

Accepting an unconditional offer

You might have heard stories about unconditional offers, and how a friend-of-a-friend's next-door neighbour's cousin received one before they got their exam results. In the past this would probably have been an urban myth or at most, not the whole story. However, some universities are now making [unconditional offers](#) to exceptional applicants who don't have their results yet. Some universities and colleges make unconditional offers based on an interview/audition, admissions test or predicted grades.

Here, we explain what you need to consider if you're thinking about accepting one of these offers.

Having an unconditional offer from your favourite university at an early stage of your application can be very reassuring. It means that if you select them as your firm choice, you will definitely be accepted on to the course, regardless of what grades you get in the summer.

But there can be a bit of confusion about accepting unconditional offers, so before you select one as your firm choice, make sure you know the facts.

If you accept an unconditional offer as your firm choice:

1. Your exam results won't affect whether or not you get accepted but that doesn't mean they're not important.

Here's why:

- When you apply for work placements and jobs, you will be asked about your qualifications. Often there are requirements from pre-university qualifications. Employers may look at all your qualifications, and may even use A levels or other qualifications as well as degrees to shortlist potential candidates so they do still matter.
- When you start at uni you'll be straight into assignments, coursework and for many courses, exams. The qualifications you're studying for at the moment are essential preparation for this and are the foundations of your future studies.
- Your new course mates at uni are likely to have completed relevant qualifications before they've started the course, so you'd have to play catch-up from the moment you arrive if you chose not to finish your A levels or equivalent. That's not easy when you already have so many new things to learn.
- Sometimes things don't go to plan. If you arrive at your chosen uni and decide it's not right for you, you may choose to reapply for other unis or look for jobs instead. Leaving gaps where your education is concerned could have a negative impact.

2. You cannot have an insurance choice. Because 'unconditional' means you'll get a place on the course, you don't need the option of another choice. If instead you accept a conditional offer as your firm choice then it's OK to accept an unconditional offer as your insurance choice. That said, a university may stipulate that their offer is only unconditional if you make them your firm choice, so be sure to check any terms attached to their offer before you reply.

3. You can't just go into Clearing to accept a different university if you decide on results day that you no longer want the place. By accepting the offer you're entering into a commitment with the university, so it's important to make sure you pick your favourite choice to be your firm choice. If you do change your mind, you'll have to contact your unconditional firm choice university and ask to be released in to Clearing. If your insurance choice is unconditional, you also need to be prepared to be accepted by that university if you are unsuccessful with your conditional firm choice.

4. Even though your place is confirmed at the university, it's important that you check the offer carefully. Even if you've already got your qualifications and have met the entry requirements, you might still need to do other things before you start, such as getting a DBS check or providing proof of your qualifications. If you need help deciding which offer to accept as your firm choice, speak to your tutors and careers advisers. Family and friends can also offer alternative perspectives you might not have considered, and reading blogs from current students already at your university choices can provide a valuable insight into what it's like to be part of their student community.

If you're unsure of the offer shown in Track, please contact the university or college who will be able to explain why they've made the offer they have.



St Mary's Catholic School

IF YOU RECEIVE AN UNCONDITIONAL OFFER:

1. Don't immediately accept it.
2. Tell your Tutor and Head of Sixth Form.
3. We will arrange a meeting with your parents to discuss this, the options and importance of doing well.
4. We will track your progress more closely and have regular update meetings.
5. We will speak regularly to your subjects teachers and expect you to meet your target grades.