

## About Higher Education

So what exactly is Higher Education (HE)? It is a chance for your son/daughter to continue their studies and open the door to all kinds of jobs and opportunities, gaining the skills and knowledge that many employers want.

Today, there is much more to HE than ever before. There is a wide range of different courses available at hundreds of institutions- in fact, over 50,000 courses at more than 500 colleges and universities.

And there are many routes into higher education- from A levels to on-the-job qualifications like Apprenticeships. An undergraduate degree can help your son/daughter earn, on average, over the course of their working life, over £100,000 more than someone similar with two or more A levels and, as a graduate, they are much less likely to be unemployed than non-graduates. In 2007 the average starting salary for graduates in full-time employment was £18,000.

'Education is a doorway to a better future. What you have learned from you education- and how you have used these opportunities- will set you apart from the rest. These are the sort of people we want to employ.'

Chief Executive Officer of Cadbury Schweppes

No doubt you'll have lots of questions about Higher Education. It's never too soon to start thinking about HE- Whatever their age, talking through the various options with your son/daughter can help him or her find the right path to doing something they really enjoy.

### What your child can get out of Higher Education

HE can open doors to all sorts of new possibilities for your son or daughter, and bring a whole range of benefits too. Of the 18 million jobs expected to become vacant by 2020, half- that's 9 million- are in occupants most likely to demand graduates.

#### Choice and opportunity

There are 50,000 courses to choose from- including general academic courses that focus on a specific subject like history, and vocational courses that teach practical skills to prepare your child for a particular job, such as nursing.

#### More than just a qualification

Going to university or college will help your child gain independence and maturity- they'll learn more about themselves, other people and what they want to do when they're older.

They'll make lots of new friends, and they'll have the chance to use student facilities and develop new interests. There are many clubs and societies to join, and social events to attend.

But what about the cost?

Higher Education is likely to be the best investment your child ever makes. But there will be lots of questions about how to pay for it. Although tuition fees are now chargeable, financial help is available, and the principle of 'study first, pay back when you are earning', applies for full-time courses.

Read on to find out more about HE - the opportunities it can bring, how much it could cost and the options available. You might also find it useful to check out the case studies to see what other parents and their children think.

## *A letter to Parents and Carers*

### *Dear Parent / Carer / Son / Daughter,*

For both you and your child, deciding whether to go on to Higher Education is a big decision, However there is excellent support available. The enhanced financial package means that an estimated 100,000 additional students per year will receive some non-repayable support in the form of a grant.

*Bill Rammell, previously Minister of State, for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education has said "No one should be held back from realising their potential by fears that they will not be able to afford to go to university. The changes we're introducing will not only give more financial support to those from low income households but will also extend help to those hardworking families on modest incomes who are doing the right thing by encouraging their children to go to university".*

### **The key points are as follows: Subject to change for 2009/2010**

- Up to one third of new full-time students with household incomes up to £25,000 could qualify for the **full** Maintenance Grant of £2,835;
- Another third of new full-time students with household income between £25,001 and **£60,005** could qualify for a partial grant;
- Typically a new full-time student with a household income of £40,000 could qualify for around **£1,000** in non-repayable financial support;
- HE student Support Guarantee for all 16 years olds receiving EMA for the first time from September 2008 if they continue into higher education;
- Student loans are available for tuition fees and living costs;
- Student loans are not repaid until after leaving university and earning over £15,000;
- For those who enter repayment in **April 2012** or later there is the option of a repayment holiday of up to five years
- In addition to the support available from the Government many universities and colleges offer help in the form of non-repayable bursaries.

It is well worth looking into the financial support that your son or daughter may qualify for, including that from the university or college of their choice as it could be more than you expected.

### **How to get financial help**

A guide on the various sources of financial help available for higher education and how to apply for it is available on the [Aimhigher Surrey website](#). Many students and their parents worry about the cost of going into Higher Education. Fortunately, there is a wide range of financial support available, to make it possible for anyone, whatever their financial situation, to be able to go into Higher Education.

## **Get the FAST facts about Student Finance in England**

A new increased student package available to full-time students entering Higher Education in 2008 including full Maintenance Grants for those whose household income is up to £25,000 a year. Partial grants for those with household incomes between £25,001 and £60,005

### **FAST Facts**

#### **Non-repayable grants**

- There are non-repayable grants to help toward living costs worth up to £2,835 per year for students with household incomes up to £25,000. If your household income is up to £60,005 you may still qualify for some non-repayable support;
- Around two thirds of all full-time students are likely to qualify for a full or partial grant and for students with disabilities or students with children there are additional grants.

#### **HE student Support Guarantee**

- 16 year olds who receive an EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance) from September 2008 for the first time will receive a firm guarantee of the minimum amount of financial support they will receive if they enter higher education on leaving school or college.

#### **Student loans for tuition fees and living costs**

- Universities and colleges can charge up to £3,145 per year in tuition fees. However, a tuition fee loan is available to cover the full cost of tuition fees;
- On top of the loan for fees there are student loans for living costs. These cover accommodation, food, books and other costs;

#### **Non-repayable bursaries**

- Universities and colleges also offer bursaries and other financial support to students which don't have to be repaid. The amount of support available varies, depending on the institution and your personal circumstances, so look in university and college prospectuses or websites to see what they are offering.

#### **Repaying student loans**

- Students do not pay back their loans until after they have left and are earning over £15,000 and pay back 9% of their income above £15,000;
- For those who enter repayment in April 2012 or later there is the option of a repayment holiday for up to five years at a time of their choice.

### Key dates in the run up to starting university

September 2008	Back to school and start of year 13.
November and December 2008	Prepare the UCAS application form and personal statement. Your child's teacher, form teacher or careers advisor will be able to help.
Mid January 2009	UCAS deadline for main applications to full-time higher education.
March 2009	Work out the budget. You can now think in more detail about the finances. You will know the level of student loan available to your son/daughter what financial support your chosen universities and colleges are offering and other issues such as likely accommodation costs.
April 2009	You and your son/daughter can now start sorting out your student finance. Go online at <a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance">www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance</a> to apply on-line or to download the forms.
May & June 2009	Sitting those exams.  Final UCAS applications date.  Make sure that you and your son/daughter apply for the student finance in time so that the money arrives for the start of your their course.
Mid August 2009	A level results day- find out if your son/daughter has got their place.  They can apply for a university or college place through clearing. But they will need to sort out the finances quickly.
September-October 2009	Start university or college.