

WHY GO TO UNIVERSITY?

Benefits of university?

- To pursue a specific career path
- To challenge yourself
- To explore your subject in more depth
- For the student experience and personal development.

How to choose your course and university

Course

- What do you want to study and why?
- Use the UCAS course search to see what courses are available
- Have you considered subjects not taught in school/college? (eg Architecture, Pharmacy, Anthropology)
- How will you study? There are different alternatives:
 - joint honours (studying two subjects, eg Drama and English)
 - full time or part time
 - foundation year.

Content

- Does your preferred course cover the subject areas you are interested in?
- Is the course structured in a way that will suit you?
- Is it mainly exam or coursework based?
- How is it taught? Mainly seminars or lectures, or by other methods?

Campus

What do you want from your university experience?

- Do you want everything in one place? (campus university)
- Would you prefer to be in a city with academic buildings, the students' union and accommodation in different parts of the city?

City

- Do you want to move away or be near/stay at home?
- Do you want to be in a big city, a medium city or a town?
- Do you want to be in the countryside, near the sea or somewhere that combines these factors?
- If you want to move away, how much will it cost to live there? Will student loans cover it, or will you need to get a part-time job?
- How often will you want to go home? How much will it cost?

Additional costs

- Academic costs include: books, course materials, printing/photocopying costs etc.
- Living costs include accommodation, food, clothing and laundry, personal items, social life, mobile phone, TV licence.

Tuition fees

- Most universities have set their tuition fees at £9,250 per year.
- UK/EU students do not have to pay tuition fees upfront; a tuition fee loan is available from the UK Government. You apply for this loan via Student Finance England.
- The tuition fee loan is paid directly to the university by Student Finance England.

Financial support available

- All UK/EU students are entitled to tuition fee loan to cover the full amount of fees, for up to four years of study.
- Living cost loans (maintenance loans) are available to full-time and part-time UK students to help with living costs.
- Scholarships – check if the university you are looking at has any specialist scholarships.
 - Do you play a musical instrument or play sports at a high level? If so, you may be eligible for a sports or music scholarship.
 - Are you expecting to achieve very high grades that may qualify you for an academic excellence scholarship?

Repayments: the facts

- Repayments are linked to your earnings; not how much you borrow.
- Tuition fee loans and living cost loans are repaid as one.
- You repay 9% of anything you earn over £25,000.
- Repayments start from the April after you graduate*.
- If your salary falls below £25,000, your repayments stop.
- Any amount remaining after 30 years will be written off.

**If you are studying part-time, you may begin repayments the April three years after you started your course and once you are earning over £25,000 per year.*

How to get the most out of your time at university

Academic life

- You are responsible for your own work. Unlike school, nobody will be chasing you to meet a deadline; it's down to you.
- You learn in a variety of ways – from independent study, to attending large lectures, and participating in smaller seminar and group work sessions.
- You may not spend hours in the classroom. Some courses, such as Pharmacy, have a high number of contact hours, whereas courses such as English Literature may have fewer, but require more independent study.

Student life

- Consider a part time job, or spending a year abroad/in industry as part of your course – you can earn a salary and gain essential experience to add to your CV.
- Join clubs and societies – you will learn new skills and have the opportunity to try something new.

Graduate employment: invest in your future

- University offers unique opportunities:
 - you may get to go abroad for a year and live anywhere in the world
 - you may have the opportunity to take up a year in industry, where you can earn a salary before completing your final year.
- You gain many transferable skills, such as analytical thinking, formal writing and time management.
- You will have a greater choice of professions. For example, if you have a specific vocation it may well require a degree (doctor/architect/social worker).
- A graduate earns an average salary of £25,000 compared to an average of £20,000 for non-graduates. Source: *Graduate Labour Market Statistics 2017* (updated April 2018).

Useful links

- Fees and funding at Kent: www.kent.ac.uk/ugfunding/
- Kent's finance website: www.kent.ac.uk/finance-student/
- UCAS: www.ucas.com
- Unistats (for comparing courses): unistats.ac.uk/
- *The Complete University Guide*: www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

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