

## 5. Choosing a university

By deciding on a course you'll have narrowed down the choices available. However, there may be many universities or colleges that offer a course that appeals to you, especially if you are considering a popular subject such as English or history.

Most students have some idea of the location they want to be in – whether it's in the south of England, by the sea, miles away or close to home. Many opt for somewhere that's far enough away from their families to be independent but not too far to get home in a crisis, usually two-three hours drive. When you've found five to ten universities that appeal to you, you'll need to find out more about them.

### How do I find out about universities?

University websites and prospectuses are a good place to start finding out more, but by far the best way to get a feel for a university is to visit. Before you fill in your UCAS form, visit as many universities as possible. Look out for open days, campus tours, taster sessions and master classes. This will give you a taste of what the university is really like and current students will often be on hand to answer your questions.

Once you receive an offer from a university you may also be invited to an interview or visit day. It's important to visit your first two accepted choices – your firm and insurance choices.



### Questions to answer when researching universities

- Is it a campus or non-campus university?
- How far away from home is the university?
- Are the transport links good?
- What sort of location would you like to be in? For example, a country town or large city.
- Is there part-time work available? Does the university offer help in finding work?
- What bursaries/scholarships do they offer?
- What's the university's reputation like? League tables published by national newspapers will give you an indication of teaching quality and graduate employability.
- How many students attend the university? Is this important?
- How does the course compare with similar courses at other universities?
- What is the accommodation like?
- What are the study facilities like? For example, libraries and IT facilities.
- How good are the social and sporting facilities?
- What student support is available? For example, medical, financial and disability support. Will you need special support, such as dyslexia support?

You'll be investing a great deal of time and money in your degree so make sure that you make an informed choice. Of the students who drop out of higher education in their first year, the majority do so because they have chosen the wrong course or the wrong university for them, so do your homework!

### Visiting and deciding on a university

Here's a checklist with some important factors for you to consider when visiting and deciding on a university.

University	Campus	Distance from home	Town/city	Part-time work	League tables	Number of students	Course	Accommodation	Students' Union	Sport	Support
Oxford Brookes University											