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UniTasterDays.com

Teachers' Guide to University 2023

The key higher education facts for school and college staff.

Produced in collaboration with **HELQA**

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Welcome to the UniTasterDays.com Teachers' Guide to University

This guide has been produced to support you to deliver excellent university guidance to your students.

As well as supporting you in your day-to-day role, it will also anticipate a conversation between you (the teacher/careers adviser) and your student (the potential higher education applicant), arming you with solid answers to their questions about moving on to higher education. It has been produced based on the higher education system in England and released in October 2022.

The guide aims to clarify the current position for you and your students following so many significant sector changes. Crucially, it looks to bring you closer to the institutions that offer so many ways for your students to explore higher education, before committing to it.

Helping students to make the right choice

As with any of life's landmark choices, higher education is not a decision to be taken lightly. Sound advice and first-hand insight into what students face, at an early stage, provides a smoother path to a successful higher-level study, and a better chance of a satisfying and fulfilling career. This guide helps you to provide it.

Universities operate in a more competitive

market than ever. It's in their interest to attract students by inviting them to open days, workshops, talks and all manner of familiarisation events – be that on campus, in school or online. The following pages show a selection of activities your students will find useful.

The simple fact is that your students now have a wider choice than ever of ways to 'try on higher education for size' and to ask any question they want to the university staff member or student best equipped to answer it.

Experts on your side

This guide features contributions from experts in higher education, as well as specialists from outside the sector with fantastic advice and support to share. It has been produced in collaboration with HELOA - and we are very grateful for their support and the contributions made throughout the guide by HELOA members.

I should also add that often in the guide, we use the term 'university' – but it is acknowledged that not only universities offer higher education programmes. We just use the term 'university' as it avoids another acronym and using repeated references to 'higher education institutions' throughout.

I hope you will find this Teachers' Guide to University useful, and that you'll visit UniTasterDays.com to search or request your next event soon.

Jon Cheek - Director, UniTasterDays.com
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Visit us today. We're waiting to help you build your university links!

How to build links with universities

By Christine Canavan, Contracts & Communications Officer at Shaping Futures (Uni Connect Programme)

Building links with universities is an excellent way of providing your students with high quality educational experiences, ran by professionals with years of experience delivering engaging outreach events.

Whilst the most obvious benefits link to achieving Gatsby Benchmark 7 (encounters with further and higher education), engaging with these activities can also support a school to meet multiple Gatsby Benchmarks, whilst inspiring learners to consider their future education and careers.

Here are some hints and tips to help you to get started:

UniTasterDays.com is an excellent starting position to find out about events in your area (and further afield). This is a free resource for schools to connect directly with higher education providers. From this website you can search for events including open days, subject tasters, summer schools and much more. You can contact the UniTasterDays.com team and even request event support directly from universities using this platform.

You can also organise activities directly through higher education providers. Most universities and higher education providers will have a dedicated team (usually called Outreach, Student Recruitment or Widening Participation). Widening Participation in higher education is a key priority for the Department for Education. It aims to increase the participation of those groups which are currently underrepresented in higher education, such as students from disadvantaged backgrounds. There may be targeted projects available to learners who meet this criteria.

Note from UniTasterDays.com

You can find out more about fair access and widening participation on page 60.

It is often possible to request bespoke activities, for example, sending a message like:

"I would like to take my Year 12s to a university campus during June so they can find out more about higher education options."

"From conversations I've had, students are really confused about how they will afford university. They are also curious about what it would be like to move away from home and what student life is like. Please could you advise if you're able to facilitate an activity which will cover these aspects?"

Links with higher education providers can also support with practitioner continued professional development (CPD). Some universities will invite staff to attend directly, but if you follow your local institutions outreach pages on social media (such as LinkedIn and Twitter) they will promote upcoming CPD and training sessions. Examples of this may include personal statement workshops, understanding the student finance system or the UCAS processes.

If you have any specific requests, you can contact them directly, here is an example:
"I have a student who is applying for university this year and exploring eligibility for the Disabled Students Allowance to support her whilst she studies. This is the first time I've supported a student through this process, could you provide me with any resources? In addition, can I signpost the student to any other university support on offer?"

And do not forget to network! Attend Teachers and Advisors events, meet other teachers and find out about outreach in the area.

Some schools may also be eligible for extra support through your local [Uni Connect Partnership](#). Each hub is partnered with their local further and higher education landscape and will utilise this knowledge to provide impartial information, advice and guidance to eligible pupils. The programme was set up in 2017 to support the social mobility goals of the government, to increase the number of young people from underrepresented groups going into higher education.

A guide to the Gatsby Benchmarks and how universities can support you to achieve them

By Carl Griffiths, UK Student Recruitment Manager and Erin Wilson, Student Recruitment Assistant at Lancaster University

Gatsby Benchmarks define what careers provision in education should look like.

Most universities have an extensive list of talks and workshops, which we spend a great deal of time developing alongside our colleagues in schools and colleges and various bodies, such as HELOA and UCAS. Most of this is created with you, and the Gatsby Benchmarks, in mind. Therefore, as soon as you dip into the support offered by universities; you are automatically going to be meeting several benchmarks.

For example, at Lancaster University, our Choosing a Course and University talk is designed to target Benchmarks 1, 2 and 7: establishing a university contact, learning about the market of higher education, and engaging with a university. Below are a few more examples of how we at universities provide support that links to the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Gatsby Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

Dedicated contact points within universities will work with you to gain an understanding of your careers programme and how they can support you.

Gatsby Benchmark 2: Learning from careers and labour market information

Students can explore careers and labour market information through networking events and understand what to expect in an ever-evolving job market through a range of higher education organised events, such as taster days.

“ **Gatsby Benchmarks define what careers provision in education should look like** ”

Gatsby Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

We know one size does not fit all, so we're always trying to provide diverse information, as well as identifying ways to provide 1-2-1 guidance at higher education fairs and drop-in sessions.

Gatsby Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

Universities look to connect academics, careers teams and teachers to help understand how they can develop a cohesive journey from school to career.

Gatsby Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

Universities are keen to showcase the destinations of their students. This often takes the form of alumni representation at events, and this is a great way for students to start understanding the career paths that they may explore.

Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

Many universities and their careers teams are keen to support schools in their understanding of how to approach work placements.

Gatsby Benchmarks 7: Encounters with further and higher education

Those of us working within higher education are always exploring ways to better connect with students. Whether it is the main route for them or not, we want to make sure that the options are clear and available.

Gatsby Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

You know your students well and will certainly be providing guidance where you can. However, school liaison and widening participation teams are also available and trained to speak to and support students with their queries about their next steps, be that at school, through admissions calls, or residentials and open days.

The Gatsby Benchmarks are designed to give your students the best chance in the future, whatever their plans may be. Remember, we are here to help, and we're always looking to shape our resources and support to help you meet the needs of the curriculum, CEIAG support, and your students' futures. Use universities to your advantage!



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www.uea.ac.uk/study/tasters

How universities can support your attainment raising activities

By Dr Hannah Merry, Head of Higher Horizons Operations (Uni Connect Programme)

Universities have been asked to do more to raise attainment in schools – but what does this mean?

If you have been your school's careers lead or outreach co-ordinator for a while, you will know that the government often change their mind about how they want universities to support schools.

The government's latest priority for universities is to support attainment raising. This should, they say, boost equal access to university because we know the attainment of student groups underrepresented in higher education is often lower than their more advantaged peers. If pupils achieve better grades in their exams, it should widen their options for post-16 and post-18 study.

The first thing to say here is that universities are not the experts in how to support attainment raising in schools. And we know that. Teachers support young people to achieve their best every single day, and we are not going to claim we have all the answers. We also know that so many of the challenges young people face happen outside of school, and neither universities nor schools can solve these without the support of other agencies. But we do believe we can work in partnership with you to complement your school's attainment raising strategies.

So, what can we do to support attainment raising, and what do we do already?

University outreach teams already do a lot of

different things that are designed to support attainment. Some of this activity might have an explicit focus on attainment like offering revision or study skills sessions, tutoring or academic mentoring from undergraduate students. This type of work is designed to boost skills used for learning (what you might hear referred to as metacognition) or improve confidence in academic skills (what we refer to as self-efficacy). You may have taken cohorts to university taster days - these are often subject-specific, with extra- or supra-curricular activities designed to enhance knowledge gained inside the classroom.

Universities also deliver other types of activities which might have the secondary effect of boosting attainment, by helping young people improve their motivation and give them a route to higher education. This work is just as important as work directly aiming to boost attainment - good exam grades might widen choice, but if students aren't empowered to understand their options or understand how they can achieve their goals, they may not be able to make an informed choice about which university is right for them, or which type of qualifications they should take at sixth form or college to facilitate entry to the course or university they are aiming for.

You should expect to see the continuation of these types of information, advice, and guidance activities, along with campus visits which show young people the realities of university life so they can picture themselves there.

Supporting good attainment is only one part of working towards equal access to higher education. If we want to improve access to higher education, we not only need to give young people the tools (study skills, exam technique, motivation) to succeed, but also the knowledge to make informed choices. Universities should be aiming to do both - and you should not be afraid to remind them of that.

“ Supporting good attainment is only one part of working towards equal access to higher education. If we want to improve access to higher education, we not only need to give young people the tools to succeed, but also the knowledge to make informed choices ”

A guide to providing university information to parents and guardians

By Lydia Greenhalgh, Content Officer at the University of Kent

As our working weeks get busier, you might be wondering how you can share university information in a way that prevents parents and guardians from having to make a mad midweek rush from work to your school or college hall. Yes, parents' evenings are great for providing advice and guidance about the UCAS process, but they don't need to do all the heavy lifting.

Here are some tips to follow when you are creating resources for parents and guardians.

1. Create a virtual parent zone

Our new on-demand world has given us the luxury of accessing information when we're good and ready, and this works well for busy parents and guardians. Like their Gen Z children, digesting information when they need it and when they have time is a big bonus.

Creating an exclusive parent zone or hub within your school or college website is an effective way to share information. There, you can store guides, pre-recorded videos and downloadable resources related to higher education guidance. You could even ask a few universities to collaborate with you on the project and be the voice for some of your content too. Consider a short video about writing personal statements or a walkthrough of the UCAS process.

Once you have built a knowledge bank, all that is left to do is share how parents and guardians can access your online hub and remember to update information if anything changes (student finance, we're looking at you).

Alternatively, many universities have virtual parent hubs that you can link to if you do not want to create your own.

2. Encourage parents and guardians to attend open days and higher education exhibitions

Open days are one of the best places for parents and guardians to receive university information. Some universities will have information stands or talks specifically for parents where they can ask staff and current students about topics that might concern them, i.e., student finance, accommodation, wellbeing, academic support and campus safety.

Similarly, higher education fairs such as those provided by UCAS and UK University Search provide an opportunity for parents and guardians to speak to several university representatives at one event, and there is usually some handy literature to take away too.

3. Help parents and guardians to access the information they need

As teachers and advisers, you have your ear to the ground when it comes to university and higher education events, but some parents and guardians might not know where to find that information.

However you share your school or college news – whether that is through a newsletter, email or your website, create a space for sharing any upcoming open days, webinars or other exclusive parent events that you've heard about. Look out for universities that offer travel bursaries to get to their open days too, they can make all the difference to some families.

Finally, don't hesitate to ask the audience. A quick survey asking your parents and guardians what information they need and how they would like to receive it could give your faithful higher education evening a specific focus or guide you in a new direction altogether!

Request a Parents' Guide Brochure for your University Resources

Download at www.unitasterdays.com/parents/

A higher education jargon buster

By **Susie Kilburn, UK Student Recruitment and Schools Liaison Officer at City, University of London**

Higher Education is full of jargon that may be unfamiliar. The list below covers some terminology that you as teachers and advisers may find useful when helping your students navigate their university research.

Degree

Undergraduate

An undergraduate course is the first level of a degree qualification. Once a student completes an undergraduate course, they become a graduate in that degree subject.

Postgraduate

Postgraduate qualifications are for those who have completed a first (undergraduate) degree and are studying for further advanced qualifications such as a masters or doctorate.

Integrated Degree

An integrated degree combines two courses into one. This is usually a combination of an undergraduate and postgraduate degree (integrated masters degree), or a foundation course and undergraduate degree (integrated foundation degree).

Foundation Course

Foundations courses are preparatory courses that provide students with the knowledge and skills required to succeed on an undergraduate course. Foundation courses are often one year long and usually lead straight on to undergraduate degree study with the same university.

Placement

Placements are built into some courses to provide students with practical industry experience before they qualify. These can be compulsory for some courses (such as health care and other vocational degrees). They can also take the form of a 'year in industry' or as part of a module. Placement options will vary depending on the university and course.

Teaching

Seminar

Seminars are smaller discussion-led sessions where students talk about a weekly topic. They are usually facilitated by an academic tutor, but students are expected to come prepared with pre-reading as well as their own research and ideas to discuss during the session.

Lecture

Lectures are when an academic delivers a talk to a large group of students on a particular topic. Students usually attend at least one lecture per module per week. Lectures are usually held in large lecture theatres and are an opportunity for students to take notes and ask questions to the lecturer about the topic.

Contact Hours

Contact hours refer to the number of hours a student has contact with teaching staff during the week. This could include seminars, lectures, workshops, lab work or office hours. Scheduled contact hours may vary significantly depending on the subject and structure of the course. Although some students may have fewer scheduled contact hours than others, they are then expected to conduct independent reading and work for the rest of the week.

Modules

University courses break learning and teaching into modules. Modules usually cover a particular topic within the course subject. Some modules may be compulsory, others may be optional and up to the students to choose. Some courses will also allow students to take a module in a different subject – sometimes called an 'elective module'.

Credits

In order to achieve a degree qualification, students are required to achieve a certain number of credits. Credits are earned on completion of modules. Modules will vary in how many credits can be earned. Students must then pass a certain number of modules to graduate.

Note from UniTasterDays

Throughout this guide, we'll explain other university terms you might run into.



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Working together to support students build successful and fulfilling futures.

The Schools Liaison team provide a wide range of activities to support teachers and advisers and inform students on their transition to higher education.

We deliver talks and workshops in schools and colleges, arrange for academic staff to deliver taster sessions, attend higher education fairs and exhibitions, facilitate visits to campus, and offer an array of online and in person support for students and teachers.

Student finance information for your students

- please do share this with them.

5 things EVERYONE should know about student finance

By Martin Lewis, MoneySavingExpert.com

Ignore what you've read in the papers. Ignore the political spittle that flies across Parliament. And in some cases, ignore what parents tell you too. There are more myths and misunderstandings about student finance than any other subject (my polite way of saying there's a lot of bull spoken).

This is a political hot potato. People spin explanations to suit their own arguments. Yet that's about the big picture. When you come to decide whether YOU can afford to go to university, you should focus only on how it'll practically affect your pocket. And that is radically different to what you usually hear.

Now please don't confuse the fact I want to explain the system with unblinkered support of it. I do have issues, but frankly that's not relevant here. What counts is that I tool you up to make the appropriate decision. And be careful listening to past student's tales, how student finance works depends on when they started and where in the UK they studied.

This is about the system for English students who started in or after 2012

Don't assume student finance is the same for everyone, it's important to understand which system you are on.

- **This is for those who start university in/from September 2022 in England.** Though these are the same rules as they are for anyone who started in England since 2012.

- **The rules change and costs increase for new starters from 2023.** Those who start this year are the last on the current system, as there are big changes afoot for those starting in the

following academic year. However, to be very clear, if you start in 2022, you remain on the current system throughout your university life, you don't move to the new system.

- **If you are from Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland...** please see www.moneysavingexpert.com/studentmythbuster. In general, your loans are much smaller though.

1. The student loan price tag can be £60,000, but that's not what you pay

Students don't pay universities or other higher education institutions directly. Tuition fees, typically up to £9,250 a year at the time of writing, are paid for you by the Student Loans Company. Over a typical three-year course, the combined loan for tuition and maintenance can be over £60,000. But what counts is what you repay...

- You should only start repaying in the April after you leave uni.
- Then you only need to repay if you earn £27,295 a year (and that threshold is frozen until 2025). Earn less and you don't pay anything back.
- You repay 9% of everything earned *above* that amount, so earn more and you repay more each month.
- The loan is wiped after 30 years – whether you've paid a penny or not.
- It's repaid via the payroll, just like tax, and doesn't go on your credit file.

2. There is an official amount parents are meant to contribute, but it was long hidden

You are also eligible for a loan to help with living costs – known as the maintenance loan. Yet for most under-25s, even though you are old enough to vote, get married and fight for our country, your living loan is dependent on family residual income, which for most people is a proxy for 'parental income'.

For 2022/23 starters, the loan received starts to be reduced from a family income of just £25,000 upwards, until around £61,000 (or

£69,000 if you're going to uni in London), where it's roughly halved.

This missing amount is effectively an unsaid parental contribution – as the only reason you get less is because your family earns more.

Yet parents weren't ever told about this gap, never mind told the amount. That will start to change this year, as after campaigning year after year, finally one Universities Minister listened, so now your correspondence will refer to it, though more work is needed on their official explanation.

In a nutshell though, to work out the parental contribution gap, either use www.moneysavingexpert.com/ParentalContribution or subtract the loan you receive from the full amount that a student with parents on the lowest income would receive. For 2022 starters, the full loan is:

- £8,171 if living at home.
- £9,706 away from home.
- £12,667 away from home in London.

The difference is the amount you have less to live on than what is deemed the minimum. Of course, some parents won't be able to afford it – and you can't force them to pay. But at least knowing there is a gap helps you understand what level of funds are needed. And it's important to have this conversation with your parents and discuss together how you are going to plug the hole.

In fact, while the media often focuses on tuition fees, I hear most complaints from students that even the maximum living loan isn't big enough. Funny isn't it, after everything that's said, the real practical problem with student loans isn't that they're too big, it's that they're not big enough – this is especially true with the current cost of living crisis, the living loan has not been uprated close to the increase in inflation.

So when deciding where to study, look at all the costs, transport, accommodation (will you get into halls?), as that's a key part of your decision.

3. The amount you borrow is mostly irrelevant – it works more like a tax.

This bit is really important to understand, as



frankly it turns the way you think about student loans on its head. So take your time (read it a couple of times if necessary).

What you repay each month depends solely on what you earn – from April 2022, it's 9% of everything earned above £27,295.

In other words, the amount you owe and the interest is mostly irrelevant. For a graduate who earns, for the sake of easy numbers, £37,295...

- Owe £20,000 and you repay £900 a year
- Owe £50,000 and you repay £900 a year
- In fact, let's be ridiculous and say tuition fees have been upped to £1m a year, so you owe £3m+, you still ONLY repay £900 a year

So as you can see, what you owe DOESN'T impact what you repay each year. The only difference it makes is whether you'll clear the borrowing within the 30 years before it wipes.

It's predicted very few – only around 20% of the highest-earning graduates – will clear it in time. So unless you're likely to be a seriously high earner, ignore the amount you 'owe'.

Instead in practice what happens is you effectively pay an extra 9% tax on your income (not including National Insurance) for 30 years.

At current rates, it works like this:

| Earnings | Uni goers | Non-uni goers |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Up to £12,570 | No tax | No tax |
| From £12,571 - £27,295 | 20% | 20% |
| From £27,296 - £50,270 | 29% | 20% |
| From £50,271 - £150,000 | 49% | 40% |
| £150,000+ | 54% | 45% |

This doesn't make it cheap, far from it, but it does mean that all the talk of burdening students with debt is misleading. The burden is paying 9% extra tax – frankly it shouldn't be called a debt, it really doesn't work like one (I'd call it a graduate contribution system).

The more you earn, the more you repay each month. So, financially at least, this is a 'no win, no fee' education.

4. Interest is added, the headline rate is 7.3%, but many won't pay it

Student loan interest is set based on the Retail Prices Index (RPI) rate of inflation – the measure of how quickly prices of all things are rising. It changes annually each September based on the prior March's RPI.

Yet this year, as inflation is so high, the maximum interest was scheduled to be up to 12%, but the Government has capped the maximum interest at 7.3% (though it'll be 6.3% for three months, from 1 Sep 2022 – 30 Nov 2022), so interest charges are as follows...

- *While studying*: This year it is 7.3% (6.3% from Sep – Nov).

- *From the April after leaving*: Normally it is a sliding scale between RPI and RPI + 3% depending on earnings. Yet as both of those are

above the cap, this year it's just 7.3% (6.3% from Sep – Nov).

But the interest added isn't what you actually repay. While many graduates may be charged the maximum 7.3% interest rate, some won't actually PAY any interest at all.

That's because the interest only has an impact if you'd clear your initial borrowing in full over the 30 years before it's wiped. Many won't. And even of those who will, all but the highest earners won't come close to repaying all of the interest added.

5. The system can and has changed.

Student loan terms *should* be locked into law, so only an Act of Parliament can negatively change them once you've started uni – but, they're not. And a few years ago we saw a very bad change imposed, though thankfully after much campaigning it was overturned.

And indeed this year we saw the Government freeze the current repayment threshold until 2025 – not as bad as the earlier attempt to drop the threshold – but it does mean people will repay more of their student loan than was previously planned, both each year and for most in total too. So sadly, all my explanations above need the caveat of 'unless things change'.

Hopefully that gets you started on student finance. If you'd like to read full info see my detailed 20 student finance mythbusters at www.moneysavingexpert.com/studentmythbuster

Other important student guides to read: www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-budgeting-planner/ www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-bank-account/ www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-guide/

Note from  UniTasterDays

This student finance information has been kindly provided by Martin Lewis for you to share with your students. We've included information regarding proposed changes for 2023 starters on the following page.

Student finance changes for September 2023 starters - three key updates

By Jon Cheek, Founder, UniTasterDays.com

In February 2022, The Department for Education announced a series of changes to student finance and repayment policies for new students in England, who will be starting higher education courses from September 2023.

This was, and is, big news. Student finance is the biggest barrier to university, pretty much everywhere you look. Including in our own [National Review of University Guidance](#). Any change to student finance will have a significant impact on the university participation of students.

I won't cover everything here, but you can read the [full government announcement introducing the changes](#) and share this with your students. I will instead provide guidance on three updates included in the changes which I think students intending to start university from September 2023 should be aware of.

Please also note that that these changes do not affect current students in receipt of student finance, those who are now in repayment, or students from Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

The repayment threshold will be set at £25,000. And will remain that way until 2026-27.

For new students starting courses from September 2023, they will start repaying student loans when they earn over £25,000,

at 9% of earnings above that amount. That is changing from £27,295 for students who started university in September 2022 as Martin Lewis writes on pages 12-14.

Let me give you a quick example:

- Molly starts university in 2023
- And finishes her course in 2026
- Then, in the April after her graduation, she is earning £30,000.

Her monthly repayment will be around £37.50. It might actually be a little less if the repayment threshold increases in the future, but I don't want to make things unnecessarily complicated here!

The loan repayment period will be extended from 30 years to 40 years

This will add ten years to the current repayment term, for new students starting university in September 2023. Providing more time for them to pay off more of their full student loans.

Of course, if students are in the position where they (a) repay the balance within the 40 years or (b) decide to clear it within the 40 years, the repayments would stop earlier than that.

A reduction in interest rates

Interest rates will be set at RPI+0% for new borrowers from September 2023. Meaning students will no longer repay more than they borrowed in real terms. Of course, at the time of writing in October 2022, interest rates are currently capped for student loans (see [Martin Lewis's text on pages 12-14 for more information on that](#)).

Note from  UniTasterDays

For full guidance regarding student finance, please always refer to the [student loans company website](#).



A guide to university scholarships and bursaries

By Nia Stokes, Student Recruitment Officer at Swansea University

University is fast becoming the most popular post-18 option, with a record number of young people being enrolled in 2021. However, for some students and parents, course costs can be a prohibiting factor. Student finance does a great deal to make university affordable for students, but the financial aid doesn't stop there; there are a range of further support options available for your students in the form of scholarships and bursaries.

What are university bursaries?

Bursaries are one-off payments which can be offered for certain criteria, including low household incomes, disabilities, or to students from certain areas or countries. The aim of these bursaries is to remove certain barriers to education and encourage students to attend university who may not have considered it previously. They may be popular with your students because this money will not need to be paid back to the university. Most universities also have hardship funds, which are one-off payments specifically designed to help students falling into unexpected financial difficulty.

What are university scholarships?

Scholarships are delivered in a different way, usually annually or as instalments each term. They aim to reward excellence in certain areas. Academic scholarships reward students for their grades and usually do not require an

application form. For example, once a student accepts an offer at Swansea University, we will reward AAA grades with a £3,000 scholarship, and AAB with £2,000. This is split across their time at university, with UCAS points being accepted for students completing other forms of qualifications.

There are also sporting and music scholarships. These will need to be applied for online, where there is likely to be a detailed list of requirements regarding the stipulated level of ability in order to be eligible.

The financial support can be used to support the cost of training, competitions and exams. Certain universities will also run specific scholarships for high performance sports, where the student is offered assistance from specialist coaches and physiotherapists to help them pursue their passion alongside an academic degree. They will also focus on areas such as strength and conditioning, lifestyle management and sports science.

There are some unexpected scholarships offered by funding bodies and universities too, with criteria such as being vegetarian or vegan, having the surname Graham in Glasgow, or having a parent in the military, pharmaceuticals, or a grocery business! With this in mind, researching financial support can be a worthwhile activity to complete with your students.

The Scholarship Hub is a great website for students to start comparing offers from lots of different universities in one place, and there is also a teacher's area with further resources. It is important to note that each university will have different application processes and requirements, so it is best for your students to look at their respective websites before jumping into their application!



A guide to the NHS Learning Support Fund

By Rowan Hoper, Student Recruitment Officer at the University of Salford

We know that the financial aspects of higher education can be daunting for some students, perhaps now more than ever, so it's key that they are aware of any available funding that will support them with their studies. Many are not aware of the NHS Learning Support Fund (NHS LSF), so we've put together a handy guide for you and your students.

What is the NHS Learning Support Fund?

The NHS LSF is additional funding for eligible university students. The payments are grants, so they **don't** need to be paid back. As it is an additional pot of free money, it also has **no impact** on eligibility for student finance. The below financial support is available:

Training grant

A non-means tested grant of £5,000¹ each academic year, with an additional £1,000 also up for grabs in certain subjects.

Parental support

A £2,000¹ grant per year for students with parental responsibility for a child who is either aged under 15 or under 17 and registered with special educational needs.

Note: this grant does not impact access to child support or other funding.

¹Part-time students receive pro-rata amount.

Travel and dual accommodation expenses

Reimbursement of additional travel and accommodation costs students might have whilst on placement (above their regular commute).

One of the Podiatry students at the University of Salford shared that this allowed them to 'apply for the exact placement opportunities needed, without worry about the extra commuting costs.' However, it is important that students know that they will still need to budget and keep a log of

their expenses to claim them back.

Exceptional support fund

An income-assessed grant of up to £3,000 per academic year for eligible students who experience unforeseen financial hardship.

Who is eligible for the NHS Learning Support Fund?

At a basic level, to be eligible for the NHS LSF students need to be...

- Actively studying an **eligible** course at an English university.
- Eligible for maintenance and tuition fee support from the Student Loans Company.

The following pre-registration courses (at undergraduate or postgraduate level) are eligible:

- dental therapy or dental hygiene (level 5 and 6 courses)
- dietetics
- midwifery
- nursing (adult, child, mental health*, learning disability*, joint nursing/social work)
- occupational therapy
- operating department practitioner (level 5 and 6 courses)
- orthoptics*
- orthotics and prosthetics*
- paramedicine
- physiotherapy
- podiatry* or chiropody
- radiography (diagnostic and therapeutic)*
- speech and language therapy.

*Students on these courses can get an extra £1,000 per academic year.

Note: Social work has different funding, find out more here: [Social Work Bursaries | NHSBSA](#)

How do students apply?

Applications open in spring and students will need to [create an account and apply online](#).

Like with student finance, they will also need to re-apply each academic year.

When are the payments?

The NHS LSF is paid in three instalments across the academic year, but at different intervals to student finance loans.

Top tips for schools and colleges

Two of our wonderful healthcare students have shared their 'top tips' for Careers Advisors and Teachers...

"Remember that it isn't means tested or linked to the student loan – and that not all courses qualify!"

"If you're unsure about anything, ask for advice – there are people that can help!"

So – encourage relevant students to check out the NHS LSF and if you have any questions just get in touch! In the age-old words of Dr Pepper, what's the worst that could happen? Find out more: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-learning-support-fund-lsf

“The NHS LSF is additional funding for eligible university students. The payments are grants, so they don't need to be paid back. As it is an additional pot of free money, it also has no impact on eligibility for student finance ”





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A guide to the Disabled Students Allowance

By Sarah Hanson, Strategic Outreach Lead at Shaping Futures (Uni Connect Programme)

Starting a higher education journey can be really exciting, but many students have concerns about how they'll manage and the support they'll get. This worry is particularly pronounced for students with learning difficulties, mental health issues or disabilities who may be used to comprehensive support at school through their Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). However, there is a wealth of support available, including the Disabled Students Allowance, or DSA.

The Disabled Students Allowance is provided to help with extra costs a student might incur as a direct result of a disability. All the support provided by the DSA is based solely on a student's needs, so it's not dependent on household income and students don't need to pay back any funding or return any equipment they receive.

DSA can support students with a wide range of issues, including:

- Specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or ADHD.
- Mental health conditions, such as anxiety or anorexia.
- Physical disability impacting mobility or dexterity.
- Sensory impairments, such as sight or hearing loss.
- Social or communication impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders.
- Long term health conditions, such as cancer or chronic fatigue syndrome.

This may help students with a range of support measures, including:

- Specialist equipment such as assistive technology or ergonomic equipment.
- General allowances such as fridges for medication or printing costs.
- Non-medical helper support, including specialist note takers or a BSL interpreter.
- Travel, such as private taxi transport.

Students apply for DSA online as part of their student finance application. They're required to upload medical evidence, such as a diagnostic report, after which they'll be invited to book a needs assessment. During this appointment they'll work with an Independent Needs Assessor to agree the support they'll need from DSA, and after the appointment they'll receive an Entitlement Decision Letter (DSA2), confirming the support they'll receive with instructions on how to move forward.

Many students are put off applying for DSA because of worries about being treated differently, or wanting a fresh start at university, but this support can be vital to a young person succeeding and achieving their potential. It is vital that schools and colleges raise awareness of DSA to students and parents/carers and encourage any student who might benefit to apply. Students should start the process as soon as possible, to ensure support will be in place for the start of the term.

Alongside support from DSA, universities and colleges will also offer a package of support, such as specialised transition days, disability co-ordinators to support students directly, or peer mentors. Students can find out more about this support via university websites, or through attending open days and speaking with student support teams.

“The Disabled Students Allowance is provided to help with extra costs a student might incur as a direct result of a disability”

A guide to why students might consider university

By Erin Wilson, Student Recruitment Assistant at Lancaster University

University is a big decision and one that students may have been re-evaluating during and since the pandemic. The deadlines, the time commitments, the money – is it all worth it?!

Whilst there are alternatives to higher education such as apprenticeships, employment or travelling, which may seem more appealing to students right now, I would always advocate the benefits of going to university; benefits that I believe, massively outweigh the costs. For me, without sounding biased, university was the making of me in ways that I never expected.

It is very easy to think linearly when it comes to higher education, for example:

Go to university = studying = graduating = job

Whereas, in reality, university looks much more like the below equation:

Go to university = studying = learning what interests you = facing failure = questioning the future = learning new hobbies = building connections = feeling lonely = personal development = learning to be independent = graduating = ???

As you can see from the above, there are many reasons to go university. Students do not have to start a degree with a job in mind; some sort of goal is good, but the end goal doesn't have to be employment, that may not suit them.

Some other questions you may wish to explore with students are:

- Do they want to learn more about a subject they love and gain a new appreciation for it?
- Do they want to network and build connections with like-minded people?
- Do they want to undertake growth and development, both academically and personally?
- Do they want to explore the options a degree can give them and go from there?

All of these are good reasons to consider university and can all be goals to work towards. A degree does not have to have a job and a salary attached to it.

As you would expect, a massive slice of the university experience is taken up by studying. Your students might be aiming to study something they have loved for years and are inspired or intrigued by. Or they might be studying a new subject that has not been available to them until now. University can open paths in terms of what students can learn and what they expect from a subject and alter their path afterwards as a result. Or it may allow them to develop their interest in a chosen subject.

Another benefit of higher education may be the student life and university experience itself. I don't mean drinking, clubbing, or staying out until 4am. I mean that if your students want to try underwater hockey without ever having played it before, they can, or just exploring a new town or city they've never visited before with new friends, and so much more; they can do all of this.

University means uncertainty and learning and unlearning what a student expected from themselves, their lives and from the university experience. So, to answer the question, "why might students consider going to university?" Easy: "Possibility."



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A guide to why students might consider university (2)

By Izzy Kelly, Aimhigher Project Officer at Aimhigher West Midlands (Uni Connect Programme)

The future can be a daunting prospect for some students. With many options now available beyond sixth form or college, offering a helping hand to young people and supporting them to make informed decisions is more important than ever.

University remains one of the most diverse higher educational options available to students, offering thousands of courses across the UK. Recognised and respected by employers and academics worldwide, university degrees can create a multitude of opportunities, making them an enticing route for young people to take.

Here, I will be shining a spotlight on higher education, with my key reasons why students might consider university:

Exploring their passion

University provides the opportunity for a student to study a subject they are truly passionate about. Learning about something they enjoy can be the gateway to finding their ideal career and the flexibility of university allows students to tailor their studies to suit them, whether that is choosing their own modules, studying a joint degree or taking a year abroad.

Wider job opportunities

There are careers such as Medicine and Dentistry where a specific degree subject is a must, and others where a degree in any subject can be an essential requirement for a job. This can appeal to students who don't have a set career in mind. By gaining this key qualification, regardless of the subject, a wide range of job opportunities are available to them.

Increasing earning potential and career progression

Research shows us that graduates are more financially stable, tend to be in higher skilled employment and can progress in their careers faster in comparison to non-graduates. With the average salary for graduates at 30% higher than for non-graduates aged 25-30, the long-term financial benefits of university are enticing.

Developing essential skills

Students can gain a plethora of essential skills at university: confidence, leadership, organisation, teamwork, time management, problem-solving, communication – the list goes on. A standout skill I must mention is independence. By living in student accommodation (if a student chooses to do so), sometimes far away from home, students develop this essential skill by caring for themselves, managing their own money, paying bills and navigating public transport.

Experiencing student life

Meeting like-minded people from different backgrounds, joining societies and making new friends all make up the experience that is student life. Reminding students that continuing their education isn't all work and no play can change their mindset and allow them to see that life-long friends, and perhaps becoming President of the Fencing society, can be another perk to add to the list!

University certainly may not be the right path for all students and exploring a variety of post-18 options is an important process. By considering the reasons why university might be the journey they wish to embark on, we can excite and inspire students to make informed decisions about their futures.

“ Recognised and respected by employers and academics worldwide, university degrees can create a multitude of opportunities ”



A guide to degree apprenticeships

By Clare Middleton, Degree Apprenticeship Manager at the University of Portsmouth

With most universities now offering degree apprenticeships, there is an even bigger choice for young people when they are deciding which route to take post-18.

Degree apprenticeships are a rapidly growing concept that many people agree is the ideal way to gain work-based experience as well as a degree. Apprentices typically come from school or college with A-levels or equivalent, and work full time 4 days a week, coming to university 1 day a week, with programme duration varying from 2-5 years depending on the subject.

In many cases, apprentices gain chartered status and professional recognition during their programme, which can make them better qualified than full-time graduates. The other compelling benefit is that the employer pays all the course fees, so there is no cost to the individual.

Subjects cover a wide range of professions, ranging from an architect to civil engineer, nursing associate to police constable, there is even a route to becoming a doctor via degree apprenticeships now and the subjects are forever growing.

Salaries are generally much better than lower-level apprenticeships, with degree apprentices often receiving pay rises incrementally and when they pass their final assessments.

Apprentices also receive all the same benefits as other students, from student discounts to access to sports facilities, study and student support services and wellbeing initiatives. In some cases, they can also access university accommodation and live on campus.

The national apprenticeship service is the best place for students to search for vacancies in their local area and they can search by employer, level or subject. They can even set up alerts to be notified when vacancies arise.

The application process is as it would be when applying for a job, it is very competitive and there is stiff competition for each role. Many employers use assessment days to help them select the right candidates for the role, which can include team-building activities, scenario-based assessments and personality profiling. Currently, there is much higher demand than supply, so it is recommended that students apply for university through UCAS at the same time, so they have options in case they were unsuccessful.

Whilst a degree apprentice may not get 100% of the university experience as they are working and studying 5 days a week; they graduate with no debt, proven work experience and can remain in a job related to their degree, so are likely to see their career progress faster than a traditional graduate.

However, a degree apprenticeship is not for everyone, students need to be sure of the profession they want to go into from the beginning and will need a lot of self-motivation, drive and initiative.

“Currently, there is much higher demand than supply, so it is recommended that students apply for university through UCAS at the same time, so they have options in case they were unsuccessful”

A guide to the different types of undergraduate university courses

By Christopher Edwards, Student Recruitment Officer at the University of South Wales

There are multiple options when it comes to the types of undergraduate university courses. Navigating these and choosing which subject and which type of course to study can be a difficult and important part of a student's decision when it comes to their higher education options.

This article will provide you, the teacher or careers colleague, with some basic knowledge so you can provide students with the best possible information and guidance to make informed degree course decisions.

Types of courses

Bachelor's degree courses

Bachelor degree courses usually involve a single subject, however there are options to combine two subjects in a single course (joint or dual honours), or multiple subjects (combined honours). These courses can be studied full-time, or in some cases part-time.

Some offer a sandwich year, where the student will have a year in their chosen industry forming part of the course. All these courses will have core modules, which every student studies, then for some there will be the ability to pick optional modules to tailor the course according to the interests of the student.

Foundation year

For some courses there is a foundation year attached. These are usually designed for those students who did not meet the entry requirements for the undergraduate degree. The foundation year will support students to develop the skills and subject knowledge to continue their studies and undertake the degree course. This will add an additional year and once completed, the student will usually enrol onto the first year of the undergraduate degree course.

Diploma in Foundation Studies

This is a one-year qualification, usually known as an Art Foundation and is a recognised route to gain entry to some of the prestigious art and design degree courses.

Degree apprenticeships

This is where a student will achieve a bachelor degree as part of an apprenticeship. Degree apprenticeships are becoming more popular as the students will leave with greater work experience and still achieve the same degree status as those studying through a traditional degree route. These can vary in duration, and between institutions, so it is worth students spending some time researching them further.

HNCs, HNDs and Higher Technical Qualifications

A HNC is a one-year course and a HND is a two-year course, both are work related. These are options for those who do not want to fully commit to a full-time bachelor degree but might want to complete this in stages and potentially join the third year later to complete the bachelor programme.

Higher Technical Qualifications are new for 2022 and are level 4 and 5 qualifications, which are aimed at students who are retraining or upskilling within their workplace or CertHE.



Choosing a course checklist

It is important to remember that no two courses are the same, just because the course has the same title and is offered at different universities, it does not mean students will learn, experience and be assessed in the same way. Therefore, it is important for your students to consider the following criteria when deciding between different universities when the course title is the same.

- **Course content** – students should choose a course which includes topics they are interested in. This can differ depending on the university.
- **Assessment type** – some courses might only assess students through exams, some a blend of exams and coursework. Students should consider options which meet their preferred assessment styles.
- **Accreditation** – certain universities will have industry recognised accreditations as part of their degree.
- **Work placements** – depending on the university, a course might offer work placements as part of their degree. It is important that students consider this, especially if they are considering a career where an accredited degree is a requirement to practice.
- **Travel / field trips** – some institutions might offer opportunities for trips, either national or international within their programme. Universities must disclose whether the cost of these are included as part of tuition fees or whether there will be an additional cost to participate.

| | Criteria 1 | Criteria 2 | Criteria 3 | Criteria 4 | Criteria 5 |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Course and Institution A | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Course and Institution B | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Course and Institution C | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Course and Institution D | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Course and Institution E | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Course and Institution F | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ |

Figure 1: Example UniTasterDays Course and Criteria Checklist

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A guide to the different types of universities

By Dr Morag Duffin, Head of Access and Participation at The University of Law

The higher education system in the UK is very diverse, and students can study at a wide range of institutions, from traditional universities to further education colleges with higher education provision, to smaller and specialist institutions.

As a result of this diverse range of institutions and their different modes of teaching and learning, your students can choose the setting that best suits them and their individual educational preferences.

When helping students to choose *what to and where to study*, the '*what*' always comes first.

What course do they want to study? Once they know that, they might have the difficult but exciting prospect of deciding where to study it. A primary consideration is what the course is like at each institution, i.e., the content of the course – does the History programme cover the topics they are most interested in?

It is also important to note that different higher education providers might teach the courses in different ways. Some institutions might focus on the more theoretical aspects of the course, whilst others embed more modes of application and research.

Understanding the different types of universities will enable you to best advise your students.

What type of educational setting is your student looking for?

A good way to answer this question is to encourage a student to think about what is most important for them as an individual and marry this with the type of setting.

Some questions for your students to consider include:

- Do you have any preferences on location? This may be influenced by family or work

commitments. It is important to note that if they would prefer to study online, there are some institutions that provide a 100% online model. This could allow them to remain at home but still study their course of choice.

- Are they looking for a traditional academic university or a more vocational/professional one? Everyone has a preferred style of learning, and different types of universities will accommodate these. Going to a university that better suits their style of learning will enable them to better achieve their goals. For example, if they prefer project work as a mode of learning, they can attend a university that does not place significant weight on end of year exams.
- Do they like the idea of learning as part of a large cohort of students or as part of a smaller one? Attending a larger university will provide the conventional 'university' experience of being in large groups. Meanwhile, going to a smaller, more specialist institution will mean smaller class sizes where they may receive more individualised attention.
- Do they want a traditional residential student experience or a more work-like experience? For instance, if they are looking to study Make Up Artistry, they could study at a specialist institution like the Arts University Bournemouth, or a traditional university like Solent University or at a further education college like Bury College. This variety is not just for more applied courses, for instance the academic subject of Law can be studied at a traditional university, but also a specialist professional university like The University of Law.

The best way to approach supporting your students with choosing where to study their chosen course is to encourage them to keep their minds open to all types of institution, to find out more about them (by reading prospectuses and social media posts, attending open days and talking to current students), and then decide which suits them best.

A guide to supporting students making their university and course choices

By Emily Warner, Student Recruitment Officer at the University of Essex

When it comes to supporting students researching and making decisions about higher education, we understand it can be an overwhelming and exciting time for school and college practitioners. Here, I will provide guidance to help you when you support students to make informed university decisions.

Course first decisions

We always recommend students choose their course first, this way students can avoid the disappointment of not being able to go to a particular university because they do not offer the course they want. There are thousands of courses to choose from and many will be in subject areas which students have not had the chance to study previously. Some may wish to explore these new options whilst many students will continue to study a subject that they are familiar with and enjoy. It could also be the case that students need to apply for specific courses to help them follow their desired career path.

Research is key

We encourage students to research their courses by looking at course content, module options, and assessment methods. Many courses will have the same course title, however, what will be taught and how they are assessed will differ at each institution. University course content is driven by the academics that teach on the programme and is often focused on their expert areas of research, allowing students to explore and study the topics they are interested in by experts in the field of study. It is also important to advise students to be both optimistic and realistic in their expected grade profile for applications, allowing them to have options available to them on results day in case their results are not as expected.

Once students have their course selected, they can then have a look at which universities offer it. Depending on the course chosen, students may have a varying number of universities to choose from, but from those available, there are several factors they may then want to consider:

- City or campus?
- Big or small?
- Stay at home or move away?
- Do they have student accommodation?
- What rankings do they have?
- Do they offer scholarships or bursaries?
- What employability support is offered to prepare for graduate life?
- What academic, social and sports facilities are available?

Attending university open days and taster days are the best way for students to make informed decisions about universities and courses. These events give students the chance to take campus and accommodation tours, find out more about the courses and the student experience, attend taster sessions, and explore the local area.

Whilst there is a lot of information available online, we always recommend students visit a couple of their top choice universities in person, to be able to get a feel for whether the student sees themselves fitting in there.

The UCAS website is a great resource which allows students to search for courses by subject, title, region, and institution. Students are also able to access Unibuddy to chat with current students through the UCAS website, to find out more about a course or an institution and help them to make informed university decisions.

“ Attending university open days and taster days are the best way to make informed decisions about universities and courses. ”



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A guide to how graduate outcome data can support student decision making

By Ian McGarry, Operations Manager at Greater Manchester Higher (part of the Uni Connect programme)

Depending on your choice of media, you would be forgiven for thinking university subject choices these days are less about doing it for the love, more about the money.

Information about graduate outcomes has always been published but it has a lot more clout these days. Alongside the familiarities of course completion rates, degree outcomes and the numbers going on to occupy graduate roles, we can now explore detail about earning potential for up to ten years after the course ends.

It is powerful stuff, and it has a name, LEO (Longitudinal Education Outcomes). It links education data to HMRC records, and it is helping to stoke the continued debate about the value of higher education. It also helps to cut through a lot of the hyperbole.

What is the benefit of LEO data to a sixth form or college student preparing a UCAS application?

Dig into the data and students will find trends like the sort of salaries to aspire towards after graduation. Very broadly, we are dealing with averages (sorry, median ranges) with outcomes influenced by the choice of degree subject, where it is studied, and which part of the UK the graduate goes on to settle down in.

I'm sure none of that comes as a big surprise to any teacher or careers advisor, let alone a dancer or a nuclear physicist to come to that.

What a pity that LEO data is often dumbed down to soundbites in the media. Our shared experiences of the last three years only demonstrate that now, more than ever, young people need conversations and context. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) that is personalised and tailored.

There are so many competing internet sources of IAG, arguably more platforms than in Elton John's shoe collection! Websites such as *Discover Uni* (formerly Unistats) can be easily overlooked. Owned by the Office for Students, it is tactile, easy to navigate, and gives the would-be UCAS applicant a chance to compare rival courses against one another, across a range of factors. All of which is informed by public data sources and clean of marketing.

At Greater Manchester Higher, we have introduced sources of LEO data to support our IAG around student finance. It helps us to nurture conversations as well as tackling some of the continued misnomers around loans, repayments, and the question, *is university worth it?*

It also allows us to encourage young people to stick with the tried-and-trusted science behind the choice of degree subject. Always lead with where the appetite and passion for a subject lies, then introduce graduate outcomes to support the thinking. Do not flip that advice. Because the benefits of going to university are, and remain, wide-ranging and potentially transformative for the individual, as well as to the economy and society.

Get those UCAS choices right and it is hard to put a value on that.

“Always lead with where the appetite and passion for a subject lies, then introduce graduate outcomes to support the thinking. Do not flip that advice ”

Tips when supporting students who are thinking about moving to a new area for university

By Ruth Boyce, School & College Development Officer at the University of Winchester

Trying out a new place can be a fantastic experience for young people, whether that be from a rural to urban location or experiencing a new town with differing local culture and atmosphere. However, students often rely on what they know, secondary aged students (11-16 years old) travel an average of 3.4 miles to get to school¹ and although often travel further for their post-16 education, it is perhaps not a surprise that they rely on places they recognise to guide their decision making.

Below are some ideas to encourage students to think far and wide when considering where to study.

Where is? Quiz

This is fun to do with those starting their research, focusing on places in the UK (not even thinking global!). It is interesting to see where the gaps are, parts of the country they may not have been exposed to or places they haven't heard of.

Destination maps showing where previous students are studying can be a great reinforcement of scale and maps in shared spaces can provide easy look up opportunities.

All in a name

We know not all universities are named after their location; but many discount a university because they've not heard of the place before. Additionally, search result lists in online platforms tends to be alphabetical. Think about the shortlisting platforms you are promoting and whether students have the skills to critically use the search filters. Reordering lists can throw up previously unconsidered options.

How far

In the UCAS course search, students can choose how far from home they might study. They may need support to identify how far a distance is in journey time though. Depending on where in the country they are starting from, 100 miles is around a 2 – 2 ½ hour drive. This might help students visualise where they are willing to travel and put into perspective scale from map to journey time.

Local or living away

Students may live at home to save on spending, but often overlook the cost of commuting and their reduced maintenance loan. As they shortlist, urge them to consider how often they plan to travel home. In addition, questioning whether being 1 or 7 hours away is going to have an impact on how connected they feel to those at home, how would they connect over the distance?

From starting at a point of researching far and wide, they might find a course that is perfect for them either by exploring a university that is new or a few miles outside their search zone. It is worth reflecting on how you support students (and their supporter at home) with their geographical thinking.

¹ Taken from the National Travel Survey 2019



A guide to studying in Scotland

By Helena Ziegler, Manager, UK Student Recruitment Team at the University of Aberdeen

Have you ever considered suggesting studying at a Scottish university to your pupils? But perhaps don't know much about Scottish universities or studying in Scotland. Want to find out more? This is the article for you.

History of excellence

First, Scotland has the same long history and great reputation for excellent higher education as the rest of the UK. Amongst the 19 Scottish universities are 4 of the 6 oldest UK universities, as well as some of the most modern institutions. Scottish universities include those that offer a full range of broad-based degree programmes from A-Z, as well as a highly specialist Conservatoire, art school and agriculture college.

Second, Scotland has a very high standard of education, reflected in the fact that 86% of research at Scottish universities has been judged to be of "outstanding impact" to society. Scottish researchers are responsible for many world-changing discoveries and innovations, including for example, the MRI scanner, penicillin, and keyhole surgery.

They are now also home to ground-breaking research for our 21st century world, in areas including artificial intelligence and robotics, ethical hacking, environmental studies & sustainability, and coping with the challenges of an aging society. Studying in Scotland gives students direct access to world-class researchers, facilities, and centres of excellence.

Third, a Scottish university education provides great employment prospects. Employers are known to value Scottish graduates highly, with nine out of ten graduates in employment or further study within six months of graduating.

A Scottish university degree fully prepares students to move into the workplace.

What about tuition and student loans?

Good news - tuition at a Scottish university for an applicant from England, Wales or Northern Ireland is no different than if they were to study at a university elsewhere in the UK. Applications for tuition and living loans are made in the same way, and the payment mechanisms are also the same.

But what's with the longer, four-year degree?

Most standard Scottish undergraduate degrees are four years in length. This degree structure follows a long-established European tradition which has also been copied in many countries worldwide, including the US and Canada.

What are the advantages of the four-year undergraduate degree?

- It provides enhanced flexibility in subject choice, especially in the first two years, which allows students to experience new subjects without committing to them longer term. This opportunity to explore contributes to academic development and is also very attractive to employers.
- The opportunity for students to mature academically, improving their intellectual skills in the pre-honours years before committing to their specialism in the last two years.
- The opportunity for students to mature into adulthood, with extra time to adjust to university life and independent living, and enhanced chances to explore new opportunities and interests.

What else is there to say? Scotland is very proud to welcome over 50,000 students from over 180 different countries to study with us every year. Our students enjoy vibrant and exciting cities, while being able to appreciate nature on their doorsteps, and Scotland is home to exciting events all year round, which all make it an ideal place to be a student!



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[ABDN.AC.UK/STUDYHERE](https://abdn.ac.uk/studyhere)

A guide to studying in Wales

By Rebecca Breen, Student Recruitment Officer at the University of South Wales

Students living outside of Wales may have already had the opportunity to visit Wales for a summer holiday, or weekend break, but they may not be familiar with the differences and advantages of studying their degree at one of the seven universities situated in Wales.

Below are some of the reasons students choose to study in Wales each year - which you may wish to share with your students:

Making the most of university life

With the sheer variety of things to do, see, and experience across our university locations, there is something for everyone in Wales.

Students can try their hand at surfing, swimming or relaxing on one of Wales's sandy beaches. Or even cycling, horse riding, hiking in the mountains, experiencing some live music, or exploring the 600 castles dotted around the country. There are certainly plenty of activities for students to take part in, and fun things to do during their spare time whilst studying at a Welsh university.

For those adrenaline-fuelled students, who are seeking a more adventurous pastime, Wales is home to many attractions such as Cardiff International White Water, Newport's Velodrome or Zip World, all easily accessible to students through excellent rail and road links.

Whether students are looking for a vibrant city centre location, or a more tranquil, slower-paced, countryside environment to immerse themselves in whilst studying

their undergraduate degree, Wales is full of inspiring contrasts. From the buzz of the cities, the beauty of the coast, and the calm of the countryside, students in Wales can experience it all!

Low cost of living

With the average cost of living in Wales being lower than the UK average, students will certainly have more money in their pockets to enjoy their time in Wales.

Welsh NHS Bursary

I always encourage students to extensively research any additional funding which may be available to them, to help them make those all-important informed university decisions. For example, if students are successful in securing a place at a Welsh university to study an allied health care profession such as nursing, medicine, dentistry, paramedic science or operating department practice, among others, they would be eligible to apply for the Welsh NHS bursary, to cover university fees and maintenance costs. This could mean that students studying an NHS-funded course at a Welsh university could leave university after their three-year degree, with little or no student debt (terms and conditions apply). More information relating to this bursary can be found on the [Welsh NHS Bursary webpages](#).

Learn a new language

When talking to prospective students at careers fairs, we are often asked if students must speak Welsh when studying at a Welsh university. The answer to this question is no. However, students often enjoy picking up a few basic, useful phrases along the way, whilst studying in Wales, and many of our universities will offer opportunities for students to learn Welsh if they wish to do so.



A guide to alternative careers in healthcare: introducing the allied health professions

By Marc Alner, Student Engagement and Recruitment Manager at Birmingham City University

Each year there are thousands of students applying to courses like medicine and pharmacy. These programmes are fantastic for those interested in becoming doctors or pharmacologists, among others. But competition can be very high. Quite often, students have not considered the wide variety of alternative routes they can pursue or, are simply unaware that they even exist. I will provide a guide to some of these here.

What are the allied health professions?

When informing students of the options available to them, it is important that we do not forget some of the lesser known - but no less important - careers in healthcare. The allied health professions (AHP) are comprised of fourteen different areas of practice, making up the third largest workforce in the NHS. From operating department practitioners and speech and language therapists to therapeutic radiographers and dietitians, the skill sets required are often very similar to those required for medicine and pharmacy degrees.

Some of the AHPs struggle to recruit more than others, such as therapeutic radiographers, podiatrists, and orthoptists. It is these professions and degree programmes that need the support of advisors, informing prospective students of what is available to them at higher education level.

These types of degree programmes are regulated by either the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or General Osteopathic Council (GOC). This offers students the opportunity to spend time on an industrial placement within their three years of study.

They will become familiar with various medical environments and experience life as a professionally autonomous healthcare practitioner. Due to the collaborative nature of the healthcare sector, many of the AHPs find themselves working closely with doctors and surgeons daily.

Financial support for health programmes

Financial support for students studying these degrees is also a factor worth considering. The introduction of the NHS Learning Support Fund (LSF) in 2020 has provided students on certain eligible courses with a training grant of at least £5,000 in each year of study (subject to terms of the LSF). You can find out more about these on page 17.

It is important to stress the importance of the role these professions play within the healthcare sector. The work that has been done to bring attention to these pivotal roles has resulted in a welcome increase to study these degrees at university. Health Education England's campaigns have included raising the profile of the AHPs in the military, including roles as a Radiographer and Operating Department Practitioner.

We must continue this work to shed light on the AHPs. To ensure that they are given equal consideration to courses like medicine and dentistry when prospective students come to consider viable career paths within healthcare.



A guide to creative courses - why there is still a place for creative learning

By Jasminne Gwalter, Senior Student Recruitment Officer at Arts University Plymouth

It is no secret that creative learning and subjects in our schools and colleges have sharply declined in recent years. However, the creative industries in the UK are booming, estimated to be worth around £115.9 billion and accounting for 5.9% of the UK economy. In fact, Oxford Economics predict that with the right investment, the UK's creative industries will recover from the pandemic faster than the UK economy as a whole, growing by over 26% by 2025 and creating 300,000 new jobs.

This begs the question - why are we not making it a priority in mainstream education to encourage our students to engage in creative thinking and making?

Not every student favours art over PE, but the transferable skills that students pick up from their creative subjects will set them up to succeed in a variety of different career paths and support their professional development and general well-being in many ways. Art, design and media are a motor for economic growth and job creation, but just as importantly, creativity drives innovation and makes communities in all parts of the UK happier, healthier places for us to live in. The British Journal of Clinical Psychology [published a study](#) which demonstrates when people are involved in arts-oriented activities, they see a boost in positive emotions and a reduction in negative emotions - bringing about greater overall happiness.

The ability to think critically, some would say, is as important as Maths and English. Having the ability to ask 'why?' as well as 'how?' and to analyse the subject matter in order to form a clear judgement and continue to make informed decisions as well as demonstrate problem-solving capabilities. These kinds of skills can give students the confidence to approach education, work and live independently and with resilience.

Hands-on subjects are a way of learning by doing, allowing students who thrive in these environments to feel more comfortable in their abilities. Practical subjects allow students to explore, developing their skills and practice and take this confidence forward to apply to their core subjects, as well as improving their concentration. This provides a platform for students to feel prepared when taking part in GCSE qualifications, A-Levels, or any other more vocational type of subject.

Universities can support you with creative workshops

Often our schools and colleges have their hands tied when it comes to providing a way for all students to access creative subjects for their GCSEs or A-levels. However, many universities offer a variety of free masterclass or practical workshops to help engage students in creative study whilst also exploring higher education. This can be a wonderful way to allow students to get a feel for what it might be like to study a creative subject at university, whilst giving students the opportunity to engage in a new activity and skill, build their confidence and professional and personal relationships with their peers and beyond.

Through creativity, students develop ability as natural problem solvers, preparing them for further study and employment, and equipping them with the skills that will be needed to tackle the problems of the future. Creative learning is needed in our schools, colleges and universities now more than ever.





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A guide to university careers support and future student employability

By Andrew Cooper, Undergraduate Recruitment and Conversion Manager at Lancaster University Management School and HELOA UK Vice Chair (Membership & Administration)

Students may ask you *what is the point of going to university?*

Ultimately it is to get a high-level graduate job and in such a competitive job market, careers support has never been more important. Students quite rightly look at course options, accommodation, cities etc., but the careers support isn't usually as high on the important search list, so what should students be considering when exploring careers?

University careers teams

Every university will have a careers team and every student will have interactions with them. Often, they will deliver lectures, but like in your school or college, the more a student engages the more they get out. A good team supports students with workshops (writing CVs / interview preparation), meeting employers and learning about their recruitment processes and accessing resources via Careers Portals.

The structure of a team varies, and this is one way a student can differentiate between offers. Some will have a team who supports all students, others have a central team for general guidance with an adviser for a faculty, others will have faculty led careers support. Ascertaining what structure a university offers can help students explore what experience or support they will have, whether that is general support or subject specific provision.

Who can I work with?

Many students ask "*who do you work with?*", but the better question should be "*who can I work with?*".

Universities will work with local employers and some with international companies, but a good

team will support students to find placement opportunities. Placement years are a great way of experiencing the industry a student may potentially work in. Some universities will offer placement opportunities for all students, others may require students to apply in advance for a degree programme with a placement opportunity. If this is the case, it is likely those students will have dedicated modules on careers and how to apply to placement providers, who to talk to and most importantly, how to seek out opportunities.

Just because a university doesn't have a connection to a company, doesn't mean a student can't work with them. By asking who does the student want to work with, careers teams can seek out new opportunities to best support them.

What did you learn?

Many courses now have built-in skills development, so an English graduate can confidently talk about transferable skills, a Maths graduate can talk about the use of data. A great way to gauge potential success is for a student to look at university alumni. Often a university will run networking events, and this is a great way to hear from successful graduates, share contact details and crucially ask *how they used their skills from their time at the university to get to where they are now*.

By asking these important questions, students can see how their chosen providers can support them to reach their ultimate goal, achieving a high-quality job utilising all the multiple skills developed during their studies. This is something many university outreach and careers teams can assist you with - so you can best advise your students considering university.



A guide to how students can make the most of university – an academic perspective

By Marie Clifford, Senior Lecturer at the University of South Wales

Students turn up to lectures or seminars, do some extra reading, submit their assessments, pass them with flying colours and get their degree. There might also be some socialising thrown in too.

That is one way of viewing university, but by preparing your students for what to expect and what they need to put in to get the most out of it, it can become more than a transactional arrangement with some cheap drinks on the side.

Relationships are key

Encourage students to get to know lecturers, their peer group and other key players (the person who makes the coffee each morning is REALLY important).

The vast majority of lecturers welcome contact from students, want to hear their thoughts and be asked for clarification. This provides great support for students both academically and socially.

Peer group support is invaluable; someone to vent with over a coffee or ask questions over WhatsApp, all provide guidance and that key human contact we all need. With more hybrid, remote methods of learning being used, attendance for on campus sessions really helps when building these relationships.

Students should engage fully

There is no point turning up if the student is not actually 'present.' Paying attention to what is going on during on-campus and online sessions is crucial. Students should take notes to ensure active learning is taking place, limit distractions (there are apps to disable social media, for example, during teaching time). They should also expand learning outside of the formally arranged sessions by reading around the subject, finding links across subjects and where applicable, into day-to-day life.

Take charge of their own learning

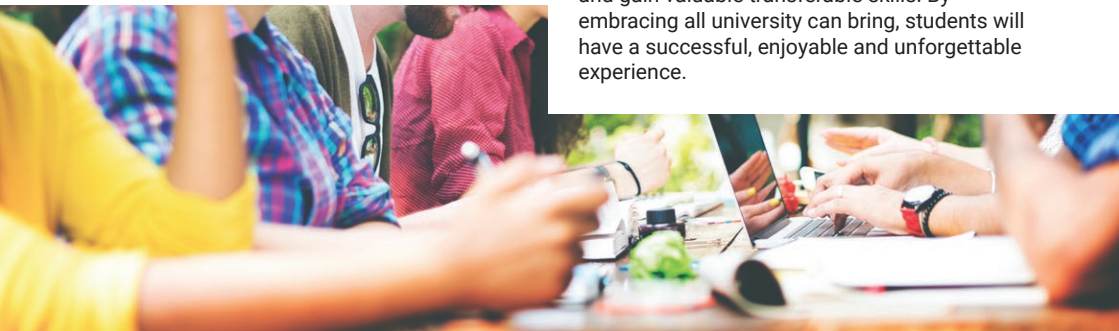
One of the key aspects of higher education study is becoming an independent thinker and an autonomous learner. There are huge advantages to this in that students have more choice and options than they may have experienced from compulsory education. But with great power comes great responsibility... attendance may not be monitored as closely, and additional reading and research will need to be done outside of the classroom.

Organisation and time management are skills that will need to be honed and students need to take charge of any feedback received. How can they improve? Are there common areas they are falling down on? How could this help them with future assessments in that subject, but also in different subjects?

Plan ahead

It is never too early to think about careers. What experience do they already have? How can they get more? All universities have a careers service that will be able to find volunteering and paid positions that can broaden any CV when it is time to think about the graduate job market.

University is not all about study either, so factoring in socialising, hobbies and me time is essential to allow students time to recharge and gain valuable transferable skills. By embracing all university can bring, students will have a successful, enjoyable and unforgettable experience.



A guide to university study skills

By Hannah Emery, Academic Achievement Manager at Blackpool and The Fylde College

Higher education study develops all kinds of skills for students. Writing an assignment is not *just* writing an assignment: it is effective notetaking, the ability to understand a question, researching, reading and evaluating secondary sources, using a referencing system, and setting aside time to write and edit. Students are expected to work on individual assignments over extended periods of time, which also requires motivation, confidence, organisation, and persistence.

It is never too early for students to be aware of their approaches to studying, and for them to consider how they might apply their skills in the future. The tips below can be used during discussions with your students to encourage them to see higher education study skills as buildable over time, rather than as a new and daunting prospect.

Students will have already developed skills

Students rarely start from scratch with their study skills. Problem solving, analysing, and evaluating are often used in everyday situations such as making decisions and maintaining friendships. Daily life at school also involves organisation and time management. It is helpful to make explicit links between these existing skillsets and how they might apply to academic study. Ongoing self-reflection can also have a positive impact on confidence, as it allows students to appreciate that their skills are not fixed and can be developed.

Developing skills can take time (and that is okay)

Unrealistic expectations of their own abilities can form barriers for students who expect too much of themselves in a short space of time. It is important to emphasise that students will develop skills during their chosen course; they do not need to excel at them all on the day they enrol! Highlighting the differences between immediate and long-term goals, and how a student can approach these, can make all the

difference in confidence and outcomes.

Assignments are often designed so that feedback can be used to constantly improve. Using feedback as a tool to enhance their work rather than focusing solely on the grade given will encourage students to have a positive approach to constructive criticism.

Independent does not mean alone

Higher education involves lots of independent study but that doesn't mean students shouldn't ask for help. Providers offer vast amounts of support and using the available services will improve the student experience, both prior to and during study.

Potential students should be reminded to check websites of providers they are interested in for information on transition activities: for example, Blackpool and The Fylde College runs 'Flying Start' workshops each summer so that students can meet staff, pick up study tips and share strategies for good time management. Although some students can be initially reluctant to seek out support, those who do invariably comment on how useful it is in building their skills and confidence.

In conclusion: writing an assignment is not *just* writing an assignment. It is meeting expectations, communicating effectively, appreciating the views of others, receiving feedback and learning how to improve. It is developing a complete set of skills that will continue to be valuable in education, employment, and life.

“It is never too early for students to be aware of their approaches to studying, and for them to consider how they might apply their skills in the future ”

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A guide to university societies

By Charlie Kettlewell, Outreach and Schools Liaison Officer at University College Birmingham

University societies are a great way for students to meet new people with a common interest, much like after-school clubs. They cover a variety of topics: academic, sporting and general interest. If it exists, there is probably a society for it!

I will outline some key information about societies here, which will be helpful when you speak to students about them.

General interest societies

General interest societies or clubs cover a range of topics: from wellbeing to drama societies, students get involved in activities that they are interested in, such as creating fundraisers, going on trips and weekly games, activities and quizzes.

Academic societies

Academic societies support students studying specific subject areas, creating a community by bringing together learners who are on the same course but may not be in the same classes. These societies can help students form study groups and informal seminars, as well as providing a brilliant way to swap reading lists and books.

Sport societies

Sports societies can be for both competitive and casual players, and students can pick and choose which elements they want to be involved in. Some sports societies, like football and basketball, take part in the BUCS (British

Universities and Colleges Sport) league. Different societies can also take part in varsity competitions between universities too.

Things to make students aware of when considering societies:

- They are associated with a students' union (SU), which is independent from the university. Students will automatically become a member of their SU unless they ask not to be. They are led by students for students.
- Most sports and societies will have a membership fee – these vary from society to society. To pay these, students can pay online or in person at their SU. The payment is not associated with the tuition loan and is separate from their studies, even if they are joining an academic society.
- For trips, societies may ask for additional payment, which may be discounted. Trips could include travelling abroad, going to the theatre etc.
- Societies are run by students who are likely to have been members themselves previously. They are voted in for different roles and volunteer to run the society under the supervision of the SU.
- During the first few weeks of university (commonly known as Freshers' Week, but many universities now call it Welcome Week or Welcome Fest), students attend fairs where they can meet the students who run the clubs and societies and can even sometimes try them out!
- If students would like to join a society that does not yet exist, they can group together and create one!



I always encourage students and applicants to get involved with sports, clubs and societies as it made my student experience the full, exciting and interesting one that it was, and it helped me flourish as an individual. And with us coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, it will really support students by feeling a sense of community in a new setting after being isolated for so long.

A guide to student life and the university transition

By Sarah Wiltshire, Student Recruitment Graduate Intern at the University of South Wales

Transitioning to student life at university from a sixth-form or college may prove intimidating for some students. This is their opportunity to live and study autonomously, encountering new aspects of independence that they may not have tackled before.

Here are some useful hints and tips to help you support students on their higher education journeys.

Student finance and budgeting

Each student will have an individual financial situation, depending on their student loan, accommodation choice and lifestyle. Therefore, the importance of making the most of their money must be stressed.

One way to show your students the value of their loan is to break down their cost of living. Once their rent and other expenses have been deducted from their total, divide the rest of the money into a monthly or daily allowance. This may surprise some students, as they may never have considered the cost of living. However, there are simple yet effective ways to stretch out their loan, such as buying and cooking in bulk - a larger weighted item of food may cost more, but may work out less per pound and will last longer. Another way would be to use shop brand products, rather than big brand items.

Student accommodation

Living away from home for the first time can be a daunting prospect. However, it is a chance for students to get a taste of independent living. They will be residing with individuals who have come from unique walks of life who will provide

different perspectives. Moreover, students will be able to learn new life skills such as cooking new meals, cleaning, and keeping themselves healthy.

It is important to stress that if students do not feel they have all the knowledge they need, it is easily accessible. Universities often provide advice on independent living, they can ask friends and family, or simply search online. Crucially, students must remember that it is always possible to visit family or stay in touch with them online - staying connected is imperative for positive well-being.

Making friends

It is important for students not to feel lonely at university, as this can negatively impact their well-being.

University provides a wealth of opportunities for students to make new friends. A good way to find friends with similar interests would be to join a society, this will allow students to continue their passion or hobby whilst making friends who appreciate the same topics. Another way to meet new people is through attending Freshers events, as well as joining online freshers' groups on social media.

Three top tips for your students from a recent graduate

1. Buy a wall calendar to keep track of your assignments - it is useful for knowing when to start each one and when the deadlines are!
2. Bring sweet treats on your moving in day to break the ice with new flatmates.
3. Buy a student railcard to save money when visiting friends and family.

“Students must remember that it is always possible to visit family or stay in touch with them online - staying connected is imperative for positive well-being”



A guide to university student support services

By Fatmata K Daramy, Widening Participation and Student Success Manager at The University of Law

Universities support students in a myriad of ways - both financially and pastorally. The following article will outline the ways in which they do this.

It is important to note that support will differ between institutions. I would encourage prospective students to visit university websites to gain an understanding of the services which can be provided.

Bursaries and scholarships

To address the financial concerns some students might have in attending university, there are a range of bursaries and scholarships. In general, a scholarship is awarded based on a student's merit e.g., if they have achieved specified grades before attending university. In contrast, bursaries are usually allocated based on financial need.

Some universities, including The University of Law, provide bursaries for students who fit specific household income criteria. These bursaries might not need to be applied for, as some universities will automatically allocate the funds to students.

Widening participation support

Widening participation students are identified as students who are underrepresented in higher education. This includes, but is not limited to, mature students, students with care responsibilities, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic students, disabled students,

and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Support can be provided to aid these students throughout their educational journey, from access to university to progression into the world of work.

Students should be encouraged to disclose such information on their application forms. This will enable universities to identify them as being in specific groups i.e., a care leaver or a student with a disability. This will ensure that the students receive the support that has been tailored for them. For example, The University of Law provides undergraduate estranged and care-experienced students with a financial support package as well as contextual offers to enable them to access higher education.

Student success programmes

Additional forms of support that universities offer include those directed towards student success. An example of this is peer to peer, external, or alumni mentoring. These are focused on allowing students to be able to build relationships and networks.

Finally, one unique way that some universities are providing support to students is through schemes enabling current students to co-create initiatives that aim to support student success for widening participation students. One example of this is Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) advocates or ambassador schemes. This is a paid role that enables the university to work with students who self-identify as part of the BAME community, to aid the university in supporting and empowering specific students. This scheme not only supports BAME students in general, but it empowers students to be able to create change and further support their peers.

“ Universities support students in a myriad of ways - both financially and pastorally ”



A student guide to making the most out of university

By Emma Berwick, a current Business with French student at the University of Birmingham

Whether students are doing a three-year course, integrated masters, or planning to do a PHD, there are certainly lots of opportunities as they embark on the university journey.

This article will offer an insight into the opportunities at university, how to balance this and where to find them.

I have split this into the usual three years across their programme.

Year 1

It is important for students to get involved in societies. Not only will they meet new people from all years, build new skills, and attend social events and potential trips, societies will also help with their work-life balance. I would also encourage students to join a sports team or similar.

Often at the end of a student's first year, societies will be looking for new committee members. There are usually opportunities such as social secretary, treasurer or president, and although these roles are unpaid, they are an excellent way to develop leadership skills, meet new people and give back.

Typically, the first year for most courses at most universities does not count towards the overall grade. This gives students a bit more flexibility and an opportunity to gain a strong foundation into their course, particularly if they've never studied a subject before. Taking some time to establish a strong foundation will be a worthwhile investment.

In the first year, with less at stake, students have more time. This is an ideal opportunity to get a job. A lot of students might work on campus, at the student's union, waiting tables, or as a student ambassador supporting during open days. They also might seek employment

externally, perhaps at the local supermarket, or by getting a transfer from their current job. From my personal experience, I would advise working for the university as they are more flexible around study commitments. They are also likely to support future job opportunities through providing references or similar.

Whilst students are at university, they should not forget to take advantage of all the extra-curricular opportunities on offer. This might be free language courses, talks about public speaking or being a student rep. All these opportunities are a small-time commitment but over time will compound so they will finish the first year with stronger time management skills as well as much broader knowledge beyond the scope of their degree.

Now that the world's opening up - long may it continue, the opportunity to study abroad is too. Even though I have not completed a summer study abroad myself, everyone I have spoken to who has completed one, has had a fantastic time. Students thinking about study abroad opportunities should keep an eye on emails and get in early. Usually, these are offered by partner universities, which means low or no tuition fees for a student. Universities may offer travel grants or subsidies to support this, and the new Turing scheme is also worth exploring.

Year 2

For context, I have just completed my second year and I am now going to study abroad at Montpellier Business School next year.

Coupled with the resources alluded to in the first-year section, some students opt for a study abroad or industrial placement. For language degrees, this is an essential part of the degree but for others it may be optional.

Taking place in the third year, just after a student finishes their second year, study abroad can be a fantastic option. If a student is looking to be immersed in a new language, experience a new city or culture and meet people from across the globe, study abroad might be for them.

I made the decision to take my modules in French because I wanted to become more

familiar with the terminology and develop my fluency. As I do not yet know what I want to do when I am older, having another language or two under my belt will make me more employable.

Although planning for a career should not be the sole focus of the second year, taking the time to tune into careers talks from professionals is also worth the time.

If a student is following a 3-year course, second year (penultimate students) often look for an internship. Whilst this is not the be-all and end-all here, having some employment experience can take the pressure off when it comes to searching for graduate roles. If a student has enjoyed working for the company during this time, they can 'convert' to a full-time role, or if nothing else, they will have a toolkit of scenarios for future interviews.

Year 3

We are now on to third year – thank you for reading this far!

Whilst I cannot comment with first-hand experience of this, I have instead included some resources below on organisations students might like to explore – this ranges from tutoring to careers talks.

Year 1 resources: Sanctuary graduates (brand ambassador); Peppo tutors; Circl Leadership Programme; Tutor the nation; Wisier; FastFutures

Year 2 resources: SEO London; Aletio; Uptree; Zero Gravity

Year 3 resources: All the above; Bright Network, Target Jobs, Coursera.



A guide to university accommodation

By Charlie Kettlewell, Outreach and Schools Liaison Officer at University College Birmingham

There is a range of accommodation available for students to suit a variety of budgets. I would recommend you encourage students to research institutions' different options online and to see the accommodation in person during open, applicant or clearing days.

What are university halls?

Most universities have their own university halls. There can be a range of options available, from shared bathrooms to ensembles and even self-contained flats! Most are self-catering but some universities do offer catered options.

These flats are usually fully furnished with kettles, toasters, beds, wardrobes etc. Do encourage students to read their institution's website for what is included in their halls, as no-one wants ten kettles in one flat!

Universities will stipulate who can live in halls: some, for example, may say first year students who make them their first choice will be offered a place in halls, while others will offer places to any student that wishes to reside in them.

A lot of contracts will cover September to June for when students are studying. However, students estranged from parents or in care can ask for additional support and some universities will have 52-week provision available. Longer contracts can also apply for education, health/medicine and international students.

What is university managed accommodation?

This accommodation is privately owned, external to the university and off campus, but the university manage it. This means payments of rent and requests for maintenance will be done through the university.

What are private student halls?

Private halls are much like university halls but are privately owned and are not associated

with a university. If studying in a big city where there are different universities, students from all these different institutions may be living there and be at different levels of study.

What are private student houses?

Like the above, these are privately owned houses to rent. Most students move into a room in these shared houses after their first year of university and tend to share with friends they have made through societies or on their courses.

Costs

Rents for student accommodation are calculated as a weekly rate (for example, £132 p/w) but can be paid termly (for example, £1,386) when student maintenance loans and grants are paid. Rents in halls tend to cover rent, maintenance and security, utilities, Wi-Fi etc. Privately owned accommodation can differ from place to place.

Student support departments are equipped to support students when reading contracts to make sure they feel comfortable before signing. Deposits are paid before moving in. If a student is struggling financially, encourage them to contact their university for support.

My tips for school and college colleagues discussing university accommodation with students:

- Signpost students towards their institution's student support or accommodation services if they are concerned about finances, moving, contracts etc.
- Encourage students to not rush into signing contracts and check them with a parent/teacher before they do sign.
- Deposits are refundable unless the student has breached their contract. Deposits need to be paid beforehand.
- Colour code – it is easy to lose white plates, so encourage them to bring something a little jazzy so they are not lost.
- If money is an issue, second-hand alternatives may be available.



A guide to organising online and physical events for your school or college

By **Oliver Rossetti**, Outreach Manager at the University of Leicester

Events are back on the cards and a successfully organised event can go a long way to supporting the achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks and ignite that *lightbulb moment!* Planning an impactful event can seem daunting but you're certainly not alone and as higher education institutions, we are here to advise.

Do you want an online or physical event?

Post-pandemic, you now have options! Universities are awash with digital resources and platforms to support information, advice and guidance sessions. So you have the freedom to broaden your reach out to institutions from further afield and really get your students thinking!

I suggest you weigh up the benefits of face-to-face delivery, could that talk simply be shown on a live screen and resources sent beforehand to have the same desired impact? Could pupils be off timetable for a virtual work experience day, meeting universities and employers alike?

Particularly with older key stages, young people know which format they prefer, so why not empower your pupils and see which format they would find most beneficial? Above all, make sure students feel connected to the session through offering interactivity, such as a Q&A opportunity.

Choosing digital...which online platform should you use?

If the pandemic has shown us anything, it's that there is an abundance of online platforms to choose from, such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Adobe Connect, which all promote a different level of interactivity. Providers will likely have access to some of these platforms, so you don't necessarily have to use your budget.

Concerns about safeguarding? Restrictions can normally be applied such as passwords or enabling the teacher themselves to admit students from a register. Don't be afraid of requesting the university to lock down settings in order to meet your safeguarding policy and risk assessment.

Physical Considerations

If face-to-face delivery is appropriate then I suggest for the short-medium term, ensure adequate space between stands, and have hand sanitiser upon entry. Send any guidance necessary for the time of year, such as PPE requirements or bringing extra layers should your careers fair be in a cooler environment. As visitors, we want to arrive prepared and be good examples for your pupils.

Organised chaos is better than no organisation

Universities receive a number of requests, so do research into the date and check whether it conflicts with local or national career exhibitions. You could consider linking up with another school within your trust or a local school to help encourage a larger variety of providers to attend. Alternatively, you could schedule your event a day either side to allow providers to book accommodation and attend both local events.

What information will universities need?

The more details, the better! I suggest including the following details in your first email and then your confirmation email two weeks before the event:

- Date, times and location
- Expected size of audience*
- DBS and safeguarding information
- Car parking information
- Schedule of the day
- Refreshment information
- Anything that may impact the day such as construction work or a requirement for warm clothing
- The main organiser's contact details
- If possible, information about the key learning outcomes of any workshop sessions

**We appreciate audience size can fluctuate so approximate numbers is fine, it helps universities bring the correct quantity of literature.*

Maximise speaker efficiency

Avoid booking multiple institutions to deliver the same talk to a handful of students. Universities have a finite amount of resources and particularly this year will be trying to cover as many events as possible to support gaps in knowledge.

Refreshments - to be or not to be, that is the question?

This will always be budget-dependant! As a general rule, tea/coffee/water goes a long way, particularly for those colleagues who may have left at sunrise, travelling from afar. Food is always welcomed, but if this is not provided,

simply let those attending know in advance if they need to bring their own lunch – nobody likes a room full of hungry stomachs!

A passionate event will make a world of difference!

Be creative and don't be afraid of asking for feedback from both your pupils and exhibiting organisations.

I hope you find these tips useful and whether it will be your first or your hundredth event, I wish you the best of luck in organising a successful one!

“ Planning an impactful event can seem daunting but you're certainly not alone and as higher education institutions, we are here to advise ”



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people and get to know the
university before it became
my home.”**

Harris Stovell, BA Graphic Design graduate

How to prepare students for UCAS fairs and events

By Carly Outerbridge, Undergraduate Student Recruitment and Access Officer at Keele University

Talking to students in advance about what to expect during a UCAS exhibition is key to helping avoid the grab and run or “*errmm...I don't know what to say*” conversations that we sometimes experience.

We recognise fairs can be quite intimidating, a hall or exhibition centre full of teenagers, teachers, and unfamiliar faces. If students do not know what to expect on the day, they are bound to feel even more unsettled. We would recommend a preparation session in advance and following the steps below can help prepare your students.

It is all about options

Try to get students to think about their next steps and provide reassurance that they do not need to go with an exact picture of what they want to study or where they want to go. It might be handy to produce a shortlist of individual universities that are a must to speak to on the day.

No question is too big or small

The chances are, we have been asked the same questions hundreds of times before. It is important to remind students to not just lean on friends to be the designated university interviewer, as the fair is a fantastic way to help build independence and ask questions that are important to them. Feel free to pass on a few conversation starters about courses, entry requirements, accommodation, facilities, location, extra opportunities, open days and whatever else that interests them!

What to expect

Share a map in advance with your students to help gather familiarity and allow them to prepare their trail and plan for any scheduled talks. Universities are labelled alphabetically,

which makes planning a whole lot easier! Some universities may provide physical or digital prospectuses, either way, it is best to be prepared with a strong bag and wear comfortable shoes. Teachers... wear your Fitbits!

Students will be asked by universities if they would like to have their individual QR code scanned to keep up to date with university updates. Some students find it beneficial to temporarily set this as their phone 'lock screen' or have it easily accessible. Providing their QR code does not commit students to go to that institution – they will not be bombarded with emails and can unsubscribe if they choose.

Previous images can help provide familiarity with the day. Most importantly, remind your students to enjoy every minute, this is one step closer to their future.

Universities also want to hear from teachers and advisors on the day too – so do not forget to come and introduce yourself!

After the event

After you step back on the coach, there will be lots of worn-out students (and teachers). It can be good to ask the students to make notes and write down the universities that stood out. Revisit the day at your next available opportunity and encourage students to continue the conversation. This might be a chance to explore what action has been taken since, and you might notice a few students who were inspired to start their personal statements early!



A guide to university open days

By Ashleigh Little, Head of Post-16 Outreach and Recruitment at the University of Sunderland

Once your student has made a shortlist of the universities they are considering, the next step is to visit their chosen universities.

Most universities host their main open days on a Saturday, and some host events more frequently than others. You can usually find out when their next open day is by visiting the university website or browsing events on UniTasterDays.com.

Most universities can accommodate school group bookings for their open days too. If you email their recruitment team in advance, they will be happy to organise your trip to come and see them.

Below are some tips that will help your students get the most out of their university open day:

- **Register in advance** – signing up to the open day in advance means they will receive the open day programme ahead of time. This means your students can plan if they need to book travel or accommodation, and if there is anything going on in the town or city, they may wish to spend a weekend there, exploring the feel of the area.
- **Travel costs support** – some universities offer a reimbursement of travel costs, so make sure your students look out for this and see if they are eligible. They may also provide refreshments, and some even provide lunch!
- **Timetable talks and tours** – using the open day programme, they should make a list of the talks and tours they want to attend, so they don't clash. Make sure they leave enough time to see and do what they want to, without feeling rushed. Universities may repeat their most popular subject talks in the morning and afternoon, so they can attend more than one subject talk.

- **Prepare questions** – get your students to write questions beforehand to ask the academics. Whether it's about module content or hours of study per week, their answers will help when comparing subjects at different universities.
- **Attend the finance talk** – if the university has put a finance talk in their programme, I would encourage your students to attend it. It will provide information on how university funding works, when and how to apply for it, and what students are eligible for based on their circumstances. This information is crucial for guiding your students through the application process.
- **Speak to current students** – all universities have student ambassadors on hand during an open day. These ambassadors are current students who are there to guide them around the university. They are also there to talk to your students about their chosen course and what it is like to study there. Getting first-hand accounts from their peers is invaluable when making such a big decision.

Once your students have visited their chosen institutions, they will usually have an inkling of where they feel the best place for them is. It is important that they choose somewhere that they feel they will belong, and where they will feel safe and supported to achieve their goals.

“Most universities can accommodate school group bookings for their open days too. If you email their recruitment team in advance, they will be happy to organise your trip to come and see them.”

A guide to online university events

By Lily Wearden, Student Recruitment Officer at Aberystwyth University

Since 2020 we've understandably seen a huge rise in the number of online university events. At Aberystwyth we have organised virtual open days, higher education fairs, webinars, Q&As, subject tasters and much more.

While we are all thrilled to be back working with our prospective students in person, these online events certainly still have their place, even without social-distancing laws! More than anything, it increases the number of institutions students are now able to access. Students can find out everything they need to know from the comfort of their homes, without having to travel hundreds of miles, or worry about clashing open day events.

I would always recommend students to visit a university in person before accepting an offer, if the option is available, but certainly for initial information gathering and comparing between similar institutions, attending an online event can be just as valuable.

Top tips for your students to make the most of an online event:

Research

Encourage students to explore the university in advance; through UCAS, the university website, UniTasterDays.com, UniFrog, The Student Room etc. They can work out what they are interested in about the institution and the course, and what they still need to know. Are they eligible for scholarships? What is the accommodation like? Will they be able to continue their hobbies? What are the public transport links like? The more they know in advance, the more they will be able to make of the open day, and the experts who will be online to help them.

Talk to the advisors, academics and current students

This is relevant to students and teachers alike; at in-person events it is easy for us to approach you and chat about our institutions and what

we can support you with, and you will find that walking around campus or flicking through a prospectus might inspire questions along the way.

Online events will not always have the same prompts to help generate conversation, and it is important that students still use the opportunity to learn as much as they can, especially things that are specifically relevant to them, regardless of what direction they are approaching from.

We understand that, for prospective students, it can seem more daunting to message in a chat box than speak to someone face-to-face, but we are there to help and can help ease any worries or concerns students have about university. Similarly, we love to speak to teachers and advisors about how we can support you in your schools, and these online events are a great way of putting you in touch with the right people.

Take advantage of what is available

It is very easy for students to scroll through the welcome page of an online fair, browse a course page they have probably already looked at, and then log off. However, particularly at large national fairs or online open day events, there is usually so much more on offer, such as virtual campus tours, presentations on student life, and departmental sessions. All of this is created specifically to help provide students with the same information they would be able to gather at an in-person event. It is important that they are aware of this – and take advantage of it.

Attend subject specific events

Another great thing about having online events so readily available is that universities are able to run academic taster sessions and webinars, which would be much less feasible to deliver in person in each individual school. This means students get a chance to learn about the course subject and experience the actual teaching styles of the university. It also means if they are not 100% sure what they want to study, they can try out some different sessions and see what appeals the most! Universities will be able to offer live subject sessions during school time and directly to your students, but also a lot of the time you will find that this content is available on demand as well, so students can tune in at their convenience!

A guide to university open events

By Andy Jackson, Recruitment Events Manager at the University of South Wales

The past two years have seen huge innovation and change in university open events, and the range of activities available to students can seem overwhelming. Attending university open events is one of the best ways to find out if a university and course is the right fit for a student.

Working out which events to attend and proper preparation is crucial to a student making the most of their time on campus. So, this is an insight into open events which will hopefully assist you when providing guidance to your students.

School / College visits and university taster days

These events are a great option for introducing a class to higher education and the options that are available to them. These are usually arranged by a school and college liaison or outreach team at a university. Depending on when in the year you visit a campus, these can also include sessions on applying to UCAS and starting an application. Check out UniTasterDays.com and individual university websites to find details of these events.

University open days

Everyone knows about open days – right? Yes and no. While open days are the most well-known event, they can also be the most misunderstood. For many universities, the days of visitors just turning up and having a talk are long gone. Open days are changing and evolving, the open day will reflect the type of university and course the student has chosen, so there really is not a “one-size-fits-all” event, they will vary in size, shape, and content.

Students should visit 3 – 5 universities for open days. Even if they are really set on a specific university, it is a good idea to visit more than one to get perspective.

Applicant and offer holder days

After applying, most universities will invite prospective students for a second visit. These can either be once they have applied or after an offer has been made.

These events usually include more subject-based activities and may involve either a group or a one-to-one meeting with an academic member of staff. If your students are invited before an offer is made, they should check if this one-to-one is an interview or just an informal chat.

Online activities

Digital fatigue is real, but there is still real value in online activities. Many universities use Unibuddy, which allows prospective students to contact current students and staff, ask questions, and find out more about the university and student life.

Online open days and webinars are also valuable as they can give students another chance to hear from academic members of staff, ask questions to support services and follow-up anything they may have missed or were not clear on from an on-campus event. Some universities also run webinars on preparing for key events such as open days, results days, and ahead of enrolment.

To get the most out of events, preparation is key. Here are some top tips for your students:

1. Book a place for the event – this is the best way to know what to expect and to stay up to date.
2. Read the programme and other information (and check your junk folder).
3. Plan how to get to the open day, and check where to go – especially if there is more than one campus. If the event is online, plan which device to use and have the charger to hand.
4. Prioritise what to do and allow time for some queueing.
5. Bring a notebook and take photos, to document the day for reflection.
6. Think of some questions to ask on the day to support future decision making.



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BOOK YOUR
OPEN DAY

A guide to booking a university event for your school

By David Handy, Head of Admissions at King Edward VI College, Stourbridge. David has previously worked in a senior role at a university, and prior to that, as a Head of Sixth Form

Following the publication of the Gatsby benchmarks in 2014, schools have increasingly sought to work with partners from the world of higher education to inform and educate their students on the fantastic opportunities available.

Higher education providers receive multiple requests on a daily basis from partners in schools for events on site with the school, and also on site at universities. Owing to the volume of requests, allied to staffing and logistical arrangements, recruitment and outreach teams will often have to prioritise events to ensure that they are delivering a good return on investment.

On university websites you will find email addresses for recruitment and outreach teams that will be ready and willing to listen to your requests – or you can also use the free *event request* service on UniTasterDays.com. I would always recommend planning in advance to secure attendance to your event – waiting until the last minute may result in disappointment. The more lead time you can give, the more chance of securing the experts!

If the event would take place on site in school, the university would need the following information to consider your request:

- The year group(s) that will be attending.
- The approximate number of students or parents that will be in attendance.
- The service required from the higher education institution (e.g. attendance at a careers fair, delivery of a presentation, a workshop, mock interviews, attendance at a parents evening, etc.).

- The time of the session(s) and if this is to be repeated, how many times?
- What IT facilities will be available, particularly for workshops and presentations.
- Will car parking be provided?
- For longer events, will refreshments or lunch be provided for university staff in attendance?

It is also crucial to consider the timing of the event! Does the event need to last all day, or can it be shortened into a more concise event? If parents are to attend, are they going to attend immediately after the end of the school day or is there going to be a gap before a parental session?

Top tip

In my experience, Key Stage 3 students in particular can often be poorly prepared for careers fair events. You may therefore wish to build short presentations into the programme where colleges, universities, training providers and others can provide some event context and the types of questions students could ask. This will enable students to benefit more from the experts in attendance.

If you are looking to book a visit to a university for taster activities, presentations or residential activities, you will need to provide the following information for the university to consider whether they can support your request:

- The year group(s) that will be attending .
- The approximate number of students that will be in attendance.
- What activities you require from the university.
- The time of the planned arrival and departure.

The best relationships between schools and universities evolve over years, often with activities repeated on an annual basis. This is built upon an ever-strengthening relationship and the knowledge of activities that are mutually beneficial for the school, the students and/or parents involved, and the university.



How universities can support schools seeking subject specific events

By Nia Stokes, Student Recruitment Officer at Swansea University

When researching universities, students are often questioning what the university can offer them when they get there. However, it is also worth finding out what an institution can offer before the application process even starts.

Subject specific events come in many forms and are a great way for your students to start exploring higher education. Student recruitment teams can offer talks and workshops in person or online on a range of subjects, from course tasters to student life and personal statements.

On-campus visit days are also on offer, which allow students to experience university facilities first-hand whilst receiving sessions from academics. Furthermore, summer school programs can encourage students to gain independence and meet new people.

The benefits of subject specific university events

Subject events are highly beneficial for prospective students. Deciding what subject to study at university can be a daunting task, especially if they are considering areas that are not taught at their school or college. Trying

out a subject with their chosen university can give a real insight into whether they can see themselves pursuing it as a career.

Doing so can also provide a taster of university teaching. Lectures, seminars and tutorials differ greatly from Key Stage 5 education, as does the independent study that university courses often require. Experiencing this at a summer school or webinar session can indicate to students whether university is right for them.

Another advantage of subject specific events is that university academics are leading researchers in their fields, so discussion of a specific subject through a webinar session can also develop students' knowledge and improve their academic skill in preparation for their exams.

Mentioning this event participation can look attractive in a personal statement too, demonstrating interest and commitment - especially if it involves a student's chosen university.

Subject specific events have school and college benefits

As well as being of great benefit to your students, organising these events can also help schools and colleges to achieve their Gatsby Benchmarks. Incorporating regular sessions into your timetables will increase encounters with higher education (Benchmark 7), link your curriculum to careers (Benchmark 4), and create a stable careers programme (Benchmark 1).

“ When researching universities, students are often questioning what the university can offer them when they get there. However, it is also worth finding out what an institution can offer before the application process even starts ”

Note from UniTasterDays

Students and schools can visit the UniTaster On Demand platform to watch 100s of impartial introductions to university subjects at www.unitasterdays.com/ondemand

How can universities support school and college staff with CPD opportunities?

By Rachel Wier, Student Life Enhancement Manager at the University of Essex

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an opportunity for teachers and school staff to interact with external mentors, share best practice and enhance their knowledge in specific subject areas, including the higher education journey. It is also a way of keeping teachers 'in the loop' with current issues that young people might be facing and providing the tools needed to manage concerns within the school environment.

Universities recognise that teaching/support staff can have limited time and resources, so when delivering CPD activity, they ensure it is relevant, informative and high quality.

Throughout the pandemic, CPD became widely available online, encouraging school staff to sign up for events offered by institutions across the globe, not just in their local area.

Explore CPD opportunities

University conferences

This is a one- or two-day programme of higher education updates, workshops, Q&A sessions, and networking. Conferences are typically held on university grounds to showcase their facilities, however virtual conferences are becoming increasingly more popular, allowing attendees to join from home.

Subject-specific CPD sessions

These are interactive workshops focusing on upskilling, generating discussion and/

or providing teachers with resources to integrate into their lessons. These sessions would usually run for 1-2 hours and are now commonly available as online webinars. Examples of previous sessions delivered at the University of Essex during 2021-22 include Teaching Generation Z, a Masterclass in Behaviour Management, Handling Difficult Conversations with Parents, and Teach to the Top.

Teacher and adviser webpages

Universities tend to hold useful links, resources and print outs for teachers to use in their day-to-day teaching on a teacher/adviser webpage within a schools and colleges section of their website. Many institutions also post their past CPD sessions on their website as pre-recorded videos. This makes it possible for teachers to research what is out there and build their own CPD programme to access in their own time.

Podcasts

Podcasts are the perfect way for teachers to keep up to date with student finance, UCAS and employability related information. Universities record episodes with academic staff, current university students and external experts and then stream through platforms such as Apple Music, Spotify and Soundcloud. For teachers, it's an enjoyable way of connecting with institutions in their own time and can be easily shared amongst student cohorts too.

Note from UniTasterDays

Check out our new Uni Guide podcast for teachers - launched in October 2022.

Need something else? Please request it

University recruitment and outreach teams are more than happy to provide bespoke sessions or materials upon request. Get in touch to suggest topics, providers and resources that you would like to engage with!



A guide to fair access and widening participation

By Danielle Russo, Head of Outreach and Widening Participation at St George's, University of London

Defining Fair Access and Widening Participation

Fair access and widening participation are both terms used in relation to higher education. Fair access relates to admissions processes, while widening participation broadly refers to the widening of social groups that benefit from higher education.

The focus of Widening Participation is to work with under-represented groups that are statistically less likely to progress onto higher education. This therefore supports fair access to university, so everyone with the potential to succeed in higher education has equal opportunity to do so.

Who is under-represented in higher education?

The Office for Students (the regulator for higher education) considers the following groups to be under-represented in higher education:

- students from areas of low higher education participation, low household income or low socioeconomic status
- some black, Asian and minority ethnic students
- mature students
- disabled students
- care leavers
- carers
- people estranged from their families
- people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- refugees
- children from military families.

Often, Widening Participation activities will aim to work with young people who meet at least one of these criteria. We're all really keen to support the young people where activities

will have the biggest impact and teachers are invaluable in helping us to identify such students.

What sort of activities do universities run?

Universities differ in the approach they take to widening participation, so there will be similarities and differences. Examples of the type of activities delivered include summer schools, campus visit days, information, advice and guidance workshops, and long-term programmes where students take part in multiple different activities over a period of time.

Activities will be targeted at different age groups, often starting in primary school right through to Year 13. Often the overarching aim will be to support, inform and prepare individuals from under-represented backgrounds to achieve their potential and consider higher education as a realistic and achievable option.

A current focus for widening participation is on attainment raising. This might involve fully trained university students delivering subject-specific tutoring to school pupils.

Many universities also have contextual admissions schemes. Usually this means that applicants who meet specific criteria will be eligible for a reduced offer, so rather than being required to achieve AAB, they may receive an offer of ABB, for instance. Again, universities manage contextual admissions in different ways, but you can find out more on university websites.

How can schools get involved in university fair access and widening participation programmes?

I would encourage all teachers to contact university widening participation teams to find out more about the activities they can support you with. Many will have newsletters you can sign up for, to keep informed of activities and initiatives. Don't be shy to talk about any ideas you have about the types of activities that would best support your students – we are here to help, so please get in touch!

“ Activities will be targeted at different age groups, often starting in primary school right through to Year 13 ”

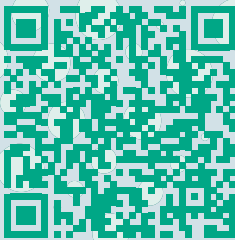


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Widening participation and access programmes – what is available?

By Gagandeep Chaggar, Outreach Coordinator at the University of West London

Universities are keen to support you with your school priorities, such as supporting attainment and aspirations, and providing guidance and opportunities for learners who are underrepresented in higher education.

As a former secondary teacher, I wish I had known about these great opportunities.

What is widening participation?

Widening Participation focuses on supporting learners from under-represented groups in higher education, who may miss out on the opportunity to progress their education. It's all about addressing inequalities and priorities in groups and communities, and exploring options in the world of university, apprenticeships and work.

Why do universities offer this service?

Universities create Access and Participation Plans (also known as APPs) which outline how they will improve equality of opportunity through widening participation and fair access, as directed by our regulator, the Office for Students (also known as OfS).

The Office for Students ask universities specifically to *'improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education'*. This work varies for many universities, but we are all directed to deliver projects with thorough evaluations and impact measures.

Department names for those delivering this activity usually contain some, or a combination, of the following words and teams:

- Access and Participation
- Outreach
- Schools and Colleges
- Widening Access/Participation

What can a university do for you and local communities? An example.

Here is an idea of what universities offer, based around University of West London activities:

- **Long term projects:** Young People's Lectures development programme, National Saturday Clubs, Storytelling projects, in specific settings such as Pupil Referral Units.
- **For specific groups:** care leaver cooking sessions, mature learner programmes, specific projects aimed at working-class communities.
- **Career development activities:** work experience for widening participation students, discover university days, subject taster days.
- **Ad hoc programmes:** working with local schools, colleges, councils, community and voluntary organisations to develop reactive programmes.

If you have an idea for a project, please do contact a university as there may be flexibility in their offering.

Who benefits from widening participation work?

Widening participation teams work with those who meet specific criteria, as set by the Office for Students and universities. As an example, this includes the following for the University of West London:

- young people from a working-class background.
- learners eligible for free school meals.
- disabled learners.
- mature learners.
- care leavers and looked after children.
- young and adult carers.
- learners with no parental/carer history of higher education in the UK.
- learners from the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller backgrounds.
- refugees and asylum seekers.

Remember, even if you know your students do not have an interest in going to university, you can still engage in activities.

How do I work with a university?

A quick internet search should reveal your local universities. Then visit these universities' websites for details about their outreach, widening participation or schools/college work. You can also browse opportunities on UniTasterDays.com, which is a national directory of university opportunities for schools.

You can contact them to generally connect or with a specific request. Also, get signed up for any newsletters and pass these links onto other relevant people at your institution.

My top tip for teachers?

I strongly recommend seeking out teacher networking opportunities with universities as a great way of meeting people, receiving innovative continuing professional development and supporting your most vulnerable learners.

“Universities are keen to support you with your school priorities, such as supporting attainment and aspirations, and providing guidance and opportunities for learners who are underrepresented in higher education”



A guide to the students eligible for fair access and widening participation initiatives

By Laura Whitelock, Access and Outreach Officer at the University of York

Many higher education institutions are eager to support fair access and widening participation initiatives to ensure our learning communities are inclusive, safe, and welcoming spaces for all students, no matter their background.

With that in mind, many institutions will support key groups of students, which will usually include students who are most underrepresented at their institutions, or students who are generally underrepresented within higher education institutions in the UK.

What does that actually mean?

It means that students who are statistically less likely to progress to higher education are the key target audience for widening access programmes. Often institutions will break this down using eligibility criteria. Many of the criteria points focus on students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, or underrepresented communities.

Who is eligible to receive support?

The most common thread is that students usually need to have attended a state school or college for their secondary and post-16 education. Aside from this, students eligible for support may include:

- First-generation students (students who are the first generation in their immediate family to attend higher education).
- Care experienced and estranged students (students who have spent time in local authority care or are estranged from their family).
- Young carers (students who have caring responsibilities).
- Ethnic minority students (for example Black, Asian, Arab, or mixed-race backgrounds).
- Mature students (students aged 21 or above at the start of their undergraduate studies).
- Refugee and asylum seekers.
- Students from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities.
- Students with a disability or long-term health condition (including mental health conditions).
- Students from military or service families.
- Students living in areas with a low progression rate (usually measured by POLAR data - you can [check student's postcodes](#) online).
- Students with a household income below £42,875.
- Students eligible for free school meals, pupil premium or other discretionary payments.
- Students who attended a school or college that achieved below the national average (based on [Government statistics](#)).

It is worth noting that different institutions will likely have different eligibility criteria. Even some programmes at the same institution may focus on different groups of students. For example, at the University of York we have [Black Access](#), which is a programme designed by our current Black students to support fellow Black students, but we also have post-16 programmes such as [YorWay to York](#), accepting students from most of the above criteria.

What support will students receive?

This can vary between institutions, but may include:

- Reduced offer schemes (where students can receive an offer lower than the standard entry requirements - for example, AAA could become AAB or even ABB).
- Access to scholarships or bursaries (money provided by the institution to support students with study or accommodation costs, which does not need to be repaid).
- Mentoring (often with current students at the institution).
- The opportunity to attend tailored events and activities with the institution (such as campus tours, residential events, or online skills sessions).
- Ongoing support (regular contact relating to key milestones, for example making post-18 decisions, completing personal statements, applying for student finance, and much more).

How can I help my students access support?

1. Invite institutions, both locally and nationally, to attend your school or college and introduce their programmes. Continue to raise awareness of these programmes in school to support your students, discussing the key benefits.
2. Look at institutions' websites to check their eligibility criteria. You may wish to focus on your own student population's needs, for example, do you have a high proportion of ethnic minority students or perhaps your school is located in an area of low progression?
3. Most of all, continue to develop your understanding of widening participation programmes, and who may be eligible, to ensure you can support as many of your students as possible. It can be helpful to receive updates from institutions directly, or through general communications, such as [UniTasterDays](#).

“Institutions are eager to support fair access and widening participation initiatives to ensure our learning communities are inclusive, safe, and welcoming spaces for all students, no matter their background”



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A guide to university event targeting - why are certain events only available for certain schools and students?

By Alexandra Roberts, Senior Student Recruitment Officer at the University of South Wales

You may be asking yourself why, amongst a university's outreach offering, there are specific events for students from certain backgrounds or with certain characteristics.

Universities host a range of events throughout the year, from open days, to information, advice, and guidance (IAG) talks, to applicant days and subject-specific events. The aim of every university is to ensure that the most up-to-date and applicable information gets to the right people. It is for that reason, that bespoke activity is planned throughout the year to support applicants who may have additional queries when making their university choices.

These events cover specific information with regards to additional support and funding options for these groups. For instance, a university may host an open event for SEN students, where the programme is designed to be specifically welcoming and considers the needs of that group. The event may also share information on Disabled Students Allowance applications and entitlement, as well as additional support offered by the university.

To best support these students, it is important that any additional needs, care leaver status or caring responsibilities are disclosed while completing UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) applications, so that universities can put the correct level of

support in place from the start. It is important to also stress that disclosing these will not have a detrimental effect on the applicant's consideration for the course.

Universities may also target their events around groups of students who are statistically identified as underrepresented in higher education or disadvantaged in accessing education. These events will aim to raise aspiration, inform, and demolish any barriers these students may perceive in their journey towards a higher education qualification.

Each university will have its own scholarships and bursaries for specific groups, and it is important that those that are eligible are aware of them. There are also additional external funding opportunities in some cases and universities play an important role in signposting students towards these.

Through targeted events, universities acknowledge that for some students, additional support may ensure that the student feels more confident when navigating the application process. Fundamentally, some students will need different information than their peers because of their circumstances. That is why universities offer bespoke events that address the needs of diverse groups of students.

Universities aim to accommodate as many groups as possible in their outreach, be that by specifically designing a targeted event or by adapting the mainstream outreach and campus activity so that it is as accessible as possible for all, some even offering travel bursaries to support attendance at open days. That said, if you have not found the event you are looking for on a university webpage, but you feel that your students require tailored information or additional guidance, then why not contact universities' schools and colleges or widening participation and outreach teams who will be delighted to support you.



A guide to event evaluation - why is it important (and tips when you create your own)

By **Ann-Marie Richardson, Outreach Assistant at the University of Greenwich**

The aim of a university outreach team is to guide students to make informed decisions about post school or college life. Outreach events such as careers fairs, workshops, assemblies, and on-campus events are designed to give students a forum for asking questions about university life and their futures.

Although universities offer many opportunities, we can only measure how helpful they are by learning about the experiences of the students. It is crucial we receive feedback to make sure we are engaging students during their time with us, not just lecturing them about accommodation or finance!

Student feedback – why is it important?

1. To measure the “effectiveness” of events

Students should leave an outreach event feeling more informed about their options and/or university life. To do this, we need to know if the event was useful. Including a question on the form along the lines of *what did you learn during X event?* can gauge how much information students are retaining.

2. To assess delivery

Asking students how clearly and effectively the information was delivered helps the outreach team learn how the event could be improved.

This is particularly useful during the age of webinars. It can be more difficult for a speaker to gauge audience reactions for example when sessions are delivered in an online format.

3. To improve future events

Feedback can be used to improve collaborative relationships. More personalised communications can be sent to students who sign up for emails, or to teachers or advisers

relating to any upcoming events which they feel would be helpful.

Common feedback from an information-heavy workshop, such as student finance, suggest that workshops could be more interactive. This approach may require extra work, but it helps ensure that students are retaining the information.

Writing the evaluation form(s)

Below are some key factors to consider when drafting your own evaluation form(s):

1. Explain why

It is important to stress to students *why* we ask for feedback and how useful it is for us to hear their thoughts.

2. Length and layout

Consider time constraints. The shorter the questionnaire, the better. A visible progression bar on the page identifies how quickly the form can be completed.

Questions should be a blend of qualitative and quantitative but a long response for each question is unnecessary. Adopt alternative measures such as a 1 = Poor to 5 = Excellent scale.

3. Mode

Most universities are going paperless where they can, and there are websites and apps for constructing a form. A link or even a QR code can be disseminated after the event and the results exported into a desired format.

4. Anonymity

You want the student to feel they can be as honest as possible. Consider not asking for names – simply their school and year group.

If the comments will be used for marketing purposes, make sure you ask for consent to use this for the intended purpose.

5. Separate the mandatory from the optional

Universities will have questions they want answers to, often based on their own team strategies or targets. But be careful not to include questions where the subsequent answers would not have a useful purpose.

Admin, evaluation and targeting - be kind to your outreach practitioner

By James Elliott, Head of Market Development at Keele University and Katie Coombe-Boxall, Higher Horizons Data and Research Manager (Uni Connect Programme)

The Uni Connect programme is a national outreach initiative that supports young people who are likely to achieve the grades needed for higher education but are unlikely to go. To justify spending, it considers 'what works' – this means tracking learners to see where they end up, and evaluating activities to assess their impact.

Our unique ways of working can be seen as inconvenient and demanding. We hear you! But let us explain...

Awful admin

Tracking the learners we work with means collecting data about them. This isn't as scary as it sounds – put simply, we want to see if our activities influence their future educational decisions.

We request registers of attendance because we need proof of our work; and learners and parents are asked about their background when we add them to tracking databases.

We understand that this causes sleepless nights for your school data protection lead, but each Uni Connect partnership has its own data protection lead too, trained in the latest data policy and legislation, backed up by a university Data Protection Officer. Our data requests are not opportunistic or ad hoc; we have got your back.

Tedious targeting

Then there's the mean targeting. We want to widen participation, don't we? Why not do it for everyone? Well, because resources are few we prioritise.

More importantly, we have been charged with narrowing the gap between the most and least privileged entering higher education. It would be far meaner of us to help those who don't need it over the wall, while just teasing those at the bottom of the ladder with a few rungs.

'Widening' Participation is the name of the sector, but 'narrowing' the gap is the name of the game. This is why we target.

Endless evaluation

And then we are constantly asking Johnny how he feels about each activity and about higher education. We need to show that activities meet a standard, and have 'impact' with learners undergoing 'shifts' in their attitudes towards higher education.

'What works' must be tested and replicated. Outreach is not always about converting forlorn youth from a state of Dickensian despair to that of climbing every aspirational mountain; it is more nuanced, and we need data to understand it fully. Besides 'conversion', it is about consolidation – ensuring that those interested in higher education are not lost to the forces of disillusion and misinformation; and about contemplation - getting young people to consider higher education and scrutinise their futures.

In short

Your outreach practitioner only asks of you what is being demanded of them. We know that our requirements place a burden on you but be kind to your outreach practitioner; if they can't track the learners they engage and evaluate the impact of activities, the days of impartial university outreach are numbered.

“ Widening Participation is the name of the sector, but narrowing the gap is the name of the game. This is why we target. ”

How to improve the academic attainment of Black children in UK schools - to increase enrolment, attainment and retention at university

By Neil Mayers, Director of Raising Black Achievement

Black student underachievement has been a topic for discussion in the UK since Bernard Coard's emotively titled publication, *How The West Indian Child Is Made Educationally Subnormal In The British School System* in 1971.

Whilst primary school teachers struggle to encourage more Black students to sit the Eleven Plus (11+) exam, debates around raising the attainment levels of Black students in the 11+ appear moot.

The national average for students achieving a GCSE Grade 5 in English & Mathematics (2020/21) stands at 51.9%. Meanwhile, the figure for Black Caribbean boys flounders at 30.9%. 28.9% of students achieved at least three A grades at A Level. However, only 11.9% of Black Caribbean students met this target - the lowest of all ethnic groups with the exception of the Gypsy/Roma communities (whose percentage was only 1.1% lower). The story is similar for A-Level average point scores.

How do things change at university?

At university level, the impact of Black student underachievement is 3-fold: disproportionately low attainment, low enrolment and low retention. In all three areas, the 'worst' results are from Caribbean males.

Even with the similarities across a range of educational institutions, many educators believe that their issues around Black student underachievement are unique. Moreover, that the solutions should only come from organisations working in their particular sector.

I wholeheartedly disagree. I have been educating parents, teachers and students on the importance of 'cultural-esteem' since the release of my first book, [Gifted At Primary, Failing By Secondary \(2008\)](#) and I regularly highlight the direct impact of cultural-esteem on academic attainment. [You can watch this YouTube video to explore this further.](#)

One of the UK's most celebrated educators, Sir Anthony Seldon spoke of changing the climate and academic attainment as Head of Wellington College in 2005 by introducing classes in 'Happiness' to his students. The move was tremendously successful even though the British press lambasted him for addressing such an 'airy-fairy' and perhaps taboo topic - mental health and wellbeing. Clearly, he was ahead of his time.

Although the terms 'cultural esteem' and 'cultural wellbeing' are not frequently used in schools, it shouldn't be much of a leap to recognise how self-confidence could dramatically affect academic performance. After all, most people are comfortable recognising the importance of self-confidence in sports. How often have we seen football managers explain their striker's recent dip in form being attributed to a lack of confidence?

Most recently, Laura Kenny [spoke of how her change in confidence](#) within the space of 24 hours made her feel like "a completely different bike rider" when she won gold in the Commonwealth Games after finishing 13th in a final the day before!

For those who recognise that 'good teaching' is not simply an assessment of subject knowledge, helping a child on their cultural journey home may be just as fulfilling as hitting those performance targets.

“ It shouldn't be much of a leap to recognise how self-confidence could dramatically affect academic performance ”

A guide to diversity in university communities

By Dr Sarah Mohammad-Qureshi, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Partner at The University of Law

Universities are ideal environments to bring together a blend of people from different backgrounds, with variety in the personal characteristics that shape us, our motivations, experiences, and values.

The student community is undoubtedly more diverse than students entering that space are accustomed to. This is an opportunity not afforded in many social groups or workspaces and is one for students to benefit from.

Interacting with people different to ourselves is important to support our own personal growth through a wider understanding of the world and helps us relate to the communities in which we expect to work.

Students may be daunted by the prospect of diversity – my tips for practitioners to address this:

Misunderstandings about groups of people who are different to us can lead to unnecessary hostility and anxiety. By exploring why students might feel nervous, uncomfortable, or safe around certain people can tell us a lot about how these biases have formed.

At university, students can expect to meet, study, and socialise with people of many

different characteristics. These include different disabilities, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, and gender identities. This offers fantastic potential for their learning, not only in the diversity of thought from their peers, but also in their own understanding of society, privilege, and inequality. The more interactions that occur will help to change preconceptions and stereotypes. Students can also use this learning to challenge negative associations and see others as individuals and potential friends.

Another benefit to this unique environment is that it facilitates students to expand their social and professional network to include a broader range of people. This exposure to diverse thinking, cultural awareness and equality will directly benefit them by enhancing social and structural inclusion, whatever their future career aspirations. Through this personal growth, they can have a positive impact on the world.

Students can also use this opportunity to become more mindful of barriers and inequalities faced by their peers by considering who is underrepresented and how their journey to higher education differs. This may be the first time they have needed to consider additional factors such as venue accessibility, safety concerns of particular groups, or religious customs.

This is also an opportunity for students to showcase aspects of their own personal attributes and celebrate themselves in a more authentic way than they may have been supported to do previously. By realising the lived experiences of others, we can help create a culture of inclusion and support each other to succeed.



A guide to how universities support students in need of additional support

By Gideon Woldelessie, Student Recruitment and Widening Participation Manager (Science and Engineering) at Queen Mary University of London

Students in need of additional support are often the least well equipped to obtain it. Thousands of pounds of additional funding, for instance, goes unclaimed every year because students are not aware that they qualify for it.

With the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities have redoubled their efforts to ensure support for students is as accessible as possible, particularly to those most in need. As advice and guidance practitioners, there are a number of ways that you can help ensure that students are aware of the support that is available, and how to access it.

What support is available at university?

A range of free, confidential and professional support services are typically available to students at universities. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- **Mental health and wellbeing services** – These are wide ranging and are usually designed to be as flexible and accessible as possible. This can include the provision of a 1:1 appointment, both in-person and on the phone; online support and resources; and round-the-clock crisis support.
- **Academic support** – At Queen Mary, as at other universities, students are assigned an academic adviser who they can seek academic support from on an individual basis, in addition to other forms of academic support that is available.
- **Financial support** – As well as their tuition fee and maintenance loan funding, many students will be eligible for additional financial support in the form of grants, bursaries and scholarships. Alongside being automatically assessed for some of this support when they apply, students can

check university webpages and websites like The Scholarship Hub to see what else they can apply for.

- **Disability and dyslexia services** – These services can help students obtain needs assessments, apply for funding and facilitate the provision of course materials in alternative formats.
- **Careers services** – Students can get help to find part-time work, internships and work placements, and can receive support with associated application processes.
- **Specialised services** – These can include tailored support services for care experienced and estranged students, refugees and asylum seekers, residential services and 'Report and Support' services.
- **The students' union** – Run for students, by students, a students' union provides students with support and opportunities to develop in a range of different ways.

Research is key

Support services at universities differ from each other in precisely what they offer and how they are structured. As such, it is particularly important that students who may expect to access support services at university more frequently, do their research to understand what support is available, and how to obtain it.

As well as specific university resources it is also helpful for students to be aware of more generalised support that is available through organisations and initiatives such as Student Minds, Togetherall and Jumpstart University.

Supporting students into and through university

Students can often get access to many support services before arriving at university, as well as during vacation periods and after they graduate.

This can include:

- Transition support programmes.
- Access to mental health and wellbeing services prior to enrolling at their chosen university.
- Student engagement platforms like UniBuddy, which provide a useful tool for students to connect with current university students studying their subject of interest.

A guide to supporting care experienced and estranged students into higher education

By Patricia Ambrose, Director, National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL)

Young people who are care experienced or estranged from their family often look for extra guidance from their teachers and advisers when thinking about university. Here are some of the ways you can support them in making their choices.

Researching the options

Encourage your care experienced and estranged students to research the options available. What subjects are they interested in? What type of qualification will suit them best? Do they want to study locally or move elsewhere?

As well as the information on UCAS, many institutions put their offers for care experienced students on the [Propel website](#). The [Stand-Alone charity](#) publishes a higher education contacts list and encourages estranged applicants to contact universities to find out more.

What support is available?

At institutional level, NNECL membership or being signatories to the Stand Alone Pledge and the Care Leaver Covenant are good indicators of commitment. [NNECL](#) recently launched a Quality Mark for universities and colleges and growing numbers are achieving this award.

Here are some key areas of support to look for:

- Outreach and application support including mentoring and summer schools.
- Admissions support including lower grade (contextual) offers or an inclusive policy for care experienced and estranged applicants.

“ Encourage students to tick the UCAS box to say they are care experienced or estranged. Some students worry that this may harm their chances. In fact, it is just the opposite ”

- Transition support from a named contact or team who will help with the move to university, including early induction and welcome events.
- Financial support including bursaries and access to additional funding for study visits and other costs.
- Pastoral support which is available throughout the student's time at university - including preferential access to well-being support, study skills, work experience and careers guidance.
- Year-round accommodation for those who are moving away to study (some universities provide Unite Foundation accommodation scholarships). For local students, look for help with commuter costs.

Your students may want to connect with their peers as they move into higher education. The This Is Us student-led community is a dedicated and safe online space for estranged and care experienced students in the UK. There is also useful advice and practical tips in the EACES Handbook written by estranged and care experienced students.

Making the application

Encourage students to tick the UCAS box to say they are care experienced or estranged. Some students worry that this may harm their chances. In fact, it is just the opposite – ticking the box is a signal for institutions to get in touch and outline the support available.

Applying early for student finance should be encouraged. That way students will have funds in place at the start of their course and is one less thing to worry about in those early weeks at university.

Making the right choice of higher education is really important for care experienced and estranged students. As teachers and advisers, you are in a great position to provide the informed guidance and encouragement which may be lacking elsewhere.

A guide to how universities support students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

By Natalie Freislich-Mills, Head of Make Happen (Uni Connect Programme)

Although special educational needs and disabilities is a term used widely in schools and colleges, at higher education this is usually replaced with the term disabilities. Some students may not identify with the term disabled; however, it is important that students are aware of their rights and the support available to them during their studies.

The first step for students is to declare their disability on their UCAS application. Universities use this to begin conversations with students early, to ensure support is in place from the start. Declaring their disability will not affect their offers, universities have a legal obligation to ensure they are not discriminating against students during admission and throughout their education (Equality Act 2010). In addition, any student who declares a disability is legally entitled to reasonable adjustments. Universities want students to succeed, and will be keen to provide students with the information and support they need.

Disabled students can apply for specific funding in the form of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). The DSA helps to cover additional costs incurred whilst accessing their course and is usually applied for through the relevant nation's body for student finance. It is a non-repayable grant and is dependent on a student's individual needs. If students are yet to receive an official diagnosis, it is not too late. Some universities offer full or partial financial support for assessments once enrolled.

The types of support on offer for students will vary depending on the university, so it's essential that students research carefully.

Generally, the focus is on developing independent learning skills, so often support is less than in schools and colleges. Disability support is usually provided by student services teams so encourage your students to get in

touch or visit their page within the university website to find out what is available.

Some examples of what may be on offer for students:

- Specialists or experts in specific disabilities.
- Supported induction programmes.
- Student societies.
- DSA application support.
- Exam or timetabling adjustments.
- Flexible teaching methods.
- Study skills support and tutoring.
- Mentoring.
- Extended library loans.
- Handouts in alternative formats.
- British Sign Language interpreters.
- Exam adjustments, including readers and scribes.
- Specialist accommodation, including for carers.
- Scholarships, grants and bursaries (in addition to DSA).

University open days allow students to meet staff as well as existing students to find out what support is really like. Student unions often have a disability officer who will represent disabled students within university decision making and ensure their interests are represented.

Once students begin their course, some universities will proactively keep in touch, while others will expect students to take the initiative. It is also important to consider how the university supports students with career transition, so encourage students to speak to the career teams.

Your local Uni Connect hub may be able to support you and your students. Uni Connect provides impartial information and guidance on college and university and is funded by the Office for Students. Visit the Uni Connect website to find [contact details for your local hub](#).

“ The first step for students is to declare their disability on their UCAS application. Universities use this to begin conversations with students early, to ensure support is in place from the start ”

What works? Demonstrating impactful university engagement

By Fiona Curry, Strategic Lead, Access and Participation at the University of Cumbria

In a previous [blog post](#), Izzy Kelly touches upon evidenced interventions that demonstrate impact to university acceptance. For more information on impact evaluation and recommendations you can read the [Fourth independent review of impact evaluation evidence](#) submitted by Uni Connect partnerships.

In summary, sequential multi-interventions programmes over time, high-quality information, advice and guidance, *people like me* role-modelling to name a few – are all recommended based on findings of impact that they are likely to have on young people.

Universities are increasing their knowledge base through research each year, to understand what interventions are most impactful to young people. However, we still have much more to do.

Measuring impact- how?

Firstly, what impact are you trying to achieve?

Largely, universities are looking to increase participation to higher education either in general or more specifically to their own institutions. However, this is through the attitude and method of supporting students to make an informed decision that is right for them, which could mean an apprenticeship or taking some time after compulsory education to build skills and experience before progressing onto higher education.

Impact can be measured in a range of ways, including university applications and progression, increased attainment, higher attendance rates at school or college and increased confidence and self-efficacy.

Our regulators, the Office for Students, have incorporated the [Theory of Change](#) framework into our practice, to understand what each intervention's impact is intended to be and how we can prove this rather than assume. In brief, it means questioning how we will know what success and impact looks like and how we will be able to measure it before starting an activity or intervention.

Method

There's been a move away from only 'happy sheet' questionnaire forms focusing on immediate feedback of an activity and learners' perceptions and intentions as an impact measure, and a movement towards demand for empirical enquiry and causality. This means using control or comparison groups to prove a change with one group when given an intervention another group has not received.

Unchartered territory

While there is work taking place to establish evidence for favoured interventions such as mentoring and summer schools, what about activity that's not been created yet?

Thankfully, our regulator is also keen for universities to try new ways of engaging with students to increase university participation, if we evaluate and contribute to knowledge of *what works?* (And sometimes what doesn't).

This means there is certainly scope for co-creating with you, through discussion and sharing ideas, new activity to best support your students. You will have your own context you are working in within your institution, and this will of course impact how interventions are received and what support your students need.

So, while you can start or continue with university engagement that exists already and has an evidence base, your insights and experiences are important and will help shape future interventions that are not listed on the UniTasterDays.com website yet!

“ Universities are increasing their knowledge base through research each year, to understand what interventions are most impactful to young people ”

A guide to the university admissions service

By Carrie Williams, Student Recruitment Officer at the University of South Wales

Applying to university is one of the biggest decisions that a student will make and supporting them through this process might seem daunting for you. However, this short guide will provide you with an overview of the admissions process and highlight some of the important aspects and key dates to be aware of.

Application deadlines

Once students have researched their options and made their final university and course choices, they will need to submit their application through UCAS. Applications are open from September and for students applying to Oxbridge or for medicine, dentistry and veterinary courses, applications must be submitted in October. For most students however, applications will need to be submitted to UCAS by January, the equal consideration deadline. Exact dates vary by a few days every year, so make sure you check the UCAS website for the most up-to-date information.

What happens next?

Once the application has been submitted, it will be reviewed by admissions staff at each university the student has applied to. The academic entry criteria, a student's predicted or actual grades, personal statement and reference will be considered before a decision is made.

Some universities may require further information and invite students to attend an interview, audition, or request a portfolio of work (for art and design courses). Students should keep an eye on their UCAS Hub and email for this information. It is important that students use an email address they can access whilst still at school or college and after they leave.

“ **Applying to university is one of the biggest decisions that a student will make** ”

Navigating Offers

From January, many students will begin to receive offers. Offers are displayed on students' UCAS Hub accounts and emailed to them directly.

Waiting for offers can be nerve-racking and students may begin to worry if they don't hear back immediately or if their friends receive offers before them. However, universities respond at different times due to varying admissions procedures and students should not be concerned if their offers take slightly longer than their peers.

If an offer has been made, it will be either unconditional or conditional. An unconditional offer means that the student has a place on their chosen course. A conditional offer means that the university has accepted the student subject to them meeting certain conditions – which is usually related to exam results. The full conditions of the offer are shown through the UCAS Hub.

It is also through the UCAS Hub that students can respond to their offers, accepting their firm and insurance choices and declining their remaining offers.

Unsuccessful outcomes

If the university has decided not to offer a place, the student will receive an unsuccessful decision. Sometimes the reason for this decision will appear on the UCAS Hub, if not, students can contact the university to ask for feedback. A withdrawn application means that the application has been withdrawn by the student or the university. If the university has withdrawn the application, the reason will be displayed through the UCAS Hub.

For students that have not been offered a place, it is easy for them to panic and make a rushed decision. However, there are still options available to them. They can either add a choice through UCAS Extra if eligible or look for course availability later on and apply through Clearing.

Universities will display their remaining course places on their websites and will advertise via UCAS. However, it is best to encourage students to ring the universities they are interested in directly, and they can do so from early July onwards.

A guide to supporting students working on their personal statements

By Abigail Bing, School and College Engagement Officer at the University of Exeter

Want to hear a good one about a student, a professor, and a dog who walk into a bar?

Maybe, but not in a personal statement you don't. Jokes, clichés, and truth-bending do not belong in a university application. As tempting as it may be for students to try to stand out through humour and bold statements, it is genuine motivation and commitment that will help students get noticed by universities. If students are stalling and focussing on a punchy opener, remind them it should be written like a job application, not a biography, and needs to be formal, clear, and concise.

Identifying students' favourite topics, modules or experiences in a subject will help them shape the start of their statements, where the focus will become about the skills and knowledge they have acquired which are relevant to their chosen courses. Help with determining which skills and experiences are most relevant to discuss can be found by looking at course modules and content on university webpages.

It is important that students identify common modules and skills required in different universities' courses, to ensure that their statement will be applicable to all courses/universities to which they are applying.

Work experience in personal statements

Whilst the UK aims for pre-pandemic functionality, it has still been a challenge for many students to secure work experience during this period of change. In an increasingly competitive environment, it is crucial that students identify skills gaps they have, to overcome these and increase their confidence and chances of success. Whilst in-person work experience may not have been possible for all, there are still ways in which students can close

skills gaps, including through participation in online events and at school.

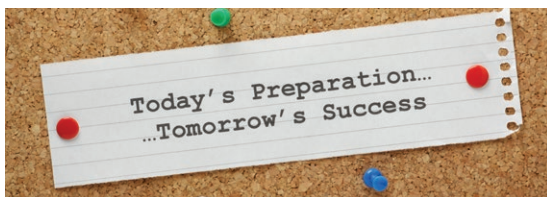
An example is included below:

- A student applying for Politics studies a Massive Open Online Course - also known as a MOOC (pro-active, motivated, engaged, learning outside of classroom).
- Inspired by the content, they create a debate club to be run in-person or online at school (creativity, leadership, adaptability).
- Topics debated are important to their school, so they create a proposal to bring about changes (written communication, teamwork, problem solving, creating structured arguments).
- Signatures from peers supporting the changes are gathered through an online platform, and momentum gained through a presentation during a school assembly (verbal communication, persuasive writing and speaking, marketing).
- As a result, vegetarian and vegan meal options are introduced at the school canteen (negotiation, implementation).

This process will be beneficial to the student on their course where they will research and understand political and cultural issues - and create and deliver structured arguments.

For proactive students looking online to close skills gaps, one advantage is gaining new knowledge and skills with less worry over time constraints, cost of travel, and established/historic networks.

Online support for writing personal statements can be found through the Discover University programme at the University of Exeter. Universities also deliver live sessions to schools on personal statement writing, and I would recommend students research online, and attend sessions where possible, which are hosted by the universities they are considering applying to.



Discover University in Cornwall and Devon

We work with schools and colleges across the UK, offering a selection of activities and programmes in person and digitally, to encourage students to consider higher education as a realistic and achievable goal.

We cover a range of topics, including:

- Degree Apprenticeships
- Applying to competitive universities
- Student life in Devon and Cornwall
- Writing an effective personal statement
- Contextual offers
- Subject specific

Discover University is a collection of online activities and resources designed to support:

- Students
- Parents / Guardians
- Teachers and Advisers

Join us in supporting students to make informed decisions about their future.
For more information contact: outreach@exeter.ac.uk or visit our webpages:

exeter.ac.uk/teachers

exeter.ac.uk/discoveruniversity

A guide to the qualifications universities accept for entry

By **Erin Tungate, Student Recruitment Officer at King's College London**

When applying to university, each institution has specific entry requirements for their courses. Students will find these requirements vary depending on:

- The course or subject
- The type of degree
- The university.

The most well-known entry requirement is exam grades – universities list online the grades which students should achieve to be successful when applying to their courses. The most common qualifications universities list are A levels and BTECs, but universities also accept other qualifications like T levels and Access to HE courses. Most courses will also ask for certain GCSE grades in subjects like Maths and English.

For example, a Psychology (BSc) course might ask for one of the following:

- A level results of A*AA
- BTEC Extended Diploma results of DDM
- Access to HE Diploma with 36 credits at Distinction.

Some universities, instead of specific grades, ask for a certain amount of UCAS tariff points. Most academic qualifications have a numerical value depending on the qualification type and the grade achieved. Your students can use the [UCAS online Tariff Points Calculator](#) to check the number of points their qualifications represent.

Aside from grades, universities can ask for various other requirements for their courses:

The Personal Statement

When applying through UCAS, students will

submit a 4000-character personal statement – a piece of writing about them and why they would like to study their chosen course. Whilst there are no specific requirements for this, university course pages usually describe skills and experience they would like students to demonstrate in their applications, and students can use this as a guide.

Pre-application tests

Some universities ask students to take a test before applying to certain courses. This can include the LNAT for Law courses and the BMAT or UCAT for Medicine or Dentistry courses. Universities then take that score into account when considering students' applications. Many universities differ in what tests, if any, they would like students to complete before applying - so make sure your students check course pages for this.

Interviews

After applying for courses, universities might ask students to attend an interview before making them an offer. Some interviews will be panel interviews – a standard set-up with questions from a small number of admissions staff and academic staff from the department the student has applied to. Other interviews, particularly for subjects like Medicine and Dentistry, will be more structured; a common form of this is Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs). Usually, universities will list the possibility and structure of an interview on their online course page which gives students lots of time to research how to prepare for this and what to expect.

Contextual offers

You may see universities offer alternative entry requirements on their course pages, often called contextual requirements. These are typically one or two grades lower than the standard entry requirements and is how universities acknowledge applications from students who have experienced barriers that may have affected their academic progress. Usually, a student's UCAS application will indicate whether they are eligible for a contextual offer or not, but they can always contact a university before submitting their application if they are unsure.

Applying for a creative course – five tips for your students when preparing for portfolios and interviews

By Sarah Hewitson, Student Recruitment Centre Manager, Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries at the University of Portsmouth

Applying for a creative course requires more than just grades. Developing a portfolio of work, attending an interview, or writing a personal statement will form a key part of a student's application. It will allow them to showcase their style and creative ability, discuss their influences, and demonstrate their passion for their creative subject.

Five tips to help you support students during the creative course application process:

1. Research the course

It is really important that your students look into the course they're applying for. Universities won't expect them to be able to recite every module, but courses can differ vastly between universities. In their portfolio/interview, they'll need to show an understanding of the course and subject area. So, encourage them to attend an open day, read the portfolio guidance carefully and explore current events, to stay ahead of the game.

2. Help us learn about your students

At the same time as showing they understand the course, universities will also want to see what inspires the student! Everyone is unique and we want to see them amongst the pages. Encourage students to include a range of things that describe them as a person and as a creative individual – what makes them tick. As creatives, we put a lot of ourselves into our work, so ensure that comes across.

3. Show us the creative process

Within the portfolio, your students can shine by demonstrating their creative journey through initial research, developmental work and then the final piece. They should also demonstrate that they can critically review and analyse their work – would they do the same again, what would they change? This balance of creativity and reflection will help them sail through their studies.

4. Keep it succinct

While we love to see a variety of work within a portfolio, we do want to see their ability to edit. It is all about establishing a balance. They shouldn't bring everything they've ever done but not pare it back to nothing at all. Students should also try to tailor this to the course they're applying for.

5. Choose a suitable format

Students should opt for what best suits the creative area they're working in – just because a portfolio is digital, it doesn't mean all the work has to be digital too. Consider practicality too – is a bulky folder going to hinder them in transit? Would a digital portfolio be easier to share? Tailor the format of the portfolio to suit the situation.

If they're attending a zoom interview – firstly make sure the tech works. Does the microphone and camera work, has screen sharing been set-up? In addition to this, does their digital portfolio read in the same way as a physical portfolio would?

Remember, applying for a creative course can be daunting, but universities will always be there to support students through the application process. If you have links with universities, make the most of opportunities to attend workshops, taster days and more, so that students are fully engaged and prepared for their application journey.

“Applying for a creative course requires more than just grades”

A guide to how schools can support young carers to apply to university

By **Andy McGowan**, Head of Engagement at the charity **Caring Together**

In every classroom, every lab, every dance studio, in every college and sixth form across the country, there will be at least 1 or 2 pupils who are constantly juggling their studies with caring responsibilities for ill or disabled family members or friends – young carers.

A young carer is someone aged 18 or under who provides unpaid care to a family member or friend who could not cope without their support. This support may be needed due to illness, disability, a mental illness, or substance misuse, or often a combination of these.

Many of these young carers will have the potential to go onto higher education, and might want to, but will think they ‘can’t’ because of their caring responsibilities. We have spoken to young carers who have successfully progressed to university and asked them what helped them feel able to apply and ultimately go onto higher education. Their advice is below.

1. Make sure there is young carer awareness-raising for staff in college or sixth form and systems to identify young carers

You can only support the young carers who you know about – without awareness-raising and processes to help identify potential young carers, you will struggle to help them.

2. Don’t be afraid to challenge young carers

Some young carers make education or career choices because of their caring role. For some, they think caring is ‘*the only thing I know how to do*’ or think university isn’t an option because ‘*who will look after mum?*’ or ‘*how could I afford university when dad isn’t well enough to work?*’ For other young carers they can struggle with feelings of guilt.

“At the application stage, I started to feel a lot of guilt – I knew with the course I’d have to move away from home as my local universities don’t offer it. I experienced a lot of conflict – I was excited about the course, opportunities and student life but it also felt really unfair that I was going away living my best life, leaving more for mum to do. I kept flitting from one extreme to the other – really excited to ‘I’m the worst person’. Luckily, my tutor was really supportive – she actually got quite cross at me when I told her about my guilt – she sorted me out!”

Holly, 1st year undergraduate

3. Make sure you know what support is available for young carers in your area and that students know what support is on hand both in college/school and outside

If you don’t know who your local young carers organisation is, you can find your nearest service by visiting [The Children’s Society](#).

4. Encourage colleagues, including senior management, to review what support you offer to your young carers

From financial support to flexibility with deadlines, to additional support around next steps after college – having a carer-friendly school or college can make a huge difference for young carers.

“In every classroom, every lab, every dance studio, in every college and sixth form across the country, there will be at least 1 or 2 pupils who are constantly juggling their studies with caring responsibilities for ill or disabled family members or friends – young carers”

A guide to contextual university admissions

By Rachel Brookes, Widening Participation Officer at Harper Adams University

It is important that every young person has a fair chance at securing a place at a university, regardless of their background. Contextualised offers help with this, and here is how.

What is a contextualised offer?

A contextualised offer is an alternative entry offer to what is regularly advertised by the university, which is based on the social background of the applicant. This could lead to a lower grade offer, or other help, such as work experience reductions.

What are contextualised offers based on?

There are various factors considered by universities. One of these is based on home postcode data, looking at how disadvantaged that area is and the higher education participation within that postcode area.

Another factor is around the individual and their circumstances, such as whether they were in receipt of free school meals, are from a low-income household or where parents have not been in higher education. This factor also considers other personal circumstances, including having a disability, being in care, or being a refugee. Universities also look at school level indicators, such as GCSE averages within that area.

Then finally, universities will run contextualised schemes, in which a successful long period of engagement with the university and that young person could make them eligible for a contextualised offer.

How do I know if students will be eligible for a contextualised offer?

Universities will openly advertise their contextualised offer scheme on their webpages. It may be located on different areas on the website, depending on the university, so a general search on their page for 'contextualised offers' might work best.

Otherwise, navigate to the admissions pages or the 'how to apply' page and look out for the words 'access', 'contextualised admissions' or 'offers'. If you can't see anything that way, then email the universities admissions or widening participation teams and they will be able to help you out.

Universities will usually have an online form for students to fill in with basic details, such as their home and school address. There may also be other tick boxes for extra information collection. Then the access teams in the university will check their details and let them know if they are eligible for a contextualised offer and what that offer might be.

Will people know students have received a different offer?

Only the university will know if the student has a different offer, so it's entirely up to them if they choose to tell anyone.

If students are concerned about achieving the entry requirements that the university is asking for, it is always worth them exploring eligibility for a contextualised offer. This system is in place to help everyone access university, but if they find that they're not eligible for a contextualised offer, their eligibility check may lead on to other advice and help that they may not know about, such as alternative courses or work experience sessions!



A guide to writing a school university reference

By Ben Stone, Head of UK and International Admissions Services and Emily Day, Recruitment Co-ordinator at the University of Wolverhampton

Writing a student's UCAS reference can feel overwhelming, especially if you are responsible for completing several or are new to the process. Here are our tips to help.

Why do we want a reference?

The reference is the only part of the application that provides information from a third party about an applicant. The main aim of the reference is to give confidence to the university that the student is enthusiastic for the career pathway, course chosen, and that they have the potential and ability to cope with higher education studies and the demands of university life.

The reference gives higher education providers a snapshot and a holistic overview of the applicant.

What to include and where

First Paragraph

- A short overview about your institution, intake, and environment. Any contextual information including widening participation background. This could be standardised for your institution.
- We recommend that you have a webpage and use a standard link as this will free up space.
- Any extenuating circumstances, we recommend including as much information as possible, such as facts, figures, when and to what extent. This could include health, educational disruption, home or financial circumstances.

Second Paragraph

This section accounts for 60-80% of the reference and includes academic skills and suitability for the course. Consider the students suitability and the key skills that are important for their programme. Checking university websites is a great place to help with this.

Ideas for popular courses are:

- Health related courses: have they linked to the NHS core values?
- Science and Engineering: is their mathematic academia at the required standard?
- English: Can they critically evaluate a text?
- History: Do they understand the use of sources?
- Psychology: Do they understand the scientific as well as the human side?

When thinking about their academic skills and potential, consider including:

- Predicted grades.
- Does the applicant's attainment reflect their ability?
- Their potential to study at university.
- Are they motivated to learn and capable of independent study?
- Do they have an enquiring mind?
- Are they able to present an argument?
- How they have developed during their studies.

Conclusion

This paragraph allows you to add in non-academic information. Consider meeting with each applicant before writing their reference. This will help you understand their motivation as well as find out more about them. Information to include in this section could be:

- Positions of responsibility
- Career aspirations
- Past achievements which help with the subject
- Work experience & extracurricular activities.

Finally, here are some overall top tips for helping you write the best reference:

- Read their whole application.
- Focus on the positives.
- Remember students can ask to see a copy of the reference.
- Include information about special needs and other requirements - but don't provide information without the student's agreement.
- Each university and college will see your reference. If you refer to one of them in your reference, this could compromise the application.
- Some providers will score the reference or use Pass/Fail criteria. This is one of the criteria that may be used for highly selective courses that require an interview.

A guide to preparing for university - what happens after results day?

By Jen Barton, Student Recruitment Manager at Durham University

After results day, when your students hopefully have a place confirmed at university, you may be wondering what happens next. I will provide a guide to this here.

University processes can differ. For example, at Durham University, students will have to complete an offer acceptance form within seven days of receiving their confirmed decision. They should receive clear instructions from their confirmed institution about what to do next.

Also consider that if your students sit certain qualifications, they may need to send these to UCAS. A list of results that UCAS don't receive from the exam board can be found [on the UCAS website](#).

Here are some of the key things that students will need to do before arriving at university:

- **Contact:** Students should ensure their contact details are correct – by this point they should not be using a school email address.
- **Accommodation:** Students will need to ensure their accommodation arrangements are arranged.
- **Support:** Students should discuss any support that they might need, for example, additional support if they have a disability.
- **Enrol:** There will be a process of enrolment that students will need to follow, this will ensure that they have things like a university IT account, an email address etc. After this they should then be able to register for the university course modules they want to take.
- **Organise their finances:** First, students should make sure they set up a bank account if they have not already. They can

often get great student bank accounts which offer incentives such as a young person's railcard, this will save students a lot of money when they are travelling to and from university.

- **Budget:** Students should, by this point, have a good idea of their expected income when they are at uni. They should learn the costs of everyday items, thinking about essential items like food and utilities, and then luxuries like evenings out and clothes.
- **Buy a Railcard:** A 16-25 student railcard is a worthwhile investment if it is not something they have already. A railcard can save them a third off their train travel. Once they have made two or three journeys, they may have saved what they have spent on buying the card.
- **Join social media groups:** Students can also start making connections with their fellow students. Most universities will have social media groups in place which they will invite incoming students to. This is a great way to make friends before they arrive, and it should make the whole process less daunting.
- **Start reading:** Most institutions will have a pre-reading list available before students arrive. Students will not be expected to read everything, but they should get their brain cells going again and prepare for the workload that they can expect when they start university.
- **Learn to be self-sufficient:** Students should prepare for certain life-skills that are required when living away from home. Some students may have never cooked, cleaned or done their laundry! The summer break is a great way to learn some of these skills. Students should at least know how to cook two or three basic meals to help them stay fit and healthy at university.



A guide to the university transition - how can your students become university ready?

By Lucy Judd, Transition Team Manager and Marie Muir, Head of Student and Community Engagement at Nottingham Trent University

In the lead up to results day, your students are likely focused on two things; getting the grades to get into university, and imagining what life will be like when they finally start their course at their chosen institution. So, it can be easy to forget about the period in-between!

Here are some top tips for students to be aware of before the start of term. This is sure to support them when settling into their new university adventure.

1. Get started early

Gone are the days of universities expecting students to turn up on their first day and nervously feel their way through the first week and beyond. Now, university transition involves a much wider range of support to ensure the smoothest and most confident transition possible.

This means there will usually be tasks and activities to complete in those last weeks of summer to get students started on their courses. Whilst staff will help anyone to catch up when they arrive, completing those tasks ahead of time will help them to feel as clued-up and in-control as they possibly can.

So, the best advice you can give those heading to university would be to get enrolled, to get familiar with navigating their student email accounts and learning platforms, and to check back regularly, right up until they arrive. That way, they will be able to complete any tasks or activities that are communicated to them.

2. Get social

The social element of going to university is always a source of excitement and nervousness for new students, and whilst social media has online networks covered, universities have other

ways for students to speak to peers before they arrive too.

Depending on their university, new students should look out for welcome calls from fellow students, contact from peer mentors, or even online chat platforms to start connecting with their classmates. These are great, informal ways to get to make connections, to learn more about university before they start, and to start combatting any shyness as they see that everyone else is asking the same things.

They should also look out for welcome activities they can plan before they arrive - these are so much more than nightlife activities and offer the best possible chance to meet like-minded students. Ranging from academic and disability support to small group events, specialist tours, and beyond; universities have loads to offer students to meet people with similar quirks, hobbies, and interests!

3. Seek help and support

Students' mental, emotional, and physical health are all hugely important to all universities, and their services will be reaching out to new students before they arrive as well as making sure they know where to find them in the future.

Before they start, students might find it useful to familiarise themselves with the support available, and crucially, to declare any ongoing or existing conditions so that the right support can be put in place as soon as possible. Disclosing a support need will not affect their course or their offer, but it will help to make arriving at and settling into university a smooth experience.

4. 'Know-Do-Feel' action plan

At Nottingham Trent University, our approach to transition is designed around three key questions:

- What do students need and want to **know**?
- What do they need and want to **do**?
- How might they **feel**?

Students can use this same framework to help them in the lead up to starting university. By making a checklist of questions or actions they need to complete under each category, they can start to build a personalised action plan for the weeks ahead!

A guide to preparing for university - key tips for students before they start their course

By Anam Hoque, Student Recruitment and Widening Participation Senior Officer at Queen Mary University of London

Home and Away

Many students will take the opportunity to move out in search of new experiences that university has to offer. To best support students, it is important to identify those who may be the first in their family to go to university as they may require advice on making sure they have successfully completed any associated administration, including their student finance and accommodation applications.

Advising these students to go through a little life admin wouldn't go amiss either, such as opening a bank account, brushing up on laundry skills, and having a go at cooking, all of which can help the student flourish (and may also put the mind of the parent or guardian at ease!).

Students commuting to university may also need to apply for travelcards and make themselves familiar with their journey. Locating the local shops, campus library, students' union and lecture buildings will help reduce those first week nerves once they know where they will be studying.

Successful transition

The transition to university or higher education can often be a worry for students. Remember, universities have a wide range of initiatives to support and prepare students for a successful

transition. It would be great to advise them to research such initiatives and put some time aside to consider the skills they may need to develop at university.

Universities will also provide reading lists when a student starts their course - but students can often obtain these beforehand too if they ask.

Encourage students to have fun

University is not just about getting a degree; it is also about gaining new skills, experiences and making new friends! Encourage your students to get to know their students' union and get involved with clubs, societies, volunteering and students union roles when they start. Also put a word in for welcome week!

Enhancing employability

The summer before university can be a good time for students to get some work experience and help raise additional funds to support their first year. In addition, it is worth researching employment and placement opportunities at their chosen university. For example, by working as a student ambassador, students can continue to develop the skills they require to be successful after their graduation.

A note on reviews and appeals

Universities will try to be flexible in keeping places open for those who use the re-mark and appeals services but will have no guarantee their offers will be held after 31 August. If you know of any results likely to be subject to delay, let the university know in good time. For more information, visit the UCAS adviser webpages.

If you would like to learn more about supporting your student's university journey, you can speak to universities directly, or check out the dates of upcoming university teacher and adviser conferences.



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