

The image features a purple rectangular logo in the top left corner with the text 'MANCHESTER' in white and '1824' in yellow below it. Below the logo, the text 'The University of Manchester' is written in a smaller white font. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a young woman with blonde hair and a young man with brown hair, both smiling and looking at each other. They are standing in front of a stone archway. In the background, a red and white double-decker bus is visible on a street. In the foreground, there are out-of-focus purple and yellow flowers.

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

An applicant's journey: **a guide for parents and supporters**



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Welcome

With more than 34,000 courses available at over 330 different higher education institutions across the UK, making the correct decision about which course to study at which university can be bewildering for any applicant. Whilst ultimately the decision must be made by the applicant, as a parent or supporter you can offer valuable support and make the journey to higher education much easier to navigate.

At The University of Manchester we value the vital role parents or supporters play at all stages in the applicant's journey to higher education, from supporting learners when choosing a university and course right through to leaving home and settling into university.

This guide is intended to support you in this role. It identifies the key milestones of the applicant journey and signposts the information and advice at each stage.





Why go to university?

There are many reasons that students may decide to go to university:

To study a particular subject in more depth.

An applicant may already enjoy a particular subject at school, or they may want to branch out and learn about a new subject area.

The career an applicant is interested in may require a degree level qualification.

To become a doctor, town planner, teacher, lawyer or chemical engineer you are required to have a degree in these disciplines. An applicant may also be interested in one of the many jobs that are only open to people with degrees. By attending university students gain higher level qualifications and develop new skills and interests that are highly sought after by graduate employers.

For the university experience.

Higher education is not just about studying, it provides access to opportunities that enables students to expand their horizons, make new friends, and meet people from a variety of countries and backgrounds. Students may also have the opportunity to study abroad, spend a year in industry, and play for university sports team.

Key Fact – Graduates have greater earning potential.

According to the 2011 report from the Office for National Statistics, the average earnings of a graduate was £12,000 a year more compared to a non graduate.

Applicant journey

Action		Key dates
1	Research courses and universities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend UCAS Conventions and University Open Days Speak to teachers and discuss predicated grades – make realistic choices Decide which five universities to apply to Explore subject choices and careers paths by attending University Discovery Days. 	Year 12 and beginning of Year 13
2	Complete the UCAS application form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather together qualifications achieved and currently undertaking Write a personal statement Teachers to write student academic reference to support student's application Submit application form to UCAS Sit any additional entry admissions tests (e.g. UKCAT/BMAT for Medicine/Dentistry). 	Summer of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 1 September - the UCAS application cycle opens 15 October - deadline for application to Oxford or Cambridge and courses in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science 15 January - deadline UK/EU applicants to be guaranteed equal consideration. Students are advised to apply before this deadline.
3	Wait for decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers/declines/invitations to interviews start to arrive – check UCAS track Attend interview and university visit days to help make an informed choice on which university to attend. UCAS Extra opens in February for students who have declined all their offers or not received any. 	Receive confirmation of university decisions from UCAS September onwards (depending on when UCAS form submitted). Please note that the length of time varies across all institutions.
4	Accept/decline offers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform UCAS of firm/first choice and insurance/second choice. 	End of April/May Students will be informed by UCAS of exact deadline
5	Results day If: Firm choice grades met – wait for confirmation of place from UCAS/university Or: Firm choice grades not met – check with firm choice university; if not accepted contact insurance choice.	Mid August
6	Firm/insurance choice grades not met or no offers held – enter Clearing • Contact universities with vacancies .	On and after results day
7	Firm choice grades met and exceeded – students may be eligible for Adjustment • Contact universities with vacancies available through Adjustment to ask about options available.	On and after results day If a student chooses Adjustment, they have five calendar days to find an alternative place.



Researching options

With over 34,000 courses available in the UK at over 330 different higher education institutions, choosing just one course and university is a daunting task. Applicants should keep an open mind, and review their options thoroughly.

Key questions to ask

- ▶ What course does the applicant want to study?
- ▶ What type of university does the applicant want to study at?
- ▶ What student support and facilities are available?

In the following sections we suggest key topics to investigate when researching options for higher education.

Choosing a course

There are a number of key questions applicants should consider when choosing a university course:

- ▶ What grades are required?
- ▶ Does the university have a good reputation for that course?
- ▶ How is the course taught?
- ▶ What modules are available?
- ▶ How much contact time is there?
- ▶ How much independent/private study is expected?
- ▶ What teaching and learning facilities are available to students?
- ▶ Can you study abroad or gain work experience whilst studying the course?
- ▶ What careers can the course lead to – what are the most popular careers for graduates of the course?
- ▶ Does the course have professional accreditation? Is this important for the chosen career pathway?
- ▶ Is it a course that they will enjoy studying?



Key facts about Manchester

- Manchester is a founding member of the Russell Group, a collaboration of 24 of the UK's leading research intensive universities.
- The quality of our teaching and the impact of our research are the cornerstones to our success. The Shanghai Jiao Tong University Academic Ranking of World Universities assesses the best teaching and research universities, and in 2012 we were ranked 5th in the UK, 7th in Europe and 40th in the world.
- Manchester boasts 25 Nobel Prize winners among our current and former staff and students and has more Nobel Laureates than any other UK university.
- The University of Manchester has the largest student community in the UK, with over 27,000 undergraduate students.
- We offer more than 400 degree programmes. For a full list of courses, including entry requirements please see: **www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses**
- In addition to their course, students at Manchester have the option to participate in the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning. Students are offered course units that showcase the breadth and depth of research and knowledge found at the University and encourage students to go beyond the boundaries of their degree programme. For more information please see: **www.college.manchester.ac.uk**
- Many of our courses offer students the opportunity to study abroad as part of their degree programme or have a year in industry.
- Manchester offers a number of professional accredited courses, for example the Psychology BSc is accredited by The British Psychological Society, which is essential for a professional psychology career, and the Town and Country Planning MTCP course has professional recognition by the Royal Town Planning Institute.



Case Study:

Choosing a university

Dr Tim Westlake
Director for the
Student Experience



Part of my job for the last two decades has been to provide advice and guidance to young people applying to University, so that should mean supporting my own daughter, Freya, should be easy, shouldn't it! Of course there is additional pressure this time, as I will have to live with the consequences of my advice!

I have always argued that by far the most important decision for students is finding the right course for them, rather than the right university. My experience is that the vast majority of students will have an amazing time at university, but the key is also getting an excellent degree and that usually means selecting the right course. This requires a huge amount of research into the content of a degree programmes and also, as importantly, the career prospects after graduation. Parents have a crucial role to play in supporting their children in selecting the right course for them (and not selecting the right course for the parents!). With Freya the course she wants to study at University was actually the easy bit, for a long time she has wanted to study psychology.

Once a student has selected the right course for them, the next challenge is identify the right university. I would always recommend when selecting a university to consider balancing its status with its location. Most students want to study in the highest

status university for their chosen subject (difficult to measure with so many contradictory league tables!) but this must be balanced with location. I believe I succeeded academically because I found the right course first (I have always loved human geography and that is why I studied town planning and this allowed me to focus on the one subject I always did well in at school), in the right location for me and (by chance) the University was number one in my subject area.

For Freya having a father who has a detailed understanding of how all the different university league tables are compiled was probably a pain! Freya and I set about looking at every league table on psychology and selecting the ones we thought were the top 20. We then had a detailed discussion about each location and she looked at lots of websites. She then went to lots of Open Days across the country and those visits really helped. Universities she thought she would not like, she loved and our first choice from the web never got into her top 5, so visiting before putting them down on the application form is crucial.

Like all parents, I hope Freya gets the grades and goes to her first choice university, but I keep reminding her that wherever she ends up she will have an amazing experience at university (and once there I will be reminding her she needs to also get a good degree!).



Choosing a university

UK students can choose from a wide variety of universities and colleges, so researching the options available is vital. Most undergraduate courses are at least three years long so students need to ensure that they make an informed decision.

Key questions

- ▶ Does the university offer the course the applicant wishes to study? Not all universities offer all courses.
- ▶ Is the university based in a town or a city?
- ▶ Is it a campus based university?
- ▶ How easy is it to get to the university from home?
- ▶ Does the city have good transport links?

Key facts about Manchester

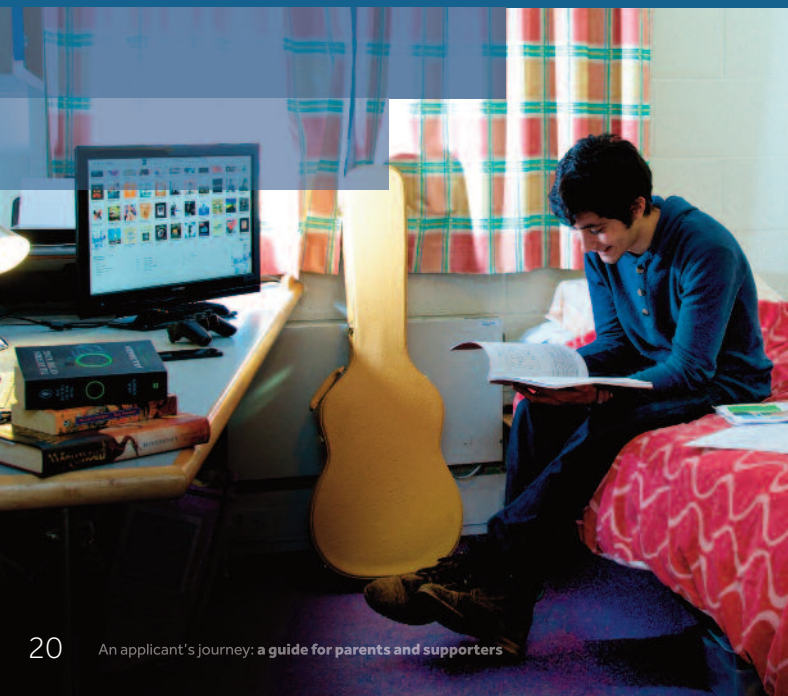
- The University of Manchester is the UK's largest single site campus university based within the heart of Manchester.
- The University is currently undertaking the largest ever capital investment programme in UK higher education, with more than £600 million invested to date. Over the next ten years The University of Manchester will invest a further £1 billion to make further improvements across the campus.
- The city of Manchester has a strong student community of over 85,000 students from The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, Salford University and the Royal Northern College of Music.
- With a population of over 6 million, Manchester is one of the largest cities in the UK outside London. Despite its size, the city boasts a friendly community atmosphere and has a compact and easy to navigate city centre.
- With a major international airport on our doorstep and excellent road and rail links with the rest of the UK, Manchester is one of the most accessible cities in the country.



Accommodation

Key questions

- ▶ Are students guaranteed a room in university accommodation in their first year?
- ▶ What sort of accommodation is available?
- ▶ What is included in the accommodation cost?
- ▶ What support and help is available to students after their first year?



Key facts about Manchester

- We encourage all first year undergraduates to stay in Halls of Residence for their first year, especially if they are moving away from home for the first time.
- We guarantee a place in University accommodation to all new first year students coming to Manchester alone. Applicants must have submitted an application for accommodation by 31 August and hold an unconditional offer to study here by this date.
- We offer students an unparalleled choice of accommodation. We have over 9,000 different rooms available to students in over 30 different Halls of Residences. Our accommodation ranges from modern self catering flats to traditional collegiate style Halls of Residence.
- Halls are self contained communities and some have their own bars, common rooms and social activities, so they are an ideal place to make new friends. All halls have single bedrooms with an Ethernet connection.
- Pastoral support teams are available should students encounter any academic or personal problems whilst living in university accommodation.
- Students have access to the free service of Manchester Student Homes. This service is run in conjunction with other universities based in Manchester and provides free housing advice and operates a Code of Standard, promoting good practice and raising the standards of privately rented accommodation.

Further information on accommodation at Manchester:
www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/accommodation

Graduate careers

Key questions

- ▶ What support is available to students in terms of researching careers and applying for jobs?
- ▶ How many of the university's graduates find work or go onto further study after completing their degrees?
- ▶ What kinds of jobs do graduates go on to?
- ▶ What additional support do students receive to help them enhance their employability?

Key facts about Manchester

- Top recruiters target Manchester graduates. Over 92% of our students go straight into employment or further study*
- Students are encouraged to use the Careers Service from their first year of study.
- In the academic year 2011/2012:
 - 3,500 recruiters advertised jobs, exhibited at fairs and presented on campus.
 - Our Careers Service provided one-to-one advice via 8,000 appointments and over 2,000 email communications.
 - 1,100 students took part in careers education courses.
 - 1,250 students participated in the Manchester Leadership Programme, which improves employability by giving students an insight into current global leadership challenges and the opportunity to complete local, national and international voluntary work.
 - Over 150 students and graduates secured paid internships via our Manchester Graduate and Student Summer Internship programmes.

* Which? University 2012



Study Abroad

Key questions

- ▶ Is there an opportunity to study abroad as part of the degree programme?
- ▶ What are the benefits of studying abroad?
- ▶ Where can students go?
- ▶ What financial support is available?



Key facts about Manchester

- Manchester offers the widest range and highest calibre of partner universities for Study Abroad programmes, including some of the top universities in the world – with no additional tuition fees for students.
- Students who wish to study abroad do not need to be studying a foreign language to be able to study abroad.
- The vast majority of undergraduate degree programmes at Manchester allow students to participate in Exchange Programmes.
- Benefits of studying abroad as part of a degree programme include:
 - Improves job prospects
 - Broadens students' horizons and allows students to experience new cultures
 - Gives students the opportunity to make new friends from all over the world
 - Improves and develops student's language skills.
- Students have the opportunity to go on an Erasmus Exchange Programme in Europe or a Worldwide Exchange Programme to universities in the USA, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Latin America and New Zealand, for one semester or a full academic year.

For more information on study abroad as part of your degree programme please see:
www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/studyabroad

Sport, health and fitness

Key questions

- ▶ What organised sports are available?
- ▶ What sport facilities are available at the university and locally?
- ▶ Are there any sport scholarships?

Key facts about Manchester

- At Manchester students are entitled to discounted rates at the University's sports facilities.
- There are three fitness suites, two 50m swimming pools and many indoor courts and outdoor pitches on the campus.
- The city can offer more facilities with Sport City, Manchester Velodrome, Chillfactore indoor ski slope, indoor tennis centre and athletics centre, just a short distance away.
- The Athletic Union is made up of more than 40 sports clubs and students have the opportunity to represent the University.
- Other organised activities include campus sports leagues, hall sport sessions and health and fitness classes.
- Scholarships are available up to the value of £3,500 for those students that excel at sport.

For more information on sport, health and fitness please see:
www.sport.manchester.ac.uk





Students' Union

Key questions

- ▶ Does the university have a Students' Union?
- ▶ What facilities and services does the Students' Union offer students?

Key facts about Manchester

- Manchester Students' Union is the UK's largest Students' Union, with more than 300 student-run clubs, societies and campaigns.
- Facilities include four live music venues, attracting the latest big-name and up-and-coming bands.
- Through the Union students have the chance to make decisions and influence the way the University is run.
- The Union offers students free confidential and impartial advice through its advice services.

For more information on the Student Union at Manchester please see: manchesterstudentsunion.com

Library and IT facilities

Key questions

- ▶ What facilities are available to students to support their learning and independent study?
- ▶ Will students have access to IT facilities?

Key facts about Manchester

- Manchester offers students the largest single site university Library in the UK, with more than four million books and journals.
- Students have access to the latest technology. There are nearly 4,000 computers on campus.
- Alongside the traditional library services, Manchester offers students self-service facilities, group study areas, an in-house binding service and Wi-Fi throughout the campus.
- The newly opened £24 million Alan Gilbert Learning Commons offers a stimulating 24/7 environment for study, with flexible spaces and the latest in learning technology.

For more information on the library facilities at Manchester see: **www.library.manchester.ac.uk**

For more information on the IT services and facilities at Manchester see: **www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk**



Applying and university offers

Applications to university are made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, known as UCAS. UCAS is a central organisation that deals with all undergraduate applications to study in higher education in the UK.



Key facts

- All applications are made online.
- Applicants have a maximum of five choices on their UCAS form.
- There are some restrictions to the choices students can make e.g. applicants wishing to study Medicine, Dentistry, or Veterinary Science can only apply to four universities for these subjects, their fourth choice must not be for a Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science course.
- Students can only apply to either Oxford or Cambridge.
- Applications are 'invisible' – universities are not able to see where else applicants have applied to.
- Applicants are required to write a 'personal statement' to support their application. This statement needs to show that they have the academic ability and other skills and experiences needed to complete the course they are applying for.
- Once all offers and declines are received by the applicant, they need to choose two universities – their Firm Choice (their first choice university) where they want to go to and an Insurance Choice (their second choice university), a back up choice in case they do not achieve the requirements of their Firm Choice. The Insurance Choice should normally have lower entry requirements.

Applicants should be offered information and advice from their school or college on applying to university and their school will provide a reference to support their application.

There are a number of deadlines that are set by UCAS. Full details on the application process and the deadlines are available on the UCAS website: wwwucas.com. Applicants should also ensure that they meet any school deadlines.

There is a section for parents and supporters on the UCAS website with lots of information on the application process:

<http://ucas.com/parents/>

Case Study:

The Application Process and Offers

Karen Badat,
Senior International
Liaison Officer



So from the dizzying heights of actually having 2 children and 8 nieces and nephews either at or been or going to University, I have been asked to give you some suggestions of how to survive the application process.

Be meticulous in your planning

Deadline dates really do matter so check the UCAS website. Work backwards at least a fortnight from all the dates so as to build in some encouragement time to ensure that everything is done.

Develop your own specialist knowledge

Your young person's school would usually provide advice but the more you understand what is required the more helpful and appropriate your guidance will be. The part of the UCAS form that may cause the most heartache is the personal statement. Reassure your young person that it doesn't have to be Man Booker Prize winning. It needs to state clearly why they want to do this course and why they think they are likely to be successful at it. This last part is very important, admissions tutors will want to know that prospective students have understood what the course is about and have imagined how they will prepare for this.

Be constructive in your advice and suggestions

This is likely to be a difficult year for your young person and sadly it's possible that not all of those universities to which they apply will make them an offer. For many this might be the first time that they have been rejected for something and, as we all know, this is not a good feeling. You will need to be guided by your child in how you handle these experiences – some do want sympathy, some just want to be left alone but very few can resist cookies or their favourite meal.

Key your eye on the real goal

Once the responses to applications start to come in, you can again play a pivotal role in helping your young person to understand the options they have.

If they are lucky enough to have choices to make between their offers, perhaps this is the time to encourage them to talk about those that they are trying to decide between – did they go on a visit/open day or an interview? what materials are available online? Speaking as someone whose daughter did not make a wise first choice, I would encourage you to focus on the course – however much you loved the accommodation or however strong the motivation in terms of an ultimate career – they will spend the most significant amount of time studying and researching during their programme – they do really need to love it to do well. But be guided by them.

Develop a thick skin and a forgiving nature

There's no denying that this is unlikely to be the easiest year you and your young person have spent together. So this is the moment to really focus on their needs and celebrate the fact that this year, whatever the outcome, will mark a turning point for both of you. After this, they might not need you quite so much anymore but with luck, they will still want you in their lives and the joy of having one's children choose to come home and spend time with you is huge.



Student finance

It is important to understand that individuals do not have to find the money for university fees upfront. The government provides loans to students for tuition fees and living costs. Students only start to pay the loans back once they are earning over £21,000 per year.

Students may also be entitled to non-repayable grants and bursaries from the government and/or the university they attend.

Key facts

Tuition fees

The tuition fee at The University of Manchester for home undergraduate students is £9,000 per year. UK students do not have to pay fees while studying – they can take out a tuition fee loan. *

Support available from the UK government includes:

- Tuition fee loans
- Non repayable grants
- Loans for living costs

For information about support available from the UK government see:

www.gov.uk/student-finance

* Eligible students only – please see
www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance

Support from The University of Manchester

More than a third of all students who successfully apply to study at Manchester receive a bursary. Eligible students are able to choose how they receive this support, either a cash bursary or discount on tuition fees or accommodation costs.

For more information about fees and financial support at Manchester see:

www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/studentfinance



What next?

Find out more

- www.manchester.ac.uk
- manchesterstudentblogs.wordpress.com
-  [Facebook.com/AdmissionsUoM](https://www.facebook.com/AdmissionsUoM)
-  [@AdmissionsUoM](https://twitter.com/AdmissionsUoM)

Contact us for a copy of The University of Manchester undergraduate prospectus.

Come and visit us at an open day.
For further information and open day dates please see:

www.manchester.ac.uk/opendays

Or alternatively you are welcome to join us on one of our regular guided visits.
For further information please see:

www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/opendays/other-visits



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