



# Choosing a Degree Course

## Research

Before diving into specific courses offered by different universities, start with the general subject you want to study. This might be clear to you already; but if not, here are some questions to help you decide:

### How many courses are available in the UK?

According to UCAS for 2019/20:  
**36,725 at 376 Institutions**

#### What course should I choose?

Is it a subject you've already studied?

Simply, what are your favourite subjects currently?

Which classes do you always look forward to or get top marks in? For instance, if English literature is your favourite class, and you always have a book on-the-go, an English degree is a sensible possibility.

Will you still be interested in that subject for a further three or four years - enough to motivate yourself to work and research independently?

Does it differ at degree-level, compared to at A-level, GCSE etc? This is where you should look at examples of modules you might study.

Any thoughts on life after university - what do you want to do and could your subject choice help reach with this goal? On a positive note, many careers will consider graduates from a wide range of subjects (though you'll need to demonstrate transferable skills that can apply to whatever job you apply to e.g. research, problem-solving).

Is it a subject that relates to a career idea? Maybe you've always dreamed of becoming a journalist? Or perhaps a work experience gig you didn't have any expectations for, has opened your eyes to that career?

How is the subject you're considering at university viewed by the industry it is connected to? Do you need to take it to actually go into that career? For example, you don't have to do a journalism degree to become a journalist - many degrees are considered. Have you done any/enough work experience to see if this is the right career for you? Don't just base your idea of a career on what you've seen in films and television - it could be quite different.

Is it a subject that relates to something new? Maybe you've always been interested by the big questions in life and now you're considering a philosophy degree. This isn't the most common A-level subject, so it's possible you won't have studied it prior to applying to university.

Do you know what's involved? Try speaking to a careers adviser, researching online or exploring in detail the type of modules you'll study. As above, your perception of a subject may be very different from reality.



**What can you do later?** While you may be really interested in a particular subject, keep in mind what your career prospects might look once you graduate. You never know, you might learn about jobs you never knew existed.

Once you know the general subject you want to study, it's time to see what courses are on offer for this. For example, if you're interested in history as a subject, you might choose to study a Modern History course. Remember that a course might differ drastically from university to university, even if they have the same name.

**Do all universities offer the course you're interested in?** If you want to study veterinary science, for instance, there are only a handful of UK universities offering it, narrowing your options straight away. On the other hand, if you want to study something like business, there are over 170 universities to pick from, not to mention different types of business degree. For certain subjects, such as acting or psychology, choosing a course that's been accredited by a relevant body will ensure you're 'work-ready' or able to progress straight into the appropriate postgraduate course - this will give you a head start when it comes to getting into a specific profession.

## Consider Joint or Single Honours

### Single Honours:

Study one main subject  
Choice of modules relating to this subject

e.g. BA (Hons) Criminology

### Joint Honours:

Study of two subjects  
Choice of modules in both subject areas

e.g. BA (Hons) Criminology **and** Sociology 50/50  
LLB (Hons) Law **with** Politics 75% Law 25% Politics



## What else to Consider

**Course Content** - Similar sounding course can actually end up covering very different areas, so reading the course content for each is a good point of comparison.

**Type of Assessment** - Your degree could be assessed in lots of different ways - coursework, exams, practicals, presentations and group work. When comparing courses, take a look in detail at this to try and find the course that best plays to your academic strengths.

**Grade Requirements** - Match the course entry requirements to your predicted grade to ensure you're making realistic choices, based on what you are likely to achieve - plus a backup option in case you don't quite get the grades you are predicted.

**Students Satisfaction Scores** - All final-year are asked to rate their course and university experience in the National Student Survey (NSS).

**Graduate Prospects** - Find out what students are up to after they graduate from studying a course - including the percentage who are now in work or further study.

