

**Next Steps
South West**



2020 Clearing Handbook

"Over 55,000 students secured a university or college place through Clearing in 2019" – UCAS

Hello there!

Ready to progress onto higher education... but you haven't received the grades you hoped for, or perhaps your plans have changed?

Don't fret! You're not alone, and you still have options. In fact, last year, more than one in ten university students were accepted through Clearing.



This handy booklet was designed to help you make sense of the Clearing process.

Clearing is a chance to find a study programme at the same institutions you originally applied to, or somewhere new. Clearing can also be an option if you're a school leaver whose original plans have been cancelled, due to circumstances like the Covid-19 Pandemic.

It's normal to have a wobble on results day, but there's no need to panic. After all, universities and colleges need students too. A future full of adventure, new friends, skills and opportunity awaits.

Don't worry, we've got you covered!

What is Clearing?

Clearing is the process universities carry out over summer to match vacant spaces on their study programmes with students seeking a place.

It takes place between July and September, with most vacancies published by UCAS around A-level results day. However, if you've already received Highers, BTEC or IB results you might be able to get a head start, as some vacancies are published early.

You are eligible to enter Clearing if:

You're applying after 30th June.

You haven't met the conditions of your offers and so haven't been offered any places.

You haven't been made any offers at all (or none you wanted to accept) and didn't go through UCAS Extra.

You've declined your offers and want to go somewhere else.

What is Clearing Plus?

New for 2020!

If you find yourself in Clearing this year, UCAS will match you to courses you may be interested in, using what they know about you from your application, and what universities and colleges are looking for in a student.

If you're unplaced or have started a new application, a button will appear in Track - My matches. This will take you to your top 50 course matches. You'll then be able to tell universities and colleges you're 'interested' in their courses. If they still have vacancies and you meet their entry requirements, they may call you.

Don't worry, if you want to apply for something different you can still find courses available in Clearing using the UCAS search tool.



"Clearing gives you the ability to re-evaluate your options and you can find yourself going to a better university or doing a course you're more suited to that you didn't know existed!"

Ella, BA (Hons) History with English

Do your research

Becoming a Clearing candidate might feel like a compromise at first, but once you start exploring the vacancies available you'll realise there are plenty of unique and exciting courses still open to you.

Try following these steps to create your new shortlist:

1

If you applied before the 30th June, check your UCAS application, are any of your original selection going into Clearing? If you are applying after the 30th June, you will be fast-tracked directly into Clearing.

2

Is there a course running at any of your preferred universities/colleges that interests you?

3

Search the course title you originally applied for (or would like to apply for) and see which universities/colleges are still recruiting for a similar study programme or a programme that interests you.

4

Check your Clearing Plus matches in Track - 'My Matches'. This will take you to your top 50 course matches.

5

Once you've narrowed your search to 5-10 courses, check out each institution's website and social media to get a feel for life on campus. Most universities also provide a virtual tour.

6

Build an honest picture of what it's like to study on each course, and compare the pros and cons. You'll find helpful information on websites such as Which?, The Student Room, and What Uni?

7

Seal the deal! Once you've made your decision, it's time to pick up the phone.



It's your call

To make an application through Clearing you may have to make a telephone call. Not everyone feels confident picking up the phone, but some simple preparation will make sure your conversation runs smoothly.

Most universities and colleges have a dedicated hotline number for you to call, with a team of friendly advisers waiting to hear from you. Phone calls may range from quick checks of your A-level results to in-depth interviews checking your suitability for the course.

Follow the checklist overleaf to make the right impression!

Before calling

1. Have your UCAS Clearing number and A-Level / BTEC / IB results to hand.
2. Note down each university/college's name and phone number.
3. Find the course code, name and details of the course you're enquiring about.
4. Re-read your personal statement and have a copy nearby to refer to when questioned.
5. Make some notes on why each course appeals to you, why you deserve the place, and any questions you have for them.
6. Keep a pen and paper ready to note down the course code if they accept you.
7. Make sure your phone is charged and you have good signal in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed.

On the phone

1. Be patient – you may not get through to an adviser straight away as there are many young people in the same position as you.
2. Manage your time – if you tried the same number a few times and can't get through, move onto the next one and try again later.
3. Take down the name, email and telephone of whoever you speak to, just in case you get cut off or need to get back in touch.
4. Speak clearly and confidently – sell yourself and ask as many questions as you need to – this is your moment to shine.
5. If an offer is made over the phone then remember to write down the code they give you.
6. If they don't make you an offer, move onto your next phone call.

After calling

1. Whether you accept one verbal offer or multiple offers over the phone, you may only enter one code into UCAS Track.
2. Login to your account at **track.ucas.com** and click "Add Clearing Choice" to confirm your decision.
3. Take a deep breath. You did it! Look out for a confirmation letter from the university and remember to update your student finance and accommodation applications.

FAQs

When does Clearing open?

Clearing officially opened on **Monday 6th July**, but not all Clearing courses will be advertised then. Most will be advertised around A-level results day on **Thursday 13th August**.

When does Clearing close?

Clearing officially closes on **Tuesday 20th October**, but most vacancies will be filled before this date. Some universities or colleges may offer places in late October at their discretion, so it's always best to check with their admissions team.

When do I register for Clearing?

You can register any time up until the last day of Clearing (see above).

Can BTEC or IB students apply through Clearing?

Yes, in fact some BTEC and IB results are released in July (before A level results day) so you can enjoy a head start. If you don't see something straight away, keep checking UCAS Track as most vacancies are published around A-level results day.

"We understand that going through Clearing can be nerve-racking, but you don't need to panic, there are still options available to you. We're always happy to talk to students about our degree courses and help them choose what's right for them."

Kate Leyland – HE Admissions

I've just missed out on my predicted grades, what can I do?

If you came really close to receiving your predicted grades you may still be in with a chance of getting on to your preferred course. Call up your firm university choice (and your insurance if you've missed the requirements for both) and ask if there's any wiggle room. You may have to explain your reasons for missing the mark, but you've nothing to lose by trying. Refer to the "It's Your Call" section of this guide to make the right impression.

I missed the January deadline. Can I still apply for HE?

Yes - if you are applying after **Tuesday 30th June** you will be fast-tracked directly into Clearing.

I haven't made a UCAS application before. Can I still apply for uni or college this year?

Yes, it's not too late! Create a new profile through UCAS and you will be placed straight into Clearing.

Can I defer my offer if I'm accepted onto a course through Clearing?

Most universities/colleges offer Clearing vacancies for this academic year. If you don't want to enrol this September you will need to contact their admissions department and discuss your options. They may ask you to withdraw your offer and apply again next year.

I applied for student finance before going through Clearing. What do I do?

Now that you've selected a choice through Clearing you will need to change your application details with Student Finance England. Visit [gov.uk/studentfinance](https://www.gov.uk/studentfinance) or your loan provider to quickly update your details.

It's results day and I have not applied for student finance yet. What do I do?

You will have missed the official student finance deadline, so your loan may not arrive in time for the start of your course. Don't worry, just start your application as soon as possible so that Student Finance England can begin processing your details.

How is Clearing affected by the Covid -19 pandemic?

Clearing 2020 will follow the same processes as usual. However, there may be some changes e.g. how you chat to tutors or visit a campus. Please contact the university or college direct to discuss what they have to offer. Take a look at the NSSW website for more of your questions answered on Covid-19 <https://nextstepsw.ac.uk/is-university-for-me/faq/going-to-uni-admissions/>.

Glossary

You'll see plenty of new words and abbreviations while conducting your research, but we've highlighted the 'need-to-know' phrases below.

UCAS

Clearing – A second-chance process for higher education applicants who did not receive offers, declined their offers or did not meet entry requirements.

Clearing Plus – Available alongside Clearing. This new tool is designed to help you find your perfect course.

Conditional Offer – A HE offer made that is subject to conditions, usually related to exam results.

Confirmation – When an HE offer has been accepted by the college or university, and is now 'unconditional'.

Deferral – If an applicant decides to delay their enrolment and start in the following academic year.

Entry Requirements – What an applicant needs to have to get onto their HE course of choice. This may include qualifications, subject specialisms, interviews, portfolio reviews, admission tests, and more.

Firm Choice – The HE course offer a student accepts as their first choice.

Insurance Choice – A HE course offer a student accepts as a second choice, in case the conditions for the first offer are not met.

Personal Statement – A piece of text applicants write to demonstrate their suitability for a study programme.

UCAS – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. The website that will process your application to higher education.

UCAS Track – The name of the online tracking system where you can check your application's progress, reply to offers, and make Clearing choices.

Unconditional Offer – A HE offer made to you with no extra conditions to meet.

Unsuccessful – When you've not been made an offer or haven't met the conditions.

Withdrawal – When an applicant has changed their mind and decided to withdraw a choice.

General

College – An institution that provides further education (post-16) and sometimes higher education. Nowadays, lots of colleges that offer 'FE' (A-levels & BTECS) also offer HE study.

HEI – Higher Education Institution.

Higher Education (HE) – An optional stage of learning beyond secondary level, usually offered by universities and colleges. You can apply for this level of education once you have completed A-levels, BTECs, or IBs.

Postgraduate – The next level of study after higher education, for those who have completed their undergraduate degree. You cannot apply for this until you've completed an undergraduate course.

Undergraduate – The first level of study in higher education such as degrees, Higher National Diplomas, and foundation degrees.

University – An institution that only provides higher education (i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate).

Qualifications

Degree Apprenticeship – A qualification combining a degree from a HEI and work experience from an employer. Applications do not have to go through UCAS.

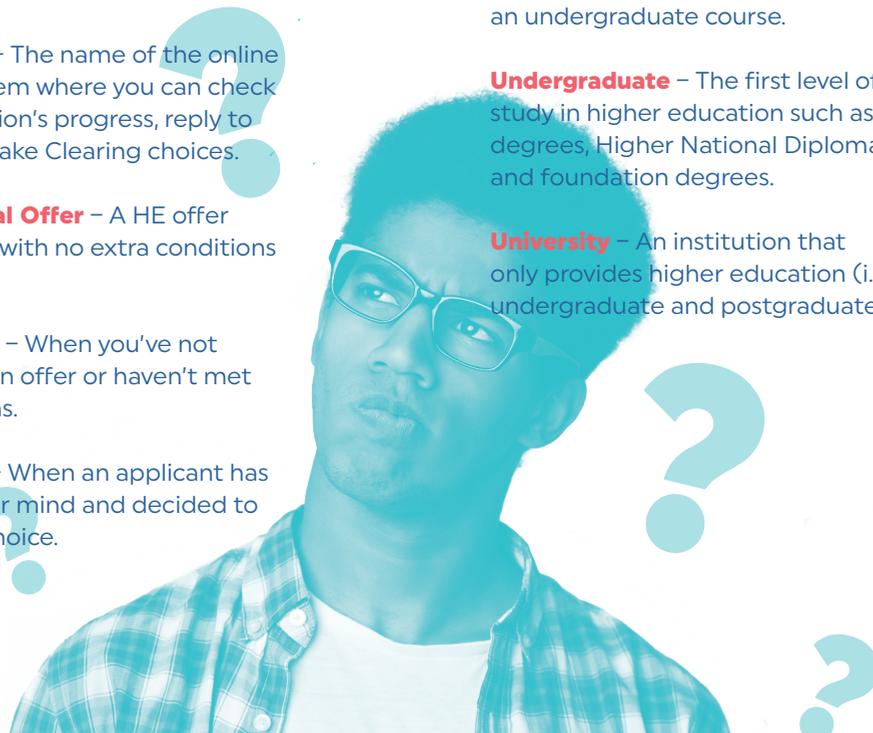
Foundation Degree – Combines academic and vocational skills in a higher education course. Equivalent of two years of a bachelor's degree.

Foundation Year – Also known as 'Year 0': a one-year preparation course for students who may not have gained entry requirements to go straight onto a degree, or want to explore a variety of disciplines before committing.

Higher National Certificate (HNC) – A vocational higher education qualification, that takes one year to complete. It's roughly equivalent to one year of university study.

Higher National Diploma (HND) – A vocational higher education qualification. Completion of an HND is considered equivalent to the second year of a three year degree course and can often be used to gain entry to a university course.

Undergraduate Degree – Also known as a bachelor's degree: a three or four year higher education course. Most are presented as a Bachelor of Arts (BA), a Bachelor of Science (BSc), or a Bachelor of Education (BEd).



Hotlines

Next Steps South West represent 14 universities and colleges throughout the South West, each with their own unique variety of study programmes.

If you're considering making an application through Clearing and want to stay in Devon, Cornwall or Somerset, get in touch today.

"Plans can change – and there's nothing wrong with that – but it's better to have a plan that changes than to have no plan at all." – NSSW

Devon



01752 305 786



UNIVERSITY CENTRE SOUTH DEVON

0800 021 31 81



01392 400 444



0300 555 60 60



01271 852 335



01752 636 700



01752 203 402



01752 585 858

Cornwall



0330 123 2523



01326 213 730



01872 267 061

Somerset



University Centre Somerset

Part of Bridgwater & Taunton College

01278 441 373



01935 845 454



01458 844 401

Clearing Timeline

6th July

Clearing opens

Early August

BTEC results
released

13th August

A-Level
results day.
You can
now apply
for your
preferred
Clearing
choice

Mid August

Universities
release
information
about their
course
vacancies

20th October

Clearing
closes

Good luck!

If this guide helped you secure a place at university or college, let us know by scanning the QR code below.

You'll be entered into a prize draw with a chance of winning a £50 Amazon voucher.



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SCAN ME!





Next Steps South West

Get in touch

Explore events and free resource on our website, or contact our friendly team for more information.



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