

SOLENT
UNIVERSITY

SOUTHAMPTON

An illustration of a woman with curly hair and glasses, wearing a dark blazer and light-colored pants, jumping joyfully while holding a large orange balloon. The balloon is tied to a thick yellow and orange arch that spans across the top of the scene. Below the arch is a white silhouette of a city skyline with various rectangular buildings. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

**STEP
INTO
UNIVERSITY**

YEARS 10-11

Solent University believes that every young person with the ability to succeed should be able to take advantage of the benefits of university and higher education, whatever their background.



Hello,

As you enter year 10, you'll be starting to focus on your GCSEs and looking ahead to your A-levels/BTECs or other Level 3 qualifications and even university.

To help you prepare, we've put together this short guide including answers to some of the most frequently asked questions regarding university, what you need to be thinking about at this stage and, finally, a jargon buster to help you understand some of the new phrases you'll be hearing as you move up through your studies.

If you have any questions or want to find out more information, please speak to your school careers team.

The following websites may also be useful:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>
www.careerpilot.org.uk
www.solent.ac.uk

WHY SHOULD I THINK ABOUT GOING TO UNIVERSITY?

There are three main reasons why you might think about going to university: enhancing your career prospects, following your passion and, finally, having fun. We explore these in a bit more detail below:

Career prospects

- At university you'll study a subject you really love, which can help you go into your chosen career.
- Some career options such as doctors, vets, lawyers and architects require a degree and university can help you on your way to achieving this.
- Those that have been to university typically earn more in their lifetime than those who don't.
- A university degree will help you stand out when applying for jobs in the future.

Follow your passion

- You'll be able to explore the subject you really love in-depth.
- You can choose your own study options.
- You'll engage with like-minded people.
- You'll gain a real sense of achievement.

Have fun

- You'll become more independent and develop as a person, grow in confidence and have the chance to make new friends and try new things.
- You'll have the opportunity to mix with people from other cultures and backgrounds.
- There are lots of extra-curricular activities to get involved in: from societies to sports clubs, there's something for everyone.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As you approach your GCSEs, you'll be asked to think about whether you are going to study A-levels/BTECs or any other Level 3 qualifications, and ultimately whether you want to go to university. We've put together some of the most frequently asked questions about university studies to help you with your planning.

WHAT SUBJECT SHOULD I STUDY AT UNIVERSITY?

When deciding on which subject to study, think about:

1) What are you studying now?

Are there any particular subjects you enjoy and are good at? Will one of these subjects hold your interest for three or four years at university?

2) Is it a subject you need to study?

If you have a particular job in mind, consider whether you need specific qualifications to go into your chosen field.

3) Would a new subject appeal to you?

At university you have a wider choice of subjects that you can study at degree level. If you are interested in an area you haven't studied before, you should look at course details and teaching methods to make an informed choice.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHICH UNIVERSITY TO GO TO?

With thousands of courses on offer across UK universities, there are plenty for you to choose from. You might need some support to narrow down the options, and think about where you would like to study. Your school careers advisers are there to offer advice and guidance in making your decision, but also consider talking to teachers and family members.

VISIT PAGE 12 FOR A HANDY LIST OF WEBSITES TO VISIT FOR ADVICE



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW DO I APPLY TO GO TO UNIVERSITY?

The application process starts at the beginning of year 13 and you can begin to think about this earlier. If you have some idea as to what you would like to study at university, then start your research even before you begin your sixth form or college courses. That way you can ensure that when the time comes to apply to university, you meet the requirements for the course.

Don't worry if you are still undecided. Make sure that you choose subjects that you enjoy and keep your options open.

The majority of applications to university courses are managed by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Students complete one application on the UCAS website which is then sent to their individual university choices. Some courses at some universities take applications directly through their own websites, so it is worth checking beforehand.

HOW WILL I PAY FOR UNIVERSITY?

The cost of university is one of the biggest concerns for students who are thinking of going to university, and for their parents or carers. The cost of your degree is initially covered by the Student Loans Company which pays the university directly on your behalf. This means that there is no upfront cost for you.

There are two types of loans:

Tuition fees: this is the cost of the course itself, for example, teaching time, library and course facilities.

Maintenance loan: to cover some of your living costs such as accommodation, food, bills and transport while you are at university, you can also apply for a maintenance loan which is paid out at the beginning of each term. The amount you'll receive will depend on a number of factors, such as your household income, where you live and what you are studying.

Tuition fees and the maintenance loan are linked to keep repayments simple. You'll only start to pay back your tuition fees and maintenance loan once you have finished your degree and are earning over a certain amount per year. So the good news is that student loan repayments are based on what graduates can afford to pay back rather than the amount they borrow.

IS THERE FURTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE?

Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to access extra financial support from your university such as:

Scholarships: often these take the form of a lump sum and are offered to academically talented students.

Bursaries: these may be offered to students from lower-income families, care leavers and young carers.

Hardship funds: these provide help for students who are experiencing financial difficulties, usually in an emergency or exceptional circumstances.

Each university has its own schemes and eligibility criteria, so you can check with your chosen university for details.

Disabled Students' Allowance: the Disabled Students' Allowance is designed to cover any extra costs you may have due to a disability, long-term illness, mental health problems or specific learning difficulties. The support can include specialist equipment such as computers or extra travel costs.

WHAT SUPPORT WILL I GET IF I AM A CARE LEAVER?

Universities are committed to supporting young people in care and care leavers to enter and succeed at university. A range of support is offered to make your transition to university life easier. Support from universities includes:

Financial support: an annual bursary for the duration of your course (that does not need to be repaid). The amount you will get depends on the university.

Accommodation support: an extended halls contract, to provide accommodation all year round.

Designated member of staff: acting as the first point of contact, providing pre-application help and pastoral and emotional support to care leaver students as needed, particularly in the period when they're settling in, and signposting students to financial and academic support and further health services, as appropriate for additional support.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Support networks: many universities offer a 'buddy' system, where care leavers in their second or third year become mentors to care leavers in their first year. This encourages care leavers to develop their own networks and support each other.

WHAT SUPPORT WILL I GET IF I AM A YOUNG CARER?

Most universities will provide support for students who are carers for their parents/ immediate family members (excluding children). A caring responsibility may be short-term, such as supporting someone with their recovery following an accident, or long-term, such as helping someone with a long-term illness.

To help you manage this, many universities have put support in place specifically to help students with caring responsibilities. This can include:

Academic help: flexible deadlines, help with managing your workload, or priority access to academic or career opportunities (for example, internships).

Financial help: bursaries and other financial support for student carers. You might be eligible for a scholarship, grant or bursary.

Health and wellbeing support: as well as support services on campus, some universities offer induction days over the summer to help you settle in and to give you the chance to discuss your support needs.

Carer Passport: some universities run the Carer Passport scheme, which means you won't have to share your story multiple times with different staff across the university.

The help available varies between each university, so do your research before you apply. Most will have a website that gives more details, but you can always contact the university directly to find out more. There will also be people available to talk to on open days, if you plan to visit.

WHAT OTHER SUPPORT CAN I GET AT UNIVERSITY?

There are a range of support services provided at university to help you achieve your academic potential and have a great student experience.

Academic support: most universities run a personal tutor system which means you might be allocated an academic staff member who you can talk to about academic queries. In addition, your subject tutors will have 'office hours' during which they are available to give students extra guidance or answer questions.

Practical support and emotional welfare: the university and the Students' Union will run services offering advice on financial and academic matters as well as counselling and emotional support.

Support for students with additional needs: there will be a team dedicated to support students with disabilities, mental health problems, long-term health conditions or learning difficulties such as dyslexia. It is important that you contact the university before you start your course if you are likely to need this type of support.

Student-run clubs and societies: universities have numerous clubs, societies and sports teams run by students for students. This is a great way for you to get involved in your student community and meet like-minded people. Clubs and societies could range from photography, film and radio to e-sports and debating. There are also faith groups and clubs linked to different subject areas.

Career support: careers advisers will be available to help you make decisions about your future. Most universities' career services run employability workshops, mock interviews, careers fairs and mentoring schemes, and they may also advertise internships and job opportunities.



WHAT SHOULD I BE THINKING ABOUT NOW?

As you enter year 10, you'll be encouraged to start thinking about what you would like to do when you leave school, for example, A-levels/ BTECs. The decisions you make now are very important as your subjects and grades will be taken into account when applying to university.

When selecting the A-levels or BTECs you would like to study, it's important to consider:

- whether you want to go to university and, if so, what subjects you would need to take in order to apply for the course of your choice.
- choosing facilitating subjects if you're not sure on the route you want to take. Facilitating subjects are those which are commonly asked for in universities' entry requirements, regardless of the course you're applying to, making them good options to keep your degree options open. Such subjects include: biology, chemistry, English, geography, history, maths, modern and classical languages, physics.
- what you want to do as a career choice and what you actually enjoy – don't select options based on what your friends are doing.

And finally ...

- Think about the future, not just the now – for example, you might not enjoy maths but really want to study engineering at university, so an A-level in maths would put you in a good position to apply.





JARGON BUSTER

There's a lot of jargon around university, so we've put together an explanation of some of the most commonly used words and phrases to help.

The education system can be full of acronyms and unfamiliar terms, so we have explained some of these below:

A-levels: the academic qualification gained from studying at a sixth form or college after completing GCSEs.

Apprenticeships: apprenticeships combine practical training in a job and study. An apprentice will work alongside experienced staff, gain job-specific skills, earn a wage and get holiday pay, and will be given time for study related to their role (the equivalent of one day a week). Apprenticeships are available at a variety of levels including degree apprenticeships.

AS-levels: a stand-alone post-16 qualification that takes one year to complete.

BA: Bachelor of Arts – the undergraduate degree awarded to those studying an arts or humanities degree.

BSc: Bachelor of Science – the undergraduate degree awarded to those studying a scientific discipline.

BTEC: Business and Technology Education Council – vocational qualifications that equip students with theoretical and practical knowledge in a range of subjects. There are three main levels: BTEC firsts,

which are equivalent to GCSE level; BTEC national diplomas, which are equivalent to A-level; and BTEC apprenticeships.

Bursary: a non-repayable monetary award made to students who satisfy certain criteria as set by the awarding universities and colleges.

Degree: a full-time course usually lasting three years. However, there are also opportunities to study for degrees on a part-time basis.

DSA: Disabled Students' Allowances – monetary awards made to those students who may need additional support during their studies as a result of a disability or long-term health condition. For example, these awards may pay for specialist equipment, printing costs, a note-taker, and so on. These awards are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

FE: further education – the qualifications that are taken post-16, that is to say, after a student has taken their GCSEs.

Graduate: a person who has completed and passed his or her degree and been awarded their qualification.

GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education – the qualifications that are taken at the end of a student's secondary education, in year 11.

HE: higher education – the qualifications that are taken at level 4 or above, that is to say, those that are taken after A-levels or equivalents.

International Baccalaureate Diploma: a two-year educational programme primarily aimed at 16 to 19-year-olds in 140 countries around the world. The programme provides an internationally accepted qualification for entry into higher education and is recognised by many universities worldwide.

Key Stage 3: Key stage 3 (or KS3) refers to school years 7–9.

Key Stage 4: Key stage 4 (or KS4) refers to school years 10–11.

Key Stage 5: Key stage 5 (or KS5) refers to school years 12–13.

Open days: 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.

Oxbridge: the informal name for both Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Personal statement: the section of your UCAS application form where you can tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You only have one statement for all five of your application choices.

Student Loans Company: the company that provides financial assistance in the form of loans to students. Loans are not paid back until after the course has been completed and graduates are earning a salary above a certain level.

Students' Union or Students' Guild: an organisation found in all universities that is run by the students and is dedicated to the representation and support of the students at university. The Union represents the interests of students across a whole range of issues, and also provides a focal point for social activities on campus for all students.

Terms: periods of teaching time throughout the academic year.

T Levels: Technical Levels – these two-year courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work. T Levels offer students a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement.

UCAS: University and College Admissions Service – the central organisation which handles applications for higher education across the UK.

Undergraduate: a student studying for a degree.

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



USEFUL LINKS

Visit the websites below for help in making decisions regarding your future career and university studies.

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>

www.careerpilot.org.uk

<https://hants.emsicc.com>

www.ucas.com

www.theuniguide.co.uk

www.sunoutreach.org

www.gov.uk/student-finance

www.apprenticeships.gov.uk



GET READY FOR UNIVERSITY GUIDE

Unsure what to do with your future? Confused about the university application process? Follow our 52 Things to Do guide, designed to help you every step of the way.

From thinking about the degree that's right for you to writing a personal statement, we've got it all covered – with handy advice and tasks designed to take no more than an hour each week.

Visit www.solent.ac.uk/52-things



ABOUT SOLENT UNIVERSITY

At Solent, our aim is to deliver innovative, inclusive and intellectually stimulating teaching in order to develop self-confident and highly employable graduates.

Employers expect more from modern graduates than ever. It's not enough to know your subject – to kickstart a good career, young people need connections, experience and opportunities.

All our courses are designed with employability in mind, which makes industry-based learning a priority.

We make the most of partnerships with local businesses and organisations to offer students the most relevant experience that will provide the necessary skills for their future career. Notable partners include Southampton FC, ABP Southampton Marathon, B&Q and Carnival.

We offer a range of industry-focused courses in the following areas:

- Architecture and construction
- Art and design
- Business and finance
- Computing and games
- Engineering
- English and journalism
- Fashion
- Health, psychology and sociology
- Law and criminology
- Maritime
- Marketing, communications and PR
- Music and performance
- Sport and fitness
- Travel and tourism
- TV, film, media production and technology

To find out more about Solent and our range of courses, visit www.solent.ac.uk/courses


To find out more about our support for students, including care leavers and those with disabilities, visit www.solent.ac.uk/student-support




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