

Information on how you can on your course

A student guide

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Introduction

There are lots of different places you can get information about higher education.

Universities and colleges have their own websites, publish prospectuses and run open days, all of which are designed to tell you about them and what they offer. There are also a number of independent sources of information like comparison websites such as www.unistats.com and <http://university.which.co.uk> as well as the information provided by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) on its website. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has also released an animation which you might like to watch that tries to explain things a bit more (www.youtube.com/qaatube: 'How to choose where to study higher education').

All of this information is intended to help you make a confident decision about what and where to study. One thing that will probably be important to you is what it is actually like to study at the university or college you are thinking of going to. In particular you might want to know about issues like how much time you will be expected to commit to your studies, how you will be taught and who will teach you, how many people will be in your class, and how you can make your views known when you get there. This series of four short guides helps you answer those questions by explaining some of the key pieces of information you could look for, grouped into four themes:

- Information on staff teaching qualifications
- Information on class size
- Information on workload
- **Information on how you can comment on your course (this guide).**

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Responding to students' views

You should expect the university or college you are thinking of attending to provide you with clear information on how and when you will be able to tell them what you think about the course (how you can 'give feedback'). They should also publish clear information about what current and previous students thought about the course, and what improvements the university/college has made to respond to that feedback.

You can expect to be asked for feedback on every module in the course. Often this will be through a survey or questionnaire. You might find that other ways of collecting feedback are also used, depending on what the module is about and how it is taught. For example, online evaluations might be used for part-time students or those not studying on a campus, or you might be invited to attend a meeting or focus group.

When looking at information published by universities or colleges about how they collect and use student feedback, it is worth bearing in mind that in higher education, students should be seen as partners in learning - sharing responsibility for their education with the university or college they are attending. When you provide feedback, keep in mind that you are working together with your university or college to make sure that the learning experience is the best it can be.

Giving feedback is an important way of helping to shape your own education. There are many others, such as becoming a student representative for your course, school, faculty or even for your whole university or college. This is often organised through your local student union/association, so they are a good place to start if you want to get more involved. Watch our animation to find out more - [www.youtube.com/qaatube: 'What is student engagement?'](http://www.youtube.com/qaatube: 'What is student engagement?)

What is a good feedback system?

There is no absolutely perfect system, but when reading the information provided by universities and colleges you might want to look out for a system that:

- is consistent - you, and they, can see what is happening right across the university or college, and they can keep track of changes and whether they have been successful
- always lets you know what action has been taken
- collects feedback quickly so that things can be changed quickly
- includes published and clear plans of action in response to feedback
- doesn't just rely on informal discussions.

Further information

If you have any questions about staff teaching qualifications then the best thing to do is to get in touch with the university or college using the contact details on their website or in their prospectus.

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