

UNIVERSITY OF  
**EXETER**

**DISCOVER**  
UNIVERSITY

YOUR GUIDE TO  
HIGHER EDUCATION >





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## WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION? >>

You can study for a Higher Education qualification at a university, with some courses available at Further Education colleges. Higher Education allows you to have access to teaching and research facilities which enables you to develop your knowledge further. Most people will start Higher Education after they finish their A levels or equivalent qualification.

Students often describe these years as some of the best of their lives, having

made fantastic memories which stay with them long after they have finished their studies.

You will have the opportunity to study subjects you enjoy, and may have the chance to take up opportunities like study abroad or gaining valuable work experience through placements working for companies in the UK or overseas. It is also a time where you can build confidence and develop vital life-skills.

Higher Education is 'a chance to develop skills which you will need in life, both in work and every day.' JAMES

Higher Education is 'a chance to study what I love, where I enjoy it most!' DANIELLE

### BENEFITS OF GOING TO UNIVERSITY:

Graduates on average earn more than non graduates

Access to jobs which require you to have studied at degree level

Opportunities to study something new or expand your knowledge in a subject you are already passionate about

Meet new people and have the chance to try new things

Develop key skills such as time management, budgeting and independence

# WHAT IS IT LIKE TO STUDY AT UNIVERSITY? >>



I have found that studying History at university is very different from the experiences I had at school. Instead of following a set curriculum, the flexibility in module choices, particularly in years two and three, have meant that I could deeply explore my interests. I love the approaches taken by the lecturers as instead of linear and top-down history, the course has allowed me to explore interesting and engaging themes. Generally, an idea will be introduced in a lecture and then I will independently read around the topic, using suggested reading lists to form my own opinions. I frequently relate the history I study to the society that we live in.

LUCY, BA History



Studying at university will be different for everyone, depending on what subject you take, how you prefer to learn and research, and what your interests are. Whatever you study, university gives you the opportunity to be more independent and to ask and answer questions in new ways. My dissertation (a big report of my own research study) has allowed me to not only study an area in depth but use this information to try and improve mental health services. I prefer using online resources from the comfort of my room to study. Other students may prefer using the library as a quiet place and using the physical copies of books and journals. The university experience allows you to be supported and gives you the opportunity to make positive change.

CHRISTOPHER, MSci Applied Psychology



Studying Politics has been incredibly flexible and I have been able to explore my interests in political philosophy, economics and political economy. This has led to me developing a strong interest in economics and how political factors such as women getting the right to vote and the end of slavery has impacted taxation and governmental systems. It has been an amazing three years and I have had a lot of freedom to explore my interests, which has given me a unique perspective on the political world around me.

BRANWEN,  
BA Politics



## YEAR ABROAD



I had the amazing opportunity to spend my third year of university studying in Australia. As well as deepening my knowledge with engaging course material, getting involved in university life with campus societies/activities allowed me to fully immerse myself into my experience studying abroad. I was part of a wide college community that included many other international and domestic students who made me feel welcome as soon as I arrived. I was able to travel extensively inside and outside of Australia including countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam, and Fiji whilst meeting many incredible people along the way.

I gained true independence and expanded further many interpersonal skills which I may not have gained otherwise. It was truly one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences I have ever had which I would recommend to anyone if given the chance!

EMMA, BA History and Politics



On my year abroad, I studied Law at IE University in Madrid, I was able to collaborate and learn from students from every continent, being consistently inspired by their alternative approaches to academia and their own perspectives about what the future holds for the legal industry. There was also a sense of excitement, resounding daily, from experiencing different aspects of an alternative culture; be this going to sunbathe between classes or exploring the busy back streets of Madrid at 11pm!

When choosing to study Spanish alongside my Law degree, I made my decision primarily on the ability to continue my linguistic skills acquired from my A level studies. Although studying abroad was ancillary to this, I was unaware that it would be the highlight of my university career this far.

MIRANDA, LLB Law with European Study



# STUDENT LIFE >>

Every university has an organisation that aims to support and represent the students and provide the best university experience possible. Normally called a Students' Union, it is a democratic organisation, which means that whenever any important changes are made the final decision comes down to the students and their elected representatives.

## WHAT'S ON OFFER?

This short list provides a sample of the sort of activities on offer at the University of Exeter. Each university will offer different opportunities.

### Societies:

- Circus Soc
- Film Soc
- Erasmus
- UNICEF on Campus
- Chocolate Soc
- Beach Soc
- Doctor Who Soc
- A Cappella
- Community Action
- Raising and Giving
- Hide and Seek Society
- Fashion Soc
- Flute Choir
- Italian Soc
- Islamic Soc
- Debating Soc
- Disney Soc
- Motor Soc

### Sports:

- Boxing
- Water Polo
- Triathlon
- Cheerleading
- Speleology
- Tae Kwon Do
- Korfball
- Lacrosse
- Snow Sports
- Volleyball
- Fencing
- Climbing
- Archery
- Football
- Basketball
- Hockey
- Rugby
- Netball

If you can't find a society or sports club that interests you, you can always set up a new one.

"I joined the rock climbing society as I always enjoyed the outdoors. I've made so many great friends who I subsequently spent a lot of time with over my three years at university."

AMY, LLB Law

"I was a member of the University of Exeter Sailing Club. They organised a variety of trips to a nearby reservoir for all skill levels, from running nationally recognised RYA courses for beginners, to offering experienced sailors the chance to compete internationally."

LUKE,  
Medical Student

"I am a member of a few societies and at the end of my first year I'm already involved in running the Hip Hop Society. I used to love my dance lessons at home and this allows me to continue doing something I love whilst also using it as a break from my studies."

SASHA,  
BSc Evolutionary Biology

# WHERE WILL I LIVE? >>

If you choose to go to university and decide to move away from home then you will need to know what accommodation options are available to you. Most universities provide accommodation for their first year students, known as halls of residence. Living in halls of residence is a great experience as you will have the opportunity to gain independence, meet new people and perhaps even learn to cook! Universities will offer a variety of accommodation for first year students, usually self-catered or catered and either on or off campus. Typically you will then arrange private accommodation in the local town for the remainder of your studies and support will be available to help you do this.

“Living at university has given me some of the best experiences but also provided me with opportunities to develop independence and skills I need for later life.”

## LIVING IN HALLS

At first, moving away from home can feel like quite a daunting prospect, however, I can honestly say that I really do enjoy it! Living away from home can be a really fun experience as you get to live with your friends, or make new ones. You certainly do learn new skills when you live away from home for example; you have to make sure that you are looking after the accommodation you are living in and you also have to learn how to live on a budget – some of my favourite nights at university have been cheap free movie nights, where it’s just a bunch of mates having a laugh watching a film! Living away from home at university has certainly been something that I have thoroughly enjoyed, and I’ve learnt a lot about myself through the process.



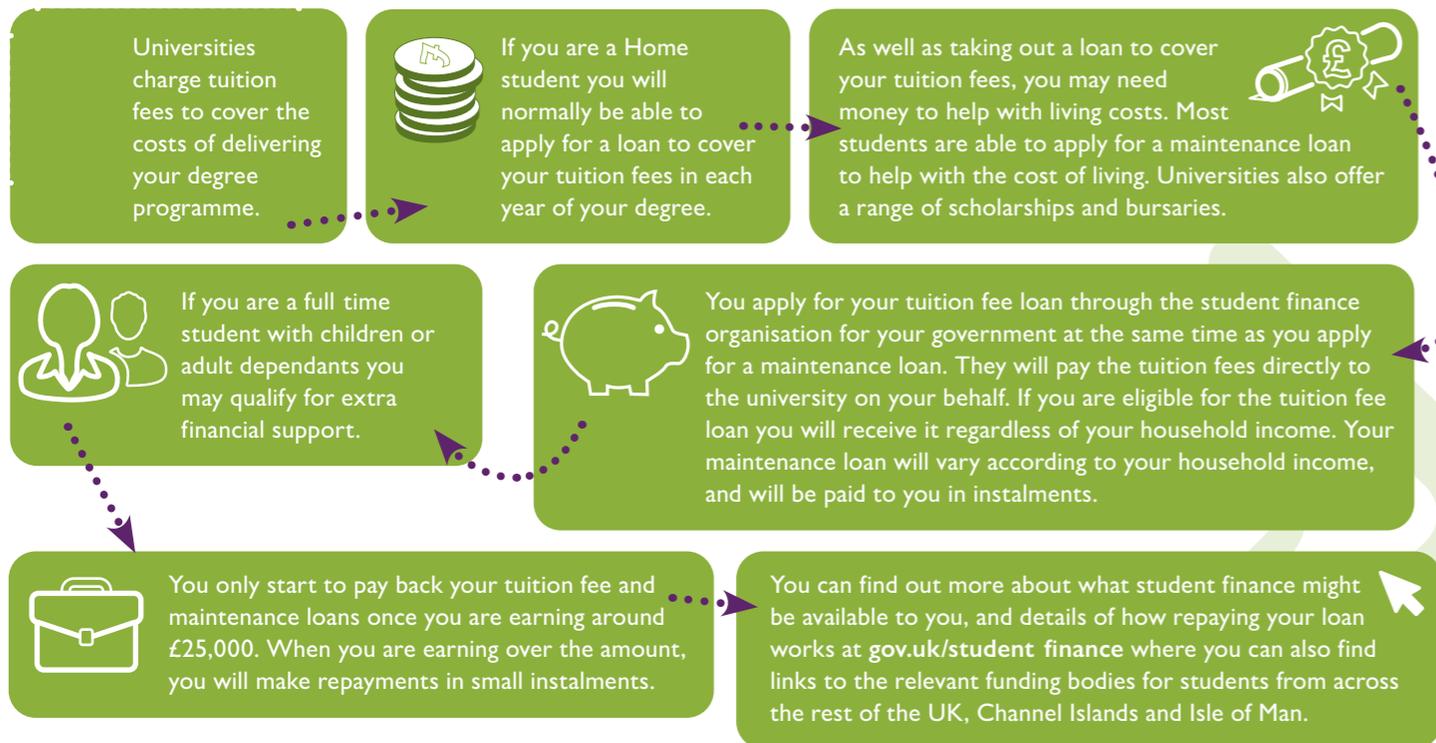
MATTHEW,  
BA Geography



“The amount of confidence I have developed since living at university for the last three years has been unbelievable. Throughout my time at university, the support offered to me from my friends, housemates and the university itself provided me with the best three years of my life.”

“I moved to Exeter from a very different part of the country and was worried about moving to somewhere a long way away from my family. However, the friends that I made living in halls of residence made it a really special time, creating memories that will stay with me forever.”

# HOW DOES STUDENT FINANCE WORK? >>



# SUPPORTING YOU >>

Universities and Higher Education providers are used to supporting students as they move on from sixth form or college. At university you will have access to a number of support services. You should check with the university or college that you are applying to but they are likely to have services similar to the following:



**TUTORS:** Personal tutors or Academic tutors (or both) are a point of contact for you at the university to check in with your progress and how you are getting on personally or with your course. They can often signpost you to services across the university should you need them.



**WELLBEING TEAMS:** These teams at universities may come under different names, but are in place to provide emotional and physical support and resources. This may vary from helping you to get the right support if you have additional learning needs to providing temporary support in the event of an unexpected injury.



**FAITH SUPPORT:** Universities and colleges recognise that for some students their faith is a really important part of their lives, and can be a large part of their support structure. They will either have representatives across a number of religions, a multi faith chaplaincy, or should be able to put you in contact with groups in the local community.



**STUDY SUPPORT:** Many universities have teams that are able to assist you adapt to the new ways of studying that university brings. This could vary from 1:1 support to online resources, and anything from giving you guidance about writing an academic essay to preparing for exams.



**CAREERS SUPPORT:** Universities want you to succeed in the world of work, so have teams available to support you with building your employability to be able to gain the jobs you want once you graduate. For example, you might be able to access CV writing and interview workshops, find work placements or part time jobs during your studies, and even access help once you've finished your degree.



**FINANCE ADVICE:** There is often a team that you can be put in touch with who can help you if you need extra guidance or support when it comes to managing your money at university.

# WHAT YOU SHOULD DO AND WHEN >

**SPRING**  
UCAS exhibitions

**SUMMER**  
University open days

**SEPTEMBER**  
UCAS applications open

**OCTOBER**  
UCAS early deadline for Medicine, Dentistry, Vet Science and Oxbridge

**JANUARY**  
UCAS equal consideration date

**SPRING**  
Student Finance applications open plus Offer Holder Visit Days

**AUGUST**  
Exam results; Confirmation, Clearing and Adjustment

**MAY**  
You need to confirm your firm and insurance choices. Student Finance deadline



## DECIDING WHERE TO STUDY >

Once you have decided that you want to go on to Higher Education the next decision you need to make is where to study – it's an important and a very personal one. There will be many factors which will be central to your decision. When you make your choices ensure they are what you want and that they are for the right reasons. We've created the adjacent table with a number of factors people take into account when making their decisions about where to study so that you can think about the importance they hold for you. These aren't, though so if you have your own reasons you should consider their importance too.

FACTORS	LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE FOR YOU				
	1	2	3	4	5
Accommodation available	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Cost of living	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Course	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Distance from home	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Employability	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Entry requirements	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
League table rankings	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Location	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Module options	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Sports clubs and societies	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Teaching facilities	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Teaching styles	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Transport links	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
University or College	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Year abroad/in industry	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

## SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION >

There are thousands of courses on offer at hundreds of different Higher Education providers across the UK. Most providers will either have websites or printed guides called prospectuses which provide details of each course.

All programmes have specific entry requirements which you can find out about either directly from a provider or by visiting [ucas.com](http://ucas.com). Some programmes may require prior study of a specific subject and may also have minimum grade requirements. You should make sure you have checked what the entry requirements are for a course before you decide to apply.

All applications for full-time study must be made through UCAS. You can do this through your school, college or independently.

The UCAS tariff system is the process for allocating points to qualifications used for entry into Higher Education. Some providers will list their entry requirements in terms of tariff points, some will list specific qualifications and grades. Students

enter universities with a range of qualifications, but you should check the individual university's requirements before you apply. The universities or colleges you apply to will decide if your predicted grades meet their entry requirements when they consider your application. Remember that a university or college's decision is likely to be based on your overall suitability for the course as well as whether you meet the minimum entry requirements.

Applications are generally assessed on the following:

- Academic achievements
- Predicted grades
- Personal statement
- Teacher/Adviser reference

Key dates to remember when applying via UCAS are the 15 October deadline for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dental and Veterinary programmes and the 15 January equal consideration date for most other programmes.

# PERSONAL STATEMENT >>

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO SEE ON YOUR APPLICATION?

The personal statement is your opportunity to tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd.

# 1

The reasons why you have applied for a particular programme and how this relates to your current and previous studies and experiences. If you have a career goal it is helpful if you explain how the programme would enable you to fulfil that ambition.

# 2

Evidence of a willingness and desire to learn at a higher level: universities are looking for students who have the potential and the drive to succeed.

# 3

Your reasons for the choice of subjects taken at A level or equivalent and, where appropriate, the relevance of those subjects to your chosen degree programme.

# 4

Details of responsibilities and experience that you have had (paid or unpaid). Universities are particularly interested to see that you recognise how the skills you've gained are transferrable to your studies and life at university. For some people work experience might be the best way to demonstrate this, but for others it could be experiences such as caring for a loved one.

# 5

Information regarding volunteering and other extra-curricular activities and what you have gained in terms of experience and skills from these interests.

## REMEMBER TO:

- Ensure your statement is directly relevant to the subject(s) you're applying for.
- Write about relevant skills and experience.
- Check university entry requirements to find out what they're looking for in applicants.
- Write what comes naturally to you.
- Relate your current studies to your application.
- Be focused, convey motivation and enthusiasm.
- Demonstrate your interest and knowledge in your chosen subject.
- Check your form for spelling mistakes and perhaps get someone else to read it through for you.
- Write in full sentences and don't use bullet points or lists.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU HAVE APPLIED:

- You may be invited to attend an interview or visit day.
- Alternatively you may be asked to submit a portfolio or attend an audition.
- The university will decide whether or not to make you an offer.
- You will then decide whether to accept or reject their offer by choosing a Firm and Insurance choice.



# JARGON BUSTER >>

**Bachelor's degree:** a degree awarded by a college or university to a person who has completed undergraduate studies.

**Bursary:** extra financial help provided by a university or college for students from households on lower incomes. It does not have to be paid back.

**Campus university:** a university situated on a dedicated site, with student accommodation, teaching and research facilities, and leisure activities all together.

**City university:** a university situated within a city with facilities, accommodation and leisure activities spread across the local area.

**Clearing:** a way for universities to fill any spaces they have left for the new academic year. Clearing opens in advance of A level

results day and it gives applicants who do not hold an offer a chance to find a university place.

**Combined or Joint Honours:** a type of degree where you study more than one subject.

**Firm choice:** your firm choice is your first choice university – this is your preferred choice out of all the offers you have received.

**Fresher:** an informal name for a first year student.

**Graduate:** a person who has successfully completed a Higher Education course.

**Higher Education (HE):** is the level of education that involves undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

**Insurance choice:** your insurance choice acts as a back up, so if you don't meet the conditions of your firm choice you will be committed to attend your insurance choice university. This relies on you meeting the conditions of the insurance offer unless you choose to reject your insurance choice and enter clearing.

**Lecture:** a method of teaching at university. Large classes in a room with tiered seating and a lecturer talking at the front while you take notes.

**Module:** a unit of study that explores a specific area within a subject. Each module has a set number of credits which will vary from course to course.

**Open days:** are days when the university is open to students who are considering applying. They often include activities such as campus tours, subject talks, accommodation tours and finance talks.

**UCAS:** Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. This is the organisation that handles nearly all university applications. The application process (including choices and personal statements) is all done online via: [ucas.com](https://www.ucas.com)





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Student Recruitment Office, Exeter EX4 4RN  
[exeter.ac.uk](http://exeter.ac.uk)

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