

**Next Steps  
South West**



# **Parent & Carer Clearing 2021**

**"Over 70,000 students secured a university or college place through Clearing in 2020" – UCAS**



# Hello there!

So, your child is ready to progress onto higher education...but they haven't received the grades they hoped for, or perhaps their plans have changed?

They're not alone, and they still have options. In fact, last year, **13.6%** of all accepted students got their place through Clearing.

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## **Clearing 2021 & Covid-19**

Although a lot has changed this year, like the decision to cancel exams and grades being based on teacher assessment, the process of your child getting their results and continuing onto a HE course has remained reassuringly similar. Results day for 2021 will be on **Tuesday 10th August**, and UCAS will open Clearing on **Monday 5th July**.

Clearing is a chance to find a different course at the same institutions your child originally applied to, or even somewhere new! It can be an option if they're a school leaver whose plans have changed due to circumstances like the Covid-19 Pandemic. Read on to find out more.

# 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.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, this year Clearing will be open from **5th July 2021** and close on **19th October**.

## Your child is eligible to enter Clearing if:

They're applying after **30th June**.

They haven't met the conditions of their offers and so haven't been offered any places.

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

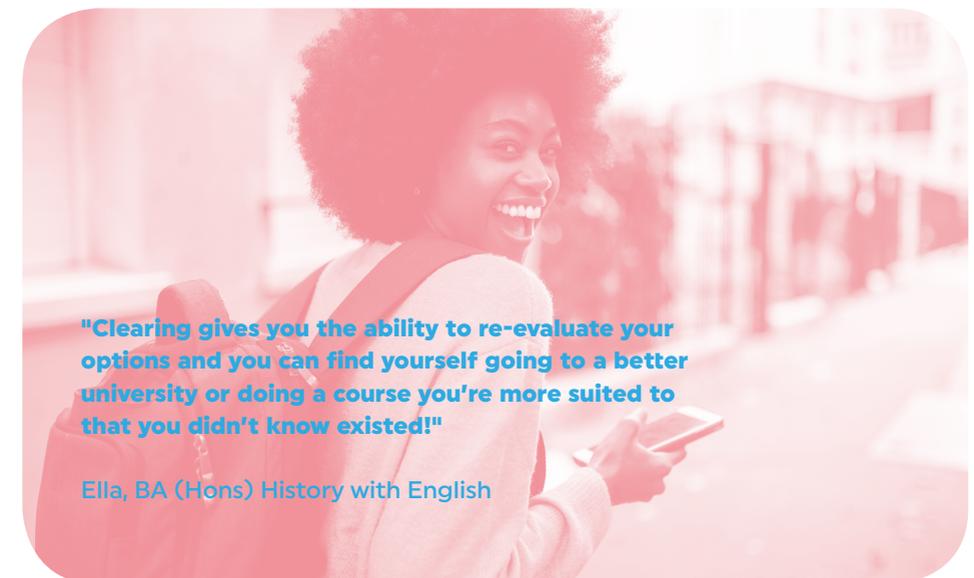
They've declined their offers and want to go somewhere else.

## What is Clearing Plus?

If your child finds themselves in Clearing this year, UCAS will match them to courses they may be interested in, using what they know about them from their application, and what universities and colleges are looking for in a student.

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

Don't worry, if they want to apply for something different they 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

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

Follow these steps, so your child can create their new shortlist:

- 1 If they applied before the 30th June, they need to check their UCAS application, are any of their original selection going into Clearing? If they are applying after the 30th June, they will be fast-tracked directly into Clearing.
- 2 If not, look on the UCAS website for vacancies at any of their preferred universities/colleges. There is no need to buy any of the newspapers that print this information.
- 3 Search the course title they 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 them.
- 4 Check their Clearing Plus matches in Track - 'My Matches'. This will take them to their top 50 course matches.
- 5 Once they've narrowed their 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. [Browse some of the universities virtual tours on the NSSW website.](#)
- 6 Build an honest picture of what it's like to study on each course, and compare the pros and cons. They'll find helpful information on websites such as Which?, The Student Room, and What Uni?
- 7 Seal the deal! Once they've made their decision, it's time to pick up the phone.

# It's their call

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

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

**Follow the checklist opposite,  
so your child can make the  
right impression!**



## Before calling

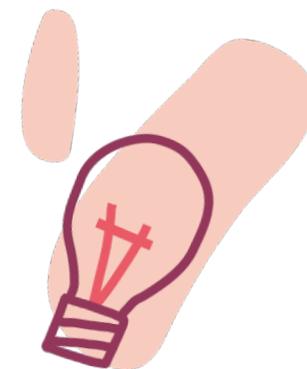
1. They need their UCAS Clearing number and A-level/BTEC/IB results to hand.
2. Note down each university/college's name and phone number.
3. Find the course code, name and details of the course they're enquiring about.
4. It's good for them to re-read their personal statement and have a copy nearby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

## On the phone

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

## After calling

1. Whether they accept one verbal offer or multiple offers over the phone, they may only enter one code into UCAS Track.
2. They need to login to their account at [track.ucas.com](https://track.ucas.com) and click "Add Clearing Choice" to confirm their decision.
3. They did it! They need to look out for a confirmation letter from the university and remember to update their student finance and accommodation applications.



## Is higher education a good choice for my child?

Graduates are still likely to earn more than non-graduates even if they have non-graduate jobs. The benefits of a degree are also more than just the salary obtained, and include better chances of promotion, increased opportunities to adapt in the ever-changing work environment, and higher levels of job satisfaction. Vocational degrees lead to clear career paths, but research from the Office for National Statistics also shows that students feel they are utilising what they learnt in their studies in their current role, regardless of subject. Going to university is a highly worthwhile investment.

## How much money will university cost me?

Whilst there is no legal obligation for you to financially support your child at uni, the reality is that parents often contribute. The majority of students in England fund their tuition fees and living costs using the means-tested student loans system. There are also many other ways to finance being a student, including taking a part-time job, and ways to reduce costs, such as accommodation alternatives to student halls or 2-year fast track degree programmes. If your child is able to live at home whilst studying, there are excellent local HE options.

Repayments are not linked to how much a student borrowed; they are based on how much they earn and repayments are automatically deducted from a person's pay. After 30 years, whatever amount is outstanding is written off. Check out our Student Finance page for further information: [nextstepssw.ac.uk/a-guide-to-student-finance/](https://nextstepssw.ac.uk/a-guide-to-student-finance/)

## When does Clearing open?

Clearing officially opens on **5th July**, but not all Clearing courses will be advertised then. Most will be advertised around A-level results day on **10th August**.

## When does Clearing close?

Clearing officially closes on **19th 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.

## How does my child go through Clearing?

If your child is eligible for Clearing, they'll be given an option to 'add a Clearing choice' in the 'next steps' section when they sign in to UCAS Track. They can then search for vacancies in the UCAS search tool. Once they've found the course they're interested in, encourage them to give the university a call to check for vacancies. If the university offers your child a place, they'll be able to add this choice in their UCAS Track.

## What is Adjustment?

Adjustment is only available to students who've exceeded the grade requirements for their firm choice university. UCAS Adjustment starts on A-level results day and gives your child the chance to switch to an alternative university or course should they wish to.

## My child has just missed out on their predicted grades, what can they do?

If they came really close to receiving their predicted grades they may still be in with a chance of getting on to their preferred course. They should call up their firm university choice (and their insurance if they've missed the requirements for both) and ask if there's any possibility of being accepted still. They may have to explain their reasons for missing the mark, but they've nothing to lose by trying. Refer to the "It's Their Call" section of this guide to make sure they make the right impression.

## My child hasn't made a UCAS application before. Can they still apply for uni or college this year?

Yes, it's not too late! They need to create a new profile through UCAS and you they will be placed straight into Clearing.

## Can my child defer their offer if their accepted onto a course through Clearing?

Most universities/colleges offer Clearing vacancies for this academic year. If they don't want to enrol this September they will need to contact their admissions department and discuss their options. They may be advised to withdraw their application.

## My child applied for student finance before going through Clearing. What can they do?

Now that they've selected a choice through Clearing, they will need to change their application details with Student Finance England. They should visit [gov.uk/studentfinance](https://gov.uk/studentfinance) or their loan provider to update their details.

## It's results day and my child has not applied for student finance yet. What do they do?

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

## How is Clearing affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Clearing 2021 will follow the same processes as 2020. Results day may be a little different to normal, as your child's teacher will be grading them instead of your child receiving exam grades. Universities will not be giving out 'Unconditional' offers this year, to help students make fair decisions. Make sure your child contacts the university or college directly to discuss what they have to offer. [Take a look at the NSSW website for more of your questions answered on Covid-19.](https://www.nextstepssw.ac.uk/a-guide-to-student-finance/)

# 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

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**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 firm 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 child's application to higher education.

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

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

**Unsuccessful** – When a student has not been made an offer or hasn't met the conditions.

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

## General

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**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. Students can apply for this level of education once they have completed A-levels, BTECs, or IBs.

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

**Predicted Grade** – A grade given to a student that their school or college believes they can achieve in positive circumstances.

**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

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**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 your child is 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 305 300



UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE  
SOUTH DEVON

0800 021 31 81



01392 400 500



01392 661 000



01271 345 291



01752 636 700



01752 203 434



01752 585 858

## Cornwall



0330 123 2523



01326 370 400



01872 305 000

01736 809 000

## Somerset



University  
Centre  
Somerset

Part of Bridgwater & Taunton College

01278 455 464



01935 423 921



01458 844 400



# Next Steps South West

## Get in touch

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



[nextstepssw.ac.uk](https://nextstepssw.ac.uk)



[nextstepssw@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:nextstepssw@plymouth.ac.uk)



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