

University of Exeter Student Ambassador Case Study

Personal Profile

Name – Claire Fraser

School Attended – Churchill Sixth Form, Somerset

Subjects studied – A level Geography, Psychology, Theatre Studies and Biology

University attended – University of Exeter

University campus – Penryn

Degree subject – BSc Geography with Environmental Management

Number of years as a Student Ambassador - 3

Year of graduation – 2011

Current job/employer – Widening Participation & Student Recruitment Assistant, University of Exeter

About me –

Geography is great! You may think I am crazy but I find it fascinating. In all seriousness the grand challenges we face as a population are extremely complex and research in this field is continually evolving. The modules available at the University of Exeter Penryn Campus appealed, as did the small classes and the community feel. I specialised in environmental management allowing me to cover what I wanted in my own research. The fieldtrip to California may have helped too!

I became an ambassador in my first year and continued until I graduated in 2011. The ambassador scheme made me realise that I really want to work in education.

Now I am working for the University in the Student Recruitment team as 'Widening Participation and Student Recruitment Assistant', which I would not be doing unless I was a student ambassador. I am not promising you jobs in the team when you graduate but I had fantastic experience and prior knowledge which put me in good stead for the job. My role as Widening Participation and Student Recruitment Assistant is to work closely with schools and colleges, both locally and nationally, to inspire young people to make informed decisions with regard to their future education and aspiration.



Had you always planned to go to university?

Although I was the first of my immediate family to go to university I think it was always in my mind. My parents were always really supportive and my school certainly encouraged us to think about applying to University. I think having role models or inspiring teachers makes a huge difference in decision making- it certainly did in mine.

What would you say to students who are currently not sure if university is for them?

Take time and do your research! Firstly I would say to study subjects that keep options open post 16. Pick things like English, History, Maths, Geography- these subjects keep doors open for the future. I would also recommend that they pick things that they enjoy- as they will put so much more effort in if they like what they are studying. Going to University is not an easy or insignificant decision, particularly with recent cost implications. Students who are not sure need to do their research into careers, courses, modules, opportunities within an institution, and student finance/ bursary eligibility to name a few. They need to speak to as many people as possible about all the options available to them. Understanding themselves the benefits of Higher Education and weighing up all the factors without influence from others is my bit of advice. There should not be barriers to anyone who is ambitious and able and that is the message I try and put across.

What made you apply to become a University of Exeter Student Ambassador?

As soon as I arrived at the Penryn Campus I knew I had to tell others about it. I had a fantastic University experience, living the Cornwall lifestyle and studying for a degree from the University of Exeter. Open Days and Offer Holder days really influenced my decision and as an ambassador I knew I could tell prospective students all about my experiences and try to help them make the best decisions.

I also have always really enjoyed working with children and young adults. The opportunity to run workshops and give presentations in schools was of interest as teaching has always been on my radar. I also think that making the decision to go to University is getting harder, especially for certain groups of students. Being able to provide all the information will help students to make the best decision for them.

Getting paid for work which is rewarding and great experience was appealing too!

Do you think that being a University of Exeter Student Ambassador contributed to your own personal development and if so how?

Oh Endlessly!

Team work, presentation skills, leadership skills, time management, confidence, communication skills, business acumen, use of initiative and so on.

Spot a trend? All 'buzz' words for the CV- fantastic experience.

What was your highlight of being a Student Ambassador?

Working on the summer residentials! Spending a week with students as they experience living on campus, going to lectures, having social events in the evenings was not only great fun but you could see them all being more inspired and enthusiastic about their own stages of education. On both of the residentials I worked on as a student I met other ambassadors from Streatham and St Lukes who I can honestly say, four years on, I am still in touch with! Building greater links between all of the campuses was something I lobbied for as a student – this certainly helped.

A close second has to be the Open Days. Chatting to prospective students and parents about the campus made me leave thinking 'I want to do it all again'.

Would you recommend becoming a Student Ambassador to anyone thinking about applying and why?

I will say this quickly; otherwise this could be a long winded answer. Being a student ambassador is a fantastic opportunity to show your enthusiasm for Higher Education, inspiring students to reach their full potential in a variety of fields. You meet some great people and gain invaluable experience for your future careers- no matter what that may be. I would most definitely recommend it.

To find out more about the University of Exeter Student Ambassador scheme visit www.exeter.ac.uk/ambassadors/

To find out more about the work of the University of Exeter Student Recruitment Office visit www.exeter.ac.uk/teachers