

Haileybury Almaty



Guide to UK University Applications





STEWART
1742

Contents

Why study in the UK?	04
Applying through UCAS	05
English Proficiency	06
Your Application	07
Tracking Applications	08
Researching Universities	09
Choosing where to study	10
Sandwich Degrees	11
Course Characteristics	12
UK Conservatoires	13
UK Arts Universities	14
UK University Costs	15
Applying to Oxbridge	16
Clearing	17
Adjustment	18
UK Admissions FAQ	19
Certain Special Programmes	20
Accommodation	21
Making the Move	22

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a large, ornate Gothic-style building, likely a university or government building, with a tall flagpole in front of it flying the Union Jack. The building is partially obscured by lush green trees in the foreground. The sky is a pale blue with some light clouds.

Internationally Recognised Credentials

The higher education system in the United Kingdom is one of the finest in the world, with degrees offering specialised training in hundreds of fields with a long rich tradition of welcoming international students from around the globe.

Value and Career Prospects

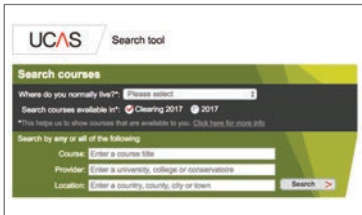
Students completing Haileybury Almaty's A level programme can complete most UK university courses in three years, rather than four. Universities in the UK provide strong practical education, career guidance, and greatly enhanced English-language skills.

Easy Application Process

Over 121,000 international students apply through the UCAS system (www.ucas.com) every year. Students can apply for up to five courses at once, and the process is straightforward and fair.

Why study in the UK?

Applying Through UCAS



The screenshot shows the UCAS Search tool interface. At the top, it says 'UCAS Search tool'. Below that, there's a section titled 'Search courses'. It asks 'Where do you normally live?' with a dropdown menu set to 'Please select'. Below that, it says 'Search courses available in:' with radio buttons for 'Clearing 2017' and '2017'. A note says '*This helps us to show courses that are available to you. Click here for more info.' Below this, it says 'Search by any or all of the following'. There are three input fields: 'Course' with the placeholder 'Enter a course title', 'Provider' with the placeholder 'Enter a university, college or organisation', and 'Location' with the placeholder 'Enter a country, county, city or town'. A 'Search' button is to the right of the location field.

Step 1: Choosing Courses

UCAS is the centralised system for applying to the UK. There are over 50,000 courses at 395 universities and colleges to choose.

Go to digital.ucas.com/search and start exploring options and entry requirements. Parents can find information on how to get involved at ucas.com/parents.



The screenshot shows the UCAS 2017 Register and log in page. At the top, it says 'UCAS 2017 apply Register and log in'. Below that, there's a 'Log in' section with fields for 'Email address' and 'Password'. There's a 'Log in' button. Below that, there's a 'Register' section with a 'Register' button. A note says 'There has to be a payment for 2017 entry, please visit the register page to see the details. The course fee will be applied once you have been accepted on a course and you will need to pay the fee before you start your course.' At the bottom, there's a 'Need any help?' link and a 'Privacy policy' link.

Step 2: Applying

To apply, first register online at ucas.com/apply. You may apply for up to 5 courses, but you will need to pay a fee of £24 (accurate of time of publication).

Get started early! While the deadline is January 15, applications before October 15 will significantly increase your chances.



The screenshot shows the UCAS Apply to offers page. At the top, it says 'UCAS Apply to offers'. Below that, there's a 'Reply to offers' section with a 'Reply to offers' button. Below that, there's a 'Please select your firm choice' section with a 'Select your firm choice' button. Below that, there's a 'Frequently asked questions' section with a 'Frequently asked questions' button. At the bottom, there's a 'University of Bristol' logo and a 'The university or college has offered you a place subject to conditions' section with a 'Conditions apply' button.

Step 3: Tracking and Replying

Universities will review your application and inform you of their decisions. Offers may be conditional or unconditional. Check and see what conditions are required, such as a language test, and then reply to your offers.

English Proficiency

Meeting Requirements

All universities will require you to demonstrate proficiency in English. Check their websites for different options and specific requirements. Demonstrated English Language proficiency is also required to apply for a student visa.

The IELTS

The IELTS is the most accessible exam. See www.britishcouncil.kz/exam/ielts for Kazakhstan-specific information on taking this exam.

SELT and Getting a Student Visa

Taking a Secure English Language Test (the SELT), such as the IELTS, for UK Visas and Immigration may be necessary to secure a student visa. This test is offered in both Almaty and Astana. Go to www.gov.uk and search for approved tests and centres.

Your Application

References and Transcripts

Maintaining a strong academic performance throughout is so important precisely because it is a student's predicted grades that are the basis for an initial offer from a university. The reference, written by the Head of Sixth Form, will incorporate comments and insights from your House tutor and teachers. Always try your best!

*“Describe my ambitions, skills, and experience in 4,000 characters – Easy!”
— No student ever*

The Personal Statement

Writing an effective personal statement is not easy and **will take several drafts**. You need to write about why you are applying to the five courses you chose – without mentioning specific universities – and what makes you suitable, including your extra-curricular activities.

International students should also answer:

- Why do you want to study in the UK?
- What have you done to prove your English language proficiency?
- Why do you want to study internationally and not at home?

Search on www.ucas.com for more information and help on writing the personal statement. A standout statement is ultimately one that expresses who you are and what you want.

Tracking Applications

The Track system on ucas.com allows you to see how your applications are progressing online. You can see when decisions are made and reply to any offers you receive. The deadline to reply to offers is set once all decisions are in.

Attaining your predicted grades is the way to stay in your top university!

Types of Replies

If you receive an unconditional offer, you may accept your place straight away. If your top choice is a conditional offer, you may select a second offer as an insurance option, in case you do not finish with grades high enough for your first choice.

You can only attend your insurance choice if you do not earn grades high enough for your top choice, be sure to choose carefully!

Declining and Switching

Students who choose to decline their offers (or who receive no offers) can apply to new courses through UCAS's Extra service, or enter Clearing between July and September, when universities try to fill vacancies in their courses.

If you change your mind about offers you accepted, contact UCAS advisors. This process becomes considerably more complicated after 14 days after your offers, and impossible after mid-July.

Researching Universities

Finding the Right Fit

The United Kingdom is home to 395 universities and colleges, and choosing the right university and course is essential. Degree courses tend to be very specialised and changing your course is very difficult. Specialist universities offering focused education in areas like: business, the arts, music or engineering might be the right place for you, or alternatively you might feel more at home in a more traditional university. Check <https://unistats.ac.uk> for an official look at comparative data between UK universities.

75+ universities require admissions tests for subjects ranging from medicine to law and more.

Unistats offers features to help you search courses by subject, qualification type, study mode, location, and other characteristics.

The Russell Group

The Russell Group is an association of twenty-four public research universities that includes many of the UK's top universities including Cambridge, Oxford, University College London (UCL), London School of Economics (LSE), and Imperial College.

Russell Group universities are distinguished by relatively high selectivity and undertake the majority of world-impacting research in the UK.

Choosing Where to Study

While some students will choose their university based solely on the course being offered, many take location and a specific university's character into account when making their decision. London is a very popular choice, and is commensurately expensive. Cities like Edinburgh, Newcastle, Bristol and Sheffield have thriving social scenes as well.

*Do your research ahead of time and
find the right universities for you!*

Open Days, Exhibitions & Taster Courses

Open days are an opportunity to explore university campuses and meet students and staff. Each university will plan an itinerary of tours, talks and other activities in addition to giving you time to seek out particular departments and ask your questions. UCAS exhibitions hosting multiple universities are also held throughout the year in the UK.

Taster courses can last one day, a weekend, or a summer. They usually include lectures, discussions and tutorial sessions. This gives you a chance to get hands on experience with how a university works and lets you find out about how students at the university live. You can find Taster courses through unitasterdays.com or through ucas.com.

Virtual Tours

Students who are unable to visit universities for events, open days or taster courses can get a sense of life at the university through virtual tours which are available online through ucas.com.

Sandwich Degrees

What are Sandwich Degrees?

Sandwich degrees are four-year undergraduate courses that include a year of work placement or study abroad, typically after the second year at university. Sandwich degrees have higher costs, but holders have a significantly higher employment rate than other graduates. These are highly recommended by the School.

Thick or Thin

Even if you choose not to do a sandwich course that would place you in industry for a year, you can combine smaller work placements (e.g. six months) around your study. Whether you decide on a thick or thin sandwich course, your university can help link you to companies and secure specific placements.

Great Benefits

Many companies place significant priority on hiring graduates who have work experience, and some sandwich courses can pay financial benefits or allow you to work abroad. They are an excellent way of making contacts within your chosen industry and are highly recommended.



Course Characteristics



Integrated Masters

Integrated Masters are programmes that award a Master's degree in four years (five in Scotland) rather than a Bachelor's in three. You apply for them directly as if they were a normal course. They are especially popular in STEM fields.

Foundation Course

A one-year pre-university course for international students who need additional English/academic preparation. Some may guarantee progression to specific universities. Foundation years are standard for arts courses.

Studying Abroad

Many courses, particularly humanities courses, include a chance to study abroad through partnerships with non-UK universities around the world, often for a comparable cost to studying in the home university. Searching on Unistats will show which courses offer options to study abroad.

UK Conservatoires

Conservatoires provide performance-based higher education including courses in music, drama, screen and production. Students can apply to any UK conservatoire through [ucas.com](https://www.ucas.com). You may choose up to six courses. Music courses have 'study type' options and may allow you to study two instruments. Other courses just state *Main Specialism*.

*Apply to UK Conservatoires through
www.ucas.com/conservatoires*

Application

After registering online at UCAS Conservatoires, students can apply from mid-July. The deadline for music courses is 2 October and 15 January for most undergraduate dance, drama, or screen production courses. These may be flexible for international students, so check with conservatoires directly.

Material required to apply includes a personal statement, list of qualifications, two references (academic and practical) and a fee of £25 (accurate of time of publication). You will then be informed of how to audition.

Audition/Interview

The audition is your chance to demonstrate your performance skills and talk about your artistic interests. Music auditions are often held from October – December and others are held at different times of the year. Audition locations exist around the world, but if you cannot attend any then you may be able to send in a video or recording instead.

UK Arts Universities

Students who wish to study Art and Design in the UK will find some of the world's best options for developing their futures as artists. The area is diverse and courses are flexible with the chance to incorporate IT literacy, teamwork skills, and communication skills as well as competency in art history, media studies, graphic design, and more.

Following Your Dreams

Art and Design leads to a very competitive industry, and these courses often have the unfortunate reputation of having low graduate employment and prospects. That said, if you have the talent and

drive to distinguish yourself through your vision, then you can really stand out in a very exciting industry.

Students who pursue Art and Design should be very thoughtful of how much they will really need to work, not only to develop themselves as artists, but also to prepare to market themselves, network, and build connections. Whether you want to work as an artist, or in fashion, or in museum curation, take the time to examine the professional connections that universities have so you can properly leverage your time there to build a career doing what you love.



UK University Costs

Tuition fees can vary significantly and depend on the course and university you are applying to. The search tool on [ucas.com](https://www.ucas.com) will help you see what your fees will be as an international student.

*For more information, see the
“Finance and Support” section on [ucas.com](https://www.ucas.com)*

Living Costs

London is the most expensive city in the UK. UK Visas and Immigration estimate that you will need £1,265 per month in London, and £1,015 per month anywhere outside of London.

Many universities have detailed information on living costs for their students on their websites, and have services available to help you budget properly for your studies.

Financial Support

Undergraduate scholarships in the UK require some effort to search for, as they are often offered for specific courses in specific universities as part of a foundation grant. If you think you will need financial support while in the UK, dedicate significant time to this search and start as soon as possible, as application deadlines are often early.

A useful resource for searching for scholarships for UK higher education is the website [educationuk.org/global](https://www.educationuk.org/global).

Applying to Oxbridge

While the applications for Cambridge and Oxford start with UCAS, there are important distinctions to keep in mind. Students may only apply to one of these two, and must apply by October 15th or earlier depending on course or interview requirements. Furthermore, while many universities may not interview candidates, Cambridge and Oxford insist on in-person interviews. Additional fees and exams may also apply.



Other Requirements

You may need to take a written test as part of your application, or submit written work depending on your selected course.

International applicants to Cambridge must submit the Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA) and Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ) in addition to the UCAS application.

After an initial evaluation, shortlisted candidates may be invited to interview.

Both Cambridge and Oxford may seek additional information about you from your teachers or public records in order to make their decisions.

Check the Cambridge and Oxford university websites for more information.



Clearing

The Clearing system on ucas.com is for those who wish to apply to courses after 30 June, or those who did not receive any offers or did not meet the conditions of their offers. Applying during Clearing is similar to a normal application, but you cannot add course choices. You will then search for Clearing vacancies (which update regularly) through the Track system and contact universities directly to request a place. Once the university gives you permission, you can add the course in Track.

If your exam results are reasonable and you are flexible on subject/location, you are likely to find a course

After Searching for Vacancies

Call! Universities may reconsider you, even if you applied to them earlier in the year, and will extend informal offers over the phone after you contact them and give them your UCAS Clearing number and Personal ID number to see your application online. Once you add a Clearing choice in Track, it is the same as confirming an offer, so be careful!

More Help

The UCAS system has substantial information to help you navigate clearing, including a direct contact service that you can sign up for so that universities can contact you from 5 July if they have courses that might be suitable for you.

Adjustment



What if you exceed your predicted grades? It may be possible to swap your firm choice course for another course that you prefer through UCAS's risk-free Adjustment system. Adjustment is optional and opens on A level results day (mid-August) until 31 August.

How to Sign Up

The option will be available in Track. After registering in Track, you will have 5 24-hour periods starting from when your conditional firm offer changes to unconditional firm, or A level results day (whichever is later). Your original choice will be safe unless you confirm a place in another university.

Using Adjustment

There is no vacancy list – you need to call universities, give them your Personal ID to check your application, and ask if there are vacancies. You may call several universities just to see what is available, just be careful to clarify that. Universities themselves add you, so only verbally accept an offer if you are sure!

UK Admissions FAQ

Do They Actually Read the Statement/Reference?

Yes, and it is important to give full effort to each part of an application. A very poor personal statement is highly unlikely to be rescued by excellent references, and vice-versa. In borderline cases, the personal statement will be what separates accepted students from the rejected.

Enthusiasm, vision and a coherent narrative make for a strong personal statement

How Relevant are Extracurricular Activities?

Extracurricular activities and accomplishments are valuable in multiple ways. Duke of Edinburgh, for example, can not only distinguish you in borderline cases, but gives you a variety of different experiences along the way that you can build on. Be creative in making what you did relevant to what you want to do, and remember that for some courses, e.g. medicine, extracurricular activities demonstrating your commitment to the field are absolutely essential. Similarly, work experience, particularly in the field you are applying, is highly valued.

Do I need 4 A2s?

In general, while 4A2s can give an advantage, it is not a disadvantage to only take 3A2s. Students who do well with 4 A2s would likely do well with 3 A2s and still would be admitted to similar-level top universities. Focus on results, as in most cases three As and an E would look worse than getting 3 As. Elite universities are particularly interested in A* grades, which require >90% marks on all examination papers.

Certain Special Programmes

Medicine

Students interested in studying medicine can apply for medical school in the UK. Generally, the requirements involve 3 As, with one or sometimes two in a lab-based science (Chemistry or Biology). Some medical schools require Maths or Physics at A-Level.

Work or volunteering in a medical environment is vital, and this will come up in the personal interview. Medical schools also require one of four admissions tests, so check carefully which test the university asks for. Check medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine for more information.

Each medical school can fill 7.5% of its yearly intake with internationals

Law

Students interested in practicing law can apply for an LLB programme, a process that mirrors the medical school application in several ways: an exam (lnat.ac.uk), three A levels (law is not necessary, but subjects like art or dance may not apply), and work/volunteer experience. In 2017-2018 21% of admits were overseas students. Depending on your career path, you may take a one-year training programme after graduation from university.

Other programmes, such as veterinary medicine, dentistry, or architecture may have their own requirements and can be explored through ucas.com and university websites.

Accommodation

Places in university-owned student housing may run out very quickly, and so it is very important that international students make arrangements as quickly as possible. Halls of residence owned by the university may be mixed or single-sex, and may house up to 800 students. Most spaces are usually reserved for first-year. Students or privately-owned halls of residence also exist you may choose to rent a flat house with other students.

Applying for Accommodation

University halls are excellent places to make friends and be a part of the university's social scene. Some universities may guarantee you a place for

your first year, but this may not be the case if you came in through Clearing. Once you accept an offer, you can check your university's website for information on their housing process, or you can search online for private residence halls.

Some residence halls will have strict rules about what you can and cannot bring with you, as well as behavioural restrictions and health & safety issues. Check carefully what bills you will need to pay, check what essentials are provided for, and take advantage of virtual tours on the UCAS, [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and elsewhere to get a taste for where you could be spending your first year of university.

Making the Move



Organising Your Visa

Once you have accepted an offer from a university and confirmed a start date for your course, you may apply for a Tier 4 Student visa. You can apply up to three months before your start date. It normally takes around 15 days, but this is not guaranteed, so apply early!



Completing Requirements

Proving your English language skills, receiving the Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) from your university, and proving your financial status are among the steps you will need to take. You may also be required to pay an immigration healthcare surcharge and **take a TB exam. There is only one approved clinic in Almaty, so take care of this as soon as possible!!**



Finding Accommodation

Now you are nearly there; many international students choose to stay in university-owned accommodations for at least the first year of study. Check with your university for deadlines to apply for their accommodations; they may be early.

The Haileybury Journey

University applications are sent in Year 13, but students must prepare for it long before this point. In fact, how a student progresses in every year of his or her schooling determines their success in reaching the best university for them.

Haileybury Almaty is proud to offer support and guidance for students at every step of their journey, allowing them to fully realize their potential and pursue their dreams.

- Our Applications Team offers students unparalleled assistance with their UCAS university choices, essays, and references.
- Our approach is individually tailored, including everything from interview practices to pastoral care to personal tutoring.





Educating future leaders

You can book a tour on the web-site:

<http://www.haileybury.kz/en/almaty/admissions>

Contact us:

admissions@haileyburyalmaty.kz

T +7 (727) 355 09 88

+7 (727) 355 01 00 (ext. 226, 240)

112, Al-Farabi Ave.

www.haileybury.kz

 Haileybury-Almaty

 @haileybury_almaty

 HaileyburyAlmatyOfficial

 @HaileyburyKZ

 HaileyburyAlmaty

Haileybury is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and those connected to the schools to share this commitment.