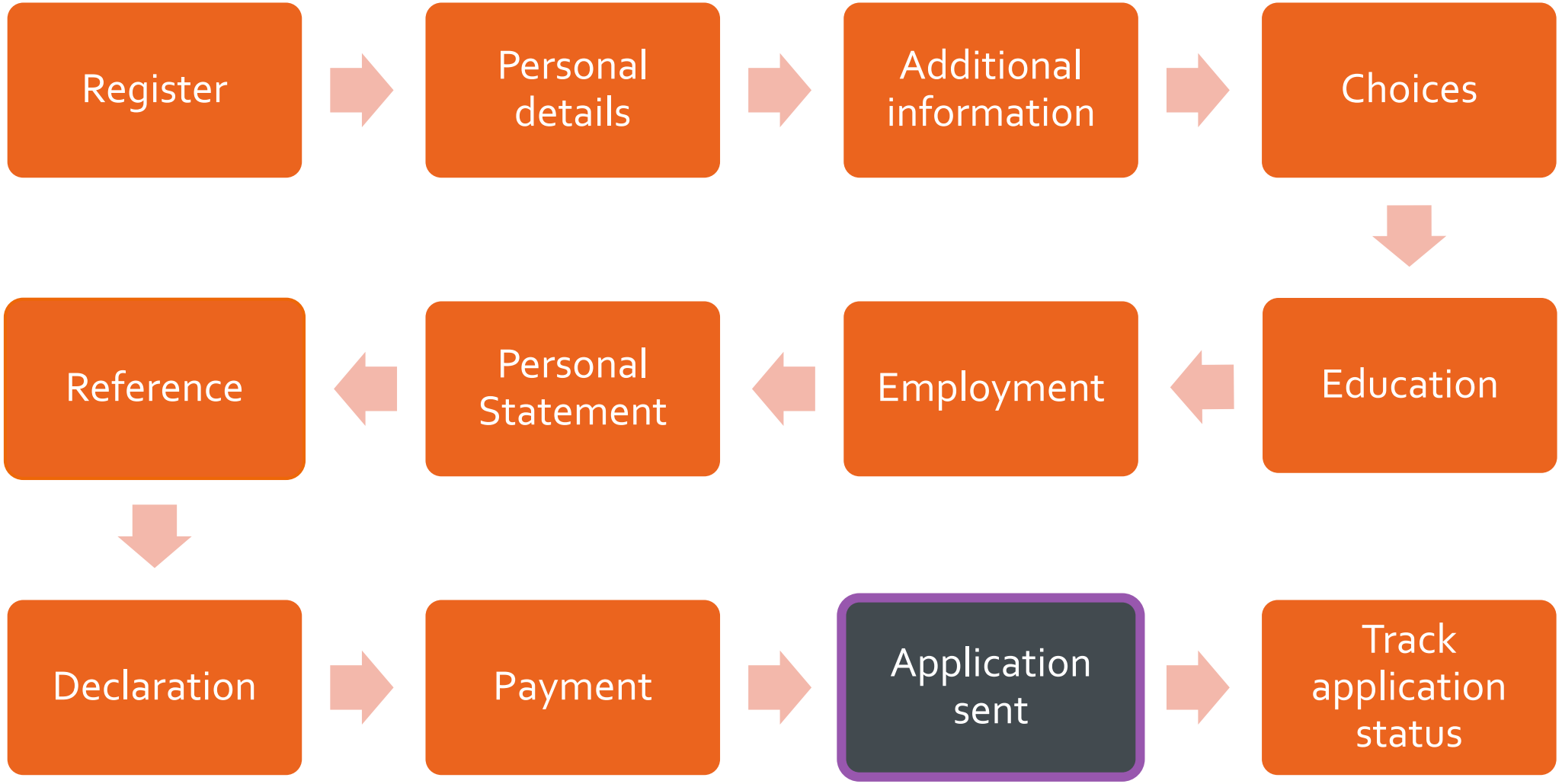
What goes into your UCAS reference?

You will not see the reference before it is sent off, but you can always request to see your tutor's reference afterwards



Sending and tracking your UCAS application

The UCAS process



UCAS key dates

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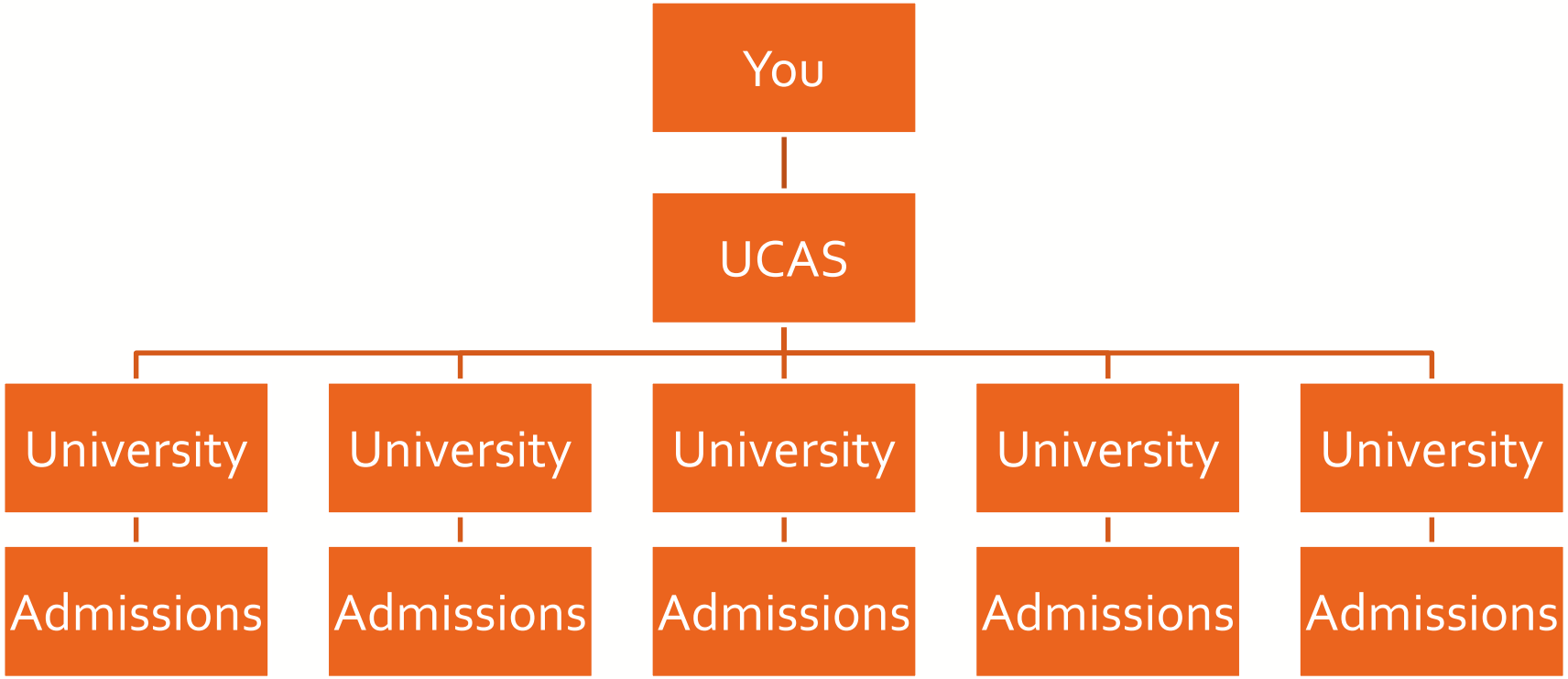


UCAS Video- How to apply



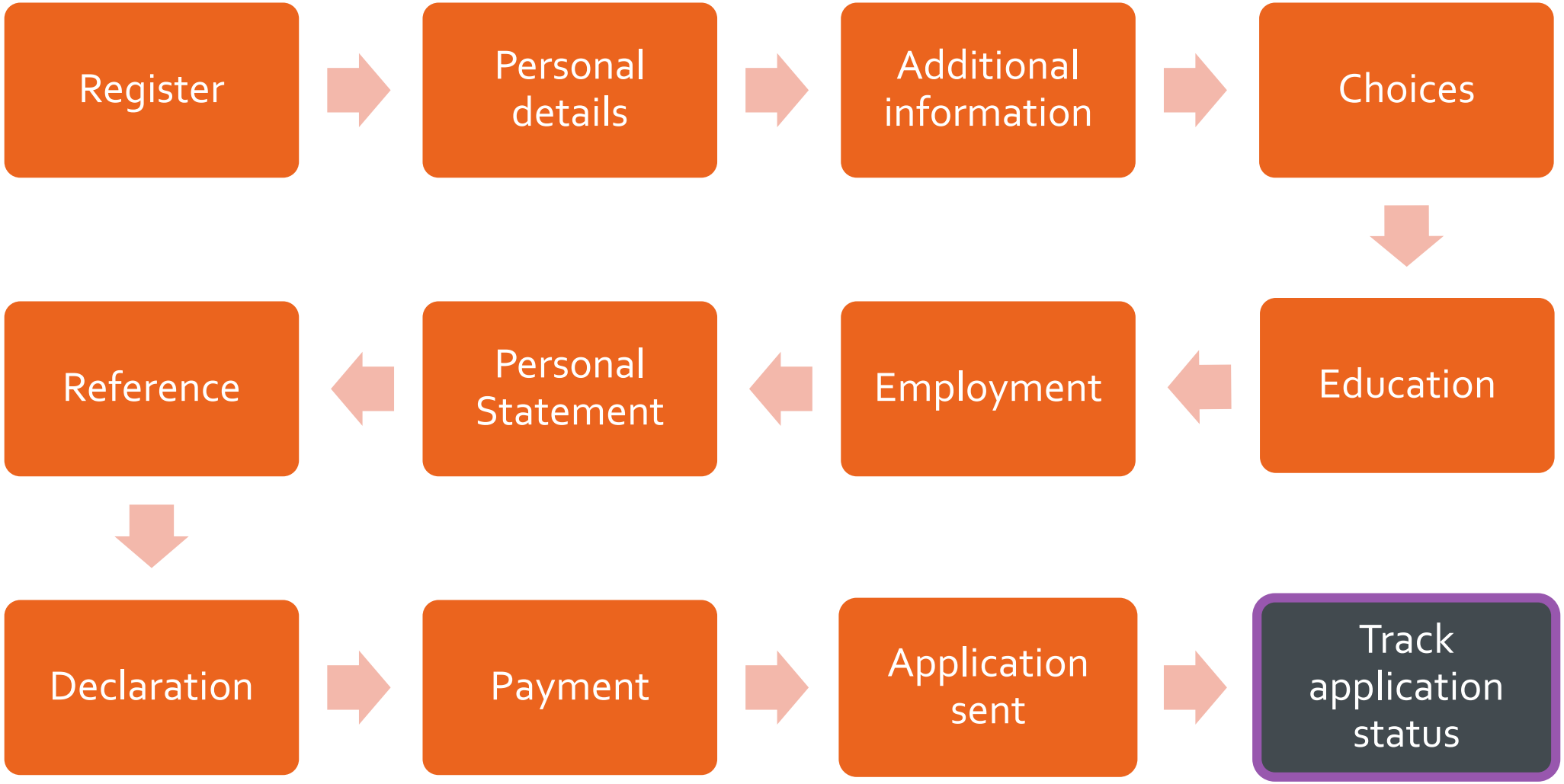
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OW7aIoEZqo

What happens to your UCAS application?



Once universities have made a decision, you will be updated via **UCAS Track** where you should be able to see all your offers.

The UCAS process



University Responses

You will receive one of the following responses from each university to which you have applied:

Conditional	Unconditional	Unsuccessful
This offer is based upon attaining the entry requirements set by the university for the specific course. * Make a ***FIRM*** & ***INSURANCE*** choice based upon your conditional offers.	This offer means that you have a confirmed place, not dependant on you attaining certain qualifications to study your chosen subject at that university, should you wish to accept it. Once accepted, you are committed to attending that university and specific course.	Unfortunately you have not been accepted by this university for the applied course. The university may provide feedback at this stage or you can contact them directly to discuss feedback.