



Life as a student is different for everybody. This is because of the freedom you have at university to make it an experience that you want and that suits you best. However, as with any new venture, it can feel daunting and so having some information can give you an idea of what to expect and what's on offer.

There are sections in this guide, designed to help you with all aspects of university life from the very beginning to after you finish.

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### Before you start...

Student life begins as soon as you know where you are going to study, and for most people, this is confirmed in the summer before you start in September. Here are a few things you might have on your to-do list:

#### **Applying for accommodation**

If you choose to live away from home at university, there are lots of options and you can confirm this with your university when you have made your decisions. It will impact your life as a student, whether you decide to share facilities like kitchen and bathroom, or want to have all your meals provided for you – it's about finding what works for you, so look at all of the options available to you and make sure you follow the information about how to apply and when your deadlines are. You can access frequently asked questions [here](#).

#### **Accepting your offer**

Following all your research, you will have made some decisions about where you would like to study. You have a firm choice and an insurance, which is your second choice. Make sure you keep an eye out on UCAS Track for updates about your offer. If you are waiting on A Level results, the universities will have these a few days before you get them on results day, so will already know whether you have your place on that day, ready for you to make contact if you need to. If you meet the conditions of your offer, there's nothing more you need to do – just celebrate your hard work and look out for further information from your first choice! If you don't meet those conditions though, don't worry, you can enter Clearing.

#### **Clearing (just in case)**

Clearing is the process that matches students to places that have not been filled at universities. It is used for lots of reasons: for people who have not met the conditions of their offer; for people who have changed their mind about the final choices they made; for people who did not apply before the deadline and would





like to do so now. It is a chance to find a place and course that suits you if your original plan didn't go as you had intended. It involves contacting universities directly to discuss your circumstances with them individually, so it's worth finding out how it works ahead of time, in case it's something you want to do later on. UCAS provides lots of information about it [here](#).

### Planning your budget

You will already know how much student finance you will be entitled to at this point and they will have provided you with a schedule of payments so you know the important things such as how much you're getting, and when it will arrive! This will give you a chance to plan out your budget to help you figure out the things you need. This will be different from person to person, but you can find a good list of things you might need [here](#), from laptops to pots and pans. Your budget doesn't have to be exact, but having a rough idea of how much money you have and how long it needs to last you will give you some peace of mind. There is a useful student budget tool [here](#).

### Your First Week

So you've arrived at campus with all of your belongings, what happens now?

#### Induction Week – what happens?

Induction week is the first week you are officially a student at university. It's dedicated entirely to you making it feel like home, whether you are staying on campus or commuting from where you live. There are lots of activities on offer for you, led by the University, as well as the Students' Union, to help you settle in. You will probably be feeling nervous, but that's how everyone else will be feeling too, so you're not on your own! There are no lectures or academic sessions in this week, and no other students either, so you can concentrate fully on the activities and finding your way around. It's the time where you'll get your student card, figure out all of the buildings on campus, learn how the library works, and probably also find the best take away places in town too!

#### Freshers' Fair

When you start university, you'll probably be aware that you're known as a 'fresher' and the Freshers' Fair is not to be missed as it's dedicated entirely to first year students. It's a large scale event where lots of businesses and organisations are there to make you aware of what's on offer in your new city, as well as the student discounts that are available to you. There are usually lots of freebies on offer from pot noodles to stationery... If you play it right, you might not need to buy a pen all year! A member of our Students' Union team wrote about it a couple of years ago, so you can learn more [here](#).

Alongside these exhibitors, there is also a representative from each of the university's sports clubs and societies so you can sign up to things you might like to get involved with. More information about what is on offer at Chester is [here](#). It's not the only chance you will get to be involved, but it's a good opportunity to see what's on offer all in one go. And signing up isn't an obligation, you can get as much information as you want to begin with and then make your mind up. So if you've always had a burning desire to be a cheerleader, or want to get involved with politics, this could be your chance!





## During Your Studies

During your studies, you will have lots of aspects to life as a student. This guide is designed to give you information and advice relating to the three main areas of: Academic life; Support; Social Life

### - Academic Life

#### **Study Skills**

Studying at university can be a very different experience to studying for level 3 qualifications in sixth form or college. You are required to be more independent, and possibly work to different rules relating to your writing, for example. There is a team dedicated to Study Skills at the university and they are there to provide sessions and workshops for students who would like some support in study techniques. This could be from academic writing to referencing, and anybody can access these tools at any time.

#### **Personal Academic Tutors**

Every student is allocated a [Personal Academic Tutor](#) from their faculty. It may not be a tutor who teaches you, but they will be within your department. They are your point of contact if you have any concerns, and will meet you regularly to discuss how you are getting on, and can give you advice on any aspect of your course.

#### **Seminar, Tutorial, Lecture**

Learning at university will be different to what you might be used to. You could have lectures, seminars, lab time, practicals, and independent research. All of this will depend on your course and your timetable will be dependent on your module choices. Lectures will be large scale and will be led by your tutor, where seminars will be small groups where you have the chance to discuss with your peers, and tutorials are likely to be one-to-one meetings with you and your tutors.

### - Support when you need it

Coming to university can be a big step in your life. It's likely to be some of the best time in your life, but in case there are times when you feel like you need support, it's there for you whenever you might need it.

#### **Wellbeing and Mental Health**

Maintaining a healthy wellbeing is important for your happiness. If at any point you feel like your mental health might be suffering, there are several ways you can seek help. There is a dedicated [Wellbeing and Mental Health Team](#) who you can book an appointment with and they can signpost you to other services available. There are workshops you can take part in throughout the academic year from how to support your friends, to how to deal with exam stress.

#### **Disability Support**

If you have a disability, you may be eligible for [extra support](#) at university. If you declared this on your UCAS form (we highly recommend that you do), this highlights to your universities of choice that you require





further assistance and this allows us to get all of this in place for you before you start, to save you having to do it after arriving. This support might be in the form of adjustments to exam procedures, requiring a scribe in lectures, mobility aids in your accommodation, or assistive software on your devices, and is handled by a dedicated team. The university is there to help you achieve your full potential. You may also be eligible for financial support through the Disabled Students' Allowance, which you can look into [here](#).

### Care Leavers and Carers

Additional Support is available for students who have experienced local authority care, and also for those who have caring responsibilities. This is in acknowledgement that student life might be out of the ordinary for these students from time to time and therefore extra support is available if required. This involves having contact with a dedicated member of staff as an extra port of call to discuss things with. Alongside this, there are also [bursaries](#) available, which are packages of money and/or services to ease the transition to university life in a small way.

### - Social Life

Having a social life is a really important part of university life. You can fill your time with a wide range of activities, so whether you're a party animal karaoke champion, or would rather spend your time dog-walking or planting trees, or maybe volunteering in a local school, (maybe a bit of all three!), there will be a whole host of activities you can get involved with.

### Volunteering

Being able to [volunteer](#) is a great opportunity to give back to your community while at university, as well as developing your own transferable skills. You can log your volunteering hours with the volunteering team and this counts towards the [Chester Difference Award](#), which can be a great addition to job applications.

### Student Ambassador

Students are the best way for people to learn more about universities. As a [student ambassador](#), you would have the opportunity to work on events such as open days and school campus visits to give insight into what student life is like. You might also be involved in marketing materials such as the prospectus or website, social media takeovers, or writing blogs about your experience. It's a great way to share your experience with others.

### Chester Students' Union

The Students' Union is an important part of any university. It is an internal organisation which is led by a president and vice presidents who are elected each year. They work with the university to ensure that students' views are being heard and that facilities on offer are suitable for students. This involves facilitating the sports clubs and societies, running the on-site bar and activities, providing support for students, and ensuring that any issues are heard and resolved. Their information can be found [here](#).





## Sports Clubs/Facilities

You can join a sports club during your studies, whether you're a pro, or a complete beginner – there will be opportunities for you to get involved. From football, rugby and hockey, to lacrosse, basketball and even quidditch, you can continue with something you already do, or have a try of something new. Wednesday afternoons are free of lectures so you can dedicate time to training and competing against other university teams. There are some examples of the things you can take part in [here](#).

You can also access the facilities on campus, so that's the gym, the swimming pool and the pitches, even if you just want to book them for a kick about with your mates.

## Societies

[Societies](#) are clubs which are run by students who share an interest. As they are led by students, they can change from year to year as you are able to set up a society if you wish. All you need to do is prove that there are other people who would be interested and the Students' Union can help you with the rest. They range from Disney, Harry Potter or Anime to DJ production or Mountaineering – there really is something for everyone.

## Discount

You can get discounts at hundreds of shops, bars and restaurants by using your [Totum](#) card, or signing up to [UniDays](#) or [Student Beans](#). You can sign up to all of these as soon as you are enrolled as a student. They all have access to a wide variety of discounts from ASOS, Samsung, Yo Sushi and more. Many places offer discount if you show your student card too, so make sure you ask in your favourite retailers!

## Nightlife

Every city has its own nightlife waiting to be discovered, and lots of them have special theme nights for students, or discounts available too. It's a great way to really see your city and enjoy what's on offer, and find the best places to go!

## Jobs

Many people choose to have a part time job during university. This can be useful to give you some extra money, but also good because of the transferable skills you will develop too. Some places also offer you discounts as staff perk, so that might be money off food or clothes depending on where you choose to work, which can also be very useful too when your money is feeling tight! Alongside jobs in the usual places, you could also work on campus through Unijob, which is a facility that offers employment at the university exclusively for students. These are varied and could be permanent or temporary, and across a range of areas from the gym to academic faculties. You can find out more [here](#).





### Looking to the future...

University can be a great experience and will certainly be one that stays with you for the rest of your life. You will no doubt make lots of memories, develop your skills and knowledge, as well as make friends for life. However, it's important to think about how it can impact your future and where you would like your degree to take you. It's never too early to be thinking about this!

### Careers and Employability

Being ready for employment after graduation is important. You can access the Careers and Employability Team at any point during your studies to help you with information about what job you might like to go into when you have finished your studies. It's also a good place to go for advice on applications, internships and work experience during your studies. Once you have finished your degree, you can still access this service after you have left, as you will always be part of the University of Chester family as an alumni!

### Work Based Learning

We recognise that many people choose to go to university to broaden their job prospects, and it is really important to us to ensure that you feel ready and prepared to enter the world of work when you graduate. As part of the commitment to this, every student who does not have work placements already part of their course completes a Work Based Learning module at the end of the second year. This is a six week experience and involves working in a field that interests you to give you valuable skills and experience of the workplace. You can use your own connections to secure this place, or you can access a wide range of support to assist you to find something you will find worthwhile.

### Study Abroad

Studying abroad allows you to see the world from a different perspective, whilst still learning too. It's a great opportunity that is available to all students, and is something we encourage all students to consider as it can give you great memories and experiences to treasure. There are several different options for how you might like to complete this, and more information can be found [here](#).

### Summer Opportunities

One of the great things about being a student is that you have long summer breaks. It can be a chance to get some extra hours in your job, soak up the sun with your friends, or even jet off on holiday. But you can also use this time to your advantage and get involved with lots of opportunities which exist around the world, looking for students to take part. From working as a character in Disney World, to volunteering at an elephant sanctuary in Thailand, or ski coaching in the Alps – there are lots of things on offer which might take your fancy! You could check out companies such as [STA](#) or [Working Abroad](#) for more information, but make sure you do lots of research before you go.





### Graduation

All of your hard work culminates in the graduation ceremony. It's a real celebration and you will feel very proud collecting your degree alongside your friends and with your supporters watching you too. The University of Chester's graduation ceremonies take place in the Chester Cathedral, and you can see pictures of them [here](#).

### Postgraduate studies

There are lots of postgraduate courses available to you if you would like to continue studying, and the full list can be found [here](#). If you choose to continue studying at the University of Chester after completing your undergraduate degree, there is also a discount available in your tuition fees. Further information about student finance for postgraduate can be found [here](#).

### #mychesterstory

You can hear from our students across social media by following #mychesterstory across all platforms. There is a lot for you to see! You can see some of the highlights [here](#).

Imbarr64



Imbarr64 Last Fencing session of the year #mychesterstory #uocfencing #uocsociety #sunnyday

gem\_patricia  
Chester, Cheshire



gempatricia #finally #mychesterstory #studentnurse #cosy

run.lana.run  
Chester Students' Union



run.lana.run Tonight's run. Managed to get some rainbow laces in support of No to LGBT-phobia! #mychesterstory

jamesbullen2



jamesbullen2 So proud to have been part of this team 1st of many trophies! #CSUSports #mychesterstory

uoc\_mma



uoc\_mma Our taster session of the year! #uocmma #uocmma #uoc #mma #uocmma #mychesterstory #CSU #lovecsu

will.i.am.king  
University of Chester



will.i.am.king A line of asskicking linebackers #americanfootball #Legion #linebacker #55





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