



# Higher education

Pros	Cons
An opportunity to take your studies to a higher level! If you have a passion for a particular subject, university offers a unique chance to specialise and develop in-depth knowledge.	Costs – tuition fees and living expenses mean that many students need to take out a loan to pay for everything. Although this can be offset in the longer term by higher earning potential, the average student leaves university (outside of London) with a debt of £35,000 to £40,000.
Provides a pathway to a significant number of professional careers that have graduate-only entry requirements.	There is no guarantee of future employment or, more specifically, of obtaining a graduate level job.
Having a degree enhances your employability prospects and not just in graduate entry careers. In 2013/14 90% of graduates were in work or further study within six months of graduation.	This is a step up and you have to work hard. You need to be motivated to study and learn.
Statistics show that longer term, graduates earn more on average than non-graduates. The difference in earnings was recently calculated as being as high as £500,000 over a working life.	An additional three years of study (if taking a full-time degree) and assessment is not an option that will appeal for everyone.
Develop essential skills such as verbal and written communication, organisation, time management, team work, leadership, problem-solving, and critical thinking.	During this time, you're not earning and not gaining experience of work.
It's more than just education – university life offers a unique opportunity to get to know a diverse range of people and cultures, to share knowledge, and try new activities.	You will be responsible for your own workload and must ensure you are fully committed and able to work independently.
For some it provides the first taste of independent living away from home and with it, the chance to develop self-confidence and a whole range of useful life skills, such as money management. It can enable young people to have additional time to develop interests and experiences before having to choose a particular career.	If you have taken on a part-time job to gain some extra income, it can be difficult balancing university with your working life, and this can be quite stressful for some students.