# Applying to UCAS Guidance for SWAP East Students 2019/20

The SWAP East team are there to assist throughout the year. If you have questions about the information in this booklet or if you need advice or guidance at any point, please get in touch, by phone on **0131 650 6861** or by email at **Swap.East@ed.ac.uk** You might also find what you are looking for on our website: **scottishwideraccess.org/east**

# Contents

1. Introduction ..... 2

2. Registering with UCAS ..... 2

3. Completing the application form ..... 11

3.1. Personal details ..... 12

3.2. Choices ..... 13

3.3. Education ..... 14

3.4. Employment ..... 23

3.5. Personal statement ..... 23

3.6. What should my personal statement cover? ..... 24

3.5. Personal statement dos and don'ts ..... 25

4. What happens next? ..... 26

5. UCAS process ..... 27

6. Help and advice ..... 28

7. UCAS personal statement mind map ..... 30

# 1. Introduction

Anyone wishing to apply to a university in the UK must apply via UCAS, using the UCAS online system: www.ucas.com

The main application **deadline** for 2020 entry is **15 January 2020**.

There are also separate deadlines for conservatoires (1 October) and Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine/Science, Dentistry (15 October 2019).

Your college will probably require you to complete your application much sooner than the UCAS deadline in order to leave time for your tutor to write your reference before sending the application on to UCAS.

The UCAS application fee for 2020 entry is £25 to apply for multiple courses and £20 to apply for only one course (not something we'd recommend).

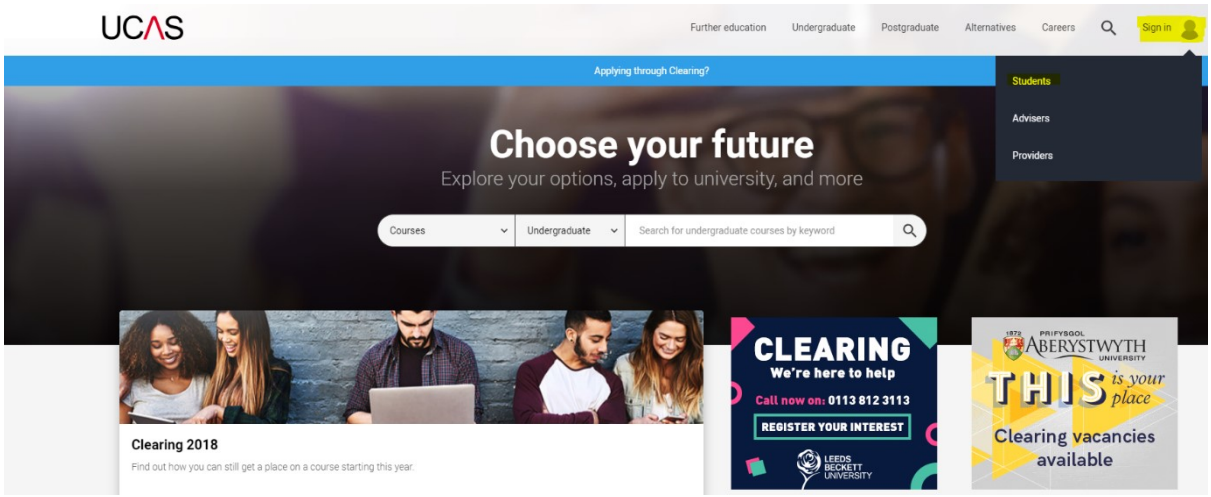
# 2. Registering with UCAS under SWAP

**NB Some of the screenshots used in this document were taken during previous application cycles.**

The first step is to register with UCAS. You can do this any time, but please **make sure that you register as a SWAP East student**. **All SWAP students should apply to UCAS through SWAP**. This flags to admissions officers that you are a SWAP applicant and, therefore, eligible for a SWAP offer. It also means that SWAP can monitor your application and check that it is progressing correctly.

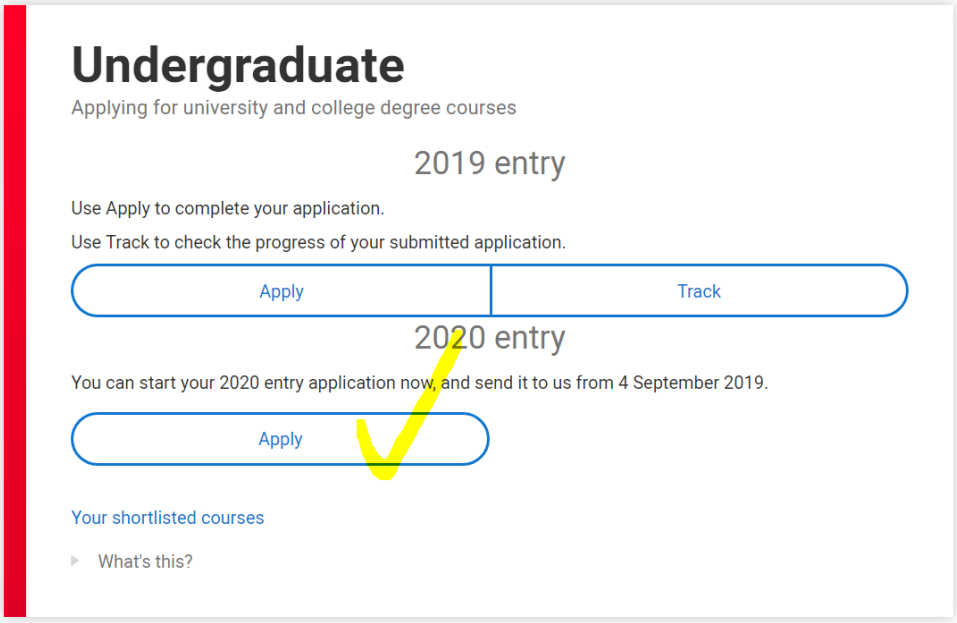
**UCAS Registration: Step by Step Guide**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 1** | Click on the *Sign in* tab in the top right hand corner of the UCAS homepage. |




# Student sign in

**Please select an education scheme.**




| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 2** | Click on *Undergraduate,* then *2020 entry Apply.* Then click on *Register*, followed by *Next*. |

UCAS

Contact us | Help | Print page

2019 apply **Register and log in**

What is Apply?
Help
English

**Key**

Help

Home > Register and log in

## Log in

If you have already registered, please enter your username and password below to log in. **You must enter your username in lower case and your password in the same case you used to register.**

Username

Password

Forgotten login?

log in

## Register

If you have not registered for 2019 entry, please click the 'register' button to use this service. **You only need to register once.** If you apply more than once in a cycle your application fee will not be refunded.

register

Version 12.0.0-master-1

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UCAS

Contact us | Help | Print page

2019 apply **Register: Welcome**

What is Apply?
Help
Options/Opsiynau

**Key**

Help

Home > Register

Progress

Before you can apply you must first register. This is free and will take approximately fifteen minutes.

You will only need to do this once. If you apply more than once in a cycle your application fee will not be refunded. If you have already registered but cannot remember your login details, please use the 'Forgotten login?' link on the login screen to access your details.

Registration is a process of entering your personal details, for example, name, date of birth, address.

If you are applying through a school, college, careers centre or any other organisation, you will be asked to use the buzzword provided by them, so please have this information to hand.

This will allow your school, college, careers centre, or other organisation to access and see the progress of your application, and allows your referee to attach your reference.

If you are not applying through a school, college, careers centre or any other organisation, you can apply as an individual.

Once you have completed the registration, a username will be automatically generated. You will be asked to create a password of your choosing. **Please make a note of these details as you will need them to log back in to your application later.**

Use our website to find more general information about applying.

Help text is available throughout each section.

previous next

About us | Terms & conditions | Privacy policy

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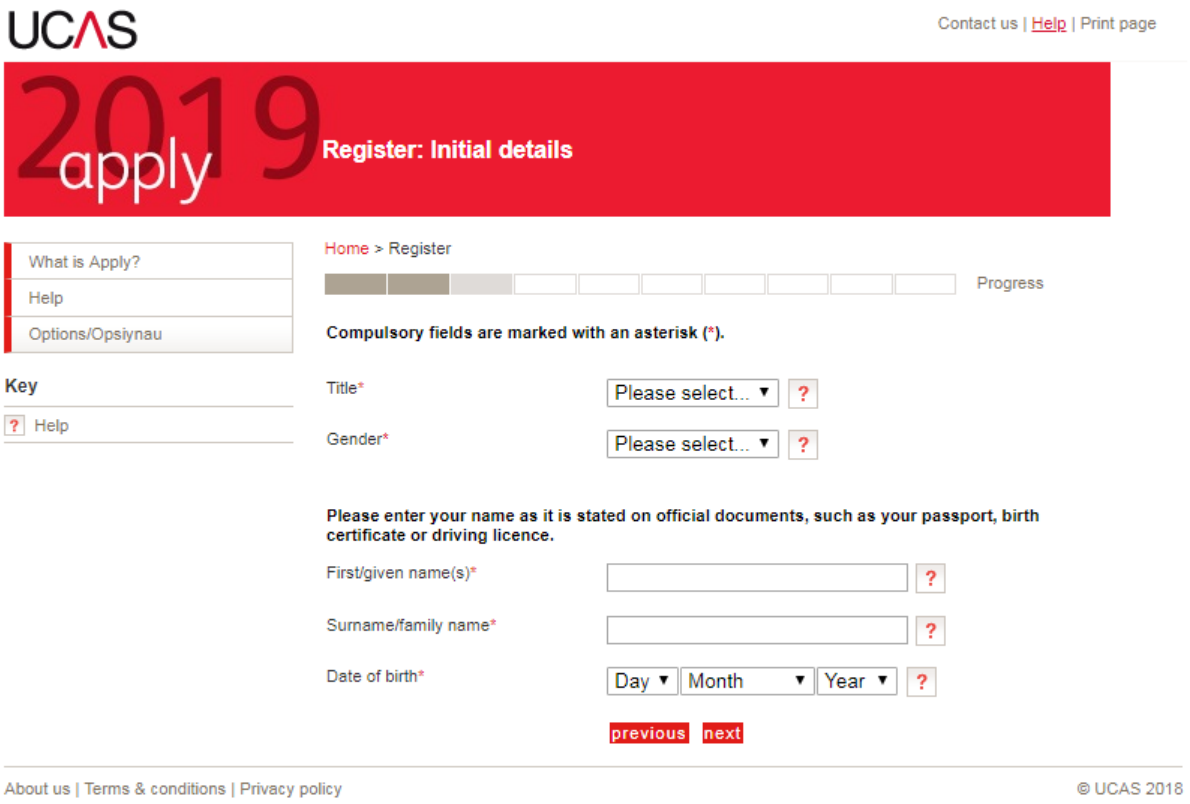
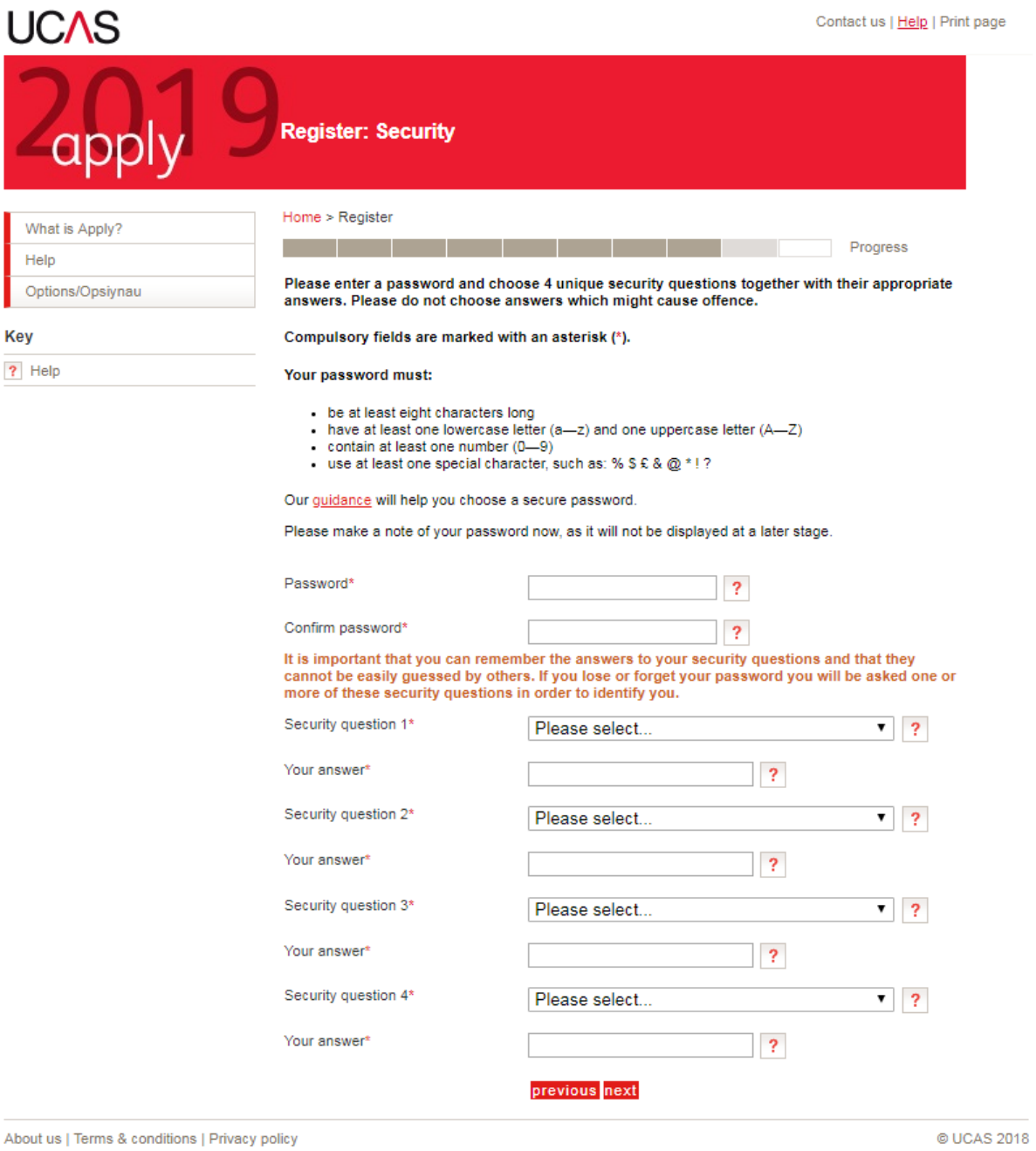
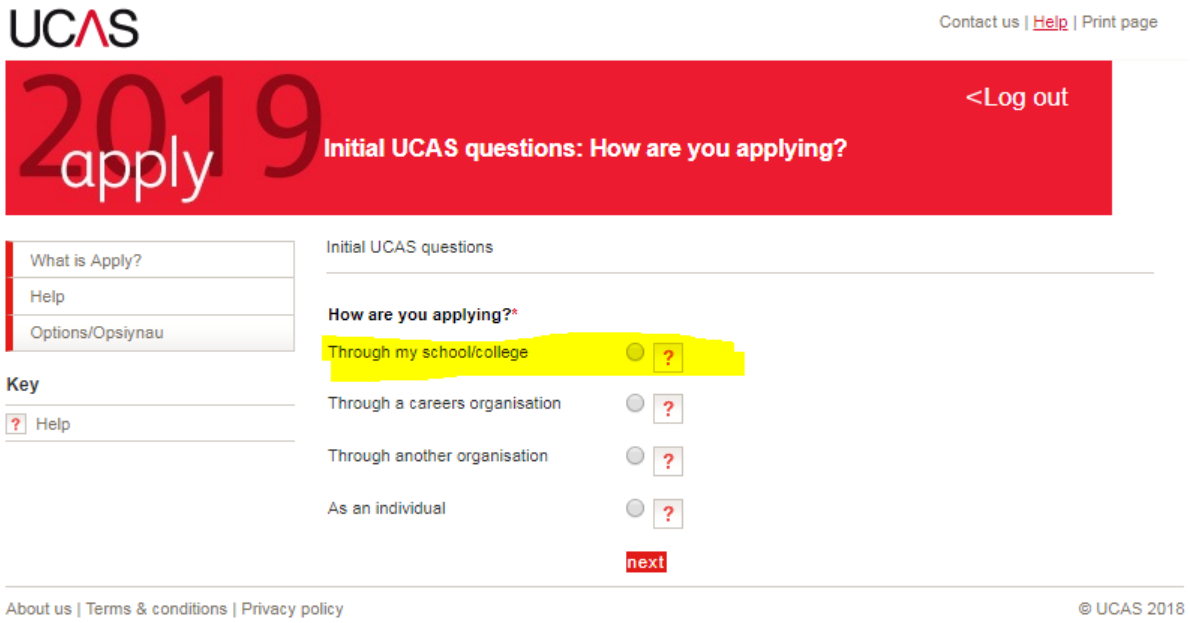
| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 3** | You will be asked to accept the UCAS Terms and Conditions. |
| **Step 4** | You will be asked to enter personal information: name, address, date of birth, contact details. Complete and press *next*. |



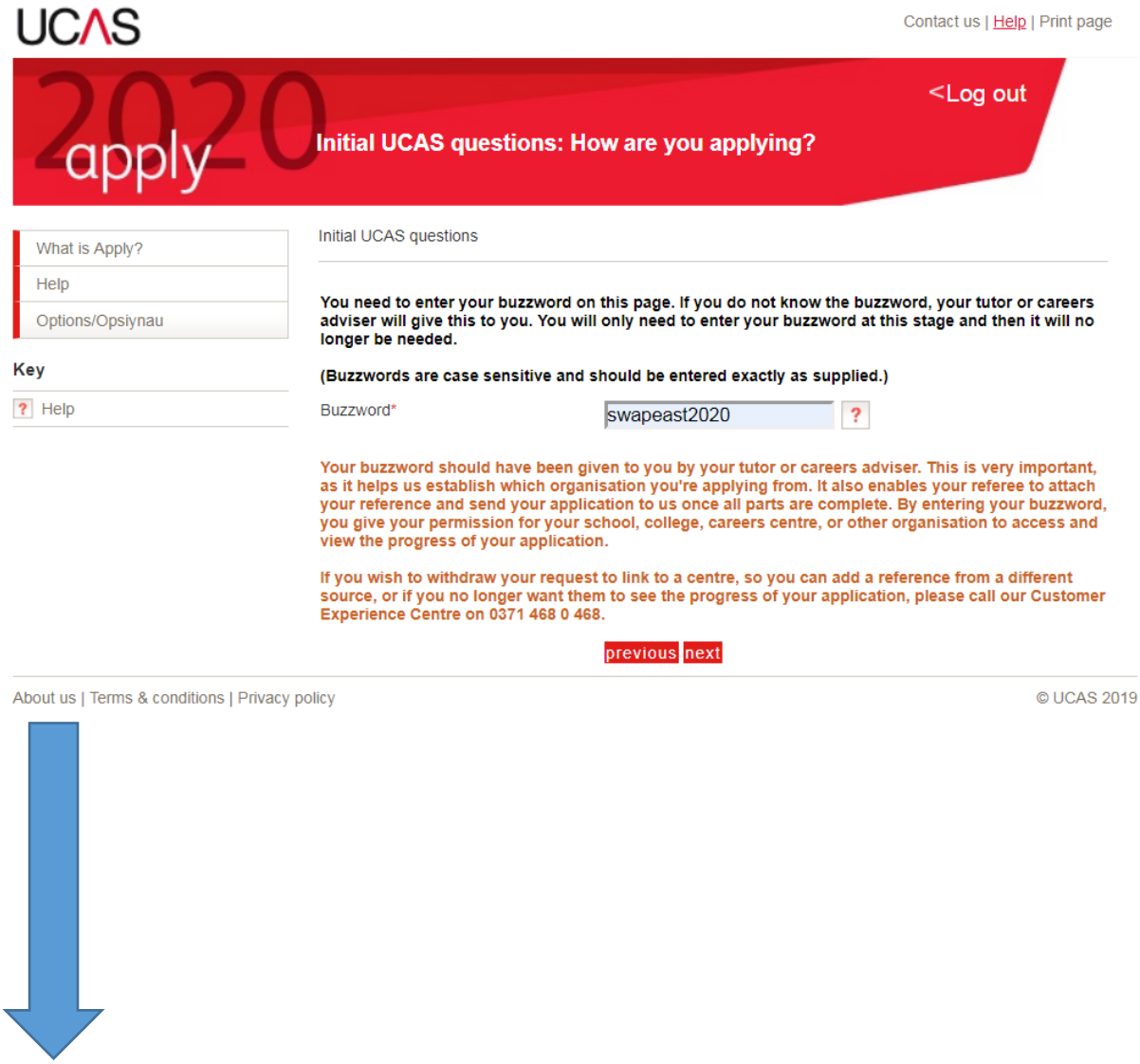

| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 5** | You will be asked to make up a password (which must be at least eight characters long, have at least one lowercase and one uppercase letter, one number and one special character). You'll also need to choose four security questions to answer. |

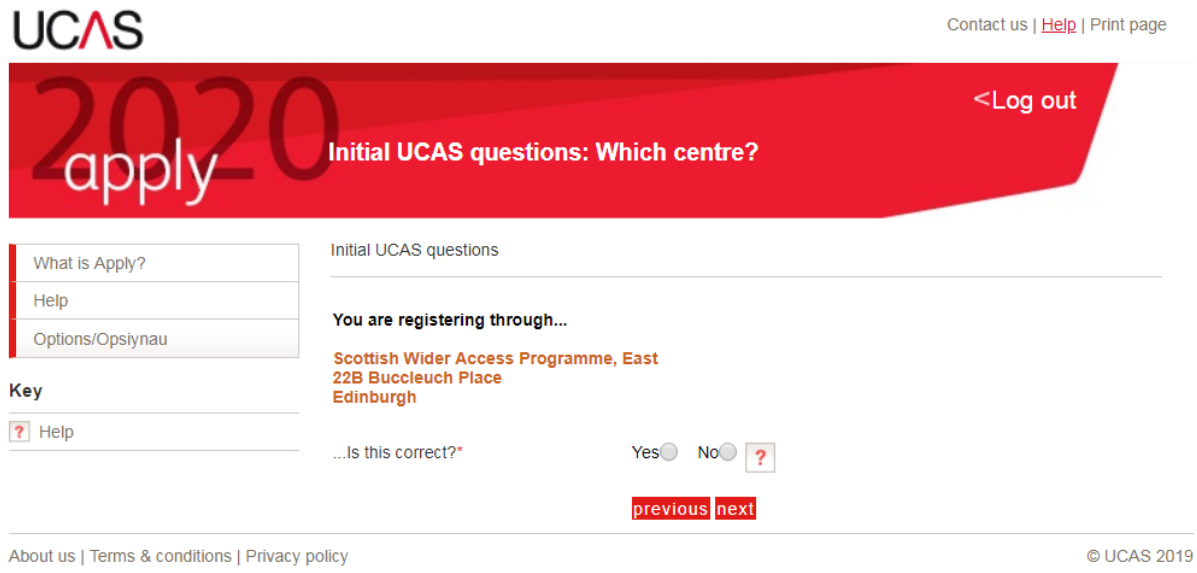



| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 6** | At this point, you will be given a username. Make a note of your username and password. You will need these when you want to log-in again. Click *Log in now* |
| **Step 7** | You will be asked how you are applying. Select *Through my school/college* |

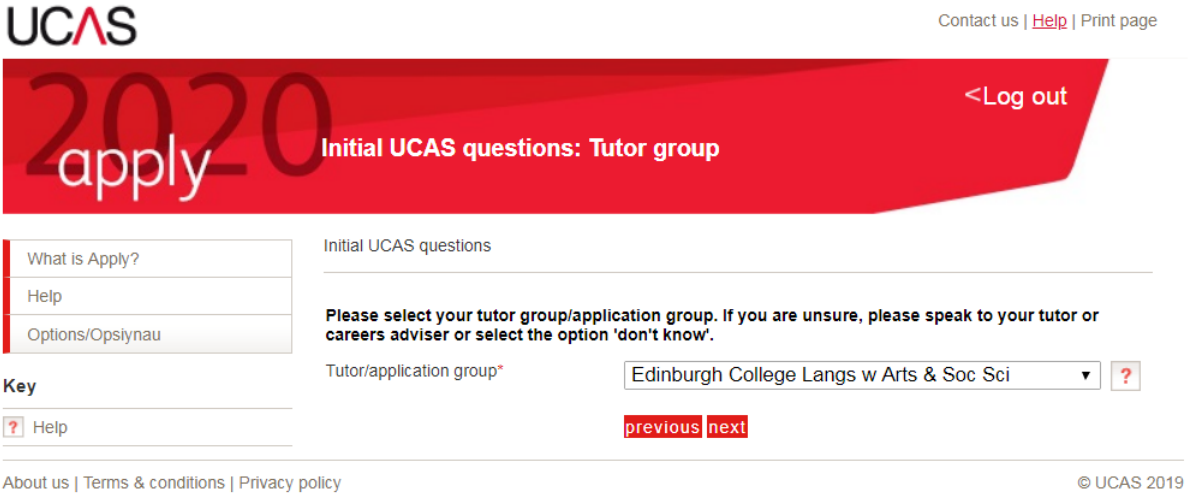



| Step 8 | You will be asked to enter the buzzword. Type in **swapeast2020.** Next, confirm that you are registering through the **Scottish Wider Access Programme East.** |
|---|---|

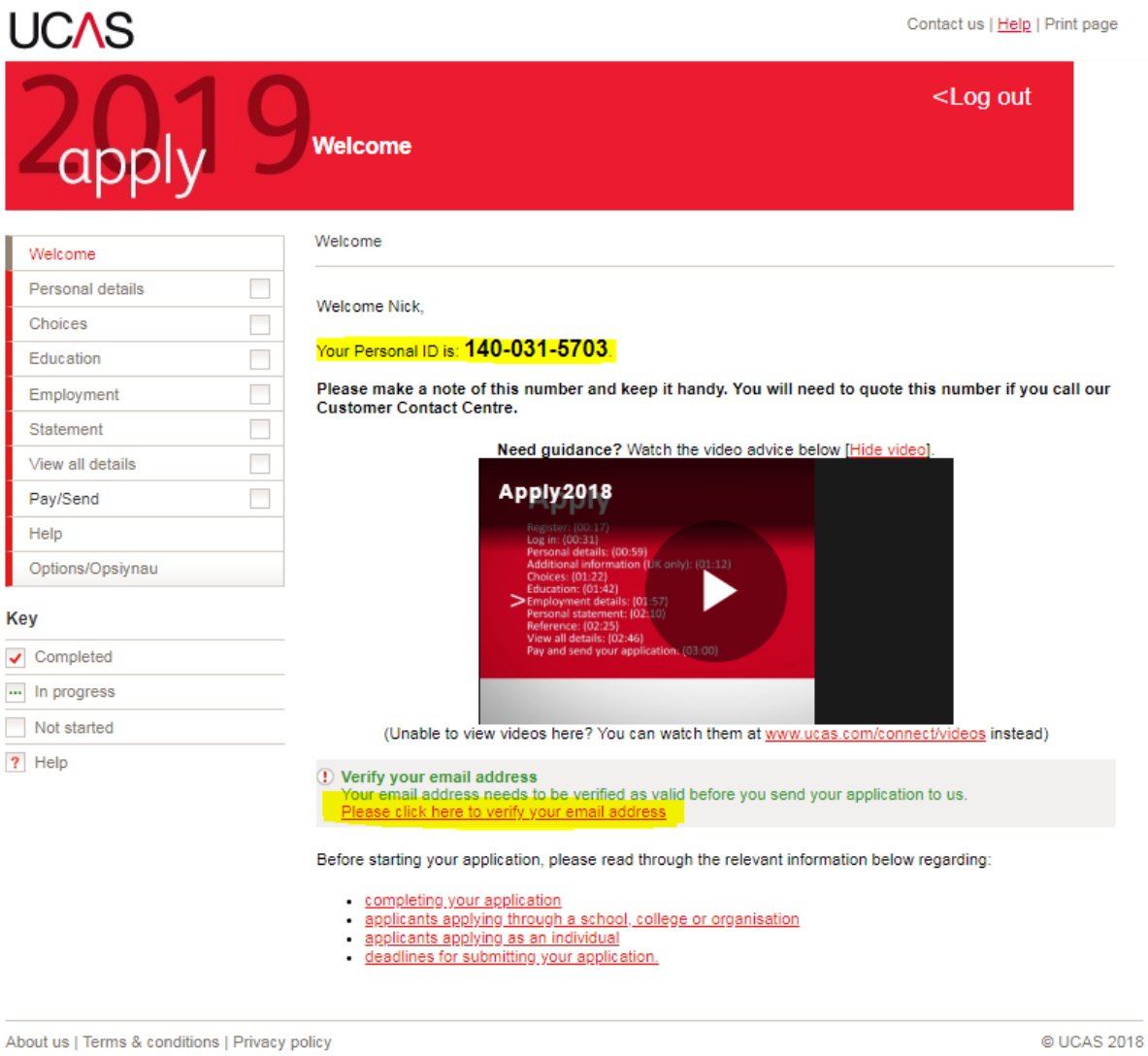





| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 9** | Select your college and SWAP programme from the list. **NB the course selected in the screenshot below is an example only; you should choose the access programme you are doing.** |




| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 10** | You will then be given a UCAS ID number. Keep a note of this, you will need it for all correspondence with UCAS. |
| **Step 11** | Lastly, you will need to verify the email address you have supplied; You will see a link that says *Please click here to verify your email address*. |




## 3. Completing the Application Form

The UCAS application is made up of 7 sections, which are listed on the left hand side of the webpage (see above):

1. Personal details
2. Choices
3. Education
4. Employment
5. Statement
6. View all details
7. Pay/Send

You can work through the sections in any order you like, but the Pay/Send option is only viewable once all of the other sections are marked as complete. You can log in and out of the UCAS system as often

as you like, but don't forget to save any work you have done before you log out.

Most of the sections in the application are fairly straightforward and self-explanatory. Detailed guidance on completing the form can be found on the UCAS website; it's a good idea to have a look at that before you start.

The document you are reading now is specifically intended to help SWAP students fill in the UCAS application, as there are some particularities which only apply to you.

### 3.1. Personal Details

This section gathers information on your personal circumstances, including where you live and how your studies will be funded. It is generally self-explanatory; however, you might find the following notes helpful to know.

| | |
|---|---|
| **ULN (Unique Learner Number)** | This only applies to applicants in England and Wales. Unless you have studied previously in either of these parts of the UK, you won't have a ULN and should just leave this blank. |
| **Nominated Access** | This enables you to nominate someone else to speak to UCAS on your behalf. There may be some circumstances where this is useful (e.g. if you are going to be in hospital or in a remote location at a crucial time). Generally, however, universities much prefer to deal directly with the applicant. |
| **Disability/ Special Needs** | This allows you to provide details of any disabilities which may impact on your university studies. Don't worry about disclosing too much in this section. The information is asked for to enable universities to be ready to make adjustments for new entrants. Any details you include here will <u>not</u> be considered by admissions officers when they assess whether or not to offer you a place. |

### 3.2. Choices

This section is where you list the degree courses you want to apply for. You can make a maximum of five choices. It is a good idea to **use all five choices** if you can, especially if you are applying for subjects which are in very high demand (e.g. education, law, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and social work). You should also make sure you **apply to at least one SWAP East partner university** in order to maximize your chance of being made an offer. University admissions staff only see what

you have applied for at their institution and don't see what you have applied for anywhere else.

Remember to research the entry requirements you need for all the courses you are applying for. You can find these on the progression route search tool on the SWAP East website. Try to make sure that **at least one of your choices has lower entry requirements**, as this could provide you with a back-up plan if you don't get the grades you are aiming for.

The order you list your choices in is not important, because the UCAS system will automatically arrange them in alphabetical order. Check that you have typed in the correct title and UCAS course code, as some courses at the same university have very similar titles and codes.

### 3.3. Education

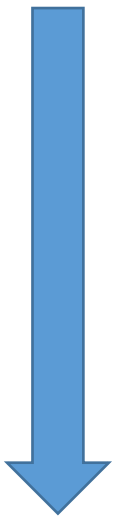
It's very important that you complete the education section in as much detail as possible, making sure to include details of all the units you are currently studying on your SWAP programme as well as full details of your pre-access educational history.

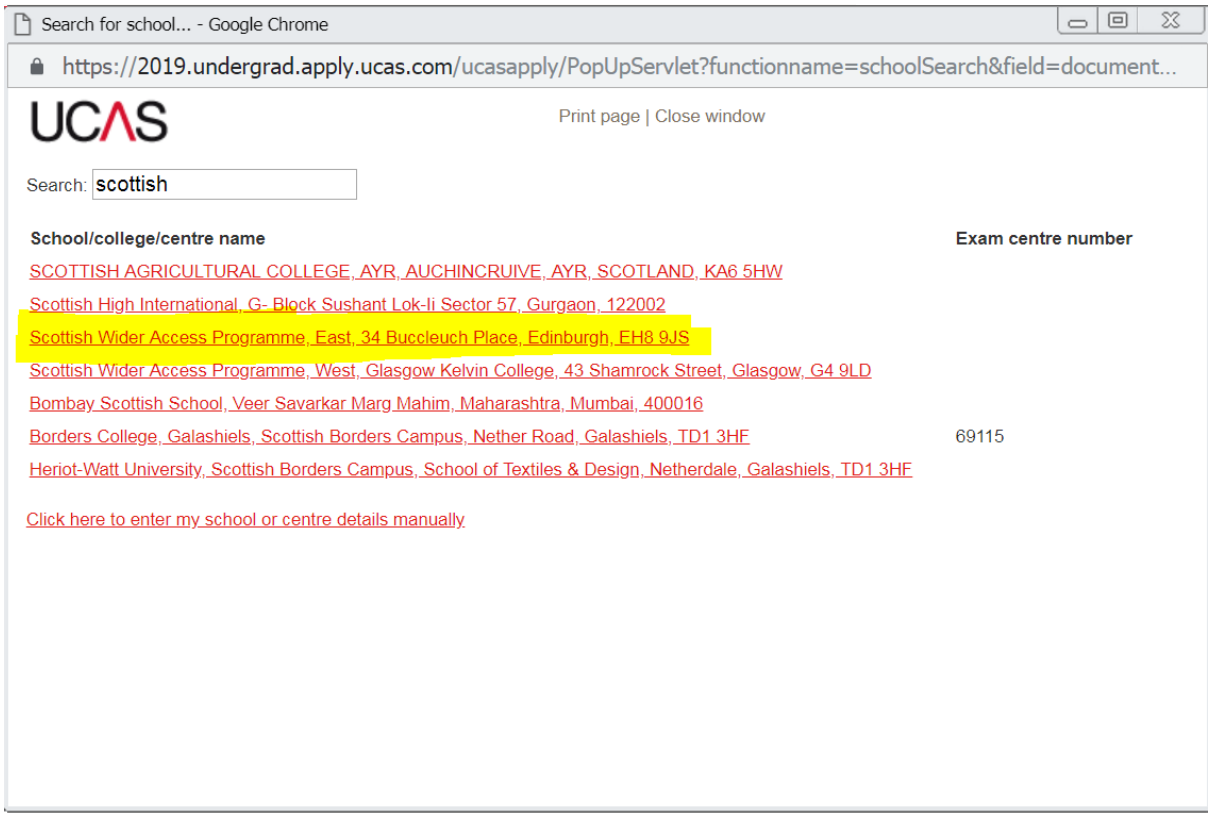
Before starting this section, you should make sure you have a list of all the units you are studying this year, including titles, SQA codes, SCQF Levels and credit values. Ask your SWAP tutor if you are unsure where to find this information.

#### Step 1

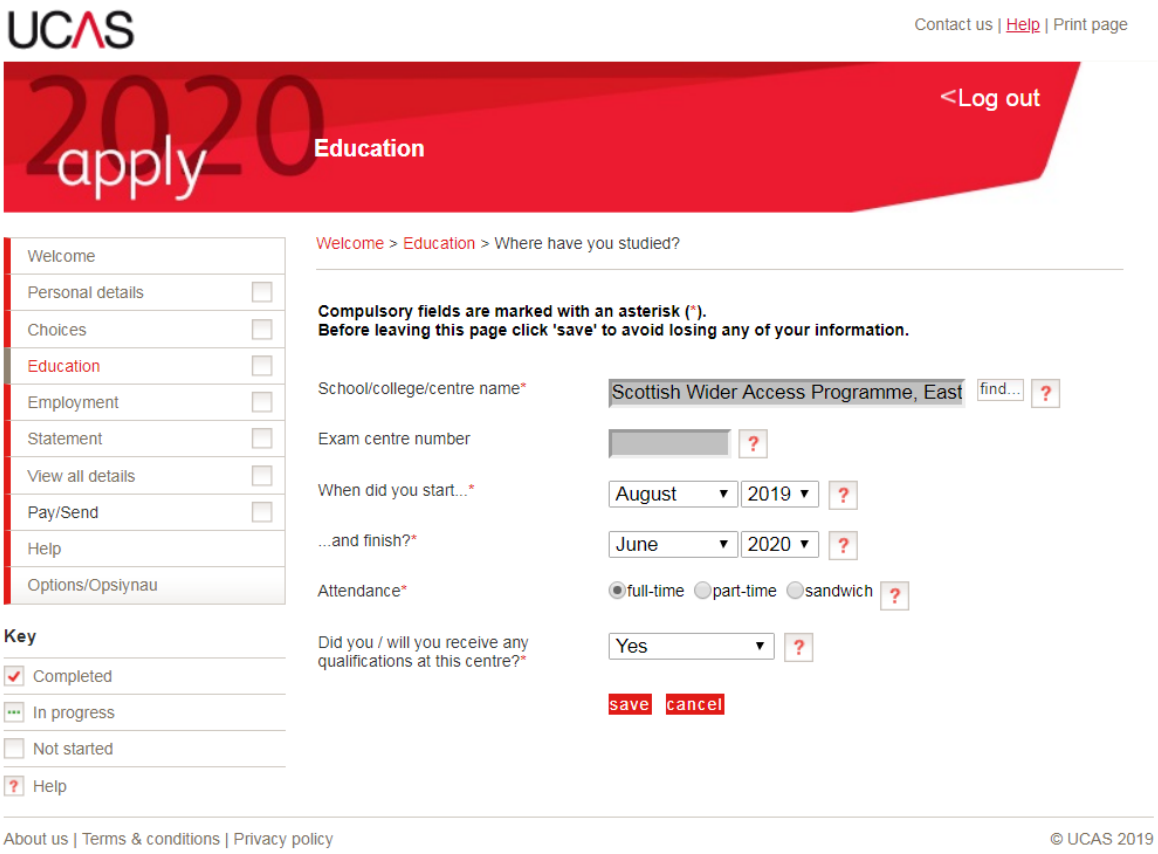
See steps 1-6 and the screenshots below.

1. Click on *add new school/college/centre.* You will see that the grey space for *School/college/centre name* is empty.
2. Click on *find*. A window will appear with a search box.
3. Type "Scottish" into the search box.
4. Then select "Scottish Wider Access programme, East".





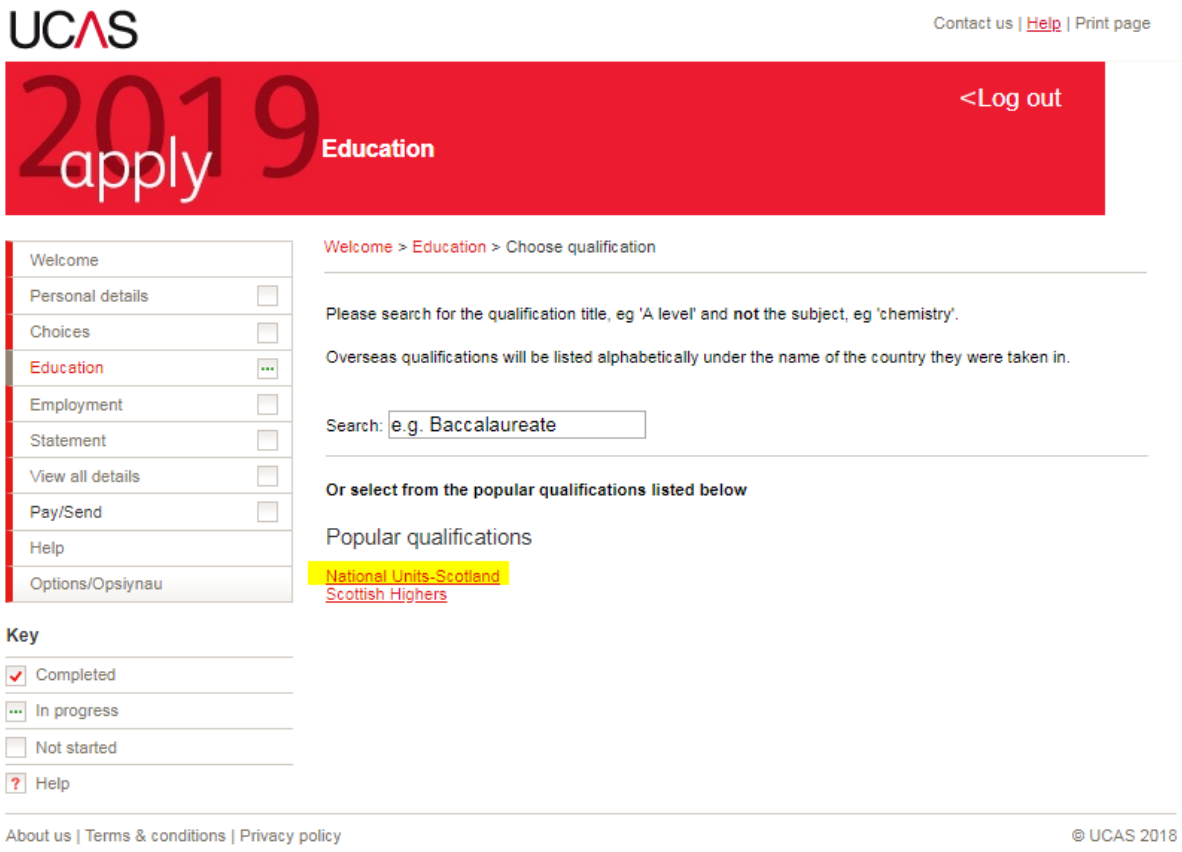

5. The grey space for *School/college/centre name* will now be filled in. Below it is another empty grey box for an *Exam centre number*. Leave it blank.
6. Type in your start and finish dates (month and year). Indicate that your programme is full-time and that you will receive qualifications from the centre. An automatic warning will pop up stating "as you have entered a finish date which is in the future, these details must be for the school or college you are currently attending". You can ignore this and click save.




## Step 2

**Next you need to list all the units you are taking this year**—admissions officers must see this information.

Click on a*dd qualifications and* you will see a link for *National Units-Scotland* under the heading *Popular qualifications*. Click on the link. Now, you will be able to input the details of all the units you are taking on your access programme.

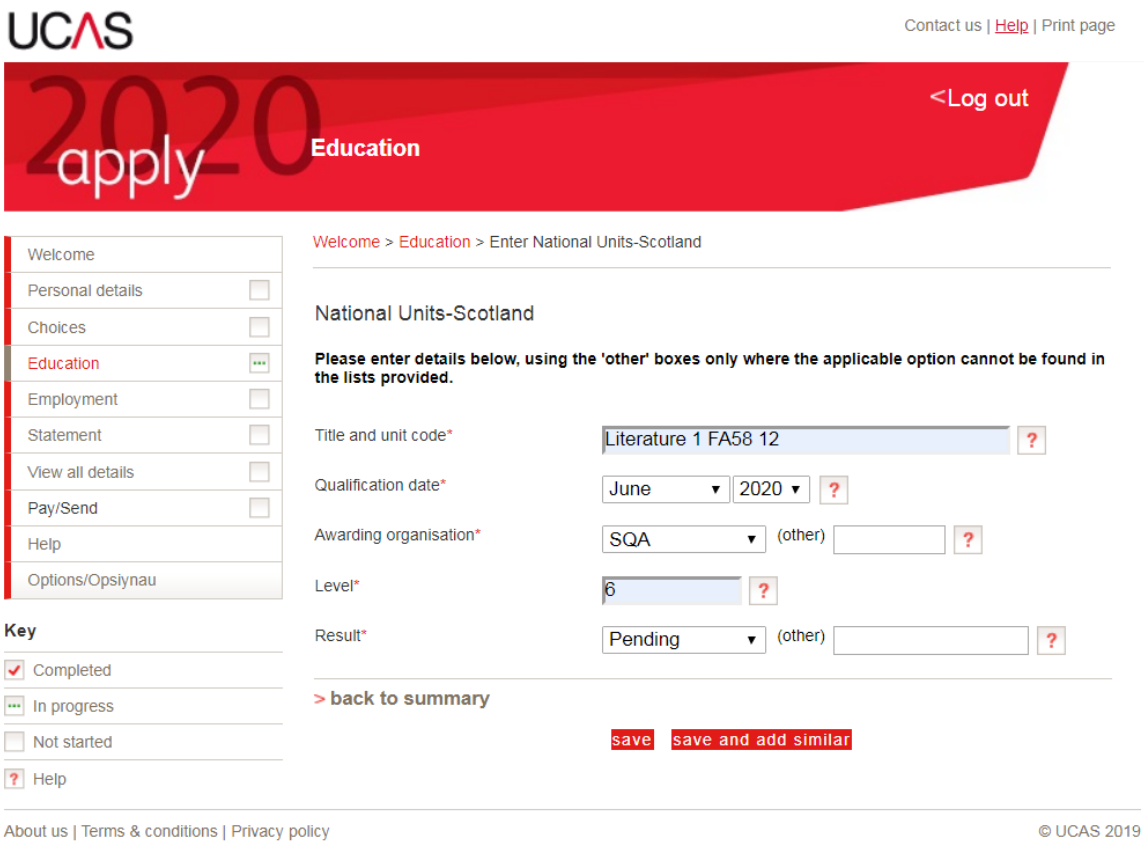



**N.B.**

**Qualification Date**. You should put the date when you will finish the qualification (e.g. June 2020).

**Level.** This refers to the SCQF Level of the unit. Your units will be level 5, level 6 or in rare cases, level 7. Check with your tutor if you aren't sure.

**Result.** Since you have not yet gained the qualification, you should select *Pending* from the drop down list.

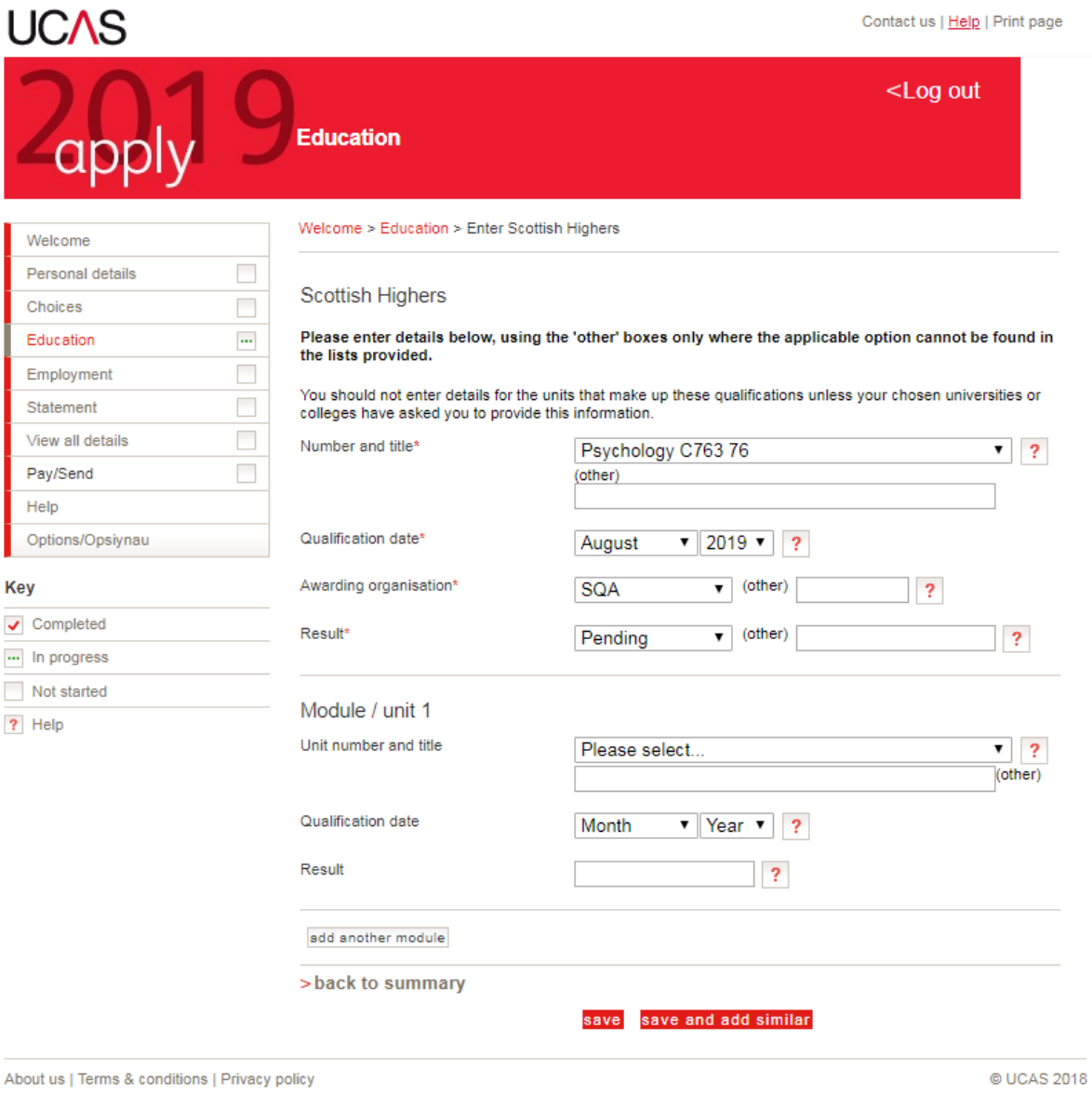



You should also add Prep for HE and any college-based units you are taking. Just type in the title of the unit; you don't need a code, since it is not an SQA unit. For the awarding organisation, type in "College" in the *(other)* box. The level will most likely be either SCQF level 5 or level 6.

## Step 3

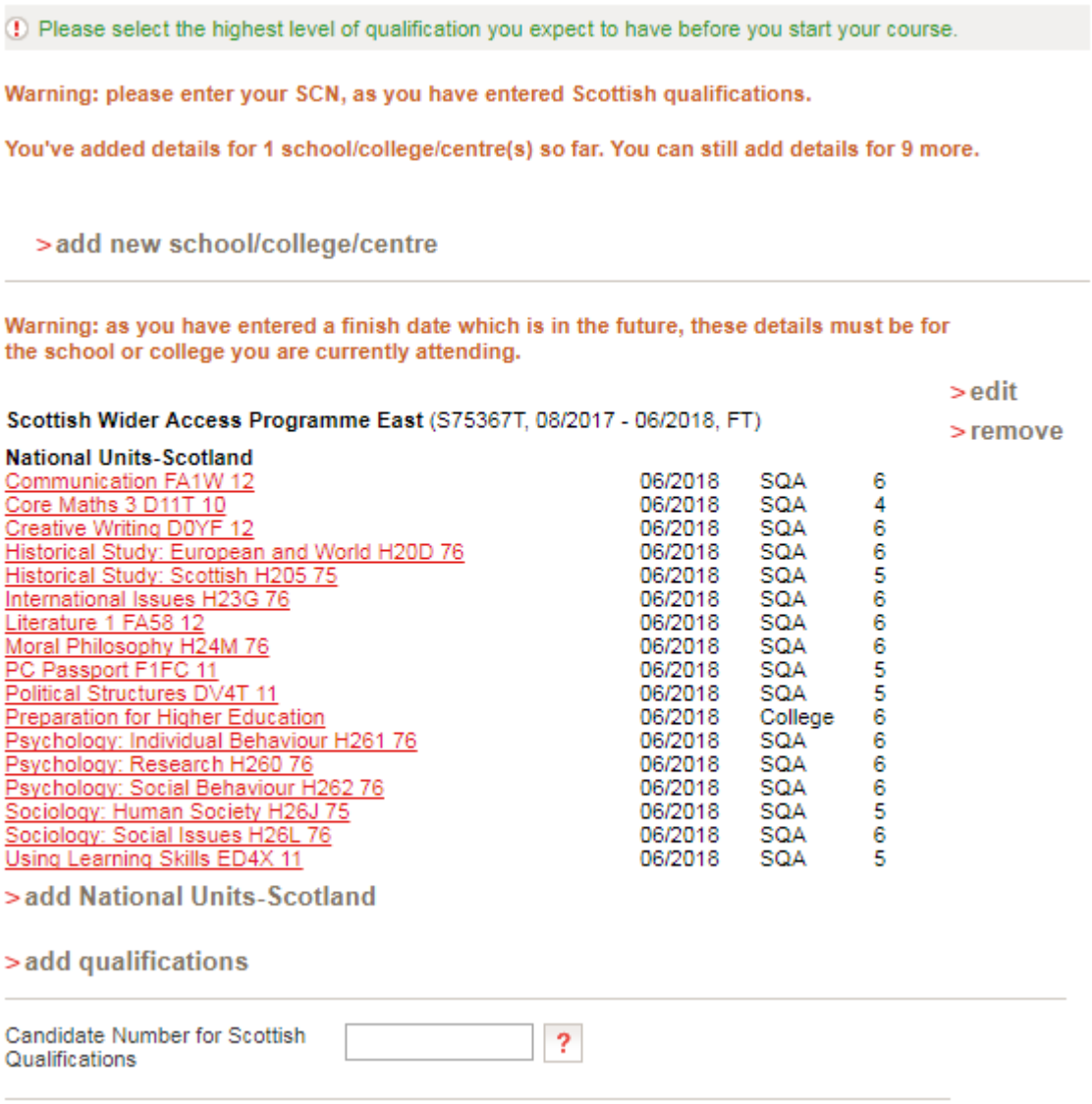
**If you are taking external exams such as Highers or National 5s, these are added separately.**

1. Click on *add qualification*.
2. Enter the qualification type into the search box (e.g. National 5 or Higher). It should then appear in a list. Click on the relevant exam type.
3. Select the subject from the drop-down menu, enter the date you will take the exam, and choose *Pending* for the result. You do not need to enter details of the individual units again here.



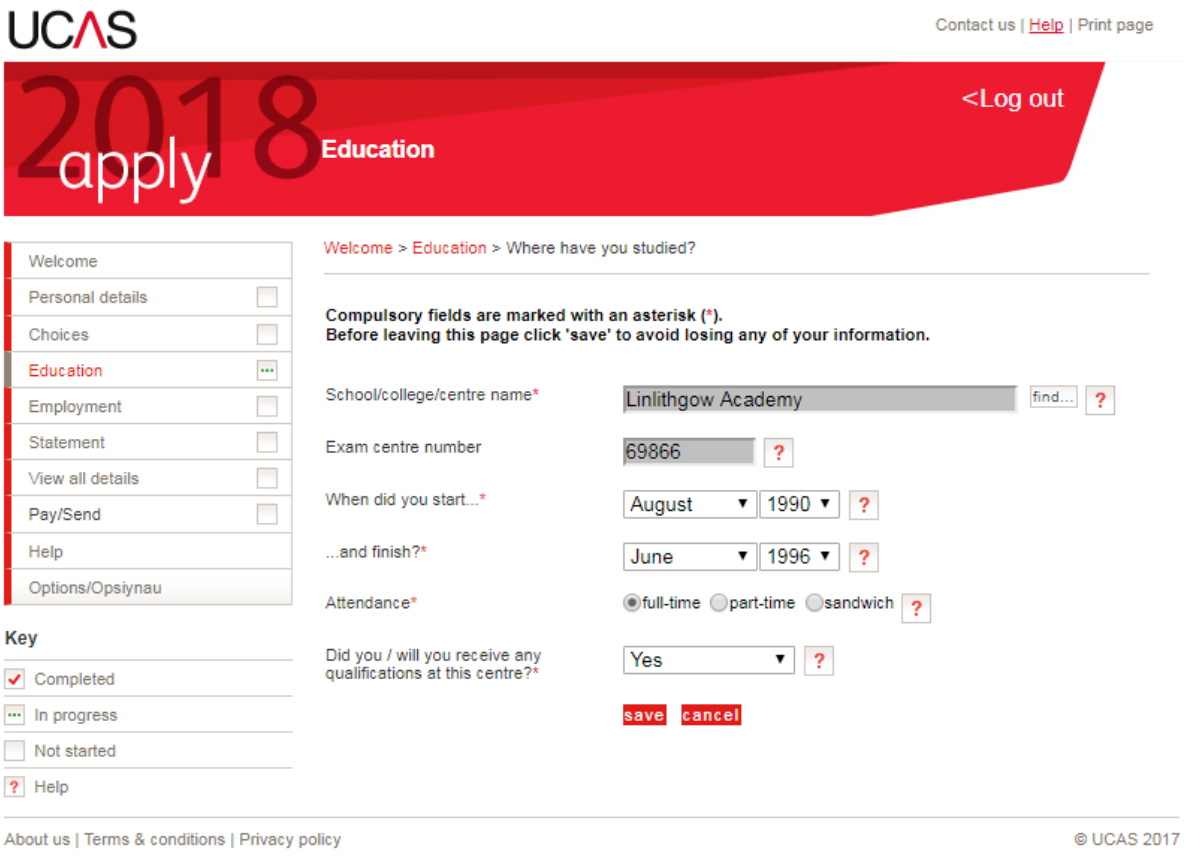

When you are finished you should be able to see all of the units you are taking this year listed, as well as any external exams you need to sit in June.

**N.B. The screenshots below are from the 2017/18 cycle; you should enter 06/2020. Also, it is just an example; each programme is different and you must make sure you list the units that apply to you and your programme.**




## Adding Previous Qualifications

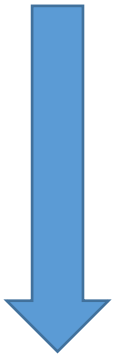
Enter details of any educational qualifications you gained before you started the SWAP access programme, regardless of how much time has elapsed since then. Click on a*dd new school/college/centre* to add these details. If you gained qualifications at more than one school or college, you will need to add each separately. Most schools and colleges in the UK are already listed on UCAS and will appear automatically when you type the name into the search box.




You should now see that school/college/centre listed on the summary screen below the SWAP entry. Click on a*dd qualifications* to enter details of the qualifications you gained at school. If you didn't gain any qualifications at the school/college/centre you entered, then just leave this blank. Once complete, you should see a full list of everything you are taking this year and all the qualifications you already have.

If you have lost or forgotten details of previous qualifications, the relevant awarding body (e.g. SQA for Scottish qualifications) might be able to help you. If you are offered a place at university, you could be asked to supply copies of educational certificates, so it is important to make sure that you are entering accurate information.

The screenshot on the next page is an example of what your final education summary page will look like.  For each student this will be different, since it depends on the access programme you do and your own educational history.



You've added details for 2 school/college/centre(s) so far. You can still add details for 8 more.

> add new school/college/centre

> edit
> remove

**Scottish Wider Access Programme East** (S75367T, 08/2017 - 06/2018, FT)

**National Units-Scotland**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communication FA1W 12 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Core Maths 3 D11T 10 | 06/2018 | SQA | 4 |
| Creative Writing D0YF 12 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Historical Study: European and World H20D 76 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Historical Study: Scottish H205 75 | 06/2018 | SQA | 5 |
| International Issues H23G 76 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Literature 1 FA58 12 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Moral Philosophy H24M 76 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| PC Passport F1FC 11 | 06/2018 | SQA | 5 |
| Political Structures DV4T 11 | 06/2018 | SQA | 5 |
| Preparation for Higher Education | 06/2018 | College | 6 |
| Psychology: Individual Behaviour H261 76 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Psychology: Research H260 76 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Psychology: Social Behaviour H262 76 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Sociology: Human Society H26J 75 | 06/2018 | SQA | 5 |
| Sociology: Social Issues H26L 76 | 06/2018 | SQA | 6 |
| Using Learning Skills ED4X 11 | 06/2018 | SQA | 5 |

> add National Units-Scotland

> add qualifications

> edit
> remove

**Linlithgow Academy** (69866, 08/1990 - 06/1996, FT)

**Scottish Highers**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Geography C733 76 | C | 06/1996 | SQA |
| Mathematics C747 76 | C | 06/1996 | SQA |

> add Scottish Highers

**Standard Grade**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Accounting and Finance | 2 | 06/1994 | SEB |
| Economics | 2 | 06/1994 | SEB |
| English | 3 | 06/1994 | SEB |
| Geography | 3 | 06/1994 | SEB |
| German | 2 | 06/1994 | SEB |
| Mathematics | 2 | 06/1994 | SEB |
| Physical Education | 3 | 06/1994 | SEB |
| Science | 3 | 06/1994 | SEB |

> add Standard Grade

> add qualifications

Candidate Number for Scottish Qualifications [ ] ?

Please state the highest level of qualification you expect to have before you start your course* Please select... ?

☐ section completed

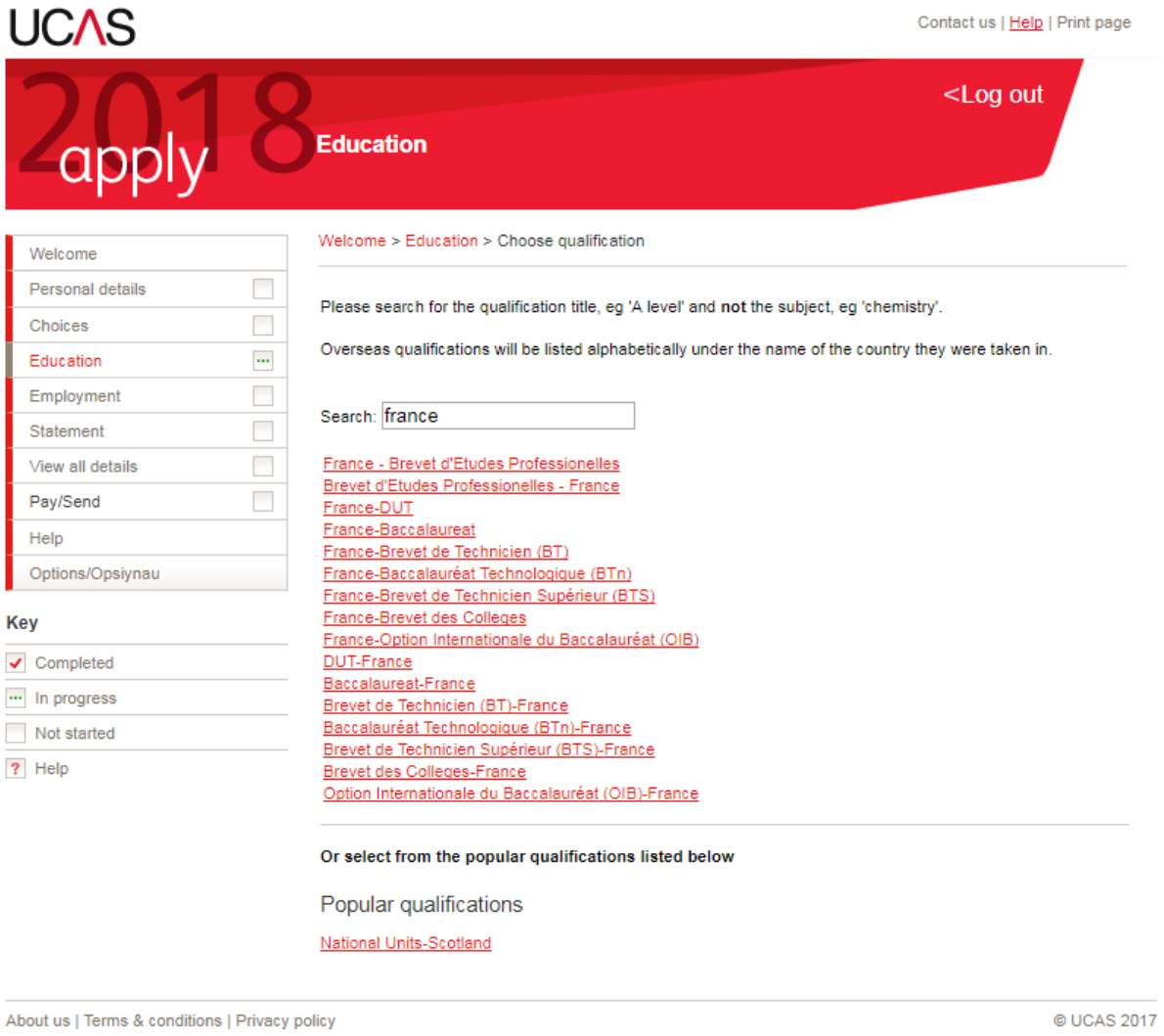
save

## EU/International Qualifications

If you have previously studied outside the UK, your school/college is unlikely to be listed and you will need to type it in (follow Step 1) and then add the qualifications you gained there. Leave the *Exam centre number* blank.

Overseas qualifications are listed alphabetically under the name of the country they were taken in. When you have added details of your school or college, click on *add qualifications.* In the search box, type in the name of the country you studied in. This will bring up a list of qualifications from that country. If your qualification is not listed, go back to the education home page and type in "Other" in the search box. Then choose from the options listed (e.g. Other (International EU Qualifications)).

Below is an example of the choices that appear when you enter "France" into the search box.




## 3.4 Employment

This section is only for details of paid employment.  Details of any voluntary work, work experience or work shadowing that you have done should be included in your personal statement.

### 3.5 Personal Statement

**Our guide to writing your personal statement (opens in a new window) should help you complete this section.**

**We strongly recommend you write the statement using a word-processing package and paste it in to Apply.**

**You can type your statement directly into the box or edit a statement you have pasted in.**

**Need guidance?** Watch the video advice below [Hide video].

(Unable to view videos here? You can watch them at www.ucas.com/connect/videos instead)

Personal statement

**Click 'save' within 31 minutes so that your work is not lost.**

**You have used 0 of 47 lines based on the preview and 0 of 4000 characters.**

**Your completed statement must be between 1,000 and 4,000 characters (maximum 47 lines) including spaces**

?

This is your key opportunity to demonstrate to university admissions officers that you deserve a place at their university. You are aiming to show that you are **committed** to your chosen subject and that you have relevant **skills and experience** to succeed at university**.**

There is no right or wrong way to write or structure a personal statement; you need to find a way that suits you. It is important to keep it clear, concise, relevant and interesting. Admissions officers read thousands of UCAS applications, so try to make yours stand out— for the right reasons!

You are allowed a maximum of 4000 characters in 47 lines (including spaces and blank lines). This may sound like a lot, but it isn't. It's a good idea to work on the application in Word or Pages and then copy and paste it into the online form once you're happy with it. This means you can count characters and edit as you go along; it also means you won't risk being "timed out" and losing your work.

### 3.6 What should your personal statement cover?

In the first place, it is sensible to highlight that you are a SWAP student. Then, you should aim to cover the following four areas.

**Why?**

- Why do you want to go to university?
- Why have you chosen these subjects and degree courses?
- How do you demonstrate enthusiasm for education and commitment to academic work? (It's especially important for adult returners to show they will cope with university).

**Chosen subjects**

- What aspects of the subjects are you most interested in and why?
- What are your expectations of the course? What are you hoping to learn more about? (N.B. Make sure you have researched what the course actually offers).
- How might you use the skills and knowledge you will gain? For example, do you have any particular career aspirations? (Don't worry if you don't).
- If you are applying for courses in more than one subject, you should try to cover all of them, which is not always easy.

**Knowledge, experience and skills**

- Do you have any relevant study experience or qualifications? How has this developed your knowledge or passion for the subjects you want to study?
- Do you have any relevant experience (e.g. employment, placements or volunteering)? What skills did your experience develop? How will those skills benefit your studies?
- Have you had any experiences which have helped to develop transferable skills (e.g. organizational skills, communication skills, analytical skills or team-working)?

**Notable achievements and personal attributes**

- Have you been involved in any activities or do you have hobbies which might be relevant to your studies?
- Do you have any notable personal achievements which are worth a mention?
- What are the qualities which set you apart from other applicants?
- How will you contribute to university life?
- Do you have any examples of when you have demonstrated desirable qualities, such as commitment, determination and reliability?

University admissions officers are looking for evidence of maturity, ability, commitment and knowledge of your subject.

Advice on writing your personal statement can be found on the UCAS website. You might also find it helpful to have a look at the UCAS personal statement mind map (a version is included at the end of this document).

### 3.7 Personal Statement: Dos & Don'ts

| Do | Don't |
|---|---|
| Make a plan. | Leave it to the last minute. |
| Draft, redraft … and redraft again. | Think you can get it right first time. |
| Try to be clear and concise and have an enthusiastic, professional tone. | Waffle, repeat yourself or use long sentences. |
| Be careful with humour, quotes or anything too unusual. | Use slang, colloquial (spoken) language or clichés. |

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| Give examples of achievements and say what you learned from them. | Just list your skills and attributes. You need to show evidence and relevance. |
| Have a strong introduction and conclusion. A sentence for each is fine. | Start randomly or end suddenly— or both! |
| Be honest about your skills and achievements. | Copy. UCAS uses plagiarism detection software to screen applications. It will flag up any similarities with other statements (past or present). |
| Read over what you have written and get someone else to read it too. | Forget to check for spelling and grammar mistakes. |
| Say that you are a SWAP student. | Mention universities by name unless you are only applying to one. |
| Submit it as early as you can, so that your tutor has plenty of time to write a reference for you. | Expect your tutor to write a reference the day before the UCAS deadline. Or to check that you have filled the form in correctly or made appropriate choices— that is your responsibility. |

## 4. What happens next?

When you have completed all seven sections and you are happy that your personal statement is as good as it can be, you are ready to submit your application to your tutor. You'll only be able to do this if you have paid the UCAS fee. If you need to change anything you'll need to ask your tutor to send the form back to you.

Your tutor will then write up your reference and, provided they are happy with the rest of the application, they will submit the application to UCAS. **Once the application has been submitted to UCAS no changes can be made.**

**When will I hear back from my choice?**
It depends on the university and the subject. Some universities process applications very quickly and others take a lot longer. Most universities will aim to decide by end of March but the final deadline for their response is 5 May. Some of your classmates may hear back before you. This does

not necessarily mean that you have been unsuccessful. It just means you have to be more patient.

**How long do I get to decide?**
If you hear back from all of your choices by 31 March, you have until 3 May. If you don't hear back from all your choices until after 31 March, you have until 7 June to decide. **If you don't reply by the deadline all of your offers will be declined automatically.**

**What if I get no offers from any of my choices?**
You can use **UCAS Extra** to add an extra choice. If you've used all five choices and have had no offers or have declined all your offers, you are eligible to use UCAS Extra. See Extra choices on the UCAS website for information.

**What if I don't get what I need to get into either my firm or insurance choice?**
You may still be able to find a suitable place via the **UCAS Clearing** system. UCAS Clearing opens in July. Not all universities will enter clearing and there will only be places on a few courses. Check what's available and contact the relevant university directly if you see anything of interest. See the Clearing section of the UCAS website for info. If all else fails, your SWAP qualification is valid for another year and so you could apply again next year or you could look at alternatives, such as an HNC/HND at college, which could potentially still lead you to university.

## 5. UCAS Process

After the 15 January deadline, universities start to consider applications and will decide whether to make you an offer. This could take months, so you'll need to be patient. For some subjects (e.g. primary education, nursing and social work) you might be invited to attend an interview.

Hopefully you will receive at least one offer. Your offers are most likely to be **conditional (C).** You'll need to meet the specific conditions set by the university to be given the place. The university will tell you what these are when it makes the offer.

You decide (by a specific date) whether you want to **accept** or **decline** your offers. You can accept two offers, one as your **firm choice** and one as your **insurance choice**. You are committed to taking up your firm choice if you meet the entry conditions. Your Insurance choice is your back-up, in case you don't meet the conditions. So, ideally, your insurance choice should have lower conditions of offer.

In June, you'll be given your final SWAP profile grades by your college tutor. SWAP East will send those on in July to the universities you have made your firm and insurance choices with.

If your offer is conditional only on achieving specific profile grades, the university will then either change your offer to unconditional, if you've got the Grades you need, or retract it, if you've not got what you needed. If your offer is also conditional on external exam grades, the university will wait until it receives your exam results from SQA in August before confirming your offer.

If you've got a university place, you'll receive written confirmation from UCAS; then you can start getting yourself organised for university. If you've not managed to get a place yet, you might still be able to find something suitable through UCAS Clearing, which opens in July.

## 6. Help and Advice

Your college is likely to have guidance or student support staff who can advise on the UCAS application process. Lots of useful hints and tips can be found on the UCAS website. If you encounter any technical problems or need to make a change to your application once you've submitted it, you should contact the UCAS Helpdesk on 0371 468 0468.

SWAP East is happy to help with any queries or problems relating to your UCAS application. We can be contacted on 0131 650 6816 or 0131 650 6685 or by email at swapeast@ed.ac.uk

A list of useful links for university applicants is provided below. There are more, but these are a good start.

| **Researching Degrees and Universities** |
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| http://swapsurvey.org/progression/east<br>Search degree progression routes at SWAP East partner universities. |
| www.UCAS.com<br>University and Colleges Admission Service: The online system for applying to any UK university. Also provides details of all degree programmes at UK universities. |
| www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/<br>Information on UK universities and degree courses. |
| https://unistats.direct.gov.uk/<br>Compares UK universities and degree courses on the basis of performance in the annual National Student Survey. |
| https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/news/complete-university-guide-reveals-its-top-uk-universities-2018<br>The Times. |

| **Researching Future Careers** |
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| www.myworldofwork.co.uk<br>Help and advice on careers |
| www.prospects.ac.uk/<br>Careers information for graduates |

| **Fees and Funding** |
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| www.saas.gov.uk/<br>Student Awards Agency Scotland. Information on tuition fees and student loans. |
| http://www.scottishwideraccess.org/index.php?section_name=east-current-students-info-and-guidance<br>Funding guidance for SWAP East students. |

| **Writing a UCAS Personal Statement** |
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| www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/undergraduate/filling-your-application/your-personal-statement<br>UCAS advice on how to write your personal statement. |

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| http://university.which.co.uk/advice/your-ucas-personal-statement-10-more-things-to-put-in<br>Tips on writing your personal statement from Which? |
| www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/9565872/Personal-statement-Ucas-guide-to-the-personal-statement.html<br>Advice from a UCAS director. |

| **UCAS Extra and UCAS Clearing** |
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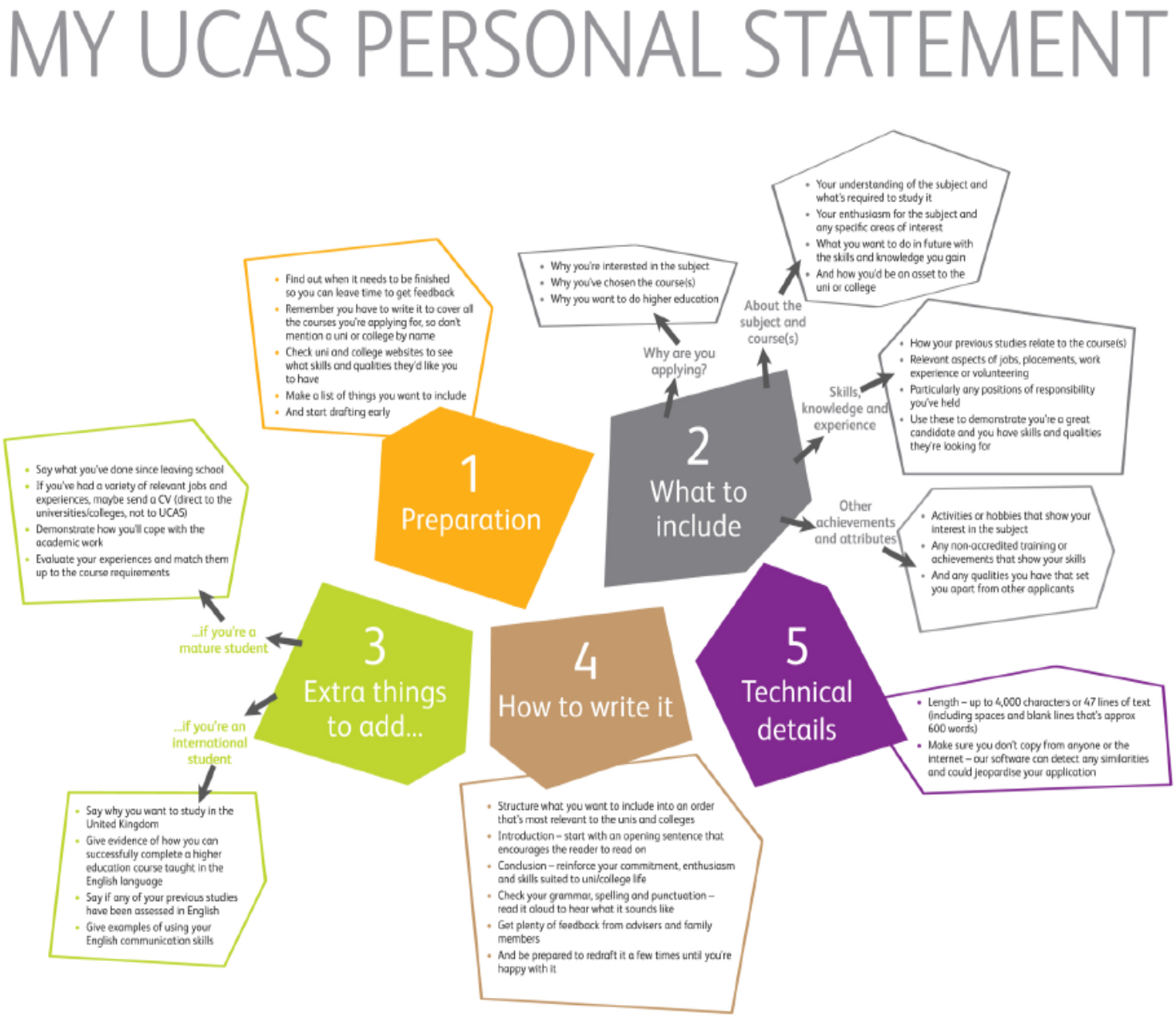
| www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/undergraduate/tracking-your-application/adding-extra-choices<br>Information on how UCAS Extra works |
| https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/results/no-offers-use-clearing<br>Information on how UCAS Clearing works. |

See also https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/personal-statement-mind-map.pdf