

Applying to highly selective courses

Top tips for supporting students



Highly selective courses receive many more applications than they have places available. Universities are therefore more likely to request specific qualifications for entry to competitive courses that will enable them to select students with the required foundation of knowledge and the most talent, potential and ability to succeed.



1. Ensure that it is realistic your students will achieve the specified **entry requirements**. These are highly competitive courses and there will be very limited leeway in grade requirements. Speak to the relevant admissions team if you are unclear.
2. Individual universities and courses may set different **deadlines**. Make sure your students know the deadlines for their applications and any admissions tests they need to take.
3. Ensure your students have a good **understanding of the subject** they are applying for. Encourage them to follow the latest developments in the media, online and in specialist publications. More information is available in our information sheet, **Developing your students' skills and knowledge prior to application**
4. Encourage your students to apply for similar courses in the **same subject area**. Their personal statement will then be more focused on the courses they wish to study, and their application will demonstrate a clear and informed decision. More information is available in our information sheet, **Top tips for writing a personal statement** .
5. **Work or voluntary experience** can give students practical knowledge and skills, particularly useful for courses linked to professions. Where possible, this experience should be related to the area they wish to study. More information is available in strand one, **How do I help my students choose a university and course?** .



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6. Make sure you and your students pay attention to the personal statement and academic reference as they can make a real difference to whether a student receives an offer or not.
7. If your student is invited to **interview**, encourage them to prepare well. Ensure they understand the structure and composition of the course, including how it is taught and assessed. More information is available in our booklet, **How do I help my students apply to university?**^①.
8. Encourage your students to **find out as much information as possible about the university** and the area in which it is located, as they will be there for at least three years.
9. If your student has to take a test as part of the admissions process, encourage them to practise. Our guidebook, **How do I help my students apply to university?**^①, provides useful information on all the main tests, including UCAT, BMAT and LNAT. Practice test papers and helpful advice are available on all test websites.
10. There may be other routes to university. Foundation or Access programmes are provided for students who do not have the formal qualifications for immediate entry to a degree course. They help prepare students for degree-level study and gain the necessary academic knowledge. They are often targeted at students from under-represented backgrounds. Check out our resource **Alternative routes into competitive universities**.

