

Audio Transcript for Exploring Higher Education

Slide 1 – Title- Exploring Higher Education

Hello everyone. My name is Jane Catchpole, I work at UWE Bristol as a Pre-HE careers adviser in the widening access team. We work with local schools and colleges in the area to support students, like yourself, to explore your options and plan for your next steps after you finish your courses.

I appreciate that it is very early to be thinking about what you might be doing at 18. However, it can be useful to find out more about all the pathways and options available to you. It helps to get you thinking and coming up with ideas. Also if you have a longer term plan in mind, you can work out what you need to do to get there. We hope you find our sessions useful.

Slide 2 – Today's session aims

Higher Education or HE means studying at university, college or apprenticeship for a higher-level qualification, usually a degree.

There are a number of reasons why people go to university and we will explore these in more detail.

There is lots of choice available, and we'll consider some of the options relating to subjects and career ideas. This can have implications on what you choose for your post-16 options and beyond.

There is a lot of information out there, but we'll help you to find your way around. Don't forget you are only in year ten or eleven, so you have plenty of time to think about this, and of course to change your mind.

Slide 3 – Higher Education

It's worth pointing out that all post-16 options *could* lead to Higher Education at 18 or later on in life.

To help you make the right choice, you need to think about how you learn best, what kind of environment you want to be in and what is right for you at the time. This could be academic courses like A-Levels, or semi vocational courses such as BTECs, where you get a broad understanding of a work sector. Or in the work place doing practical assessments in a specific job role with an apprenticeship.

Slide 4- University true or false?

Have a go at this quick 'true or false' activity as a starter. Simply pause the recording, read the statements, think about the answers and then when you are ready to go press play to see the answers.

1. False – No, increasingly students are staying local and living at home.
2. False – Different study options for people achieving range of grades in a range of subjects.
3. False – Different hours for different courses.
4. True – No age limits. 84-year-old student currently studying a law degree at University of West London.
5. False – No, many people choose a wide range of careers they hadn't initially planned for at the start of their degrees.
6. True – see next slide.

Slide 5 – College - did you know?

Did you know there are many great opportunities at college? A third of young people aged under 19 applying to university via UCAS used college as their route in.

Colleges also offer higher education courses, with 137,000 people studying higher education courses at 165 different colleges in the UK.

Slide 6- Why study at higher education level?

Everyone has different reasons for going to university. What are yours? Some common ones are listed on the screen now.

Having a degree can give you a higher level of skills, potentially helping you to prepare for the new jobs of the future.

There are lots of opportunities available at university to widen your experience and develop skills. You could get involved in work placements, international study options, field trips, industry projects, additional language modules, take part in clubs and societies, sports and meet lots of new people from all over the world.

Slide 7- Typical concerns about higher education

On the screen you can see some typical concerns about going to university. Let's have a look at them now.

Most graduates are unemployed: Currently graduate unemployment is low with just **5.5%** of graduates unemployed 15 months after graduating.

I won't get a good job afterwards: At the moment, 71.8% of graduates needed their degrees to get their first job.

I don't know what I want to do in the future: There are lots of careers and employers including the NHS, Sky, Deloitte and Amazon that employ graduates from any subject area in professional jobs. There are more options than you might think. Ideas and opportunities will come up while studying. It doesn't matter at all if you're not sure which career path you want to take at the start of your degree.

It will cost me too much: University fees are £9,250 per year plus a living cost loan or maintenance loan of up to £9,000 a year to cover rent, food, phone, travel and more.

But remember you don't start repaying loans until you earn over £27,295 per year. If you earned £29,000 a year, you would be paying back £12.80 a month. You probably already pay more than this for a monthly Netflix or Spotify subscription. It's estimated that about 80% of students will never pay the loan back in full, and it is wiped out after 30 years.

Slide 8- Types of HE courses

It's important to know that there are a few different course combinations on offer.

- Single subject - you would study just one subject for example Criminology.
- Joint Honours - you would study two subjects in equal amounts, 50/50.

- Major/minor - you would study a bigger chunk of one subject so the split would be 75/25.
- Sandwich year, or placement year is the opportunity to spend a year gaining skills and earning a wage in industry. Some courses will offer shorter work placements, which you can build into your course.

Slide 9- HE qualification levels

The table shows HE qualifications at different levels, undergraduate at the bottom and postgraduate qualifications at the top.

A degree is usually three years long. Some courses have an 'integrated foundation year'. This is the chance to boost your grades if needed, or pick up a new subject. For example, you studied English and Media at level 3 and want to study Science at uni.

In some cases, degrees can have an integrated Master's year, for example Engineering, and usually last four years.

Vocational qualifications like foundation degrees, HNCs or HNDs last one-two years. You can top-up and do third year at university to get full level 6 degree. These are linked to an industry sector and usually available at colleges.

With this variety of qualifications there will be options to suit all learning styles, interests and entry grades.

Slide 10- Over 50,000 courses

There is a huge range of courses to choose from, you will find subjects from A-Z.

Some will be vocational, where you will learn about an industry or role and gain practical experience required for this role.

Others will be non-vocational including a broad study of the subject, and you will dive deep to research and question the subject.

Or they will be semi-vocational, where you'll learn about an industry helping you specialise in an area as well as keeping options open about a range of jobs.

Slide 11- Ideas for exploring courses

When you're considering what you might like to study there are some good places to start thinking, which include:

- any possible career ideas you have- research these careers and find out if there are particular qualifications you need to get into that job.
- your favourite subjects.
- your interests and what you enjoy learning more about.
- what you're good at.
- skills and knowledge that will be useful in the future - building new skills as technology and how we do things changes.

Slide 12 Where can my subjects /take me?

There are lots of myths about which subjects are needed for certain study paths or careers, so let's check some of these out now. Pause the recording, read the statements and then press play when you're ready to see the answers.

1. You need to take GCSE Business Studies if you want any career in finance. FALSE
2. You need A-Level Biology and Chemistry to do a Medicine degree at university. TRUE
3. You need to study A-Level Law, English and History and do a Law degree to become a solicitor or barrister. - FALSE

This shows the importance of researching your ideas about future careers and study in detail to make sure you have the full facts.

Slide 13 Exploring Course Ideas -1

This slide show subjects you may be studying or considering for the future – pause the recording and use the websites shown on the screen, and in the handout, to find HE courses that could link on from these. Feel free to skip over any subjects you really don't like.

Press play when you're ready to see some examples. Please remember the examples really are just a flavour of what is available across each subject area. Remember to check the entry requirements for the courses you find.

Here are some examples

Linked to Maths:

Computer science Can include theory, experimentation, and engineering that form the basis for the design and use of computers.

Economics is the study of how people use resources and respond to incentives.

Biomedical engineering application of engineering principles and design concepts to medicine and biology for healthcare purposes (e.g. diagnostic or therapeutic).

Linked to Biology:

Biomedical science focuses on how cells, organs and systems function in the human body.

Molecular biology exploring the role, function, and structure of biomolecules.

Genetics is the study of the effect of genetic differences on organisms.

Linked to Chemistry:

Biochemistry is the study of the chemistry behind *biological* processes.

Forensic science is the application of science to law through the collection, preservation and analysis of evidence.

Chemical engineering combines physical science with life science and maths. Chemical engineers attempt to convert raw materials into more useful items.

Linked to History:

Archaeology is the study of human activity through the recovery and analysis of material culture.

Politics is the how the power of governance control a state or community. How it is handled and where the power lies.

Art history is the close analysis of art and its interpretation as a telling product of human societies.

Linked to Geography:

Ecology and wildlife conservation is a branch of biology which studies the interactions among organisms and their environment.

Flood and coastal engineering combines engineering, the environment focusing on flooding hazards.

Human geography is the study of people and their communities, cultures, economies, and interactions with the environment.

Linked to Religious studies:

Theology is the critical study of the nature of the divine.

Philosophy is concerned with the knowledge of how things are the way they are.

Anthropology is the study of humans, human behaviour and society in the past and present.

Linked to Art:

Fine art refers to visual art that is created for beauty and meaning and includes painting, sculpture, drawing and graphics.

Product design is the process of imagining, creating, and testing products that solve users' problems or address specific needs.

Illustration is the production of drawings, paintings or diagrams that help make products more attractive or easier to understand.

Linked to Textiles:

Buyer researches trends and are responsible for selecting the products that appear in store or online.

Surface pattern design is artwork that is created to be applied as surface decoration, including patterns, illustrations, hand-lettering, and artwork.

Visual merchandiser is the practice of developing floor plans and three-dimensional displays in order to maximize sales in retail. Using blending of lighting, colour combinations and articles of decor to stimulate an observer and generate interest.

Linked to English:

Communications and media is the analysis of the way all media platforms reflect, represent and influence.

Linguistics is about understanding the workings of language. Why is it that we have different languages? Why do they change over time?

Film studies is the study of history and the social impact of cinema.

I hope this quick exploration confirms the big range of subjects there are out there that can develop and grow a subject interest you have, or create a new one.

Slide 14 - Finding the information

Research is a really important in planning your next step. There is a lot of information out there, which can be confusing, so we have selected some websites for you that are helpful, up to date and accurate.

Careerpilot has really good information on all your options after GCSEs and beyond. You'll also be able to research careers by school subjects and interests.

UCAS is where you apply to university, but it also has lots of really good information to help you make choices, including subject guides helping you get an idea of what studying that subject would be like at university.

SACU has an interest-based online tool that will match you against possible subjects that might be a good match for you.

The Complete University Guide has some really good subject guides, as well as information about where you could study them.

What Uni has a course finder that asks you questions to help you build a picture of possible options.

You can find details of all these websites on the handout with this session.

Slide 15- Summary

We've explored the reasons why people go to university and seen that they can vary.

We know that there are many subjects out there and why it's important to keep an open mind, so that we don't miss any opportunities.

There are many careers that are not in the spotlight, in the media or that we come into contact with on a daily basis. Start to look around you and notice the careers people have.

This can take time, so researching, becoming curious about things is a good start to making decisions about your future.

Slide 16 – Thank you

Thank you for watching. We hope you found the information useful.

If you have any questions about planning for higher education and careers you can contact the team by emailing prehecareersadviser@uwe.ac.uk We'll help as much as we can. Please remember to email us from your school or college email account, rather than a personal account, otherwise we won't be able to reply. We look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks and good luck.