November 2026

Parent pathways

From first thoughts to first term







From shortlist to next steps: your November guide

Dear parents,

Welcome to our November issue of *Parent Pathways*. In October, we explored open days, shortlists and those first application steps. This month, we're helping you support your young person as they narrow down their UCAS choices and start putting their personal statement into words for a first draft.

1 A little planning.....

Remember to gain a broad picture and get all the info that you need to make an informed decision:

Research

Check out how universities compare in our institutional league table

Filter by the measures that matter most to your young person and tailor to their needs.

Compare

See which unis excel in certain subject areas you may be considering in our subject tables.

Hear from current students

Read reviews from the universities you are interested in. Find out what their students think and how they'd rate different areas,

2 Start the personal statement with a conversation

A blank page can feel like a big hurdle. Before your young person worries about an opening sentence, suggest a short chat about what interests them and what they have already done.

Then check out our guide on what to include in your personal statement

The UCAS personal statement has three questions. Help them gather ideas around these themes:

Why do you want to study this course or subject?

How have your qualifications and studies helped you prepare?

What else have you done to prepare outside education, and why is it useful?

Try asking: "What have you studied, done or experienced that made you want to learn more about this subject, and why?" to get them brainstorming ideas.

RESOURCE

Personal statement writing tips

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Make your personal statement stand out

3 Use November open days to answer the last questions

If your young person is deciding between courses or universities, an open day can help fill the gaps. Let them lead the visit and speak to students and course staff.

Read our guide for parents attending open days and keep the application moving one step at a time. November is a useful time to agree a simple plan: confirm course choices, make time for a first statement draft and check who is providing the reference.

Your November checklist:

- Compare the courses on their shortlist and check entry requirements.
- Gather personal statement examples and begin a first draft.
- Use an open day or online event to answer outstanding questions.

RESOURCE

Open day planning guide

Help us grow our parent community

Tell parents about our free Parent Pathways newsletter and we will continue to send trusted information, useful tools and supportive guidance every step of the way.

We want to help parents help their children make informed decisions.

Best wishes from the Whatuni & Complete University Guide team