

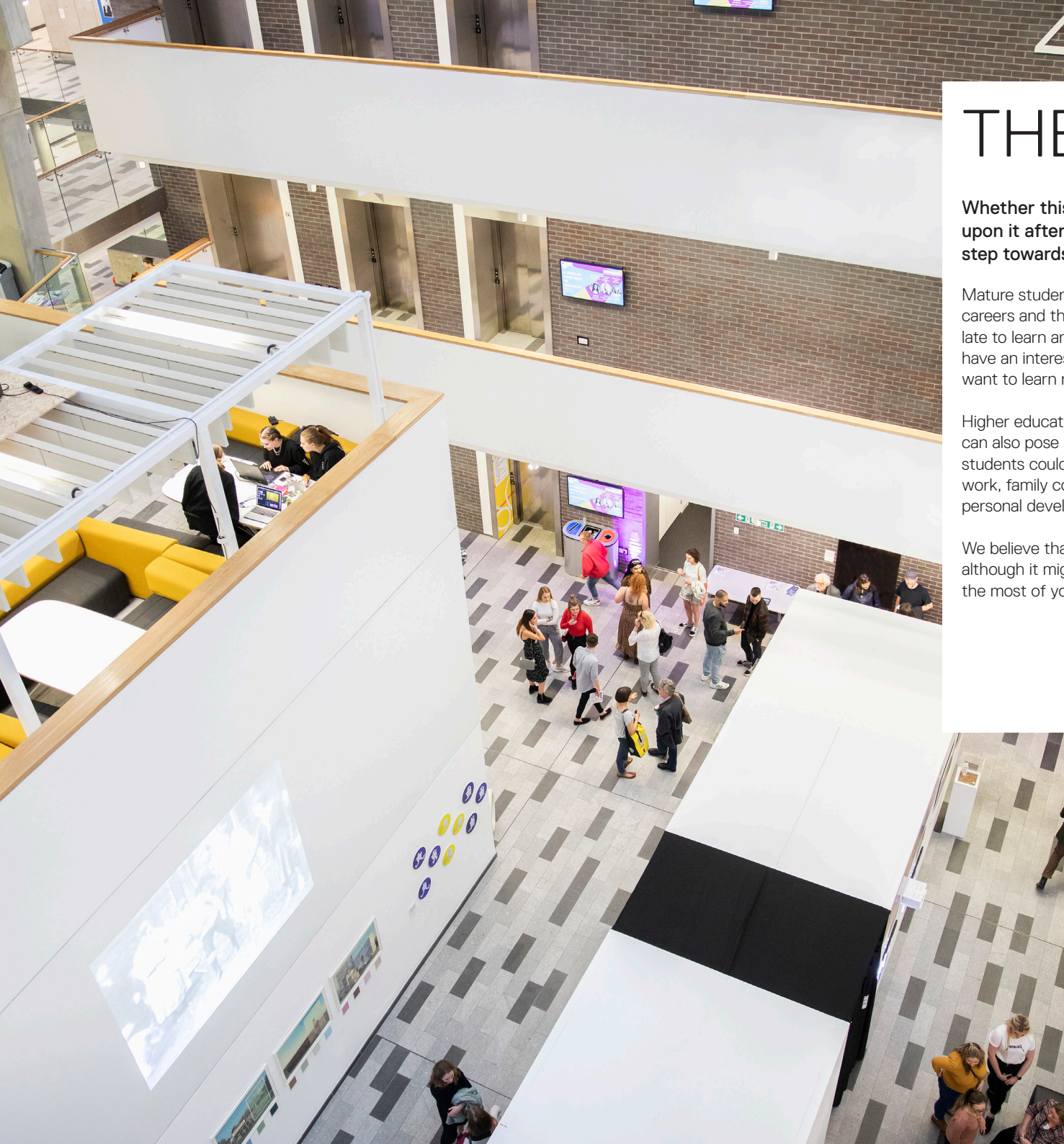


University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

# MATURE STUDENT GUIDE







# THE FIRST STEP...

Whether this guide is the start of your journey, or you've stumbled upon it after months of research, congratulations on taking that first step towards your university experience.

Mature students are go-getters; taking the chance to develop themselves, their careers and the lives of their families through higher education. It is never too late to learn and there are many reasons to return to education: perhaps you have an interest in an academic subject, plans to change your career or you want to learn new skills and improve your future job prospects.

Higher education represents a fantastic opportunity for self-improvement, but it can also pose some significant challenges that should not be overlooked. Mature students could paint a tough picture of juggling academic study with paid work, family commitments and financial responsibilities, but there's also a lot of personal development and fun to be had too!

We believe that everyone has the right to access a fair and good education and although it might seem scary, there's lots of support on offer to help you make the most of your time at university.

*The Office for Students defines 'mature students' as those aged 21 or over at the time of starting their course. Although we use the term 'mature students' throughout this guide, we recognise that the content may be of use to learners of all ages, needs and backgrounds.*

In September 2019,  
**over 30%** of all our new  
students were 21 or older.

Two thirds of these were  
25 or above.

***You will not be the only one!***



# STUDENT SUPPORT

## askUS

[www.salford.ac.uk/askus/](http://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/)

### YOU ARE NOT ALONE ON THIS JOURNEY.

At the University of Salford, we encourage students from all backgrounds to succeed to the best of their ability, regardless of what time of life they choose to join us.

At Salford, askUS is at the core of our student support service, offering information and advice on matters such as finance, wellbeing and counselling, learner support and more. Once you're a student here at Salford, if you have any worries, concerns, or need advice on a particular topic, askUS should be your first stop.

Everyone has different circumstances, challenges and support needs, so don't feel like you need to deal with everything on your own, especially when facing some of the issues that may arise during your studies. We want you to feel like an integral part of our student community, and there are a range of staff and student-led services available that can be of benefit to you during your studies, whether you're 21 or 70.



## STUDENTS WITH FAMILIES

[www.salford.ac.uk/askus/our-services/diversity-and-faith/students-with-families](http://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/our-services/diversity-and-faith/students-with-families)

The University recognises that students with families (or those who are expecting) are likely to need additional support throughout their studies, to ensure that they can make the most of their course and achieve the best results possible.

For parents with young children, we recognise that caring for your family and balancing your studies can be a tricky act to juggle sometimes, which is why we seek to offer you the support you need at a time and place that suits you.

If you already have a child or are about to become a parent, a wealth of services are available to support you at Salford. We have a purpose built, on-campus branch of Busy Bees Nursery ([www.busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/salforduni](http://www.busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/salforduni)) and the University can offer assistance, if required, in gaining effective and accessible alternative childcare in the local area, so you're always nearby.

We will also take any childcare arrangements into consideration when defining what support we can offer you, to ensure that you and your family can be taken care of during your studies at Salford.

## STUDENTS WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

[www.salford.ac.uk/askus/our-services/diversity-and-faith/student-carers](http://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/our-services/diversity-and-faith/student-carers)



One in ten of us have caring responsibilities, so if you are looking after someone whilst studying, we recognise that juggling all of this can be very difficult.

Because of this we have developed a policy to ensure that you get the support you need. We are the first university in the country to offer an individual Carer Support Plan, that can be adapted to your needs. We have a Carer Support Co-ordinator, to help with any questions you may have and well-developed links with local Carer Centres who are also able to support you.

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour who could not manage without this help because of frailty, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability. You may be a carer without even realising it.

If you have family or caring responsibilities and would like to discuss your situation, please contact:

**Jane Hopkinson**  
Carer Support Co-ordinator  
t: 0161 295 0023  
e: [studentdiversity@salford.ac.uk](mailto:studentdiversity@salford.ac.uk)

## COMMUTING TO UNIVERSITY

We are committed to delivering the best experience to all our students, whether they live on campus or not. We are easily accessible via public transport, as we are on a main bus route and have Salford Crescent train station in the middle of our Peel Park campus. If you choose to drive in there is car parking available, and we also have spaces for over 400 bicycles across campus for those who prefer pedal power!

Across campus, we have hubs for our commuting students with study spaces, comfy seating and storage facilities. The common rooms also have kitchenettes with microwaves, fridges and washing up facilities, enabling you to heat up your lunch or make a brew between lectures.



### MY STORY

#### EVE / PSYCHOLOGY

"I have family at home – so as I'm a mature student juggling studying and the school run living in halls wasn't an option for me! I only have lectures two days a week and if I have a 9:00am lecture I set off at 8:00am so I can miss the traffic and get parked up with plenty of time to spare. I don't actually know anyone who lives in halls, I only know people who commute in. A lot of them get the train – they all meet up to come in which is nice.



It's like having two separate lives. You go have that home life, which is comfortable and normal and then you go to university and you have a separate university life. I'd maybe say you miss out on the partying, but if that's not your thing then it's not really a con. Even if I lived in halls, I don't think I'd go out clubbing anyway. *I really enjoy living at home and travelling in.*"

# STUDY SKILLS

[www.salford.ac.uk/library/help/academic-support](http://www.salford.ac.uk/library/help/academic-support)

**As a mature student you may be worried about how you'll cope with the demands of academic work, particularly if you've been out of education for a few years.**

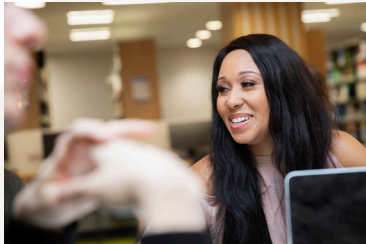
Get Going is our online introduction to studying at the University. Through videos, interactive content and quizzes, this online programme will help you to get started and understand the step up to university study.

If you want to improve your IT skills, we have a globally recognised IT qualification (Microsoft Office Specialist) available to all students. It's a self-taught study programme, so all the resources you need to pass are available online - this allows you to practice in your own time, at your own pace.

Across our libraries, attractive workspaces provide students with the freedom to learn in ways that feel natural and comfortable to them. We have Staffed Support Desks to assist you in using library services, and our online instant messaging service is another source of help when you need it.

Research is a major part of university education, and it is expected that you will read, understand and discuss the writings of others. When you write your assignments, you will refer to existing literature on your subject, including books, journals, newspapers and websites.

It is essential that you learn how to research and reference correctly, so every school has an Academic Support Librarian assigned to provide specialist expertise and to help you identify study resources and use them effectively.



Alongside a wealth of Skills for Learning support, we have the following workshops available at Salford, which mature students may find particularly useful:

## WORDSCOPE

[blogs.salford.ac.uk/wordscope/](http://blogs.salford.ac.uk/wordscope/)

Wordscope is designed to help students improve and develop their academic writing skills. It provides tuition to help tackle common writing problems such as punctuation, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

*"When essay-writing is a new concept, it can be very stressful, but I encourage every Salford student to recognise that developing our writing skills can reap more rewards than we ever anticipated. So, I encourage you to stick with it, trust the process, do your best, and, as I always said to my students at the end of their final Wordscope lesson, 'Go forth and conquer!'"*

Christina Sims, Wordscope Tutor

## MY STORY

### KIERAN / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICS

Prior to starting at Salford, I was a Royal Marines Commando for 7 years. I did a year with the Open University and this made me decide to want to study full time. I attended many Open Days at various universities and Salford stood out to me. I was really impressed with the overall feel of the open day and the location was appealing; being near to Manchester and closer to home.

I found the that application process was very straight forward and my first few weeks went as I expected; it was great to know that there was lots of help and support on offer and that it was fully accessible and easily available. My tutors have been very supportive and crucial in helping me develop academically. I attended the Wordscope course which I definitely found very beneficial and would highly recommend it to everyone, regardless of age or educational background.

At 28, I'm not the oldest in my class, but I really don't think that age matters anyway, as I don't see that my student experience differs to that of my peers at all... ***Being a mature student is really nothing to be worried about.***

## MATHSCOPE

[www.mathscope.salford.ac.uk/](http://www.mathscope.salford.ac.uk/)

MathScope is designed to help students with any type of mathematical or statistical problem they may come across in their course and is run on both a drop-in and appointment basis. It doesn't matter what subject or the year of study, MathScope has experienced tutors who will help to ease any anxiety and support students to find solutions to their mathematics problems.







# STUDENT FINANCE

Higher education is a major investment in your future and starting university is a big financial commitment. It is important to manage your money carefully and apply for everything you may be entitled for. The amount you get will depend on your family situation and the type of course you're doing, and you may get extra help if you have children.

## TUITION FEES

Universities can charge up to £9,250\* per year of study, but you can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan to cover these costs. The loan is paid directly to the university on your behalf when you register as a student, so you don't need to have this money available to pay your fees upfront. There is no age limit on eligibility for Tuition Fee loans, so anyone can apply, providing that they're going to be studying for their first undergraduate degree.

For more information on Student Finance, we recommend you visit the following pages:

[www.salford.ac.uk/askus](http://www.salford.ac.uk/askus)

[www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

[www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk)

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/student-services](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/student-services)

## LIVING COSTS

You can apply for a Maintenance Loan for living costs to help with such things as rent or mortgage costs, utility bills, food etc. while you are studying. This loan is paid directly to you three times a year at the start of each term. You must have a personal UK bank or building society account in your own name, and you will need to have registered at the University and received your student ID card before you can receive your first payment.

The amount you get will depend on your circumstance and household income. You can get an estimate of what you might be entitled to here: [www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator)

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR HEALTHCARE STUDENTS

As of September 2020, there is additional funding available for students on certain healthcare programmes.

Eligible students will receive a Training Grant of between £5000-8000 to support their living costs while studying.

Please visit the NHS Bursaries website for the latest information on this.

*\* All costs are correct at time of printing (May 2020).*

If you have one or more children, or an adult who is financially dependent on you, then you may be able to apply for the following grants:

## PARENTS LEARNING ALLOWANCE

You may be eligible for help with your learning costs if you're a full-time student with children.

Depending on your household income, in the 2020/21 academic year you could get between £50 and £1,766\* a year and it's usually paid in three instalments direct to your bank account, one at the start of each term.

You do not need to be paying for childcare to qualify and the Parents' Learning Allowance is paid on top of your other student finance and does not have to be paid back.

## CHILDCARE GRANT

You may be eligible for help with your childcare costs if you are a full-time student and have children under 15, or under 17 if they have special educational needs.

Your grant will be paid to your childcare provider, directly from an account that you'll get instructions on how to set up. The grant does not have to be paid back and is paid on top of your other student finance.

The amount you'll get depends on your household income and the number of children who are dependent on you. For the 2020/21 academic year, you can get 85% of your childcare costs or a fixed maximum amount, whichever is less:

/ up to £174.22\* a week for one child

/ up to £298.69\* a week for two or more children

Income-related, unemployment and housing benefits are not affected by a Childcare Grant.

## ADULT DEPENDANTS' GRANT

If you're a full-time student in higher education and an adult depends on you financially, you can apply for an Adult Dependants' Grant of up to £3,094\* for the 2020/21 academic year. The grant does not have to be paid back and is provided on top of your other student finance. The money is paid in three instalments (one at the start of each term) directly into your bank account.

The amount you get depends on your income, the dependant adult's income, your personal circumstances (for example if you're married or have children) and what other grants you're receiving, for example the Childcare Grant.

## PART-TIME STUDENTS

New part-time students are able to apply for a Tuition Fee Loan from Student Finance England to help pay for fees. The course intensity must be a minimum of 25% of the full-time course equivalent.

Part-time students can also apply for a Maintenance Loan to help support them with living costs. The amount that can be borrowed will depend on a few different factors such as household income, study intensity, and where you live.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

You can apply for the Tuition Fee Loan and the basic rate of the Maintenance Loan without having your household income looked at. This means you can apply without having to send in any details of your income. However, if you want to get the full Maintenance Loan, Student Finance will need to assess your household income before confirming the amount of your loan.

Whose income is assessed depends on whether you are classified as a dependent or independent student. You're classed as an independent student if:

- / you're 25 or older
- / you have a child
- / you have no living parents
- / you are or have been married or in a civil partnership
- / you've supported yourself for three years
- / you're estranged from your parents.

As an independent student yours and your partner's income will be assessed.

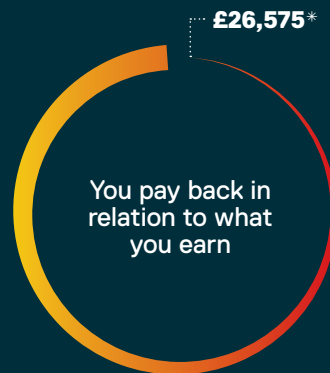
## UNIVERSAL CREDIT

You may be entitled to Universal Credit even if you receive a student loan, however, the amount you are entitled to may be greatly impacted. We would really recommend you speak to the Student Loans Company or Citizens Advice to discuss your personal circumstances in greater detail.

## REPAYMENTS

A student loan is likely to be one of the largest amounts of money you owe, so it is natural to wonder how it will impact your credit rating. We can confirm that your student loan will not appear on your credit report. So, if you apply for a credit card, loan or mortgage and the financial provider runs a credit check on you, your student loan will not make an appearance. Some financial providers may specifically ask you whether you have a student loan, but this is only where they want to include it as a factor in an affordability check.

Student loan repayments won't begin until after you graduate, and you must be earning over £26,575\* for them to start. You pay back in relation to what you earn, not what you owe, and it's taken from your salary automatically, just like tax and national insurance. The system is set up to be affordable; you may only be repaying the cost equivalent to a couple of coffees each week, and your loan is written off after 30 years, so many students will never repay everything they have borrowed.



You may only be repaying the cost equivalent to a couple of coffees each week



\* All costs are correct at time of printing (May 2020).

## MY STORY

### SALLY / OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



It's not the first time I've done this... When I was 18, I went to university to study Occupational Therapy. It was heavily theoretical teaching, in huge lecture theatres with students from other disciplines and I found it quite overwhelming. I was allocated a placement over 100 miles away from home and really struggled to get the most out of the experience. I completed the first year but couldn't face going back.

As the years passed, the possibility of study seemed impossible. Friends were climbing the career ladder and I was thinking for years before I applied, what if...?

I drove into Manchester one day for a concert and noticed Salford's Open Day advertised on side of a building on the journey in – the next day I registered to attend. What was I thinking?! I was so nervous the morning of the Open Day! What do 18-year olds wear? (Did I mention that I'm 38 now...?)

I tentatively arrived on site and soon saw a lot of friendly people and had lots of good chats. Mature students, college students, staff, I didn't feel too out of place. I was encouraged by a current student to go on a tour of the facilities in the building and I was blown away! It wasn't stuffy

like before, things were modern and spacious, all pretty impressive stuff. The day continued in this vein, listening to one of the tutors talking about placements, which would all be within the Greater Manchester area and even the opportunity to go to Alicante in the second year. I was starting to see that OT was much more than needlework and assessments. Finally, the guy in finance explained things in a way I've never heard before and made me think this crazy idea that I had, could actually be a reality.

The rest, as they say, is history.

I'm keeping up with my studies because I have a smaller class size where seminars are directed at my chosen field. What I thought was a barrier to starting University has turned out to be my greatest asset... experience! I'm the one who volunteers to be the guinea pig in class, the one who does presentations in front of my peers, because I'm not inhibited and worried about making a fool of myself like I was when I was fresh out of college.

Twenty years of low self-confidence and lack of belief in my ability are now behind me... ***I'm a wise owl and I ain't afraid to show it!***



# THINKING OF APPLYING?

At the University of Salford, we believe that everyone has the right to a good education. We accept many different qualifications, from A-Levels to Access to HE courses and, depending on the course you're applying for, we may be able to accept overseas qualifications too.

If you have been out of education for a while, want to further your career, or simply want to study in a field that you're passionate about, then the Salford Alternative Entry Scheme (SAES) could be for you.

## ALTERNATIVE ENTRY SCHEME

We recognise that prospective students returning to higher education may not have gained the traditional entry requirements. The Salford Alternative Entry Scheme (SAES) has been developed to offer students who have gained the knowledge, skills and experience that are equivalent to the academic entry route, the ability to continue in their education.

Applicants seeking entry onto their chosen course through SAES can do so by applying to their chosen course via UCAS. If you are a candidate for SAES, then you will be contacted by our admissions team.

To find out more about how to apply to universities visit:  
[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

The scheme has two routes to entry:

### ROUTE 1

#### ACCREDITATION FOR PRIOR LEARNING (APL)

APL is used for courses in Business and Law, Health Sciences, Environment and Life Sciences and Arts and Media. APL allows us to consider students who may not have the traditional entry criteria but do have relevant experience or the ability to pursue the course successfully. Admissions Tutors may consider employer references, previous coursework/examinations or a portfolio of your work.

### ROUTE 2

#### MSAP-UK TEST

The MSAP-UK test is used for courses in Health and Society, Computing, Science and Engineering, and the Built Environment. The MSAP-UK test is a combination of two one-hour exams that test your written English and reasoning skills.

## FORMER FORCES

With many of our students and staff being ex-forces themselves, we are proud to support ex-forces personnel in their transition from military to civilian life. Our core strategy is to work closely with industry to help students develop and enhance skills, leaving the University ready for work. Our askUS team provides a wide range of free and confidential support services including Counselling and Wellbeing, and Disability and Learner Support and much more.

The University of Salford is a registered ELCAS ([www.enhancedlearningcredits.com](http://www.enhancedlearningcredits.com)) provider and offers tailored entry schemes for service leavers without traditional qualifications.

For more information please contact: [ex-military@salford.ac.uk](mailto:ex-military@salford.ac.uk)

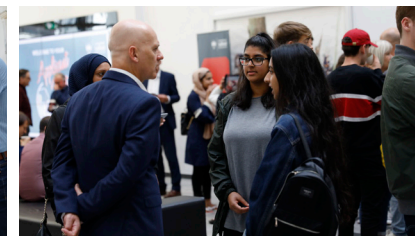
## OPEN DAYS

[beta.salford.ac.uk/undergraduate/open-days](http://beta.salford.ac.uk/undergraduate/open-days)

University Open Days can start very early in the academic year, so try to plan your visits before making your UCAS choices. You may find it useful to ask someone to visit with you, as they may notice aspects of the campus and course that you may not see by yourself. If you have children and are struggling for childcare, you are more than welcome to bring them along – you're taking a positive step to changing your future and that will impact them too – and we always love having a chat with them to make sure they're enjoying their day as well!

We publish our Open Day schedule in advance, so have a look online beforehand to see what tours, talks and taster sessions you might like to attend, and think about what other information you're hoping to get from the day. Prepare a list of questions to bring with you and speak to as many staff and student ambassadors as you can. It may seem overwhelming at first, but we're all there to help you get the most out of your visit – don't ever think that a question is too silly to ask – it's not, and we've probably heard it before!

Find out more at [www.salford.ac.uk/open-days](http://www.salford.ac.uk/open-days)





## “ MY STORY

### LENNY / HUMAN BIOLOGY

When I came to UK with my 9-year-old son in 2008 it was a dream come true. I went to college two years later, and after completing my Access to Higher Education Diploma, I decided to work as a Support Worker.

I worked in social care for years, but I always dreamt of going to university and changing my career. Deep down I knew it was never too late for me to continue learning.

I started university in September 2015 and I was overwhelmed by the great opportunity for me to meet new friends. The excitement towards my studies was increased by the friendly environment and all the staff that I met. There were many activities available for me to join in with and information and advice on different matters was always available from my personal tutor, school office, the library and askUS.

During my first year, I found out that I was pregnant, and it was bothering me day and night how I would manage my studies and the baby. I told my personal tutor that I was expecting, and they were really supportive throughout it all. This gave me a great relief and I was referred to askUS, who talked me through my options (I took a gap year) and told me about the nursery available at University.

After a year at home with my new baby, I went back to University (and she went to nursery) and in 2019 I graduated with my degree - proudly saying ***“I am proof that anyone can do this!”***



## LENNY'S TOP TIPS

1. Start your planning early and do as much research as you can. Visit different universities and do not be afraid to ask questions to get all the information you need to make your decisions.
2. Gather finance information from all sources, but make sure you're looking at information relevant to the academic year you're applying for. Speak to Finance Advisors at universities, and Student Finance England. If you need to, book an appointment with Citizens Advice to discuss how student finance will affect your circumstances.
3. Starting university is exciting but sometimes it is overwhelming. Balancing your studies with work, family and adjusting your finances can be a challenge. Don't ever feel afraid to ask for help though, there's so much out there to help you through.
4. Make use of all the library skills workshops, they are just as important as your subject learning.
5. Make yourself known to your tutors, ask for a one-to-one chat if you need it and talk through your ideas or concerns – you may find that you are worrying unnecessarily.
6. Student discount... use it everywhere!
7. Don't ever feel like you're an imposter because you're older than your peers! Mature students bring so much to their classes and group work. Often, we can help younger students develop their organisational and presentation skills – and we help each other when our confidence needs a boost.
8. Feeling stressed or losing motivation? Focus on your progress and reward your achievements. Reach out for help, be it from your friends, personal tutor, school staff, askUS or the Students' Union – you're not alone.
9. Get involved – but don't stretch yourself too thinly. It's tempting to throw yourself in to absolutely everything but remember that you may have a lot more commitments than your peers, so its ok to say no to some things.
10. Embrace your learning and the overall experience... It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. **ENJOY IT.**







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For more information on studying at Salford  
contact our Course Enquiries Team on:

T: **0161 295 4545**

E: **enquiries@salford.ac.uk**

