

WHAT IS...

A UNIVERSITY?

A university is an institution where students study for degrees and where academic research is done. Young people attend university after they have passed their level three qualifications. Students can go straight from school or take a gap year and work or go travelling. Some people go to university later in life and these people are known as mature students. At university, you can study for an undergraduate degree, which typically lasts between three and four years. In the end, you graduate with a bachelor's degree in your chosen subject.

WHAT TO CONSIDER?

- > Do they run the degree that I want to do?
- > Do I want a more practical or theoretical degree?
- > Is it a campus (all (or most) of the university-owned buildings and spaces, such as lecture theatres, student bars and halls of residence, are situated in one place) or city-based (university buildings are scattered throughout the city) university?
- > Is the accommodation expensive?
- > Location – large or small city/ close (or not!) to home/by the sea or inland

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

- > You can study a subject you love. If you have one subject that you want to delve into deeper, a bachelor's degree in that subject is an ideal choice – you'll get to explore it thoroughly with the help of lectures, seminars, tutorials, and a fair number of hours in the library.
- > It keeps your options open. Universities can be a great choice for those who aren't 100% sure about the career they want to pursue yet. English degrees, for example, can lead to a range of career paths, from journalism to teaching, and even digital media. Employers are often more interested in the soft skills (like critical thinking, organisation, and decision-making) you develop during your degree than the subject you study, and there are plenty of sectors (including the Civil Service, marketing, and even accountancy) that'll take on graduates with a degree in any subject. This isn't the case for every career path though: if you want to be a dentist, for example, you'll have to study dentistry. It's worth doing a bit of research before selecting your field of study.
- > University will give you more opportunities to live and study as you would like, compared to other study options. You can continue to live at home if your chosen university is nearby and you want to save on accommodation fees or move to a different city or even a different country, enjoying the student lifestyle that comes with it. This newfound independence is certainly a benefit for some students. Whichever you decide on, all students will have the opportunity to meet new people, explore different places and try new things.

WHAT'S NEXT?

WHAT CAN YOU DO AFTER UNIVERSITY?

- > Study for a postgraduate degree. After you have finished your bachelor's degree you may want to study for a master's degree.
- > Take a gap year. Many students like to take a gap year after they have finished their degree so they can travel and or take a job.
- > Find an internship. An internship is a period of work experience, offered by an organisation, lasting for a fixed period of time anywhere between a week and 12 months. They are typically undertaken by students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills.
- > Find a graduate job. Many companies offer graduate training programmes where you will learn more skills and have training in your chosen field.
- > Find an apprenticeship. Now that you have your degree you could find a level 7 (post-graduate) apprenticeship.
- > Start your own business. You will have picked up lots of skills during your studies and you may be in a position to start your own business.