



CAMPBELL  
COLLEGE

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**CAREERS DEPARTMENT  
POST 'A' LEVEL GUIDE**

**Make sure you read this carefully so  
that you are fully informed about the  
Confirmation and Clearing process for 2018**

## Introduction

This guide is intended primarily for UCAS applicants and provides information about what to do when you receive your 'A' level results on **Thursday 16 August**. It also offers advice for those who have applied through CAO or to local Colleges of Further and Higher Education. Hopefully when you receive your results, you will have performed as anticipated, or even better, and you will have no difficulty in securing your chosen course. However, this guide provides advice on what to do, whatever your situation. If you have achieved higher results than expected, you may be able to change your course choice if you wish. If you have not performed as well as you had hoped, there is still action you can take to gain a university/college place. Read through this guide carefully; you are also encouraged to make full use of the help and advice offered by the Careers Department at Campbell College.

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## **At the start of July**

Ensure that all the information stated in your application is still up to date and accurate. This includes your home address (especially important for boarding students), email address and telephone number. It is essential that any examination information is accurate and complete in order to avoid mismatches which will create delays in offers being confirmed by universities. Any changes in examination information made since you submitted your UCAS application should be emailed to [qualsupport@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:qualsupport@ucas.ac.uk). This includes dropping a qualification, module or unit. Most other changes can be made through TRACK, or by contacting the UCAS Customer Experience Centre by telephone - **0371 4680468** (make sure you have your Personal ID number ready). You must also inform your chosen universities of any changes.

UCAS will have contacted you directly by email if there appears to be any discrepancy between the qualifications you have entered in your application and those actually taken. You must respond to this email with the correct information, otherwise your university place is at risk. Please ensure that you regularly check your email (including junk folders) for important communications from UCAS.

Ensure that you remember or find your Personal ID number, username and password for TRACK in advance of the release of examination results. Please note that TRACK will be frozen from Wednesday 8 August, so do not expect any updates to your records at this time.

## **Collecting 'A' level results**

'A' level results are available for collection from Campbell College from 9am onwards on Thursday 16 August. You should also have been provided with a pin code to log in to check results of CCEA examinations.

As already advised, you should **not** go on holiday at this time as you need to be available in person to handle whatever situation may arise. If your absence is unavoidable, you should have designated someone for 'nominated access' and universities **may** be willing to deal with this person on your behalf. However, if you are not able to deal with arrangements personally, your future plans may be at risk.

UCAS is informed directly of your 'A' level and 'AS' level results and will pass this information on to your universities (this is why it is so important that your examination information is accurate and up-to-date). They should also be informed of BTEC results, but it is sometimes necessary to clarify these directly with universities. If a GCSE or IELTS qualification is part of your offer, you will need to pass this information on to the university yourself.

## UCAS: Possible scenarios after 'A' level results are made available

1. You have satisfied the conditions of your Firm choice (CF)
2. You have not satisfied the conditions of your Firm choice (CF), but have met the conditions of your Insurance choice (CI)
3. You have exceeded the conditions of your Firm choice (CF)
4. You have not met the conditions of either your Firm or Insurance choices (CF or CI)
5. You initially applied through UCAS but have not held any offers (either because you were not successful or chose to decline them)
6. You have not been accepted by either your Firm or Insurance choices (CF or CI)
7. You have already accepted an offer but you wish to apply for a different place through Clearing *OR* You have met your grades for your Firm offer but now want to go to your Insurance choice
8. There is a problem with your examination results.

### **1. You have satisfied the conditions of your Firm choice**

If you know that you have met the conditions of your firm offer (CF), you do not need to do anything. A confirmation decision will be shown in TRACK when your chosen institution has received your examination results and has confirmed that they are acceptable. The status of your offer will change from CF (conditional) to UF (unconditional). You can also read your confirmation letter (AS12) in TRACK.

If you do not see this information on TRACK, this does not mean that you have not been accepted. As long as you have achieved the conditions of your offer, your place will be confirmed. If unsure about the conditions of your offer, please consult Careers staff at Campbell. If you have satisfied the conditions of your firm choice, you are expected to honour your confirmation commitments. If you have changed your plans and now wish to turn the offer down, read the advice in Point 7. You should also discuss possible implications of this with Careers staff at Campbell before you take any action.

If you receive a confirmation letter from your firm choice institution or receive notification on TRACK that you have been accepted **before** you collect your examination results, you cannot assume that you have achieved the required grades. It may be the case that you narrowly missed the grades but the institution has decided to accept you anyway.

## **2. You have not satisfied the conditions of your Firm choice, but have met the conditions of your Insurance choice**

If you have not met the conditions of your firm offer (CF), you may be accepted anyway if you have narrowly missed the grades. They may notify you on TRACK that you have been accepted. If you have not received notification, you may telephone the university or college to enquire about your status, but be prepared to be patient, and have all the required information to hand. As long as you have met the conditions of your insurance offer (CI), you will definitely hold your place there while you are waiting to find out about your firm offer. If your firm choice institution does not wish to accept you, you will be sent confirmation information by your insurance choice institution. If you have satisfied the conditions of your insurance choice, you are expected to honour your confirmation commitments. If you have changed your plans and now wish to turn the offer down, read the advice in Point 7. You should also discuss possible implications of this with Careers staff at Campbell before you take any action.

It is possible that you may be made a changed course or year offer by your firm choice institution and sent a confirmation change letter (AS12C) outlining the options available to you. This is also indicated on TRACK by the code UCC. You are not obliged to accept this, but have five calendar days to accept or decline. You can choose instead to take up your insurance choice if they have accepted you.

## **3. You have exceeded the conditions of your Firm choice**

The procedure called **Adjustment** is for candidates who exceed the conditions of their firm choice and wish to reconsider where and what to study. You can only be considered for Adjustment if you have performed better than your firm offer; universities and colleges will be verifying this. Applicants have five calendar days from 16 August or the day they were confirmed at their firm choice institution (whichever is later) and before 31 August, to receive another offer through UCAS. Applicants must make contact with other universities or colleges to discuss an Adjustment place and register for Adjustment through TRACK. If they do not receive an alternative place, they remain accepted by their firm choice institution. There are no Adjustment vacancy lists and applicants should contact a university or college to discuss an Adjustment place.

Adjustment is entirely optional, and having researched your institutions and courses carefully in the first place, you may not wish to change your plans at this stage. Factors such as accommodation and finance should also be considered. There is no guarantee that there will be vacancies on the courses to which you would consider changing, especially if they are competitive courses. If you have exceeded

expectations and wish to change your plans as a result, you may wish to consider applying again for 2019 entry instead of using Adjustment.

When contacting a university or college, make it clear that you wish to be considered for Adjustment, not Clearing. If you are unsure about whether you have exceeded your initial offer, please consult Careers staff at Campbell. Adjustment cannot be used if you have not been accepted by your firm choice but exceed your insurance choice.

Use of Adjustment in past years has been limited; on average less than 0.08% of successful applicants have secured a place in this way.

#### **4. You have not met the conditions of either your Firm or Insurance choices**

You may be placed directly into Clearing (see Point 6) or alternatively, you may still be offered a place on one of your chosen courses. In this event you will be notified on TRACK if you have been accepted and will be sent a confirmation letter (AS12). You may telephone the universities or colleges to enquire about your status if you have not received notification, but be prepared to be patient, and have all the required information to hand. Alternatively, if you have not met your conditions, you may be made a changed course or year offer and sent a confirmation change letter (AS12C) outlining any options available to you. This is also indicated on TRACK by the code UCC. You are not obliged to accept these offers, but have only five calendar days to accept or decline any changes. If you decline a change, you may become eligible for Clearing (see Point 6).

Be warned that this can be an unpleasant situation in which to find yourself and you could face an agonising wait for universities to decide whether or not to offer you a place. If you are kept waiting for a decision, this could cost you a place in Clearing if the institution finally decides not to accept you. You could request that the university withdraws your offer, but if they agree, this may also take some time before you are eligible for Clearing. You would also be risking the chance of a place at your chosen institution. You may wish to discuss the implications of any action with a member of the Careers Team at Campbell College.

#### **5. You initially applied through UCAS but have not held any offers (either because you were not successful or chose to decline them)**

If you do not hold offers from your initial application or through EXTRA, or you declined all offers received, or you made an application after 30 June, you are automatically eligible for Clearing (see Point 6).

## **6. You have not been accepted by either your Firm or Insurance choices**

If you have been unsuccessful in both your firm and insurance choices you become eligible for **Clearing**, procedures for which take place on TRACK from 3pm on 16 August. When you become eligible for Clearing, an 'Add Clearing Choice' option will appear on your TRACK screen. Using the suggested resources for finding institutions and courses with vacancies, you can identify courses that may be of interest to you. Contact the different universities and colleges directly to discuss vacancies and you may be made a provisional offer of a place (not binding). If a university or college provisionally offers you a place, you should enter the course details on TRACK. You can only select one course, so if several institutions make you provisional offers, you must choose carefully. Do not enter institution or course details unless you have been provisionally offered a place and want to accept it, otherwise this will delay the process of securing an offer. If the university or college to which you have made a Clearing application accepts you, the details will appear under the 'Choices' section on TRACK. If they decline you, the 'Add Clearing Choice' option in TRACK will be re-activated so you can apply to another choice through Clearing.

UCAS also offers a Direct Contact Service which allows universities and colleges to make contact with unplaced students to inform them of a place on a relevant course. This service is entirely optional and should be used alongside your own Clearing research and enquiries, since it is not guaranteed that you will receive contact from any institution. You should have received an email invitation for this service and you will only be approached if you have signed up to it.

Remember that if you are holding conditional firm and insurance offers, you do not technically become eligible for Clearing until these institutions have confirmed that they will not offer you a place. If you know informally that this is the case before it has been confirmed, or if you suspect that you may not be offered a place, do not wait. Research your options and contact other institutions directly. Although they will not be able to formalise admissions until the 'Add Clearing Choice' option appears and you can enter the course and institution on TRACK, prompt action will avoid unnecessary delays in securing a place later.

When approaching a university about the possibility of Clearing, you should be aware that you will be dealing directly with Admissions staff. As such, you should treat the process as a mini interview. There is little to be gained from a speculative phone call in which you show little understanding of the course or university. Clearing can be a competitive process and you should ensure that you have researched appropriately before contacting a potential university, in order to make a favourable impression.

Remember that there will inevitably be a brief time lag in updating lists of vacancies on the UCAS website and especially in the press. It is important to understand that the Clearing situation can be very fluid. If you are geographically flexible and willing to leave Northern Ireland, or try a different area of the mainland UK than previously considered, you have a much greater chance of success.

Candidates should not rush into any decisions in Clearing, but take their time to consider the full implications of their choices. However, the Clearing process may be very tight and only last for a brief period; for this reason, it is imperative that pupils receive timely advice and guidance and are fully prepared to act and respond promptly.

**7. You have already accepted an offer but you wish to apply for a different place through Clearing  
OR You have met your grades for your Firm offer but now want to go to your Insurance choice**

UCAS is very clear that applicants are expected to honour their commitments at Confirmation and that they must either take up their place or withdraw completely from the application cycle for that year (unless using Adjustment). However, if you are in either situation described above, the institution in question will probably be prepared to release you into Clearing. Even if you wish to be accepted by your insurance rather than your firm choice, you would first need to be released into Clearing and you would be made an offer through Clearing.

This is a risky strategy and you need to think very carefully about your reasons for wishing to take such a step. You would be giving up a secured place at university and there is no guarantee you will be made an offer through Clearing, thus you could end up with no place at all. You may wish to discuss the implications of a particular action with a member of the Careers Team at Campbell College.

**8. There is a problem with your examination results**

If there is any delay or you have lodged an appeal against a result, telephone your chosen university or college immediately. Do not wait for the outcome of an appeal.

UCAS has a wealth of information about Confirmation and Clearing on its home page and during August will use Twitter and Facebook to post important reminders and answer questions. See [www.twitter.com/ucas](https://www.twitter.com/ucas) online and [www.facebook.com/ucasonline](https://www.facebook.com/ucasonline). These resources are staffed by experienced UCAS advisers and provide answers to the most common questions. For more specific queries, the UCAS Customer Experience Centre offers one-to-one advice.

**Before contacting UCAS or a University/College, ensure you have  
all your details to hand, including your Personal ID number.**



## **Arrangements for local Universities** *(this information is correct at time of writing)*

Local universities will directly inform applicants holding CF or CI offers of all Confirmation and Clearing arrangements as well as provision for accommodation. If in any doubt about these arrangements, please consult Careers staff at Campbell. The services provided by the local universities are summarised below.

**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY** will be making decisions available on the website:

[www.qub.ac.uk/ucas](http://www.qub.ac.uk/ucas)

Decisions are usually published on this website from 7am on Thursday 16 August and should be updated at 9am and 2pm every day. You can view decisions on your application by entering your UCAS Personal ID number. If you have applied to Queen's University, you will receive notification about using this service. Please note that this service is intended to keep potential candidates as up to date as possible, but decisions are only 'official' once you are informed through UCAS TRACK.

Further information, including details on Clearing and Adjustment will be available on: [www.qub.ac.uk/clearing](http://www.qub.ac.uk/clearing). Other useful information is provided on [www.qub.ac.uk/new-students](http://www.qub.ac.uk/new-students).

Courses upon which any places are available will be posted online and continually revised and updated. If you are interested in a Change of Course, Clearing, or Adjustment at Queen's, you should use their Enquiry Form which can be downloaded from the website. If you already hold an offer for a course at Queen's and have exceeded the requirements and thus wish to consider a different course, you should not enter the Adjustment process, but simply apply for a Change of Course at Queen's. You should only use the Adjustment process for Queen's if you are holding an offer from another institution.

The Queen's University Admissions and Access Service can be contacted on: **028 9097 3838**.

There will also be an Open Session in the Whitla Hall on Monday 20 August from 2pm onwards. This is intended for applicants who may wish to discuss possible options within Queen's or consider admission in 2019; it is not intended for applicants who have already been unsuccessful. Please check the specified websites for further information.

## ULSTER UNIVERSITY

Information relating to admissions at Ulster University will be available on: [www.ulster.ac.uk/admissions](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/admissions) . Applicants who have met the specified conditions for admission should have their offer of a place confirmed by UCAS during the week following the publication of results, and do not need to telephone the University.

### Admissions Enquiries Helpline

**028 7028 7028**  
**(048 7028 7028 from ROI)**

The helpline operating times are:

Monday - Thursday	9am – 5pm
Friday	9am – 4pm

### Advice Day – Friday 17 August 2018

The University is also holding an Advice Day on its Belfast, Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee campuses on Friday 17 August 2018 at the following times:

Jordanstown	9am – 4pm	
Belfast*	}	9am – 1pm
Coleraine		
Magee		

\*for Art and Design, Architecture and Design, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management programmes only.

Otherwise, at each session, advice will be available on vacancies across all campuses.

Information will be provided on available courses, part-time undergraduate options, finance and accommodation.

## **CAO and applications to other Colleges**

Pupils who have applied to universities/colleges in the Republic of Ireland are considered on the basis of their examination results, according to their course choices in order of preference. There are several 'rounds' of offers made. First round offers are usually made around the middle of August, and further offers are made in Round Two, in late August/early September. Offers will be sent by post as well as being available on the CAO website; unsuccessful applicants are also notified. If you are made an offer, you will need to respond by a specified 'Reply Date'. Additional offers may also be made after Round Two. If you receive an offer, it will be at the institution/course of your highest preference for which you have satisfied the entrance criteria – you cannot change your mind and accept a course for which you initially expressed a lower preference. If you are subsequently reconsidered for a course that you had initially placed as a higher preference, you will have the opportunity to accept it, or to remain with your previous acceptance. Make sure you follow instructions issued by CAO carefully, especially in notification of examination results. CAO should receive examination results directly and will send you a statement of application record. If any of your results do not appear on this, you are required to supply **certified copies** of results to CAO immediately; these should not be faxed, or scanned/emailed. See the CAO Handbook for further information on the Offer Stage.

For courses at Colleges of Further and Higher Education, you should know whether or not you satisfy the conditions of an offer. For offers held from Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC), you should have been invited to an 'Endorsement Day' when you provide evidence of your results. If you do not turn up to the Endorsement Day, it is likely you will lose your place on the course. For courses at South Eastern Regional College (SERC), it is essential that you attend their Open Day on Results Day to confirm your place. If you do not attend, you are likely to lose any offers you hold.

## **Alternatives to UCAS Clearing**

If you choose not to make use of UCAS Clearing or are unsuccessful in the Clearing process, consider the following alternatives:

- **Colleges outside of the UCAS system** which may still have vacancies. Local Colleges of Further and Higher Education offer Level 5 foundation degrees/courses and HNDs which can lead to degree level study at local or mainland UK universities. However, the local colleges are also oversubscribed, and most courses will already be full by this stage. If you did not apply earlier in the year, as recommended, you may still secure a place on certain courses, but you will need to act fast. The local colleges will also have open sessions after the issue of examination results – see websites for publication of arrangements closer to the time.

- **Direct Employment.** This will require a lot of writing, emails, applications, telephone calls and answering advertisements. You may find greater success by using a recruitment agency. In this situation, it is essential that you consult an adviser from the Northern Ireland Careers Service.
- **Apprenticeships.** Apprenticeships, including Higher Level Apprenticeships for students with A levels, can prove difficult to obtain, and larger employers (such as NIE and Deloitte) have already recruited for this year. There may be some vacancies remaining in apprenticeship schemes locally, so contact the Careers Department at Campbell if you are interested in such opportunities. Alternatively, if you know of an employer who is willing to take you on as an apprentice, you should consult an adviser from the Northern Ireland Careers Service who will be able to offer guidance about training programmes. You will also need to consult an adviser from local training providers e.g. Colleges of Further and Higher Education.
- **Resitting courses or modules,** either through school (exam only) or Colleges of Further and Higher Education (repeat courses). The advantages of this are that potentially, you could directly access an undergraduate degree rather than going into a Level 5 course first; you might also end up with your chosen degree course, rather than settling for a second choice. It might also stop you wondering in later years whether you could have made your first choice preference. Disadvantages include the possible loss of a year when you could be working towards a foundation degree/HND through which you can access a degree course. Also to be considered are financial implications, boredom, and the fact that for some competitive courses, you may be expected to get higher grades the second time around. Some courses also require that examinations are achieved in the first sitting. Apply as soon as possible if you are considering A level programmes at BMC or SERC.

Depending upon the timing of resits, it may be possible to combine them with a shortened 'gap' experience. Be careful though – your resits must take priority in such a situation, otherwise you may end up gaining nothing from your year out.

- **Gap Year.** An unexpected gap year (without taking resits) may be the best option if you have decided to lower your sights and go for a course for which you are able to satisfy the entrance requirements but were too late to secure a place for this year. It might also be an option if you have changed your plans from your original application and you could not secure a place on a chosen course for this year, although your qualifications satisfy entrance requirements. Make sure you use your year profitably.

## Sources of information, advice and guidance

**Campbell College Careers Department**

**028 9076 3076**

**Thursday 16 August**                      **9.30am – 5.30pm**

**Friday 17 August**                      **9.30am – 2pm**

We will not take decisions for you, or communicate with universities/colleges for you. However, we can help organise positive action to give you the best chance of a Higher Education place, or assist you in re-thinking your longer term plans. You can discuss ideas with us and consider the implications of any decisions you make. You can get advice on procedures and the best sources of information to assist you.

Staff will be available at the times stated above and you can drop into the department or telephone to speak to an adviser. However, at busy times it may not be possible to answer telephone calls so you may find it more beneficial to visit the department in person.

### **Careers Service NI**

Our designated adviser is Ms Gillian McCluskey from the Belfast office, however, you can speak to any adviser at any office. They have up-to-date information on Clearing and will discuss other alternatives with you, such as courses in Colleges of Further and Higher Education, Apprenticeships, Employment and changing your longer-term plans. Advisers are available at:

Belfast Careers Resource Centre

56 Ann Street

Belfast

BT1 4EG

Telephone: 0300 200 7820

Bangor Careers Office

110 Hamilton Road

Bangor

BT20 4LS

Telephone: 0300 200 7820

Newtownards Careers Office

9 Conway Square

Newtownards

BT23 4DA

Telephone: 0300 200 7820

## Clearing

Course vacancies will be listed on the UCAS search tool on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) from 5 July 2018.

Clearing vacancies are also published by *The Telegraph* on Thursday 16 August. For helpful information on Clearing see: [www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/clearing/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/clearing/).

Local Clearing vacancies are sometimes listed in the *Belfast Telegraph*.

More information on the UCAS Confirmation process is available on: [www.ucas.com/examresults](http://www.ucas.com/examresults)

**Video guides** and **general information** on the use of Clearing and Adjustment will be available on [www.ucas.com/clearing](http://www.ucas.com/clearing) and [www.ucas.com/adjustment](http://www.ucas.com/adjustment) .

Students should already have applied for finance, but if you have changed your plans or will be embarking on a different course, contact **Student Finance NI** urgently. For help and advice on aspects of student finance see [www.studentfinancenl.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancenl.co.uk) .

### Local University websites:

<a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk">www.qub.ac.uk</a>	Queen's University Belfast
<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk">www.ulster.ac.uk</a>	Ulster University
<a href="http://www.stran.ac.uk">www.stran.ac.uk</a>	Stranmillis University College

### Local College websites:

<a href="http://www.belfastmet.ac.uk">www.belfastmet.ac.uk</a>	Belfast Metropolitan College
<a href="http://www.serc.ac.uk">www.serc.ac.uk</a>	South Eastern Regional College
<a href="http://www.nrc.ac.uk">www.nrc.ac.uk</a>	Northern Regional College
<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk">www.cafre.ac.uk</a>	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise

### Exam Results Helpline - 0808 100 8000

This provides expert information, advice and guidance for students who get unexpected exam results and don't know what to do next. Experienced careers advisers will be supporting students to make the right choices about their futures. Lines are available from Thursday 16 August.

### UCAS Customer Experience Centre - 0371 4680468