



A Guide for **Adults Returning To Education**



WELCOME.

Welcome to The University of Manchester's Adult Returners to Education Guide. In this guide you will find information to help answer your questions about returning to learning. You may also be considering higher education for the first time and this guide is designed to signpost you to useful resources to help your decision making.



An 'adult learner' refers to anyone over the age of 21 when beginning a course of study. Our adult learners come from a whole array of backgrounds, study every kind of course, and are motivated by career intentions as well as personal interests – there is no such thing as a typical adult returning to education! We welcome applications from adult learners and value the contributions they bring to the University.

As one of the UK's top research institutions, we feed our research directly into our courses – meaning you'll graduate with cutting edge knowledge in your field. We partner with leaders in industry, education and public services offering you diverse practical experiences to supplement your learning and make you even more employable. We are unique among UK universities in having social responsibility as a core goal. This means our courses help you develop as a global citizen.

We hope you find this guide useful and if you have any further questions please get in touch with us.

Stephanie Lee
Head of Widening Participation and Outreach

Bernard Strutt
Head of UK/EU Student Recruitment

Why consider Higher Education (HE)?

Adults return to education and take up university study for a wide variety of reasons including:

Financial and Career Benefits:-

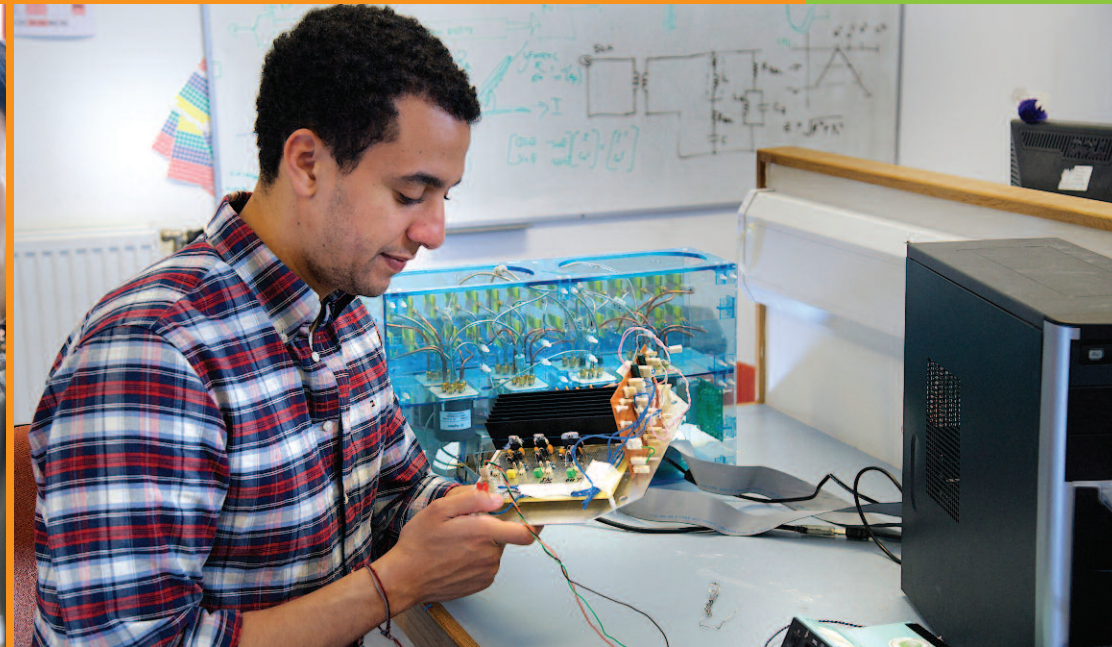
- On average graduates earn more money over a life time than non-graduates (*Office for National Statistics*)
- Graduates have access to a wider range of career opportunities, including 'fast tracking' in certain careers e.g. the Army or Police
- HE might help you to realise a career goal or enable you to change career.

Higher Education Experience:-

- Study a subject you are passionate about and pursue your interests
- Discover something brand new
- Develop your transferable skills.

“I'm a few years older than everybody else – so what! I've made some really good friends and met people who I would never have met otherwise. I have found the university experience more worthwhile than you can ever imagine.”

Charlotte, Law (LLB) student
2nd Year



Am I ready for Higher Education?

The level of knowledge you need will vary from course to course. In some subject areas (often in the sciences, for example), a good level of prior knowledge is essential. In others, there is more emphasis on your commitment to the course, and your general study skills. If you have taken a broad-based Access to HE course this will often be accepted as preparation for a degree programme. Some universities and colleges offer a 'foundation year' to introduce the subject area of a degree course. The University of Manchester, for example, offers foundation years in Science and Engineering, as well as foundation years in Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy, for students without appropriate A-levels (or equivalent qualifications) in these subject areas. The foundation year enables students to be prepared for a course even if they have not studied the subject before. Many school leavers take higher education courses that they did not study at school. It is always useful to contact the admissions staff for the course(s) you are interested in to find out what the entry requirements are.

You can research all of our current undergraduate courses by subject area or A-Z listings at:

www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses

Progression routes to Higher Education

There are many pathways which can lead to degree level study. Some of the qualifications adult learners take before progressing to degree courses at The University of Manchester are:

- A-levels
- Access to HE courses (www.accesstohe.ac.uk)
- BTEC qualifications
- Professional or work-based qualifications
- International Baccalaureate

Most adult students at The University of Manchester will have completed some recent study at an appropriate level, which helps to demonstrate commitment to study and to the subject. However, our admissions staff will pay careful attention to your overall profile of experience and abilities, not just your educational qualifications.

APPLICATION

Full-time undergraduate study

All applications for full-time undergraduate courses at The University of Manchester are submitted through UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). A significant part of the application is the Personal Statement in which you outline your reasons for choosing your course and how your skills, knowledge and experiences make you a suitable candidate. Adults who are returning to education often have a number of points in their favour, other than qualifications, that can help to make a case.

These might include:

- Experiences from work, family life, children, voluntary activities and other experiences and interests
- A high level of commitment and motivation and a positive attitude
- A proven ability to work independently.

You should make the most of your life experiences in your application. Successful students are often those who can identify skills developed elsewhere and adapt them to the demands of university study.

For more detailed information about the application process please visit: www.ucas.com More information about writing a Personal Statement can also be found on The University of Manchester Aspiring Students Society website: www.umass.manchester.ac.uk

PROCESS

September – October:

Start to explore your choices, research courses you are interested in, visit university open days.

November – December:

Collect all the information you need to submit your application including your personal statement and reference.

January:

The on time deadline for UCAS is 15 January. Applications after this date do not have to be considered. Student Finance opens for new applications.

February – June:

You will start receiving offers or invitations for interviews from the universities you've applied to. The deadline for you to reply varies upon when you received the offers but the final deadline is usually in May.

July:

Clearing opens for students who have not received any offers.

August:

Confirmation of places by universities after you have received your exam results.

September:
Start your course.

"Don't be intimidated by returning to education or of being older than your classmates. Just dive right in. You'll be surprised by how easy it is to fit in to university life! There are lots of mature students at Manchester, both undergraduates and postgraduates. You are not alone!"

Alicia, English Literature and American Studies student
1st Year

Student Finance

Tuition fees

Most UK students will be eligible to take out a tuition fee loan from the government. For more information about tuition fees you can visit: www.manchester.ac.uk/studentfinance

Government Maintenance Support

There are various amounts of repayable support available from the government and for further information on the support available from the UK government, you can visit: www.gov.uk/student-finance

University Support

The University of Manchester is committed to attracting and supporting the very best students, regardless of financial circumstances. The University is committed to providing support to students from lower and middle income households and has invested in a multi-million pound range of scholarships and bursaries. More information about our scholarships and bursaries can be found on our website: www.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/student-finance

Further Information

Student Finance is ever changing and we advise you to seek guidance from Student Finance England: www.gov.uk/student-finance.

Scotland: www.saas.gov.uk

Wales: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Northern Ireland: www.studentfinancenir.co.uk

Should you have any specific questions about the support The University of Manchester can provide – you can contact the Student Services Centre: funding@manchester.ac.uk



Student Support

Nearly 40,000 students study at The University of Manchester, but our student support services make sure that every individual gets all the support they need.

A choice of student support services:

Academic Advisers

Every student is allocated an Academic Adviser who is available to give you help and advice on all matters, whether academic or personal.

The University Library

The University of Manchester Library is one of only five National Research Libraries and is also the largest single site university library in the UK. At the start of each academic year a full introduction to Library services is offered and there are teams of staff who provide advice, training and assistance in locating resources. The Library also provides facilities and extra help for disabled students.

Alan Gilbert Learning Commons

The £24 million Alan Gilbert Learning Commons offers a flexible and stimulating space in which students can learn. The building is home to 1,000 study spaces and 400 computers, and has wi-fi throughout. Learning spaces include a mix of individual and group spaces and there are 30 bookable rooms. A dedicated team of Library staff are on hand to give students all the help they need. It is open 24/7, so students can use it whenever it suits them best.

Careers support at Manchester

The University of Manchester Careers Service is here for you from day one of your studies. They can support you to:

- find part-time work or volunteering opportunities;
- think through your career options;
- develop the skills employers want through mentoring programmes and accredited modules such as Career Management Skills and the Manchester Leadership Programme;
- access computer guidance, information and vacancy systems exclusive to Manchester students.

Peer mentoring

Peer mentors are higher-year students on the same degree course who will help you to find your feet and adjust to student life. As peer mentors are already students at Manchester, they are also able to help with any non-academic matters. Peer mentors will often organise activities and workshops to support students and set up social events to help everyone get to know each other a little better.

Students' Union

The University of Manchester Students' Union is an organisation run by students to provide representation, support, activities and campaigns for the student body of the University. The Students' Union building is the social hub on campus, with spaces to relax, eat, drink and engage in many activities and events to have fun, help improve the community and enrich your time at university and your CV. The Students' Union has an active Mature Students Society (www.manchesterstudentunion.com/maturestudents) as well as a Living at Home Society (www.manchesterstudentunion.com/livingathome) where mature and living at home students can get to know each through fun socials and events.

Other University-wide services available to students include:

- The Counselling Service which offers confidential counselling for personal problems affecting studies or general wellbeing.
- The Disability Advisory and Support Services which provide information, advice and support to students with any disability (including mental health, mobility and learning difficulties) or other additional support needs.
- The Students' Union Advice Centre, which provides professional help and advice across various issues.

Full details of the support services are given to new students at registration and can also be found on our website.

Student Accommodation

All single first-year students at The University of Manchester are guaranteed a place in halls if they wish, providing they apply for accommodation by the deadline of 31 August in the year of entry.

Many adults returning to education choose to live in halls of residence with other adults or postgraduate students and, if you are thinking about living in University accommodation, you may want to enquire about these options.

Family Accommodation

The University has halls specifically for students with families and partners. These include double rooms, one, two and a few three-bedroomed, self-contained flats. Due to demand this type of accommodation cannot be guaranteed.

For further information, see:

www.accommodation.manchester.ac.uk

Useful Websites

Student Finance:-

England: www.gov.uk/student-finance

Scotland: www.saas.gov.uk

Wales: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Northern Ireland: www.studentfinanceni.co.uk

Access to HE courses: www.accesstohe.ac.uk

UCAS: www.ucas.com

PEARL: www.epearl.co.uk

“Having had a job before I had experience of working 9-5 which gave me lots of practice in terms of structuring my time. One of the big advantages of returning to study after working in full-time employment is that you are good at managing your time.”

Cronan Quirke, Pharmacy graduate

The University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL
United Kingdom

www.manchester.ac.uk