

Parents' and supporters' guide to...

Results day

A-Level results day is in August. Other courses such as BTEC or International Baccalaureate will usually receive their results sooner and may have their university place confirmed sooner. Prior to results day, your child will have chosen a firm and insurance choice from the conditional offers received from their selected universities.

The university chosen as the firm choice will receive your child's A-Level (or equivalent) results from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and will decide whether to make the offer unconditional. Essentially this means that the place to study at the firm choice university is confirmed and this is the course and institution your child will attend. If the offer grades at the firm choice have not been met, it may be that they will be accepted by their insurance choice university as the grades needed are usually at a lower level. Please know that even if the achieved grades do not exactly meet those requested in the conditional offer, they may still be accepted at a firm or insurance choice as the university may take other factors into account.

Clearing

If your child missed their grades and a place hasn't been confirmed by either their firm or insurance choice, they will automatically be entered into Clearing which is where universities advertise any remaining spaces on their undergraduate courses. It is worth making a list of potential universities/courses of interest before results day so they can make a quick decision on who to call. They should also consult their school or college advisor to talk through their options. Places available through Clearing are available on the UCAS website. Once a course has been identified as being of interest, your child needs to telephone the university and be ready to quote their Clearing number and/or UCAS Personal ID. The university will give you a yes/no decision over the phone. If the decision is yes, then a place will be provisionally saved and, should they wish to accept the place, they need to add the university and course as their Clearing choice on UCAS Track. There are strict deadlines surrounding Clearing and their place will only be secured if they update UCAS Track within the given deadline, the place will then be confirmed by the university.

What if my child wants to go to their insurance rather than their firm choice?

If your future graduate has been accepted by their firm choice, they will need to talk to their firm choice to be 'released' and contact their insurance choice to see if they will be accepted by this university. If the insurance university does not have any places in Clearing, this may be more difficult as they may not have any space left on the course.

What if my child wants to change course or go to a different university?

They can use UCAS Clearing to explore courses with vacancies. If they have been accepted for their original choice at their firm or insurance university, they will need to contact the university and ask to change course or to be released in to Clearing, leaving them free to explore their options. It is recommended that they are only released in to Clearing once an alternative place has been selected.

Adjustment

If they have done better than expected, and exceeded the conditional offer made by their firm choice university, they may wish to use Adjustment. Once the firm choice university has confirmed your child's place, Adjustment means they have five days to shop around to find out if there is a preferable option that they may wish to take. Their place at their firm choice is held for them for the five days until a final decision has been made.

Can my child enter Clearing if they didn't initially make a UCAS application?

Yes, once they have received their results, they can register on UCAS and make an application through Clearing.

What if my child is not interested in any Clearing choices?

They should consult their school or college for advice. They may wish to take a Gap Year to work, reapply or potentially retake their exams.

Other things to consider

Visits

If your child's university choice changes on results day, they may wish to visit their new university if they haven't visited it before. Check if the university will be offering a Clearing Open Day. If not, can you visit for a campus tour? Universities may also offer a virtual tour online.

Accommodation

Students whose choices change on results day will need to find accommodation at shorter notice. Is the new university offering accommodation for Clearing applicants? How is this allocated? If not, what is the private rented sector like in the area?

Student finance

If they have applied for a student loan, they will need to update their course and university so their tuition fees go to the right place.