



THE PARENT'S GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY

A guide full of top tips and advice on how to best support your child with their transition to university

HELLO!



We are FutureHY York and North Yorkshire. We are part of the national Uni Connect programme, and our aim is to support young people to make well-informed decisions about their future education.

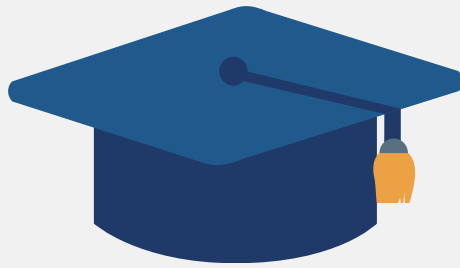
We have created this guide for parents to help you support your child as best as possible as they apply and then transition to university. Although this guide refers to parents, it equally applies to carers, guardians or other supporting adults.

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THE BENEFITS OF UNIVERSITY



University is an opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to pursue a career. Not only does having a degree widen employment opportunities, graduates are also more likely to earn a higher salary.

However, university isn't only a learning opportunity. Going to university encourages independence and personal development through independent living and social experiences.

UNIVERSITY OPEN DAYS



Choosing which university to go to can be very overwhelming for students as there are so many different options available, all with something unique to offer.

University open days are a great way to research the different options and answer any questions that the student may have. By attending an open day, students find out more about higher education and how each individual university differs.

Due to coronavirus, many universities are opting to host 'virtual open days', so it is important to understand the difference and know how to help your child make the most out of each option.

When attending an ‘on campus’ open day, there will be an itinerary of activities running throughout the day. These could include ‘meet and greet’ sessions, subject tasters, seminars, virtual tours, and information fairs. In this scenario it is a good idea for the student to have a plan before visiting so they know which departments to go to and what questions to ask.

If the student has accessibility needs it is important that they contact the university prior to their visit so they can arrange the appropriate support.

It is a good idea to attend open days with your child as a way of supporting them in their decision making and providing a second opinion.



Virtual open days, on the other hand, are slightly different to an ‘on campus’ open day. However, it is still important that your child makes the most of the opportunity.

Many universities will ask students to register their details in advance to book a place and then provide them with a link to the webpage the open day will be held on. It is still a good idea for students to plan a schedule with virtual open days, one particularly useful website to help schedule open days is [opendays.com](https://www.opendays.com).

Help your child to consider the questions they would like to ask at the open day. Most online platforms offer a ‘live chat’ function where you can ask any questions as you would at an ‘on campus’ open day.



It is also still useful to 'attend' the virtual open day with your child, as having someone there to support them with their decision is always helpful.

Prior to the event it is a good idea to check accessibility, e.g. does the link provided work? Also, check that your internet connection is strong enough, as there may be videos which could struggle to load with poor connection. Find a quiet space and avoid distractions to allow your child to concentrate and learn as much as they can, as this may be the only chance they get to experience the university prior to making their decision.



THE TRANSITION



Going to university is a big step and can be very daunting for both students and parents.

For students who are particularly nervous, some universities offer summer schools which aim to help students settle in before starting later in the year. This can be particularly helpful for students with anxiety, Asperger's or those on the Autistic Spectrum, with some universities offering summer schools especially for this.

As a parent, it is important to support your child during their transition and to provide them with reassurance and encouragement. If your child is nervous, they may avoid talking about it, however, openly discussing their transition can have a positive impact. Ask your child what their concerns are, and talk to them about how to overcome this.

UCAS have a really helpful website which offers lots of advice on starting university. We also have a great 'Student Starter Guide' on our website which includes lots of handy tips for new students!

You can find it in the student resources section on our website: futurehy.co.uk



Another way to help your child with the transition is by developing their independent living skills, this is especially important if they are moving away from home to study.

It is a good idea to start this early to allow good practices to become habits. An example of this could be encouraging your child to do their own laundry, cleaning and cooking. By developing these skills, your child will be more confident living independently.



YOUNG CARERS



A young adult carer is any young person aged between 16-25 years old who has a commitment to providing essential unpaid care to a member of their family or a friend.

Care needs can vary, from illness, disability, mental health issues or substance misuse. Some young people believe that their role as a carer will prevent them from going to university, however, many universities have specialised support in place as a provision for students with caring responsibilities.

Support services vary between each university so it is critical that students research this before application.

Support for Young Carers can include financial support, such as bursaries, grants or scholarships, academic support, such as flexible deadlines or support in workload management, and health/wellbeing support; most universities have a support team on hand to help with any problems and to provide students with specialised support.

Some universities run a voluntary 'Carer Passport' scheme, this 'passport' identifies a student as a carer. The visible 'passport' may be something like an ID card which the student can present without having to explain their personal circumstances.



UCAS



UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admission Service) is an independent charity which helps students in their transition to higher education.

Students apply to university through UCAS online to secure a place to study on their chosen course. To apply to university through UCAS, the cost is £20 for a single choice, or £25 for multiple choices.

We have included some helpful links in the 'Useful Resources' section to help parents know more about UCAS and how it works.

UCAS TIMELINE

1ST SEPTEMBER

Begin UCAS application and personal statement

15TH JANUARY

Deadline for undergraduate courses, except those with Oct 15th date

25TH FEBRUARY

UCAS Extra Opens

4TH JULY

Last date for Extra choice in Track on UCAS

5TH JULY

Clearing opens

19TH AUGUST

Adjustment Opens

31ST AUGUST

Remaining offer conditions must be met, adjustment ends

PERSONAL STATEMENTS



A personal statement is a supporting document which goes alongside a student's UCAS application.

Before submitting the application, it may be helpful for you to proof-read your child's personal statement to check over the spelling, punctuation, grammar and structure.

There is no set structure for a personal statement, however, we recommend the following 5 sections as a basic structure:

1. Motivation – why does your child want to study this subject?
2. Skills and Knowledge – what skills and knowledge does your child have which will help them with the course?
3. Experiences – does your child have any past experiences such as volunteering or employment which has provided them with additional skills?
4. Research – what does your child know about the university and course?
5. The Future – how does your child hope to use this course to help them in the future?



It is recommended that a UCAS personal statement does not exceed 4000 characters (approximately 500 words or a single A4 page).

If your child writes their draft personal statement on a Word Document initially, this will allow them to monitor the word count (this will also help you when checking spelling, punctuation and grammar).

For a detailed guide on how to write a personal statement, you can find our 'How to Write a Personal Statement' guide in the 'Student Resources' section on our website: futurehy.co.uk



FINANCE



When starting to think about the true cost of university, it's important not to dive in with any misconceptions, outdated facts or wrong information.

Simply put, make sure you know your student finance fact from fiction. Most students will be eligible for a tuition fee loan to cover their tuition fees upfront, provided they meet some basic criteria, so you and your child can push that to the back of your mind.

As for living costs, students should be able to apply for maintenance support that's based on your family's household income.

Once you know what support your child is eligible for, it's time to see how far it needs to stretch. In fact, this might sway your child when it comes to choosing between university choices – especially if they're considering two very similar degree courses at opposite ends of the country.

Don't calculate a budget down to the very penny. Your child should think about having a buffer for any surprise costs that might crop up – spontaneous trips home, say, or fixing a smashed phone screen after a night out. The same goes for any one-off fees, such as a student halls deposit, or membership fees for clubs/societies. For these, it might be worth chatting to some current students (or their parents) to see what sort of costs caught them off-guard.



Banks battle for students' custom with some generous freebies, but make sure your child isn't tempted by ones they'll never actually benefit from.

If your child is travelling back and forth between university and home, it may be worth them opting for an account that offers a free four-year railcard. The 16-25 railcard costs just £30 annually and saves a third on rail fares for a year.

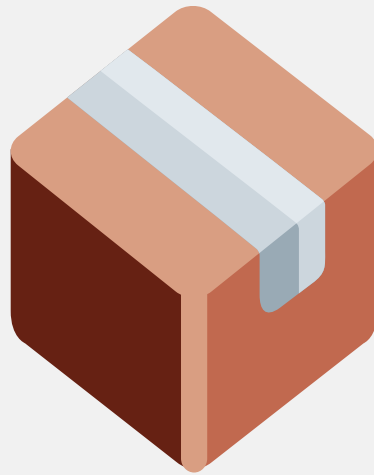
For more useful information on student finance, visit the following websites:

<https://www.ucas.com/money>

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>



WHAT TO TAKE



Kowing what your child should take to university can be tricky, so here are a few essentials you may not have thought of:

- Bedding - x 2 make sure you know the size of the bed before purchasing them and take an extra blanket.
- Medical Kit - any medication your child uses regularly, also Paracetamol, Ibuprofen, bandages, plasters, alcohol wipes, etc.
- Extension Lead - this will be needed for all their tech equipment.

- Hangers - for the wardrobe, but remember the wardrobe space will be quite small.
- Recipe book - simple recipe in a book or on their phone.
- Photos - moving can be hard and they might find they miss you. A couple of frames with family photos in won't go amiss.

For a more extensive list of what to pack, we have included a link in the 'Useful Resources' section to a blog written by a university student.



TOP TIPS

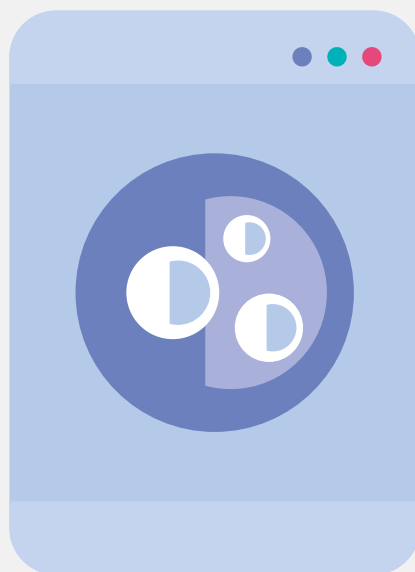


We have put together some helpful top tips below from a parent who has gone through this process before:

Don't panic about results day - if your child doesn't receive the results they were expecting, try to put your own feelings aside and let them know that whatever the verdict, there are plenty of options and you're there to support them. Results are just the beginning of the process and re-marking of exams and UCAS clearing may still secure them their desired place.

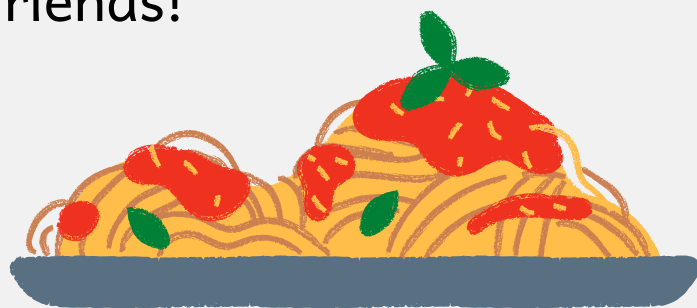
Talk through everyday living expenses with your child and make them aware of hidden costs such as council tax, TV licence and student rail cards. You should also discuss the realities and dangers of using credit cards and overdrafts and give some helpful tips such as taking cash out each week to stay on budget.

Make sure they can do their own laundry - does your child know how to work the washing machine? If not, now is the time to teach them the basics. From separating colours to choosing the right temperature, these simple tips will serve them well and avoid turning all their whites pink!



Streamline what items your child takes with them - check with your child's accommodation about what is included in their room and communal areas. You might not need that wardrobe or desk lamp after all! Also, what you're allowed in one university might not be allowed in another - even a doorstop, while it may pave the way for friendly conversation, it might be a fire safety no-no depending on the university.

Teach them a few simple recipes - knowing how to rustle up a few easy, budget-friendly meals will make the transition to independent living a lot easier. Spend an afternoon going over a few basics together, such as spaghetti bolognese, stir fry or homemade soup, and give them a couple of cookbooks to take with them. Knowing how to cook is a great way to make friends!



Leave some things until the last minute - one flat doesn't need three kettles. Wait until the move-in day to see what other students have brought on the kitchenware front. Or, if it's possible, see if your child can connect with their future housemates beforehand online (such as housing groups on Facebook, Whatsapp groups or on the university's website), so they can plan what they can each bring.



TOP TIP: If a student has a television in their own room at university, they will need to get a TV licence if they want to watch regular TV!



Give them space - once your child has moved in, resist the urge to ring up and ask endless questions about their veg intake and sleep pattern. Give them some space, and if you do want to check in, remind them about important tasks such as signing up to a GP or dentist, especially if they've moved to a university far away.

On the other hand, it is normal for new students to feel homesick in the first few weeks. Help them to stay positive and reassure them that it will get easier. University is all about making mistakes, meeting new people and becoming young adults, so let them enjoy it - warts and all!



USEFUL RESOURCES



Here are some useful resources to help you best support your child:

- www.futurehy.co.uk - great resources for parents and students
- www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/advice-parents-and-guardians/ucas-undergraduate-application-process - everything you need to know about the UCAS application process
- www.ucas.com/parents-signup - sign up for the UCAS parent's newsletter
- www.opendays.com - a really useful open day calendar
- www.gov.uk/student-finance - up to date information on student finance

- www.unitasterdays.com/university-tips/tip/126/how-to-make-the-most-of-a-university-open-day - how to make the most of an open day
- vimeo.com/423526473 - a great video created by the FutureHy team to explain how to make the most of an open day (there is also a transcript on our website)
- www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/advice-for-parents - great advice for parents
- www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/big-list-absolutely-everything-you-need-to-pack - an extensive list of what to pack



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