



HEON
HIGHER EDUCATION
OUTREACH NETWORK



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

AN INSIGHT INTO UNIVERSITY



WHY GO TO UNIVERSITY?

Going to university can not only allow your child to study a course they love, but also help them develop their independence, confidence, and career ambitions. Although some careers may require a particular degree, employers value the transferable skills students develop across different courses at university. Graduates can also reach higher earning potential over their lifetime than non-graduates.



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Course choices at school and college can have an impact on the university courses and careers available to your young person. It can be useful to identify potential requirements for a degree course early, to avoid missing out on their preferred choices later on. If students are not yet sure about what to study in the future, it is best to keep an open mind and study a range of subjects at school or college that they enjoy and feel engaged with. This will certainly help them make informed decisions later.



EXPLORE DIFFERENT COURSES AND CAREERS



Brightside Trust Bright Knowledge - www.brightknowledge.org

Plotr - www.plotr.co.uk

Career Pilot - www.careerpilot.org.uk

Target Careers - www.targetcareers.co.uk

Guidance from competitive universities - www.informedchoices.ac.uk

CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY



Picking the ideal place to study isn't just about comparing universities in league tables. Academic departments can focus on very different aspects of the same subject. The best way to pick the right university is to attend free university Open Days and taster events. Speak to current students to ask them what it's really like studying there - campus or city-based universities can be very different to live in. Alternatively, universities may have virtual tours and videos online.

COMPARE DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES

The Complete University Guide - www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

Dicover Uni - www.discoveruni.gov.uk

What Uni? - www.whatuni.com



PREPARING FOR UNIVERSITY



In order to apply through UCAS, a personal statement has to be completed. This can be a challenging part of the application process and encouraging early research into this will help. Getting a drafted personal statement read by various teachers or advisors can provide valuable feedback. There are also plenty of online resources available which offer tips and advice about the application process. In addition, researching accommodation, budgeting and student lifestyle will help prepare both yourself and your young person to get ready for the transition to university.

SEARCH FOR ADVICE AND TIPS



UCAS - www.UCAS.com

Which? University Guide - www.theuniguide.co.uk

Parentzone - www.careerpilot.org.uk/parent-zone

UCAS for parents - bit.ly/UCASparents

Prospects - www.prospects.ac.uk

STUDENT FINANCE



- Tuition Fees are charged per year to students for their studies
- However students do not pay this up front, as they apply for Tuition Fee Loans from Student Finance England. The tuition fees are then paid directly to the institution
- For Full Time students, there is also a similar Maintenance Loan, paid to students in termly instalments. The Loan is household income-assessed, and helps with living costs and rent.
- Currently graduates pay back loans as salary deductions, just like a tax, and only once they start earning above a fixed amount per year
- Universities also offer many grants, bursaries and scholarships – all of these just mean free money awarded for different reasons (e.g. household income-assessed; high academic ability; subject choice)

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT STUDENT FINANCE

GOV.UK Student Finance - www.gov.uk/student-finance

Martin Lewis - www.moneysavingexpert.com/students

Overview of scholarships, grants and bursaries - www.thescholarshipub.org.uk

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

UCAS is the organisation that processes almost all applications to study undergraduate courses in the UK. The UCAS process starts in the summer term of Year 12, when applications open. However, before this, students can search and compare the many different university course options currently available from all providers.

On their main website, there is also information and advice specifically for parents, including a free email newsletter, the UCAS Parent Guide outlining the application process, updated each year, and more.

APPLY ONLINE

Students can apply for up to 5 courses through UCAS. The application includes a **Personal Statement**, written by the student to show universities their passion and suitability for the subject, as well as a reference written by an academic referee (usually your teachers) to confirm your suitability for the course you are applying to.

WAIT TO HEAR BACK

Universities will then decide whether to make the applicant an offer, and communicate that decision via the UCAS portal. An offer is usually based on achieving specific grades, and there may be an interview or test.

REPLY TO OFFERS

The applicant then replies to their offers, deciding to accept their favourite course as their **Firm Choice**. Applicants also select an **Insurance Choice**, a back up option in case they don't meet the conditions of their firm choice. Any other offers are then rejected.

RESULTS - CONFIRMATION OR CLEARING

On results day in August, if a student meets the requirements for either of their offers, they can confirm their place. If they meet and exceed their offers, it is possible to look for an alternative course or university using Adjustment if they want to. If a student just misses out on their grades, the university may still accept them onto their chosen course. If they miss the grades and are then rejected by their Firm and Insurance choices, they can still go through Clearing to gain a place on a different course or at a different university.

FIND OUT MORE

Step by step guide to application process -

www.heon.org.uk/parents/supporting-someone-applying-to-higher-education

Find advice for parents - bit.ly/UCASparents



This guide has been designed by The Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON) in collaboration with Innervate Careers Services Limited. For more information visit us at www.HEON.org.uk

