

Year 12

University: For Me or Not For Me?

Wednesday 16th January 2019

1. * Student Ambassador01 2: Hi everyone, my name is Charlotte and I am currently in my 3rd year studying Medical Sciences. The theme for today's forum is "University: For Me or Not For Me?". For those of you who are new to the forums, you are welcome to ask me questions either directly related to the theme or about any other aspect of university life. Anything I can't answer I will refer on and someone from the Exeter Scholars team will get back to you with a response in the next few days. For those of you that have logged on before, welcome back!

2. * Student Ambassador02: Hi everyone, my name is Chloe and I am currently in my second year studying mathematical sciences.

3. * Student Ambassador01 2: Before we start I just want to give you a quick overview of how the session itself works in case you've not used one before.

When you post a message it will be sent to me to reply to and will show on your wall as awaiting reply. When I reply to your message it will then post to the public wall for you and everyone else to see. Until I have replied, no-one else will see your message. Bear with me, as when it gets busy it will take me a few moments to reply – but don't worry, you won't have been forgotten! I will start all messages with the name of the person I am replying to just to make the discussion easier to follow and if I'm posing a question to the whole group I'll start the message with 'Everyone'.

4. * Student Ambassador01 2: I hope that all makes sense. To get us started ...

How did everyone find the student conference?

5. arock: how did you know that the course you have taken was right for you?

* Student Ambassador01 2: Question: "How did you know that the course you have taken was right for you?"
Good question! I think I liked my course initially because I was fairly undecided about what I wanted to do after my degree, and the modules were very flexible. This means that over the course of the degree, I've gotten a wide range of knowledge. Essentially, I'm indecisive!

* Student Ambassador01 2: I knew I had an interest in the general field that my course is about, but I didn't know what I wanted to specialise in. I think that this is really common when you're in college, so courses that offer a wide range of modules are fantastic for this.

Does anyone else have any questions about choosing a university course?

6. arock: is it possible to change courses if you don't like it?

* Student Ambassador02: Arock – This website may help you to decide what course is suited to you to avoid which may help avoid the need to change course.

* Student Ambassador02: www.bestcourse4me.com

7. * Student Ambassador02: "is it possible to change courses if you dont like it?"

Yes! There is the possibility of changing courses if you decide you don't like the course you have chosen.

8. * Student Ambassador01 2: Question: "Is it possible to change courses if you don't like it?" Yes, it is, sometimes. This will depend on lots of things, such as your A-levels or similar qualifications, when you decide to change course, as well as the number of places on the course you'd like to change to. The easiest way to prevent this is to really think about the course that would be right for you, and not to rush any decisions. Has anyone thought of taking a gap year?

9. Zuzanna Jankowska: Well, I'm on the first year of doing IB. When I finished GCSE's I thought IB would leave my path wide open, but when I checked some university courses it turned out I have to have specific subjects at higher level or two sciences for example to do specific courses in university. What do you suggest I do if i wanted to do medicine? Should I change my course or look for a different course in university that doesn't need biology or chemistry?

* Student Ambassador01 2: Medicine very often requires some level of biology or chemistry training before entry, because the course can be quite content-heavy sometimes. This will depend on different universities, however, so make sure you check around on different university websites for their entry requirements, as they will all have slightly different requirements and some might not require biology. It's worth bearing in mind as well, with medicine it's really beneficial to have something on your personal statement about some experience that could prepare you for studying medicine. This could be working in an old people's home after college, for instance. I hope this makes sense!

10. arock: I'm quite shy and meeting new people is hard, won't that make it difficult for me to attend university?

* Student Ambassador02: Arock – Just remember that everyone is in the same position and it is very unlikely that anyone will know anyone else when they go to university. But it is important to get involved in things and meet new people as everyone will be feeling a little shy and nervous.

11. * Student Ambassador01 2: Does anyone have any thoughts about doing a gap year? Like whether you might do one or not, and what you might do? Gap years can be a great way to do some brilliant things before choosing whether to go to university.

12. * Student Ambassador02: Or has anyone thought about apprenticeships as an alternative to going to university?

13. Zuzanna Jankowska: Thank you. I was thinking of doing a gap year and going to help with skiing in the Alps. I was also thinking of doing some travelling, or going to live in another country and maybe finding a job there.

* Student Ambassador01 2: Zuzanna, that sounds fantastic! That would be a great way to make a bit of money before university and just see the world. It would give you some time to think about your choices regarding university, such as whether it's the right choice for you, and what course you want to do.

* Student Ambassador01 2: If you want to travel, a gap year is a great time to do it. Lots of people do it after university too, but because of graduate jobs, they might not have enough time.

14. Zuzanna Jankowska: If I went to live in Germany or France for the gap year and if I liked it there, I could do my degree there. I know there's English Degrees you can do abroad, but I don't have a lot of information. Do you have any details? Or could you recommend me a site that has information about studying abroad?

* Student Ambassador01 2: Great question! I actually have an old housemate who is studying English in Munich, Germany, for her year abroad right now (she's absolutely loving it!). There are two ways of doing this really. You could choose an English-spoken degree abroad, provided by a university abroad, or alternatively, you could choose to do a degree with a university in the UK which has the option to do some studying abroad at some point in the degree. This could be for a semester, or a whole year. Every university is different, so it's worth checking to see what sparks your interest.

* Student Ambassador01 2: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/studying-overseas> might offer some valuable advice for you too!

15. Zuzanna Jankowska: Thank you for that. Do you know if Exeter University does any courses that include the studying abroad?

* Student Ambassador01 2: They absolutely do! They offer these in two ways. The first is that you can study abroad as part of your course, which involves going to a university abroad and studying at that university in a similar way to how you would study at you university in the UK. The second way is doing a professional placement, often called a Year in Industry, or Professional Training Year, which involves working in the industry that you are studying. This could be in the UK or abroad! I am currently on my Professional Training Year in sunny Cornwall.

* Student Ambassador01 2: Also, these two types of years abroad that I've just spoken about most often take place between the second year and final year. But every university and course is different.

16. Jack Reddicliffe: How easy is it to get work whilst at university?

* Student Ambassador02: Great question Jack! So most universities provide jobs on campus which may include student ambassador work or working in your campus shop/bar. These are great options as they work alongside your studies to avoid clashes with your timetable. Alternatively there is the option to get a part time job outside of university and this is quite common for students to do – for example I have a friend who works in a pasty shop at the weekend. Hope this helps.

17. Zuzanna Jankowska: Thank you, I will check that out. That sounds brilliant for you!

* Student Ambassador01 2: Well it's not quite France or Germany but I do love pasties!

Did you have any other questions for us? It can be about literally anything, we'd love to help! :)

18. Zuzanna Jankowska: Bye!

* Student Ambassador01 2: Bye Zuzanna, and good luck with everything! Hope it all goes well for you!

19. Jack Reddicliffe: what are the benefits of taking a course which has a year studying abroad

* Student Ambassador01 2: There are lots of benefits to studying abroad. It's a fantastic way to try new things, and meet completely new people, whilst exploring a different part of the world! In some cases, the courses are also slightly different abroad, so if you wanted to expand your knowledge in a way that you might not be able to do by staying in the UK, this might be a great way to do it.

* Student Ambassador01 2: Some courses lend themselves particularly well to studying abroad, such as those focused on languages, places or people. This isn't to say that other courses aren't well suited to studying abroad, as they absolutely are! You just have to find a course that sparks your interest.

20. Jack Reddicliffe: also do you know how the year in industry works?

* Student Ambassador01 2: The year in industry is different for every course, and some courses will not offer it, so you just have to check. This normally involves you finding and applying for a placement with a university or a company, in the UK or abroad, like you would do for a normal job, with a CV and cover letter. This might sound daunting but you'll get the help you need from the University. Then, you'll go off and work in that placement for a year! It's a great way to learn new skills that you wouldn't otherwise learn at university.

* Student Ambassador01 2: Thanks very much for taking part in today's online forum; I hope you've found it useful! Details of the next session can be found at

www.exeter.ac.uk/exeterscholars/currentparticipants/liveonlineqaforums/. If you have questions in the meantime, please contact the Exeter Scholars team, who will be happy to help:

www.exeter.ac.uk/exeterscholars/contact/currentparticipants/.