

# THE RIGHT FIT

A guide to university  
for students



## Physics



# Should I go to uni?

## Why study Physics?

- 1 To develop problem solving and analytical skills
- 2 If you want understand how the physical world works
- 3 For a huge range of jobs<sup>1</sup>
- 4 For great pay<sup>2</sup>

## What could I do with Physics?

Physicists are not only teachers and lab technicians, with a degree in physics you could be:

**1 An Astrophysicist** who studies the universe to understand the nature of planets, stars and even how time began.

**Possible degree:** Astronomy, Space Science and Astrophysics BSc at the University of Kent.

**2**

**A Special Effects Advisor** using your knowledge of physics principles to create realistic special effects on the latest blockbusters.

**Possible degree:** Physics and Philosophy MPhysPhil at the University of Oxford.

The background features a complex network of thick, stylized lines in shades of blue and purple. These lines intersect at various points, with two prominent intersections marked by white circles with black outlines. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a light blue geometric pattern in the background.

3

**A Renewable Energy Physicist**

who designs methods through which we can produce electricity from renewable resources, to ensure we can still have the homes, cars and gadgets we're accustomed to.

**Possible degree:** Physics with Renewable Energy Science BSc at the University of Dundee.

4

**A Meteorologist** who follows and predicts weather patterns to advise businesses and warn of any extreme conditions!

**Possible degree:** Physics of the Environment BSc at the University of Reading.

For more information about these and many more jobs, visit [prospects.ac.uk](https://prospects.ac.uk).

# What about alternative routes?

It's hard to decide what you want to do when you are older. So if you're not sure about going to university, these websites could help:

- **notgoingtouni.co.uk** will help you find out about alternatives to university.
- **careerpilot.org.uk** will help look at all your options at the ages of 16, 18 and even afterwards.
- **findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk** to find a full list of apprenticeships in the UK.
- **Gear up** The Study Higher alternative routes advisory.  
**For more information please register on the Study Higher website.**

## You could also:

- Go to a University open day **opendays.com**
- Sign up for a taster day or masterclass **unitasterdays.com**
- Get some work experience to find out what you enjoy.
- Carry on with your hobbies and interests.
- Check out jobs on **prospects.ac.uk**

4

GO TO UNI

3

APPLY THROUGH UCAS

2

CHOOSE SOME UNIS

1

CHOOSE A DEGREE

**I THINK I WILL GO TO UNI,  
WHAT TO DO NOW?**

# Choosing a course

There is a lot of information out there so while you are choosing a subject keep these things in mind:

## **Entry requirements**

These will vary from course to course.

## **Course content**

Always check the modules on the course to make sure you get to study topics that interest you.

## **Teaching method**

What suits you the most: independent study, lectures, seminars?

## **Assessment types**

Do you do best in coursework, practical work or exams? Also does the course provide certifications you need?

## **Entry Requirements**

Universities publish their typical entry requirements. Some universities will also have contextual offer which are lower requirements depending on the student's background, skills or a variety of other reasons.

## **Work experience opportunities and careers help**

Does the uni you are considering have connections with employers, help with getting a job or a placement, study abroad opportunities, sandwich year, interview process training, etc?

# Choosing a university

To make choosing from hundreds of UK universities easier, **consider the following things:**

## **Size**

Some unis only have 1000 students while some might have over 30,000!

## **Location**

How far do you want to be from home? In a big city or smaller town? Up north or down south?

## **Campus or city university?**

Campus universities have all their buildings on one big campus. City universities are spread around a bustling city.

DEGREE	EXAMPLE OF UNI	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	CAREER PROSPECTS <sup>1</sup> AFTER 6 MONTHS	
			% EMPLOYED	AVERAGE EARNING
<b>Astronomy, Space Science and Astrophysics BSc</b>	University of Kent	BBB including Maths and Physics	80	£22,000
<b>Physics and Philosophy MPhysPhil</b>	University of Oxford	A*AA including Maths and Physics	80	£30,000
<b>Physics with Renewable Energy Science BSc</b>	University of Dundee	BBB including Maths and a science or engineering subject	90	£25,000
<b>Physics of the Environment BSc</b>	University of Reading	ABB including Maths and Physics	93	£22,000

**These are some of the degrees for the jobs mentioned earlier.**

1 | [discoveruni.gov.uk](https://discoveruni.gov.uk)

### **Cost of living and accommodation**

The north is usually cheaper than the south. Cities are more expensive than rural areas. Quality and price of accommodation will vary too.

### **Bursaries, grants and support for you**

Financial awards are different at each university. Check which university will support you most suitably.

### **Sports clubs and societies you might want to join**

Do you want to carry on a sport or maybe try a new hobby? Check if the uni you are looking at has the clubs you are interested in.

### **Reputation**

What is the university known for? Academics, sport, atmosphere, and so on.

The Higher Education system in the UK is set up so that anyone who wants to go to university, can! So don't let the finances deter you.

# Finance

When you apply for student finance you claim two different loans<sup>1</sup>;

**A tuition loan of up to £9,250/annum<sup>1</sup> for the cost of your studies** – paid in full to the university. None of the tuition fee has to be paid up front by you.

**A maintenance loan up to £12,010/annum<sup>1</sup> for living costs** – paid in termly instalments to you. This loan is income and circumstance assessed.

**Note:** These numbers change year on year so please check [slc.co.uk](http://slc.co.uk) or [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) for up to date information.

## Repayments<sup>1</sup>

As of April 2020<sup>2</sup>, repayments for student loans:

- Start the April after you graduate and only once you earn over £26,575.
- Stop if your income drops below £26,575, which means if you are not earning enough your parents don't have to cover you.
- Are taken straight out of your pay check so you never have to go to the bank to pay it.
- Are 9% of your earnings over £26,575 (see table).
- Do not affect your credit rating or your ability to get a mortgage.
- All outstanding debt is written off after 30 years.

SALARY PER YEAR	£ OVER £26,575	9% (IN £)	MONTHLY REPAYMENT IN £
£21,000	0	0	0
£25,000	0	0	0
£30,000	3,425	308	25
£40,000	13,425	1,208	100

AVERAGE GRADUATE SALARY 2019

ABOUT THE SAME AS A PHONE CONTRACT

University can be expensive, but over a lifetime with a degree you are likely to earn many times more than you will repay. If you have an ambition, a dream, or an interest in a subject, it is worth it to invest in your own future!

For more information go to [thestudentroom.co.uk](http://thestudentroom.co.uk) or [slc.co.uk](http://slc.co.uk)

# Jargon Buster

**Higher Education (HE)** The level of education that leads to a degree.

**Gap year** A year away from education to gain work experience, save up funds or go travelling.

**Undergraduate** Students studying for their first degree.

**Graduate** Someone who has completed an undergraduate course.

**Higher National Diploma (HND)** A two year work-related qualification; considered to be an equivalent of two years of HE study.

**Foundation degree** A one year course taken in preparation for an undergraduate degree.

**Bachelor's degree** Usually a three year degree course. Bachelors of Arts (BA) are for arts and humanities courses while Bachelors of Science (BSc) are for science courses.

**Master's degree** A more advanced degree, either taken after a Bachelor's degree or as an integrated Master's.

**Joint honours degree** A degree comprised of two different subjects.

**Postgraduate degree** Courses taken after your first degree such as a master's degree.

**Sandwich year** A work-placement year taken during a degree.

**Admission Team** The people who receive and consider your application.

**Halls of Residence** Student accommodation at the University.

**Campus** University grounds.

**UCAS** The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service through which you apply to university.

**Open Days** Days during which you can visit universities free of charge and be shown round.

**Prospectus** A printed booklet advertising a school or university to potential students.

**Student Loans Company (SLC)** A non-profit, Government-owned organisation who provide loans and grants to students in universities and colleges in the UK.

**Student Loan** A loan students can take up from SLC to cover living costs and tuition fees.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

**[ucas.com](https://ucas.com)** All things university related and the portal through which you apply to university.

**[prospectus.ac.uk](https://prospectus.ac.uk)** Careers website with details on a huge variety of career options.

**[opendays.com](https://opendays.com)** A list of all the university open days in the UK.

**[universitytasterdays.com](https://universitytasterdays.com)** A list of taster days available at UK universities.

**[discoveruni.gov.uk](https://discoveruni.gov.uk)** Compares entry requirements, course details and prospects of UK degrees.

**[thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](https://thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk)** and **[timeshighereducation.com](https://timeshighereducation.com)** University and subject league tables, helpful advice and guides on many university related topics.

**[thestudentroom.co.uk](https://thestudentroom.co.uk)** University guides, articles and question forums.

**[careerpilot.org.uk](https://careerpilot.org.uk)** A summary of options at ages 13/14, at 16+ and 18+.

**[slc.co.uk](https://slc.co.uk)** Student Loans Company website for financial questions.

**[notgoingtouni.co.uk](https://notgoingtouni.co.uk)** A list of opportunities if you do not want to pursue university.

### Study Higher partner universities' websites

**[reading.ac.uk](https://reading.ac.uk)**  
University of Reading

**[brookes.ac.uk](https://brookes.ac.uk)**  
Oxford Brookes University

**[ox.ac.uk](https://ox.ac.uk)**  
University of Oxford

**[bucks.ac.uk](https://bucks.ac.uk)**  
Bucks New University