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, e.g. 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 university)

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 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 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 40 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 £36,000 compared to an average of £26,000 for non-graduates. Source: Graduate Labour Market Statistics 2021 (updated June 2022).

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
• Discover Uni (for comparing courses): www.discoveruni.gov.uk/
• The Complete University Guide: www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

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