

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

PARENTS' AND CARERS' GUIDE

How to help your child apply for university



INTRODUCTION

Applying to university is an exciting time in a young person's life. It's also a time when big decisions are made. As a parent or carer, you may feel you also need support to help your child or dependant make informed choices about what and where to study.

This guide takes you through what you need to know about applying to higher education. As well as key dates and deadlines, you'll find information on fees, funding and accommodation, plus advice on how to prepare your child for life at university.

Our Open Days are another great way to find out more about what's involved. You'll have the opportunity to get a real taste of Oxford Brookes. You can attend subject talks, tour the campus and visit student halls. Our academic and support staff are also on hand to answer any questions you may have.

Some students are the first in their family to go to university, and you may feel unsure about how to guide them. Be assured that Oxford Brookes will be able to offer plenty of support and guidance from staff during the application process, throughout their studies, and beyond graduation into the world of work.

For further dedicated information for parents and carers, go to our website:

www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/parents

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WHY GO TO UNIVERSITY?

Studying for a degree is a life-changing experience. In many ways it marks the beginning of a new journey to independence and the world of work.

Going to university gives your child the opportunity to:

- **study a subject which they enjoy and are good at in more depth**
- **improve career prospects:** with access to expert lecturers and opportunities such as work placements and studying abroad, a degree can give your child the best possible start to their career
- **increase earning potential:** a degree is an essential requirement for many careers and professions
- **increase employability prospects:** at Oxford Brookes, 91.9% of students are in work or further study within 6 months of graduating (*HESA Destination of Leavers 2016*)
- **develop key transferable skills valued by employers:** such as communication, time management, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills
- **gain independence and develop self-confidence**
- **make life-long friends.**



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is the system through which students select and apply for almost all full-time undergraduate courses in the UK.

The early stages of applying

If your child is currently in education, they will make their UCAS application through their school or college. They will write a personal statement to support their application, and a teacher will write a reference for them. If they are not in education they can apply as an individual. For further details see

www.ucas.com

Students can apply for up to five courses through UCAS. The fee for entering an application through UCAS is £13 for a single choice and £24 for multiple courses or for applications submitted after 30 June.



Assessment stage

Internal admissions staff at each university will assess whether each applicant is capable of completing a course, based on their achieved and predicted grades, personal statement and academic reference. The process may take a few days, weeks or even longer. When a decision has been made, students will receive the response in UCAS Track on the UCAS website. These responses include:

- **an unconditional offer:** their place is guaranteed
- **a conditional offer:** their place will depend on obtaining certain grades or a successful interview or portfolio submission
- **an unsuccessful decision:** they have not been offered a place on the course (some universities may make them an alternative offer).

Making firm and insurance choices

When your child has had responses from every institution they have applied to, they will have to choose:

- **a firm choice:** their preferred course and institution
- **an insurance choice:** a back-up course and institution with lower entry requirements, at which they would also be happy.



JARGON BUSTER

Personal statement: Your child will need to complete this as part of their UCAS application. It's their opportunity to demonstrate that they will be a good student who does well at the university. The statement should include their personal ambitions, skills and experience, such as part-time jobs, hobbies or voluntary work. The statement can be up to 4,000 characters long.

UCAS Extra: If your child receives no offers, they can still apply to university through this process. It allows students to search online for universities with available places and make one additional choice at a time. It runs from February until early July.

UCAS Track: an online system that allows your child to check the progress of their application.

Clearing: If your child doesn't get the grades they need on results day in August, they can enter Clearing – when universities publish online any unfilled places on their courses. Students need to research suitable courses, then phone the university and speak directly to a course tutor or admission staff to see if they can be accepted.

Deferred entry: Deferring means applying for a course and then taking a year out before coming to university. Students can apply for deferred entry by ticking the deferred entry box on their UCAS form. If your child decides to defer after results day, they should contact the university to ensure this is possible.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

This timeline shows the important milestones in the UCAS application process that you and your child need to know about.

MARCH – SEPTEMBER Pre-application research

The UCAS system allows students to choose a maximum of five courses, which can be at the same or different universities. This time should be used to research courses and institutions. They should visit UCAS fairs and talk to teachers, careers advisers, friends and you.



FROM FEBRUARY Apply for finance

Begin the student finance application sooner rather than later. Visit www.gov.uk/student-finance for more information and opening dates/deadlines.



NOVEMBER – MARCH Begin to receive offers

Your child may begin to receive offers from the universities to which they have applied. Each institution will have different admissions processes so don't worry if this process takes a little while.

15 JANUARY Main UCAS deadline

This is the deadline that guarantees that your child's UCAS application will be considered by the institutions they have applied to. If they miss this deadline they can apply up until 30 June.



15 OCTOBER Early UCAS deadline

Some courses will have earlier deadlines (including medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and applications to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge).



MAY – NOVEMBER Attend university open days

Most universities will hold open days across this period. Complete UCAS application and write personal statement.



END OF MAY Apply for student finance

To guarantee payment at the start of term, your child should apply to Student Finance by the end of May.



END OF JUNE Final application deadline

Any applicants who apply after this date will enter Clearing.



MID-AUGUST Results day

If they are in school or college, your child will receive their results in mid-August. If they have achieved the required grades, we'll automatically send confirmation of their place at Oxford Brookes to UCAS. If they don't receive the results needed, they can apply for the same or a different course through Clearing.



EARLY MAY Deadline for accepting place

If they applied by the January deadline, your child must make their firm and insurance choices by the date set in early May, otherwise UCAS will reject all offers by default. If they applied later they will have a different deadline to respond to on UCAS Track.



MAY – SEPTEMBER Book accommodation

If your child has received and accepted an offer from Oxford Brookes, we start taking applications for accommodation from May. Find out more at: www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/accommodation



AUGUST – SEPTEMBER Preparation

Congratulations! Once your child's place has been confirmed, we'll begin sending communications directly to them detailing everything they need to do to get ready before they join us.



FEES AND FINANCES EXPLAINED

Going to university is a big financial commitment, and we understand that the costs involved are one of the most common concerns for parents and carers.

At Oxford Brookes we believe in giving students from all backgrounds the opportunity to study. This section explains tuition fees and loans, and other possible sources of financial support at Oxford Brookes which may be available to your child.

Student loans

The government provides student loans to cover tuition fees and some living expenses. The full-time student loan is made up of:

■ A tuition fees loan

No fees are payable up front by any student. All first-time undergraduate students are eligible for a tuition fee loan of up to £9,250 per year. This is paid directly by Student Finance England to the University.

■ A maintenance loan

This loan is available to full-time students to help cover costs with living expenses. All students are eligible for a loan – the amount varies depending on household income.

Applying for the loan

If your child is applying for the tuition fee loan and the basic maintenance loan you won't have to do anything as they will complete the application with their own details.

If they are applying for a maintenance loan that depends on your household income, they'll be asked to enter your email address in their application. Student Finance England will then send you detailed instructions on what you need to do.

Repaying the loan

Your child won't have to repay their student loan until they've left university and their income is over £21,000 a year. They'll then repay 9% of any income over this amount, deducted automatically from their salary through the tax system.

If their income drops below £21,000, repayments will stop. Any debt remaining after 30 years is written off. Unlike credit card or loan debt, student loans do not go onto credit files.

Bursary schemes and scholarships

Bursaries, scholarships and financial aid do not have to be paid back.

- Oxford Brookes Community Scholarships reward state school and college students in Oxfordshire who have been an excellent role model within their school, college or

community and/or have overcome personal or social difficulties.

- Oxford Brookes Bursary Scheme - open to full-time on-campus undergraduate students whose household income is below £35,000. Your child won't need to apply for this bursary as we will know if they are eligible from your household income figure provided to Student Finance England.
- Financial support is available to help students who find themselves unexpectedly facing financial hardship.

For further information on all our bursaries, scholarships and financial support, go to the website: www.brookes.ac.uk/finance

USEFUL WEBSITES

Student finance

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

The Student Loans Company

www.slco.uk

NHS bursaries

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students.aspx

UCAS

www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/student-finance

Young adult carers

www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/individual-needs/young-adult-carers

STATE BENEFITS AND OTHER FINANCIAL HELP

If you receive any state benefits or other financial help it can be worth checking if the change in circumstances when your child goes to university will have any impact.

Depending on your child's circumstances and their mode of study (full or part-time) they may be entitled to claim some benefits. If they are already in receipt of benefits or you receive benefits which include your child as a dependant, it's a good idea to ask for advice.

Rules around benefits and other financial help are subject to change so we recommend you use government websites or contact your benefits advisers for the most up-to-date information.

Specific guidance for students and families is available from a number of places:

■ www.turn2us.org.uk/

Turn2Us provides a wide range of guidance on benefits which can be useful for families and students.

■ www.entitledto.co.uk/

When your child is no longer classed as a dependant (20 or over), your entitlements may change. **Entitled to** is a calculator which confirms what benefits you may be entitled to.

■ www.disabilityrightsuk.org/funding-higher-education-disabled-students

If your child has a disability they may be entitled to **Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)** and in some instances other support. Visit Disability Rights UK for more information.

The Student Finance calculator helps provide an estimate of the financial support your child may be eligible for: www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator

ACCOMMODATION: THE FACTS

Halls of residence provide a safe, secure environment for students living away from home. It's also a great way to meet people, particularly when settling in.

A guaranteed room in halls

We guarantee that applicants who choose Oxford Brookes as their firm choice, and apply by the deadline, will be offered a room within one of their hall choices for the first year.



Support

Each hall has an on-site residence manager and hall supervisors. There's support on-site through the night too. Hall staff are experienced at making people feel at home.

Find out more about our halls and other options on our website at:

www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/accommodation



Travel

All halls are on a BROOKESbus route – connecting Headington, Harcourt Hill and Wheatley campuses with the city centre. Your child gets a free BROOKESkey bus pass if they live in halls.



Safety

The University is situated in one of the safest student areas in the country according to research conducted by the *Complete University Guide*.



Most of our student halls are on or near our campuses. They consist of:

- 4,000 self-catered, single study-bedrooms
- 130 studio apartments



WHAT'S ON CAMPUS?

Campus facilities include:

- cafes and eateries
- sport facilities
- libraries (open 24/7 during semester)
- computer rooms
- shop
- bookshop
- bank
- students' union run bar (Headington Campus).

Student insurance

All students who live in halls are provided with block contents insurance covering their time in halls.



PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR UNIVERSITY

For many students, going to university is the first time they have lived away from home. Parents and carers can play a valuable role by preparing their child for this new phase of their life.

Before they leave home

- Encourage them to work out a budget so they know how much money they have to spend each week. Key costs include books and equipment, accommodation costs, food, travel and leisure activities. For guidance go to our website: www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/finance/living-costs
- Discuss issues relating to personal safety to ensure they can keep themselves safe, for example taking care of valuables and travelling late at night.
- Check they know how to cook basic meals.
- Make yourself aware of what they should and cannot bring with them, and give them guidance on packing appropriately.
- Make sure they know who to contact if they have any problems.

Settling in

It is normal for new students to feel a little unsettled for the first few weeks as they get used to their new environment and routine. Most students feel significantly better once they are a month into the term. If they continue to have problems, encourage them to talk to hall staff, their student support co-ordinator, or the University wellbeing team. Find out more on our website:

www.brookes.ac.uk/students/wellbeing

TIPS FOR PARENTS

It's important to bear in mind that this is a time of great change for you too.

- **Plan ahead:** make arrangements in advance to see your child during term and in the holidays.
- **Enjoy yourself:** you may find you have more time which you can use to explore new activities or rediscover old interests.
- **Share the experience:** spend time with friends and family and talk with other adults who understand what you are going through.
- **Keep in touch with Oxford Brookes:** there are plenty of opportunities for you to engage with Oxford Brookes from receiving our latest news via social media to attending public lectures and other community events. See www.brookes.ac.uk/events

"Since I came to university I've learned the basics, like doing the chores and keeping track of stuff. It's not just about education; it's about being independent and discovering who you are."

Harminda Surana, studied Human Biology

LIVING AT HOME

Not all students move away for university. At Oxford Brookes, a large number of our students either live locally or commute from further afield.

Longer distance commuting

The University is also easily accessible for students commuting from further away. There are two intercity direct motorway coach services between Oxford and London: The Oxford Tube and the X90. Both run every 10-15 minutes most of the day, every 20-30 minutes late evenings and hourly right through the night.

Travelling to and from Oxford Brookes

All full-time undergraduate students are entitled to a free BROOKESkey bus pass, providing free travel on the BROOKESbuses. The U1 operates 7 days a week connecting Harcourt Hill with Headington and Wheatley Campuses from early in the morning until late evening.

BROOKESkey bus pass also offers generous discounts on journeys into and around Oxford such as:

- £1 trips on buses run by the Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel, and Stagecoach buses within Oxford's cityzone, and for BROOKESbuses night services NU1 and NU5
- £10 period return tickets to London on the X90 and Oxford Tube.

Student societies

Students living at home often make new friends on their course or by getting involved in social activities. Our diverse range of student societies and sports clubs are a great way to make new friends across the University and meet people with a common interest. From hobbies, culture and politics to music and dance, we have many societies and clubs to choose from, helping your child find their feet and settle into their new social life.



"My main reason for choosing Oxford Brookes was to be close to my family, so they could help me with childcare for my son whilst I complete my

studies. Oxford is my home city and I remember seeing the John Henry Brookes Building during construction. After seeing what the space would offer I was so excited to be a part of it and start my university life here."

Taylor Samuel-Beechey, studying Geography and Education Studies

SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

When your child starts university it's an exciting time, but it can also feel daunting - for both them and you. We ensure that there is plenty of help and support available, both while they settle in and throughout their time at university.

Student support co-ordinators

Student support co-ordinators are based across all subject areas within the University. They are a first point of contact providing confidential advice on any personal or study-based concerns that a student may have.

Medical and dental services

A medical centre and NHS dental clinic are based on Headington Campus, and there are local GP services close to the other campuses.

Counselling and wellbeing

We offer confidential one-to-one counselling with trained, experienced staff. There is also online and group support.

Disability and dyslexia/SPLD service

A range of specialist services are on hand for any student with dyslexia, a disability or other specific learning difficulties. Help includes specialist library services, assistive technology, study support and specialist exam arrangements.

Faith and religion

There is a multifaith chaplaincy giving friendship and spiritual care to all students from any faith tradition, or no faith at all.

Brookes Union advice service

The union has trained advisers who can help with a wide range of problems from finances and housing to studies, health or wellbeing.



Safety bus

The Brookes Union Safety Bus scheme is a volunteer-run welfare service for students. If a student misses the last bus and finds themselves unable to get home, the bus will collect them and drop them home. The scheme is free, asking for voluntary donations of £1.

For further information on support and wellbeing go to: www.brookes.ac.uk/students/wellbeing

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

At Oxford Brookes, 91.9% of graduates are in work or further study within six months of completing their course*. Our courses are designed with the real world in mind, giving your child the opportunity to develop skills for the workplace.

Accredited courses

Many of our degree courses in areas from healthcare to business and the built environment, are recognised by a professional awarding body, exempting them from professional exams or leading to membership.

Work placements

Oxford Brookes' strong links with industry mean that we can offer excellent opportunities for work placements on many courses. Going on a placement gives students the chance to build graduate-level skills and increases their confidence when applying for permanent jobs after university.

Mentoring

Students on some courses are teamed up with a senior professional from industry who can provide one-to-one mentoring and guidance on taking first steps in their career.



Studying abroad

Oxford Brookes has links with around 150 partner universities all over the world including 21 European countries and further afield.

Working part-time

By working part time, your child not only benefits from additional funds; they are building practical experience in the workplace too. Oxford is a great place for part-time and seasonal work, and the University has some opportunities for paid roles, like becoming a student ambassador. Our careers service can put them in touch with what's available: www.brookes.ac.uk/careers

Careers service

The careers service offers tailored guidance to students, including one-to-one sessions, workshops, advice on CV-writing, interview practice and online resources. The service is available free of charge for up to three years after graduation.



A guide to:

- applying to university
- fees, funding, accommodation and support
- getting prepared for university.



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If you have any questions please get in touch at:

UK Recruitment and Partnerships Team

Telephone: **+44 (0) 1865 484945**

Email: **schools.liaison@brookes.ac.uk**

Twitter: **@BrookesSchools (outreach)**

Twitter: **@oxford_brookes (general)**