

CHOOSING A COURSE AND UNIVERSITY

Choosing a course

Course

- Over 30,000 options to choose from – make sure it is something you enjoy
- Entry requirements will vary – be realistic in where you apply

Content

- The same course at two universities can be vastly different – check course structure and content
- How much flexibility and control do you have on what you study?
- How are you taught and assessed?

Additional opportunities

- Can you take a year abroad/year in industry?
- Are there work placements within the course?
- Does the structure allow for responsibilities outside of your course/university life?
- Can you explore other subjects and interests?

Choosing a university

Campus or city?

- Campus means academic buildings, social spaces, accommodation and catering are in one place
- City means these facilities are spread out over multiple sites/the general area

Each has their own pros and cons!

Accommodation

- Will you live at home or at the university?
- What accommodation is available?
- Catered/self-catered? Ensuite/shared bathrooms?

Academic facilities

- Do you have industry standard facilities?
- What is the library like? Are there online resources?

Social facilities

- What is the student union like?
- What clubs/societies are there?
- What sports/social spaces are available?
- What does the local town/city have to offer?
- How close are local amenities? What is public transport like?

Career development

- Are there volunteering opportunities?
- Is there a dedicated careers team?
- Where can I work whilst studying?
- Do they have professional speakers/events?

Support

- What academic support is in place?
- What student support and wellbeing is in place?
- What safety/security provisions are in place?

Doing your research

What's important to you?

- Course content?
- Location?
- Accommodation?
- Career prospects?

UCAS and UniFrog

- One stop shops to find out everything you need to know about applying to university
- Research subject areas, entry requirements and general information

Prospectuses and university websites

- Great tools for getting a general feel for courses, universities and their top selling points
- You can usually download the prospectus, but hard copies are also available. Be aware that these are marketing tools
- Download subject leaflets as these will have more details about the assessment methods used and the different modules that are available
- Take virtual tours of accommodation and facilities

League tables

- An objective way of comparing universities, but you shouldn't base your final decisions on them
- Subject rankings, rather than university rankings, may be more useful for you in your search
- Remember that the university should meet your criteria; academically, socially and culturally

The three main undergraduate league tables are:

- *The Complete University Guide*
- *The Guardian University Guide*
- *The Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide*

Independent assessments

These are usually listed in the prospectus and can include:

- the National Student Survey (NSS): taken by recent graduates and ranks universities and subjects according to a range of different criteria based on student experiences
- Research Excellence Framework (REF): rates quality of research produced by the university. 4* means world-leading
- Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF): assesses teaching quality of university. Gold is the highest mark.

Visits and Open Days – make your own judgements

Open days, campus tours and visits represent the best resources for university research as it provides an immersive experience:

- see facilities in person, tour accommodation, visit local area
- Speak to current students and staff
- experience the journey there and back
- get a taste for university learning.

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