

CLEARING QUESTIONS: ANSWERED BY UEA ADMISSIONS EXPERT

- *How do I prepare students for the possibility of **entering clearing**?*
- *The best advice for a student with **worse grades** than expected?*
- *How do I reinforce that entering clearing is not a **sign of failure**?*
- *How do I advise students to prepare for their **clearing phone call**?*
- *How can I ease any **anxiety** they may have?*
- *Where are the best **sources of information** for clearing updates?*
- *How should I explain the '**adjustment period**' to students?*
- *What if the clearing phone line is **constantly engaged**?*
- *How should I advise a student to react when receiving their **first offer**?*
- *One of my students has asked if it's alright to be **away during clearing**. What do I advise?*

HOW DO I PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF ENTERING CLEARING?

Some students are really confident following their exams, so much so, that they book themselves a holiday which falls over results day. Unfortunately they might find that their results don't go quite to plan and are then too late to secure themselves a place at the university they really want to be at.

On the other hand, a student can convince themselves that they are going to fail and that there is no way their firm choice university is going to take them. So, they withdraw over the Summer, only to find they get good enough grades, the first choice university would have taken them, but there are no places left in Clearing.

Either way - the best advice you can give them before the summer break is:

- Keep calm
- Wait to see what their results are
- Be at the ready to communicate with universities on the day
- Be equipped with their phone and web access

THE BEST ADVICE FOR A STUDENT WITH WORSE GRADES THAN EXPECTED?

First of all they should check **UCAS Track** to see what has happened: their Firm or Insurance choice might still have accepted them. If not, and they can see they are eligible for Clearing, the student will need to pick themselves up quickly from the initial disappointment and call as many universities that they are interested in as possible.

Most universities will give a window of time to guarantee their place - this is crucial time to weigh up all options, then decide: "Do I want to actually go to university this year?" ... "Which University do I want to go to if I do?"

If they get a few offers, it will give them back the element of choice and put them in the driving seat. It is worth reminding them that if they are given an offer on A Level results day, and they are in Clearing, they are not able to accept the place on UCAS Track until 5pm.

HOW DO I REINFORCE THAT ENTERING CLEARING IS NOT A SIGN OF FAILURE?

University's view of Clearing has changed dramatically. We are seeing more and more institutions putting their courses in Clearing each year. It is neither a reflection of the quality of the Degree Course, or the students entering through the clearing route, it is simply another process for admitting students.

Quite often, the highest achieving students hold offers for the most selective courses. Sadly these courses might not be able to accept a student who has dropped a grade, so they find themselves in Clearing.

For example, let's say the student has AAB instead of AAA. Universities will be falling over themselves to teach that student! In other words, for one university that can't take them on the achieved grades, there will be another university that will. In some cases there might even be another degree at the same university that will be able to offer them a place.

Try to coach them through what can be some difficult news and refocus on the wealth of opportunity out there to study a degree.

HOW DO I ADVISE STUDENTS TO PREPARE FOR THEIR CLEARING PHONE CALL? HOW CAN I EASE ANY ANXIETY THEY MAY HAVE?

They will need to be ready to be taken through some simple questions on the phone, so having information about themselves on hand can make the experience a lot easier.

Typical questions will be:

1. What is your UCAS personal ID number?
2. What subject/course are you interested in?
3. What results did you achieve for each subject at A Level?
4. What are your GCSE results for each subject? (some universities might still need to know this)

Usually, once they have this information, the university can advise on whether they can offer a place. At this point, the student needs to be ready to give contact details i.e. phone number, email address and postal address. Most Universities will confirm an offer in writing by email and will stipulate a deadline for accepting the offer.

If the course requires an interview, they may be asked if they can come in person to the university in the following few days, or they may conduct a telephone interview. However, they will explain the procedure for this and it is worth the student re-reading their personal statement before they have the interview.

WHERE ARE THE BEST SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR CLEARING UPDATES?

Probably the best source of information is on the Universities own website, these will have a live vacancy list. Following that, the UCAS website will show listings.

HOW SHOULD I EXPLAIN THE 'ADJUSTMENT PERIOD' TO STUDENTS?

If a student's grades are better than those asked for by the Firm choice university, they might be able to swap to another one through UCAS Adjustment. They can register for Adjustment on UCAS Track and throughout all of this the Unconditional Firm place will remain safe while they speak to other institutions. Adjustment runs for 5 calendar days from the point they register on UCAS Track to find another university. It is important that the student contacts the university they want to consider to find out if they have space and are eligible.

If a university confirms an offer through Adjustment, they need to pause before making a decision as it is a big change. Also, check that they can offer accommodation before Adjusting.

Unlike Clearing, a student does not refer themselves through UCAS Track. They have to formally accept the offer directly with the university, who will then change UCAS Track on their behalf.

WHAT IF THE CLEARING PHONE LINE IS CONSTANTLY ENGAGED?

Keep trying! Most Universities will have very busy lines between 8am – 12 noon on Thursday 13th August. Universities will be doing their best to have as many advisors on the line to receive calls, and there is often a queuing system in place. You might even want to advise the student to get family and friends calling universities on different lines, so that you can speak to the first advisor that they get through to.

HOW DO I ADVISE A STUDENT TO REACT WHEN RECEIVING THEIR FIRST OFFER?

I know that most students will have invested a lot of time and effort, along with yourself, in making the right firm choice. I think you will have to use your judgement as to whether the student is in the right frame of mind to be able to make such a significant change at this stage. However, if you can see that they are making reasoned decisions, Adjustment can be a fantastic opportunity for a student to explore other options, while knowing that they are still secure in their Firm choice.

Reassure them as well that if they do register for Adjustment by mistake - tell them not to panic - and do nothing! After five days the adjustment registration will expire and disappear on UCAS Track.

ONE OF MY STUDENTS HAS ASKED IF IT'S ALRIGHT TO BE AWAY DURING CLEARING. WHAT DO I ADVISE THEM?

My first piece of advice for all students is **don't be away**. Sometimes this is unavoidable. They need to plan for whether or not they have access to the internet. If not, they need to make sure that someone is authorised to act on their behalf. Before they leave they should give written consent to a parent/guardian to act on their behalf, as universities can only deal with the applicant.

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