UPREP UNIVERSITY OFFER DECISION GUIDE

Free resource

How to read your offers, understand alternative offers, wait lists, deferrals, and residence, respond through the OUAC, and compare programs side by side in any field.

15 pages | Worksheets included | 25 universities compared | Group A applicants



PREPARE FOR WHAT'S NEXT

For any questions or concerns contact us at hello@uprepcanada.ca

https://uprepcanada.ca/

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WHAT IS THIS GUIDE?

Getting an offer is exciting, and choosing between offers can be stressful. Most Ontario students have until early June to decide, which means you have time to compare your options carefully instead of reacting to the first email.

This guide helps you read what your offer actually says, understand how responding through the OUAC works, and compare your options using the factors that matter most to you. It includes a decision worksheet, a cost comparison table, a university-by-university table of alternative offers and deferral rules, a residence table, questions to ask in every field from engineering to music, and a checklist for what to do after you accept. A companion Google Sheet, the UPrep Offer Decision Matrix, lets you score offers and compare costs with the totals added up for you.

It is written for Ontario high school students applying through the OUAC as Group A applicants. If you are a Group B applicant, your response deadline is the one written in your offer, so read it closely.

May 28, 2027	**June 1, 2027**	**1**	**No fee**
latest expected response	earliest required response	accepted offer on file at a time	to accept an offer at the OUAC

IN THIS GUIDE

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Read every offer twice, and write down its conditions, its response deadline, and what it still needs from you.
- Respond through your OUAC account. A residence deposit does not replace your official response.
- Compare offers with a weighted worksheet and a cost table, then check your gut.

IMPORTANT

Offers, deadlines, scholarships, and residence processes are set by each university and change from year to year. The details in your own offer and on the university's website are always the final word.

PREPARE FOR WHAT'S NEXT

SECTION 1

1 READ YOUR OFFER CAREFULLY

Do not skim an offer. Read it twice, and then write down the answers to the questions below.

Question	Where to look	Your answer
What exact program and campus is this offer for?	Offer letter or portal	
Is it conditional or unconditional?	Offer letter	
What is the minimum final average required?	Conditions section	
Which courses must I complete or pass?	Conditions section	
What documents are due, and by when?	Conditions section	
What is the response deadline?	Offer letter	
Does the offer include a scholarship or award?	Offer letter or awards page	
Is residence guaranteed, and what is the deadline?	Residence page	
Is co-op or a work-integrated learning stream part of this offer?	Program page	

Conditional offers: Most offers made before you finish high school are conditional. Typical conditions include earning your OSSD, completing six 4U/M courses including your required subjects, and keeping a minimum final admission average. If your final marks fall short, the offer may no longer hold. Keep a one-page list of the conditions for every offer you receive.

TIP Check that the program name and code on the offer match what you applied to. If anything looks different, contact the admission office before you respond.

SECTION 2

2 OFFER TYPES: ALTERNATIVE OFFERS, WAIT LISTS, AND DEFERRAL

Not every response is a plain yes. Knowing the types helps you read what each university sent you and what to do next.

Type	What it means	What to do
Unconditional offer	You have met every requirement	Check the deadline and respond
Conditional offer	The offer holds if you meet its conditions, usually a final average and required courses	Write the conditions down and protect your marks
Alternative offer	An offer to a different program than the one you chose, often a related one with a lower average or no supplementary requirement	Decide if the program fits you, ask about switching rules, and respond by the deadline
Wait list	A school may place you in a queue for a limited program	Ask how the list works and how long it stays open, and plan around your other offers
Deferral	A request to start one year later, which you make after you accept	Check the school's rules before you plan a gap year

How different universities handle alternative offers and deferrals. This table summarizes the OUAC Guidance Dialogues Resource Guide for Fall 2026. Policies change, so use it to know what to ask, then confirm with the admission office.

University	Alternative offers	Deferral
Algoma	Automatic, if you are not eligible for your program of choice	1 year, if you do not attend any school during that year
Brock	In most cases automatic if you applied to only 1 program and do not qualify	Granted in some circumstances
Carleton	Given in early May, as close as possible to your first choice	Most programs, up to 12 months. Some limited programs need a higher average. None for programs that need a supplementary application, portfolio, or audition
Guelph	Yes, for example co-op to regular, or Criminal Justice and Public Policy to Justice and Legal Studies. Engineering is co-op only	1 year, if you accept by June 1, 2027 and meet all conditions
Guelph-Humber	None	1 year, if you accept by June 1, 2027 and meet all conditions
Lakehead	Automatic, if you meet general but not program requirements	1 year, with some exceptions
Laurentian	Yes, to a program you qualify for. You can contact admissions if you are unhappy	Case by case
McMaster	No separate alternative offer. Apply to up to 3 programs and each is decided at the same time	1 year, case by case, decided in late August. No other school during the year

University	Alternative offers	Deferral
Nipissing	Automatic	Accept, meet all conditions, and request a deferral form
OCAD	In general, none	Generally only for extenuating circumstances
Ontario Tech	May offer a closely related program	Up to 1 calendar year, reassessed competitively
Ottawa	For some programs	Case by case. No school during the year
Queen's	None	Extenuating circumstances only, after you accept
U of T (all campuses)	Varies. Rotman Commerce and Computer Science applicants can express interest in an alternative in the portal. UTM invites an Alternate Program Form for listed programs. UTSC considers automatically	1 year, after you accept, pay any deposit, and meet conditions. UTM charges a $96 fee
TMU	For some programs, if you lack prerequisites or a competitive average	Request in writing
Trent	Yes, if you do not meet the minimum average	Up to 1 year, granted once
Waterloo	May be considered in the final round in May, if space allows	Up to 1 full year
Western	None on Main Campus. List each program as its own choice	1 year. The Western Scholarship of Excellence and National Scholarships cannot be deferred
Huron	None	Case by case
King's	None. Each OUAC code is a separate choice	1 year, with a letter and a $250 non-refundable deposit
Laurier	Automatic. Wait lists may be used for Business, Health Sciences, and Kinesiology, with an alternative offer	Request by August 1, 2027. Not guaranteed
Windsor	Automatic, from late March to late April, then reassessed as grades arrive	Most programs without limited enrollment
York	May be offered a related program	Most programs, up to 1 year. None for Bachelor of Business Administration, Nursing, Design, or Social Work

IMPORTANT

A deferral is not an automatic right. Most schools want you to accept first, meet every condition, and avoid enrolling anywhere else during the year. Scholarships can change for a deferred student, so ask what happens to yours.

SECTION 3

3 HOW RESPONDING WORKS IN THE OUAC

This section follows the OUAC's published instructions for responding to an offer of admission.

Log in
to your OUAC application

Review and Payment
three steps

Save
your confirmation number

What to know:

- **Log in to your OUAC application** to accept or decline an offer.
- **Complete the three-step Review and Payment process.** You review your Summary, continue to the Declaration to confirm your information, and pay if a change requires payment. Accepting an offer does not cost anything at the OUAC.
- **Save your confirmation.** After you submit, the OUAC emails you a confirmation number and a Summary of Changes.
- **You can have only one accepted offer on file at a time.** To accept a different offer, you must first cancel the one you accepted.
- **Accepting one offer does not change how your other choices evaluate your application.**
- **Residence deposits do not replace your official response.** Even if you pay for residence, you still need to accept your offer through the OUAC.
- **Do not send deposits or tuition to the OUAC.** Pay the university directly, as its instructions say.

The key dates for Group A applicants (2026 to 2027):

May 28, 2027	The latest date you can expect a response (an offer, a refusal, or a deferral) if you applied by the January 15 deadline
June 1, 2027	The earliest date a university can require you to respond to an offer or make a financial commitment, such as a deposit
June 3, 2027	The OUAC's Admission Information Service opens, showing which universities still have first-year spaces

You can accept an offer before June 1 if you are ready, but no university can require you to decide before that date. Group B applicants should respond by the deadline written in the offer.

If the deadline has passed or you change your mind: Contact the university's admission office. They will decide whether you can still be considered and, if so, will tell you what happens next. Do not wait.

> **TIP** Respond a few days before the deadline, not on it. Websites get slow when thousands of students are logging in at the same time.

SECTION 4

4 COMPARE YOUR OFFERS

Use this worksheet to turn a big, fuzzy decision into something you can see. Do it with a pencil, not a pen.

Step 1: Choose what matters to you. Circle the factors that matter most, and add your own.

- Program content and courses
- Co-op or work experience
- Class size and teaching style
- Cost and financial aid
- Location and distance from home
- Residence and campus life
- Clubs, teams, and community
- Career and graduate school outcomes
- Flexibility to switch programs
- Other factors that matter to you

Step 2: Weight each factor. Give each one a weight from 1 (not very important) to 5 (essential). Your weights should be different for each factor. If everything is a 5, nothing is.

Step 3: Score each offer. Score each offer from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong) on each factor. Multiply the score by the weight, then add up the totals.

Factor	Weight (1 to 5)	Offer A	Offer B	Offer C
Total (score × weight)				

Step 4: Check your gut. If the totals say one thing and your stomach says another, that is information. Ask yourself why. Sometimes the worksheet missed a factor. Sometimes your gut is worth listening to.

COACH NOTE

This worksheet is a thinking tool, not a verdict. The point is to make your reasons visible so you can explain your choice to yourself and to the people who care about you.

SECTION 5

5 COMPARE THE REAL COSTS

Costs can change the decision more than students expect, and they are easy to compare on paper. Use the university's own fee pages and awards pages, and check whether the numbers are for first year only or for the whole degree.

Cost item	Offer A	Offer B	Offer C
Tuition and fees for the year			
Residence and meal plan (or rent and groceries)			
Books and supplies			
Transportation and travel home			
Other program costs (equipment, lab fees)			
Total cost for the year			
Scholarships and awards			
Other funding (savings, family, work)			
Funding gap or surplus			

Things to check:

- ☐ Is the scholarship automatic, or do you need to apply? What is the deadline?
- ☐ Is the scholarship renewable, and what grades do you need to keep it?
- ☐ Is the co-op program paid, and how many terms are there?
- ☐ Does the university guarantee residence for first-year students, and what is the deadline to apply?
- ☐ Have you looked into the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) and each university's own bursaries?

Residence guarantees are not all the same. "Guaranteed" usually comes with conditions. The table below follows the OUAC Guidance Dialogues Resource Guide for Fall 2026, so check each school's residence page for the current wording, deposit, and deadline.

University	What the school says about residence	Deposit	Deadline
Brock	Space for full-time undergraduates who apply and pay the application fee (not Brock Suites)	$500	June 1, 2027
Carleton	First-year students admitted by May 31, 2027 who accept both offers and pay the advance payment	$700	June 7, 2027
Guelph	Guaranteed for international and out-of-province first-years. Others, see Guelph housing	$750	June 1, 2027 for the guarantee

University	What the school says about residence	Deposit	Deadline
Guelph-Humber	Not guaranteed, first-come first-served	$500 charged in July	June 1, 2027
Lakehead	High school students who accept and register	$250	June 1, 2027
Laurentian	Group A who accept and apply with a first choice	$500 to $550	June 1, 2027
McMaster	Not unconditional. McMaster says it will share the average needed for a guaranteed spot in the spring	$600	June 2, 2027, 4 p.m. ET
Nipissing	Yes	$400	June 1, 2027
Ontario Tech	First-year students who accept and apply	See residence page	June 1, 2027
Ottawa	All admitted first-years who apply (with exceptions)	$950	June 1, 2027
Queen's	A commitment for most students, with details in your offer	$805 for fall 2027	June 1, 2027, 4 p.m. ET
U of T St. George	New first-years who apply in the portal and accept by June 1	$600 to $1,000	March 31, 2027 to apply
U of T Mississauga	After step 1 of the residence application and acceptance	$350 fee plus $1,650	March 31, 2027 to apply. June 8, 2027 for the deposit
U of T Scarborough	Apply in the U of T Residence Portal	See residence page (CONFIRM)	March 31, 2027 to apply
TMU	Not a plain guarantee. Priority goes to on-time applicants who live farthest away	$50 application fee	June 3, 2027
Trent	Guaranteed to applicants who apply on time	$600	June 3, 2027
Waterloo	Incoming first-years who meet the conditions	$500	June 8, 2027
Western	High school graduates who meet the conditions	$900	June 3, 2027
Huron	Not guaranteed, placed by application time	$1,000	See your offer letter
King's	Admitted students who apply and pay on time	$1,000	June 1, 2027
Laurier	Students attending postsecondary for the first time	$600	June 1, 2027
Windsor	First-years who apply and pay the deposit	$475	June 5, 2027
York	First-years from Ontario high schools who apply	$750	June 1, 2027

OCAD has no residence, and the Université de l'Ontario français partners with an outside residence. Residence deadlines can fall before or after your offer response date, so track them separately.

Awards checkpoints that can fall before you decide. Write these into your tracker the moment an offer arrives.

February 19, 2027	McMaster general entrance award application deadline
February 18, 2027	Ontario Tech Major Entrance Scholarships deadline
March 1, 2027	Trent Prestigious Scholarships deadline
March 31, 2027	Most application-based awards at Ottawa
April 25, 2027	Lakehead Presidential Scholarship deadline
April 30, 2027	Windsor UWinAward profile and King's application-based awards deadline

See the UPrep Ontario University Atlas and the UPrep Ontario Scholarships and Awards Guide for more detail.

UPrep is not a financial advisor. For questions about OSAP or financial aid, contact the university's financial aid office or the Government of Ontario.

SECTION 6

6 QUESTIONS TO ASK EACH UNIVERSITY

If something is not clear after you have read the website, email or call the admission office. These questions get useful answers:

- Which courses are required in first year, and how flexible is the schedule?
- Can I change programs after first year, and what are the requirements?
- How many students are in first-year classes, and who teaches them?
- How does the co-op or work-integrated learning process work, and what percentage of students are placed?
- What support is there for first-year students (academic advising, tutoring, mental health services)?
- How is residence assigned, and what are the deadlines?
- What are the conditions of my offer, and what happens if my final average is slightly below?
- Is there a deadline to confirm my scholarship?
- Can I defer my entry, and what is the process?

Questions for specific kinds of programs. Pick the ones that fit your program.

Program type	Questions worth asking
Co-op or work-integrated learning	Is co-op guaranteed or competitive? What is the first work term and how is it found? Are placements paid? What happens if I do not find one?
Engineering and computer science	How is the first-year common core structured? When do I choose a discipline? How are Computer Science and software streams assigned?
Business and commerce	When do I pick a specialization? Does the program include an international exchange or a co-op option?

Program type	Questions worth asking
Health and life sciences	Which placements, labs, or clinical hours are built in? How do pathways to professional programs work, and are there guarantees (there usually are not)?
Science, math, and environment	When do I choose a major? What research or field-course opportunities exist in second year?
Arts, humanities, and social sciences	How flexible are my electives? Can I combine a major with a minor or certificate? Are there experiential courses?
Education and social work	What are the placement hours? Is there a concurrent or consecutive route to teacher certification?
Architecture, design, art, music, and theatre	What studio or practice space will I have? Are portfolio or audition results combined with my average? Can I change programs?

TIP Write down the name of the person who answers and the date. If you are given an important answer, ask for it in an email.

SECTION 7

7 TALK TO PEOPLE AND VISIT

- **Talk to current students.** Ask what surprised them, what they would change, and what they wish they had known.
- **Talk to recent graduates.** Ask where they work now and how the program helped.
- **Visit if you can.** Many universities hold admitted-student days in the spring. A virtual event works too.
- **Be careful with rankings.** They measure what the ranker chose to measure, which may not be what matters to you.
- **Be careful with social media.** One loud opinion is not a pattern. Look for the same thing from several people.

SECTION 8

8 YOUR DECISION TIMELINE

When offers arrive

- [ ] Add every offer to your tracker with its conditions and its response deadline
- [ ] Read each offer twice, and write down the conditions
- [ ] Note any scholarship or residence deadlines (they can fall before June 1)

Before you decide

- [ ] Fill in the Decision Worksheet (Section 4) and the cost table (Section 5)
- [ ] Ask the admission office about anything unclear
- [ ] Talk to a parent or guardian, a guidance counsellor, or a mentor

- [ ] Visit or attend an event if possible

Respond

- [ ] Log in to your OUAC application and accept your chosen offer
- [ ] Complete all three steps of the Review and Payment process
- [ ] Save your confirmation number and your Summary of Changes
- [ ] Decline the offers you will not accept, as a courtesy
- [ ] Complete the university's own steps (residence, deposit) if they apply

After you accept

- [ ] Keep your final grades strong. Conditional offers depend on them.
- [ ] Confirm that your school sends your final grades to the OUAC (the deadline for schools is July 8, 2027)
- [ ] Watch for emails about course selection, orientation, and tuition
- [ ] Apply for OSAP or other funding on the schedule the university gives you
- [ ] Thank your teachers, counsellor, and anyone who helped

9 SECTION 9 COMMON MISTAKES

1 Waiting until the last minute to respond
Aim to respond a few days early.

2 Not reading the conditions
A missed condition can put an offer at risk.

3 Assuming a residence deposit counts as accepting
It does not. Respond through the OUAC.

4 Choosing only by rank or reputation
Fit, cost, and the program itself matter more than a headline.

5 Choosing only because friends are going
Your program should work for you.

6 Ignoring the cost until the end
Compare the full cost of each offer before you decide.

7 Forgetting scholarship deadlines
Some are earlier than the response date.

8 Relaxing after you accept
Your final marks decide whether your offer holds.

9 Not asking questions
Admission offices expect them.

10 Not telling the other schools
Declining offers is a courtesy and helps other students.

TIPS, TRICKS & NOTES

Take your time, but not too much
You have until early June at the earliest, so use it, but do not wait until the final day.

Write your reasons down
If you doubt your decision later, you can read why you made it.

Compare the program, not just the school
A program with the right courses and co-op may suit you better than a famous name.

Keep your options open until you respond
You can wait for other offers, as long as you respect the deadlines.

Ask for help
Your guidance counsellor has seen this before.

If you are disappointed, that is okay
Give yourself a day, then look at what is on the table.

Keep your brag sheet going
It will help with scholarships, co-op applications, and your first university resume.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

UPrep provides guidance, strategy, and feedback to help students present the strongest possible application. Admission decisions are made solely by universities based on many factors outside anyone's control, and no specific outcome can be guaranteed. UPrep is not a financial or legal advisor. Dates, scholarships, and offer terms differ by university, so always follow the instructions in your own offer.

Sources (checked October 11, 2026):

- OUAC: Responding to an Offer of Admission (ouac.on.ca/guide/undergrad-respond)
- OUAC: Undergraduate Key Dates (ouac.on.ca/guide/undergrad-dates)
- OUAC: 2026-2027 Schedule of Dates (guidance.ouac.on.ca/resources/schedule-of-dates)
- OUAC Guidance Dialogues Resource Guide, Fall 2026 (guidance.ouac.on.ca/docs/resource_guide.pdf): alternative offers, deferral, residence, and scholarship sections for each university

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Month-by-month checklist plus program deadlines across Ontario

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University Program Comparison Sheet

Research and compare programs side by side

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Ontario Scholarships and Awards Guide

Loran, Schulich Leader, Terry Fox, and entrance awards at 15+ universities

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Ontario University Atlas

All Ontario universities side by side

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How Admission Averages Actually Work

How averages work and how to calculate yours

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