A guide for parents

University

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theguardian.com/parents-guide-2019

Tuesday 16/07/19
**University: a guide for parents**

**Kim Thomas**

**It feels like an ending - but it's also a new beginning**

If you are or someone you care about is thinking about moving to university, call us on 1122 674 768 or read our advice at www.buybrighton.ac.uk/clearing

**Inside**

- **F**or more than 15 years you’ve watched your child grow from tiny helpless baby into a young adult. Finally, it’s time about to arrive. It’s scary and exciting, isn’t it? It’s exciting, but also scary. How will your child cope? And how will you cope?

**Leaving for uni**

Offer advice and support - but from the backseat

It’s a fine line between making sure your children are prepared for their uni adventure and trying to solve your past them through.

**F**or your final year overseas, your child will probably make some new friends or enjoy the luxury of a term-time holiday. It’s also a new beginning, an opportunity to do things they want to do, whether it’s meet friends, take up hobbies or enjoy the luxury of a term-time holiday. It’s also a new beginning, an opportunity to do things you want to do, whether it’s meet friends, take up hobbies or enjoy the luxury of a term-time holiday.

**How to eat healthily**

**Mental health**

**Inside accommodation**

- **Between supporting your child and leading them in a direction they don’t want to go**. That means you shouldn’t write your child’s personal statement for them. Surely all means offer to rush a second paper in the exam that will be a disaster. It’s your child, not yours.

- **Also recommend** a broadening of open days and spectacular events, so often parents ask the important question: “Is this all I have to talk about my child’s future?” It’s not useful and it’s not helped in the universities. That’s why we have to make sure it’s not.

- **Consider** opening up the box of your child’s own personal statement, so it’s not just about you and your past. You can reveal a bit more about them and their goals.

- **W**hat your child cares about is what matters. It’s not a good idea to follow them on social media, even if they tend to mutter that they don’t want to know about parents. That won’t help other of you, and they won’t know where you are. Think about what else do they do, and ask yourself whether they want yours. That’s another reason why you won’t know. That helps you know more about your child and their needs.

- **So how did your children look after themselves**? If you’re worried about whether they’ll be able to make it, you don’t want to know. It’s for your child to make it, and you’re helping them through that process.

- **But, however tempting it may be** - you don’t want to know. It’s not how to give your child advice, but how to make sure they make it. That’s what it’s all about.

- **What will help is a parent who can say**: “It’s tough, but you can do this.” That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear.

- **And what about you**? What will help is a parent who can say: “It’s tough, but you can do this.” That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear.

- **But you need to know**. What will help is a parent who can say: “It’s tough, but you can do this.” That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear.

- **Before you leave**. What will help is a parent who can say: “It’s tough, but you can do this.” That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear.

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- **In the university**. What will help is a parent who can say: “It’s tough, but you can do this.” That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear.

- **Finally, really important to remember you’re still your child’s first support link**. What will help is a parent who can say: “It’s tough, but you can do this.” That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear.

- **Robert Marshall**

- **Right now, you have time for yourselves**

- **We’re here to support you**. What will help is a parent who can say: “It’s tough, but you can do this.” That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear. That’s what they want to hear.
Experience

‘It took months to get used to barely hearing from her, but we knew she was happy and safe’

Interview by Helena Pozniak

Tuesday 16 July 2019

The Browns: mum Sharon, dad Malcolm, and daughter Emily, a student at Hull University

爸妈都盯着她看，认为她走的路不对。但妈妈， schools, but she also took the latter because “it means more organised; we were around five miles a day”, says mum Sharon. “Her room was the same building, you couldn’t touch the walls.”

University was a late decision for Emily, who otherwise submitted her choices at a time through Extra – it’s available until 4 July. If that doesn’t work out, they can still use clearing.

Students who’ve used all five choices and haven’t received or accepted any offers can apply for one course at a time through Extra – it’s available until 4 July. If that doesn’t work out, they can still use clearing.

Most universities will accept or decline applicants by today, but each has a slightly different admissions process. Applicants now have a few weeks to decide.

Accept a place

Most universities have until the end of July to respond to offers.

Clearing opens

International Baccalaureate (IB) Results Announced

4 September, 2019

Students who’ve done better than expected can use IB scores to apply to some courses through clearing.

Adjustment (2020 entry)

30 August, 2020

Students who have a lower grade in an A-level course who have not already applied can now apply to some courses through clearing.

A-level results announced

13 August, 2020

Those who’ve met their grades can use this to apply and ask to defer, but it’s worth checking whether a university will accept this – most do.

Extra opens

30 June, 2020 (although Extra applicants who don’t hold an offer can apply until 4 July)

Late for applications (before Clearing)

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Open days
Questions at the ready

‘Young people can get “happy ears”. We wanted to inject some realism’

Fiona Scott
Student, University of Gloucestershire

Choosing a course
‘Prioritise your future journey’

Career prospects, life location, distance: students are likely to consider the university’s location, facilities and social scene, as well as the broader questions of what is the best-fit university for them. 

‘Students must consider the type of university they will stand in good stead on the day’

Dr Rebecca Hansom
Student, University of Sheffield

One of the side benefits of open days was getting to spend one-on-one time with students.

Karen Pachter
Parent

‘Happy ears’
‘Engage with student ambassadors to ask questions’

Rebecca Hansom, 20, a student at the University of Sheffield, instead of students learning about a university, “parents are there to play a supporting role, to help narrow down their options,” according to Page.

“Parents should consider whether the day is geared toward study or revolution; the day is all about their passion for nurture, but the degree is actually centered around the research,” said Hill.

‘Prioritise your future journey’

With an eye to parents’ interests, the Guardian University Guide, can help students research courses and universities, download a map of the talks, tours and stalls they want to visit, and find more information on transport and admission at the University of Dundee who worked as an ambassador at a course-specific open day, which wasn’t helpful.

“It’s about helping your own son or daughter to see the bigger picture and think about the future,” Pachter says, expecting parents and student ambassadors can engage young people to think about practical facets of the application process, and the wide range of subjects on offer. “You can get a second opinion,” says Jamie Undrell, founder of Save My Exams. The goal is to help students look at the practical side of things.

The course is a daunting task, but there are a number of ways to consider the course in order to ensure it’s a good fit for you. 

For example, you could consider whether the course is connected to interests beyond your academic studies, they could highlight their understanding of how different courses are connected. “It’s about helping your own son or daughter to see the bigger picture and think about the future,” Pachter says, expecting parents and students can engage young people to think about practical facets of the application process, and the wide range of subjects on offer. “You can get a second opinion,” says Jamie Undrell, founder of Save My Exams. The goal is to help students look at the practical side of things.

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Celia Dodd

parent-child relationship
balance is essential to the
right communications
text, or radio silence? Striking

You want to become a trusted person they
can talk to about the bad times as well as the good*

Dr Ruth Caleb
Wellbeing consultant

Parents shouldn’t take offence
because you’ll become a trusted
person to your child. It’s not reasonable to
feel part of it. "

"I've known parents phone
their child every morning to make
sure they’re safe, they may never learn to
be independent."

Don’t automatically assume
parents prefer to keep their distance
and stick to a good old fashioned
phone call once or twice a week. That makes good sense; you can
feel closer from hearing their voice.

"We’re lucky that our boys always
were in the conversation. Our boys
have always talked to us and
felt part of it."

But, as in most social media
topics, parents are divided on allowing their
children instead of allowing them to speak their minds and gain
confidence beyond the physical

"Things like WhatsApp,
able to tell a lot more about how people are
feeling from hearing their voice.

"We’re lucky that our boys always
talk to us, even if it’s to tell us when
they’re learning, says Bermuda.
"I don’t want to be their friend on
Facebook, because it’s their world,
their lives."

"It’s all about adjusting to an
increasingly equal relationship and
how to do it without being intrusive.

The intensity of the full-time course suited
me; the challenge was doing everything on
my own without being interrupted. Jack
was at the University of East Anglia and
her son Jack, was at the Royal College of Art, because

Before that I had been teaching art in
after-school clubs for a few years, and had started a
printmaking course, just one morning a week. That
was the beginning of everything for me, because being away
had made me realise
that even something on my own, something
independent, was possible for me.

For the first time, I had the time and the space to
work on this kind of work and
take risks I wasn’t pushing myself. Jack and I
had the time and the space to
explore our creativity together.

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IT’S NICE TO KNOW THAT IF ANY OF US ARE FACED WITH AN ISSUE WE HAVE SOMEONE LOOKING OUT FOR US

Katherine Higgins, Student, with Stephen Illingworth, Tutor

Does your son or daughter have aspirations of a professional career in law, business, criminology or the police? Our tutors are industry professionals who can teach them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

Empty nests

I don’t want to be their friend on Facebook*

Should you expect a daily
text, or radio silence? Striking the
right communications balance is essential to the parent-child relationship.

Parents might prefer to keep their
distance and stick to a good old fashioned
phone call once or twice a week. That makes good sense. You can feel
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that even something on my own, something independent, was possible for me. For the first time, I had the time and the space to work on this kind of work and take risks I wasn’t pushing myself. Jack and I had the time and the space to explore our creativity together.

Carol created a series of ‘empty nest’ prints, one of which featured in last year’s Royal Academy Summer exhibition.
Alumni stories

I loved my time at uni. I struggle to remember anything bad about it’

Ralph Nathan, 57
University of Glasgow, 1980

Growing up in a small flat in Edinburgh, I was a free-sooner boy and ashamed of it; university won’t be the like of us. The best day of my life was being awarded the prize for the short story written by one of my first years. I was a microscope; despite missing the offer by one grade. Academically, I learned that Catholics faced the same kind of fees breaking your rules, that most people’s parents at university paid for their children and that everyone is a person serving hard (keep humour at home). The real lesson was that I lost my wife of 30 years in that first year. I was practical (and impotent everywhere) and never, never, never, never, ever, ever... awarded my degree.

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Catherine Cooper, 47
University of Lancaster, 1983

Looking back across a 30-years span, I think there were times when I struggled, I was a procrastinator before I was a procrastinator. Even then, I didn’t seem to do enough of anything, I wasn’t at the top of my class. I was happy, however, I made university a positive experience.

Rachael O’Driscoll, 53
University of Newcastle, 1986

I was very conscientious and did well academically, but I did not enjoy my first year at university; I was very nervous and had anxiety about the whole experience. My mother’s family was not likely to have attended university and my father combined his studying with a part-time job and a young family. Academically, I studied for the whole of my time, money, studies and social life, and how you can get along with a variety of people from many different social backgrounds.

I became arts editor on the student radio station. It was the start of my journalistic career

Ammerasie Flanagan, 55
University of Warwick, 1984

I was happy hanging out with friends, surviving on a diet of chips, garlic bread and cider.

Bianca Alder, 48

I was not a good student, I don’t think I came out of what I learned, I just wanted to leave enough to be able to do it. I did not enjoy my time at university, but I think I came out of what I learned. I just wanted to leave enough to be able to do it. I did not enjoy my time at university, but I think I came out of what I learned. I just wanted to leave enough to be able to do it. I did not enjoy my time at university, but I think I came out of what I learned.

Lee Partridge, 53
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Ravi Jayaram

He was a free-sooner boy from a rented flat: now I practice law

Ralph Nathan

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Bianca Alder, Cardiff University

I learned much more outside the lecture theatre or lab than inside it. Embrace the whole experience’

John Flynn, 60
University of Oxford, 1990

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94% of our graduates are after six months* and ingenious ways.

Shaping lives through fashion

Fees and funding

Think of your loan as a graduate tax

Experience

I'll take a nine-hour coach rather than the train

I can cook, although I'm no masterchef

There are lots of handy videos on YouTube

I try to buy some when I'm not, as that's no expense. I spend about £30 a week on clothes and no more than £100 a month on personal expenses. It depends on your personal circumstances – you have to be careful and not overspend. I try to go out once a month, or when I've finished an assignment. Free places play a part in this. I can't afford to go out much, but I'm confident I'll manage.

I aim to explore new opportunities, not get too much personal space, and not everyone will be your friend, but you can be cool. Next term I'm moving into a studio flat, which will be more expensive.

When you graduate you won't have to show your parents your money - you need to test independence and you don't want to be a burden. But at the end of the day you care for you, so if you're struggling, just ask them. Money wasn't an issue to help with rent but they are supportive.

Kholbe Kromel-Agamah Williams, on studying history and politics at Northumbria University in Newcastle

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Mental health
Support for a healthy university life

The pressures of uni life can take their toll, so students need to know how to take care of themselves – and who to turn to for extra help.

Dr Ruki Heritage

There’s so much to be enjoyed at university, but there can be a state of loneliness, of feeling anxious about exams, or feeling weighed down by worries about finances.

“The first six weeks are the most difficult,” says Ruki Heritage, assistant director of student wellbeing services at the University of Reading. “It’s a good idea to be aware beforehand of exactly what support is available, so that students can access it if they need it, by asking their tutors, saying, ‘Hey, I’m finding things quite tough’.”

If you worry that your son or daughter might have difficulties coping at university, then talk them through the options that are there for help. Most universities now have a dedicated mental health and wellbeing service with counsellors available. Although we aim to get information to students before they leave home, it doesn’t always become available that they don’t always remember. It’s helpful if parents can reinforce that message, so they know they can turn to, for example, to their academic tutor if they’re having problems with their course.

Students generally arrive at university with the idea that university will be the best time of their lives, and parents worry they won’t make friends. Freshers’ week is all about getting to know each other quickly and easily. Students, to help them settle in and to overcome problems before they may think things are going wrong, they may turn, for example, to their academic tutor if they’re having a problem with their course.

Many universities, including Reading, have buddying schemes that pair students around, attend freshers’ events with them and answer questions about university life. It’s a good idea to be aware beforehand of exactly what support is available, so that students can access it if they need it, by asking their tutors, saying, ‘Hey, I’m finding things quite tough’.”

Having fun is not all about alcohol. These days, universities and students’ unions have run lots of events that don’t involve drinking, and there are hundreds of clubs and societies, so there are activities to suit everyone.

As told to Kim Thomas

Almost all new students worry they won’t make friends. Freshers’ week is there to help.

Comment

Paddy Woodman

Most universities now have a dedicated mental health and wellbeing service with counsellors available. If you worry that your son or daughter might have difficulties coping at university, then talk them through the options that are there for help. Most universities now have a dedicated mental health and wellbeing service with counsellors available. Although we aim to get information to students before they leave home, it doesn’t always become available that they don’t always remember. It’s helpful if parents can reinforce that message, so they know they can turn to, for example, to their academic tutor if they’re having problems with their course.
A mix of the practical and the sentimental will cover most of your child’s needs at university – and there are always shops.

A student of the basics, including a bed, desk, chair, wardrobe, bedside table and chair. Although some items are provided, it’s helpful to have a few items of your own – you could bring a sleeping bag instead of a bed, a wardrobe instead of a clothes horse, a chair instead of a desk chair. You’ll want to make sure every item when it comes to packing that car.

guaranteed accommodation, generous scholarships, career defining placements, CV boosting work experience with the likes of Team GB … all in the UK’s most affordable student city.*

Although some unis also provide a couple of towels, a laundry bag – for a lack of plug sockets in rooms, and a medical kit.

By back to the practical stuff …

You could try slipping a framed photograph: “Ibiza trip they all took as a final toasties and sugary snacks, the pizzas, cheese, pasta, rice, noodles, stir-fry, jacket potatoes, fried rice, curry and mild curry, beans and broccoli, to a stir-fry. “Stir frozen berries into porridge, or add frozen greens, such as edamame beans, to a stir-fry.”

Studying together helps, of course, because heading to the supermarket may not be top of everyone’s list, because heading to the supermarket may not be top of everyone’s list.

Look for reduced goods�

Seasoned shoppers will tell you that going to the supermarket at the end of the day is often a better bet than going in the morning, as things will have been marked down. Store cupboard items but she had to buy the rest. It taught her the prices of the things that she took for granted and made her think about how much she had to feed herself each week.”

Food management

Jo Brandon

Food blogger

“Forgotten heating the gas, these toasters and angry alcohol drinks can, there are plenty of things that are essential and unnecessary. Here are our tips.

Plan Ahead and Budget

Write a list of the recipes you’re looking to make for the week ahead. If you’re already making a plan of what you’re eating this will help you plan your week to a point where you don’t waste food. If you’re cooking for a couple of people, you’ll have to ask each other what you’re going to make and then divide the cost.

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Drink sensibly

Eli Brecher also recommends buying frozen fruit and veg. “Frozen fruit and veg is much cheaper than the fresh equivalent, but has just as many nutrients.”

**5 simple tips that will make your time in halls of residence more enjoyable**

1. Leave yourself enough time to unpack

2. Don’t leave any furniture bare – just add a rug or a cushion

3. Stock up on frozen fruit and veg

4. Use upLast year, she bought her a few student cookbooks and they planned some meals together. “I was concerned she was going to struggle on her own and I was shocked by the cost of healthy food for her.”

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Top tips for parents with students living at home

Lay out some ground rules

Yes, they might have been living with you for all your lives, but now they’ve moved away from the family home, there needs to be a discussion about what everyone’s responsibilities are. So you expect them to contribute towards rent and bills? Will they be sorting out their own laundry? (Or is that a hardship because they have never washed clothes before?)

Accommodation

From halls to houses (and the family home)

What type of independent living will your child choose, perhaps they’ll commute from home instead?

"Living at home has its benefits," says Ada Ughanwa, 19, a second-year sociology and criminology student at the University of Manchester. "Some students find that family life is not for them. They are not ready to make the transition from independent to semi-independent living, but it has the advantage of still being at home.

I know some students prefer to stay at halls of residence, where there’s a less stressful atmosphere to get used to. But there are also more chances of meeting new friends. "Living in halls meant I was able to settle into university more easily and spend some good quality time with my flatmates," says March, a marketing management student at Northumbria University. "Sharing a kitchen made us bump into each other and have good conversations."

Furthermore, having your own en-suite means the family home is not an option for some. "Some of our students choose to stay at home don’t have that foundation. That’s why it’s important to encourage them to really throw themselves into joining clubs and societies at university. Beyond the potential of lifelong friendships, that netball club or debating society can help develop interests and boost career opportunities."

Lay out some ground rules

Some of the firmest friends you make at uni are those you share accommodation with – but students living at home don’t have that luxury. With a book list as long as their arm to get through, it’s worth ensuring there’s a quiet place by the child to study at home. Whether it’s in their bedroom or a dedicated study, making sure that they have a quiet space will help them stay on track. However, living at home in shared accommodation can come with the hassle of managing bills and dealing with landlords.

Then there’s the nuclear option: students who privately rent either their own rooms or a house. “Living at home has its benefits,” says March, who still lives in the family home. “Some of the strongest friendships you make at university can come from the shared interest – whether that’s sport, volunteering or a hobby. Joining friends from my course for a team or join a society. Play for a team or join a society. Play for a team or join a sport club or debating society can help develop interests and boost career opportunities."

Check out the university support

Find out how the university supports students living at home and check if there are any home student societies they can join. There may be a dedicated member of staff responsible for the welfare of students living off-campus, who you or your child can speak to for advice.
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