

Student Guide: Making the most of an Open Day

We are really excited to see that students can start visiting universities again in person. Whether it's a campus tour or an open day it's well worth making the effort to visit before you make your final choices.

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What can you expect from an open day?



Welcome Talks

Upon arrival it can be a good idea to attend any welcome talks; they usually give you an idea of what you can expect from the day. Talks are often led by Vice Chancellors so you will pick up information about the history and future plans of the university. They may talk about anything from league tables and research interests to graduate outcomes, location and industry links.



Course Information

Open days usually offer the chance to attend subject talks led by an academic. You will be able to find out more about the course structure, optional modules and any extra opportunities such as work placements, study abroad options or voluntary work. This is really important as it helps to make sure the course content matches your specific interests and ambitions.

It is worth finding out if there are options to pick modules from other disciplines alongside your main course or combined degree choices.

Alongside talks there will usually be opportunities to visit subject stands where you can pick up course information and speak to academics or ambassadors about the course. You may have specific questions about entry requirements or you may want to ask for advice around what they will be looking for in personal statements.



Student Life

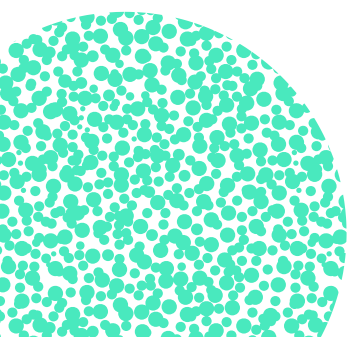
There will usually be a whole programme of Student Life talks you can attend. Typically, these will be focused on social activities and student services that the university offers. Ambassadors are always happy to share their experiences and can be reassuring if you have any concerns about moving away from home. It is a good idea to talk to the Student Union to find out more about clubs, societies and support on offer for students.



Student Services

Student services teams are usually available at open day to answer any questions around support for students. They play an essential role in your university experience whether you need careers advice or financial advice or have emotional or health concerns. Specialist staff are usually available to help students with disabilities, mental health conditions, autistic spectrum conditions or specific learning difficulties.

At an open day there may be talks relating to student services or people available to talk to.





Accommodation Tours

If you are planning to live at the university you should make the most of the opportunity to visit accommodation, after all you wouldn't rent a house without seeing it in person first! There are usually a variety of rooms available ranging in cost so you may want to compare a top of the range ensuite with a standard shared bathroom room!

Most students are not keen on sharing a bathroom but you may be surprised – you may only be sharing with one or two other students so don't rule anything out until you have seen the accommodation for yourself. Another factor to consider is that with an ensuite you might be responsible for cleaning whereas a shared bathroom may be cleaned for you!

On the tour, you'll get to see any shared living areas and kitchens where you will be able to get to know your flatmates whilst cooking your student meals! This is usually the most social area of your accommodation, so take it in – you'll likely spend a lot of time here, even if your most ambitious meal is buttered toast!

Student ambassadors will be keen to share their experiences and will often tell you snippets of useful information such as which accommodation is the most sociable and which is closest to the university lecture theatres.



Library Tours

University libraries can be really impressive and far bigger than anything you have experienced at college or school and tours are a great way to see as much as possible without getting lost. You will be able to see the quiet study space or group study areas alongside endless shelves of books and journals. It is worth checking out the opening hours and technology-enabled work spaces. Some university libraries are open 24/7, perfect for those last minute projects!



Explore the University

You can usually wander around the university on your own at an open day but to get the most out of your visit it is worth booking on to a student-led tour. A tour will take you around all of the facilities and the student ambassadors will help you get a real feel for life at university. You may be surprised by what's on offer from hairdressers and launderettes to shops, bars, nightclubs and sports facilities. You need to think about what is important to you and build your own shortlist of requirements.



Explore the Area

If there is time you should set aside some time to explore the local area. After their first year, most students live off-campus in the local town or city, so it's important to see the surrounding area.



Final Top Tip

Make a note of everything you have learned from your open day and use this information to create your own shortlist which meets your requirements. You might want to consider creating an open day scoreboard where you rate elements that matter to you most out of ten; this could be accommodation or walking distance to the nearest supermarket.

If you're struggling to decide, a scoreboard can help you remember each university clearly and reach an informed decision.

We are all different and only you can decide which university is best for you.

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