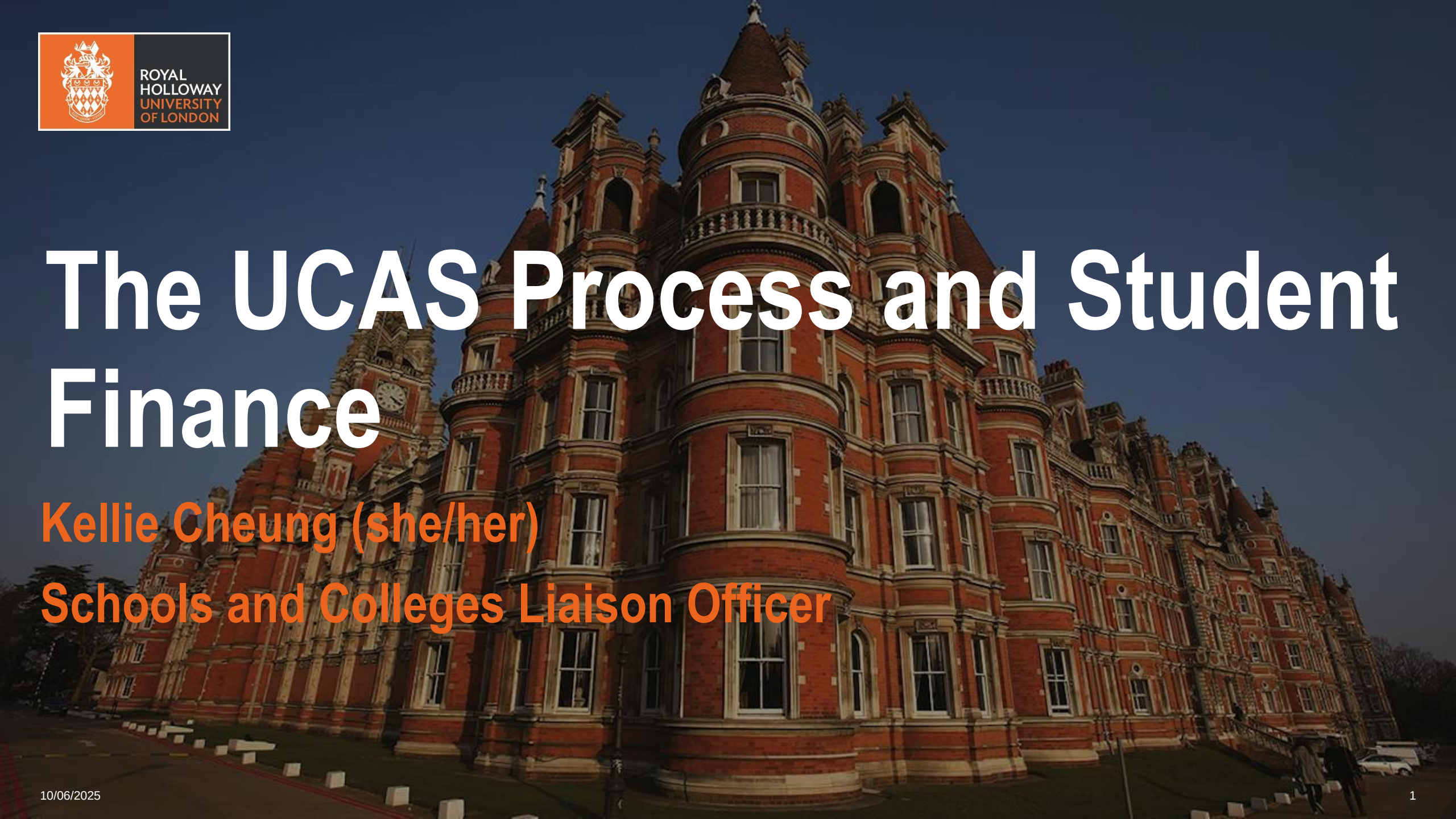

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The UCAS Process and Student Finance

Kellie Cheung (she/her)

Schools and Colleges Liaison Officer

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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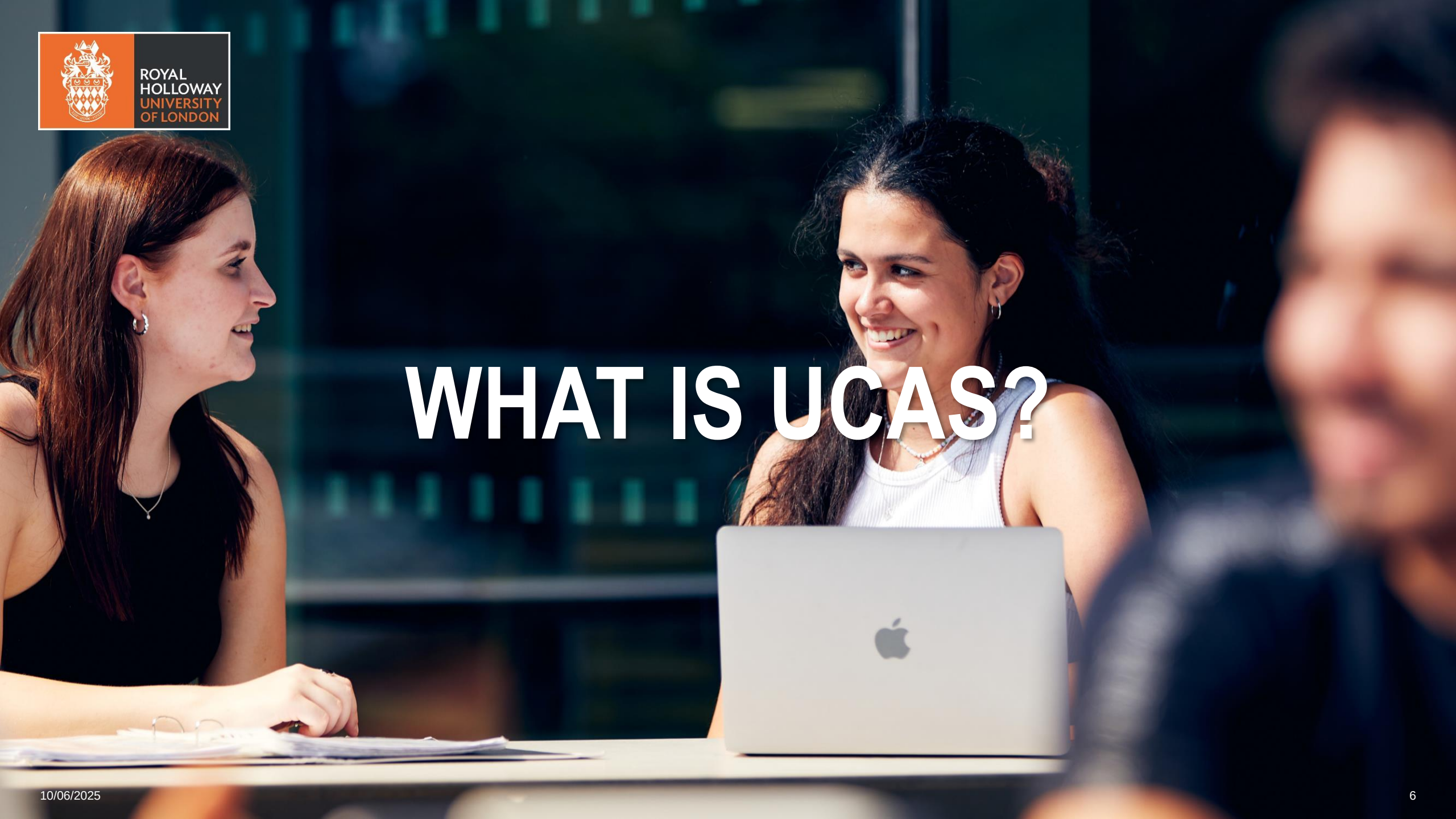
Accounting & Finance
Biological Science
Business & Management
Classics
Comparative Literature & Culture
Computer Science
Drama & Theatre
Earth Sciences
Economics
Electronic Engineering
English
Geography
Health Studies
History
Languages, Literature & Cultures
Law & Criminology
Liberal Arts
Mathematics
Media Arts
Music
Philosophy
Physics
Politics & International Relations
Psychology
Social Science

TODAY’S SESSION

- What is UCAS?
- What are the steps to apply to university via UCAS?
- Student Finance
- How do you narrow down your choices?
- What is a personal statement?
- Next steps



WHAT IS UCAS?

WHAT IS UCAS?

UCAS

- Universities
- Colleges
- Admissions
- Service

UCAS FACTS

You can apply to up to 5 university courses

Applications cost £28.50 but the fee is waived if you receive Free School Meals

Providers can’t see where else you have applied to

APPLICATION TIMELINE

13th May 2025

UCAS opens for registrations

Summer 2025

Research universities and attend open days

2nd September 2025

Applications can be sent

15th October 2025

Oxbridge and medicine / dentistry / veterinary courses deadline

14th January 2026

‘General’ application deadline

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO APPLY TO UNIVERSITY VIA UCAS?

THE UCAS TIMELINE

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Register and start your application → Complete your profile → Make your choices → Write your personal statement → Your teacher writes your reference → Complete your declaration → Make a payment of £28.50 → Press submit! → See responses from your choices → Chose one firm and one insurance → Place confirmed on results day → Start university in September!

THE UCAS TIMELINE

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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Complete your profile

Make your choices

Write your personal statement

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Press submit!

See responses from your choices

Chose one firm and one insurance

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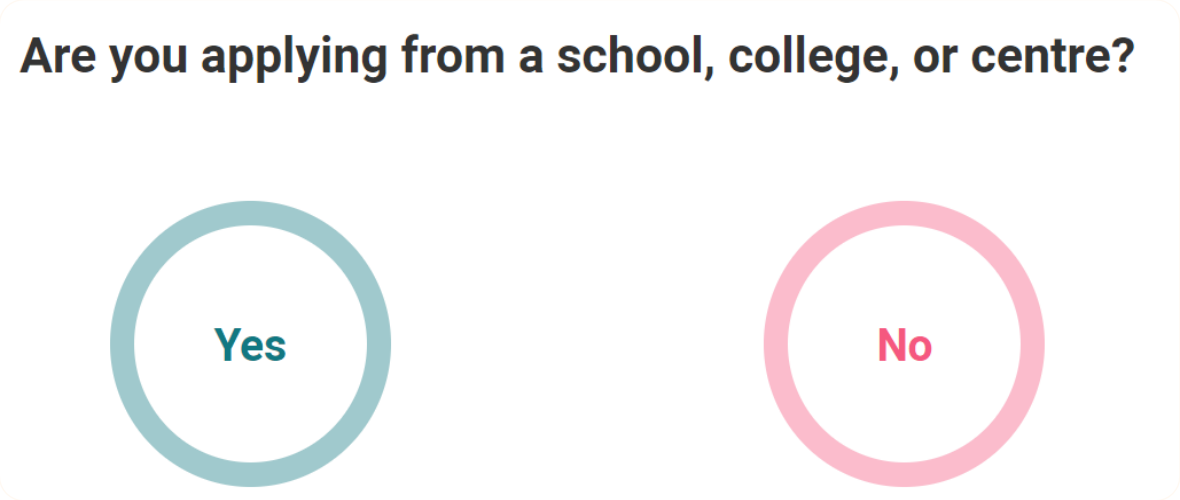
Start university in September!

STARTING YOUR APPLICATION

Use a buzzword to link your application

School / college will give you this word

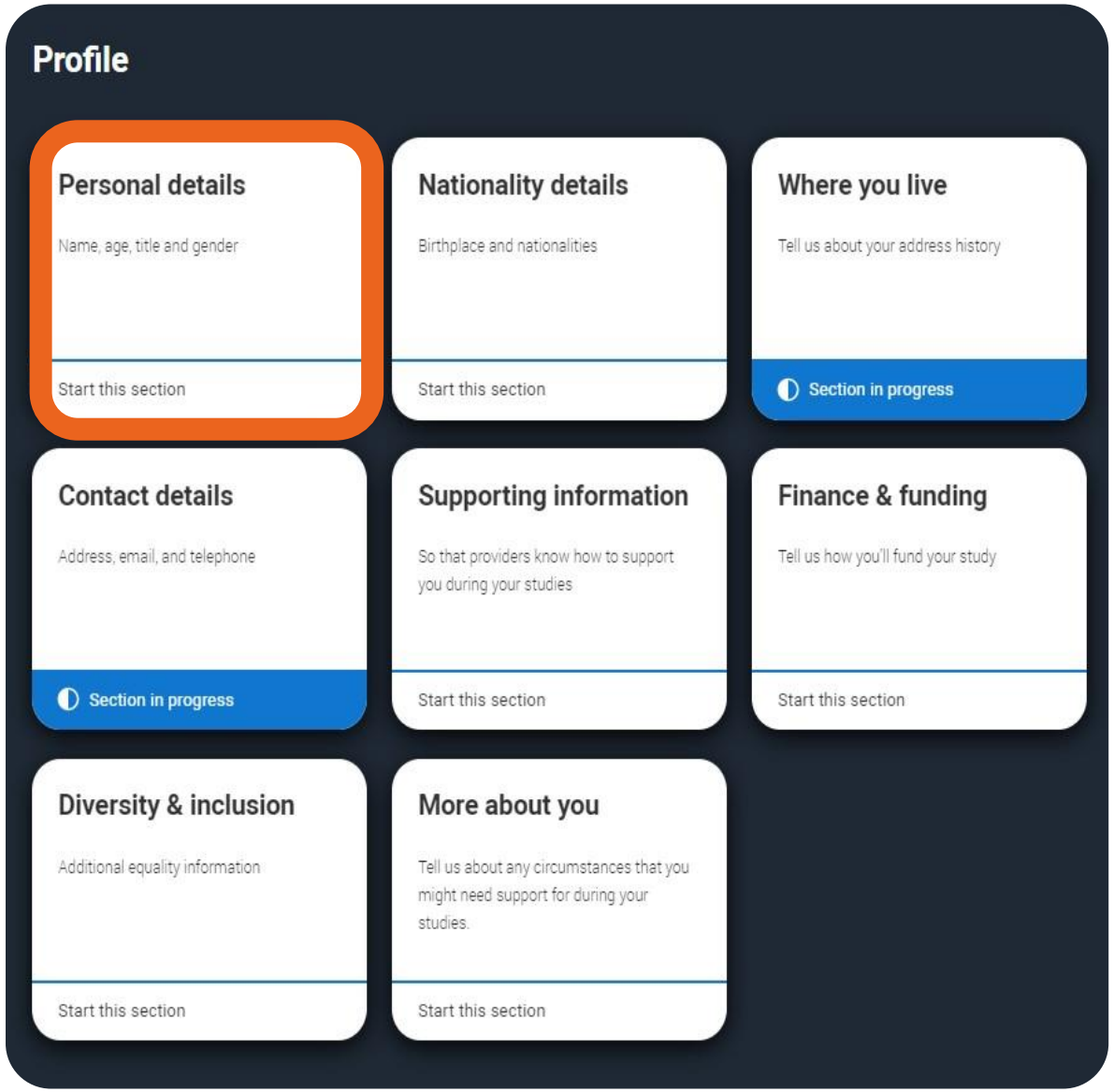


COMPLETING YOUR PROFILE

Name

Date of birth

Gender

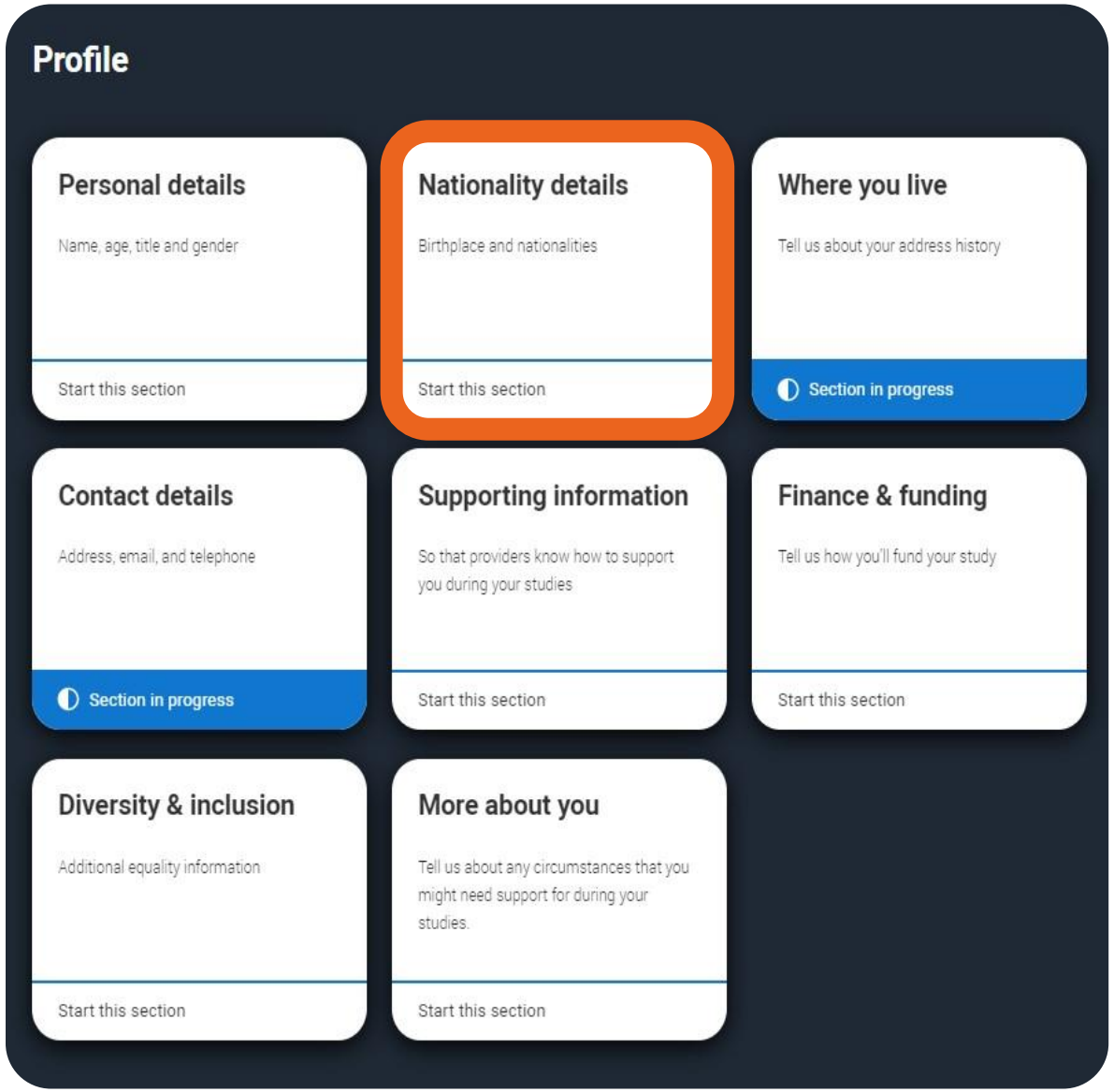


COMPLETING YOUR PROFILE

Country of birth

Nationality

Visa details

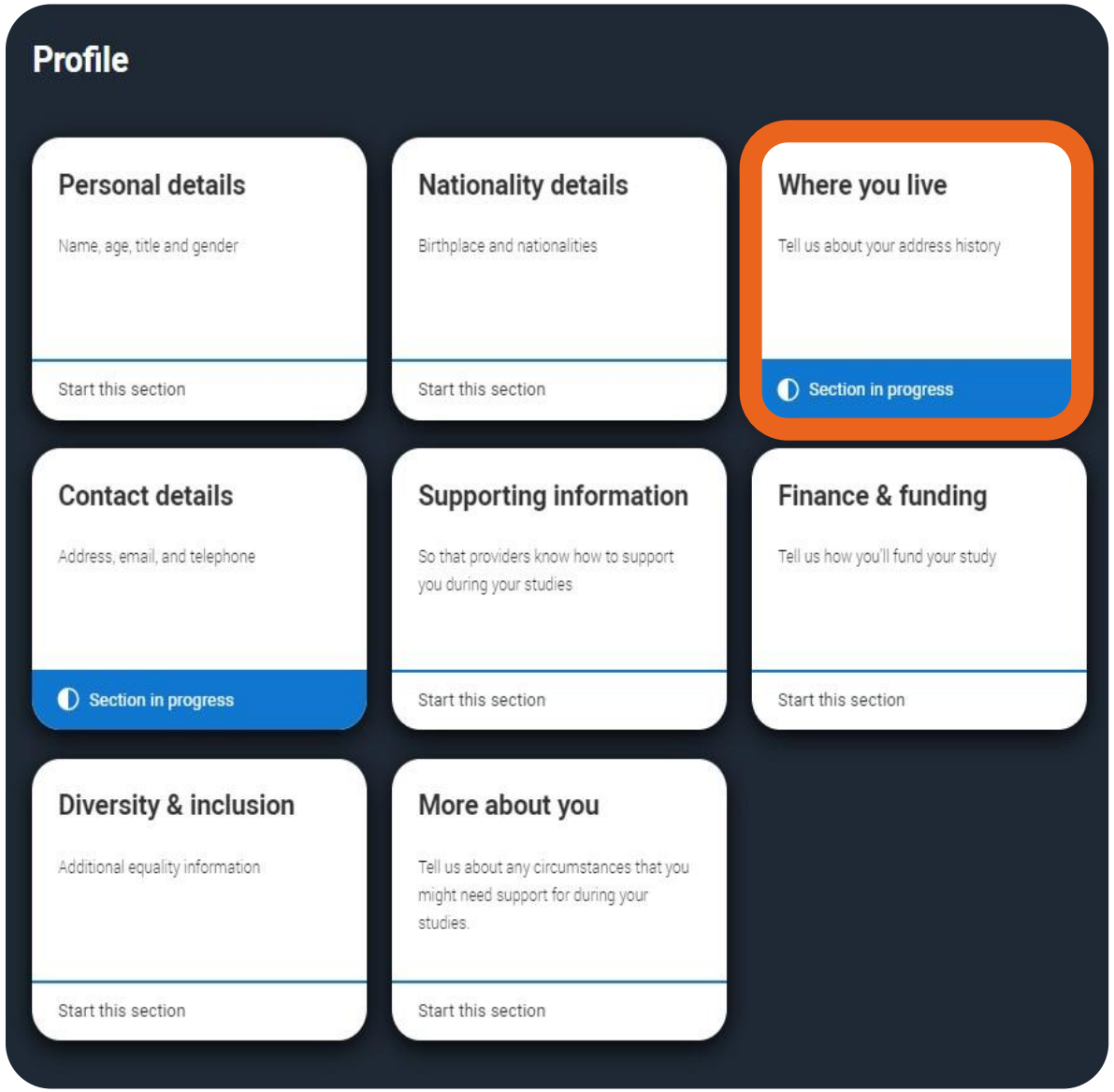


COMPLETING YOUR PROFILE

Going back 3 years

Current address

Overseas addresses

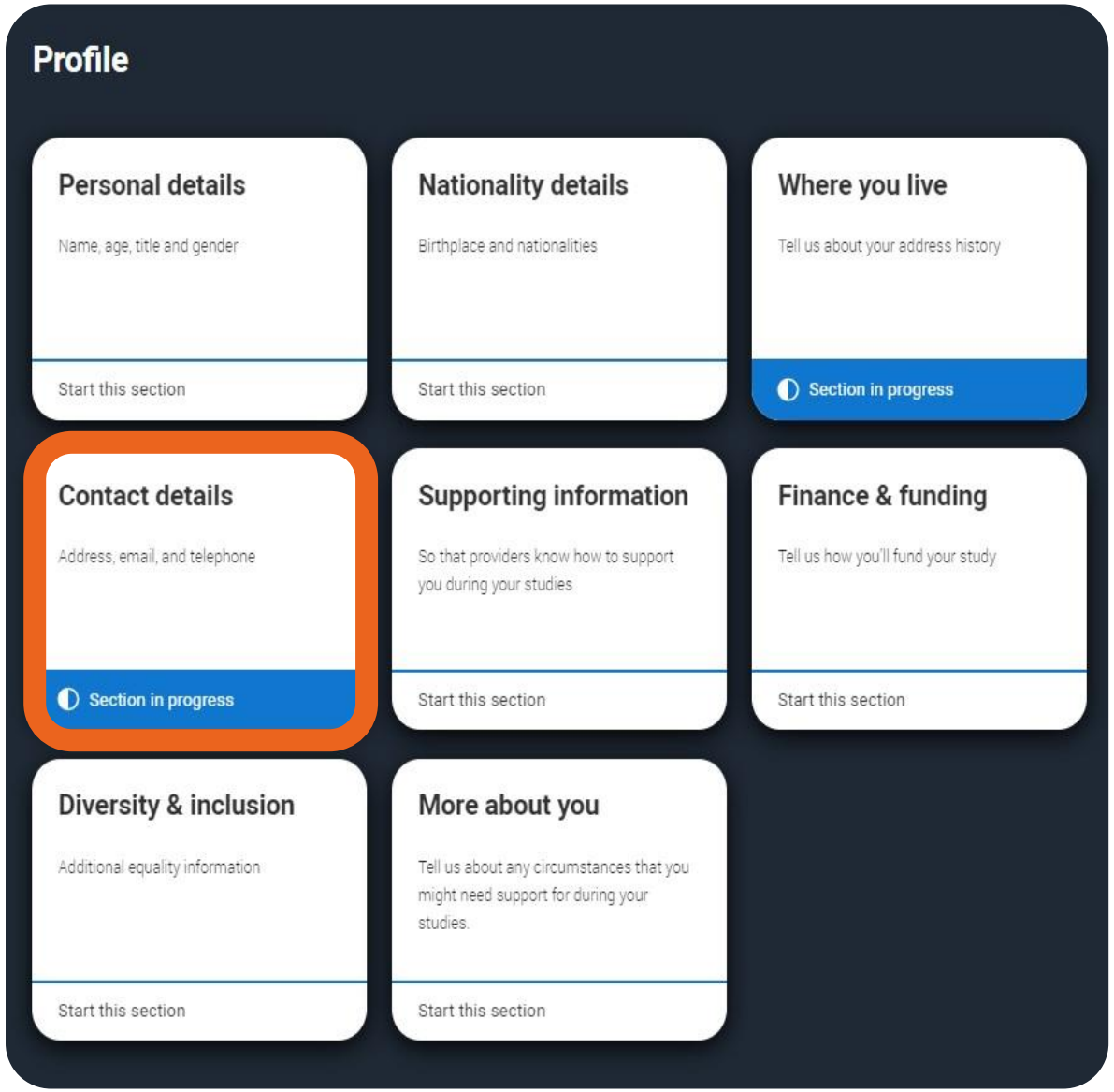


COMPLETING YOUR PROFILE

Phone number

Email address

Nominated access

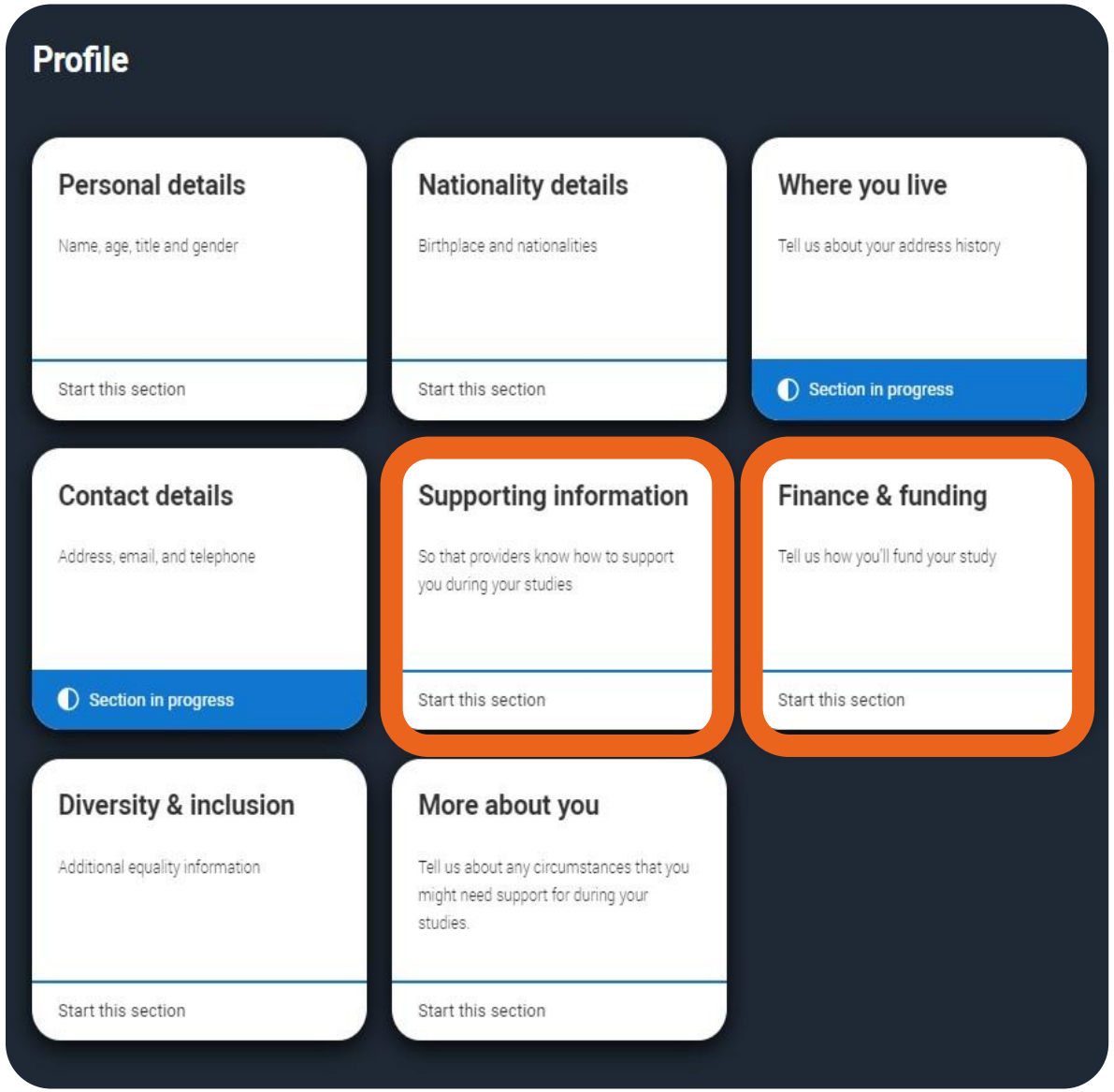


COMPLETING YOUR PROFILE

How will you pay for university?

Student finance / self funded

Local authority



What is student finance?

Government funding that allows students from any financial background to go to university

It is managed by the Student Loan Company and Student Finance England

You apply for student finance before you start each year of your degree

UNIVERSITY COSTS AND HOW TO PAY FOR THEM

Tuition Fees

Tuition fee loan

Scholarships & bursaries

Own funding

Covers the full cost of the tuition fee

Paid directly by the Student Loan Company to the university.

Not based on household income – everyone gets the same amount

Tuition fees are the cost of studying at your chosen institution.

Your tuition fees vary depending on where you're from and where you're studying.

Universities in the UK can charge up to a maximum of £9,535 per year.

UNIVERSITY COSTS AND HOW TO PAY FOR THEM

This is everything else you might spend money on:

Accommodation

Clothes

Social life

Phone bill

Food

Travel

Different amounts depending on your situation

- Where you're from
- Where you're studying
- Whether you will be living at home whilst you study
- Partly based on household income

Paid directly to you three times a year (Sept, Jan & April).

Everyday spending

Maintenance loan

Extra support for students with disabilities or carers

Bursaries and scholarships

Own funding

MAINTENANCE LOAN AMOUNTS

Household Income	Living at home	Away from home (outside London)	Away from home (London)
<£25,000	£8,877	£10,544	£13,762
£40,000	£6,642	£8,285	£11,465
£65,000	£3,907	£4,915	£7,637

*2025/26 Entry – Sliding scale
www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator

OTHER GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Disabled Students' Allowance

Travel Grants

Dependents' and Childcare Grants

DISABLED STUDENTS ALLOWANCE (DSA)

- ADHD
- Anorexia
- Anxiety
- Autism
- Bi-Polar
- Cancer
- Chronic Fatigue
- Crohn’s Disease
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Eating Disorder
- Epilepsy
- IBS
- Migraines
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Scoliosis
- Spina Bifida
- Specific Learning difficulty
- Stroke
- Tinnitus
- Visual Impairment

APPLYING FOR YOUR LOANS

- Apply online.
- Applications open in April so start early.
- You don’t need a confirmed place at university.
- You can change details later on.
- Apply for tuition fee loan, maintenance loan, or both.

APPLYING FOR YOUR LOANS

Set up account on **gov.uk/studentfinance**

→

Parents/carers to fill in their section on taxable income and NI number

→

Fill in details: university and course details; bank details; ID and National Insurance number

→

Once approved, students will be sent a loan declaration with details of the funding they will receive

→

Sign and return form

→

Tuition fees will be paid directly to the university and students will receive their maintenance

HOW DO REPAYMENTS WORK?

HOW DO REPAYMENTS WORK?

You do not start repaying your student loan until the April after you graduate

Your repayments are based on how much you earn and come out of your pay cheque like a tax

After 40 years any remaining debt is wiped

THRESHOLDS

£25,000 per year

£2,083 per month

£480 per week

9% over

If your income drops below this at any time you will stop making repayments

EXTRA SUPPORT

Scholarships

- Academic excellence or ability in other areas e.g. sport.
- Competitive - you are applying to a set number of awards against other students.

Bursaries

- Awarded on personal circumstances e.g. household income.
- Usually everyone who is eligible receives the award.

UK students are potentially missing out on more than £150 million worth of scholarships, according to research by The Scholarship Hub

SCHOLARSHIPS

- Barbara Raw Scholarships for English
- Barbara Raw for English Access Scholarship
- Donald Davies Computer Science Scholarship
- Elaine Etherton Scholarship
- Geoffrey Kneebone Scholarship
- Music Scholarships
- Physics Scholarship
- Sports Scholarships
- The Red Rose Future Leaders Scholarship
- University of London Scholarship

Cash award of £3,500 per year for three years for a student from the UK studying a selected Royal Holloway undergraduate degree.

Cash awards, performance and training opportunities for students who excel in their chosen music or sport.

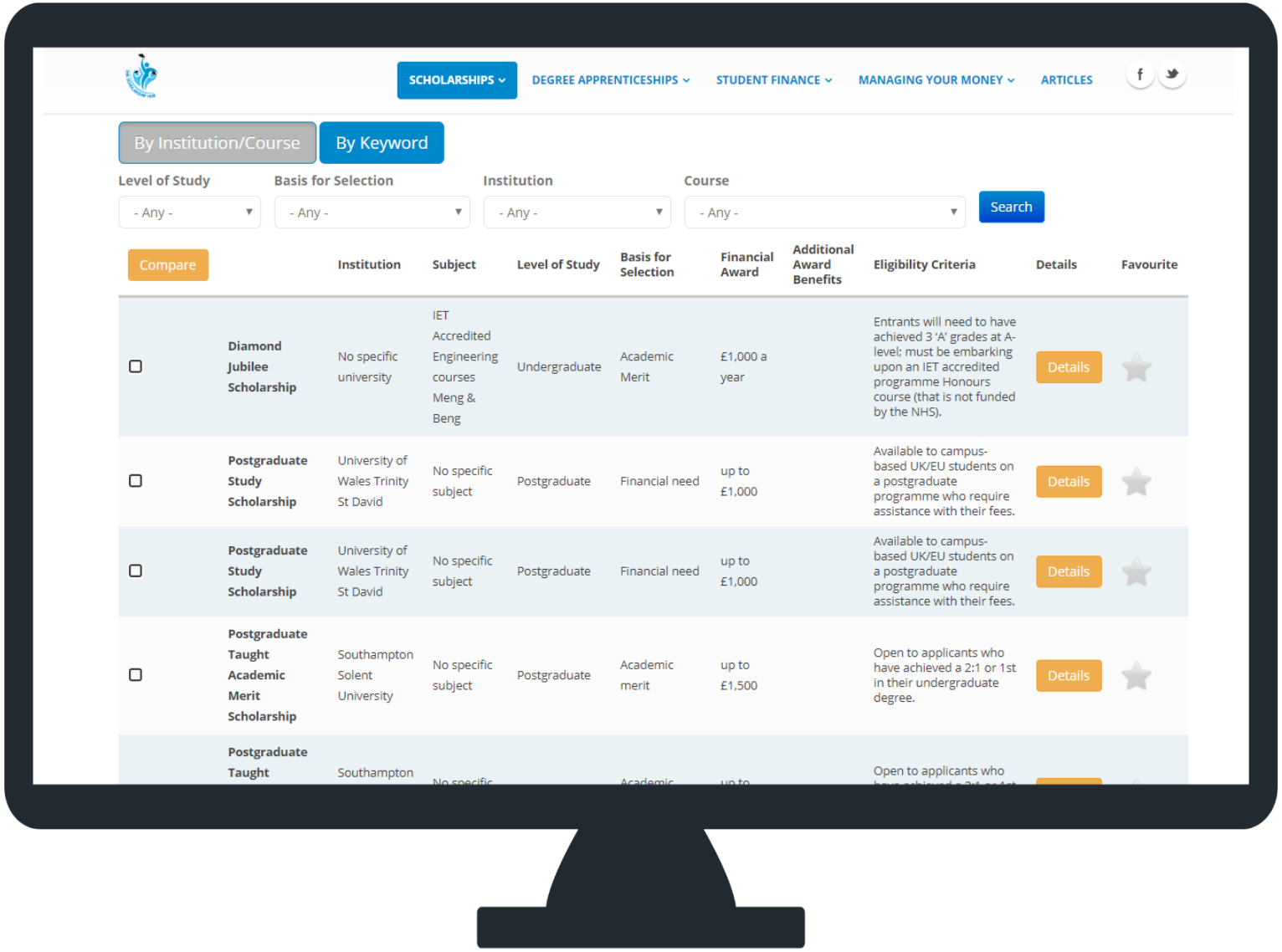
Full tuition fee reduction for students with leadership potential within selected academic departments.

Tuition fee reduction and contribution towards living costs up to £10,000 for students from London.

BURSARIES

Access Entry	**£1,000** in each year of study
Care Leavers and Estranged Students	**£3,000** in each year of study
Household income less than £25,000	**£1,300** in each year of study
Household income between £25,000-£30,000	**£500** in each year of study

Scholarship Hub

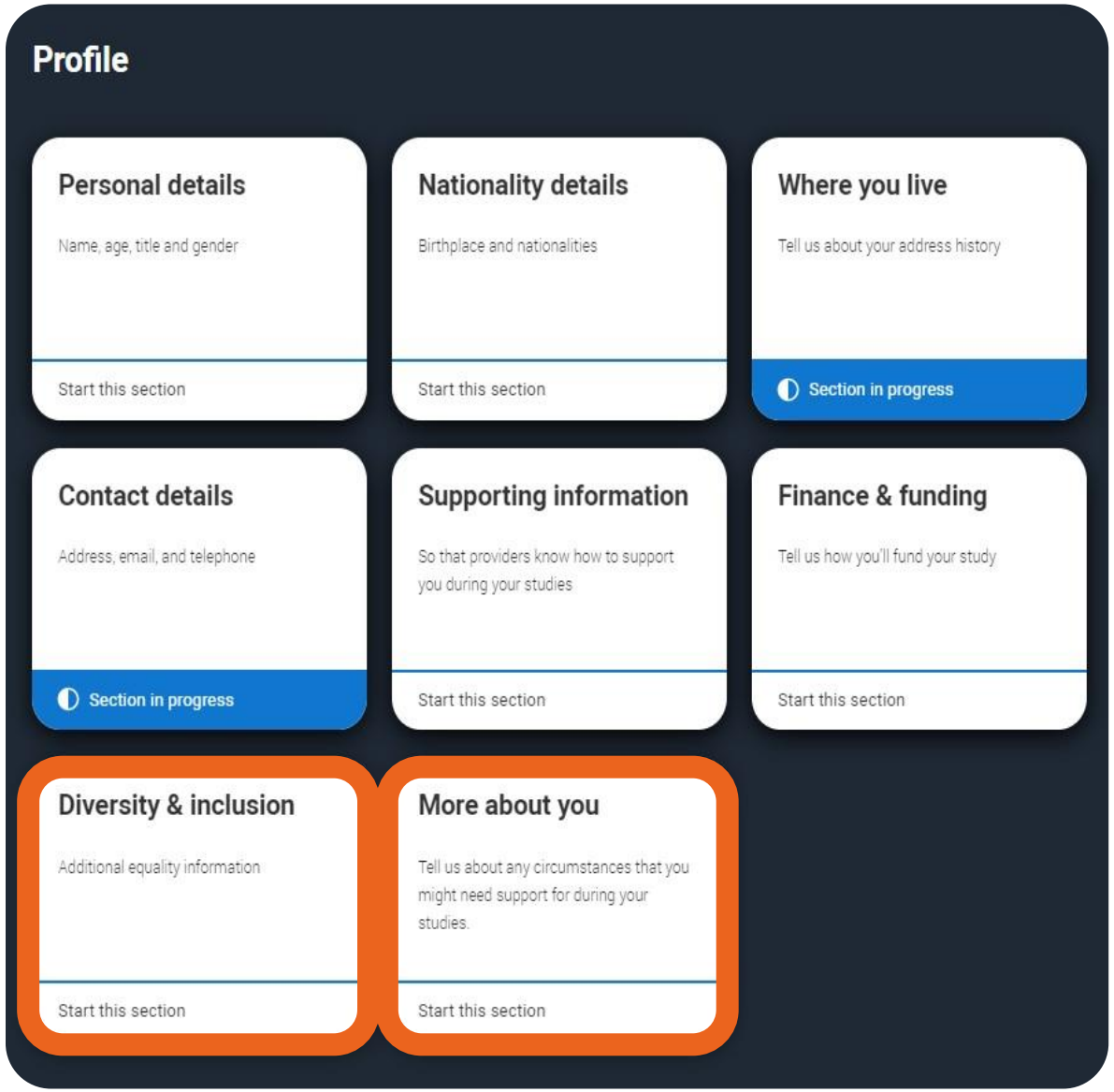


COMPLETING YOUR PROFILE

Questions about personal circumstances

Optional and confidential

Only shared with the universities after offer making

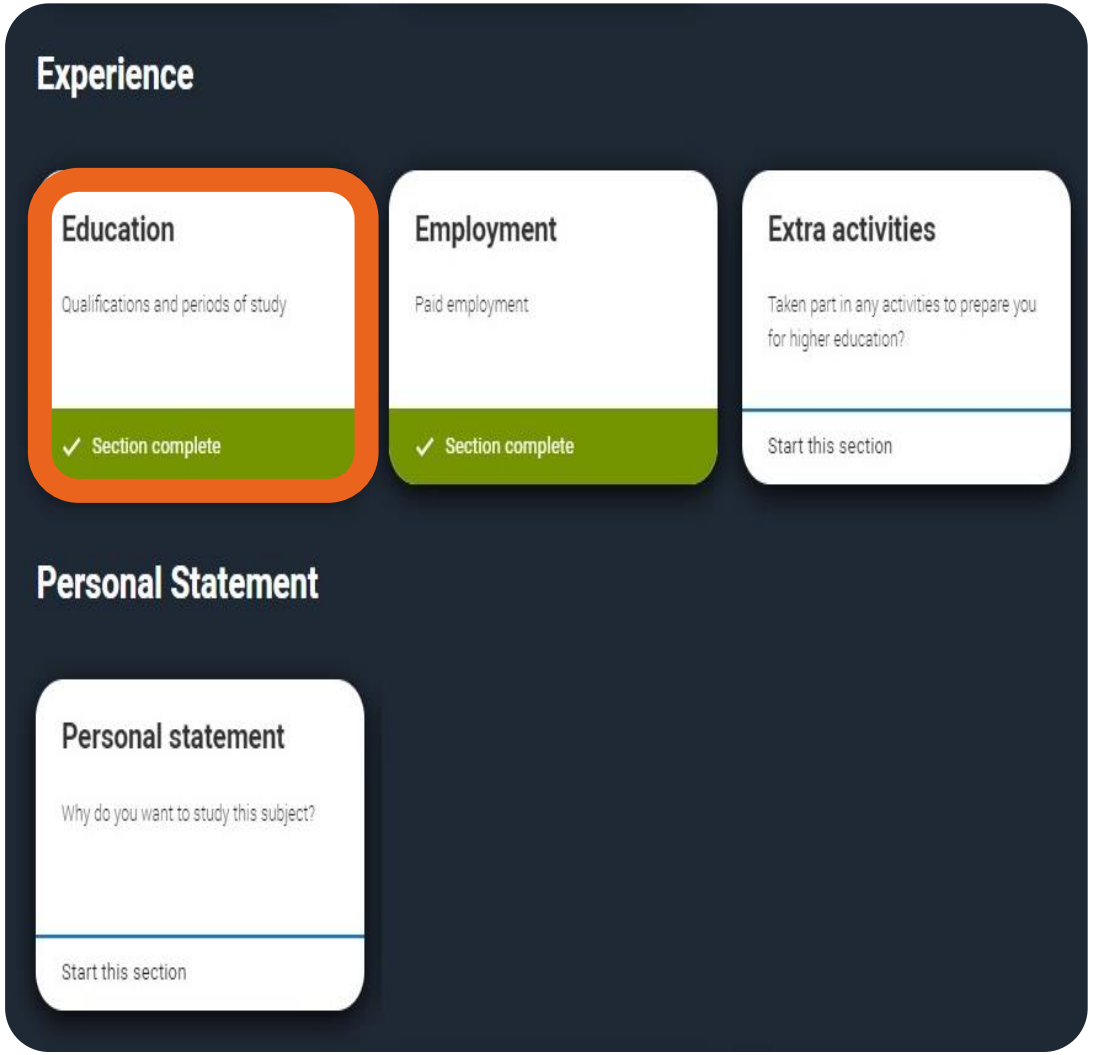


COMPLETING YOUR EXPERIENCE

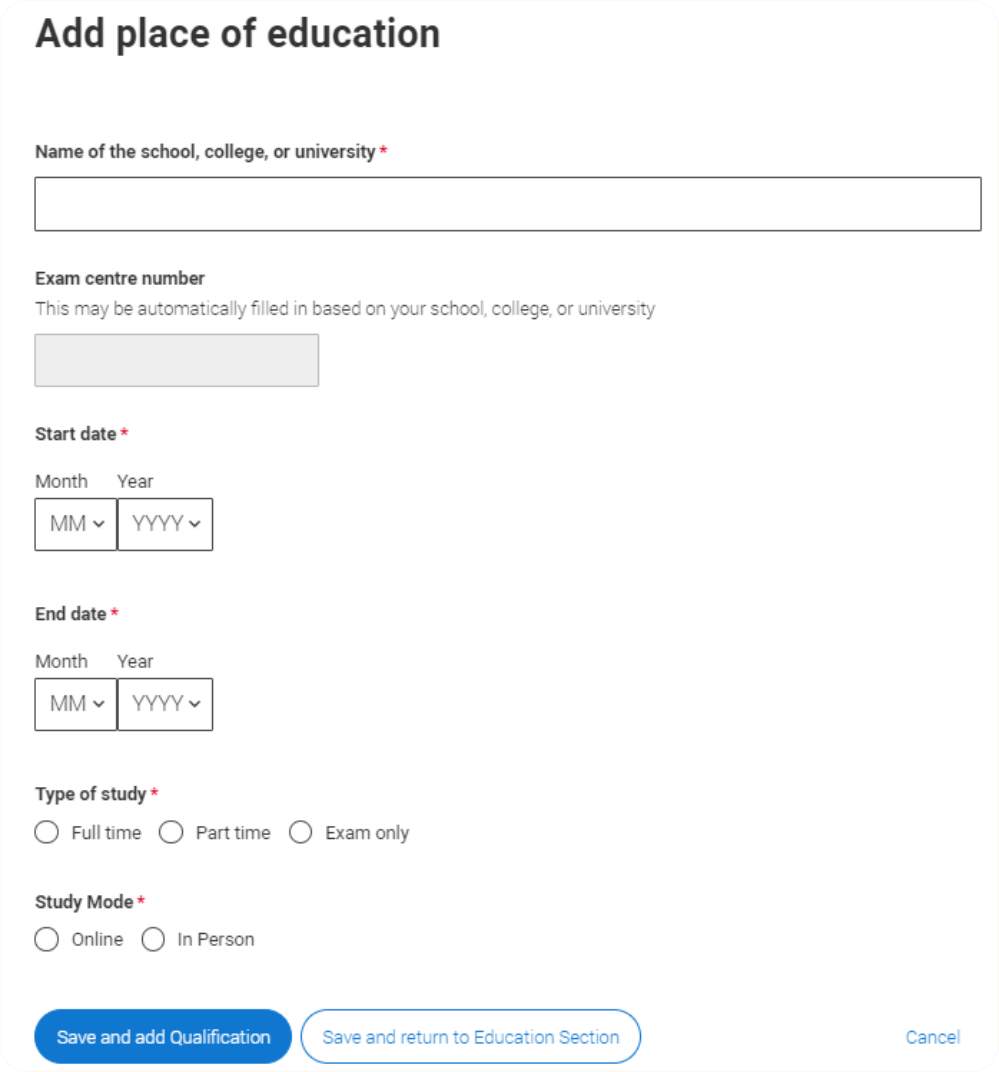
Start by adding a ‘place of education’

Include dates, type of study, and study mode

Add in each individual qualification



COMPLETING YOUR EXPERIENCE

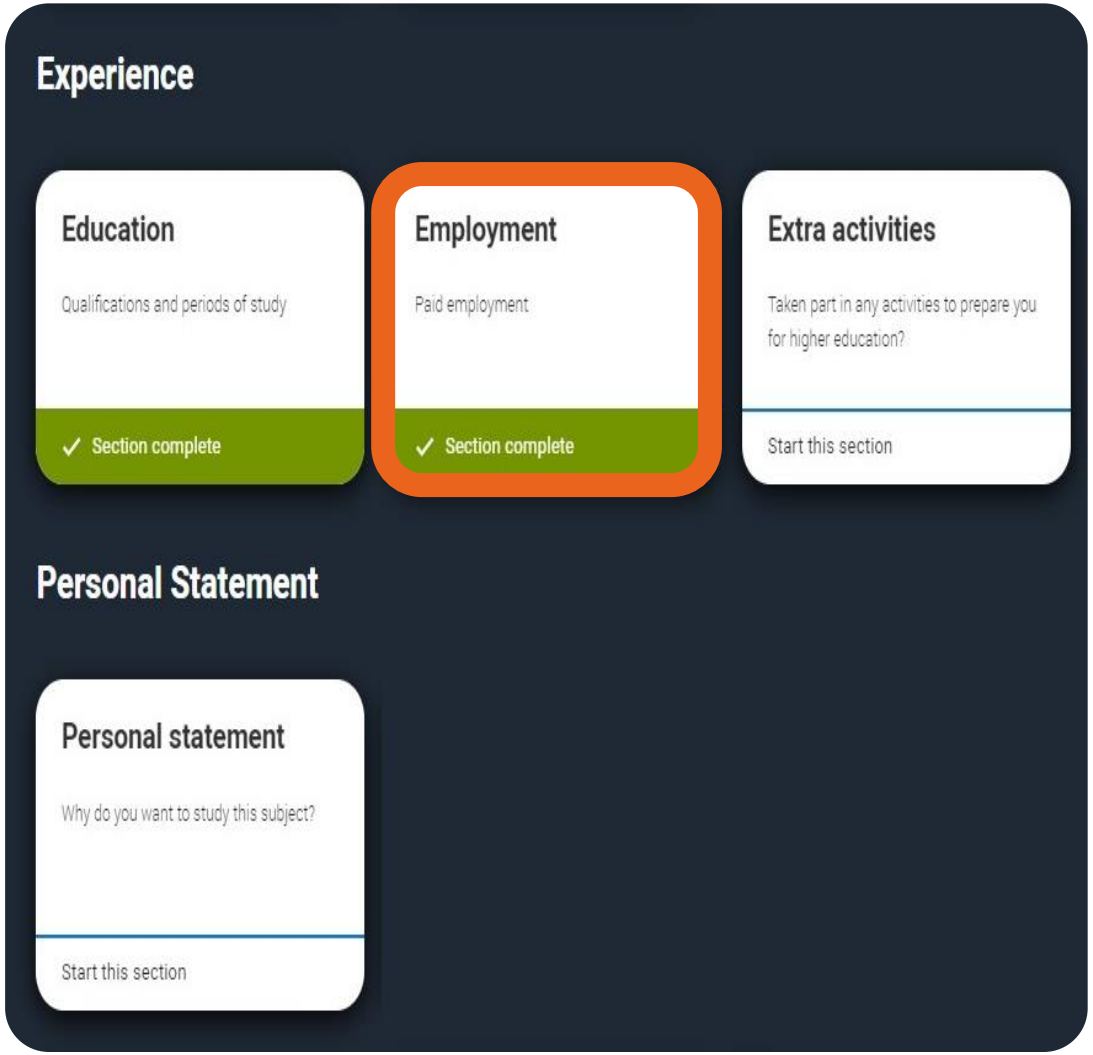


COMPLETING YOUR EXPERIENCE

Only for **paid** work, an optional section

Don’t include volunteering or work experience

List work experience in chronological order

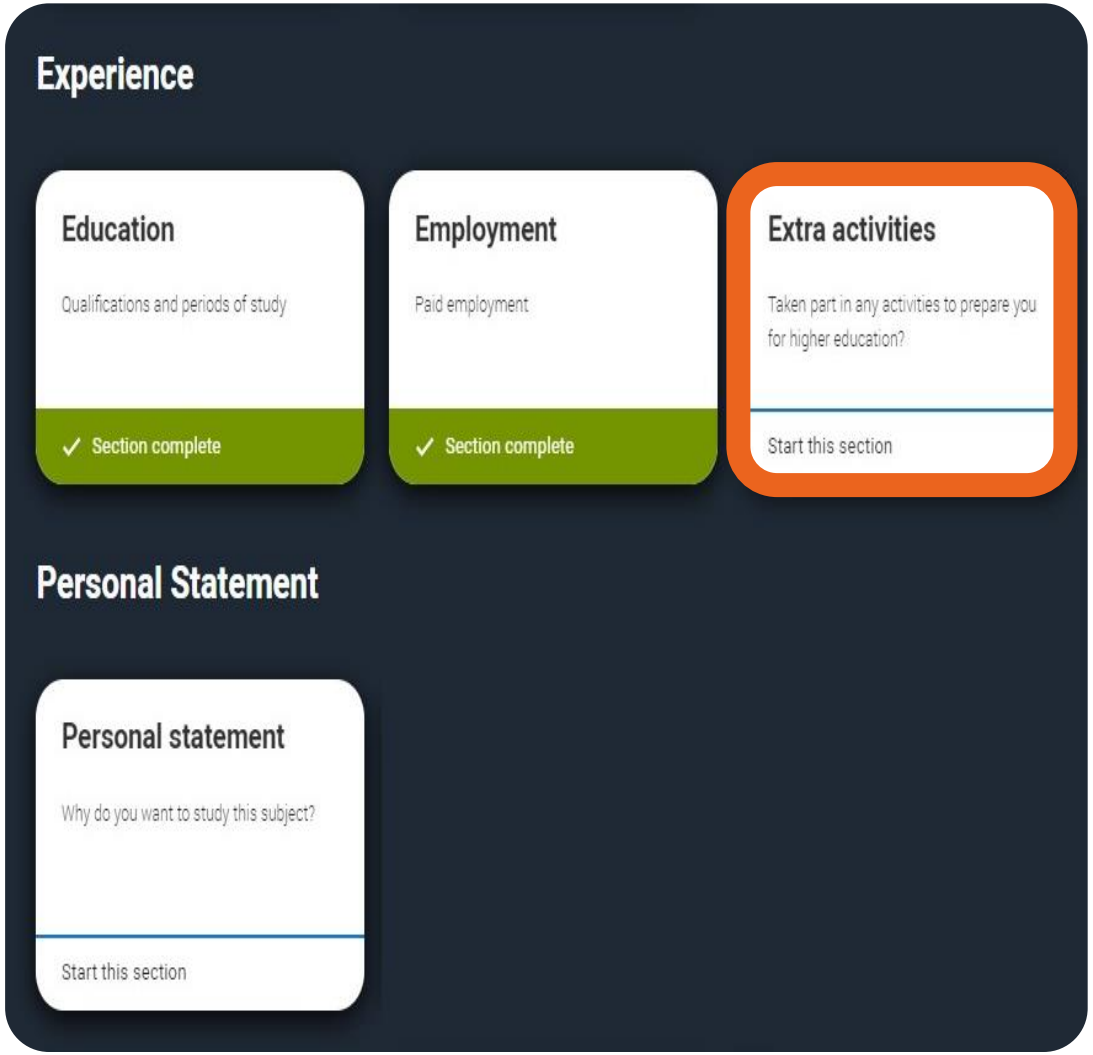


COMPLETING YOUR EXPERIENCE

Any activity that has prepare you for higher education

Taster courses, summer schools, uni residentials etc

Open days are not relevant



HOW DO YOU NARROW DOWN YOUR CHOICES?

THE UCAS TIMELINE

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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Your teacher writes your reference

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Press submit!

See responses from your choices

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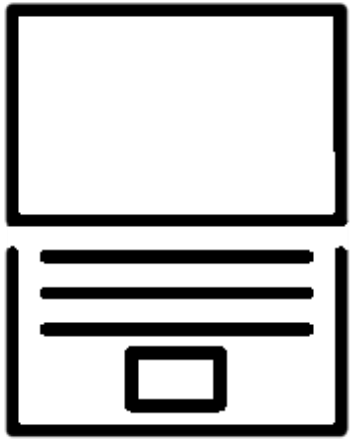
Place confirmed on results day

Start university in September!

HOW TO NARROW DOWN YOUR CHOICES

Reflect on your plans and priorities



Research your options

Make a shortlist

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

C ourse

O pportunity

L ocation

L eague tables

E ntry requirements

G ut

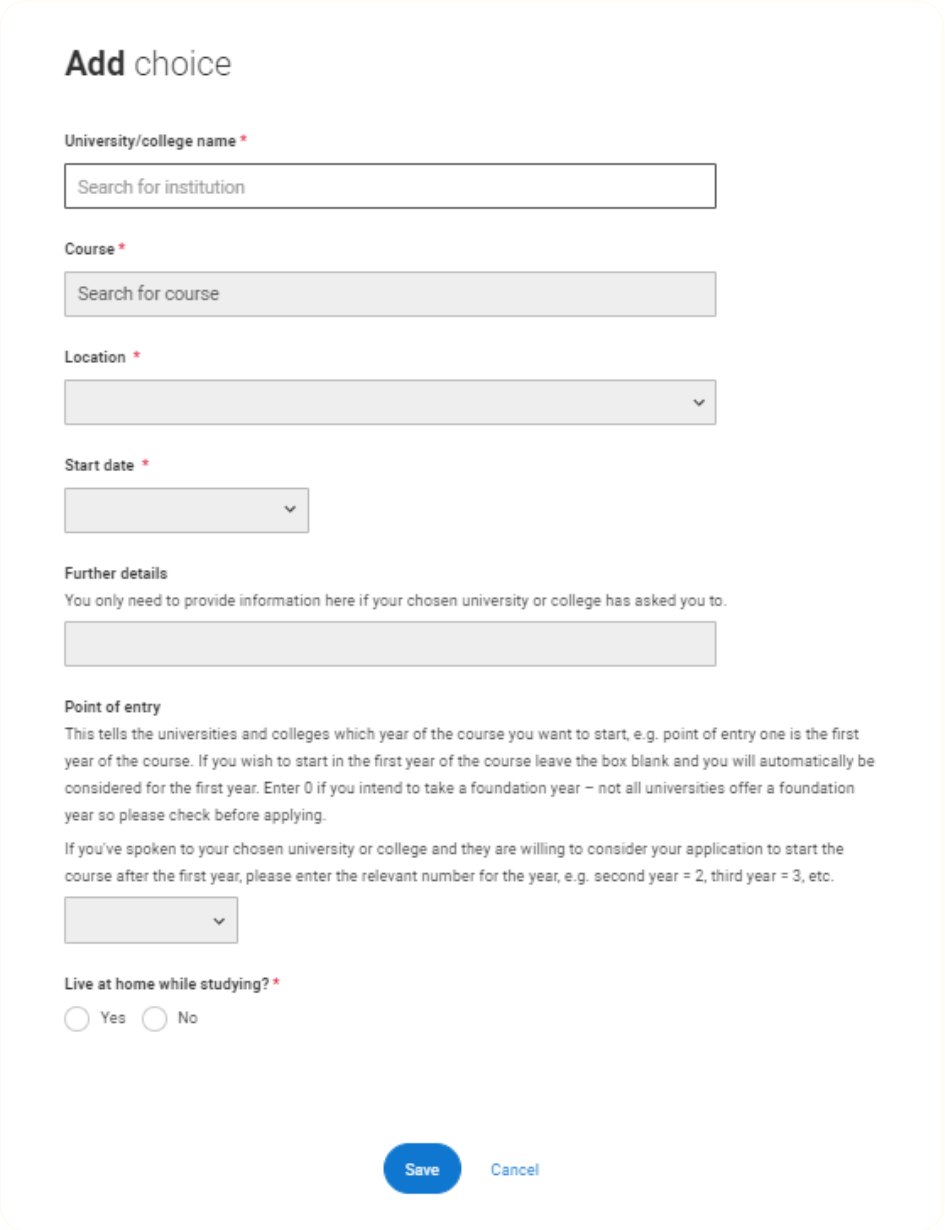
E ducation style

ADDING A CHOICE

You can add up to 5 choices

Some might require additional information

Universities will not see where else you have applied



YOUR CHOICES

BA History at Royal Holloway

BA History at Kingston

BA History at Reading

BA History at Bath Spa

BA History at Keele

OR

BA History at Royal Holloway

BA Ancient History at Royal Holloway

BA Classics at Royal Holloway

BA History at Bath Spa

BA History at Keele

WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

THE UCAS TIMELINE

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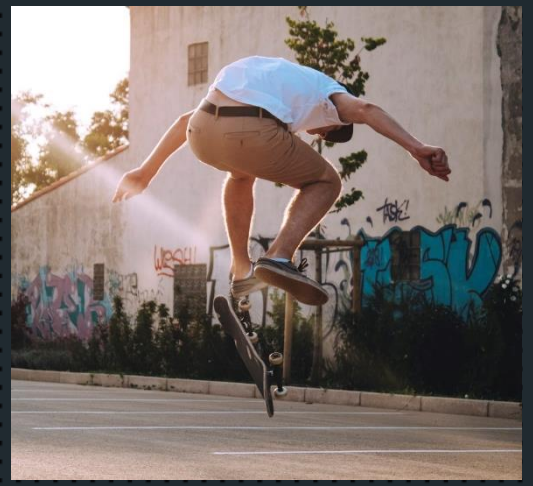
PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Reflective writing – promote yourself
- 3 Questions to answer
- 350 minimum characters per question
- 4,000-total characters max
- 1 statement for all 5 choices
- Don’t mention a university by name
- Checked for plagiarism

Why do you need a personal statement?



Opportunity to demonstrate skills, experiences and thoughts

Let's universities know who is behind the grades

Allows you to stand out from the crowd

Chance to practice writing about yourself

WHAT ARE UNIVERSITIES LOOKING FOR?

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

ABLE TO STUDY INDEPENDENTLY

MOTIVATED AND HIGH ACHIEVING

INTELLECTUALLY CAPABLE

INTEREST IN STUDYING SUBJECT

CAN CONTRIBUTE TO UNIVERSITY LIFE

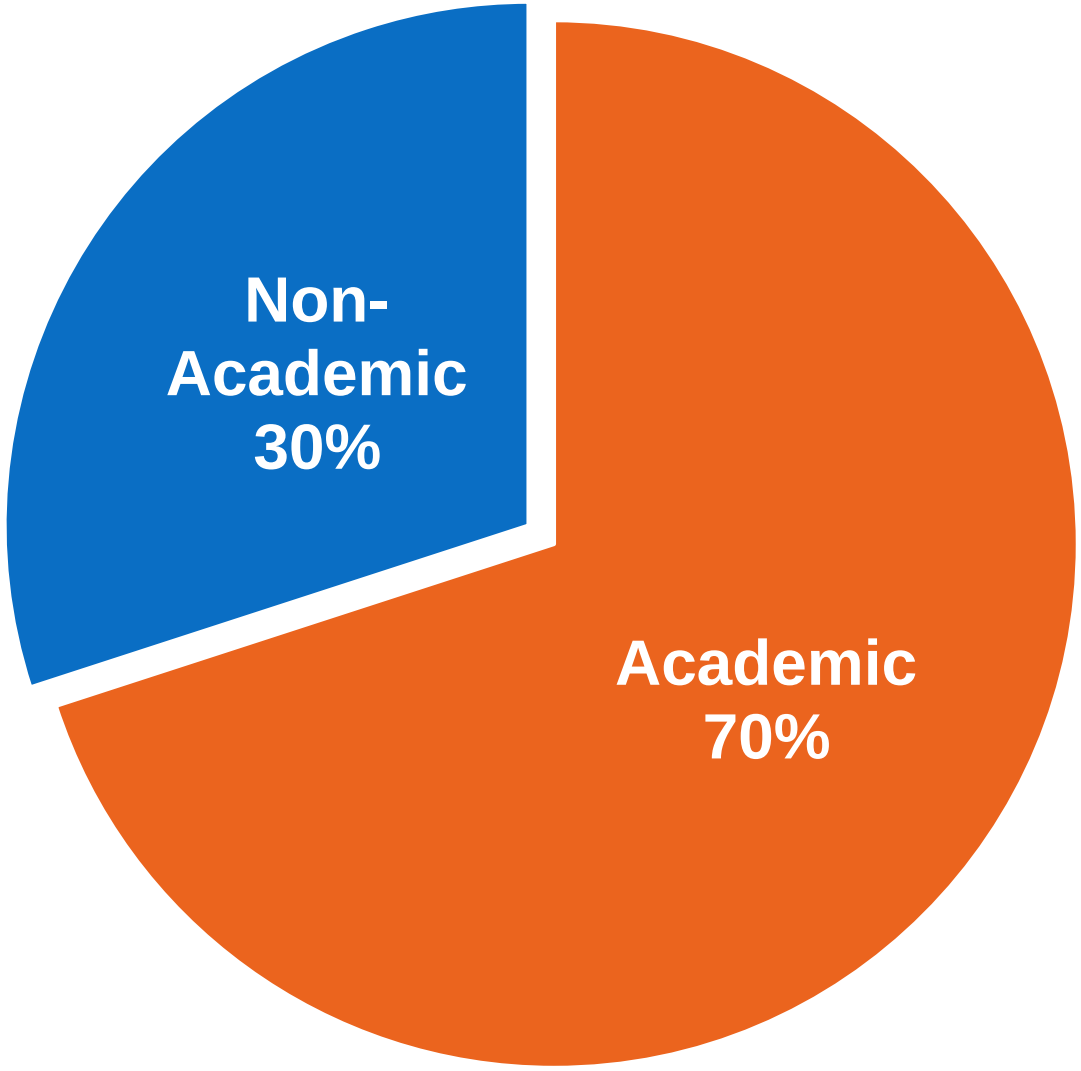
SIGNIFICANT SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE

POTENTIAL TO SUCCEED

FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Non - Academic (30%)

- What other skills and experience do you have?
- What have you done outside of your studies?
- How are these activities relevant?



The questions

Question 1

- **Why do you want to study this course or subject?**
  - Why are you interested in this course? Why do you want to study it at degree level?
  - Is there a book or subject expert doing great things that's sparked your interest?
  - Career ambitions

Question 2

- **How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?**
  - How do your A-Levels or BTECs link to your chosen course?
  - What independent reading or research have you done? e.g. academic content
  - What other course-related activities have you taken part in? e.g. taster sessions, field trips

Question 3

- **What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?**
  - What additional activities do you take part in?
  - How could these show skills that are relevant for studying at university level?
  - Work experience, volunteering, hobbies

ABCs Method

A ctivity - what did you do?

B enefit –what skills or experience did you gain?

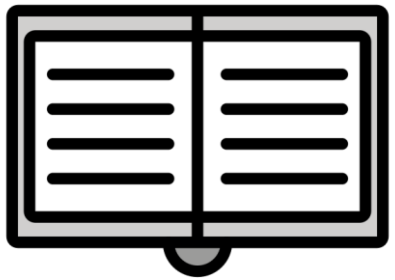
C ourse – how does it relate to your course?

S pecifics – numbers, names and titles

Reviewing your personal statement

Try reading it out loud

Utilise teachers / friends / family members



Check names, dates and technical language.

Keep checking even when you are sick of it

Make sure there is no passive language (e.g. ‘I feel’)

Spelling, grammar and punctuation need to be perfect!

Personal statement top tips

Explain why you're right for the course

Say what you've done outside the classroom & why it's relevant.

Reflect on what you want to do after university

Make it easy to read

Start strong

Write naturally

Don't write it directly on UCAS

PERSONAL & STATEMENT!

NEXT STEPS

THE UCAS TIMELINE

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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TEACHER REFERENCES

Written by your teacher, careers adviser, or tutor

Provides universities with a positive academic account of you

Gives information about extenuating circumstances

THE UCAS TIMELINE

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TYPES OF OFFERS

Unconditional	The student has a place on that course, regardless of what happens on results day.
Conditional	The student must meet certain grades on results day to be accepted onto that course.
Unsuccessful / withdrawn	The student has not met the grades required, or cannot be offered a place on that course.

TYPES OF RESPONSES

Firm	If students meet the offer conditions, they will have a place here in September.
Insurance	This should be a course with a lower grade offer in case the student misses their firm grades.
Decline	The other three courses the student has decided they do not want to take up offer with.

THE UCAS TIMELINE

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Thank you for listening! QUESTIONS?

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

What is a contextual offer?

UCAS Deadline?

Commuting vs halls?

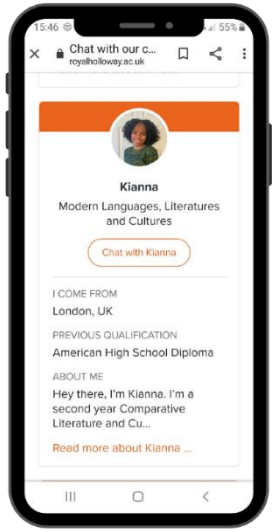
Joint honours?

Societies/ Clubs?

Student Finance?

Study Abroad or Placement?

Sign up to our mailing list to find out more and get sent information about our open days



Chat to our students and staff