

University Offers and A levels

THE COTTESLOE SCHOOL

18TH JANUARY 2020

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
SKILLS HUB



Cottesloe School A level Results 2019

'The A Level results were our best ever, with 45% of all exams taken being passed at A*-B grades'.

Office for
Students



**Unconditional
offers**
**Serving the
interests of
students?**

Office for
Students



- ▶ **The Office for Students is the independent regulator of higher education in England**
- ▶ **Unconditional offers** Serving the interests of students?
- ▶ **Insight report January 2019**

Office for
Students



January 2019

‘The OfS is concerned about the potential impact of unconditional offers on student attainment and outcomes.’

Office for
Students



- ▶ **‘ The OfS is concerned about the rapid rise in unconditional offers, particularly those that require students to commit to a particular course. We will take action where they are not in students’ interests.’**

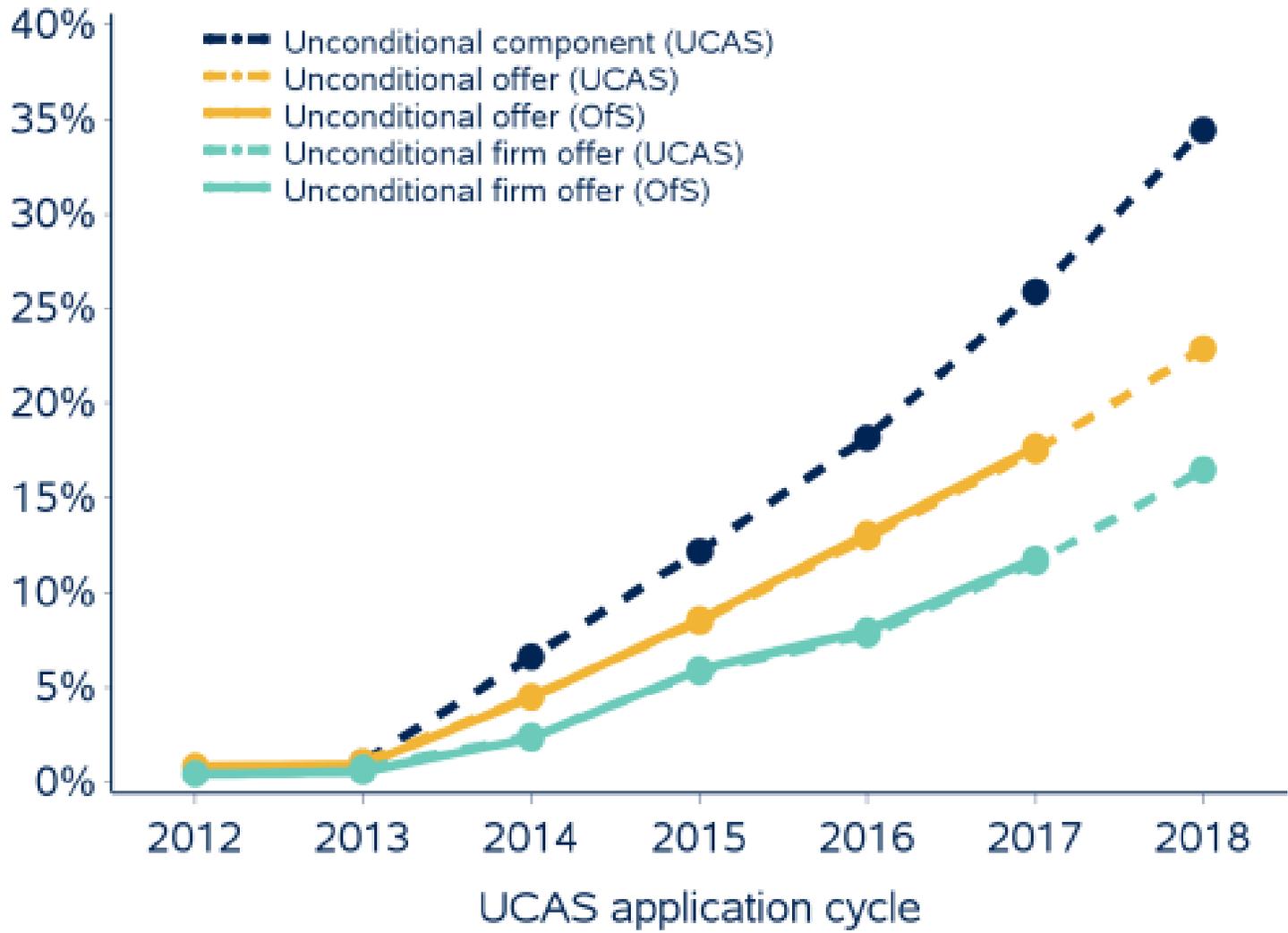
'Conditional unconditional' offers

'Conditional unconditional' offers. These are cases where a university makes a conditional offer, but lets the applicant know that it will make this offer unconditional if they make it their firm choice. These are a subset of a wider group of 'incentivised' offers, the incentive in this case being an unconditional offer.

'Conditional unconditional' offers

- ▶ The report from UCAS highlights that universities are increasingly offering “conditional unconditional” offers – which are changed to unconditional if the offer is accepted as the student’s first choice.
- ▶ Remember that when you accept an unconditional offer as your firm choice, you are committing to go to that university. So you can't select an insurance choice or enter Clearing; you must request to be 'released' from your offer first, which can be tricky.

Proportion of applicants



Proportion of 18-year-old applicants with at least one offer with an unconditional component, unconditional offer or unconditional firm offer

Office for
Students



January 2019

**‘Universities
must not resort
to pressure
selling tactics
in promoting
unconditional
offers.’**

Office for
Students



- ▶ **‘The OfS is concerned about the potential impact of unconditional offers on student attainment and outcomes.’**

“ In total, over 87,540 applicants received at least one unconditional offer in 2018 – over 1/3 of all 18 year old applicants.

In 2013, this number was just 2,570 (so you can see there's been a massive increase since). ”

WWW.UNIVERSITY.WHICH.CO.UK/ADVICE/UCAS-APPLICATION/UNCONDITIONAL-OFFERS

“ January 2019 update - UCAS have highlighted the following universities who've issued high numbers of unconditional offers: Nottingham Trent, Lincoln, Sheffield Hallam, Birmingham, York St John's, Birmingham City, Brighton, Bournemouth, Northampton, Leeds Beckett and Nottingham. ”

WWW.UNIVERSITY.WHICH.CO.UK/ADVICE/UCAS-APPLICATION/UNCONDITIONAL-OFFERS

	Number of offers with firm reply	Number of unconditional firm offers	Proportion of firm offers that are unconditional	Proportion of all unconditional firm offers
Specialist	5,275	560	11%	2%
Higher tariff providers	94,150	4,455	5%	17%
Medium tariff providers	53,295	10,525	20%	40%
Lower tariff providers	31,545	10,030	32%	38%
Other providers	4,890	495	10%	2%
All	189,155	26,065	14%	100%

Provider-level proportions of offers with a firm reply that are unconditional by the number of firm offers and by provider type in 2017

Worst offenders

Ten universities that made more than half their offers to school leavers unconditional last year

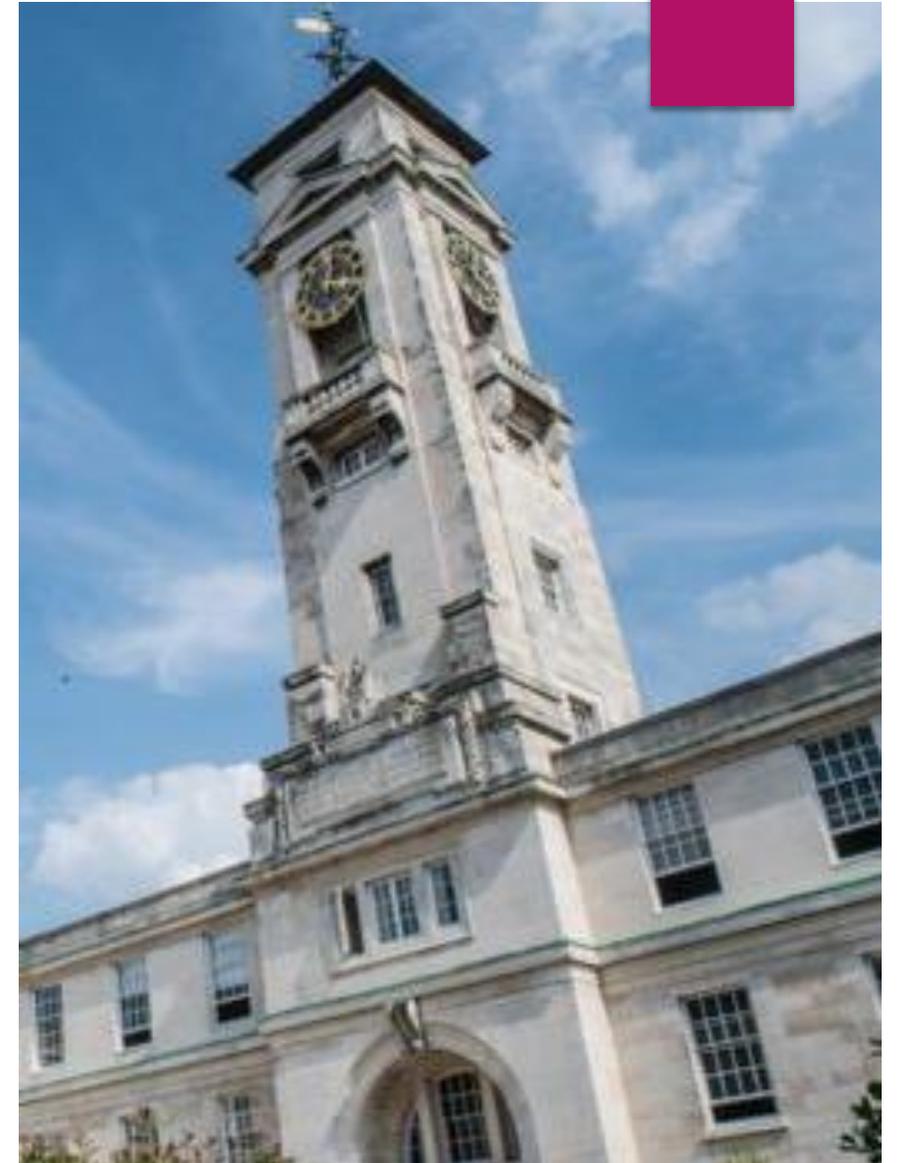
Suffolk	83.8%
York St John	78.8%
Bolton	75.6%
Roehampton	68.1%
Solent*	58.5%
Bishop Grosseteste	56.5%
Gloucestershire	56.3%
Northampton	55%
Lincoln	53.7%
Plymouth Marjon	52.4%
...and Russell Group universities	
Birmingham	18.9%
Nottingham	11.4%
Queen Mary London	4.3%
York	1.7%
Newcastle	0.4%

Source: UCAS *Southampton

University of Nottingham ends unconditional offers

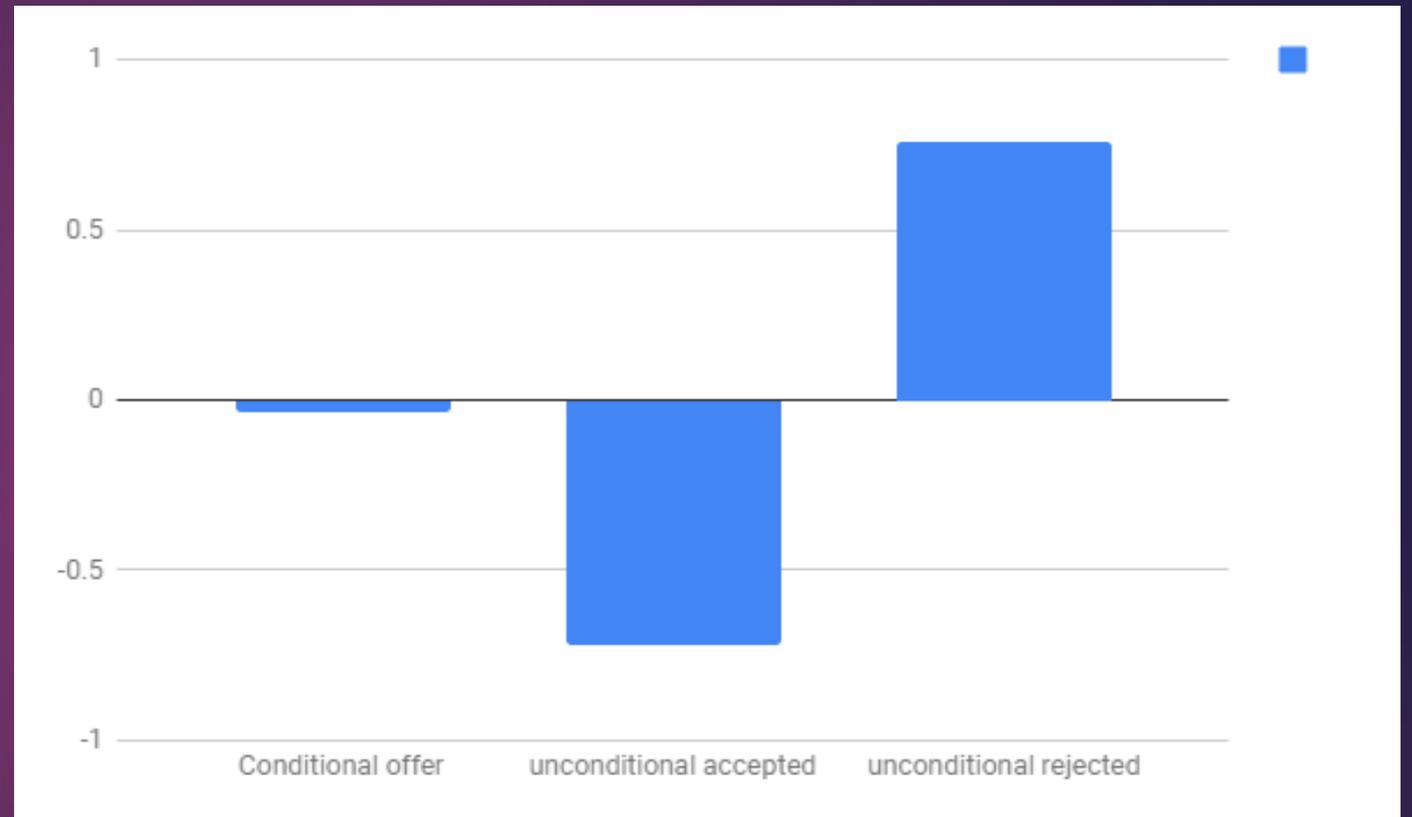
31 January 2019

- ▶ The University of Nottingham has confirmed it will end the controversial admissions policy from this September.
- ▶ The university is concerned about the reported variation between predicted and actual A-level results for some who received unconditional offers from universities, indicating that some "may lose motivation" before exams



A recent study into unconditional offers

- Students who received only conditional offers effectively met their minimum target grades
- Students who 'firmed' their unconditional offers missed their target grades
- Students who rejected unconditional offers exceeded their minimum expected ALPS grade by over half a grade per subject



Applicants who accept an unconditional offer are more likely to miss their predicted grades by two or more grades.

UCAS modelling estimates that, in 2018, more than 1,000 18-year-olds missed their predicted A-level grades by two or more grades through holding an unconditional firm offer.

Unconditional offers may mean A-level students take 'foot off the gas'

- ▶ **Damian Hinds, education secretary, has called the steep rise in unconditional offers “disturbing” and he has urged universities not to use these offers “just to get people through the door”.**
- ▶ **This report shows that many students could be distracted from the final year of their schooling, and achieve A Level grades lower than they are capable of. These are effects that we know can have a significant impact on their career.”**

Unconditional offers may mean A-level students take 'foot off the gas'

- ▶ Matt Waddup, head of policy and campaigns at the University and College Union (UCU), said: "Unconditional offers have made a mockery of exams and put students under enormous pressure to make snap decisions about their future.
- ▶ Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "It is clear this practice is now completely out of control and is driven by market forces rather than by educational considerations.
- ▶ "The problem with unconditional offers is that some students take their foot off the gas and under-achieve in A-levels or other qualifications and this hampers their employment prospects later in life."

Why are good A
level grades
important to
you?

Flexibility to change your mind

- ▶ **Some students start at University and then want to change course**
- ▶ **You have more options and more flexibility if you have good 'A' level grades**

Good A levels give you flexibility

Good A levels

- ▶ More choices
- ▶ More flexibility to change your mind

Poor A levels

- ▶ Fewer options
- ▶ Less likely to be able to change courses

£7,500 tuition fees plan faces Brexit delay



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🕒 1 March 2019 | 💬 262

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Brexit



“

The **Future** depends on what
you do **today**

”

MAHATMA GANDI