

PLAN YOUR PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT
UNIVERSITY AND COURSE FOR YOU



NAME

SCHOOL

DATE STARTED



RESEARCH YOUR WAY

TOWARDS YOUR FUTURE



FIND OUT MORE...

EXPLORE DIFFERENT TYPES OF HE LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS AT WWW.GROWS.AC.UK/PROSPECTS

YOU MIGHT JUST HAVE STARTED SIXTH FORM OR COLLEGE. YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN THERE A WHILE. EITHER WAY, YOU'RE PROBABLY BEGINNING TO THINK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE GOALS.

You might know exactly what you want to do or you may still have no idea! While it's fine to be at either stage – or somewhere in between – it's also important to plan ahead. The more research you do now, the more prepared you will be when it comes when making the next set of decisions.

One option is to continue on to university study, also known as higher education (HE). For most

people this means studying at a university or college. This workbook will help you explore the different higher education providers and courses; it will also show you how to research the best options for you. There's a lot of information out there and this workbook will help you find and use the information you need to support your choices.

This booklet contains tasks to help you to consider which subject you might want to study, and what is important to you when deciding which university to go to. Even if you have a good idea of the subject you want to study, the exercises in this book will help you make sure you're on the right track.

WHAT IS A HE LEVEL QUALIFICATION?

There are more than 50,000 courses available to you and the key to finding the right one is research. You are currently studying Level 3 courses, such as A Levels and BTECs. The next level up, is higher education which is the study of qualifications at level 4 or above. The different types of qualifications vary so understanding how they work will help you decide which one suits you best.

+ BACHELORS OR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE

This is a first degree and a Level 6 qualification. You can study full-time or part-time, usually over three years. Some degrees take four years as they include a year-long employment placement.

+ FOUNDATION DEGREE

A flexible vocational qualification combining university level study with workplace learning. It is often the same as a first and second year of a bachelors or undergraduate degree.

+ HNC/HND

These provide work-related study at higher and further education colleges and are designed to give you the skills for a particular job. HNC is a one-year course and HND is a two-year course.

+ HIGHER/DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

They combine paid work with part-time study and are designed in partnership with employers.

LEVEL				
8	Doctorate PhD			
7	Master's Degree MA, MSc	Degree Apprenticeships		
6	Undergraduate Degree BA, BSc	Higher Apprenticeships		
5		Foundation Degree FdA, FdSc	Higher National Diploma HND	
4		Higher National Certificate HNC		

UNIVERSITY

YOUR OPTIONS FOR THE LEVEL COURSES

IT IS IMPORTANT TO DECIDE WHICH TYPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION COURSE MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR YOU. A SINGLE HONOURS DEGREE IS THE MOST POPULAR CHOICE.

If you can't decide between two subjects then you could study both in a joint honours or in a major/minor format. If you think you might want to get some experience in the workplace, consider a course that includes a year out in industry; this is known as a sandwich course.

If you are motivated to work and learn at the same time then a degree / higher apprenticeship could be an option.

TOP TIP...



EACH UNIVERSITY COURSE CONSISTS OF DIFFERENT MODULES OR TOPIC AREAS.

THESE CAN VARY WIDELY FROM ONE UNIVERSITY TO ANOTHER, EVEN WITH DEGREES THAT HAVE THE SAME OR SIMILAR NAMES.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT THE MODULES OFFERED ON DIFFERENT COURSES TO HELP YOU DECIDE THE RIGHT COURSE FOR YOU.

WHEN IT COMES TO UNIVERSITY LEVEL COURSES, THERE IS SOMETHING TO SUIT EVERYONE...

+ SINGLE HONOURS

You study one subject, usually for three years (sometimes more depending on the subject). This gives the opportunity to specialise in one subject in more depth.

+ JOINT HONOURS

You study two subjects equally. You would divide your time 50:50 between both subjects. This offers the chance to study two subjects in equal depth.

+ MAJOR/MINOR

You study two subjects, usually at a 75:25 ratio. This gives you the opportunity to study two subjects but specialise more in one than the other.

+ COMBINED HONOURS PROGRAMME

You study between two and four subjects, specialising in just two subjects in years two and three. This offers the chance to study a number of subjects, then narrow your area of focus once you have had a taster of your options.

+ MODULAR COURSES

You build a personalised course by choosing modules you're interested in. This provides the opportunity to build a course around the areas you are most interested in.

+ SANDWICH COURSES

You study a single or joint honours course but with one year in industry or a year abroad. These generally take four years and allow you to gain work experience as well as knowledge.

+ FOUNDATION YEAR

If you don't have the right qualification grades, some universities and colleges offer this to help students prepare for and enter higher education. This can either be done as a standalone course or as part of a full bachelor's degree.

YOU AND

YOUR CHOICES

EVERYONE IS IN A DIFFERENT POSITION WHEN IT COMES TO THINKING ABOUT THE NEXT STAGE. IT IS USEFUL TO CONSIDER WHERE YOU CURRENTLY ARE BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR RESEARCH. THIS WILL GIVE YOU A STARTING POINT...

WHERE ARE YOU AT?

TICK THE STATEMENTS ON EACH ROW THAT MOST CLOSELY MATCH HOW YOU FEEL RIGHT NOW ABOUT YOUR FUTURE. WHEN YOU'RE DONE, READ ON TO DISCOVER WHAT STAGE YOU'RE AT AND FIND OUT WHAT TO DO NEXT TO HELP YOU FOCUS ON YOUR FUTURE.



	+ A	+ B	+ C
1.	I really want to go to university but I don't know what to study <input type="radio"/>	I think I want to study something to do with a particular subject but am not sure what yet <input type="radio"/>	I have enjoyed learning about a particular topic on my course (e.g. marketing within a business course) and I would like to focus on something to do with that <input type="radio"/>
2.	I'm finding it hard to know what to choose as I don't know what job I want to do in the future <input type="radio"/>	I am interested in a particular subject but not sure what courses there are <input type="radio"/>	I know what subject I would like to study but I need some help to find the right course for me <input type="radio"/>
3.	I just don't know where to start as there is so much to choose from <input type="radio"/>	I really enjoy two of my A-level subjects but am not sure which one to choose to study at university <input type="radio"/>	I know I want to study a particular subject but would like to know which universities offer this subject <input type="radio"/>

MOSTLY COLUMN A

You like the idea of continuing in education beyond 18 but don't have any ideas yet about what you want to study or where you want to go.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Try doing the SACU test to help you to discover your interests, what courses might suit you as well as where you can study these. Use the SACU task on page 4 to help you with this.

MOSTLY COLUMN B

You are interested in a broad topic area or several topic areas, such as business, computing or design, but do not know which specific course to study.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Consider which areas of your current courses interest you the most - use the first task on page 4 to help you with this. So for example, you were currently studying Business Management and the parts you enjoy most are the topics on Accounting. It would be worth researching studying a degree in Accounting.

MOSTLY COLUMN C

You know what subject(s) you want to study but don't know where you want to study them.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

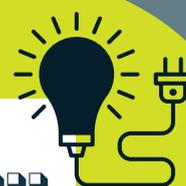
Explore which universities offer the subject you are interested in and use the task on page 7 to help you to decide what is important to you when choosing where to study. Websites like UCAS and WhatUni can help you to find out which universities offer courses in the subject you are interested in.

A MIXTURE OF COLUMNS

It might be that you have an idea of where you would like to study but don't know which subject yet. Or maybe you have a particular career in mind but don't know what subjects you need to do this. Work your way through the tasks in this booklet to help you get the answers you need.

THINKING ABOUT YOUR CURRENT STUDIES

TOP TIP...



GO TO WWW.UCAS.COM AND ENTER YOUR PREDICTED GRADES TO FILTER POTENTIAL COURSES.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY?

TO DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO STUDY AT UNIVERSITY, IT IS USEFUL TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE ALREADY DOING AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW MUCH YOU ENJOY IT. ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW TO CONSIDER HOW THE SUBJECTS YOU ARE STUDYING AT THE MOMENT COULD INFLUENCE WHAT YOU STUDY NEXT.



	NAMES OF SUBJECTS CURRENTLY TAKING	CIRCLE LEVEL OF ENJOYMENT WITH 5 BEING 'I LOVE THIS SUBJECT' AND 1 BEING 'I DISLIKE THIS SUBJECT'	LIST ANY INDIVIDUAL TOPICS WITHIN YOUR MAIN SUBJECT THAT YOU PARTICULARLY ENJOY
1		1 2 3 4 5	
2		1 2 3 4 5	
3		1 2 3 4 5	
4		1 2 3 4 5	

Use the space below to note down any other subjects you enjoy (perhaps ones you took at GCSE but are not currently studying), any hobbies or activities you do outside of school and any future jobs you would like to do.

SACU QUIZ

www.grows.ac.uk/SACU is a great online resource that can help you explore subject options based on your preferences. **Sign-up and take the career quiz - it's easy, fun and spookily accurate for lots of people.** It will result in two word-clouds - one for subjects and one for careers. You can click on any of the words to find lots more information.

Top 5 subjects of interest

Top 5 careers of interest

In SACU you can also enter your A-level subjects to discover what previous students who studied the same subjects as you went on to study at degree level.



TASK

COMPLETE THE A-LEVEL MATCH TOOL.
TOP 5 DEGREE SUBJECTS MATCHED...



WHAT ELSE

INTERESTS YOU?

NOW YOU'VE FOUND SOME NEW SUBJECT AREAS OF INTEREST, MAKE A LIST OF THOSE SUBJECTS.

UNDER EACH HEADING, SEE IF YOU CAN THINK OF ANYTHING MORE SPECIFIC THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU WITHIN THAT SUBJECT AREA.

+ NEW SUBJECT 1	+ NEW SUBJECT 2	+ NEW SUBJECT 3
Example: SPORT		
+ TOPICS OF INTEREST	+ TOPICS OF INTEREST	+ TOPICS OF INTEREST
Example: Biomechanics Anatomy Nutrition		

FIND OUT MORE...

VISIT [DISCOVERUNI.GOV.UK/ HOW-DO-I-CHOOSE-COURSE](http://DISCOVERUNI.GOV.UK/HOW-DO-I-CHOOSE-COURSE) TO FIND HINTS AND TIPS ON HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT COURSE FOR YOU.

Now that you have found a range of subjects you might be suited to, it's time to look at specific courses.

You may have noted some when you looked at the SACU Clouds, but there are plenty more resources to help you understand what is involved in particular courses and subject guides. **They include:**

www.theuniguide.co.uk

www.ucas.com

www.whatuni.com

Remember that even courses with the same name can be very different.

Read the sentences below and tick the ones that reflect what is important to you. This will help you target the information you need.

SPECIFIC MODULES STUDIED ON THE COURSE



THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY ABROAD



A SUBJECT/COURSE NEEDED TO PURSUE YOUR CHOSEN CAREER



A COURSE THAT OFFERS A WORK PLACEMENT



A COURSE /SUBJECT YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT



THE ASSESSMENT METHODS USED ON THE COURSE E.G. EXAMS OR PRACTICAL WORK



A COURSE WITH GOOD EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS



THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY MORE THAN ONE SUBJECT



HIGHER EDUCATION

PROVIDERS

NOW YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF WHICH SUBJECT(S) YOU MIGHT STUDY, YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT WHERE TO STUDY.

THIS IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT AS THERE IS NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' WHEN IT COMES TO HIGHER EDUCATION. EACH INSTITUTION HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE SELLING POINTS SO IT'S JUST AS IMPORTANT TO RESEARCH THE UNIVERSITY AS THE COURSES IT OFFERS.

THERE ARE OVER 130 UNIVERSITIES IN THE UK; HERE ARE SOME OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES.

CAMPUS BASED

All of the facilities, accommodation and teaching are in one place, usually slightly outside a city/town centre. Some universities have multiple campuses so it is important to check which one your course takes place on.

CITY BASED

All of the facilities, accommodation and teaching are spread around a city centre.

NEW/MODERN UNIVERSITIES

Generally in existence for less than 50-100 years. They tend to offer a wider range of subjects, including more practical and vocational courses.

SPECIALIST UNIVERSITIES

These specialise in a particular area of study e.g. music, arts, agriculture.

RUSSELL GROUP

A group of 24 universities that are generally ranked highly in the league tables. They have higher-than-average entry requirements and are sometimes referred to as 'selective' because they select the highest achieving students.

OXBRIDGE – THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

The two oldest, most prestigious and most highly ranked universities in the UK. They offer traditional, academic courses and have high entry requirements

FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) COLLEGES

Some FE colleges offer higher education level courses, usually with lower entry requirements than other HE institutions.



FIND OUT MORE...



RESEARCH MORE ABOUT THE TYPES OF UNIVERSITIES AND HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT ONE FOR YOU:

WWW.THECOMPLETEUNIVERSITYGUIDE.CO.UK/STUDENT-ADVICE/WHERE-TO-STUDY/CHOOSING-A-UNIVERSITY

WHAT MATTERS

TO YOU?

WHEN DECIDING WHICH UNIVERSITY TO GO TO, IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THE THINGS THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU.

FOR EXAMPLE, DO YOU WANT TO STUDY IN A LARGE CITY? DO YOU WANT A UNIVERSITY THAT HAS GOOD STUDENT SUPPORT? IS LOCATION THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR SO YOU CAN STAY LOCAL OR MOVE FAR AWAY? TAKING THESE THINGS INTO ACCOUNT WILL HELP YOU FOCUS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU AREN'T TOO SURE WHERE TO BEGIN.

YOUR PRIORITIES

IN THE LIST BELOW, TICK ALL OF THE POINTS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU. THEN RANK THE TOP FIVE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS FROM ALL THE POINTS YOU HAVE TICKED.

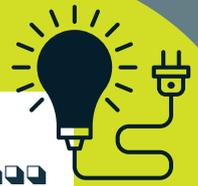


LOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY E.G. CLOSE TO / FAR AWAY FROM HOME / SET DISTANCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD FACILITIES E.G. ACCOMMODATION, LIBRARY, SPORT, TEACHING, LEISURE ETC.	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOOD ON-SITE STUDENT ACCOMMODATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	VARIETY OF CLUBS AND SOCIETIES E.G. SPORTS TEAMS, LEGO, MUSIC, GAMING ETC.	<input type="checkbox"/>
TYPE OF UNIVERSITY E.G. CAMPUS / CITY BASED	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD QUALITY SUPPORT SERVICES E.G. DISABILITY, CAREERS, COUNSELLING SUPPORT	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGHLY RANKED UNIVERSITY IN LEAGUE TABLES	<input type="checkbox"/>	SOCIAL LIFE E.G. NIGHTLIFE, OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET NEW PEOPLE	<input type="checkbox"/>
UNIVERSITY WITH A GOOD REPUTATION E.G. HIGH STUDENT SATISFACTION RATE	<input type="checkbox"/>	PART TIME JOB AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE	<input type="checkbox"/>
SIZE OF THE UNIVERSITY E.G. 30,000+ STUDENTS/ A FEW HUNDRED STUDENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOCAL AREA E.G. SHOPPING, ACTIVITIES, CLOSE TO COUNTRYSIDE OR OTHER TOWNS AND CITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRADITIONAL OR HISTORIC / CONTEMPORARY BUILDINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOCAL TRANSPORT LINKS	<input type="checkbox"/>
UNIVERSITY WITH GOOD EMPLOYMENT TRENDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	LIVING COSTS FOR THE AREA E.G. LIVING IN LONDON CAN BE MORE EXPENSIVE	<input type="checkbox"/>

BRING ALL YOUR

RESEARCH TOGETHER

TOP TIP...



CREATE A UCAS ACCOUNT AND SAVE ALL YOUR SEARCHES AND CREATE YOUR OWN HUB.

YOUR COURSE RESEARCH LOG

RECORD THE SUBJECT AREAS THAT INTEREST YOU, THE COURSES WITHIN THAT SUBJECT AREA YOU COULD DO, AND THE PROS AND CONS OF THESE.



	SUBJECT AREA	COURSES WITHIN THAT SUBJECT THAT APPEAL TO YOU	WHAT ABOUT THIS INTERESTS YOU?	IS THERE ANYTHING YOU DON'T LIKE ABOUT IT?
1				
2				
3				
4				

NOW, DECIDE ON YOUR CHOSEN COURSE AREAS TO DO FURTHER RESEARCH.

YOU WILL HAVE FIVE OPTIONS ON YOUR UCAS FORM. YOU CAN INCLUDE FIVE SIMILAR COURSES, OR FIVE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ONES (BUT DO THINK ABOUT HOW YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT CAN COVER ALL YOUR COURSE CHOICES). YOU NEED TO PULL YOUR THOUGHTS TOGETHER NOW, AND START LOOKING AT SPECIFIC COURSES AND UNIVERSITIES. ALWAYS START WITH THE COURSE, USE [UCAS.COM](https://www.ucas.com) TO SEARCH WHERE THOSE COURSES ARE TAUGHT, IT WILL ALWAYS GIVE YOU THE LIST IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER SO ADD ADDITIONAL FILTERS SUCH AS CERTAIN REGIONS OR DISTANCE FROM HOME.



TASK

My predicted grades are:

This equates to these UCAS points (go to UCAS tariff calculator and put in grades:



BRING ALL YOUR RESEARCH TOGETHER

NOW THAT YOU HAVE HAD A LOOK AT THE DIFFERENT SUBJECTS THAT INTEREST YOU AND THE PRIORITIES YOU HAVE WHEN PICKING A UNIVERSITY YOU CAN START TO PUT ALL OF THIS TOGETHER TO PICK A SPECIFIC COURSE AT VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES.

TO ASSIST YOUR RESEARCH AND TO HELP CREATE YOURSELF A SHORTLIST, USE THE TABLE BELOW TO PUT TOGETHER A 'CASE' FOR EACH UNIVERSITY / COURSE.

IN THE TABLE BELOW, SELECT FIVE POTENTIAL COURSES AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS TO HELP DETERMINE WHETHER THESE COURSES REFLECT YOUR PRIORITIES.

+ OPTION 1	+ OPTION 2	+ OPTION 3	+ OPTION 4	+ OPTION 5
COURSE...	COURSE...	COURSE...	COURSE...	COURSE...
.....
STUDIED AT...	STUDIED AT...	STUDIED AT...	STUDIED AT...	STUDIED AT...
.....
Entry requirements				
Do the course requirements match your predicted/actual grades? Consider a mixture of different options, i.e. some courses that are above your grades, some that match and one that is lower as a backup.				
Course content				
Does the course subject and content match your interests and potential career aspirations?				
Work experience				
Does the university or college offer placements or internship opportunities?				
Assessment				
How will the course be assessed? Think about whether you prefer exams or coursework and check how modules are assessed.				
Delivery methods				
How is the course taught? What teaching methods would suit your preferred learning style best?				
Location				
Where is the course based? Is it closer to home or further away? What kind of campus you would like to attend?				
Fees and costs				
Are there any additional costs you may have to pay as part of the course, such as materials or field trips?				
Financial support				
Are there any scholarships or bursaries available for the course?				
Additional support				
Does the university or college provide any additional support that you may need? Eg, if you have a disability, or if you are a care leaver or estranged from your family.				

MY SHORTLIST OF COURSES / UNIVERSITIES

	+ NAME OF COURSE	+ NAME OF COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	+ DATES OF OPEN DAYS
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

COURSE CHECKLIST

USE THE FOLLOWING LIST TO ENSURE YOUR CHOICES MATCH YOUR PASSIONS, ASPIRATIONS AND CAREER GOALS.

- + **Is this a subject you enjoy?** Remember, you are investing time, money, and effort
- + **Is the course right for your career path?**
Check with employers
- + **Location** - How near home, a city centre or the countryside will you be?
- + **How will you get to and from the college/university** if it is far away, or local?
- + **Does the study style suit you?** Is it academic or more vocational/practical?
- + **Finances** - how much does it cost to live in that area?
- + **Which modules are the most interesting and relevant to your career aspirations?**
- + **How many lectures are there per week?** How much group work will be done in seminars?
- + **What combination of exams, coursework or presentations is the course assessed by?**
- + **Who are the tutors** and are they experts in areas you want to learn about?
- + **What subject areas does the university specialise in?**
- + **Can you study abroad or get help with work placements?**
- + **Does the college/university have sports facilities or a range of societies to join?**

WHAT TO DO NEXT

You've spent a lot of time researching where and what to study - well done! Your next step will be the application process, which involves writing your personal statement.

The GROWS personal statement activity workbook will help you with this.

Get a copy at www.grows.ac.uk/pstat

Found this booklet useful? Complete our quick feedback form www.grows.ac.uk/eval

FIND OUT MORE...

WWW.GROWS.AC.UK CONTAINS LOTS OF USEFUL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR YOU AND YOUR PARENTS ABOUT FE AND HE BOTH LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY.

HAVE YOU SEEN 'YOUR FUTURE, YOUR CHOICES!' BOOKLET? DOWNLOAD AT WWW.GROWS.AC.UK/YOURFUTURE

FIND OUT MORE...



+ GROWS

www.grows.ac.uk

GROWS have put together a bank of useful websites to support you with where to look when doing your research.

Useful when: You aren't too sure where to start and want something which signposts you to websites designed to provide you with more information

+ THE UNI GUIDE

www.theuniguide.com

Impartial advice and guidance on different courses and universities.

Useful when: You want to find courses based on what you are currently studying or are interested in.

+ DISCOVER UNI

www.discoveruni.gov.uk

Official website for comparing UK higher education course data.

Useful when: You know what you want to study and have a shortlist of colleges/universities.



+ SACU

www.grows.ac.uk/sacu

An independent and impartial source of careers information. Take the Careers Quiz to be matched with HE courses and careers.

Useful when: You still not sure of the subjects / courses you want to do.

+ UCAS

www.ucas.com

The official website for applying to universities and colleges. Find information about all courses available in the UK and where these can be studied.

Useful when: You know a subject area, or even the exact course you want to study, but don't know where to study.

+ WHAT UNI

www.whatuni.com

Information about all universities and courses available. Provides profiles for every UK university based on a number of different priorities, including job prospects, courses and facilities.

Useful for: Generating course ideas based on what you currently study or are interested in.

+ OPEN DAYS

www.opendays.com

Lists dates of upcoming open days for all UK universities. Also features advice and top tips on how to make the most of an open day.

Useful when: You're planning open day visits as well as preparing so you can make the most of each visit.

+ UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE WEBSITES

Each one has its own website and social media pages detailing courses and facilities.

Useful when: You want to find out more about a specific university you're interested in applying to.

+ UNI TASTER DAYS

www.unitasterdays.com

A directory of university events

Useful when: You want to find out more about HE in general or a specific institution.

+ PROSPECTS

www.prospects.ac.uk

Advice on graduate careers.

Useful when: You want to see what types of jobs you could do with your chosen degree subject. Also provides a number of different job profiles.

