Welcome to Keele

For most young people, going to university is one of the most exciting and important times in their life. However we know that the process of applying to and beginning university involves decisions and changes that may seem daunting; decisions about which qualifications to take, where to live and, most importantly, which university to choose.

Here at Keele University, we understand that as a parent or guardian of a student about to start university you will play an important role in helping them to select the university and course that’s right. That’s why we’ve put together this guide, to answer some of the questions you may have about university and help you understand the process more fully.

We hope it’s useful – if you have any more questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us using the details on page 19.

Please note that the information in this document is correct at the time of print but may be subject to change.
Why go to university?

This is a question that many parents and guardians will ask. So why should your son or daughter go?

There are many benefits to following a path in Higher Education, such as increased earning potential, a wider range of employment opportunities and a more rewarding career.

Top 5 reasons for going to university

1. **Career prospects**
   An increasing number of jobs now ask that applicants are educated to degree level, meaning that people who have studied at university will have a wider variety of career options to choose from. Many employers target graduates in their recruitment campaigns as they have valuable transferable skills.

2. **Follow a vocation**
   Some careers are only possible with a degree – the traditional roles of doctor, dentist, pharmacist, vicar, teacher, scientific researcher, architect, lawyer and, increasingly, nurse, require a period of intense study at university level (first degree and often beyond) and are only open to graduates with a related degree.

3. **Learn what they love**
   School and college education is quite general – going to university allows your son or daughter to develop in-depth knowledge and skills in a subject (or subjects) they love; what’s more, studying a subject in which they have a genuine interest and motivation to learn often leads to excellent results.

4. **Social opportunities**
   University gives them opportunities to experience a rich cultural and social scene, make new friends and become a more confident and well-rounded adult, which will help them in whatever direction they take.

5. **Financial rewards**
   On average, graduates earn substantially more than people A levels who did not go to university. Figures show that over the last decade, graduates earned an average of £12,000 a year more than those without a degree*.

*Source: Office for National Statistics
Keele University was ranked 3rd in England in 2011 for employability of graduates with 95% of students who graduated in 2010 finding full-time employment or continuing to further study within six months.

As your son or daughter starts researching into higher education choices, there are a number of factors to consider. These can be grouped under the following headings and their school or college will support them with where to find the information and how to create a shortlist of institutions.

- Type of institution
- Type of course and subject choice
- Entry requirements
- Reputation/League tables
- Other facilities
- Student finance ‘package’

Students can start researching their course choices through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and this will show the entry requirements for each course: http://search.ucas.com/

Why choose Keele?

1. For a campus university
   As a leading example of a campus university, Keele offers a safe and friendly environment where everything you need is on the doorstep. Set in acres of landscaped parkland, fields, woodlands and lakes, Keele is also one of the most beautiful campuses in the UK.

2. For a convenient and safe location
   Keele is centrally located in Staffordshire, only one hour from Manchester or Birmingham and under two hours from London. Keele is also the safest university campus in the West Midlands*.

3. For graduate employment
   Keele graduates have some of the highest employment rates in the UK. The University is currently rated 3rd in England for graduate prospects (not including specialist universities)*.

4. For subject breadth
   Keele’s innovative approach to education means that our students leave with the breadth of education that today’s employers are looking for. Many of our undergraduate courses are Dual Honours, meaning that students can study two subjects side-by-side, and all degree programmes allow students to develop practical, transferable skills.

5. For great student satisfaction
   Keele is ranked in the top five UK universities for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey. High standards of teaching and an excellent student support system ensure that Keele students get the best from their time here.

For a list of Keele’s forthcoming Open Day dates, visit www.keele.ac.uk/visiting

*BBC news league tables for crime rates  
*Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
Applying to university

All applications to university must be made via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK. Once an application is made via the service it is passed on to the relevant university for consideration.

Application deadlines

Applications are made online via www.ucas.com; once an application is made its progress can be tracked through this website.

It is important to be aware of the following application deadlines:

15 October
Application deadline for medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine/science and for all courses at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

15 January
Application deadline for all courses (except those listed above and some art and design courses which have a 24 March deadline).

24 March
Application deadline for art and design courses except those listed with a 15 January deadline.

Receiving a decision

Some universities require applicants to attend an interview before making a decision on the application. This will depend on the course and the university.

University decisions are sent to applicants from UCAS. Offers can be either:

Conditional – dependent on exam results

Unconditional – this means that the applicant already meets entry requirements

If successful in being offered a place at more than one university, applicants need to make a ‘firm’ (first) choice and an ‘insurance’ (second) choice. There will be a deadline for making this decision which is communicated via UCAS.

UCAS Extra

If an applicant declines all their offers, or does not receive any offers, they may wish to use UCAS Extra which will give them an opportunity to add an additional choice to their application. This service runs from February to July.

Confirmation and Clearing

Following the publication of their exam results, students can find out if their place is confirmed via UCAS.

If they are unsuccessful, clearing takes place in August, and is the process where students who do not meet the conditions of their offers may become eligible to look for vacancies at other universities. It is important that students are available to discuss their options, as due to the Data Protection Act, you will not be able to act on their behalf.

www.keele.ac.uk/clearing
## Timetable of activities

### Year one / First Year of A level study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When to do it (suggested)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start thinking about university options</td>
<td>Post-Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start researching course choices</td>
<td>From March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a higher education convention</td>
<td>March to July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Open Days at shortlisted universities</td>
<td>May to October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake relevant work or voluntary experience to support application</td>
<td>On-going/summer holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register for and sit any necessary admissions tests</td>
<td>From 1 August, From 1 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. LNAT for Law, UKCAT for Medicine</td>
<td>From 1 August, From 1 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare personal statement</td>
<td>From July/over summer holiday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Year two / Second year of A level study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When to do it (suggested)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finalise application and personal statement</td>
<td>From September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit application to UCAS</td>
<td>15 October deadline for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science/ Medicine, Oxford and Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit details for student funding application to Student Loans Company</td>
<td>Service launched from February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for any interviews</td>
<td>September – April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log into UCAS Track to view university decisions</td>
<td>October onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Re)visit universities holding offers with</td>
<td>October onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCAS Extra available for students who have declined all their offers or who have not received any</td>
<td>Open from February onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept/decline offers: make firm (first) choice and insurance (second) choice decisions</td>
<td>End of April/early May – UCAS will advise you of the deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for university accommodation or look for accommodation in the private sector</td>
<td>May onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take exams</td>
<td>May onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of exam results</td>
<td>July onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place confirmed at firm or insurance institution or entered into clearing if unsuccessful</td>
<td>On/after results day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for start of semester, receive Fresher’s pack and complete any necessary forms</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB.** Not all students will need to undertake all activities. The details provided in the table above are indicative; full details should be checked with the relevant organisation.
Tuition fees at Keele University for UK and EU students are currently £9,000 a year for undergraduate, full-time degree courses.

However, it is important to remember that:

• Most English students studying in the UK, and EU students studying at English universities, won’t have to pay up front for tuition; the cost will be covered by a loan supplied by the Government and paid direct to the institution for you.
• Most students can also get a loan to help with living costs from the Government.
• These loans are rolled into one. You only pay back your loan once you’ve left university and are earning over £21,000.
• Your monthly payment rate will be based on how much you earn, not how much you borrowed. So if your salary is £25,000 a year, you pay nine per cent of £4,000, which works out as £6.92 a week.
• You will pay 9p for every pound you earn over the £21,000 repayment threshold.
• Government grants, which you don’t have to pay back, are also available to help with living costs, though these depend on your household income.

Financial support from the UK Government

**Tuition fee loan**
This loan is paid directly to the university to cover the cost of tuition fees.

**Maintenance loan**
This loan is paid directly to the student to help with the cost of living.

**Maintenance grant**
This grant is non-repayable and depends on household income.
For further information please visit www.gov.uk/student-finance

**NHS-funded courses**
For information about financial support for students studying courses funded by the NHS, including Nursing, please visit www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students

Financial support from Keele University

Universities are working hard to ensure there are financial support packages in place to help students coming from families with low incomes.

**The Keele Excellence Scholarship**
This is a non-repayable cash award of £2,000, £1,000 or £500 per year for each year of your undergraduate course at Keele, depending on the A level* grades you achieve. You will be awarded the following amounts relevant to your grades:
- £2,000 per year for three A levels at AAA
- £1,000 per year for three A levels at AAB
- £500 per year for three A levels at ABB

**The Keele University Bursary**
This is a non-repayable cash award of £1,000 per year for students who have a gross annual household income of less than £25,000.

*Other qualifications are also eligible - for further details please visit www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding

Please note: there are certain qualifying criteria for all of the loans, grants and bursaries listed above. For further information please visit the websites listed above or contact Keele Student Financial Support Office (contact details on page 19).

For further information about the full range of financial support available, visit www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding
Student support and welfare

Living on campus
Many students have the opportunity to live on campus. The Keele campus is a safe and secure environment and was recently rated the safest university campus in the West Midlands. The campus provides easy access to services and facilities with everything within a few minutes walk. There is even a doctor’s surgery and dental practice on campus.

Students living on campus have access to 24 hour support via their Resident Support Assistant. In each accommodation block (Hall of Residence), there is someone from this team on duty each night to respond to issues or complaints. The team also organise a number of social events throughout the year.

Living off-campus
At Keele, students who live off-campus are encouraged to enjoy campus life as much as possible. Off-campus students are represented through an off-campus officer.

They also have access to:
• Social spaces in halls
• Lockers to store personal belongings
• A regular bus service through campus

The Keele Safety Bus
After a night at the Students’ Union, students can access the Keele Safety Bus. The Safety Bus is a free service to ensure that Keele students can return home safely to accommodation both on and off campus.

Keele Student Support
Other support services at Keele University include:
• Careers and Employability
• Counselling and Emotional Wellbeing
• Curriculum Support and Development
• Disability and Dyslexia Support
• International Student Support
• Residence Support
• Student Financial Support
• Student Life and Learning

Peer Mentoring
At Keele, we operate Keele Mentors, a Mentoring scheme that aims to welcome and settle new students to the University. Our Keele Mentors scheme begins with email contact before arrival at Keele, and continues during the first few weeks and months after arrival and in some cases, beyond this. The scheme aims to ease the transition for new students starting with us, and provide a welcoming start to their time at Keele.
Accommodation

For students moving away from home for the first time, making sure they have accommodation that’s right for them will be a high priority.

At Keele University we offer affordable, clean and secure accommodation with staff available 24 hours a day to offer support and advice, and campus living makes it easy to make friends. Keele has over 3,000 bedrooms on campus, all within a short walk of the main facilities. Additionally, there is en-suite accommodation in Liberty Court for first year students, which is based in Stoke-on-Trent.

University study bedrooms cost between £71 per week (self-catered) and £151 per week (catered). Specially adapted accommodation is also available for students with additional needs (please contact us after accepting an offer if your son or daughter has special requirements).

Keele offers 33, 37, 42 and 51 week lets with the majority of first years in 33 or 37 weeks, to fit in with teaching terms.

Each study bedroom is fully furnished and the cost of accommodation includes a furnished room, utility bills, basic level of insurance and internet access. There are shared kitchens, dining areas and bathrooms (unless en-suite accommodation). The rooms are cleaned once a fortnight; kitchens and shared bathrooms cleaned weekly. The campus has 24 hour security presence and there is support from our team of Residence Support Assistants.

If your son or daughter is interested in looking for somewhere to live off campus, Keele has a list of properties that are accredited to make sure that they meet a list of minimum standards. To help students find accommodation off campus, we also run a landlord registration scheme.

Rents in the local area are amongst the lowest in the country. They vary depending on the facilities available, but typical costs are £55-£65 per week with utility bills on top.

Settling in

For many students, starting university also means leaving home for the first time and almost always means working and socialising in new places. The sooner they feel comfortable in their new environment, the better.

Keele works hard to support our new students in feeling comfortable quickly. Encourage your son or daughter to make the most of Welcome Week (sometimes called Freshers’ Week) and to take advantage of new opportunities.

"Keele is the safest campus in the West Midlands according to the BBC News league tables for crime rates."
Jargon buster

University jargon can be a bit of a minefield! Below is a list of commonly used words and phrases, together with a summary of their meanings.

**Bursary:** Contributes towards student fees and/or living costs. Is often means-tested and is non-repayable.

**Campus:** A university situated on one site, with student accommodation, teaching and research facilities, and leisure activities all together.

**Clearing:** A system used towards the end of the academic cycle, which enables an applicant who has not yet secured a place to apply for course vacancies.

**Conditional offer:** An offer made to an applicant by a university or college, whereby the applicant must fulfil certain criteria before they can be accepted on the relevant course.

**Deferral:** Holding an offer until the following year.

**Dissertation:** An essay or report usually of several thousand words on a specific subject that is completed during a course of study, often in the final year.

**Firm offer:** The offer of a university place that the applicant has accepted as their first choice.

**Foundation year:** If a student’s qualifications are not in the right subjects or at the right grades to meet the entry requirements for their chosen course (usually a science or engineering course), they may be able to do one year’s foundation study.

**Fresher:** First year students are often referred to as ‘Freshers’.

**Graduate:** Someone who has successfully completed a degree course and been awarded their degree.

**Insurance offer:** The offer that the applicant has accepted as their second choice, in case they do not meet the requirements for their firm offer.

**Joint honours:** As with a combined honours degree, a joint honours degree is a course involving two subjects.

**Means-testing:** A financial assessment made to determine whether or not a student is eligible for financial assistance from the UK government and for university scholarships and bursaries.

**NUS:** National Union of Students provides information about all aspects of university life.

**Scholarship:** A financial award in recognition of excellence to help support students through university. Awarded purely on merit in areas of academia, music or sport, they do not have to be repaid.

**Single honours:** An undergraduate degree involving one main subject.

**Tuition fees:** The maximum amount universities can charge for tuition is set by the Government. The fees are paid to the university directly once a student has successfully applied for financial assistance via Student Finance England.

**UCAS:** The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. They process applications on behalf of universities and provide a range of resources and advice.

**Unconditional offer:** An offer given to an applicant by a university or college, whereby the applicant has satisfied the criteria and can attend the course.

**Undergraduate:** A student at a university who has not yet received a degree.

**Welcome week:** This is the first week of the first term of the first year of a student’s university career. It will include lectures, tours and social events. Welcome week is designed to help them settle in, make friends and find their way around.

Useful contacts at Keele

**Internal Contacts**

**UK/EU Admissions**
For queries regarding applications
Email: admissions.ukeu@keele.ac.uk
Telephone: 01782 734005 or 733994
www.keele.ac.uk/paa/admissions

**Student Finance**
For information about financial support and fees
Email: bursaries@keele.ac.uk
Telephone: 01782 734240/734087
www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding

**Accommodation**
Email: accomenq@keele.ac.uk
Telephone: 01782 734152
www.keele.ac.uk/studyatkeele/accommodation

**UK/EU Recruitment**
To request a prospectus or book onto an Open Day or Visit Day
Email: recruitment@keele.ac.uk
Telephone: 01782 734092
www.keele.ac.uk/visiting

**External Contacts**

**NUS**
National Union of Students
www.nus.org.uk

**UCAS**
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
Provides information on how to apply and guidance for parents and students
www.ucas.com

**GOV.UK**
Provides information on financial support
www.gov.uk/studentfinance

**NHS**
Provides information on financial support for students enrolling on NHS courses
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students

**Icould**
Careers information
www.icould.com

**Brightside Student Calculator**
Use this website to check eligibility for loans and grants.
www.studentcalculator.org