



CLEARING...

Get it right!

If you now need to find a university or college place for whatever reason, then you have to go through Clearing. What is it and how do you make a success of it?

The advice and information in this article has been prepared independently of any other organisations including UCAS. As in all things at this time, check, verify and then decide.

CLEARING is the process by which unplaced candidates are matched with appropriate courses that still have vacancies. Having said that, there are a lot of myths and half-baked ideas about what Clearing involves.

THE majority of Clearing candidates are those students who, for whatever reason, cannot now attend their original choice and need to find somewhere else and fast, often as a result of disappointing grades. However, there are many reasons for going through Clearing. Some applicants didn't make an original UCAS Application by the cut-off dates, and all applications after the end of June are processed through Clearing. Similarly, some candidates get much better than expected grades and may feel that they have a chance of now being accepted on a course that may have originally rejected them or that they didn't even apply to.

WHILST UCAS have, in the past, stressed that Clearing is for unplaced candidates rather than 'changes of mind', the fact is that the system can and has coped with over 50, 000 Clearing applications in past years. However, all Clearing applicants need to 'know' the system and play it according to the rules. Trying to 'bend' the rules may well see you with no place at all in what often can appear a feeding frenzy of last minute activity.

BEFORE you decide on Clearing; you need to be clear what you are trying to achieve. Just getting on to any course in order to go to university is not an option worth taking. You will qualify with a student debt. It will not be a significant life-time burden, but it will be a large sum to a new graduate. So make sure that you really do want to go ahead with your 'purchase'. Perhaps waiting a year or attempting retakes might be a better option.

IF you really are determined to proceed, then you must have a particular course in mind. Check with the course tutors of relevant courses what vacancies they have and whether your grades are suitable. UCAS publishes vacancy lists on its own website. QUB and Ulster University publish lists of courses available on their websites on the morning of results day.

THE first thing you will need if you want to go through Clearing is a Clearing Number which will be displayed in track. This is vital and must be quoted in all communications, whether to potential courses or UCAS.

A course / admissions tutor at the course you want to go to will ask for your clearing number which is displayed on your "Track". It is vital that you take a note of your clearing number as you will need it when applying for another course. Please view the UCAS video "How to use Clearing" for a full explanation of the process.

IF you are a candidate who is unplaced, then the system works very well, providing you have made a clear firm choice. If you are a 'mind changer' with a previously accepted place, then you have to inform the people offering that place that you are not intending to start. Your Clearing application will not be processed if UCAS has you listed as already 'placed'. So mind changers be careful! The course you now want to go to, and are acceptable to, has to really be that much better. Ask yourself if you would be prepared to wait a year, because you may slip between two stools after cancelling one offer and trying for another.

WHATEVER your choice, remember you will be in part paying for it via student loans & fees. So is the course you want really worth the work and debt? Get advice from careers teachers & your local careers centre in particular, as well as the course tutors of the degrees in which you are interested. They will give you genuine advice about your intended career choices, without plugging their own courses & are remarkably BS free!

TRY not to rush things. Speed is important as there is often a race for the 'better' places. Some institutions deliberately keep places in reserve for the summer and the often excellent candidates they can recruit through Clearing (you). Yet remember that UCAS can only process one application at a time, so getting it wrong means you will have to start the whole process again, and that could be one delay too long for success. Care and caution, allied to ability to move quickly, are the traits you will need. Some courses will require an interview, so drop everything to co-operate and get it done as soon as possible. Saying, 'Can I do this after my holiday with my mates?' may not be the attitude to ensure that a course tutor is on your side!

YOU will also need to move fast when it comes to accommodation and student loans. If it was vital for early UCAS candidates to go and see the institution of their choice, it is even more so for you. Using the 'phone, e-mail and fax' are quicker than mail - so use them. Your school will often maintain open doors for

CLEARING VACANCY LISTS

UCAS Website
www.ucas.com

You will receive a list of all
Vacancy publications with your
Clearing Number from UCAS.

Use the search tool on the UCAS
website to find courses – it's the
only official vacancy list, so it's the
most up-to-date.

**They are the
experts, use
them & their
website.**

**Clearing opens
Thursday 17th
August
00:01am**

UCAS 2023

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2023**

DON'T forget your parents! Keep them informed, as they need to provide you with the ferry services you may need, as well as back-up at home with 'phones', etc. Indeed, they may possibly have to put their own holiday on hold! Whilst your parents' knowledge of and advice on differing courses and universities is often out of date, their ability to be sounding boards for advice on next steps is often crucial. Remember that they, UCAS and the courses, are all on your side.

FINALLY, remember that there are some real gems of courses available through Clearing. You are not having the pick of second best, any more than you as a Clearing candidate are second best. Check the courses out carefully as to graduate employment and earning rates, as well as matters such as past graduate opinion. If possible go and see them before making a commitment, and then move very quickly with your Clearing Number.

If you do decide to wait for a year, that's no bad thing. However, do something definite with that year. Whatever your decision, you can get a place on a good course through Clearing, as well as change your mind, but be aware of the time

constraints and risks. Good luck and send us a postcard from your new university or college when you get there!