

The Journey to Higher Education

A Parent and Carer Guide

The Journey to Higher Education

About Uni Connect

The **Uni Connect** programme brings together universities, colleges, local authorities, employers and others to deliver a wide range of activities and resources to display the benefits and realities of higher education. These tailored activities and resources are offered to young people from under-represented groups, with the aim of helping them to progress to higher education.

About AccessHE

AccessHE is a pan-London network of higher education institutions (HEIs) working together to ensure that higher education and its benefits, can be accessed by everyone in London who has the ability and desire to do so, regardless of their background or characteristics. We support learners from under-represented groups at all stages of their HE learner journey, from pre-entry through to graduate employment.

Geraldine Douglas

AccessHE Uni Connect Outreach Hub Coordinator

 www.youtube.com/channel/UCzzvcPN6EqXDbHYTUWFDMAQ

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Contents

04 WHY GO?

What are the benefits of higher education?

06 WHERE TO GO?

What are the options available and how do you make the decision about where to study?

08 WHAT TO STUDY?

What are the options available and how do you make the decision of what to study?

10 PATHWAYS

What routes can you take to higher education for yourself or your child?

12 APPLICATIONS

What is the process for applying for higher education?

14 STUDENT FINANCE

How much does higher education cost? Myth-busting, budgeting and all you need to know.

16 HIGHER AND DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships in higher education explained.

17 EXPERIENCES

What is it really like? Find out from students and parents.

23 SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

An overview of the support available with study and with student life.

24 ACTIVITY AND SKILLS

What skills do you need for higher education and how can they be developed?

27 GLOSSARY

Key higher education terms explained.

28 INDEX

Find all links to the resources provided



This interactive booklet will support you with the basic 'need-to-knows' about higher education. Look out for the 'tips' throughout the booklet which you can use by yourself or with your child.



WHY GO?

Every year hundreds of thousands of prospective students choose higher education as their next step after school or college. When weighing up the options for anything in life you would want to know the benefits, and there are many for going to university.



TO FOLLOW AN INTEREST

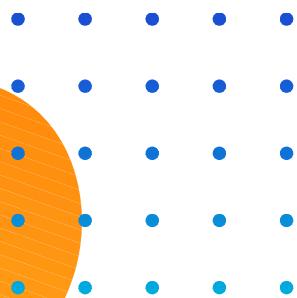
Higher education is an opportunity for your child to study a subject they love, and learn from experts in their field. They may have never had the chance to study a specific interest but there are over 500,000 higher education courses to choose from in the UK, so there really is something for everybody.

INDEPENDENCE & NEW EXPERIENCES

University study will foster independence in your child as they will learn life skills through either living away from home, or navigating how to balance their studies in an environment very different to school, sixth form or college. Their social life may become more diverse and varied as they embark on new experiences and meet people from all backgrounds, from all over the world. For many, the university experience is life changing.



Tip: To research different degree requirements for specific careers, check out the [Prospects](#) website.



£10,000 difference between the average graduate salary (£34,000) and non-graduate salary (£24,000)



CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Gaining a degree qualification is an essential requirement for certain careers, such as medicine, nursing, dentistry, teaching and law. That being said, gaining a degree in a specific subject does not close doors to other careers. A degree will equip your child with skills that increase employability overall. During their studies, your child will learn transferable skills alongside subject-specific knowledge, such as analysis, teamwork and time management.

FUTURE EARNINGS

The future earnings potential of someone with a university degree is much higher than that of someone who does not have a university degree. In 2018, there was a £10,000 difference between the average graduate salary (£34,000) and non-graduate salary (£24,000).

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/graduates-continue-to-benefit-with-higher-earnings>



Worried about employability?

Watch this video to find out more

WHERE TO GO?

There is no ‘right’ or ‘best’ place to study for a higher education qualification. Deciding where to study depends on individual preferences and is a personal choice, but as a parent, guardian or carer you can help guide this decision by presenting the various options for your child to consider.



Tip: *Try using these questions with your child during open days!*

HOME OR AWAY?

If your child decides to study near home, for example in London, the transition to university life may be easier. On the other hand, moving away from home may allow your child to explore new places and experiences.

Questions: Do you still want to live at home?
How much is student accommodation?
How far away from home will you be?
How much does it cost to live away from home?

Examples: [Why Study in London?](#)

MODERN OR TRADITIONAL?

Some universities, such as Cambridge and Oxford, are considered ancient as they have existed for hundreds of years. Others however were established more recently.

Questions: Do you want to study at a university with a strong careers focus?
Would you like to study at a university with a strong academic research focus?

Examples: [Types of university](#)

CITY OR CAMPUS?

Some universities are located in a city, whereas as other so-called ‘campus universities’ are often based on one site in a quieter or rural setting.

Questions: Do you like being close to theatres, nightlife, leisure and events?
Would you mind commuting to your lectures, or would you prefer to simply ‘roll out of bed’ and be a short walk from them?

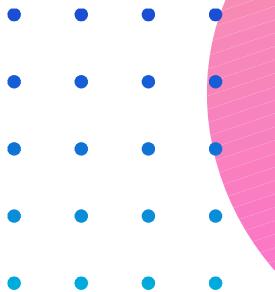
Examples: [Pros and cons of university campuses](#)

CONSERVATOIRES?

If you are choosing to study in the performing arts you may want to study at a conservatoire.

Questions: Do you want to study at a ‘specialist’ institution for your subject?
Do you want your degree to be highly vocational and performance based?

Examples: [UCAS Conservatoires](#)



FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY?

You can study at a further education college which may have a higher education centre. Further education colleges can be found in many local areas but often do not offer accommodation, so you may need to live at home.

Questions: Do you prefer smaller classes?
Do you want to be closer to home?

Examples: [London Colleges](#)
[South Essex College](#)

REPUTATION & RANKINGS?

There are many popular league tables, but it is important to look at measurements within these tables that matter to you.

Questions: What is the score for student satisfaction?
What is the rate of graduate employment?

Examples: [Times Higher Education](#)
[Complete University Rankings](#)
[The Guardian](#)

FACILITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

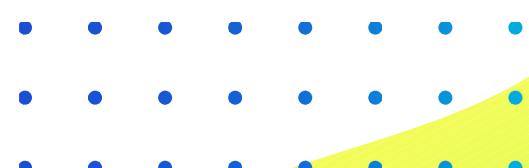
Universities may have certain facilities and opportunities that interest you and could play an important part in shaping your decision. For example, some universities have fantastic sports centres, or arts and theatre facilities, or a particularly impressive careers provision. It's also worth researching student societies you can get involved with, if you have a specific interest or want to try something new.

Questions: Do you play sports?
Would you like to work for a specific company or organisation?

Examples: [London Metropolitan Super Lab](#)
[UEL Sports Dock](#)

Can't get to an open day?

Check out universities online through [virtual open days!](#)



WHAT TO STUDY?

Your child may know that they want to go to university, but they may still be unsure of what to study. Here are some things to consider whilst making this decision.



SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS

If your child isn't sure where to start, why not sit down with them and try to match their level 3 subjects to degree courses?

- Examples:** [What degree can I study with my current choices?](#)
[What degrees do people go on to study](#)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

It's important for your child to research the entry requirements for what they want to study. Some courses will require your child to have studied a certain subject, and often to have achieved a certain grade. Their grades are converted into UCAS points, when applying to university, and a course will often have a UCAS tariff requirement.

- Examples:** [UCAS tariff calculator](#)



Tip: Compare courses on [Discoveruni.com](#)

My child didn't get the grades they needed?

[Watch to find out more](#)



Tip: Do research foundation years for specific courses. A foundation year can prepare your child with the knowledge needed to help them gain entry onto the degree they wish to study.



ALTERNATIVES

If you do not meet the requirements for your subject of choice, you may be able to study something very similar. This will allow you to still study something you enjoy and may even lead to postgraduate study. Not everyone enters their chosen field through their first degree. Did you know you can enter a degree in medicine after a degree in a related health or science subject?

Examples: Medicine

Pathways to Medicine- Graduate entry programme and more

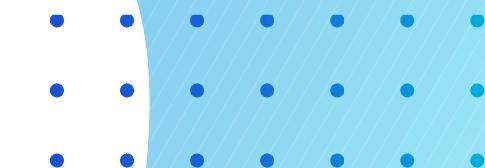
Pathways to Healthcare

Pathways to Education

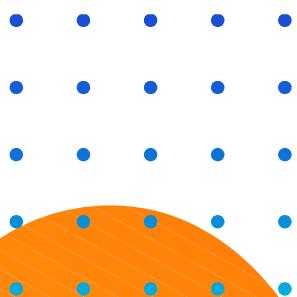
Pathways to Law

Unsure about your child's subject choice?

Watch to find out more



Tip: Remember to support and champion success and happiness through what might be a stressful decision for your child.



PATHWAYS

Use this chart as a helpful tool to understand the UK qualification system at a glance. You can start at one pathway and change at different levels. Some people may also be able to start at later levels.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	
ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS	GCSE's Grade 4-9	A Levels	1st year Bachelor's Degree	
VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	L2 BTEC	L3 BTEC T-Levels	L4 BTEC Advanced Professional award, certificate and diploma	
APPRENTICESHIPS	Intermediate Apprenticeship	Advanced Apprenticeship	Higher Apprenticeship	
WORK-BASED LEARNING	L2 NVQ's	L3 NVQ's	L4 NVQ's	
OTHER QUALIFICATIONS	Functional/Essential/ Core skills qualifications		HNC Foundation Degree	
QUALIFICATIONS FOR MATURE LEARNERS	Pre-Access to Higher Education Diploma	Access to Higher Education Diploma		

GCSE: A General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is a qualification that normally takes two-three years complete. The exams take place in year 11.

BTEC: Business and Technology Education Council qualifications (BTECs) are specialist work-related qualifications.

Functional/Essential/Core skills: These qualifications provide you with the skills you need in English, maths, and ICT to progress in education and work.

Access to Higher Education Diploma: A one-year course designed for mature learners to gain access to higher education.

A Levels: Advanced level qualifications (A Levels) are subject-based qualifications that can lead to university, further study, training or work. You can normally study three or more A Levels over two years. They are usually assessed through a series of examinations.

T-Levels: T-Levels are technical based qualifications which include theoretical classroom-based work and industry placements.

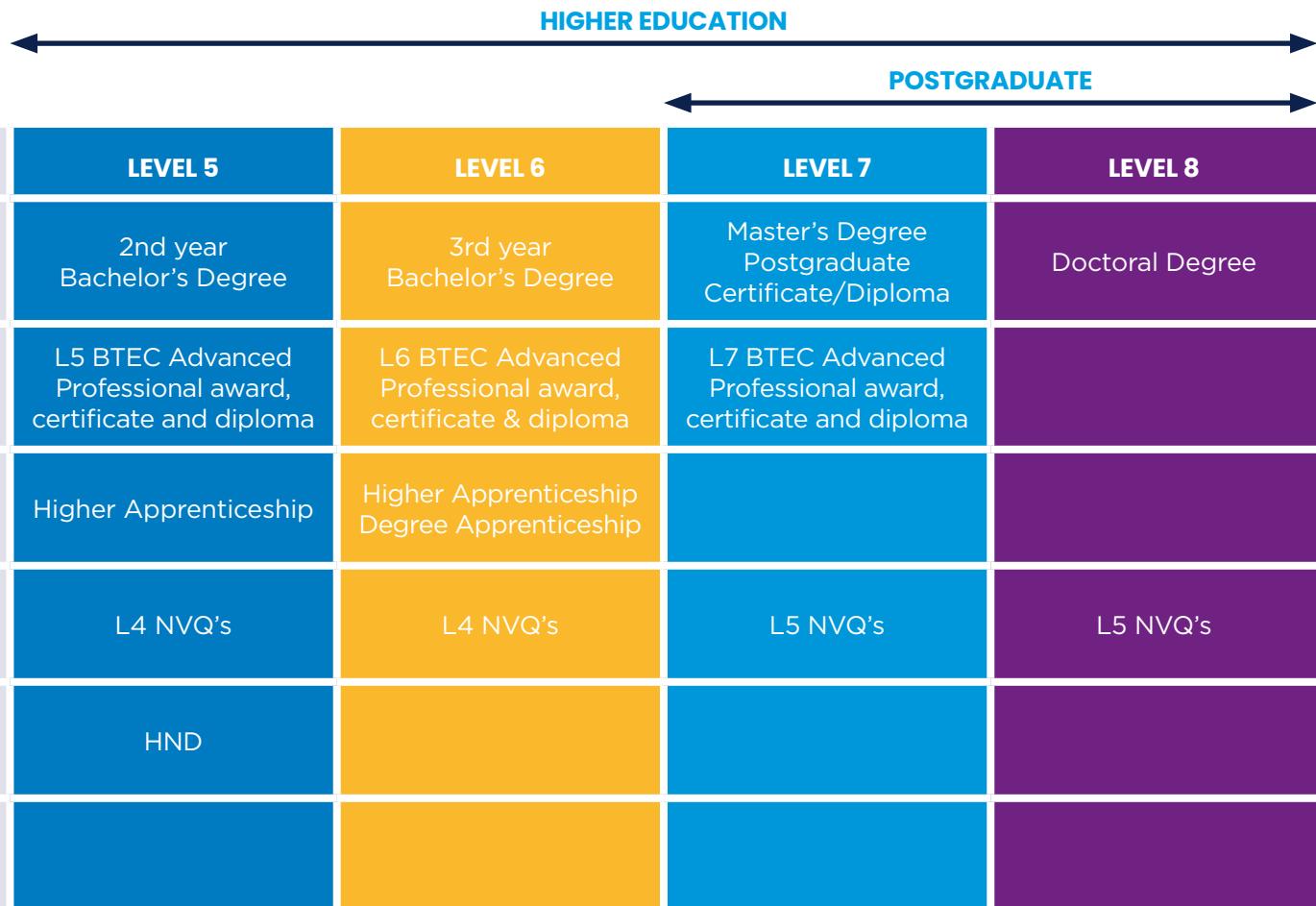
NVQs: National Vocation Qualifications (NVQs) are work-based learning qualifications graded on competency. This means your ability to demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to complete a job-related task.

WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION?

At the age of 18 students can choose to continue to study the final stage of formal education and gain a qualification.



Tip: Try returning to this page and planning a pathway with your child



HNC: Higher National Certificates (HNC) are vocational qualifications which usually take about one year to complete.

HND: Higher National diplomas (HND) are vocational qualifications which take about two years to complete.

Foundation Degree: A foundation degree will usually take two years and is a vocational course with a clear focus on a career.

Apprenticeships: These courses involve being employed alongside study. Tip: Go to page 16 to find out more!

Masters Degree: A masters degree is a level 7 qualification usually studied after gaining a level 6 qualification. This is usually a one-year course.

Doctoral Degree: The highest level of study and degree that can be achieved. A well-known doctoral degree is a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), though there are many others such as an EdD (Doctor of Education).

There are many qualifications and pathways to higher education with routes ever changing. To find out more about qualifications [click here](#)

APPLICATIONS

Applications in the UK are submitted and managed through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Schools and colleges support students with their applications. Here are some top tips to help you support your child with their application.

1. DEADLINES

Make sure you know all the key dates and deadlines for applications. Deadlines differ for some courses and institutions. For example, applications to Oxford and Cambridge University and for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science/Medicine tend to be earlier than the general application deadline.

2. PERSONAL STATEMENTS

The personal statement is submitted as part of the university application. It is a written document that will allow your child to distinguish themselves from other candidates and show why they are suitable for their chosen course and/or place of study.



Tip: Try the *A B C model* with your child to help them structure their paragraphs.

Activity: What did I do/study?

Benefit: What did I get from this? (Skills/knowledge)

Course/Career: How does this relate to my course or career?



3. CONSERVATOIRES UK ADMISSIONS SERVICE (UCAS Conservatoires)

- for performing arts at a UK Conservatoire

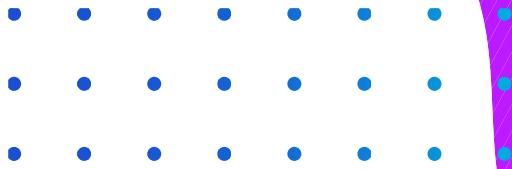
If you plan to study at a conservatoire you will have a more vocational, industry and performance focused study. Find out more about conservatoires [here](#).

To find out more check out the [Creative apply guide](#).



Tip: You can apply through UCAS and UCAS Conservatoires at the same time. This will give you more choice, though you can ultimately only accept an offer through one application service. Some specialist institutions also allow for applications direct to the university.

Want some more guidance on applications?
[Watch this to find out more](#)



4. INTERVIEWS, AUDITIONS & PORTFOLIOS

Not all universities or courses will ask students to attend an interview, but for some it is an integral part of the process. For creative arts subjects a portfolio of work or an audition will be required.



Tip: *Practice a Mock University interview with your child with this guide.*

5. ADMISSIONS TESTS

For certain subjects such as Law, Medicine, Nursing, or certain institutions like Cambridge and Oxford, there are admissions tests that will be used to decide whether you will be offered a place on the course. These are on top of the standard UCAS application.

Examples: [Admission tests](#)



Tip: *Make sure you fully read the entry requirements for each course so your child can prepare for the tests.*

FOR CARERS

Estranged, care experienced or looked after children should ensure they tick the box on their UCAS application to let universities and colleges know. This information will ensure they are given and offered the right support. For more visit [propel](#).

6. CONTEXTUAL ADMISSIONS

Entry onto a higher education course does not always depend solely on achieving the required grades. More universities than ever are offering contextual admissions. If a student meets certain characteristics, they may receive a contextual offer from their chosen course provider, meaning the entry grades are lower for them. These characteristics can include being the first in your family to attend university, or living in a particular area, as just two of many examples.



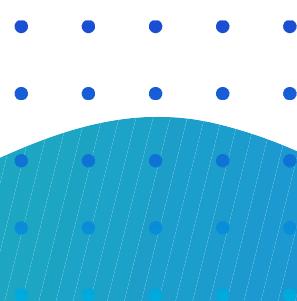
Tip: *Find out if you are eligible [here](#)*

7. CLEARING

If your child is applying late, did not receive any offers, did not meet the grade requirements or rejected the offers that they received, they will enter clearing. This is where you can find and apply for suitable and available courses.



Tip: *Help your child be prepared by encouraging them to research universities and create a list. Find some more tips [here](#).*



STUDENT FINANCE

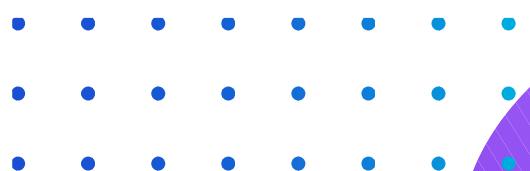
How to pay for university is a concern for many parents, carers and guardians. You may have to provide some evidence to support your child's application.

*Will having
a student
loan affect
credit ratings?*

*I can't afford
to pay for
university for
my child!*

*Will the
loan cover
everything?*

*Am I
responsible
for my
child's loan?*



**Want some more guidance on
student finance?**

[Watch this short video to find out more](#)

WHAT WILL I NEED TO SUPPORT AN APPLICATION?

- You will need to set up an account on www.gov.uk/studentfinance
- National Insurance number
- Household annual income total
- Declaration of your marital status

1. STUDENT LOAN

A loan of up to £9,250 per year to pay the tuition fees required for your course.

2. MAINTENANCE LOAN

A loan available to help with living expenses. The amount you receive is dependent on your household income and whether you will be studying at home or in London.

3. REPAYMENTS

The loans will gather interest which is UK Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 3% as you start studying. The loans are only repayable once you finish your degree and earn over the threshold of £26,575 a year, £2,214 a month or £511 a week. This is paid through your income automatically like taxable pay. You only pay 9% of any money earned over the threshold (quite manageable). After 30 years any money owed and outstanding is cleared. If you want to pay more money towards your student loan repayments, you can.



Tip: Get your child to try a budget planner once they know how much money they will have whilst studying.

[**Budget planner 1**](#)

[**Budget Planner 2**](#)

[**Budget Calculator**](#)

4. SPECIAL SUPPORT

You may be eligible for more financial support that does not have to be paid back.

[**Adults Dependant Grant**](#)

[**Childcare Grant**](#)

[**Disabled student allowances \(DSAs\)**](#)

[**NHS Medicine and Dentistry Bursary**](#)

[**NHS Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Professions Grant**](#)

[**Parents Learning Allowance**](#)

[**Social Work Bursary**](#)

[**Teacher training Bursary**](#)

[**Dance and Drama award \(DaDa\)**](#)

For detailed advice go to:

[**Student finance England Quickstart guide**](#)

[**UCAS Student finance for parents**](#)

[**Student finance mythbusters**](#)

DID YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD CAN MANGE THEIR FINANCES WITH...

[**Student Discounts**](#)

[**Student Travel**](#)

[**Part-Time Work**](#)

HIGHER & DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Is your child looking for: Experience of the workplace?
A salary? A kick start to their career?

An apprenticeship is combined employment and study. Usually it entails working up to 30 hours a week, and you will be paid at least the minimum wage.

Higher and degree apprenticeships mean that you are not making a choice between university and an apprenticeship... you are getting the best of both worlds!

There are many different fields in which you can study an apprenticeship such as

- Business Management
- Computer Science
- Accounting
- Electrical Engineering
- Policing
- ... and many more

It is not a back-up option and is a highly competitive pathway to take.

RESOURCES TO FIND OUT MORE

- [Top 10 questions about higher and degree apprenticeships](#)
- [Higher and degree apprenticeships 'cheat sheet'](#)



An introduction to higher and degree apprenticeships
[Watch this video to find out more](#)

EXPERIENCES

It is important to hear the real-life experiences of those in higher education. Here we have collected the viewpoints of students, parents, and carers. To see more case studies and videos click [here](#).

SAHRA Student

I am studying History at The University of Westminster

WHAT WAS YOUR JOURNEY TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

“After further thought, I really thought I should still give it a go!”

I did A-level History, Politics and Philosophy. Initially I wanted to go onto studying Philosophy and Religion at degree level, but I decided that I was much more passionate about History than Philosophy. I was worried because I had not done as well in History A-level as I thought I would, which made me think maybe I should not study it at degree level. After further thought, I really thought I should still give it a go! I would advise that even if you are nervous regarding a particular course, still give it a go. You may find that you are better suited to a course at degree level and will excel in it.



UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER



Listen to Sahra's Story

- A 5x6 grid of blue dots, arranged in five rows and six columns.



MY TOP TIP

I would say my top tip would be: really utilise the opportunities you get at university, as you may not get them again! As university is a mature environment you will not get a constant push from lecturers/teachers as you did at school. You will have to make sure you find opportunities yourself and create great networks of people. The key is to really put yourself out there and make sure that you get involved in university activities and career fairs and jobs on campus! It will really set you apart from others as you would have really made the most out of your university experience.

EXPERIENCES

FRANCESCA Student

I am studying at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London



WHAT WAS YOUR JOURNEY TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

"I was the first in my family to consider going to university so I wanted to make myself, as well as friends and family proud and without their support I don't think I could have done it."

I have always had an interest in science, especially biology and chemistry, and I was passionate about animals, so I began to look into potential career paths that brought all this together. That is when I discovered veterinary medicine. I threw myself at every opportunity that came my way. I worked part time at my local vet's practice and volunteered at a variety of animal sanctuaries. I also worked hard on getting my grades up and keeping them up. I was the first in my family to consider going to university so I wanted to make myself, as well as friends and family proud and without their support I don't think I could have done it. Now here I am, three years in and enjoying every minute of it.

WHAT SUPPORT HELPED YOU?

I was lucky enough to have support from a range of people and resources. My parents were fully supportive of my desire to pursue higher education and all my close friends were also looking at doing a degree of some sort. I remember running mock interviews with my father and even with my peers at school. Working together to support and motivate each other made the journey to university easier and that much more exciting. I found myself using resources like UCAS to help me compare universities and my mother used their 'parent and carer advice' page to help her with the transition too. I also tried to volunteer at a variety of establishments to immerse myself in the field of study I was interested in. Having the people closest to me supporting my choices but still helping me be realistic was really important for my journey to higher education.

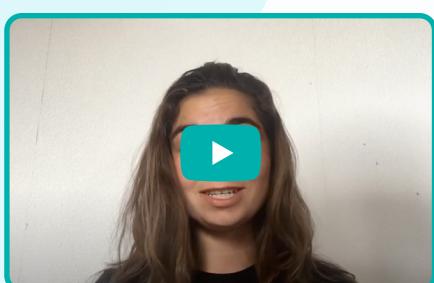
MY CHALLENGE

One of the main challenges facing myself and my family was that I was going to be the first generation to pursue higher education. This meant that at times my parents found it difficult to help me with my application compared to parents who had first-hand experience of the process. While this was daunting at first, and none of us knew exactly where to start, we were honest and open with each other about what we knew how to do. When we needed the extra help, we looked to family friends, teachers or online resources. Thanks to my parents' support throughout the process we helped overcome this challenge together and I am now pursuing the career I have aspired to be part of my whole life.

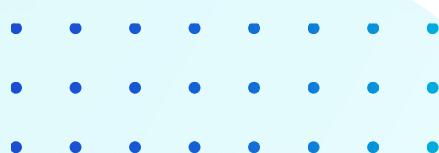


MY TOP TIP

My top tip would be to familiarise yourself with being independent before you are expected to be at university. Learn to use your washing machine, the stove and oven in your kitchen, and even your bank account. It is really important to learn a little about these three things before you are left to your own devices at university.



[Listen to Francesca's Story](#)



EXPERIENCES

ALMA Parent

My child studies English and Drama at Queen Mary University London



WHAT WAS YOUR JOURNEY TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

"I did not know anything about the higher education system in this country"

I have always believed that through education you can make your life better and secure your future and give your contribution to society. I did not know anything about the higher education system in this country. Through my child I have learnt so much - starting with writing a personal statement and applying for student finance.

WHAT SUPPORT HELPED YOU AND YOUR CHILD?

Going to university is not an easy journey and the pressure is very high for her having to submit all her assignments. She has had great support with her stress by going directly to the university for one-to-one meetings with advisors.

MY CHALLENGE

Travelling was hard for my daughter as we live in central London and it is very complicated to figure out her commute. She has learnt how to organise herself and get to her lectures on time from home.

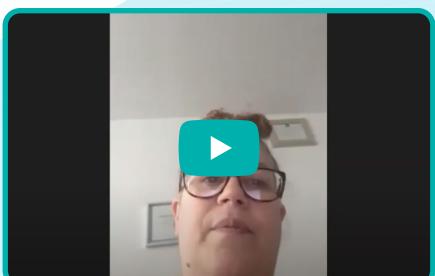


MY TOP TIP

Apply early for student finance so that this process does not become a worry for you and let your child follow their dreams!

“

Travelling was hard for my daughter as we live in central London and it is very complicated to figure out her commute. She has learnt how to organise herself and get to her lectures on time from home.



[Listen to Alma's Story](#)

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EXPERIENCES

GABRIEL Student

I am studying Business Management and Marketing at Middlesex University



WHAT WAS YOUR JOURNEY TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

"My experience was totally worth the challenge because I was able to work and study with people from all over the world who were going through the same things as I was, and I would do it all again if I had to."

I did all my education in Brazil and came to the UK to study. I had to be on top of all the requirements to study, and since this was something I'd wanted for a long time, I decided to turn it into one of the most important aspects of my life. My experience was totally worth the challenge because I was able to work and study with people from all over the world who were going through the same things as I was, and I would do it all again if I had to. My main motivation was really to be challenged to see how far I could come, and believing in myself was the main reason I was able to do it.

WHAT SUPPORT HELPED YOU?

The support I got was from the university. The university supported me by always offering a wide range of different opportunities to grow professionally and get help if I needed. I always had the university backing me up and helping with jobs, my CV, and even counselling. Also, student assistants and tutors were always there to provide academic help with learning topics and the students' union would help us make the most out of our university experience.

MY CHALLENGE

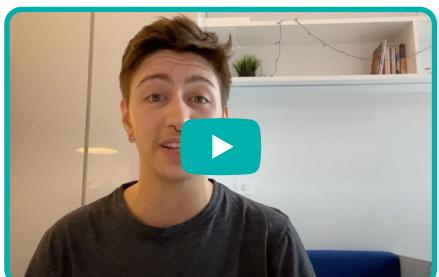
To me, the main challenges included adapting to a new country, not knowing anyone, having to learn in another language and being away from family and friends. To overcome this, as soon as I started my journey at university, I joined societies and tried getting integrated and making new friends through university. I took a volunteering position as a Student Voice Leader, which really helped in meeting new people and building relationships both with other students and with tutors as well.

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MY TOP TIP

Don't be afraid, because you're not alone. Don't let fear stop you from doing and achieving the things you want, because this is YOUR journey, and it's up to you to make the most out of it. It's completely normal to feel nervous and a bit out of place in the beginning, but universities genuinely do want you to feel safe and integrated, and you'll see that if you don't fear it (or act like you don't), the easier it will get and more opportunities will come your way.



[Listen to Gabriel's Story](#)

EXPERIENCES

MACARENA Student

I am studying French and Linguistics at Queen Mary University of London

WHAT WAS YOUR JOURNEY TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

"I am so happy I did it and I can't recommend it enough!"

I had to learn how to do the whole UCAS and personal statement process, since I'm from Spain and that is not the way of applying to university there. I realised that I was really interested in Linguistics but this wasn't offered as a degree at home - so I had to look elsewhere! I am so happy I did it and I can't recommend it enough!

WHAT SUPPORT HELPED YOU?

What helped me the most were Freshers events, especially those dedicated to commuters - I knew I was going to be able to meet people that had the same worries as me. Moreover, joining societies helped so much because you meet like-minded people who have the same interests as you! Finally, my greatest support was my family, who always had my back, especially at the beginning!

MY CHALLENGE

Something that was a challenge was the fact that I wasn't going to be living on campus, and I was scared of missing out on the fun. I just had to put in the extra effort to socialise and I was fine!



What helped me the most were Freshers events, especially those dedicated to commuters - I knew I was going to be able to meet people that had the same worries as me.



MY TOP TIP

My top tip is that your university experience will be what you want it to be - so make the most out of it! Try and leave your worries behind and be ready to grab all the opportunities that will come your way. My most enjoyable experience in university has been being a Student Ambassador, and I'm so glad I had the chance to do it.



[Listen to Macarena's Story](#)

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EXPERIENCES

LORNA Parent

My child studied Forensic Biology at Kingston University London



WHAT WAS YOUR JOURNEY TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

"My eldest daughter did not want to go to university"

I studied in Jamaica and when I came to England but was only able to re-engage with education later on in life. My eldest daughter did not want to go to university. She wanted to travel to Africa to volunteer, research and make a difference. I knew that university would give her discipline, I wanted her to just try it out. I have seen my daughter gain independence, meet many new people and gain so many new skills she has returned to be almost a different person.

WHAT SUPPORT HELPED YOU AND YOUR CHILD?

I worked late nights and I wanted to be able to help my daughter with her confidence and studies. I was not able to, but I relied on those who could. Mainly this was friends and family, I never needed to support her academically as the university was great in doing this, it was mainly ensuring that her wellbeing was protected when she came home.

MY CHALLENGE

For my daughter it was difficult as she is dyslexic, and she was very nervous when it came to exams. Initially I was upset but I went to the school and they supported me with getting her tested. With this she was able to access the support she needed, such as extra allotted time for assessments, a tutor and specific software, which made a great difference in her confidence about her studies.

“

I have seen my daughter gain independence, meet many new people and gain so many new skills she has returned to be almost a different person.

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Kingston University London



MY TOP TIP

Try not to compare your child with others. Don't judge and look at them as individuals. Try to empower them with their strengths, it may be difficult, they may take longer but they want to complete their studies. Remind them of small accomplishments ... and make them nice food for them to come home to!



[Listen to Lorna's Story](#)

SUPPORT & WELLBEING

You may be wondering how higher education differs from school, sixth form or college. With this transition to a new environment many parents and carers want to ensure their child will be okay. Here are a few things to look out for that may be on offer for your child.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

University and higher education study can be a big jump for some students. Having academic support in addition to lectures can really ease anxiety and help students to achieve to their full potential. This support can come in the form of personal tutors, skills workshops or through tracking and monitoring attendance.

SOCIALISING, SPORTS AND SOCIETIES

Students' unions not only give students a voice in their institutions but also exist to enhance the student experience by providing welfare services, social and sporting opportunities. There are clubs and societies for almost everything. Try finding one your child would enjoy or challenge them to try something new!

Examples: [British Universities & Colleges Sport](#)
[Everything you need to know about and Societies](#)

ACCOMMODATION AND SAFETY

If your child is moving away from home, in their accommodation there may be wardens or supervisors responsible for upkeep.

Example: [Student experience ratings for security](#)
[Drink Aware](#)

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Each university will have its own student mental health and counselling service. Make sure your child is registered at the university's local GP surgery and dentist. This way they will be able to access urgent medical care easily.

Examples: [Young Minds #Coping on Campus](#)
[Medical Care for students](#)

How safe is university?
[Watch to find out more](#)



SKILLS ACTIVITY

Young people may often feel worried they don't have the skills and abilities to study for higher education. Here we have collated a few key skills that you as a parent or carer can help your child understand and develop for higher education study.

COMMUNICATION

“Exchanging information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.”

In higher education study your child will find themselves having to communicate complex ideas using subject-specific terms to many different audiences and in many different ways, such as through presentations and essays.



Tip: Don't forget communication is a two-way process. Make sure to listen and/or pay attention to what is asked. Encourage your child to practice note taking whilst watching and listening to videos to prepare for lectures.

Examples: Speakers Trust Communication Skills

INDEPENDENCE

“Capable of thinking or acting for oneself.”

In higher education your child will have to be proactive and take responsibility for their own learning outside of lectures and classes.



Tip: *Independence does not mean suffering in silence when some support may be needed. Encourage your child to ask for help from their place of study.*

Resources: Top Tips for Independent Learners

RESILIENCE

“The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.”

Studying in higher education can feel like a pressure cooker with plenty of demands and expectations from all areas of life such as grades, peers, family and future career prospects. Resilience will allow you to perform and manage under this pressure.



Tip: When has your child remained positive? When did they overcome a challenge? Help them identify strengths they may not have seen in themselves.

Resources: Three Tips for Resilient People

COLLABORATION

“Working with others to produce something”

Your child will be asked to work in teams during their course, whether this be lab work, presentations or even a work placement.



Tip: Have they had work experience? Do they play any sport?

Resources: Teamwork tips

- A 5x5 grid of blue dots representing data points. A cyan shaded region in the bottom right corner indicates a local neighborhood or kernel.

ACTIVITY

With your child, in the boxes provided on the next page (or on another sheet of paper) write an example of when they have demonstrated the skill described.

Use the tips and resources on page 24-25 to learn more and practice these skills.

This activity can help with personal statements or show a young person how capable they are!

TIME MANAGEMENT

"The ability to find solutions to complex or difficult issues"

Your child will have many deadlines for their assignments, but on top of this they will be balancing their new social life and perhaps even part-time work.



Tip: Are they able to differentiate between 'have to' and 'want to'? If they find it difficult to self monitor the time tasks may take, try to encourage them to start with a list of priorities instead.

Resources: [Top Tips for revision](#)

CRITICAL THINKING

"Examine and analyse ideas, evaluate them against what you already know and make decisions"

In higher education study you will have to answer difficult questions based on what you have learnt. By researching, gathering evidence, and making a judgement you can problem solve effectively.



Tip: Have discussions about the news with your child. Is the author credible? Is it 'fake news'? What do they already know and what do they think about what is being said? Encourage them to research other viewpoints.

Resources: [Problem Solving and Critical thinking](#)



I've never been to university, how can I support my child?

[Watch to find out more](#)

TIME MANAGEMENT

COMMUNICATION

RESILIENCE

INDEPENDENCE

COLLABORATION

CRITICAL THINKING

Learn online and help your child prepare for higher education at
www.accessheonline.ac.uk or practice more skills development [here](#)

Glossary

ALUMNI

The graduates of a place of study who are contacted with opportunities and news about their institution.

BA

Bachelor of Arts undergraduate degree.

BSC

Bachelor of Science undergraduate degree.

CAMPUS

The buildings and space owned by a higher education provider.

CONSERVATOIRE

A specialist performing arts institution.

DEGREE

A qualification awarded to students upon successful completion of a course of study at higher education level.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER

An institution that provides qualifications for higher education. This can be a college or university.

GAP YEAR

The time taken off before higher education study, where students may work or volunteer.

PLACEMENT YEAR

A year before your final year of study to gain practical employment experience at university.

POSTGRADUATE

A student undertaking further study at a more advanced level after typically completing an undergraduate degree.

RUSSELL GROUP

A group of 24 universities that are known for their research and for the academic achievement of students.

SANDWICH COURSE

A course that includes a placement year.

SEMESTER

An academic year can be divided into two semesters of teaching. Some higher education providers may divide the academic year into terms (of which there will typically be three).

UCAS

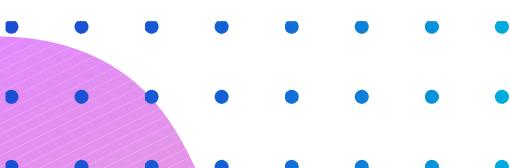
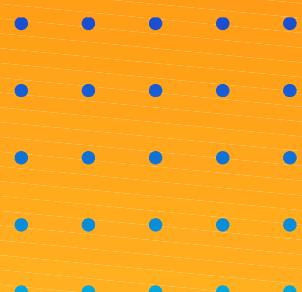
Universities and colleges admissions service.

UNDERGRADUATE

Students who have completed or are studying for their first degree.

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Measures to increase numbers of young people entering higher education from underrepresented groups.



INDEX

WHY GO?

Prospects: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Graduate Earnings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/graduates-continue-to-benefit-with-higher-earnings>

Worried about employability? Video: <https://youtu.be/PWQwd45O568>

WHERE TO GO?

Why Study in London: <https://www.study-london.ac.uk/why-study-in-london>

Pros and cons of university campuses: <https://www.studentworldonline.com/article/campus-vs-city-universities-which-should-you-choose-/413/>

Types of University: https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Types_of_University

UCAS Conservatoires: <https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires/conservatoire-study-right-me>

London Colleges: <http://www.londoncolleges.com/>

South Essex College: <https://www.south-essex.ac.uk/he/>

London Metropolitan Super Lab: <https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/services-and-facilities/science-labs/>

UEL Sports Dock: <https://www.uel.ac.uk/sport/sport-facilities>

Virtual Open days: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/open-days-and-events/virtual-tours>

Times Higher Education: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-uk>

The Complete university: <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>

The guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2019/jun/07/university-league-tables-2020>

WHAT TO STUDY

Compare courses on DiscoverUni: <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

What degree matches what I am studying: <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/a-level-explorer>

What degree do people go on to study: https://sacu-student.com/?page_id=5203

UCAS tariff calculator: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>

My child didn't get the grades they needed: Video: <https://youtu.be/cSqLV-mEpi0>

Medicine: <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/studying-medicine>

Pathways to Medicine: <https://www.medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/applications/entry-requirements?type=graduate-entry-medicine>

Pathways to Healthcare: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles>

Pathways to Education: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/teacher-training-and-education/jobs-in-education>

Pathways to Law: <https://www.law.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/law/gdl/>

Unsure about your child's subject choice? Video: <https://youtu.be/hQMgvoUugP4>

PATHWAYS

UK Qualifications guide: <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/qualifications>

APPLICATIONS

UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/>

Application guidance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20Sv0UsLGfw>

Key Dates: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/scheme/undergraduate/type/key-date>

About Conservatoires: <https://www.ucas.com/file/262316/download?token=VII0AdTQ>

Creative Apply guide: <https://www.accesshe.ac.uk/yYdIxOu7/AccessHE-Creative-HE-Apply-Guide-July2018.pdf>

ABC model for personal statements : <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/study/how-to-write-a-personal-statement>

Mock University Interview: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:ed0d3b55-ea0b-480b-acec-472df643dea3>

Admission Tests: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/admissions-tests>

Contextual admissions: <https://www.ucas.com/file/86786/download?token=zVfQ-oho>

Clearing tips: <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/student-advice/final-choice/results-day-and-clearing-advice-for-parents-and-guardians>

Propel for Carers: <https://propel.org.uk/UK/>

STUDENT FINANCE

Student finance video: <https://youtu.be/EWp9djJ1QiI>

Adults Dependant Grant: <https://www.gov.uk/adult-dependants-grant>

Childcare Grant: <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-grant?step-by-step-nav=18045f76-ac04-41b7-b147-5687d8fbb64a>

Disabled student allowances (DSAs): <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas>

NHS Medicine and Dentistry Bursary: <https://www.gov.uk/nhs-bursaries>

NHS Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Professions Grant: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/learning-support-fund/new-student-funding%C2%A0Parents%20Learning>

Parents Learning Allowance: <https://www.gov.uk/parents-learning-allowance?step-by-step-nav=18045f76-ac04-41b7-b147-5687d8fbb64a>

Social Work Bursary: <https://www.gov.uk/social-work>

Teacher training Bursary: <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/explore-my-options/teacher-training-routes/university-led-training/university-led-undergraduate-training/funding-for-undergraduate-teacher-training>

Dance and Drama award (DaDa): <https://www.dadainfo.org.uk/>

Student finance England Quickstart guide: <https://media.slc.co.uk/sfe/quickstartfinanceguide/index.html>

UCAS Student finance for parents: <https://www.ucas.com/student-finance-england/student-finance-guidance-parents-and-partners>

Student finance mythbusters: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-loans-tuition-fees-changes/>

Budget Planner 1: <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner>

Budget Planner 2: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:ab8eec1a-db0a-4866-984d-659486e3a97a>

Budget Calculator: <https://www.ucas.com/budget-calculator>

Student finance: www.gov.uk/studentfinance

Student discounts: <https://www.totum.com/>

Student Travel: <https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/student-travel>

Part time work: <https://www.savethestudent.org/student-jobs/finding-part-time-job.html>

INDEX

HIGHER AND DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Top 10 Questions about Higher and degree apprenticeships: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:54582d1c-b809-421b-b02e-a946c8f0e6d4#pageNum=1>

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships 'Cheat Sheet': <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:5bee5cff-2445-4474-bd7e-415a18637504>

An introduction to higher and degree apprenticeships video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogLBMWGD_kg&t=2s

EXPERIENCES

Case Studies and videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efOYOu0tAT4&list=PL4YpJ4y79Fx8LDZiLn8yZaw8zdNvDJNwn>

Sahra's Story Video: <https://youtu.be/efOYOu0tAT4>

Francesca's Story Video : <https://youtu.be/wUwo7YHZU10>

Alma's Story Video: <https://youtu.be/2G-c8No8wmQ>

Gabriels' Story Video: <https://youtu.be/R3CZ9KYnEWs>

Macarena's Story Video: <https://youtu.be/zKtepX3324s>

Lorna's Story Video: <https://youtu.be/5fo2hG8espA>

SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

British Universities & Colleges Sport: <https://www.bucs.org.uk/compete/sports.html>

Everything you need to know about Societies: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/student-blog-everything-you-need-know-about-student-societies-university>

Student experience ratings for security: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/sites/default/files/breaking_news_files/student_experience_survey_2018_full_results.pdf

Drink aware: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/staying-safe-while-drinking/how-to-stay-safe-at-university>

Young Minds #Coping on Campus: <https://youngminds.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/coping-on-campus/>

NHS guide for students: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-medical-care-as-a-student/>

How safe is university? Video : <https://youtu.be/YvrIouOvjVE>

Speakers Trust : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRbWy9EKEPU>

Communication Skills : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRbWy9EKEPU>

Three tips for resilient people: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWH8N-BvhAw>

Top tips for independent learners: <https://www.brightknowledge.org/study-skills/top-tips-for-independent-learning>

SKILLS ACTIVITY

Teamwork Tips: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zrdswty>

Top Tips for Revision: <https://www.accessheonline.ac.uk/courses/choose-your-own-adventure-part-two/>

Problem Solving and critical thinking: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zcjhfccw/revision/1>

I've never been to university. How can I support my child? Video: <https://youtu.be/tU7QNAL0xQ8>

AccessHE Online : <https://www.accessheonline.ac.uk/>

Skills development: <https://www.skillsbuilder.org/homelearning>

Notes



 www.youtube.com/channel/UCzzvcPN6EqXDbHYTUWFmAQ

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