

Speaker Notes: Choosing a Course at University

Welcome and Aims

Introduce yourself if not known to the class.

The session will be looking at raising awareness of the decision making process behind choosing a course and university. The session will explore using prospectuses to disseminate important facts, as well as highlighting questions which would need to be answered through online sources or by speaking with university representatives at Careers/ UCAS Conventions.

What Are My Choices?

There are 131 universities across the UK, ranging from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland to the University of Plymouth in the South West. The choice is there for you to make and hopefully the presentation will make you aware of the decision making process that could be key to you finding the perfect course and institution.

Subject

There are around 50,000 university courses to choose from in the UK. Some examples from the University of Leeds are illustrated;

Aviation Technology and Pilot Studies, Politics and Parliamentary Studies, Dentistry, Childhood Studies, Italian, Cinema and Photography, Theatre and Performance, Geography.

Further University of Leeds courses can be found using the University's [Course Finder](#), to search all university and college course across the UK the [UCAS website](#) has a comprehensive database.

Entry Requirements

Ensure you are predicted the entry requirements stipulated, checking you are studying subjects that are required for the course. GCSE grade requirements are also important to check.

Does the university have an alternative admissions process such as [Access to Leeds](#)? Where students are identified as having the potential to succeed at university, but who may not be able to demonstrate their talents through grades alone.

Are there any additional exams or interviews that would require completion? For example the [UKCAT](#) for some Medicine courses, is it also your responsibility to arrange and sit this?

Make sure you are aware of the qualification you will receive from the university, for example will it provide exemptions from further qualifications?

Teaching

Think about how best you learn and what teaching styles most appeal to you. Will you prefer lectures, or more practical lab or field work? Linking into this, how will you be assessed? Through exams, presentations or essays for example.

In Context

Are you interested in taking a Year in Industry or a Year Abroad? You may want to check whether the particular course and university you are looking at offers those as an option and find out if there are associated costs. Also, do you have to find your own placement or does the university have existing links?

Location

Where is the university located? Is it close to the city or town centre or will you have to take public transport to get there? What is on offer; is there enough going on to suit your lifestyle and interests?

Travel

Do you intend to visit home regularly? How much will this impact on your finances? Is the service frequent enough? If you are thinking of using a car at university will there be somewhere to park and have you considered the associated costs of insurance and tax?

Accommodation

What type of accommodation are you looking for? There are many options such as catered or non-catered, en-suite rooms and those where you would be required to share a bathroom. Is the accommodation on campus or will you have to commute? How many people will you be living with and how are you allocated the room, is based on interests or pot luck? For examples of different types of accommodation at the University of Leeds please click [here](#).

Investment in Facilities

It's important to know what facilities the university offers. Some examples from the University of Leeds are listed, including;

[Stage@Leeds The Edge](#) and [Liberty Building](#).

Russell Group

Some universities have formed groups through which they share ideas and resources regarding issues and procedures in the higher education sector. An example listed is the Russell Group, however there are a few others available to discuss as well as highlighted by [UCAS](#).

Support

Some students may require [additional support](#) at the university, it is important to check what services and facilities are available.

Union

A Students' Union is an organisation which represents the interests of students and is dedicated to social and organisational activities. A selection of services provided by the University of Leeds Students' Union ([LUU](#)) are listed, followed by a slide highlighting some of the societies available; Action (students having a positive impact on the local community of Leeds through volunteering projects such as the older persons tea party or volunteering with young people), , Anime, Jiu Jitsu, Caving, Assassins Guild (where students sign up to 'kill' other members using rubber knives, water pistols etc.), Henna and Circus Skills.

Open Days

Encourage your students to attend as many as possible, universities are very diverse and a wealth of advice and experience is on offer at each one. Universities will often promote their Open Days [online](#).

Facts and Figures

Using online [Student Survey](#) results and league tables can provide a good insight into the experiences of students at that university and how the university compares to its peers across a wide range of factors.

It is also worth looking into financial support available from each university, many offer a range of [scholarships and bursaries](#).

[Employability](#) is another area to consider, the University of Leeds for example has a very good reputation amongst employers. According to the 2013 High Fliers survey, Leeds is the 10th 'most-targeted' university by the UK's top graduate employers and 93% of our undergraduates are employed or studying within six months of leaving.

Close the presentation by answering questions arising from the presentation.