

University

Key things to know:

- Not just for more 'academic' students
- There are different types of university
- You don't have to be rich to go

Different types of university

It's important that pupils understand that there are different types of universities, differentiated by the more 'traditional' offering more academic subjects with more rigorous entry requirements, and those offering more vocational courses. To make informed decisions, they need to be aware that different universities offer very different courses and have very different entry requirements, in terms of grades required/unconditional offers and UCAS/tariff points.

The most selective/top third/'Russell Group' universities usually offer more academic courses requiring high attainment. Post-92 universities/former polytechnics offer more vocational courses (e.g. physiotherapy, graphic design, sports science and many creative courses like animation or music production), that suit more practical based careers and often require lower academic grades.

The Russell Group is the term used for a group of universities which often have strong research facilities and expertise and a reputation for academic achievement. Many of them are the more 'traditional' universities which have been around for longer than some of the newer institutions, and include Oxford and Cambridge and the original six 'red brick universities' (Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield). The Russell Group member universities usually feature near the top of the university league tables.

The list of Russell Group Universities is below in alphabetical order:

University of Birmingham	University of Exeter	London School of Economics	Queen's University Belfast
University of Bristol	University of Glasgow	University of Manchester	University of Sheffield
University of Cambridge	Imperial College London	Newcastle University	University of Southampton
Cardiff University	King's College London	University of Nottingham	University College London
Durham University	University of Leeds	University of Oxford	University of Warwick
University of Edinburgh	University of Liverpool	Queen Mary University of London	University of York

As with many other areas of life, the future of some universities is uncertain, and the value of different types of degree is bound to be something pupils should consider even harder than before given the likely effect of Covid-19 on the labour market.

In Section 2 you will look at all the factors that a student should consider when making their decision between a university or alternative route, and the pros and cons will be addressed in that section.

The next page will dispel a few myths which exist about universities and the types of students who go.