



# A Guide to Clearing for Teachers and Advisors



# A Guide to Clearing for Teachers and Advisors



Supporting students with their next step is a privileged job. However, it is also one which requires knowledge, empathy, and resilience. As a university, we acknowledge that you want the best outcomes for your students, and that is what we want too. For that reason, we have produced this guide to the process of Clearing in order for you to support your students through this process. 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](#).

## What is Clearing?

Clearing is the process that matches students to places that have not yet been filled 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 by students. For example, in 2019, just over 50,000 students took up a place at university through Clearing in the UK, which was around 10% of the entire cohort ([UCAS, 2019](#)). Clearing offers a chance for students who do not meet the conditions of their offer, or who have had a change of heart, to find a place in this recruitment cycle, rather than having to wait for the next cycle to apply.

## Who is it for?

Clearing is used for a range of purposes, and students can access it at different times in the recruitment cycle. It is available to those who:

- Want to apply after the 30th June deadline
- Have not received any offers
- Declined any offers they did receive

Any student who paid the £24 fee is eligible to enter Clearing. If a student only paid £18 for one choice, they 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 students have some time to consider their options. However, we would recommend that students act quickly if they know that their firm choice is no longer an option for them, as places can fill up fast.

## How does it work?

Students will be aware of their own personal situation through the UCAS Track system when the results have been published. If they have been unsuccessful, students will have been released into Clearing by their university, and can proceed directly at this point. If a student would like to be released by their university where they are holding an offer, they can now do this themselves through UCAS Track, which was a **new feature** added in 2019.

Students can gather as many offers from universities as they wish, which will allow them to do research about each institution and course to find one that suits for them. Students can then refer themselves to a particular institution when they have made their decision and this acts as their Clearing choice, where they will indicate which institution and course, just as they would have done when completing their 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.

**We encourage students to do their own due diligence and research the course, institution and location as thoroughly as they would in any other circumstance, to ensure that their choice is right for them.**

# A Guide to Clearing for Teachers and Advisors



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

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

If students enter into Clearing, a button will appear in UCAS Track called 'View Matches'. From here students will be able to view their top 50 course matches, and they can express an interest through this without needing to contact the university directly in the first instance. Students can still search for courses in the usual way, alongside looking at the courses that have been matched to them. It is designed to make the process less daunting than previously, so the students have confidence that they will be accepted with their grades before making contact. UCAS do advise that students are still encouraged to be proactive with making contact though, and be willing to talk to universities.

If students are choosing to pursue a course which is different to what they originally applied for, they will likely find it more useful to go through the regular search function instead, as the matches will be based on their previous preferences.

## What information is needed?

When in Clearing, students should be prepared to talk directly with universities. Often a spokesperson will be able to speak on behalf of the student when initially making enquiries, but universities are always keen to speak directly to the student in case of any questions which can be answered to allay fears or concerns.

Students should have the following ready when on the phone:

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

## What to do if...

### A student meets the conditions of their offer

If offer conditions are met, this will be updated on UCAS Track and show on results day, usually from 8:00am. No further action is required; the student will be able to view their confirmation letter on UCAS Track.

### A student does not meet the conditions of their offer

If offer conditions are not met, there are three possible scenarios:

- The student may have been offered an alternative course, or an alternative point of entry for their chosen course; a foundation year place, for example. This will be shown on UCAS Track and the student can respond directly on there, and must do so **within five working days**.
- The student may not have a decision on UCAS Track as the university is awaiting further information before they can make a decision on whether to offer the place or an alternative. Direct contact should be made with the university to see what is required.
- The student may have been unsuccessful and will have been released from their offer-holding choice into Clearing. This will be displayed on UCAS Track, along with the student's Clearing Number.

# A Guide to Clearing for Teachers and Advisors



## A student exceeds the condition of their offer

If a student exceeds the conditions of their offer, they are entitled to seek another offer elsewhere, whilst still holding their original offer. This process is called Adjustment. Contact must be made directly to universities to discuss a new offer with them at this point.

## Top Tips:

### 1. Proactively prepare students

Giving students information about the Clearing process ahead of time can be useful so that they do not have to deal with this along with receiving their results and not pursuing their intended plan. This will ensure they have all of their documentation ready and will hopefully feel less daunted if they enter into the process.

### 2. Manage disappointment

As we are all aware, things not going to plan can be overwhelming for students, so it is important that they know that there are other options available, and given time to process these in order to make a great decision for them. This might be to retake qualifications, pursue a different route, or a different subject altogether. Universities are available to help you support your students with information, advice and guidance, so please get in touch.

### 3. Course vs. University

Some students may be set on a particular university and therefore want to choose any course at that institution. Likewise, others may choose to pursue their chosen qualification at any institution they are able to get a place. Clearing can be a very useful process for some students to allow them to access Higher Education, and many successfully use this route. However, it is important for students to consider what is most important for them in order to make an informed choice. Research is key to ensure students settle on a choice which makes them happy.

### 4. Prepare for calls

Students should be prepared to make the calls to universities themselves, and should feel confident that they know what might be asked of them: interview, audition, speak to an academic etc. Some students are not confident in this area, but if they are aware ahead of time, this could help them.

### 5. Take time

Clearing can feel like a race against time. However, universities understand that this is an enormous decision for students and can be a great upheaval for some. Therefore, encourage your students to use the time that they have to attend the university and ask whatever question they have.

We wish you and your students 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

