University of Lancashire

The ultimate guide to university:

Parents and carers edition



Dear parents and carers

Sending your child off to university can stir up all kinds of emotions, excitement, pride, worry, and sometimes a little sadness too. It's completely normal to feel a mix of things as you both adjust to this new chapter.

We're here to support you every step of the way, with advice and information to help you feel confident about guiding your child through this big change, in whatever way they need you most.

This guide covers everything you need to know, from finances and deadlines to accommodation and wellbeing support. We hope the months ahead are full of growth and new experiences for both you and your child.

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Student life is more affordable than you think

It's important not to let the media stories about debt put your child off applying to university. Studying for a degree is a big investment but don't worry, your dependent will only start repaying their loan once they earn over a certain amount. The size of their monthly repayments will depend on how much they earn, not what they owe.

According to Universities UK, graduates overtake those who chose not to go university within just a few years, earning at least 20% more once they are in their mid-20s. What's more, the university experience offers incredible opportunities for students to meet new people from all over the world, develop as a person and gain invaluable experience, equipping them for a better future.

All UK full-time undergraduate students can apply for a loan to cover their tuition fees. They will need to apply via Student Finance England* - applications usually open in March and close in May.

They can also apply for a maintenance loan to help with living costs which is based on household income and will only need to be paid back when they've graduated.

For more information, visit
gov.uk/student-finance

*Students from Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Islands have different student support arrangements.

Did you know?

The cost of living is 8.4% lower in Preston than it is in Manchester

(Numbeo Cost of Living Index, July 2026)

Jargon

You might have noticed the process of applying to university is full of acronyms and unfamiliar terms, so here's your go-to guide for higher education jargon.

Admissions
The process to apply to study with us. Our Admissions Team are experts in assessing prospective students' qualifications, personal statements, and references to check if they are suitable for a course.

Applicant
Someone who has applied to university.

BA, BSc, BVMS, MEng etc
Letters indicating degree type and study level, for example Bachelor of Arts (BA) - BA (Hons) History.

Bursary
A monetary award based on need, that doesn't need to be repaid.

Clearing
A system which helps students find unfilled course places, often used after A-level results day, but can be used from early July.

Conditional offer
An offer to study based on meeting certain conditions. These are usually academic, e.g. achieving set grades in appropriate subjects.

Confirmation
When an offer holder meets all conditions, confirming their university place.

Deferred entry
Option to delay university enrolment, either when applying via UCAS, after submitting a UCAS application but before receiving any offers, or after accepting an offer of a place.

Enrolment
The formal process where students confirm course details and agree to our rules and regulations. Students enrol every year of their course.

Firm choice
A student's first choice course/ university. It may be a conditional or unconditional offer and universities usually refer to this as a Conditional Firm or Unconditional Firm.

Foundation year
A preliminary year of study that provides a route to study for an honours degree.

Graduate
Someone who has successfully completed their degree.

Insurance choice
This is a student's second choice institution and is a backup to their Firm choice in case they don't meet the entry requirements. If the first choice is an Unconditional Firm, then they won't be able to select an insurance, as they don't have any outstanding conditions to meet.

Interview or audition
Some courses require an interview or audition, to assess suitability for a course, before an offer can be made.

Offer Holder
Someone who has applied to university and has been made an offer to study a course.

Postgraduate
Someone who has successfully completed their degree and is studying for a higher level (usually master's) qualification.

UCAS
The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. It is a shared admissions service for higher education in the UK and separate from universities.

UCAS Extra
If a student has used all five choices on their original application, but is not holding any offers, they can add an 'Extra' choice.

UCAS Hub
A personalised online space, helping students to research their options and apply for university in one area.

Unconditional offer
This offer means that a student has already met the conditions required to study with us, so the place is theirs if they want it.

Undergraduate
Someone currently studying for their first degree.

Applicant timeline

This is a typical timeline, please check UCAS Hub for deadlines specific to their application.

October

This month is the UCAS application deadline for some specialist programmes, including Medicine and Surgery (MBBS), Veterinary Medicine (BVMS) and Dental Surgery (BDS) programmes.

January

The official UCAS deadline is in January, check the UCAS website to confirm the date. Universities will give equal consideration to any applications made on or before this date. Applicants that do not make this deadline can still apply or enter into Clearing.

If your child applied by the January deadline and they are still waiting on a decision from one of their choices, universities have until March to decide whether they will make an offer. Visit **ucas.com** to find the deadline date for this year.

March

Applying for Student Finance early is highly encouraged so that the loan arrives in time, visit **gov.uk** for details on how your child can apply for a student loan.

May

If your child has received all their decisions by end of March, they must reply to any offers by May. Except if they're using UCAS Extra to find a place, otherwise they will be declined.

Remind your dependant the Student Finance deadline is coming up, and also to respond to any further offers.

June

If your child has received all their decisions by May, they must reply to any offers by June. Except if they're using UCAS Extra to find a place, otherwise they will be declined.

July

Clearing opens, enabling students to find remaining places on courses.

August

A-Level, BTEC and T-Level results are released. If your child has received a conditional offer, then the university will be waiting to find out their grades before they confirm their place.

Did you know?

If your child doesn't receive any offers from their chosen universities, the UCAS Extra process gives them the chance to apply to an additional course or university.

ucas.com/applying

Supporting your child on Results day

Results day (usually mid-August) can be a stressful time for everyone involved – not least your child! They'll be all too aware that their grades are likely to have an impact on the next three years of their life and beyond.

Ensure your child is prepared for whatever happens and have a plan of action in best and worst case scenarios. On the day they'll need to have their UCAS ID details and passwords handy.

What happens during Clearing?

If at any point your child is not happy with their university offers they can still enter Clearing. Lots of universities will still have places available on their courses and Clearing gives your child a chance to secure one of them.

Clearing opens in July and stays open right through to October, but the busiest time is around A Level results day. Universities all over the country will have telephone hotlines and will be waiting for your child to give them a call.

Check each university's website to find the contact details for Clearing, ours is **lancashire.ac.uk/clearing**

Alternative options

Foundation Year

If your child missed out on the grades they needed to start a course then they may be offered a place on a Foundation Year. It involves a preliminary study year and your child will get lots of support to help them get to grips with the knowledge and study skills they'll need to succeed at university. If they pass the Foundation Year they can progress onto the full degree. Find out more at **lancashire.ac.uk/study**

Gap year

Another option might be for your child to take a gap year. It gives them the ideal opportunity to take some time out, think more deeply about what they want from their future career, gain some work experience, do some travelling, and apply to start university next year instead.

Location



Our campuses are compact, almost everything is within walking distance, including accommodation, lectures, shopping centres, nightlife and great places to eat – this means they'll save money on transport and get active at the same time.

It's easy to get around Lancashire and beyond, thanks to excellent public transport links. If you live locally and your child is thinking of staying at home and commuting, there's a robust network of trains, buses and cycle routes with options to pay weekly, monthly and per semester to save a little more cash.

Commuting and making friends

There's still lots of social opportunities available to students who live at home, such as regular course socials and a wide range of student groups to join – so don't worry about them missing out on the fun!

Railcards will also save them 1/3 off certain fares, so they'll be more likely to make the trip home to see you. Preston is on one of the main train lines in the UK, with places in easy reach such as:

- Edinburgh 2hr 18 mins
- Glasgow 2 hr 37 mins
- London 2 hr 12 mins
- Birmingham 1 hr 32 mins

A little closer to home we have great links with Manchester, Liverpool, Blackpool, Southport and Yorkshire, perfect for exploring with friends.





Remember...

1. Your child will only be able to apply for an accommodation place after they have accepted their offer to study at a university.
2. Most accommodation providers will ask for a deposit and sometimes a month's rent upfront. Maintenance loans may not come through straight away so it's worth having a plan B.



Home from home

If your dependant chooses to live in halls, they will be part of a vibrant community, immersing themselves in student life, meeting loads of new friends and making memories they'll never forget.

We offer rooms starting from £89 per week, which is amongst the most affordable around. Our accommodation boasts bright, modern and fully furnished study bedrooms, with access to kitchen facilities and relaxing social spaces – perfect for hosting movie nights and impressing friends with their cookery skills.

Our all-inclusive accommodation contracts mean they won't have to worry about bills either. The costs of heating, water and Wi-Fi are all included in their rent, giving them extra peace of mind.

Our on-site support team

We'll be on hand from day one. Our dedicated Residences Team will help students settle in and have the best experience with us. They'll provide support with maintenance issues, academic worries or feelings of loneliness, along with a wide range of regular social events to help them make friends like movie nights and BBQs.

lancashire.ac.uk/accommodation

Financial Support

We want our students to excel at university, whatever their financial situation.

We have several bursaries, scholarships and financial support packages available to help your dependant. Our support teams can also help them to feel more confident in understanding money at university.

Here are a few of the scholarships and bursaries we provide:

- Financial Support Package (low-income household)
- Care Leaver Bursary
- Carers Bursary
- Our Sports Scholarships

To see the full range plus eligibility criteria visit lancashire.ac.uk/bursaries

For external funding, such as NHS bursaries, visit **gov.uk/student-finance**

What's more, once your child holds an offer with us, they can access **Blackbullion**, the UK's largest hub of support funds, scholarships and grants for students to see what they might be eligible for.









Things to consider:

1. It's a good idea to sit down with your child and work out, for each university they have applied for, how much money they would need to live on taking into account maintenance loans, rent prices, course materials and the day-to-day cost of living.

2. Most students take up part-time work alongside their studies to help with these costs. Here, for example, there are many opportunities for work on and off-campus and many of our students manage to balance their studies with different types of work.



3. Finally, it may be worth your child setting up a student bank account to keep their loans or grants separate from personal money - some banks also offer incentives such as free cinema tickets or railcards. This way, it's much easier to manage their rent payments and incoming loans.

Second-to-none support

University can be a fantastic, life-changing experience for students. But it can also be tough. Many new students struggle with moving away from home, making new friends, fitting in, and meeting the demands of their course.

That's why we'll be there for your child every step of the way, with excellent support services – from the moment they arrive until the day they graduate and beyond.

First few days...

- Your child will be invited to attend a number of 'induction sessions' – activities designed to help them find their way around and settle in.
- They'll be introduced to their tutors, have opportunities to meet and socialise with other students on their course.
- Students will participate in introductory lessons to help them quickly get up to speed with all the practical skills and knowledge they'll need to succeed at university – from writing assignments to using lab equipment and the latest computer software.

Welcome...

At the start of term all students will take part in 'Welcome' (sometimes known as Freshers).

Jointly run by the University and the Students' Union, there will be an exciting programme of social activities, trips and welcome talks designed to help your child transition to their course, meet new friends, and generally have a fantastic first few days at university.

Throughout their studies

- Your child will meet with their Personal Tutor who will be there to offer advice and ongoing support with their studies and any personal matters.
- Our study skills advisors run regular workshops to help students get the most out of their studies. They can help with everything from study skills to note taking, planning and writing assignments, revision, research skills, digital skills and more.

We offer professional help and support with...

Career planning:
Our expert Careers Team can help students to plan their future career path and take practical steps to achieve their ambitions – with CV checking, interview practice and

Financial matters and budgeting:
Our team can help with Student Finance, scholarships and bursaries, plus they can offer general advice about managing money.

Faith and religion:
Our Oasis Faith and Spirituality Centre offers a warm welcome to people of all faiths and none from a multi-faith chaplaincy team.

Disabilities and learning difficulties:
Our Inclusive Support Team can help with any hurdles your child needs to overcome to succeed in their studies.

Academic study: Our Library staff can help students improve their research skills and find the resources they need for their study.

Medical Centre and Pharmacy:
Both located on Preston Campus where students can sign up with a GP to get vaccinations, contraception advice and more.

Mental health and inclusive support: Tailored mental health support from trained counsellors.

Business and enterprise: We can give your child the skills and support to set up and run their own business.

The Students' Union offers independent advice, support and representation as well as a wide range of opportunities to make friends, such as joining student groups and attending events.

Extra perks of studying here

- Affordable, **state-of-the-art gym facilities** with a wide range of classes
- **Free taxi** from Preston Campus Library to PR1 and PR2 postcodes after late-night study sessions
- **Discounted prices** on textbooks, home items, clothing, and tech, plus much more via Student Wallet
- Over 10,000 items are available to loan from our **IT Hub** including audio equipment, cameras and more
- **Free access** to Microsoft 365 and Adobe Creative Suite for relevant courses
- **Free language learning and resources** for over 20 different languages
- **Low-cost eye clinic** appointments from as little as £5 plus a medical centre on Preston Campus
- **Free, fun events** at the Students' Union and great value food and drink at Lampworks





Notes

There's lots to take in along the way, so make a note of anything you need to remember or research later:



Visit Us

Book on to our next Open Day or campus tour at our Preston or Burnley Campus.

Head to **lancashire.ac.uk/visit**

To explore our campuses from the comfort of your own home, visit our virtual platform today **virtualexperience.lancashire.ac.uk**

Next steps

Visit our website to find additional resources, key dates and advice on supporting your young person in their university journey.

lancashire.ac.uk/parents

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Please note information is correct at time of printing (October 2026).