



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Outreach

Unpacking University

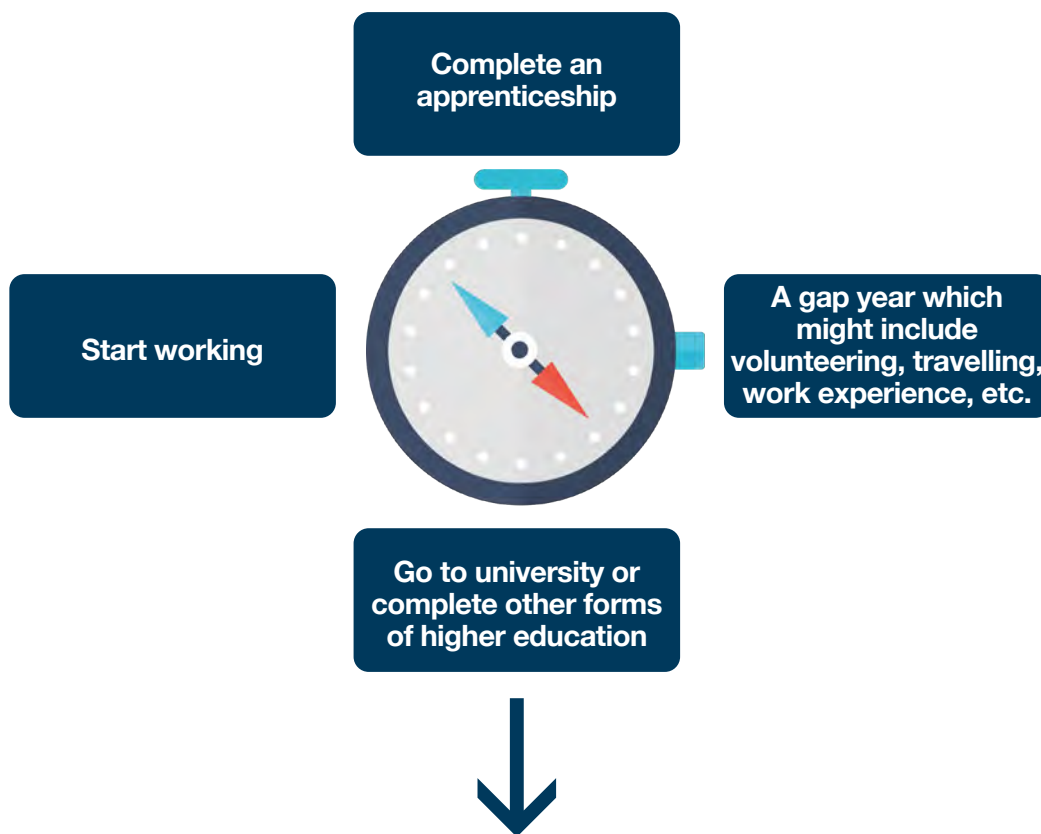
A kickstart to thinking about higher education



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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication at the time of going to print (December 2020).

What are my options after school/college?



What are the benefits of going to university?

It opens up a wide range of career options

▶ Did you know that some professions, like medicine, physiotherapy or architecture, require a specific degree subject to do that job?

Graduates earn more over a lifetime than people without a degree

▶ According to The Institute of Fiscal Studies, graduates will earn on average over £100,000 more than their non graduate counterparts over a lifetime.

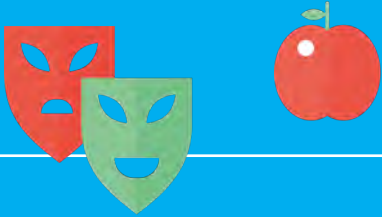
Univeristy helps you to become more career ready

▶ You will have access to the careers service. Some universities offer the opportunity to do work placements or study abroad. You will learn to work independently, manage your workload effectively and manage your finances.

How do I choose the right degree course?

What do you enjoy?

If you don't know what you want to do in the future, think about what your favourite subjects are and look at what interests you. This could even be a hobby or something you do outside of school.



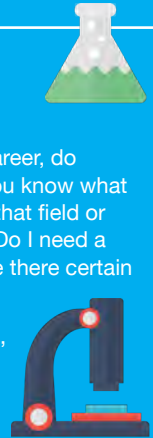
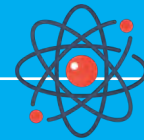
How do you like to be taught?

Do you prefer a more practical based style of teaching or do you prefer a more hands-off approach? How do you like to be assessed? Have a look at the content of the course. Is there a particular topic that you want to focus on?



What job will the course lead to?

If you want a specific career, do your research so that you know what is necessary to access that field or industry. Ask yourself: 'Do I need a specific course?' or 'Are there certain transferable skills I need that this degree or university can offer me?'



How do I choose the right university?

You need to consider a lot of different things when choosing a university and it all comes down to personal preference. Below are some key questions to consider when making your decision about where to study.



- ▶ Do you want a campus or city-based university?
- ▶ What are the qualifications needed for the course?
- ▶ Which university is ranked well for your subject? Some universities are known for specific subjects, so do your research!
- ▶ How far away do you want to be from your support base (friends/family)?

Top Tips

- ▶ Go and visit the university before making your final decision.
- ▶ Try and meet some of the lecturers and current students and see what they have to say.
- ▶ Take a look at university ranking websites. They will compare universities according to a range of factors, including quality of student experience, quality of teaching, and graduate prospects.



What does it all mean?

BA	Bachelor of Arts. The qualification most commonly 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.
BEng	Bachelor of Engineering. An undergraduate degree for a course in engineering.
Campus university	A university situated on one dedicated site, with student accommodation, teaching facilities, research facilities, and leisure activities all together.
City university	A university that is situated across multiple sites within a city. The separate buildings may reflect different faculties/subject areas or have a specific function, for example, the Students' Union.
Combined or joint honours degree	A type of degree where you study two subjects which are split equally to make up your degree.
Dissertation	A long report or essay that sets out the results of research carried out by a student; sometimes also called a thesis. This is normally produced as part of the degree course in the final year (although for some courses it is optional and might be replaced with exams or coursework).
Fresher	An informal name for a first-year student.
Graduate	Someone who has completed an undergraduate degree. An undergraduate is someone who is still studying for a degree.
Halls of residence	Accommodation for students. Usually, there will be a communal living and kitchen area where students can socialise and cook. Your accommodation may be catered or non-catered.
Higher National Diploma (HND)	This qualification takes two years to complete if studied full time, or longer to complete if studied part time. You may wish to 'top up' an HND to a degree by completing another year of studying.
Hons (Honours Degree)	The name given to undergraduate programmes which include a dissertation or research project in your final year.
Lecture	A method of teaching at university. Large classes in a room with tiered seating and a lecturer (teacher) talking at the front while you take notes.
LLB	Bachelor of Laws. The accreditation given to law degrees which allows for progression to further training to become a barrister or solicitor.
Masters	A higher-level taught degree, typically taken after completing an undergraduate degree.
PhD	Also known as a doctorate, this is the highest form of degree awarded and involves carrying out research with little or no teaching. You need to have completed at least an undergraduate degree to study at this level.
Russell Group	The Russell Group represents the leading 24 UK universities which are committed to maintaining the very best research, plus an outstanding teaching and learning experience.
Seminars/tutorials	Small group teaching where you engage in discussion with other students and a member of staff. This is more like classes at school.
Societies	Groups of students who share a common interest – a bit like an after-school club.
Students' Union	An organisation found in all universities that is run by students and is dedicated to the representation and support of students. They also run sport and social events.

FAQs

What pastoral support do you get at university?

There is support available for all aspects of your wellbeing outside of your academic studies. Most universities will offer access to a GP and Wellbeing Centre for both your physical and mental health and wellbeing. The university chaplaincy is also available, offering a place of peace for people of all faiths and none. Take a look at the links to ranking websites.

What academic support do you get at university?

It is likely that you will be given a personal tutor when you arrive at university, who will be an academic on your course. You can contact them for support with your course content. The university library is also a fantastic place to find additional learning support to help you with revision techniques, essay writing and time management.

Is living at university safe?

University security varies between universities. Some universities have their own dedicated security teams on campus and most universities will liaise with the local police to ensure that the experience of their students is a safe one. Many universities offer 24/7 on site security services if you're living in student accommodation.

Are there opportunities to practice my faith on campus?

Many universities will have a chaplaincy where people of any faith, or no faith, can meet and support one another. In addition to this, many universities will have faith-based clubs and societies where you can spend time with like-minded people.

Will I have classes at university like I do in school?

Classes at university are very different to what you're used to at school. You may have lectures in large amphitheatres and seminars in a classroom with a smaller group, where you will be able to develop your ideas. If you study science, you may have labs and tutorials which will develop your practical knowledge. The main difference between school and university is the freedom. You will need to manage your own time and workload, although there will be plenty of support at university to help you. As overwhelming as it may sound, you will be surrounded by fellow students who are in the same boat as you and will make it easier to adjust.

Are there employment opportunities at university?





Many students will have to work to fund their education. Not only will a part-time job assist you financially whilst you study, it will also help you to develop the skills and experience that employers are looking for. Many students work for the Students' Union, university bars, cafés and shops, or choose to be Student Ambassadors who represent the university to external visitors.

How do I finance university?

Most students will take out a loan(s) to cover tuition fees and general living costs. You might also be eligible to get extra money on top of this. Currently, you only start repaying your loan once you earn over £26,575. These repayments depend on how much you earn above this threshold, not what you owe. You'll repay 9% of any money earned over £26,575 which would then be divided into monthly repayments. Therefore, student finance is more like a tax than a debt. See www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan/what-you-pay for more information.



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CONTACT US

For more information or guidance about studying at university, feel free to contact our Widening Participation Team:

schoolandcolleges@stmarys.ac.uk



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KEY WEBSITES

www.ucas.com
www.gov.uk/student-finance
www.thestudentroom.co.uk
www.nus.org.uk

RANKING WEBSITES

www.timeshighereducation.com
Guardian website – University league tables – www.theguardian.com
Telegraph website – University league tables – www.telegraph.co.uk
www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/leaguetales/rankings

COMPARING DEGREE COURSES

www.whatuni.com
www.theuniguide.co.uk
discoveruni.gov.uk/what-would-you-do

STUDENT FINANCE WEBSITES

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/student-loans-company
www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk