

Queen Mary's Grammar School



University Open Days Information 2019

The Aim of this booklet is to provide one guide for 6th form students and parents/guardians, giving supporting advice on the benefits of attending University Open Days.

1. What and When are University Open Days? Why should I attend one?
2. What do former students think of Open Days?
3. What happens on a University Open Day?
4. How many Open Days should I attend?
5. How can I narrow down the University Open Days that I should attend?
6. What to do before attending an open day?
7. What questions should I ask at open days?
8. What key 3 things should I do on an Open day?
9. I have missed the University Open Day, what do I do?
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1. What and When are University Open Days? Why should I attend one?

A university open day is when a university invites potential undergraduates so that you can visit and experience it first-hand. They are there to help you make **decisions** on **what** and **where** you'd like to study. Open days show you what is on offer, and can usually tell you more about a university than you'll glean from a prospectus.

You have the chance to see what the campus and local area are like. You can talk to staff and current students and discover what your future university life could be like. You can use open days as a way to **compare** universities and courses to see which would **suit you best**.

Using <https://www.opendays.com/> it is possible to view open days in any particular month using the open day calendar or search our database of institutions. You can also book your place at many open days, free of charge, direct from this web site.

Every university in the United Kingdom will hold at least one open day every year. University open days are normally between June-October. However, most will offer two or three open days each year, to spread the number of students out.

According to What Uni.com attending University Open days *“There’s no better way to understand what you’ll be studying than to hear it from the lecturers themselves.”* clearly you being there, meeting staff and students is a key reason as well as *“It’s important to understand how and what you’ll actually learn”*.

2. What do former students think of Open Days?

“For me, going to an open day not only confirmed that I wanted to study in this University, but that I wanted to go to university in the first place. I believe open and applicant days are a fundamental part of the application process, as it provides an opportunity to break down that barrier of unfamiliarity with the location, the course, and the idea of being a student.”

3. What happens on a University Open Day?

A University Open Day gives you the perfect opportunity to hear first-hand from current students and teaching staff about living and learning at the institution. There will be personal tours, guided by students. Student housing and Student finance will give talks on accommodation, costs and support offered.

You are not alone though! As an example, The University of Birmingham typically has over 20,000 visitors on Open Days!!

An example of an Open Day schedule is shown here:

Most Universities dedicate web pages to their Open Days and produce PDF booklets of what to expect, as well as Open Day Apps.

See University of Birmingham:

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/visit/opendays/what-to-expect-on-an-open-day.aspx>

4. How many Open Days should I attend?

Some courses may only be offered at a few universities, so you would potentially find yourself with only a couple to visit.

While some subjects (Medicine, Business, Engineering, Biological sciences and Computer sciences) are offered at many Universities and you will need to shortlist which open days you would like to attend.

Also remember that All Universities will have Open Days, some Universities have Open Days PURELY for common courses, such as Medicine Open Days (Graduate Entry Medicine (GEM)).

Time	Talk/activity	Description
9.45am	Talk – Welcome and tips for your day	Activity is available between 9.00am and 4.00pm, however you can arrive whenever you like and use the programme to plan your day. Why not travel by train to our campus train station called 'University'?
10.30am	Talk – Tips for applicants	Talks on a range of general interest topics take place throughout the day and last approximately 30 minutes. Allow 15 minutes to move between talks/activities.
11.15am	Talk – what can civil engineers do?	The open day programme will list all the subject-based talks. Many subjects run sessions more than once to allow you to schedule them into your visit. Many areas will also offer taster sessions/tours/demonstrations.
11.45am	Display and information desk – civil engineering	All subject areas will be represented at the subject fair for informal one-to-one chats.
11.55am	Display and information desk – services	Have questions about areas such as accommodation/careers/student support? Visit the relevant stand at the subject fair.
12.00 noon	Lunch	There are lots of places to eat across campus. The traffic light system at the back of the programme should help you to beat the queues.
1.00pm	Campus Tour and City Cube	One of our current students will show you around the campus and tell you more about their student experience. We would recommend finishing your tour at the Birmingham Experience Cube where you will be immersed in exciting locations around the city straight from our campus.
2.00pm	Walk to Accommodation	Pick up a walking map and take the 15-minute walk to Accommodation.
2.15pm	Accommodation viewing	Available to view at your leisure are examples of catered, self-catered, en-suite and shared bathroom accommodation facilities.
3.00pm	Discover student life	Learn about our sporting community at our brand new sports centre, visit the Guild of Students, chat to student ambassadors.

Ultimately there is **no limit** as to how many open days you attend – go to as many as you need to, to feel confident that you're making the right choice **ALTHOUGH you can only take 2 days out of school to attend an open day** (most Universities hold Saturday Open Days!)

5. How can I narrow down the University Open Days that I should attend?

Below are 8 ways that you can narrow down which University open days to attend:

1. University ranking

See <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>
(The complete University guide can rank Universities according to entry standards, student satisfaction, research quality, graduate prospects)

2. Entry requirements

3. Tuition and Living Costs

See <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/cost-studying-university-uk>

4. Location/Accessibility

5. Subject(s) offered

6. Employability

7. Well-being (student satisfaction)

8. Sport/Activities offered

6. What to do before attending an Open Day?

Before attending a university open day, you should make some basic decisions:

- What subject you want to study?
- Where you want to study that subject?

Research is key!

Make the most of your visit by planning ahead. Book your preferred Open Day date to secure your place. Most universities will send out an information pack a week or so before your visit. This should include instructions on the easiest way to get to the university as well as a full list of the talks and tours taking place, so it's a good idea to bring the pack along with you.

Make a note of the talks and tours you would like to attend beforehand - and mark down which buildings these are taking place in to avoid a last minute rush! Open Days often attract a large number of potential students and their families, so remember to allow enough time to get between buildings and arrive at your talk on time.

More information about your visit is often given out when you check-in, so make sure you find out where and when you need to do this.

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7. What questions should I ask at open days?

When at an open day, think about questions you would like answered, some examples could include:

- I. Is the institution too far from or too near to home? Do you like the area? Can you cope with being there for at least three years?!
- II. How close is the institution to public transport?
- III. Is the university 'campus-based' - all confined in one area or spread over a town?
- IV. Are there opportunities to study abroad? To take a year in industry?
- V. Does the university/college have clubs and societies that suit your interests?
- VI. Does the university have sports facilities, and can you see them?
- VII. Does the social life appeal to you?
- VIII. Can you imagine yourself here? What is the local area like? What is life outside the campus like?
- IX. What support will there be for mental health, well-being, and any medical needs? Students Union?
- X. What types of student accommodation is available, what are the costs and where is it?

8. What key 3 things should I do on an Open day?

Meet students and staff

An open day is a great way to find out more about a university from those that really know it. Speaking to current students, staff and lecturers will give you a real sense of the university and what it's like to study there, something that you can't get from looking at a university guide or league table.

Current students are usually on hand to speak to you, so make sure you ask them any questions you have about what it's like to study there. They will be able to relate to how you are feeling and offer tips and advice on how to make the decision that's right for you. Don't miss the chance to ask them everything you want to know - it wasn't long ago that they were going to Open Days themselves!

Visit the subject department you wish to study

Make time to visit the department that you're interested in and tour the facilities where you'll be studying. Course talks or taster lectures will give you an idea of exactly what your course will be like, and what opportunities it offers.

Seek out Admissions Tutors

Seek out and gain any advice from admission tutors, the people who decide which applicants are successful for University places.

9. I have missed the University Open Day, what do I do?

Many Universities have multiple open days and/or other opportunities to visit the campus with campus tours/applicant tours and other university events for prospective students.

Online research can provide a lot of information about a University and reviewing their Twitter account and other social media sources is also helpful.

There are also virtual tours/Facebook live events that many universities run.

10. What should I do following an Open Day?

It is very beneficial following an open day to review the pros and cons of the university, this way you can compare it to other universities you have researched or visited.

Questions that might help you in choosing the RIGHT university for you could include:

The course and staff

- Does the course cover your specific interests?
- Do the staff seem attentive? Did they answer your questions well? Do you think they would help you enough if you went to study there?
- Contact any lecturers or course leaders who you didn't get to meet on the day.

Local area

- Does the local area appeal to you? Is there enough to keep you entertained?
- Is it a campus or non-campus university, and does this matter to you?

Accommodation

- Would the accommodation be affordable? accessible? suitable for you?

Transport

- Will you be able to travel to university and around the local area easily?

Other

- Ask for the thoughts of the person who you visited the open day with. Often an outsider's perspective can be unbiased and valuable.
- Read through prospectuses or any other reading material you picked up on the day.
- Look for more open days to go to in the future.

Most Importantly...

Can you picture yourself being happy learning and living there?

Further Information

<https://www.opendays.com/>



Opendays.com was started in 1999 and has established itself as the definitive source of university and college open day information in the UK. They list open days for every UK higher education institution - both universities and colleges - and provide all of their information free of charge to users.

<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/university-open-days-what-you-need-to-know/>



<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/events-and-open-days>



<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/open-days/student-experiences-open-days/>



An example of a simple table comparing YOUR University Open Day Visits

	University	University	University	University
Course Name				
Graduate employability rate				
University Ranking				
Type of University (campus, city?)				
Distance from home				
Other criteria of your choice				