

Choosing the right University for you

It can be difficult to decide which University to attend, especially as you hardly have sufficient time to visit all of them, or even look into all of them in detail. So the first thing to do is draw up a long list of Universities that you would consider attending, and then you can start to narrow it down from there.

Below are some things to consider:

Supporting Materials / Facilities: When considering which University, it is important that you consider things such as:

- how far are you prepared to travel to University
- Is the course you wish to pursue widely available
- Are there specific facilities that you require, such as gym, car parking etc., technical resources
- How large or small is the University and how many students study there
- Is the University located in a large city or in a rural area

University League Tables: Before deciding which University to attend, have a look at how each of the Universities you have long listed are rated in the Guardian Newspaper League Tables. These are useful as they help provide you with additional information that can support you in making choices between Universities as they explain how well each University is doing in comparison to others. However, do remember that these do not give information at course and department level. It is also important to remember that attending a University at the top of the league table does not imply that higher grades will be achieved.

Careers Service Centre: Many universities have advice centres which are staffed by career advisors and experts. Whilst you may not consider this to be particularly important at the moment, they can be invaluable when you are looking for a work placement or once you have graduated.

Social Life: Social aspects of University life are very important. The range of social, sports and cultural activities provided by the University need to match your requirements especially if you are living away from home.

Friends: Although this factor may vary in importance to you, there are many people that let their friend's choice of University impact their decision. This can be of benefit as it helps provide companionship and security, especially in the first few months of starting. However, you may find that in some instances this may make you reluctant to make new friends. This is certainly a missed opportunity to get to know new people, especially as you will be studying with them for up to three years. You may also find that friends studying a different course and possibly the same one have widely varying timetables which can affect how

much time you have available to spend together. In a similar way, many people choose to attend a University that either their boyfriend or girlfriend wishes to attend, or where a member of their family currently studies. As with choosing a University location based on where your friends choose to settle, there are pros and cons to following family members or partners too.