

## 4. Choosing a **COURSE**

There are over 55,000 higher education courses listed in the *UCAS Directory*, offered at over 325 higher education institutions, including 128 universities. With so many options available, choosing a course can be a difficult decision.

### These tips may help you to decide:

1. think about what you enjoy and do well, both at school/college and outside
2. write down a list of jobs you'd like to do and why
3. discuss your options with teachers, career advisers, family and friends
4. whatever your interests, it's essential that you do lots of research.

### How do I find out about courses?

There is no shortage of information to help you decide. An excellent starting point is the *UCAS Directory* but there are many other good sources:

- *UCAS Directory* to search for particular subjects and courses: [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)
- higher education fairs where you can meet representatives from universities
- university websites
- university prospectuses and course leaflets
- independent university guides such as *Virgin Alternative Guide*, *Times Guide*, *Push Guide*, 'Choosing Your Degree Course and University', 'HEAP: Degree course offers'
- league tables to help you investigate which universities are best for particular courses: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/> and [www.timesonline.co.uk/education](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/education)
- teaching quality information is available from [www.tqi.ac.uk](http://www.tqi.ac.uk)
- visit universities to get an idea of what courses involve. Most universities hold open days, master classes and taster sessions.
- talk to people who are already studying the subject.

### Points to remember when researching courses

- What are the course options? How does the course content vary between universities?
- How long is the course?
- How is the course assessed? How much of the course is assessed by final exam, coursework or ongoing assessment?
- How is the course taught? What is the ratio of formal lectures and seminars to independent study? Is there a final year dissertation/research project?
- Are there opportunities to do a work placement or study abroad for part of your course?
- Is it possible to study more than one subject (combined degree) or study a few modules from other courses, for example languages or IT?
- What sorts of jobs do graduates from the course go on to do?
- What are the entry requirements? Make sure the entry requirements are in line with your predicted grades. If you are at all unsure, telephone the admissions tutor for your subject (telephone numbers are listed in university prospectuses).

A tariff calculator is available on the UCAS website ([www.ucas.com/info](http://www.ucas.com/info)), which has been designed to help you calculate your score to determine whether you meet the entry requirements for a course.

Once you have chosen a course you can look at universities offering the course.