

SOLENT
UNIVERSITY

SOUTHAMPTON



STEP
INTO
UNIVERSITY

YEARS 7-9

Solent University believes that every young person with the ability to succeed should be able to take advantage of the benefits of university and higher education, whatever their background.



Hello,

If you're just starting secondary school, you might be hearing lots of talk from your teachers about GCSEs, A-levels, BTECs, apprenticeships and even university, but are left wondering what all this means and how you fit into it.

We've put together this short guide to give you a quick introduction to university, and why it might be for you. You'll find some handy things to think about while you are in years 7–9, including how to weigh up your GCSE options.

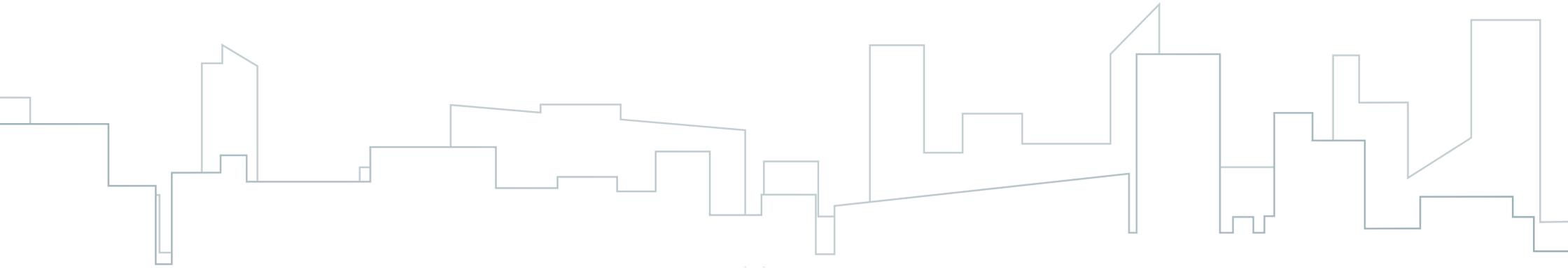
If you have any questions or want to find out more information, please speak to your school careers team.

The following websites may also be useful:

www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

www.careerpilot.org.uk

www.solent.ac.uk



WHAT IS UNIVERSITY?

University is a place where you will continue your learning after secondary school, FE college or sixth form. A university is normally a group of buildings where students learn. Courses that students study at university help prepare them for professions and careers. First-time entrants to university normally study an 'undergraduate' (UG) degree, but there are many other qualifications available.

A full-time undergraduate degree normally takes three years, but for more specialist subjects, such as medicine and veterinary science, you may be required to study for five.

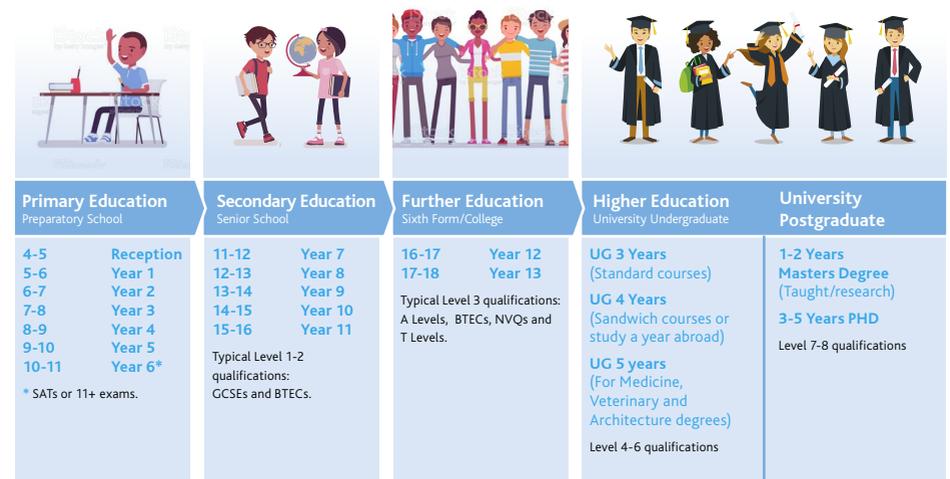
The diagram on the right shows the different stages of education, from primary to university level.



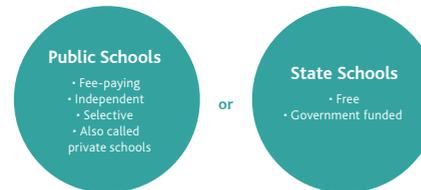
WHO GOES TO UNIVERSITY?

Anyone over the age of 18 can go to university. All kinds of people from all over the world go to university, to gain or update skills, re-learn for a new career or just study for interest.

UK EDUCATION SYSTEM



Compulsory school age in England - up to 18



WHY SHOULD I THINK ABOUT GOING TO UNIVERSITY?

There are three main reasons why you might think about going to university: you'll enhance your career prospects, you'll have the chance to follow your passion and, finally, you'll have fun. We explore these in a bit more detail below:

Career prospects

- At university you'll study a subject you really love, which can help you go into your chosen career.
- Some career options such as doctors, vets, lawyers and architects require a degree and university can help you on your way to achieving this.
- Those that have been to university typically earn more than those who don't.
- A university degree will make you stand out when applying for jobs in the future.

Follow your passion

- You'll be able to explore the subject you really love in-depth.
- You can choose your own study options.
- You'll engage with like-minded people.
- You'll gain a sense of achievement.

Have fun

- You'll become more independent and develop as a person, grow in confidence and have the chance to make new friends and try new things.
- You'll have the opportunity to mix with people from other cultures and backgrounds.
- There's lots of extra-curricular activities to get involved in: from societies to sports clubs, there's something for everyone.

WHAT DO I NEED TO THINK ABOUT NOW?

It's never too early to start thinking about university and what you hope to do for a career. The two main areas to start thinking about are ideas for your future career, and your GCSE options.

Your future career

Take the time in years 7 and 8 to find out what subjects you really enjoy, and ultimately what you think you might like to carry on with at GCSE level (some schools also offer BTECs). Take up hobbies or look at sports clubs you can join – these can be really helpful in deciding what to do in later life.

Useful links:

- www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk
- www.careerpilot.org.uk
- www.ucas.com
- www.sunoutreach.org
- www.apprenticeships.gov.uk



WHAT DO I NEED TO THINK ABOUT NOW?

GCSE options

In year 8 or 9 you'll select the subjects you want to study for GCSE – think about the questions below when considering what to study:

1) What do I want to do as a future career?

Look at what you want to do as a future career and find out what qualifications you may need to get into it, for example, maths/science GCSEs (an example is shown below). After your maths/science GCSEs, you may choose to do an A-level/BTEC in IT or computing. This may lead you to study a computing degree at university. After graduation, you could work as a Computer Network Architect, collecting information about your employer's business plan, so that you can design and build computer networks that will allow machines to communicate with each other and help the organisation achieve its goals.

GCSEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths • English • Triple Science • Computer Science • History • PE
A Level / BTEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT • Computing • Psychology • Public services
Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc Computer system and Networks

2) Do I need specific GCSEs to study particular A-levels or other Level 3 qualifications?

Some A-levels require you to have studied specific GCSEs, so if you already know what you want to study at A-level, remember to take this into account.

3) What subjects do I actually enjoy?

Remember to pick subjects that you actually enjoy and are passionate about – don't pick something just because your friend will be doing it.

4) How many GCSEs should I take? Most A-level/university courses and jobs require you to have grades between 9 and 4 in a minimum of five subjects.



JARGON BUSTER

There's a lot of new words and terms when talking about education and university, so we've put together an explanation of some of the most commonly used words and phrases to help:

A-levels: the academic qualification gained from studying at a sixth form or college after completing GCSEs.

Apprenticeships: apprenticeships combine practical training in a job and study. An apprentice will work alongside experienced staff, gain job-specific skills, earn a wage and get holiday pay, and will be given time for study related to their role (the equivalent of one day a week). Apprenticeships are available at a variety of levels including degree apprenticeships.

AS-levels: a stand-alone post-16 qualification that takes one year to complete.

BA: Bachelor of Arts – the undergraduate degree awarded to those studying an arts or humanities degree.

BSc: Bachelor of Science – the undergraduate degree awarded to those studying a scientific discipline.

BTEC: Business and Technology Education Council – vocational qualifications that equip students with theoretical and practical knowledge in a range of subjects. There are three main levels: BTEC firsts, which are equivalent to GCSE level; BTEC national

diplomas, which are equivalent to A-level; and BTEC apprenticeships.

Bursary: a non-repayable monetary award made to students who satisfy certain criteria as set by the awarding universities and colleges.

Degree: a full-time course usually lasting three years. However, there are also opportunities to study for degrees on a part-time basis.

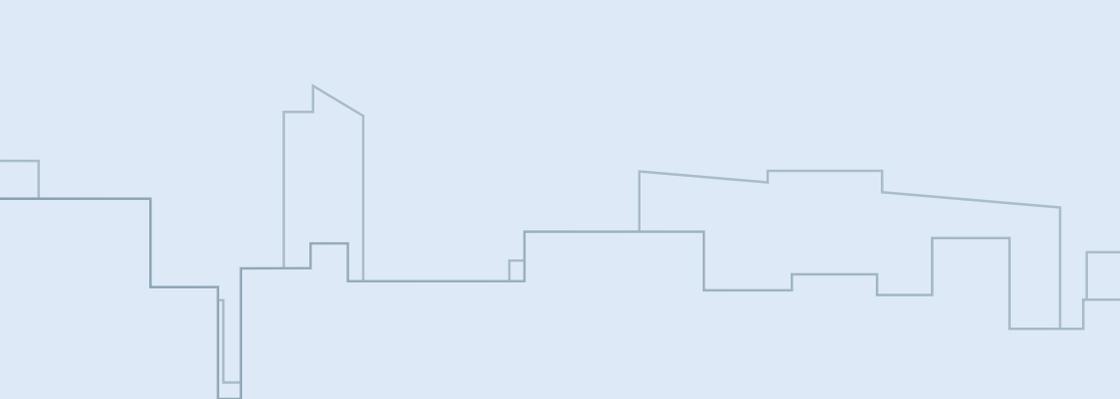
DSA: Disabled Student Allowances – monetary awards made to those students who may need additional support during their studies as a result of a disability or long-term health condition. For example, these awards may pay for specialist equipment, printing costs, a note-taker, and so on. These awards are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

FE: further education – the qualifications that are taken post-16, that is to say, after a student has taken their GCSEs.

Graduate: a person who has completed and passed his or her degree and been awarded their qualification.

GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education – the qualifications that are taken at the end of a student's secondary education, in year 11.

HE: higher education – the qualifications that are taken at level 4 or above, that is to say, those that are taken after A-levels or equivalents.



JARGON BUSTER

International Baccalaureate Diploma: a two-year educational programme primarily aimed at 16 to 19-year-olds in 140 countries around the world. The programme provides an internationally accepted qualification for entry into higher education and is recognised by many universities worldwide.

Key Stage 3: Key stage 3 (or KS3) refers to school years 7–9.

Key Stage 4: Key stage 4 (or KS4) refers to school years 10–11.

Key Stage 5: Key stage 5 (or KS5) refers to school years 12–13.

Open days: days when the university is open to students who are considering applying. They often include activities such as campus tours, subject talks, accommodation tours and finance talks.

Oxbridge: the informal name for both Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Personal statement: the section of your UCAS application form where you can tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You only have one statement for all five of your application choices.

Student Loans Company: the company that provides financial assistance in the form of loans to students. Loans are not paid back until after the course has been completed and graduates are earning a salary above a certain level.

Students' Union or Students' Guild: an organisation found in all universities that is run by the students and is dedicated to the representation and support of the students at university. The Union represents the interests of students across a whole range of issues, and also provides a focal point for social activities on campus for all students.

Terms: periods of teaching time throughout the academic year.

T Levels: Technical Levels – these two-year courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work. T Levels offer students a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement.

UCAS: University and College Admissions Service – the central organisation which handles applications for higher education across the UK.

Undergraduate: a student studying for a degree.

University: a higher education institution that offers degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as being where academic research takes place.



ABOUT SOLENT UNIVERSITY

At Solent, our aim is to deliver innovative, inclusive and intellectually stimulating teaching in order to develop self-confident and highly employable graduates.

Employers expect more from modern graduates than ever. It's not enough to know your subject – to kickstart a good career, young people need connections, experience and opportunities.

All our courses are designed with employability in mind, which makes industry-based learning a priority.

We make the most of partnerships with local businesses and organisations to offer students the most relevant experience that will provide the necessary skills for their future career. Notable partners include Southampton FC, ABP Southampton Marathon, B&Q and Carnival.

We offer a range of industry-focused courses in the following areas:

- Architecture and construction
- Art and design
- Business and finance
- Computing and games
- Engineering
- English and journalism
- Fashion
- Health, psychology and sociology
- Law and criminology
- Maritime
- Marketing, communications and PR
- Music and performance
- Sport and fitness
- Travel and tourism
- TV, film, media production and technology

To find out more about Solent and our range of courses, visit www.solent.ac.uk/courses

To find out more about our support for students, including care leavers and those with disabilities, visit www.solent.ac.uk/student-support



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