

Self-assessment and research

Higher Education Fairs are a great way to help you decide if university is the right option for you, and which university might be the best fit - but they can be overwhelming! With the right preparation, you can ensure that you get all the information you need, and make the best use of your time.

Complete pages 1-3 ahead of your event.

Self-assessment questions:

What are your academic interests? What course would you like to study?

What predicted grades are you expected to achieve?

Would you prefer a large or small university?

What extracurricular activities would you like to engage with at university?

What location would you like to live in? Near/far from home? Urban/rural?

What is your preferred learning style (lectures, seminars, practical work)?

Spend some time researching universities:

Universities vary in many ways, take some time to research their differences. Use university websites and UCAS to compare how they can be different. You could consider:

- Teaching methods (research-led or industry-focused?)
- Location (city or campus?)
- Assessments (exams, coursework, or group projects?)

Tip: Use the DiscoverUni website to compare different options.

Note your findings below to help guide your decision

Key factors and questions

Consider the criteria that is most important to you:

Now that you're more aware of the differences between universities, consider what factors matter to you. What would you like from your university experience?

Use the tick boxes below to select the criteria which matters to you.

- Exam assessments Coursework assessments Group project assessments
- Placement year/study abroad Additional support available City university
- Campus university Cost of living in the city Industry experience of tutors
- Close to home Further away from home Scholarship/bursary options
- Catered accommodation Self-catered accommodation Price of accommodation
- Societies/social life League table standings _____
- _____ _____ _____

Highlight your 5 most important factors.

Plan some questions:

Note some questions based on your criteria for choosing a university.

These questions should help you determine whether each university is a good fit for you.


Example questions

- How is this course taught and what might my typical week look like?
- What support is available if I'm finding the jump from school to university tough?
- Do you offer contextual/reduced offers?
- Are there any scholarships or bursaries on offer?
- What is the social life like? What societies and clubs do you have?
- Can I do a joint-honours degree? Do you offer placement or study-abroad years?
- Do you think this course would suit someone who wants to go into (X) career?
- What accommodation options are available?
- What are my career prospects once I've graduated? What have former students gone on to do?

Example: Matching priorities to universities

Read the example below:

Look at Alex’s profile to see how their preferences and situation shape their university choices.

<p>Student profile</p>  <p>Name: Alex Age: 17 Studies: A Level History A Level Business BTEC Law</p>	<p>Personal Preferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to study History • Wants to be able to walk to lectures • Wants workplace experience before graduating • Has Generalised Anxiety Disorder • Is close with their parents • Doesn’t like exams <p>Top 5 criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Campus university <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Placement year/study abroad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close to home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coursework assessments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional support available
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Alex’s criteria

	Campus University	Coursework assessments	Close to home	Placement opportunity	Disability support available
Universities	University of Nottingham	✓		✓	✓
	University of Birmingham	✓	✓	✓	✓

The University of Birmingham matches many of Alex’s preferred criteria and may be a better fit for them.

Now its your turn:

On the next page, fill out your top 5 criteria in the table, ready for your event.

Use the table at the event, and while researching your options. Match your top criteria to the universities that you research, and this will help you to identify the best fit for you. You can use this information to select your 5 university choices in your application, or during Clearing.

Your turn: Matching your criteria to universities

It's the day of your HE Fair! Here are some of our top tips:

- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.
- Pick up prospectuses from all the university stands that you visit.
- Speak to student ambassadors to get a unique and personal take on the university.
- There's never a silly question - ask as many as you like!
- Don't limit yourself! If you see a university that you've not heard of advertising your chosen course - go and speak to them!

Complete the table below:

- List your top five criteria in the top row of the table.
- Write each university's name in the left-hand column.
- After speaking with representatives and asking your questions, mark a ✓ or ✗ to show whether each university meets your criteria.

My Criteria

Universities					

Continued...

My Criteria

Universities					

Extra notes:

What have you learned?

Congratulations! You've completed your HE Fair - we hope you found it fun and informative. Now it's time to reflect on your experience. Read the prospectuses that you collected, and look over the notes that you made. Let's evaluate how well each university matches your criteria.

Which universities met your criteria best?

Look through your table. Which universities met most of your criteria? Make a note of them below. Are there any universities who weren't at the event, who you think might meet more of your criteria?

Do you still think that university is right for you? What are your other options?

Have you considered a degree apprenticeship? Would you like to take a gap year? Use this time to research your other options.

Tip: Visit the UCAS and Prospects webpages to help with your research.

Next steps

- When are the Open Days for your favourite universities? Can you book onto them?
- Use university websites to compare the course content between your top choices.
- Visit the social media accounts of your top choice universities.
- Talk to your loved ones, friends and teachers about your options.
- See if you can arrange to visit the town or city of your top choice!