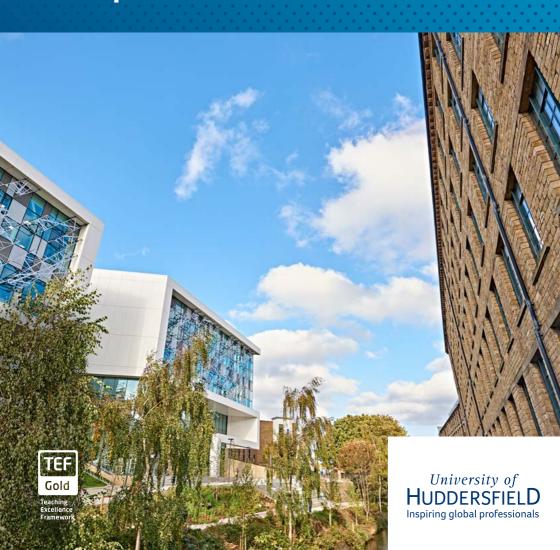
### University Guide

for parents and carers





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The most up-to-date information and advice can be accessed online at:



hud.ac.uk/undergraduate/parents-and-carers

## Why university?

Going to university can be a life-changing moment for young people, and can also have a great impact on their families.

For the vast majority of students, University can boost career prospects and earning potential, as well as provide an opportunity to gain subject expertise. They have the chance to learn from academic and industry experts and develop transferable skills to take into the world of work. With employers increasingly looking for graduates with work experience, most universities now offer valuable paid work placement opportunities, which can last anywhere between a few months and a full year.

University is also a time for independence and a chance to make friendships that can last a lifetime. There are many opportunities to enhance personal and social skills through the range of activities available to students in their free time. These activities include volunteering or getting involved in local community projects and joining the wide range of student societies that are available through the Students' Union.

University level teaching and learning is very different to school or college as students are expected to undertake their own independent research, with the support of their lecturers and personal tutors.

This of course involves a great deal of time management and self-motivation, so it is vital that your son or daughter chooses a subject area they are really passionate about.

Deciding on which university and course to apply for requires careful thought. It's important to dedicate time to research the options and to understand the application process. In recent years, increasing numbers of students have entered Higher Education meaning that it is important for applicants to make the strongest possible application in order to stand out.

That is why parents and carers have a vital role in supporting the student through both the research and decision-making process.

We hope this guide provides you with the information you need to help with your decision making.

Don't forget to visit our web pages for parents and carers at:

hud.ac.uk/undergraduate/parents-and-carers

66 Going to university can be a life-changing moment for young people, and can also have a great impact on their families.

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It is both a friendly and a welcoming place to study with a commitment to meeting the needs and aspirations of its students. The University is proud of its record in widening participation in Higher Education and of its socially inclusive student community. This is combined with good student retention rates and success in achieving graduate employment.

With over 20,000 students, the University is in the top 15 universities for courses with paid work placement years. These courses are a great opportunity to gain valuable work experience to supplement the degree and to increase employment prospects after graduation.

Imaginative conversions and new buildings on its town centre campus mean that its students have access to excellent teaching and social facilities due to continued investment in the campus. Huddersfield also has a strong reputation for its student support services meaning that help and guidance is within reach of all students during their time there.

\*HFSA 17/18

To find out more about the University's courses, and details of its forthcoming Open Days, visit:



hud.ac.uk



## Understanding university

Higher Education has expanded rapidly in recent years, which has led to increasing numbers of applicants and a huge choice of courses at universities and colleges across the UK.

The majority of students are able to apply for up to five courses in the first instance. The exceptions are a maximum of four courses in any one of:

// Medicine

// Dentistry

// Veterinary medicine

// Veterinary science

For the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge different rules apply.

For more information, visit:

oxbridgeapplications.com

Each university publishes the entry requirements on its website or in a directory called a prospectus.

Alternatively, courses across the UK can be referenced via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). The UCAS website is often the best starting point to research Higher Education choices and it is where all university applications are eventually made.





## University qualifications

Students studying on university courses are usually eighteen or over, and the majority will opt to study for a degree. However, as the face of Higher Education has changed over the years, the choice of qualifications to study at university has widened.

#### **Degrees**

Bachelor's degrees, or 'first' degrees, commonly last for three or four years. Upon completion, a qualification is awarded relative to the subject area e.g. BSc (Science), BA (Arts), BEng (Engineering).

#### Foundation degrees

These are particular types of degrees which are broadly equivalent to the first two years of a Bachelor's degree and are designed to equip students with specific work-based skills and knowledge. They can offer a route into Higher Education for students from many different backgrounds and upon completion, may allow students to transfer to the final year of a degree course. Entry requirements are often more lenient.

#### Higher National Diplomas/ Higher National Certificates

Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and Higher National Certificates (HNCs) are work-related qualifications designed to provide skills to put knowledge to effective use in a particular job. They are highly valued by employers and may also count towards membership of professional bodies and other employer organisations. Upon completion, both may lead to the final year of a degree course.

#### Degree apprenticeships

Degree apprenticeships combine full-time paid work and part-time study to offer candidates the opportunity to gain a Bachelor's or Master's degree while undertaking practical, on-the-job training. Degree apprenticeships are created by partnerships between employers and universities or colleges.



ucas.com/degree-apprenticeships



## What and where to study

With such a wide selection of courses across the UK, many students, their parents and carers, can be forgiven for feeling spoilt for choice.

Encourage your son or daughter to start the research process as early as possible and provide as much support as you can. For example, you could go with them to Open Days and explore online information with them at home.

#### Where to start

Some university courses are similar to those studied at school, such as languages, music, maths and english.

Others provide a wider range of options such as art and design, engineering and specific strands of science. Then there are degree courses that are necessary to pursue specific careers, such as architecture, medicine and social work.

Most students choose to study one subject in detail but there may also be the opportunity to study two or three subjects as part of a 'combined' degree.



# 66 Encourage your son or daughter to start the research process as early as possible and provide as much support as you can. 99

The following are suggested as useful starting points:

- // Prospectus: a directory of university courses, either online or a printed copy. The course search section of the UCAS website also contains impartial information about all Higher Education courses across the UK.
- // Discover Uni: compares official course data from universities and colleges including National Student Satisfaction Survey scores, jobs, salaries and other key information.
  - discoveruni.org.uk
- // National Careers Service: provides careers advice and information on a wide range of jobs, training, course resources and funding.
  - nationalcareersservice.gov.uk

- // My Uni Choices Online: matches the preferences and qualifications of the student with the most suitable courses available (subject to a small fee).
  - **myunichoices.com**
- // Prospects: gives information about the graduate jobs market and careers advice.
  - prospects.ac.uk
- // UCAS Videos: a section of the UCAS website which provides a series of bite-sized films explaining the entire process of applying to and preparing for university.
  - ucas.com/connect/videos

## Choosing the right course

Going to university is a landmark moment. The majority of students study for three years or longer, so choosing a course is a big decision.

Universities are looking for students who are motivated, enthusiastic and are genuinely passionate about their chosen subject area. It really shows in the application if a student has carefully researched their choices and therefore understands the demands of the courses they have applied for.

Key questions for your son/daughter to consider when choosing courses could include:

- // What subjects do you enjoy and what are you good at?
- // What style of learning do you prefer e.g practical field trips, working in labs or reading books and writing essays?
- // Do you have a job in mind?
  What qualifications do you need?
- // Could you combine subjects? Many universities offer degrees known as joint or combined honours, therefore it's worth researching these courses.

There are many resources available to help the student narrow down their subject choices and make the decision making process easier – we've included a few below to help you support them.

### Making the most of the UCAS website

Whilst many websites will provide information about universities and their courses, the most comprehensive and impartial source of information is the UCAS website.

The 'Search' section of the UCAS website allows users to research degree courses across the UK. You can then view more details about individual courses, including a summary of the course content, entry requirements, tuition fees and information about applying.

digital.ucas.com/search

### University prospectus and website

#### // Entry requirements

The prospectus and website for any university will include the entry requirements for each course. It's important that the student is realistic about the grades they can achieve as these are the minimum academic qualifications and non-academic criteria a student needs to meet. Each course at each university is different and will have its own requirements. These may be specified as grades, UCAS Tariff points, or both. Some courses ask students to attend an interview or audition, or supply a portfolio, so the tutors can find out a little more about the student, and the student can learn more about the course too. If you're unsure about the requirements that are stated, it's best to speak to a careers advisor at school or college or contact the university admissions department.

#### // Course information

The prospectus and website will also contain detailed information on the particular course such as what is taught, optional and compulsory elements of the course, assessment methods and facilities. It will also contain information about work placements.

#### courses.hud.ac.uk

#### **Discover Uni**

This website is useful for general university research as well as in depth information on courses as you can compare similar courses at different universities. This is a non-commercial website and the data is impartial.

#### **■** discoveruni.org.uk

#### Work experience

Depending on the course, this may be compulsory or optional but in either case, it is an invaluable opportunity to put theory into practice and enhance career prospects. Courses with a year's work placement are sometimes known as 'sandwich courses'

The tuition fee for placement years can vary from one university to another. It is important to check as this could make a difference financially.

## Choosing the right university

All universities will encourage concentrating on the choice of course, and the motivation for choosing it, prior to turning attention to where to study.

#### Home or away?

One of the first decisions to be made is whether to stay at home to study at a local university, or to move away. This decision may be influenced by personal preference or cost but regardless of whether the student is living at home or away, they'll always have the opportunity to be part of the university community.

Other questions to consider are:

- // Is the student accommodation of a good standard and a reasonable price?
- // If living at home, is it easy to travel
  to the university?
- // Are the student areas safe?
- // Does the university offer plenty of support?
- // What are the teaching facilities like?
- // Are the staff friendly and helpful?

#### **HE/UCAS** fairs

UCAS fairs, UK Uni Search fairs and What Career Live fairs are exhibitions held around the UK where potential students can talk to representatives from a large number of universities about their institution and collect prospectuses and other information.

- ucas.com/ucas/events-training
- ukuniversitysearch.com
  - whatcareerlive.co.uk



#### **Open Days**

One of the best research strategies is to attend university Open Days. This will allow prospective students and their families to see each institution at its best and to get a feel for what the actual place is like. This is particularly important for disabled students in order to find out about access issues.

Try to talk to current students whilst you are there and ask them about their experience of that university.

After answering all these questions, your son/daughter should finally ask themselves where they would feel happiest for three or four years before they start the application process.

#### **Applicant Visit Days**

Applicant Visit Days are another good opportunity to get to know a university in more detail after applying. They are usually by invitation and offer more information to help you make a final decision. The day might include a tour of the department and an opportunity to meet the staff and students from the course.

To find out more about the University of Huddersfield's forthcoming Open Days, visit:

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hud.ac.uk/open-days



## Post-16 qualifications and the UCAS Tariff

Most post-16 qualifications can be translated into 'points' using the UCAS Tariff. Many universities refer to the UCAS Tariff in their course entry requirements.

The UCAS Tariff allows students to accumulate points relative to the qualifications and grades they achieve, and are predicted to achieve, within post-16 education.

Most Higher Education courses publish their minimum entry requirements in the form of UCAS Tariff points, grades, or both. If you have any questions about the specific entry requirements for a course, you can contact the course admissions team. Contact details are usually provided in the prospectus or on the website.

It is also worth noting:

- // Not all post-16 qualifications translate into UCAS tariff points.
- // Some courses demand a certain grade in a particular subject and qualification.
- // Many universities, especially those with highly selective courses, will also take into account GCSE performance.
- // Some courses require substantial work experience in a relevant area.

For more information, please visit:



For more information on UK qualifications, visit:

💻 gov.uk

## Applying through UCAS

Nearly all applications for undergraduate degrees go through UCAS. Applicants apply online for a maximum of five courses and it is possible to apply for more than one course at the same university or college.

The application itself is fairly straightforward and the most important part of it is the Personal Statement – this is where the student has the chance to show their suitability for and commitment to the course. This can be a challenge but there should be support from the school/college and advice can also be found at <a href="mailto:ucas.com">ucas.com</a> and <a href="mailto:students">studential</a>.com</a>

Whilst UCAS has a deadline for applications, your son/daughter's school or college may have its own, earlier deadline, so a reference can be added to the application by a tutor before it is finalised. Once UCAS receives the completed application, copies are sent to each university. During this time, your son/daughter will receive information from the institution regarding offers and/or interviews.

#### Admissions tests

Entry to some courses are subject to an admissions test and may apply to applicants for:

- // Medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science.
- // Law courses at a small selection of universities.
- // Individual universities which set additional entry criteria.

More information is available via the 'Entry requirements' section of the UCAS website.

### Medicine, dentistry and veterinary science

Students applying for these courses have a maximum of four choices but they can use up their remaining option(s) for different, related courses without prejudicing their application since other universities cannot see their other applications at this stage. Many courses in these subject areas also have an earlier deadline of 15 October. Students are advised to read the specific advice which can be found on the UCAS website.

#### Music and performing arts

There are two ways to apply for music courses. UCAS is the place to apply for full-time undergraduate courses but some performance based music, dance, drama, screen and production courses are offered at conservatoires. These courses are very much based on practical training as opposed to the more academic routes available at universities and colleges offering Higher Education. For more information, go to:

ucas.com/ucas/conservatoires

#### Art and design

Universities can choose one of two deadlines. 15 January or 24 March. UCAS Search will provide information about this. Some students choose to study a one-year foundation course before progression onto a degree.

#### Offers and decisions

Once your son/daughter has sent off their application to UCAS, there are three decisions an admissions tutor can make:

- 1) An unconditional offer the university will accept the applicant regardless of the points/grades gained in exams.
- 2) A conditional offer a place on the course is guaranteed provided specified grades or points are achieved.
- 3) A rejection the student has not been successful in being offered a place.

On receiving these via UCAS, students can then accept a maximum of two offers, one as a 'firm' acceptance (their first choice) and one as an 'insurance' acceptance (their back-up choice). They are now committed to these institutions and can only consider other course options by rejecting both.

#### **UCAS Extra**

If unsuccessful in the first round of applications, your son/daughter will automatically qualify for UCAS Extra a second chance to apply for the places that are left, and this is available between February and July.

#### Results day

On results day, if your son/daughter has a conditional offer, they will have a place on their chosen course provided they gain the specified points or grades. If they miss these slightly, it is worth checking with the college or university as the place may still be available for them

#### Clearing and Adjustment

There are a number of options open to students after results day including Clearing and Adjustment. Clearing allows students to apply for remaining places if they do not meet the conditions of their firm or insurance choice. Adjustment is available if the student has met and exceeded the conditions of their firm choice and wants to find an alternative course. Both involve looking for available places after results day by contacting individual universities. For more information. go to:

ucas.com/clearing

ucas.com/adjustment

## Gain experience through a gap year

Some students decide to take a year out before university. If a gap year is planned thoroughly, it can have a positive impact in terms of life experience and the student's CV. Opportunities are immense and range from voluntary work and cultural exchanges to a year in industry.

A gap year is an ideal opportunity to earn money, gain valuable experience and face new challenges. Numerous organisations listed on the internet can help fund gap years or provide valuable contacts for sponsorship.

It may be possible to apply to university in year thirteen/second year at college with everyone else and simply defer entry for a year in consultation with their chosen institution. Financial support, however, needs to be started a year later, so it is important to keep in contact with the process in the meantime in order not to miss deadlines etc.

Make sure your son/daughter weighs up the pros and cons of deferring their course before committing themselves and whatever they plan, it is important that you support them and encourage them to make the experience as productive as possible. For more information, visit:

gapyear.com

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### Student fees and financial support

Financial support is available to help students with fees and living costs at university. The details of this can change from year to year. Key points to remember are:

- // Students do not have to pay money upfront for university fees.
- // Student Finance England offer financial support to learners through student loans.
- // The loans aren't paid back until after the student has graduated and is earning over a threshold amount, which makes the loan more affordable.

For the most up to date information, visit:



gov.uk/browse/education/ student-finance

For University of Huddersfield specific information, visit:



hud.ac.uk/undergraduate/ fees-and-finance

#### Other sources of funding

#### // Disabled Students Allowance

This allowance funds the support your son/daughter may require if they have a disability or a long term condition which impacts on their studies. Full-time and parttime students with disabilities are eligible. It is paid directly from the funding body and does not have to be repaid. All prospective students can contact our Disability Services for help with the application process. It's beneficial to begin the application process before the course starts.

gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas

#### // Scholarships and Bursaries

These are available by applying directly to universities and are non-repayable. Bursaries tend to be based on financial need and scholarships are awarded based on academic merit.

#### // Part time employment

Many students work around their studies to supplement their income and also enhance their CV

### **Accommodation**

Students can choose from living in halls of residence, private sector housing, or living at home.

#### Halls of residence

Most first year students choose to live in halls of residence which are either owned and managed by the university or college, or run by an external provider on its behalf. They provide students with the opportunity to meet people and make new friends in a safe environment.

As heating, cleaning and maintenance costs tend to be included in the rent, halls make the transition from home to university easier. Some halls provide meals, others are self catering. Some halls have en-suite study bedrooms whilst others have shared kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Halls often provide laundry and computing facilities and it is worth checking what equipment, bedding and utensils are available to avoid arriving with too much or too little luggage.

For the University of Huddersfield's preferred, recommended and approved accommodation, visit:

#### digstudent.co.uk

For students who wish to arrange their own accommodation, visit:

#### hudlets.su



#### Private sector housing

A lot of students move into privately owned accommodation in their second and third years. Unlike halls and university flats, shared houses do not always provide lockable bedrooms, so students must be completely happy with all arrangements before they sign a contract. Private sector housing is often cheaper but rents may not cover heating and other bills. It is always advisable to use university approved housing as this ensures that gas safety checks and other important surveys have been carried out. Make sure your son/daughter is provided with an inventory when they move in, otherwise the landlord could charge them for breakages or loss associated with the previous tenants.

#### Insurance

Whatever the accommodation, students should have adequate home contents insurance. They may already be covered by your home insurance policy so check this first.

#### Living at home

An increasing number of students now live at home and commute to their place of study. This doesn't mean they will miss out on experiencing student life. There are many opportunities to get involved and meet new people, such as through activities organised by the Students' Union.

### Student support

If your son/daughter is leaving home for the first time, you may feel anxious about their welfare.

Every university will be different, but there will be plenty of help on hand if they need it. Universities provide numerous forms of support for students. These may include:

#### Health centre

Most universities have a health centre where your son/daughter can register with a doctor which is particularly important if they are living away from home.

universityhealthhuddersfield.co.uk

#### The Students' Union

The Students' Union will usually have a Welfare Officer who can give advice and information on any aspect of university life.

huddersfield.su

#### Personal tutor

Upon arrival at university, each student is usually assigned a personal tutor – a member of staff from their particular department. Students can go to them with any problems or worries that they may have.

#### **Careers Service**

The Careers Service assists with information on choosing a career. The Service also helps students seek and apply for work whilst offering practical help such as advice on interview techniques or on completing CVs.

hud.ac.uk/careers

66 Every university will be different, but there will be plenty of help on hand if they need it. 99



### What it all means

Like every other area of life, Higher Education has its own distinct terminology and jargon. Some of these terms and definitions are listed below.

#### **Campus**

All the buildings belonging to a university that are grouped together on one site. Some universities will have both residential and academic buildings on one site, whereas others will have their buildings in several different areas of the town or city.

#### Clearing

A system allowing students who have not gained a university place to apply for remaining course vacancies once exam results are published.

#### **Dissertation**

A lengthy essay on a specific subject which many students complete in their final year.

#### **UCAS Extra**

A chance to apply for remaining courses if unsuccessful in initial applications.

#### Faculty/school

Similar subjects at universities or colleges are often grouped together under one faculty or school. For example, at the University of Huddersfield, management, business and marketing courses are grouped together under the Business School.

#### **Finals**

The last set of examinations taken before gaining a degree.

#### **Fresher**

Students in their first year at university are known as 'Freshers'.

#### **Joint Honours**

A degree where two subjects are studied together with equal weight, for example, BA(Hons) English and History or BSc(Hons) Physics and Chemistry. Where one subject has more emphasis than the other, it is known as major/minor Combined Honours.

#### Lecture

A form of teaching where a lecturer speaks on a given topic to a large group and students take notes.

#### Module

Degree courses are made up of modules, for example an English degree may offer the option of a module in Victorian Literature. Students may have the choice of a number of modules, gaining credits for each one, which make up their degree course.

#### **Prospectus**

A directory providing information on a specific university. It contains course information, details of the town or city and the accommodation available. Most universities now offer their full prospectus online.



#### Sandwich courses

Courses which offer an (extra) year's work placement are often known as sandwich courses. This placement year enables students to gain valuable work experience whilst possibly being paid a salary and they may even be offered a job at the end of their studies.

#### Seminar

Where a small group of students meet up with a lecturer and discuss their ideas on a specific part of the subject they are currently studying. Work is often set and then discussed the following week.

#### Students' Union

This is the social heart of a university. The majority of Students' Union buildings will house bars, clubs, quiet study areas and shops and also host numerous societies. Students' Unions also employ welfare staff to offer your son/daughter advice and reassurance.

#### **Term**

These are similar to terms in schools. The academic year at some universities, however, is divided into two semesters, Autumn and Spring.

#### Undergraduate

Someone studying for their first degree.

#### **Tutorial**

A dedicated session where a student can discuss their course work with their tutor.

<sup>\*</sup>There are not usually any half terms but some subjects have reading weeks.





### Useful contacts

We hope this guide has answered most of your questions about Higher Education. There is further information on our website or if you have a question, we are always here to help. Please find some useful contacts below.

#### **UCAS**



**UCAS Customer Services Unit** 

**%** 0371 468 0 468

**Student Finance England** 

0300 100 0607

gov.uk/contact-student-finance-england

**Disability Rights UK** 

**\** 0330 995 0414

**Schools and Colleges Liaison Service** 

University of Huddersfield

01484 472282

Information for parents and carers

01484 472994

parents
 ∂hud.ac.uk

hud.ac.uk/undergraduate/parents-and-carers

#### **University of Huddersfield**

Queensgate Huddersfield HD1 3DH United Kingdom

**Tel.** 01484 472282

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