

## CONTEXTUAL OFFERS

Contextual offers are when universities take into account applicants' personal circumstances before making an offer. For example, a university's normal entry requirements might be ABB at A-Level, but if you meet certain criteria they will lower the requirements to something like BBC.

In deciding whether or not to make a contextual offer, a university will look at the wider circumstances surrounding your achievements so far. They'll consider things such as where you grew up, whether you have a disability, or whether you're entitled to free school meals.

### How will my application be assessed?

Each application will be considered by the university on a case-by-case basis. By looking at your personal situation, admissions tutors will assess your potential to succeed on an undergraduate course.

### Typical criteria for contextual offers

Not all UK universities make contextual offers. For those that do, each one sets its own criteria, but they usually include a few of the following:

- You have a disability.
- You're a young carer. A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who cannot cope without support due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction.
- You've had your educational studies hindered by circumstances in your personal, social or domestic life.
- You've been separated from your family.
- You're applying from an eligible school, college or sixth form. For example, if the performance of your school, college or sixth form is lower than the national average, your academic performance so far might be given special consideration. *Please note that Bingley Grammar School does not meet this criteria, but if you previously attended another school, this might be worth checking.*
- You've spent time in local authority care. Very often, you'll need to declare that you're a care leaver on the UCAS form and have it confirmed by your referee.
- You're a refugee.
- You're a first generation Higher Education attendee (you're the first in your family to attend higher education).
- You're entitled to the 16-19 bursary or free school meals.
- Some universities run an access, widening participation or outreach programme, and completion of this might make you eligible (contact the university to find out how to be considered for this on your application).

- You live in an area with less advantaged socio-economic characteristics. This will usually be assessed using the POLAR or ACORN postcode search.

*Please note: Sometimes a contextual offer will only apply if you accept the university in question as your firm choice.*

### How to search for contextual offers using Unifrog

- Log on to Unifrog and scroll down to Special Opportunities (you'll find it under 'Searching for Opportunities').
- After clicking through, you'll be asked if you're interested in a particular subject. Most contextual offers aren't limited to particular subjects, so you can select 'Not tied to a subject' here if you like.
- You'll be asked if there are any opportunities that you want to exclude (e.g. "opportunities based on financial need or disadvantage"). You can choose any you want to exclude or leave this section blank.
- You'll then be taken to your Longlist, where you'll be able to filter by contextual offers.

- Choose the contextual offers that you're interested in, click 'Next' and you'll be taken to your Shortlist, where you can view the details of each contextual offer and the university that's offering them.

## **How to apply**

For many contextual offers, such as those offered by Aston University and Newcastle University, your UCAS application will be assessed by the admissions tutors when you apply to the university and there is no need to do anything extra.

However, for others, such as the University of Leeds *Access to Leeds* Scheme, you will need to complete a separate application form at the same time as applying through UCAS.

The details of how to apply for a contextual offer will be listed on your Shortlist; however, it's always essential to check the website of the university to get more information, particularly if a separate application is required.