



Emma

- ▶ **Difficult teens – bullying, anxiety, depression, diabulimia, family issues**
- ▶ **Applied to university through clearing and started on Foundation course**
- ▶ **First-class degree in History and currently studying a Master's in Historical Research**

When I was young, I loved school

Moving up to secondary school changed things for me: I was bullied and developed anxiety and depression. When I was fourteen my parents split up, my brother was diagnosed with autism and ADHD, and about a month later my mum was diagnosed with cancer. Alongside that I was diagnosed with diabetes. I fell into a deep hole of anxiety and self-destruction which lasted for nearly six years.

I'm quite stubborn and I don't like to ask for help. To anyone thinking of returning to education I'd say be upfront and not ashamed of things you've got going on in the background. I've been amazed at the support the university and my department give to students. Barriers don't need to be barriers, they should just be a different way of learning or a different way of doing an assignment or taking notes. It's about changing your attitude. Having bad days is fine.

The biggest barrier and challenge to university was myself

I always knew I wanted to come back to education

But I lacked the confidence and knowledge to get there. I was the first in my family to go, so I didn't really have much of an idea of what university would be like.

Although I enjoyed my job, it wasn't quite where I wanted to be. History was something I loved at school, so I decided maybe it was the right time to give it a go and see how I got on.

I've achieved so much more than just a degree. When I first came to university, I was shy and unsure of myself, but I've really come out of my shell and my confidence has grown massively.

