How to help your child/children research the Higher Education options and support available

We hope our newsletter finds you well. Our first edition of the 2021/22 academic year provides information and tips on open days from a recent graduate and a parent ambassador. You will learn about the different types of support available at higher education institutions (not all are the same so we recommend you ask the institution your child is interested in what support is available). We have some exciting sessions planned for this academic year which we would really like to welcome you to, please register via the links below. Finally, if you have a child/children currently studying at a higher education institution, you might be interested in joining Maeve, our parent ambassador, to be a parent/carer ambassador yourself (details at the bottom of the newsletter).

What is a university or college open day?

A university/college open day is a day or days throughout the year, when a university/college invites prospective students onto their campus to take a look around. You'll also be able to meet staff and current students, and find out more about different study programmes and extra-curricular activities.

Sam talks about the importance of open days and visiting the institutions you are thinking of applying to. He recommends you: visit universities/colleges to get a feel of the campus, attend a seminar and speak to current students. It gives you the opportunity to ask questions to university/college staff and omit any concerns you have. Whilst you are there, take a walk around the city/town and see if it is a place your child/children feel comfortable. To hear more from Sam click here.

A parent's perspective

Maeve Rogers our parent/carer ambassador has been talking to us about open days and the support available at university.

Maeve found open days really helpful when she was supporting her three daughters in the transition into Higher Education. Maeve said she felt “more involved in the process and got to visit new places, the university buildings and see all the facilities/support the institutions had to offer”.

Please forward this email to all parents and carers – if you are a parent or carer, great this email has reached you, please continue reading our newsletter
Here is what Maeve found most helpful:

- A tour of the department(s) your child is interested in studying
- Visiting the accommodation to get a feel of where they will be living
- Listening to presentations from academics, who will be part of your child’s university life
- Being able to see the town/city where your child is going, knowing where they are
- Talking to current students. This was extremely comforting to hear about the students experiences of university life and hearing their views on the course your child is interested in studying.

Maeve worried about her daughters going to university but found going to open days helped overcome this. As a parent/carer there is always the worry of ‘Is it a safe place?’ which Maeve soon realised by visiting, it was. She worried whether the course would actually be a right fit for her daughter, especially with one of them starting a degree in a subject she had never studied before. Listening to academics helped her and her daughter understand it all better and allowed her daughter to make a decision.

Maeve felt that the support offered at university, especially through covid-19 had been extremely important. Both of Maeve’s daughters contacted the wellbeing teams at their institutions to ask for support, one due to stress when taking exams and one for anxiety due to Covid. Maeve felt relieved that they had this support available to them. One of Maeve’s daughters was buddied with a 2nd year student when she arrived at university for the first term, this really helped her settle into university life. Maeve said “The first term is always the hardest as they settle into a new way of life, and this can be hard for parents/carers. With them being away you just have to let them make decisions but be that supportive call”

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**Open Day Tips**

- Visit lots of different institutions to find out which is best for your child/children
- Book on a campus tour
- Attend a seminar of the subject your child/children are interested in
- Take a look at the accommodation available
- Ask about the support provided i.e. disability support, bursaries, scholarships
- Ask about the city/town

**Remember** you can go to an open day whatever age, it’s not just for students who are going in the next academic year!

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**What support is there at university/college?**

**Academic Support**

The transition from A Levels/BTECS to undergraduate degree can be a significant one and some students initially struggle to adapt to a new style of learning. This is perfectly normal and nothing to panic about. Most institutions will offer the following:

- Personal tutor – a member of teaching staff to support your child/children
- Mentoring and buddy networks – some institutions have current students help with the transition to university/college life
- ICT services – support to help with any IT concerns through how-to-guides, IT helpdesks
- University library – access to resources, some institutions might provide workshops to help with writing, research etc.
Health & Wellbeing

- Student Wellbeing Centre – offer free and confidential support, advice and guidance, support for disabled students, specific learning, medical conditions and mental health. Teams are usually made up of advisers, counsellors, officers who want to make your child/children’s journey enjoyable
- Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Service – a confidential listening ear and spiritual support
- On-site Health Centre – an on-site doctors should your child/children require and medical advice

Careers & Employability

A team of qualified professionals there to support your child/children regarding future careers, employment during and after studying, assisting them with job applications, CV writing and interview techniques.

Students Union Advice Team

A team providing of specialist advisers who can help in areas such as housing, academic issues, financial queries, employment and many more.

Student Support Services

A dedicated and professional team available to help with student enquiries regarding university systems and procedures, funding, fees and payments, housing, personal support and general advice and information. Attending university/college is a huge transition, and it's very important for your child/children to be happy and comfortable with their studies and university/college life, as well as piece of mind for yourself. Should your son

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Sessions coming up

**Thursday 7 October 2021 – 17:00 – 17:30 – How can I support my child through their Higher Education application?**

Join us for this 30 minute information session where you'll hear how and where students apply for HE courses, and how you can support them as a parent or carer. You'll hear from parent ambassadors and student ambassadors on their experience and they will share their hints and tips. There will also be an opportunity to ask any questions.

[Click to book](#)

**Thursday 13 January 2022 – 17:00 – 17:30 – Benefits of Higher Education and how can I support my child to get there?**

Join us for this 30 minute information session where you'll hear about the routes into Higher Education and its social, academic and employment benefits. You'll hear from student ambassadors on their experience and why they chose Higher Education, plus parent ambassadors will share hints and tips that worked for them supporting their child make decisions on their next steps.

[Click to book](#)

**Thursday 28 April 2022 – 17:00 – 17:30 – Understanding student finance as a parent/carer**

We know the cost of higher education study can be daunting. Come along to this 30 minute information session where we'll explain how student finance works for Higher Education. We'll give you the facts on how much money students can receive as a loan or non-repayable bursary / scholarship, the extra financial support they may be eligible for and repayments. Student and parent ambassadors will share their experiences.

[Click to book](#)

**Thursday 7 July 2022 – 17:00 – 17:30 – Open days and clearing – why they are important for your child**

Join us for this 30 minute information session where you'll find out why open days are important, what to expect at one and how to make the most of them. We'll also explain Clearing, which is used by 70,000 students each year to find a place on a university level course. You will hear from our student and parent ambassadors who will share their experiences and what they found useful.

[Click to book](#)
Would you like to be a parent/carer ambassador?

If you have a child/children at a higher education institution this could be of interest to you. Hepp deliver sessions to parents and carers about the pathway into higher education. There is no better way to provide this information than through parents and carers who have lived the experience. With your support you can put others at ease through the process.

This is a paid role and if you are interested to hear more please contact Kelly Self on k.self@shu.ac.uk or 07824 431415.

For more information and advice

- HeppHUB - Higher Education Progression Partnership
- HeppSY (shu.ac.uk)
- You can also speak to our qualified careers advisers via online messaging or a phone line: www.heppsy.org/chat.

Remember your support is invaluable and working together can make a difference.

Keep an eye out for our next edition in January!