



UNIVERSITY OF  
PLYMOUTH

# APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY GUIDE

Hints and tips on making your application

# WHY UNIVERSITY?

Studying your chosen degree at university is a big decision to make and a life changing experience. The main benefits of going to university include: improving your career prospects, increasing your earning potential, improving your key life skills, gaining independence and making new friends for life.



**ENHANCE  
SELF-CONFIDENCE**



**ACCESS WORLD-CLASS  
FACILITIES AND RESEARCH**



**GAIN EMPLOYMENT  
IN A SPECIFIC FIELD**



**IN 2017, THE AVERAGE WORKING AGE  
GRADUATE EARNED**

**£10,000 MORE THAN THE AVERAGE NON-GRADUATE.**

\*Department for Education Graduate Labour Market Statistics 2017.

**MEET DIFFERENT PEOPLE  
AND FIND NEW INTERESTS**



**LIFETIME EARNINGS  
CAN INCREASE BY**

**53%** for women

**AND**

**28%** for men

\*Department for Business Innovation and Skills Research Paper 2016. [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

**STUDY  
WHAT YOU  
LOVE**



**INCREASE  
YOUR  
INDEPENDENCE**



**BECOME AN EXPERT  
IN YOUR FIELD**

# YOUR NEXT STEPS

## JUNE - SEPTEMBER

- ▶ Research universities and courses.
- ▶ Visit Open Days.
- ▶ Start your personal statement.

## OCTOBER

- ▶ Start your online UCAS application.
- ▶ The deadline for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary courses is usually 15 October

## NOVEMBER

- ▶ Make sure your personal statement has been proof read.
- ▶ Speak to your tutor about completing your UCAS reference.
- ▶ Start thinking about your top two institutions.

## DECEMBER

- ▶ If you have received offers from universities, they will invite you to visit as an applicant or for an interview.

## AUGUST

- ▶ A-level results are published!
- ▶ On results day, check UCAS Track to see the status of your application.
- ▶ If you have not met the entry requirements for your firm or insurance choices, contact the universities concerned to see if they will accept your results.
- ▶ Clearing begins.
- ▶ If you are not accepted on your chosen course look into Clearing opportunities through UCAS.
- ▶ Update your student finance application and check your accommodation options.

## JULY

- ▶ BTEC and International Baccalaureate results are published!
- ▶ Check UCAS Track for the status of your application once you've received your results.

## SEPTEMBER

- ▶ Enrol at university!

## APRIL, MAY & JUNE

- ▶ Visit a University of Plymouth Open Day. Book your place at [www.plymouth.ac.uk/openday](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/openday).
- ▶ Reply to all offers – firm insurance or decline.
- ▶ Respond to any requests in your offer letters for additional information.
- ▶ Update your student finance application accordingly. The deadline for student finance applications is the end of May.
- ▶ Apply for student accommodation at your firm choice university.

## JANUARY

- ▶ The UCAS deadline for the majority of courses is 15 January.
- ▶ The Student Finance England portal opens mid-January – make sure you apply, regardless of whether you have an offer or know which University you are going to.

## FEBRUARY

- ▶ Start applying for university accommodation.
- ▶ If you've had no offers or declined any offers, you may be able to apply for another course through UCAS Extra at the end of February. Find out more at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT COURSE

## Do...

1

### YOUR RESEARCH!

Look into the detail of each course that sparks your interest.

- Does the course cover modules that are suitable for you? What are the tariff points you need to achieve to apply for the course?
- Are there any work placement opportunities, field trips or experiences offered on the course that would help your studies or your future career?
- Visit online forums and blogs to see what current students and graduates think of the courses and institutions you want to know more about.
- Get prospectuses and course brochures (online or hard copies) to find out more.

2

### VISIT THE UNIVERSITIES THAT ARE ON YOUR RADAR

Open days are the best way to find out what life is like as a student at the universities you're keen to explore.

- Meet your potential peers and tutors (and interview tutors before they interview you!).



3

### PICK A SUBJECT YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT

You work much harder if you love the subject you're studying.

- You'll get a helping hand onto the career path you want, or get help in finding out the careers open to you through a subject you love.

4

### GET ORGANISED

- If in doubt, write everything down or make a spreadsheet of pros and cons to discuss with your family or friends.



## Don't...

1

### CHOOSE A COURSE SIMPLY BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE TELLS YOU TO

- It's your life, and you are the one spending three or more years studying the course of your choice.

2

### BELIEVE MYTHS OR STEREOTYPES

- Institutions want people who are enthusiastic, engaged and passionate about their chosen course. They won't be concerned with what you look like or where you come from.



# WHY VISIT AN OPEN DAY?

Open Days are a great way to start your research and are the perfect opportunity to get a real feel for a university, its location, students and facilities. They're also a great chance to meet academics and ask any questions you may have about the course you are interested in. Here's what our bloggers have to say about Open Days:

## BLOGGERS TIP

"Student Ambassadors are your insight into life at university; they are here to give you an honest version of what you'll experience, what the workload is like, and what kind of sports and societies you can be a part of. Talk to them – they don't bite!"

Seren, BA (Hons) English



## MEET STUDENTS

We have hundreds of Student Ambassadors at our Open Days who are happy to talk about their experiences and offer advice. Have a chat with them about what it's like being a university student to get a real insight.

## ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR COURSE

Before you arrive, it's worth thinking about the course you are interested in applying for; do you have any questions about it, such as assessment methods, modules taught or the opportunities to go on field trips or placements? Note down your questions and bring them along with you on the day.

## TOUR THE ACCOMMODATION

This is a great chance to see what the accommodation is like, find out more from the students currently living in halls and select your favourite option, just in case you end up there in September!

## EXPLORE THE CAMPUS AND CITY

A campus tour is a good opportunity to see the facilities and also ask your tour guide any questions about the campus and university life. A big part of your university experience is also immersing yourself in your university city and its surrounding area. Therefore it is so important to familiarise yourself with the area.

## VISIT THE STUDENTS' UNION

This is the hub of student life on university campuses, so make sure you have a walk around and find out about clubs and societies at the university.

## SOAK UP THE ATMOSPHERE

This is more important than a lot of people think. Trust your instincts: Do you think you'll be happy at the university? Do you feel safe and comfortable? Can you see yourself living and studying there? A lot of students say as soon as they step onto a campus they know it's the one for them (or not!), so it's very important you visit before making your final choices.

## UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

The University of Plymouth holds Open Days throughout the year in Spring, Summer and Autumn. Please visit our website to find out more and to book your place.

[WWW.PLYMOUTH.AC.UK/OPEN-DAYS](http://WWW.PLYMOUTH.AC.UK/OPEN-DAYS)

# THE UCAS APPLICATION FORM



*This is obviously a very important part. Make sure your application and personal statement reflect you, detailing everything that universities need to know about you.*

1

All applications are processed through **www.UCAS.com** and the application form is very user-friendly.

2

The education section will detail what you are studying now and what grades you are predicted to get, so you don't need to include this in your personal statement.

3

You can do little bits of your form over time. You don't have to complete it all at once as you can save sections and come back to them at a later date.

4

The form is split into various sections and you can't submit your application until these have all been completed so don't worry about missing anything out!

5

The search function within the form will let you search for the universities and courses you want. You can edit and remove these as many times as you want before you submit. You don't need to put them in order of preference and the universities don't know who else you have applied to!

## Personal statements – it's all about YOU!

*This is the bit which causes the most stress for applicants but don't worry! As long as you plan what you want to say and get it proof read as many times as possible, it's not too hard.*



**You can only write 47 lines and a maximum of 4,000 characters.**

There are also a minimum of 1,000 characters so use these wisely!



**75% of your statement should cover your academic strengths, motivation and interests.**

Why did you choose this course?



**The form does not have spell check** so we recommend

completing it in Word or equivalent and then copying across when you are ready. The form also times out after 35 minutes so save the form regularly as you don't want to lose your hard work.



**The remaining 25% should cover skills not directly related to your course**

for example, personal achievements, career aspirations, life skills and strengths.

**Remember, ABC** when writing your statement.



**Remember to be honest**

and think about what makes you interesting, special or unique. Try and show your passion for your chosen course.

**Activity:** what have you done?  
**Benefit:** how has this benefited you?

**Course:** how is this related to your course?



**Map out your ideas**

and then build these up into paragraphs.

Always evidence your statements this way– don't just list achievements!

Last but not least... **give yourself enough time** to write a personal statement which showcases you to the best of your abilities.



# STUDENT FINANCE



Undergraduate fees are published on university websites. You can get a tuition fee loan to cover the fees in full, in addition to your student maintenance loan, so nothing is paid upfront to the university. For more information visit [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance).

## STUDENT MAINTENANCE LOAN

The online application process does take a while to complete, and your parents or guardians need to complete parts too, so make sure you do it as early as possible. We recommend as soon as the portal opens in January.

Don't worry, as you don't have to repay either loan until the April after you graduate and only if you are earning over £25,725. Until you reach this earning threshold you won't pay a penny.

Repayments are then calculated on a sliding scale depending on your earnings.



In the first year of paying back your loan, most students pay approximately £30 a month.

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

You can get scholarships and bursaries at all universities – make sure you visit the university money web pages to see if you qualify.

This money doesn't have to be repaid, so it's worth doing some research to ensure you don't miss out!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT**  
**[WWW.GOV.UK/STUDENT-FINANCE](http://WWW.GOV.UK/STUDENT-FINANCE)**

**[WWW.PLYMOUTH.AC.UK/MONEY](http://WWW.PLYMOUTH.AC.UK/MONEY)**

## Budgeting

*As the loan is paid in three instalments, it is up to you to budget so you don't get caught out! Our current students have suggested the following budgeting tips:*



### DON'T SPLASH OUT TOO MUCH

on academic books in the first year – look out for second year students selling their old books.



If you struggle to keep tabs on how much you're spending then a **BUDGETING APP** could be the way to go.



A **PART-TIME JOB** can be a great experience if you can manage your time well while you're studying.



Try **NOT TO EAT OUT TOO OFTEN** but when you do, always try to use vouchers and discount codes.



Buy a **16-25 RAILCARD** as this will save you lots of money when travelling.



Don't knock **SUPERMARKET BASICS** until you've tried them. Rather than buying branded foods, go for cheaper alternatives.



Have a **SEPARATE ACCOUNT** for your loan and rent so you can see what you are spending your money on, and what is going in and out.



# UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION



*There is a lot of university accommodation out there, so it is worth doing a bit of research into the halls of residence options your chosen universities have to make sure they cater for your needs. Different types of halls have a range of prices so make sure the rent is in your price range.*



Halls are a great opportunity to meet people straight away when you arrive at university and lots of your housemates will become your first university friends. There are also plenty of other opportunities to make friends on your course and through extra-curricular activities.



Some universities have catered halls; these are a little more expensive as they include two meals a day. This might seem a great idea if you don't like cooking but depending on your lectures, what time you get out of bed and what you do most evenings, you might not get your money's worth, so make sure you have a good think about it.



Within university halls you can get studio flats if you prefer to live by yourself, smaller flats if you don't want to live with loads of people and single sex flats if you prefer to just live with boys/girls. A lot of universities also have ensuite rooms if you want to have your own private bathroom. You can specify these options on your accommodation application to university.



Once you've decided what type of room you want you need to have a think about location, location, location! Would you prefer to live on campus? Being within walking distance of the university be better? Are the halls far away from the university so you would need to drive or get a bus, and realistically will you get there in time to make your 9am lecture.



**WE GUARANTEE A PLACE IN HALLS –  
EITHER UNIVERSITY MANAGED OR FROM  
ACCREDITED PRIVATE PROVIDERS – TO ALL  
UNDERGRADUATE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS WHO  
MAKE PLYMOUTH THEIR FIRM FIRST CHOICE**  
**[PLYM.AC.UK/ACCOMMODATION](http://PLYM.AC.UK/ACCOMMODATION)**





# CONNECT WITH US

Another great way to get a feel for university from a current student's perspective is to follow blogs, social media and specific web pages. Our **#MyLifeWithPlym** student blogs give an insight into what it is really like to be a student at the University of Plymouth. You can also keep up to date with us through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## LAUREN ►

**Hello, I'm Lauren and I'm an LLB (Hons) Law student.**

Plymouth is a truly gorgeous place. The compactness of the city creates a perfect contrast; one minute you're in the hustle-bustle of the city centre, a two minute walk later you find yourself in the serenity of the Hoe, it doesn't feel like you're in the same place! When considering university, I should not have underestimated the opportunities available in Plymouth; it is a city truly blooming with chances for me to prosper both at university and in my future.

**PLYM.AC.UK/BLOGS**

f t i /PlymUniApply



## SHAHANA ▼

**Hi, I'm Shahana and I study BSc (Hons) Economics.**



Plymouth has a good balance of the things I want in an area. With the sea on one side and the countryside on the other, as well as the city in the centre, the location is a great asset to the University. The content of the Economics course and the elective modules seemed really interesting, and I really liked the fact that the University provided the chance to choose a placement year/year abroad while you are on the degree!

## ELLIOT ▼

**My name is Elliot and I study BSc (Hons) Ocean Exploration and Surveying.**

My course consists of going out on boats and staring at a variety of fish, rock or sand grain – with a bit of maths thrown in! The course is also an amazing opportunity to see some of the South West's stunning scenery. We have already visited and surveyed Whitsand Bay, with its steep cliffs and sweeping beach, and toured the stunning Tamar Estuary, gaining an alternative view of Mount Edgcumbe, the docks, and all the way up to the Tamar Bridge. I am also part of the Athletics Society, and enjoy scuba diving. I've had amazing opportunities in Plymouth because of it – last year, I travelled to Egypt for a month with a local NGO!



# USEFUL CONTACTS

For more information about the University of Plymouth visit: [www.plymouth.ac.uk](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk).

Email us at [admissions@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@plymouth.ac.uk), message us on WhatsApp at **07860 593512**, or contact us on our social media pages by searching **PlymUniApply**.

Below are a list of websites you might find useful when doing your research and applying for university:

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)  
[www.thestudentroom.co.uk](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)  
[www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com)  
[www.whatuni.com](http://www.whatuni.com)  
[www.unistats.ac.uk](http://www.unistats.ac.uk)  
[www.thescholarshiphub.org.uk](http://www.thescholarshiphub.org.uk)



## UCAS tariff

*A lot of universities, the University of Plymouth included, use UCAS tariff points rather than grades for entry requirements.*

Each grade has a set number of points which you can add up to get your predicted amount. This allows you to make sure you choose universities whose entry requirements are within your reach.

When choosing your firm and insurance universities, make sure your insurance choice has a lower tariff than your firm choice – just in case!

**To help you convert your grades to points, please use our tariff card below.**



The University is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity. If you require this publication in an alternative format, please contact us on +44 (0)1752 58 58 58.

This publication went to print in April 2019 which may be more than two years before the start of your course.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication.

However, as our courses and services are regularly reviewed and updated, some details may change. We would advise you to check our website at

**[www.plymouth.ac.uk](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk)**  
for the latest information.

## **ADMISSIONS**

**T** +44 (0)1752 585858

**F** +44 (0)1752 588055

**E** [admissions@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@plymouth.ac.uk)

**[www.plymouth.ac.uk](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk)**

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