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Supporting students to make choices at 18

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Advancing Access Webinar



What we'll be discussing

- Introduction to Advancing Access
- Appropriate degree subject choice for students
- Choosing a university
- Other sources of information and support
- How to respond to offers



Advancing Access

- A teacher outreach project led by the 24 Russell Group Universities
- This session will provide advice for students considering a wide range of different higher education options but will focus on the Russell Group universities.



Current practice

Have a think about the following things and please write in the chat box your thoughts and reflections:

- How do you currently advise students to make degree subject choices?
- Are there are resources you use or signpost students to e.g. Outreach programmes?
- How do you think your approach could be improved?



What we suggest

- Outreach programmes/Summer Schools
- Open Days
- University campus visit
- Talks (virtual and in person)
- Work experience
- Research e.g. university websites, UCAS



How do students normally make their choices?

- Usually students make a degree subject choice in the following ways:

Career-based choices

- ✓ Career in mind, makes them think what qualifications they will need

Interest-based choices

- ✓ Student chooses a course that they enjoy and are interested in



What leads students to their decision?

- Talk from a university
- Attending an Open Day
- Outreach programme e.g. summer school
- Hobby which leads to interest in a topic
- Speaking to someone about a course
- Family/peer influence



Things you should be (and probably already are) encouraging students to do:

- Research the modules for each course they want to apply for
- If a student is torn between two subjects, consider a joint honours degree
- Flexibility and graduate entry to courses (for example Law and Medicine)
- Degree/job quiz to check it's right for them and their goals
- Encourage students to ask questions



www.informedchoices.ac.uk

- Useful website which allows students to see which degree courses they may be able to access given the A Levels they are studying
- Website suggests possible courses, including those which have no specific subject requirements



Having a degree is still a safe bet in the jobs market

- Graduates are more likely to be in employment and earn more than non-graduates over a lifetime
- More jobs are asking for degrees as part of their 'required' rather than 'desirable' sections



Conversations you may be having with students

- ‘I want to go study Medicine but my grades aren’t high enough’
- ‘My parents want me to study ... at university but I don’t want to study that’
- ‘I’m predicted one grade off? Do you think I’ll get an offer’
- ‘I’ve been rejected from 3 of my choices and I don’t really like the other two?’

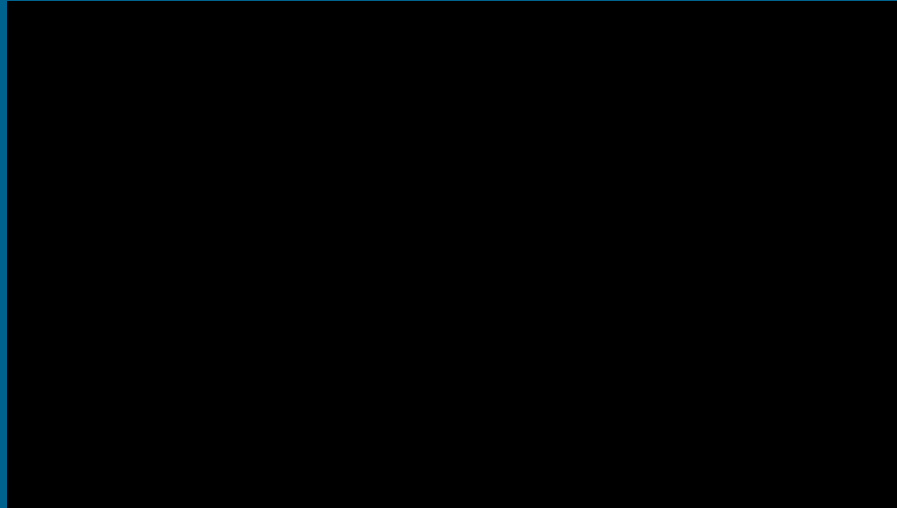


What about degree apprenticeships? What are they?

- Degree apprenticeships allow students to complete an apprenticeship and also achieve a degree level qualification at the same time
- Degree apprentices are employed by a company/organisation and spend most of their time working, but also some time studying at university
- Every course is structured differently
- Apprenticeships get paid a salary and there are no tuition fees to pay
- Apprenticeships typically last between 3 – 6 years



Level 6 Degree Apprenticeship example – University of Birmingham



Should I apply for a degree or a degree apprenticeship?!



- Students can apply for both if they'd like
- Young people must consider if they want to be a student or an employee
- There are pros and cons of both, individual's preference



Other considerations when deciding if a degree apprenticeship is right

- Financial considerations
- Apprentices don't pay tuition fees at all, however, traditional degree students don't have to pay anything upfront
- An apprentice gets paid a salary by the employer
- Students shouldn't make a big life decision on the basis of money alone
- A degree apprenticeship could take longer to complete



Advancing Access: Blog

There are several different blogs available on Advancing Access including one on Degree Apprenticeships. Other topics include:

- Vocational qualifications
- How to ensure students make the most of the support available at university
- How to support students applying to university



Moving on – Choosing a university



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Campus vs City

Location

Graduate employability

What to consider when choosing a university?

Learning environment

Entry requirements

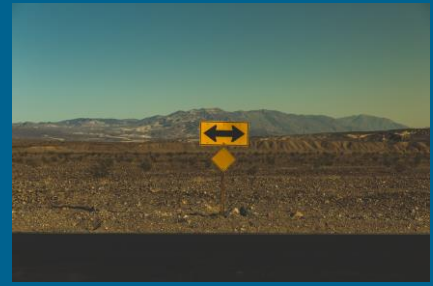
Subjects/Courses available

University reputation



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Differences between universities?



- Universities can differ in many ways such as, the content they teach, assessment methods, availability of work experience, teaching styles, career prospects and more
- I always say to students make sure you check the modules at the universities you want to apply for. It might say Geography on all of your options but actually what you learn at each university may be different



In the chat...

1. Are there reasons why you might hesitate to recommend a more competitive university to a student?
2. What could your school/college do to encourage more students to apply for more competitive universities?



Here's how you can advise students

Some students may not meet the entry requirements for more selective universities...what would you suggest?

- Contextual offers – e.g. based on postcode, other factors through Outreach programmes
- Foundation year programmes
- Many leading universities participate in Clearing.



Videos to share with students

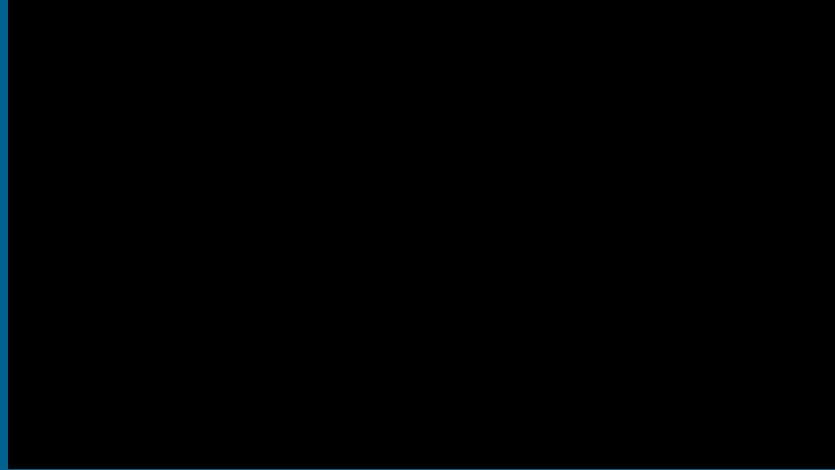
- Advancing Access have a lot of videos on different topics
- Here is a video from a University of Birmingham student



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Choosing a university and course – Case Study



Tools to help students make their decisions

- Tables, graphs, comparison lists
- Websites e.g. Discover Uni
- Career quizzes
- Work experience opportunities including in school experience e.g. prefect, leading a group etc.



Summary – Choosing a University

- Advise students on different factors to research e.g. websites
- Encourage them to visit Open Days
- Discuss programmes they could attend e.g. Summer Schools
- Look through their options with them



Responding to offers



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Different types of offers

- *Conditional offers* – conditions students need to meet to get their place confirmed (double check the specific detail e.g. grade A in particular subject)
- *Unsuccessful offer* – Sometimes a reason is given. Student can contact to ask if they'll discuss why the application was unsuccessful
- *Withdrawn* – Either the student or the university/college may do this



Unconditional offers

Less common now but previously were quite common. Some universities provided unconditional offers and the pitfalls to avoid were:

- Students not trying as hard and having to catch up once at university
- A Level results on their CV may understate their potential
- Students may get into bad study habits (e.g. first year doesn't count)
- Student may re apply to a different course if they change their mind



Advice to give students if all applications were rejected

- This does happen to other students
- They may be able to add another choice through UCAS Extra if all 5 choices did not accept the student
- UCAS Extra is a free service available to apply for a course one at a time between 25th Feb – 4th July



Resources and IAG

- Plenty of resources online (including on Advancing Access) to help students make the right decision for them
- University websites, prospectuses, Open Days, Outreach Schemes
- League Tables
- UCAS
- Careers/HE Fairs



Thank you for listening and useful websites

- Advancing Access
- Pathways to Birmingham and A2B Scheme
- UCAS
- Discover Uni

