


A Guide to Clearing for Students



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As a university, we know that choosing to go to university is an important, potentially life-changing experience. It can take a lot of planning and research, but sometimes things don't go exactly how you imagined, which can be disappointing and daunting. For that reason, we have produced this guide to Clearing in order for you to understand the process; what it is, who it's for and how it works. You may also wish to use the UCAS Clearing toolkit, available [here](#).

We are here to help, and if you have any queries, please contact us [directly](#). You can also call us on 01244 459 884.

What is Clearing?

Clearing is the process of filling places on courses at universities. Although it is important to note that **only courses which are not already full** enter into the Clearing process, it is a regularly used way of obtaining university places. For example, in 2019, just over 50,000 students took up a place at university through Clearing in the UK, which was around 10% everyone who went ([UCAS 2019](#)). Clearing offers a chance to find a place this academic year, if you do not meet the conditions of your offer, or have had a change of heart, rather than having to wait for the next year to apply.

Who is it for?

Clearing can be used for a range of purposes, and you could access it for different reasons. It is available to anyone who:

- Wants to apply after the 30th June deadline
- Has not received any offers
- Has declined any offers they did receive

If you paid the £24 UCAS fee, you are eligible to enter Clearing. If you only paid £18 for one UCAS choice, you will need to pay the extra £6 to be eligible for Clearing, and this can be done on UCAS Track.

When can it be used?

Clearing officially opens on 5th July, once the final UCAS deadline has passed on 30th June. The period of Clearing runs right through the summer until mid-October, even after term has started if necessary, so you do have some time to consider your options. However, we would recommend that you act quickly if you know that your firm choice is no longer an option for you, as places can fill up fast.

How does it work?

You will know your own situation through UCAS Track when your results have been published. If you have been unsuccessful, you will be released into Clearing by your university, and can proceed directly at this point through the Clearing process. Alternatively, if you would like to be released by the university where you are holding an offer, you can also do this through UCAS Track.

You are entitled to gather as many offers from universities as you wish, which allows you to do research about each institution and course to find one that suits you best. Once you have done this, you can then refer yourself to a particular institution when you have made your decision and this acts as your new Clearing choice. To do this, you will indicate which institution and course you have chosen to pursue, just as you would have done when completing your application originally. Once this has been done, it will be sent to the institution for confirmation and will then be processed by them in the same way as any offer previously.

We strongly encourage you to do your own research into the course, institution and location as thoroughly as you would in any other circumstance, to ensure that your choice is right for you.

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Clearing Plus: What is it, and how does it work?

Clearing Plus is a new service offered by UCAS to match you personally to courses which you might be interested in, using what they know about you from your application and what universities and colleges are looking for. You can read more about it from UCAS [here](#).

If you enter into Clearing as you are not holding any offers, a button will appear in UCAS Track called 'View Matches'. From here you will be able to view your top 50 course matches, and you can express an interest through this without needing to contact the university directly in the first instance. You can still search for courses in the usual way, alongside looking at the courses that have been matched to you. If you are choosing to pursue a course which is different to what you originally applied for, you might find it more useful to go through the regular search function instead.

What information is needed?

When in Clearing, you should be prepared to talk directly with universities. Often a spokesperson will be able to speak on your behalf when initially making enquiries, but universities are always keen to speak directly to you in case we can answer any questions or concerns right away.

To make sure you're prepared and to have one less thing to worry about, **you should have the following ready** when on the phone:

- Your UCAS ID and/or Clearing Number
- Your grades and qualifications, including full names of qualifications
- Knowledge of which courses you would be interested in at that institution (all information available on UCAS or university's websites)
- Pen and paper to note down instructions about campus tours, accommodation and offer conditions

What to do if...

You meet the conditions of your offer

If you have met your offer conditions, this will be updated on UCAS Track and show on results day, usually from 8:00am. No further action is required; you will be able to view your confirmation letter on UCAS Track. Then you can celebrate!

You don't meet the conditions of your offer

Don't be too disheartened if your offer conditions are not met, there are still three possible scenarios:

- You might be offered an alternative course, or an alternative point of entry for your chosen course; a foundation year place, for example. This will be shown on UCAS Track and you can respond directly on there, and must do so **within five working days**.
- You might not have a decision on UCAS Track as the university is awaiting further information before they can make a decision on whether to offer you the place or an alternative. You should contact them directly to see what is required.
- You might have been unsuccessful and therefore been released from your offer-holding choice into Clearing. This will be displayed on UCAS Track, along with the student's Clearing Number. You are likely to be disappointed, but you still have options in Clearing, so again, try not to be too disheartened.

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You exceed the conditions of your offer

If you exceed the conditions of your offer, first of all, well done! You are entitled to seek another offer elsewhere, whilst still holding your original offer. This process is called Adjustment. You must contact universities directly to discuss a new offer with them at this point.

Top Tips:

1. Try not to panic

Everyone knows it's not nice when your plans don't play out as you'd hoped. It can be unsettling, overwhelming, and disappointing. However, if this is the case for you when you receive your results this year, be comforted that you do have other options available to you. All is not lost.

2. Look at a variety of options

There are many universities, and even more courses for you to choose from. You don't necessarily have to focus on universities you have previously considered, you could look afresh and consider a wide variety of different universities and courses which interest you. Do your research thoroughly and think about what is most important for you. Research is key to ensure you settle on a choice which makes you happy. Make your own shortlist by using UCAS search and university websites to help you.

3. Make your own calls

Where possible, you should be prepared to make the calls to universities yourself. You will be asked for the information we have listed above, but you might also be asked whether you are available for interview or audition (if applicable for your course), or whether you would like to speak to one of the academic staff. We understand that some people don't feel confident in this area, but the universities really want to talk to you if they can and will be able to answer any questions you have straight away. The staff you will speak to are all there to help you and are experienced in talking to students through this process each year.

4. Course vs. University

You might be set on a particular university and therefore want to choose any course at that institution. Likewise, you might choose to pursue your chosen course at any institution where you are able to get a place. Clearing can be a very useful process for students to access Higher Education, and many successfully use this route. However, it is important for you to really think about what is most important for you in order to make an informed choice. Ideally, you will find somewhere which offers the course you want, at a location where you will be happy.

5. Take time

Clearing can feel like a race against time. There is a time limit to your decision, and this will be explained to you. However, universities understand that this is an enormous decision for you to make and it can feel like a big upheaval too. Therefore, we encourage you to use the time that you have to access any university events and ask whatever question you have, whether they feel big or small, before you make a decision.

We wish you the best of luck with this process.
Please remember we are also here to help, so contact us directly if you have any questions.



University of
Chester



Let's get
September
sorted

