



Push's Quick Guide to... Choosing a University

Which university is the best?

The one that matches your needs - inside and outside the classroom. There's over 150 traditional universities in the UK, plus The Open University and private universities...and no two are ever the same. It's like choosing a house: there's 100s of factors, and what seems attractive to one person might not seem attractive to another. Be bold enough to go with your personal preference.

Which course is the best?

The one that matches your needs. There are over 70,000 courses in the UK, with over 17,000 course names. Every single one is structured differently - so enjoy working out the style of learning you're most comfortable and effective at. It's worth picking the one that best suits your existing lifestyle, but will also challenge you to develop your skills.

What type of environment motivates you?

Lecture halls? Interactive seminars? Small classes? Group discussion? One-on-one tutorials? Quiet library? Projects with a partner? Left to your own? Work out how much contact time you want, and what type of teacher you like to learn from (you can always arrange to go meet them before applying). It's about what keeps you inspired, from first day to last - and hopefully afterwards when you're pursuing employment.

How do you like to be assessed?

Exams? Coursework? Practical? Ongoing assessment? ...or perhaps a mixture of all of these. Every single course in the UK is different, so be honest with yourself: which one gives you the best possible chance of achieving a grading or assessment that reflects your ability? In general: 'academic' courses are more research based and less job-specific, whereas vocational courses are training you for a specific career. A lot of degrees are a mixture of both. Find out what jobs people can go into, after doing the same degree you're interested in (research employment rates and average salaries for those who complete the course).

What do you like doing when you're not studying?

Yes you're there to learn, but you also need to find somewhere you can detach, and have a lot of fun at. Motivation outside of your degree means motivation inside of class. Find the uni that offers you a range of clubs, societies and leisure facilities that allow you to build a CV and show employers you're more than just a brain. You can explore your hobbies and interests with new friends, and there may even be links with employers, plus part-time work. It's important to think about your mental and physical health too. Uni can be stressful at times, and people can be affected by fatigue, anxiety and homesickness, so find a uni that truly cares for your body as much as you do. And if you've got a disability of any kind, make sure they have everything in place to cater for your needs.

How do you want to live?

You can either choose to live there (student accommodation provided by the uni or through private student housing organisations) or you can choose to live at home and travel in. It's not always cheaper living at home however, as transport costs can soon add up. After first year, most students end up living in houses or flats rented from a private landlord (start by asking your uni for advice on trusted estate agencies that local students use).

Which university guide is best?

There is no 'best' guide, as each guide measures different factors. Rankings and league tables can be incredibly useful, but only as part of a wider pool of research, which should also include university prospectuses and websites (both great but do remember that they may only show you the glossy marketing bits you want to see) and most crucially: visit each place you like the look of. Attend open days and taster events, grill the course leaders about the degree, walk around on your own, explore the local area, check out the travel to & from home, and do ask current students what it's like to study there.



[Here's every UK uni in under 5 mins](#)



[Moj's Choosing a Uni guide](#)