



THE EASY GUIDE TO UK ADMISSIONS



HALE
EDUCATION GROUP

ABOUT HALE

Hale Education Group is the leading independent educational consulting firm in the GCC focusing on US university admissions. We provide college admissions counseling to Emirati and international students seeking admission to the full spectrum of US universities and colleges. Our innovative model has evolved from our deep background and broad experience in admissions counseling in the United States. We center our services on providing intensive one-on-one counseling and guidance to students in every aspect of US college admissions, based on the philosophy of finding the right "fit." Hale's mission is to guide and empower students seeking to realize their maximum personal, academic, and professional potential through the pursuit of American and Canadian higher education.

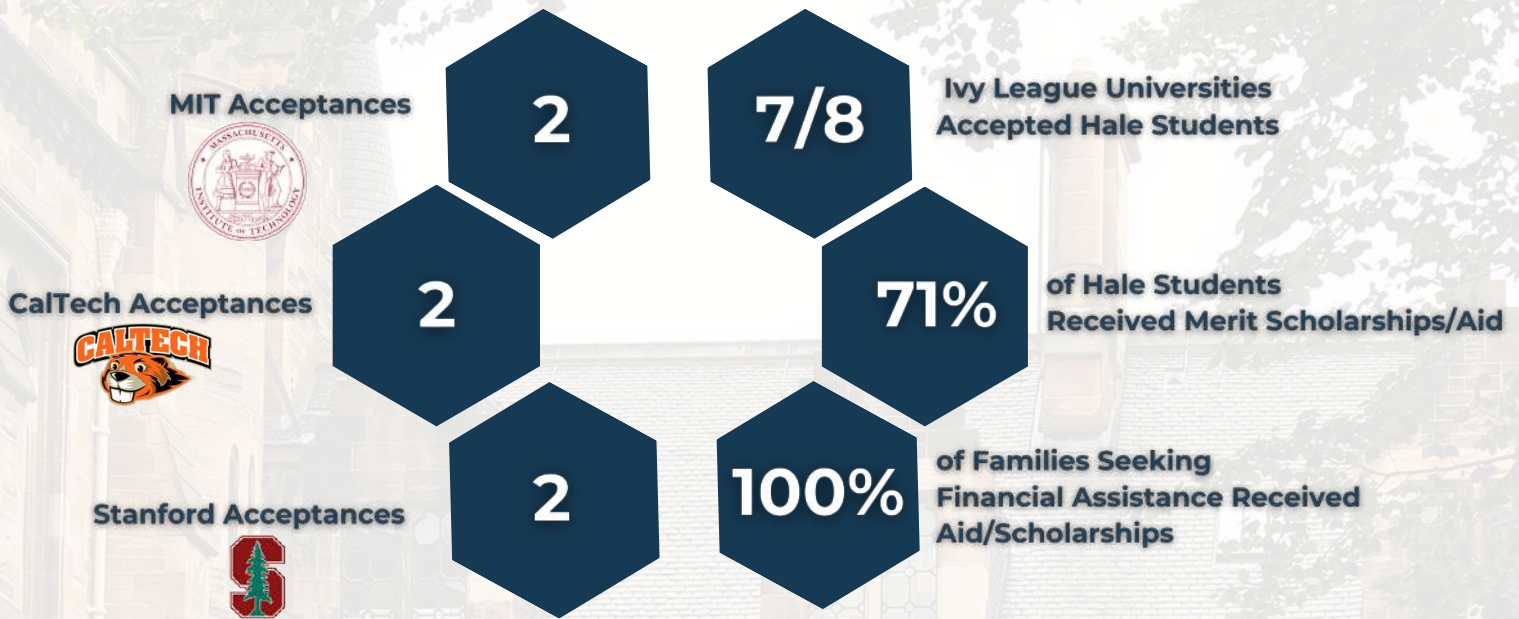
To learn more about our team of counselors, please visit:

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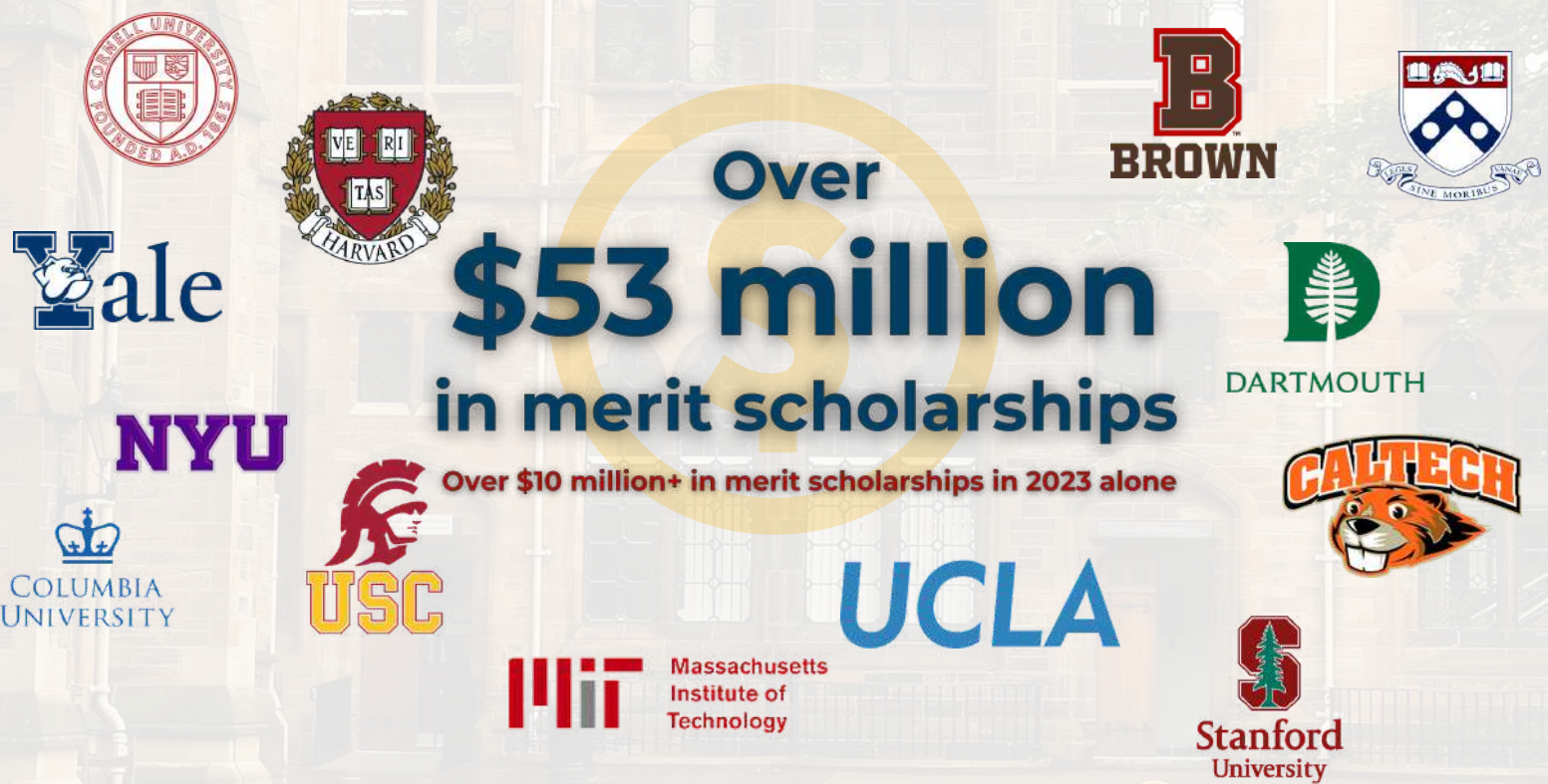
We abide by ethical practices, meaning no commission-based deals with universities and no placement fees. Working exclusively in the interests of students is our core value.



ADMISSION STATISTICS 2023



HALE SCHOLARSHIPS



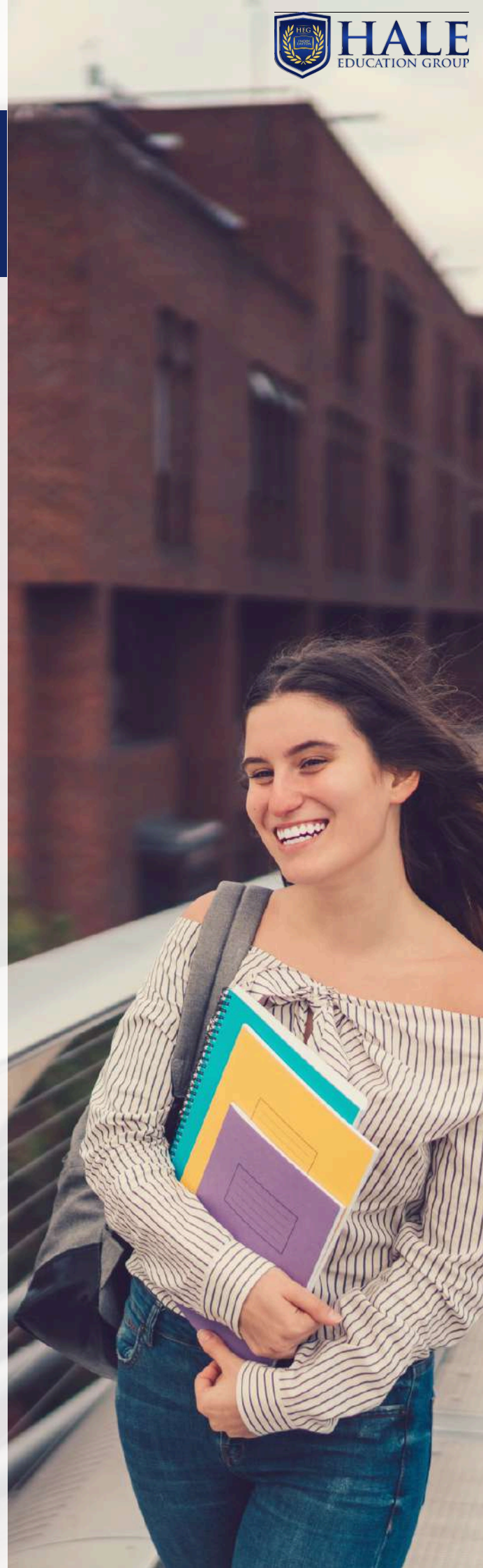
WHY CHOOSE UK?

Reputation & Ranking:

Despite its relatively small size, the UK boasts many of the world's top universities. As we can see in the QS World University Rankings 2024, four of the global top ten universities are in the UK: University of Cambridge (2nd), University of Oxford (3rd), Imperial College London (6th), University College London (9th). The UK, moreover, has its own Ivy League - the Russell Group, an association of 24 universities - including Cambridge, Oxford, and UCL - who offer world-class educations. Graduates of these universities receive better employment prospects, and the acceptance rates are generally higher than Ivy League colleges (Harvard, for example, has an acceptance rate of around 3%, whereas Cambridge admits approximately 20% of applicants).

Other top-ranked UK universities include:

- **London School of Economics and Political Science**
- **University of Edinburgh**
- **St Andrews**
- **University of Warwick**
- **Loughborough University**



Affordable Course Fees and Living Costs in UK

Compared to universities in the US, tuition fees in the UK are generally more affordable. When we factor in the average duration of a UK degree (three years), moreover, the overall cost of tuition fees in the UK can be considerably cheaper than in the US. For example, a BSc in Physics from a top university in the US would cost approximately \$280,000 in tuition fees over four years, whereas in the UK it would cost around \$130,000 over 3 three years. While the cost of living in London can be high, it is significantly lower in other regions.

Multiculturalism and Diversity

Despite its relatively small size, the UK is the second most popular choice for international students in the world. This means that every UK campus is a highly multicultural place. Moreover, for centuries people from all over the world have migrated to the UK. Outside of the campuses, then, every major city and university town consists of diverse cultures. The UK and its people embrace the nation's diverse population by recognising it as their strength.

Residency and Work Opportunities

The UK's new Graduate Route visa programme allows students to stay in the UK for up to two years following the completion of their degree in order to find work. This means that if a student takes this option and continues to live and work in the UK, they will be placed on the path to residency. Students can also work alongside their degree for up to twenty hours per week, which allows them the chance to earn while they study, and even network in their respective professional field before graduation.

Location

For residents of the UAE, the UK's location is a desirable aspect of opting to study there. Dubai to London Heathrow, for example, is only a seven-hour flight, whereas a flight from Dubai to New York - the closest US city - is double that, at fourteen hours.

UK Geography

The UK is a densely populated island, with a population of approximately 70 million. As its landmass is quite small, the weather doesn't vary significantly between regions. And yet, whether it's the vibrant energy of the nation's capital, the fascinating architecture and history of Scotland, or the focused atmosphere of a centrally located campus, students can select from a wide variety of environments, cultures, and landscapes to study in. It is useful to think of the UK university options in three categories:



1.London. The UK's largest and most populous city, and of course its capital. London is a highly popular choice for students as it's home to many of the country's top universities, including **University College London (UCL), London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), King's College London,** and **Imperial College.**

2.City Universities. In many other major UK cities, university campuses are scattered throughout the urban environment, meaning the places where students study - lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and the like - are spread out. This provides students with a more immersive experience of the city in which they live. Such universities include **Oxford & Cambridge, Manchester, Edinburgh, Bristol,** and **Durham.**

3.Campus Universities. In contrast to "city universities," campus universities have a central location, meaning all buildings are located in one place. For some students, campus universities provide greater focus on their studies, as they live and work in the same location. Examples of these universities include **Warwick, York, Kent, Queen Mary,** and **Bath.**

Prominent UK Universities

While UK university rankings are just as subjective and volatile as those of any other country, the ten following universities are generally regarded as the best in the country:

1. University of Cambridge

Cambridge consists of 31 colleges, the buildings of which are located throughout the historic and beautiful city. Student to teacher ratio of 8:1.

a. Strong Programmes: Chemistry, Engineering, Computer Science, Biology, History - strong across the board, although slightly more STEM focused than Oxford.

b. Additional Notes:

- i. Students have the option to apply to a specific college within Cambridge, or to make an open application to any of the university's colleges. Cambridge states that either option makes no difference to a student's chances of admission.
- ii. Before applying, students must register for entrance exams for their respective programme. The deadline for registrations is usually the end of September, and the exam occurs in mid-October.
- iii. Application deadline is much earlier than other UK universities. Generally, it will be mid-October, in contrast to late-January for other universities. If applying for Cambridge, students must submit all of their applications together before the October deadline.
- iv. Before an offer of admission is made, applicants will be invited to interview.
- v. Notable alumni: Isaac Newton, Stephen Hawking, Charles Darwin

2. University of Oxford

Oxford consists of 43 colleges, the stunning buildings of which - like Cambridge - are located throughout the city. Student to teacher ratio of 3:1.

a. Strong Programmes: Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE), Medicine, Law, English Literature, Classics

b. Additional Notes:

- i. See Cambridge additional notes above - Oxford follows the same submission deadline and application process.
- ii. Students can only apply to Oxford or Cambridge - not both.
- iii. Notable alumni: Albert Einstein, Benazir Bhutto, around 50% of all UK Prime Ministers!

3. London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Famous for its first-class teaching and research in the social sciences, LSE's campus is located in the heart of central London. Student to teacher ratio of 11:1.

a. Strong Programmes: International Relations, Economics, Accounting and Finance, Politics

b. Additional Notes:

- i. LSE requires many of its students to sit the Undergraduate Admissions Assessment (UGAA) before a decision will be made on their application.
- ii. Notable alumni: George Soros, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Clement Attlee

4. University College London (UCL)

Situated in London's historic Bloomsbury district, UCL has the most international undergraduates of any UK university. Student to teacher ratio of 5:1.

a. Strong Programmes: Architecture, Psychology, Anatomy & Physiology, Arts & Humanities

b. Additional Notes:

- i. UCL is home to The Bartlett, widely seen as the top architecture school in the world.
- ii. Notable alumni: Mahatma Gandhi, John Stuart Mill, Charli XCX

5. University of Manchester

Reaching its 200th birthday in 2024, Manchester offers over 1000 degree programmes. Student to teacher ratio of 8:1.

a. **Strong Programmes:** Engineering, Medicine, Business, Physics, Law

b. **Additional Notes:**

- i. Most STEM- and Business-focused students opt for Manchester as one of their choices, but it has excellent humanities and social sciences programmes also.
- ii. Notable alumni: Benedict Cumberbatch, Brian Cox, Anthony Burgess

6. King's College London (KCL)

KCL's main campus sits right on the banks of the River Thames in central London, while its other sites are located throughout the city. Student to teacher ratio of 7:1.

a. **Strong Programmes:** Engineering and Technology, Law, Business, Economics, Arts and Humanities

b. **Additional Notes:**

- i. Notable alumni: Virginia Woolf, Hanif Kureishi, Desmond Tutu



7. St Andrews

Located in the small coastal town of St Andrews in Scotland, St Andrews has started to rank as the number 1 university in the UK in some guides, above even Oxford and Cambridge. Student to teacher ratio of 5:1.

a. **Strong Programmes:** Psychology, Economics, Engineering, Business & Management, Arts and Humanities

b. **Additional Notes:**

- i. St Andrews has the lowest acceptance rate of any UK university, at just 8%.
- ii. Notable alumni: Catherine Princess of Wales, Edward Jenner, John Napier

8. Imperial College London (Imperial)

Imperial consistently ranks in the top ten globally. Positions on Imperial's STEM courses are much sought after by international students. Student to teacher ratio of 4:1.

a. **Strong Programmes:** Engineering, Computer Science, Medicine, Environmental Sciences

b. **Additional Notes:**

- i. Imperial is perhaps the only UK university that rivals Oxford and Cambridge in terms of prestige.
- ii. Notable alumni: Alexander Fleming, Brian May, H. G. Wells

9. University of Edinburgh

Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland. The university campus is located within this historic and enchanting city. It is a top Russell Group institution. Student to teacher ratio of 7:1.

a. **Strong Programmes:** Computer Science, Physics, Medicine, Economics, Arts and Humanities

b. **Additional Notes:**

- i. Edinburgh's entry requirements are slightly lower than universities like Oxford, Cambridge, and Imperial, yet it still regularly ranks in the global top 50.
- ii. Notable alumni: Alexander Graham Bell, Arthur Conan Doyle, David Hume

Additionally, other prominent Russell Group universities include the following:

1. Durham University - Strong Programmes: Law, Business, Engineering, Humanities

2. University of York - Strong Programmes: Law, Computer Science, Chemistry, and Humanities

3. University of Bristol - Strong Programmes: Engineering, Medical Sciences, Arts

4. University of Birmingham - Strong Programmes: Business Management, Economics, Biological Sciences

5. University of Exeter - Strong Programmes: Earth & Marine Sciences, Engineering, Anthropology

Sample College Lists

Since students on the Britannia package can apply to 5 universities, the division in number of competitive versus less selective universities varies for each student. As an example, students would identify - relative to their predictive grades - 2 selective universities, 2 target universities, and 1 safety.



Application Process for UK Universities

UCAS

Compared to the US system, the UK university application process is more straightforward. All 5 applications are submitted through the [UCAS portal](#). Firstly, students fill out their basic information—such as contact details, nationality, residency, and education. In this final section, students are required to list the grades they have achieved from previous years, as well as the subjects they are currently studying in their final year of high school. Students will mark these grades as ‘pending’, as their teacher will input the specific predicted grades once the application is submitted to them. There is also a reference section, in which students enter the information of their referee (almost always a teacher at their school) and select submit. Their referee will receive an email request for the reference to be uploaded to a separate portal which students do not have access to. Then, students must select the 5 degree programmes to which they wish to apply. Each of these comes with a course code that can be cross-referenced on the university website. The final section is the personal statement, which there is more information on below. Once all information has been entered, students must submit and pay the application fee.

Foundation Programmes

While most applications are submitted through the UCAS portal, some students will also wish to apply to foundation programmes. These are one-year programmes that prepare students for academic study in the UK, and they offer alternative, less competitive routes into some of the top universities. Applications for foundation programmes are made directly to universities, and they also require basic information, transcripts, and, sometimes, a personal statement.

Academic Requirements for UK Universities

Offers for UK universities are largely determined by a student's predicted grades at the time of applying. The page for every degree offered by a UK university includes a section on "entry requirements", which lists the minimum grades students must be predicted to achieve in order to gain entry to the course. **Students whose marks fall below the minimum grade are strongly recommended to apply to either a less competitive programme or a less competitive university.** Entry requirements vary across universities and programmes, the highest of which is a minimum of A*A*A for most Oxbridge degrees.

Additionally, degree pages list any specific subjects which students must have studied to gain entry onto a degree programme. While not all degrees require students to have studied certain subjects, competitive courses such as Engineering will require students to have studied Maths and Physics at high school.



Entrance Exams:

Most UK universities do not require students to sit entrance exams, or standardized tests like the SAT. There are, however, a few notable exceptions. All Oxbridge applicants must sit entrance exams in October, which they register for through September. At other universities, students applying to certain subjects must sit exams such as the LNAT (Law) and UCAT (Medicine) before they apply.

Interviews:

As with entrance exams, interviews are rare in the admissions process for UK universities. The notable exceptions, again, are all Oxbridge courses, as well as a select number of courses at the most competitive universities such as Imperial College London and the London School of Economics and Social Science. If a Hale counselor has a student who is faced with one of these requirements, they should encourage the student to do any available practice questions on the university's online platform, and give them any relevant interviewing tips beforehand.

Portfolios:

Students applying to Architecture, Design, Fashion, and Fine Arts programmes will have to submit a portfolio along with their application, similar to US universities. This will be in addition to the personal statement.

Letter of Recommendation:

The UCAS portal requires one letter of recommendation, which is usually written by a student's teacher. They can, however, be written by anyone (except family and friends) with insight into the student's academic achievements.

Official Transcripts:

Along with the letter of recommendation, a student's high school will have to submit official transcripts for universities' consideration. A request for these documents will be sent to the school by UCAS once the student completes the relevant section in the portal.

English Language Requirements:

As per visa requirements, international students must demonstrate their English proficiency by sitting an English language exam. The examinations accepted are IELTS, TOEFL, PTE Academic, Cambridge English Advanced. Each degree programme sets its own minimum grade which students must achieve in these exams.

Deadlines & Timelines

- **May: UCAS application portal opens** - from May, students can register for a UCAS account, and begin entering their information.
- **July-September: LNAT (Law) and UCAT (Medicine) exams** - over the summer, prospective Law and Medicine students must sit their entrance exams, which they can register for in May & June.
- **September: Registration for Oxbridge entrance exams** - through the month of September, students aiming to apply for Oxford or Cambridge must register for their entrance exams.
- **Mid-October: First Deadlines** - Deadlines for all courses at Oxford and Cambridge—as well as most deadlines for Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary courses at other universities—is in mid-October. Oxbridge students will sit their entrance exams shortly after they submit their application.
- **December: Interviews** - Oxbridge interviews conducted from the start of December. Their decisions are then released from January.
- **Late-January: Main UCAS Deadline** - the deadline for the vast majority of courses is at the end of January. Students can still apply after this (up until June), but their chances of admission will be reduced.
- **February-June: Foundation Deadlines** - the deadlines for foundation programmes occur after UCAS, through the end of winter and into the start of summer.

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