



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
**UNIVERSITY
OPEN DAYS**



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An open day is your best chance to really get to know a prospective university before term starts.

If you're travelling from far away to attend university, it may also be the only time you see it before your first day.

Our ultimate guide to open days will guide you through the entire process, from why you should attend an open day and what to expect when you get there to the questions you should ask.

We've also included a case study from one recent graduate on why an open day was important to her when making decision on where to study.

Why should I attend an open day?

An open day is your chance to get to know your new home before you start studying there. If you're not sure if a university is right for you, attending their open day could help you make that decision.

Of course, you can do research by looking at the prospectus or the university website, but nothing really compares to actually seeing everything in person.

By attending an open day you'll be able to meet face to face with current students, lecturers, and other university staff who will all be on hand to answer your questions. You'll be given more specific information about the facilities, fees and finance options, and your course. For example, if you're applying to study English you may get given a sample reading list.

Here are a few reasons why its a good idea to attend a university open day:

- You'll get more, in-depth information about your course
- You can see all of the university facilities
- You'll be able to attend talks and tours
- You can explore the local area
- You'll make new friends

The big question to ask yourself at the end of the open day is "Do I really want to go here?" Don't forget, this is going to be your home for the next three or four years, so make sure you really like the university, course, and local area before accepting a place.

Do I need to book my place on an open day?

The answer to that question is definitely yes. Universities need to know how many people are coming so they can make sure everyone has a good experience of their campus and facilities.

You'll be able to find all of a university's open day dates and details of how to book your place on the university website.

Can I take a friend or family member with me to an open day?

Universities like you to bring someone with you to an open day, in fact they encourage it! Having someone with you to give an impartial opinion on what they see can help if you're struggling to decide which university to go to.

University open days can also be intimidating, especially if you've come from a small school or college, so having someone sharing the experience can make you feel more confident.

Friends and family members might also remember important information or be able to prompt you to ask questions that you've forgotten to ask.

Of course, if you'd rather attend a university open day alone then that's also fine, the day is about you and your future so do whatever you think is best.

What should I wear to a university open day?

Open days are usually informal events so you won't need to brush off your suit before you go. The possible exception would be if a university combined their open day with interviews, but this isn't common and the university would give you plenty of notice if this was happening.

Although open days are informal it's still good to dress appropriately and try to make a good impression. Just wear an outfit that you feel comfortable and confident in, plus make sure your shoes are suitable for walking. Unless it's the height of summer it's also a good idea to pack a coat or umbrella and take a bag with you for all the brochures and other literature you'll be given

Is there any help with the cost?

If you're travelling a long distance attending a university open day can prove costly, but we promise you it will be well worth it.

Some smaller universities or those in rural locations help prospective students with some of the cost or accommodation so that they can attend their open days. For example, Trinity St David University offers £25 or overnight accommodation to students travelling over 100 miles.

If you're at all concerned about the cost involved in attending an open day it's worth phoning your prospective university and seeing whether they have funding in place to help students attend their open days.

Will I be offered a place at the open day?

Open days are designed to give you a chance to see whether you really like the university and aren't part of the student selection process. This means that you won't be offered a place at the open day or as a result of the open day.

Some universities prefer to hold their open days after they've made students an offer, these are usually known as "applicant days" and you'll be invited by the university when they make you an offer.

Open days are meant to be fun and relaxed, not feel like a test or interview, so just go and enjoy the day.

University Open Day Preparation 'To do' list



- Book your place
- Give Yourself Plenty of time
- Do research on the university and courses
- Prepare questions to ask
- Find out as much you can about the open day before the setting off

What questions should I ask at the open day?

There are plenty of questions you could ask at an open day and hopefully most of them will be answered during any talks or tours you attend, but there may be other things you want to know.

The exact questions you ask depend entirely on what you want to know but here are some ideas in case you get stuck:

- What do you look for in an application and personal statement?
- How will the course make me more employable?
- What proportion of students go on to postgraduate study?
- What careers guidance is offered?
- Is a place in university halls guaranteed to first year students?
- When do I need to apply for university accommodation?
- What societies and activities are available?
- What bursaries or scholarships are available and how do I apply?

What if I can't attend an open day?

If you really can't attend any of the open day dates given by your prospective university then there are other options to give you a better overall picture of what they offer

Social media

Check out their Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest and any social pages they maintain to view photos, videos, and opinions from students and staff.

Private campus tours

Universities offer private tours of the campus and facilities throughout the year so contact them to find out details of how you can attend.

Self-guided tours

If the university is unable to find someone to give you a tour they may offer you the option of a self-guided tour. University will usually provide a brochure and a map so you can explore at your own pace.

Virtual open days

Universities are making the most of modern technology and holding "virtual open days" using videos, pictures and even video calls to show you around the campus and introduce you to staff.

Open day case study: **“The open day was the key”**

For recent graduate, Alice Brown, the open day helped her choose between two universities and actually knocked her preferred university off the top spot.

“As my top two university choices were both quite local I was easily able to attend their open days, and I’m glad I did because I completely changed my mind about which university I wanted to go to.

“My top choice was Winchester, in fact I was determined to go there, but when I went to their open day I knew it wasn’t for me. I found the campus too spread out, the day seemed to be badly organised so you didn’t get the chance to see everything, and the students who were meant to be reps for my course didn’t turn up which didn’t fill me with confidence!

“I’ve got friends who went to Winchester and had a great time but the open day changed my mind and helped me decide that it wasn’t the right place for me to live and study.

“My second choice was Chichester and from the moment I got out of the car I knew I wanted to go there. The day was really well organised so you got time to see everything you needed to see. The staff were friendly and the current students were so enthusiastic about the course I was really inspired.

“Now that I’ve graduated I know I’d say exactly the same things as they about the course, the staff, and the university. They weren’t lying when they said the course was great!”