# Thank you for joining

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- Whilst this webinar has been pre-recorded, we are available live to answer your questions.
- Please post your questions using the chat box to the side of the webinar screen. We're available to answer your questions throughout the webinar.
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# Researching Options: Routes into Higher Education and contextual admissions



# Session Overview

- Introductions
- Definitions
- Pathways to Higher Education (HE)
- What to consider when researching HE
- Key takeaways

# Definitions

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| Care experienced | Care Leavers | Estranged Students |
| --- | --- | --- |

- Definitions may vary between universities
- Independent Students
  - 25yrs old or under at the start of their degree or over 25yrs old
- Often linked to financial support
  - Student Finance England or other awarding bodies
  - University financial support
- Often same teams who support students from these backgrounds
- Check uni web pages

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# Pathways to HE



# Pathways to HE

## Not all students go straight to university at 18

- **Foundation Years**
  - e.g. University of Nottingham
- **Year 0/gateway years for Medicine courses**
  - May need to meet multiple WP criteria
  - e.g. University of Southampton
- **Lifelong Learning Foundation Years**
  - e.g. University of Sheffield
- **Degree apprenticeships**
  - e.g. University of Warwick
- **Access/Access to HE courses**
  - Usually in FE institutions

Supporting someone?

- Research is key
- Reflect on the end goal
- Visit universities

**Advancing Access - self-assessment resource**

# Helping students research options

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## Universities and courses vary in:

- Support available
- Content
- Teaching styles
- Assessment methods
- Types of accreditation
- Availability of work experience
- Reputation
- Career prospects

**Encourage students to rank their choices to narrow down their options**

Download this free resource here.

### Student profile



**Name:** Alex

**Age:** 17

**Studies:**
A Level History
A Level Business
BTEC Law

### Personal Preferences

- 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

### Top 5 criteria

☑ Campus university
☑ Placement year/study abroad
☑ Close to home
☑ Coursework assessments
☑ Additional support available

**Alex's criteria**

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

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# What to consider when researching HE



# Contextual admissions

- **Contextual data**
  - Sets an application in its educational and or socio-economic context
  - Institutions may have different or multiple criteria

- **Entry requirements**
  - Level 2
  - Level 3 qualifications
  - Other prerequisites e.g UCAT

- **Contextual offers and admissions**
  - Could be lower or alternative grades
  - Firm and Insurance choices

# Contextual admissions

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**Visit the Advancing Access Contextual Admissions Hub for quick access to Contextual Admissions policies at our partner universities**

**Entry requirements**

- UCAS - top level information
- University web pages - for specific entry requirements

**Tips**

- Search for *Uni of X* and contextual admissions policy for the detail
- Next session - UCAS application

# Accommodation

## Where to live whilst studying is often a key concern

- **Encourage learners to look at different accommodation options whilst researching their university options**

- **University accommodation**
  - Accommodation guarantees
  - 365/all year round accommodation
  - Usually in halls of residence

- **Private rented accommodation**
  - Guarantor schemes
  - Contract checking

# University support

## Institutions offer a range of on course support

- **Designated point of contact**
- **Wellbeing support**
- **Peer support, student communities/socials**
- **Personal academic tutor or equivalent**
- **Careers guidance**
- **Outduction support**

**Tips**

- Uni web pages - for care experienced, care leavers, estranged students
- Advancing Access care experienced hub
- Final session - support

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**Tips**

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# Funding

- **Talk to learners about the local offer from their LA**
- **Check finance awarding body for student finance support, as there are differences across the UK**
- **From 2026-27 SFE updated entitlement for eligible care leavers to the maximum maintenance loan automatically, exempt from means testing**
- **UCAS fee waiver for care leavers**
- **Check out bespoke bursaries/scholarships for care leavers or estranged students**
- **What other funding may be available at universities?**
  - Household income-based funding
  - Hardship or financial assistance funding
  - Discretionary funds

Early conversations about funding and finance can help make university feel financially more achievable

# Key Takeaways

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Check out university web pages for full details and dedicated contacts

Search terms:
Care experienced
Care leavers
Estranged students

Could a care experienced person you are supporting be considered estranged?

Be prepared to share & understand what requirement for evidence, and at what stage

Encourage students to reach out for support and being proactive - we're here to help

Be mindful of confidentiality and consent from the person you are supporting

# Thank you for listening

- Please post your questions using the chat box to the side of the webinar screen

- The chat will close in around 5 minutes, you're welcome to continue asking your questions in the Networking Hall

- Thank you again for attending!