

By **Eleanor Harding**
and **Harry Howard**

ALMOST 5,000 courses at elite universities still have places up for grabs in what will be the easiest year ever for students going through clearing.

A total of 18 of the 24 leading universities were last night listed as having spaces to fill on the official clearing website.

It means anyone narrowly missing out on A-level grades will have plenty of alternatives. Admissions tutors are saying even medicine courses will be available this year, despite usually being the most competitive and requiring a string of A* grades.

At this time last year only 15 of the top universities, represented by the umbrella organisation the Russell Group, had spaces to fill.

Ahead of A-level results day next Thursday, a Daily Mail audit found places are still available on many of the traditionally popular courses. A drop in the 18-year-old

population is coinciding with an over-supply of places caused by the removal of the Government cap several years ago.

The total number of UK applications is down by 3.4 per cent on last year to 478,800, and the number eventually placed is expected to be down by 2.5 per cent – around 9,000. Experts said

it will mean students can afford to shop around 'collecting offers' on clearing day before making their final decision because there will be a glut of places.

Across all universities, 132 out of 148 are advertising at least one course. In total, there are a staggering 26,587 courses that potentially have availability. Universi-

ties that are struggling to recruit students are likely to lower their entry requirements in a bid to fill their places.

As of last night, 4,707 courses had spaces at Russell Group universities. For example, Warwick, which is ranked ninth in the Complete University Guide, had 153 courses available including in English literature, physics, physics combined with maths, and chemistry.

Warwick is seventh in the country for both physics and chemistry in individual subject league tables, and fifth for maths, making it even more remarkable these courses still have places. Meanwhile, Exeter, which is ranked 12th in the country, had 209 courses not yet full, includ-

'Students are now gaining control'

ing history and maths. Exeter is ranked fifth for history in individual league tables.

The Russell Group universities which had the most courses available were Liverpool with 591, and Leeds with 524. Our research found spots available on the following numbers of top courses: 23 law, 73 English, 190 history, 75 maths, 38 physics, 21 chemistry, and 16 biology. The figures included combined honours courses.

On results day, students who miss out on their university place because they did not make the required grades will be able to look for alternatives on the website of Ucas, the official admissions body.

Those who do better than expected will be able to 'upgrade' through a process called adjustment.

Richard Harvey, academic director of admissions at the University of East Anglia, said of this year: 'Student behaviour has changed

PLACES ON OFFER

Course	Typical grades needed
History at Exeter	A*AA-AAB
Maths with Physics at Warwick	A*AA
English at Nottingham	AAA-AAB
Law at Nottingham	AAA
English at Manchester	AAA
Maths at Leeds	AAA
Physics at Bristol	A*AA
Biology at York	AAA-AAB
Chemistry at Manchester	AAB
Physics at Nottingham	A*AA-AAA
Maths and Economics at York	AAA
Medical Science at Newcastle	AAA-AAB

SUMMER SAVINGS



HALF PRICE
£599
SAVE £600

The Jersey
4 seater sofa
after event £1199

£12.47
a month for 4 years
0% APR No deposit and
no interest - ever!

the only sofa company
awarded the British Standard
Kitemark® for quality

making everyday
more comfortable

dfs

Jersey 4 seater sofa. Credit subject to acceptance. Credit is provided by external finance companies as determined by DFS. 4 years interest free credit from date of delivery. Delivery charges apply. After event price applies from 29.08.18 - see in-store or online for details. DFS is a division of DFS Trading Ltd. Registered in England and Wales No 01735950. Redhouse Interchange, Doncaster, DN6 7NA. dfs.co.uk

Russia warns US of sanctions 'war'

RUSSIA has warned the US it would respond to an effective declaration of 'economic war' if it imposed financial sanctions.

America announced a first round of sanctions earlier this week over the novichok poisonings in Salisbury, which will come into effect in two weeks.

It threatened to bring in a second round affecting bank loans to Russia and banning all exports to the country.

Russian prime minister Dmitry Medvedev said yesterday: 'If we end up with something like a ban on banking activities or the use of certain currencies, we can clearly call this a declaration of economic war. And we must absolutely respond to this war - by economic means, by political means and if necessary by other means.'

'Our American friends must understand this.'

The sanctions led to a fall in Russian stocks and the value of the rouble on Thursday. It comes five

Mail Foreign Service

months after former spy Sergei Skripal, 67, and his daughter Yulia, 33, were left in a critical condition by the poisoning in Salisbury in March.

Last month Dawn Sturgess, 44, died after coming into contact with the same nerve agent near the Wiltshire city.

Her partner Charlie Rowley, 45, was left critically ill but survived.

The first set of sanctions bans the export to Russia of American technologies that are 'national security sensitive'. A senior US official said the move could cut off hundreds of millions of dollars worth of exports to Russia.

A second, stronger round that could go into effect 90 days later would include blocking all American bank loans to Russian entities, an outright ban on US exports to Russia and suspension of diplomatic relations.

and they're happy to take their time and "shop around", collecting offers before they make their final decision.' Mike Nicholson, admissions chief at the University of Bath, said: 'Students are increasingly in control when it comes to clearing.'