



University  
of Exeter

# Higher education jargon buster

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

**BA (Bachelor of Arts):** The qualification most associated with undergraduate arts, humanities and some social science degrees

**BSc (Bachelor of Science):** The qualification commonly associated with undergraduate science and some social science degrees.

**Bursary:** This is extra financial help provided by a university or college for students from households on lower incomes. It does not have to be paid back. Amounts and eligibility criteria vary according to different universities.

**Campus university:** A university situated on one dedicated site, with student accommodation, teaching and research facilities, and leisure activities all together. The University of Exeter is a campus university with three campuses.

**Catered halls:** Accommodation where meals are included in your rent.

**Clearing:** The process by which universities and Higher Education colleges fill remaining places on their courses. It is managed by UCAS, usually runs between July and October, and you can apply for a course through Clearing if you are not holding any offers or if you did not meet the conditions of your Firm and Insurance choice. Find out more [here](#).

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

**Combined or Joint Honours degree:** A type of degree where you study more than one subject, for example, 'History and Politics' or 'Mathematics and Physics'. Options vary between different universities.



**Contextual Offer:** When universities review an application, they may take into consideration the context in which applicants have achieved their academic qualifications. If candidates meet certain eligibility criteria, they may be made an offer lower than typical entry requirements. Universities use different eligibility criteria, check their website for details.

**Degree Apprenticeship:** A programme where you are predominantly based with an employer and earning a wage whilst studying for a degree level course. These courses normally have a different teaching format and are longer than your traditional degree programmes.

**Dissertation:** An extended piece of writing (typically between 8,000- 12,000 words) investigating a single clear question, project, or thesis of personal interest to the learner. This would be completed in the last year of study of an Undergraduate degree.

**Extended Project Qualification (EPQ):** This is a Level 3 course which may be taken alongside A Levels. It prepares students for a successful higher education experience through an extended piece of independent work on a topic of their choice.

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

**Foundation degree:** This is a degree that usually takes two years to complete and is a combination of academic and vocational study, designed to train you towards a specific job or career path. You may be able to progress from a foundation degree to an Honours degree at university or college in the same subject.

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

**Further Education (FE):** The level of education after GCSEs.

**Gap year:** A year away from education that some students take before going to university. Often students will use their gap year to travel or to gain work experience and additional qualifications.

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

**Humanities:** Typically covers 'Arts' subjects such as history, literature, classics, theology, film, modern languages and drama.

**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 as long as you have met the conditions of the insurance offer.



**Lecture:** A lecturer (teacher) stands at the front of a large room, usually with tiered seating, and talks whilst students make notes.

**LLB (Bachelor of Laws):** The accreditation given to Law degrees which allows for progression onto further training to become a barrister or solicitor.

**Masters:** A higher level taught degree typically taken after completing an undergraduate degree.

**Module:** A unit of study that explores a specific area within a degree subject. Each module has a set number of credits which will vary from course to course. Look at course details online and in prospectuses to see the modules on offer. These will vary across different universities.

**NUS:** National Union of Students.

**Open days:** This is 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. These are often in person, but they may also take place online.

**Postgraduate:** A student who has completed an undergraduate degree and is studying for a higher degree, such as a Masters or PhD.

**PhD:** Also known as a doctorate, this is the highest form of degree awarded and involves you carrying out research with little or no teaching. You need to have completed at least an undergraduate degree to study at this level.

**Prospectus:** These are guides produced by individual universities detailing the unique information about that university and the courses it offers. These are also available online via university websites.

**Russell Group universities:** The Russell Group represents 24 leading UK universities which are committed to maintaining the very best research, as well as an outstanding teaching and learning experience. The University of Exeter is a Russell Group university.

**Scholarship:** A financial award made on the basis of a range of criteria such as household income, excellent academic, sporting, or musical achievement. It does not have to be paid back. Amounts and eligibility criteria vary according to different universities.

**Self-catered halls:** Accommodation where you cook for yourself using the facilities in a communal kitchen.

**Seminar:** Small group teaching where you engage in discussion with other students and a member of staff.

# Student Finance



**Societies:** Clubs of likeminded students who regularly meet up because they share a common interest in something such as acting, singing, computer gaming, watching films, and so on.

**Study Abroad:** Lets you spend some time studying your subject at another university overseas. It's a great way to learn all about a new country.

**Students' Union or Students' Guild:** An organisation found in all universities that is run by students and is dedicated to the representation and support of the students at the university.

**Student Loans Company (SLC):** The SLC provide financial assistance in the form of loans to pay your tuition fees and living costs. They also manage your repayments once you've graduated. Find out more [here](#).

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

**UCAS Extra:** Allows you to add another university choice to help you gain a place before Clearing begins. You will be

automatically eligible if all five university choices have been used but you hold no offers. UCAS Extra usually runs from February to July. Find out more [here](#).

**Undergraduate:** A student usually studying for their first degree on a programme which normally lasts for three or four years. You could be based either at a university or a Further Education college.

**Undergraduate Masters:** Four year degrees such as Masters of Engineering (MEng), Masters of Science (MSci), etc, which comprise three years of undergraduate level study, with a further year to gain a Masters qualification.

**University:** A higher education institution that offers degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate level as well as being where academic research takes place.

**Work Placement:** Also known as a 'Year in Industry'. A work placement lets students spend up to a year working for a company whilst gaining skills and experience which will help them to get a job after graduating. Not all universities and courses offer this, check their website for details.



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