



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Your Open Day Handbook

Attending university Open Days is a key step in choosing the right institution for you.

Visiting in person allows you to get a feel for the campus, speak to staff and students, and see whether the university meets your expectations. Use this guide to plan your visits, prepare key questions and make the most out of each university event you attend.



What should I expect at an Open Day?

Open Days are structured events that aim to give you an informative overview of the university you're visiting and considering applying to.

You should expect a schedule that includes the following:

- A welcome talk introducing the university, usually delivered by the Vice-Chancellor (the most senior member of staff at a university), or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Subject presentations and sample lectures.
- Guided campus and accommodation tours delivered by current students at the university (known as Student Ambassadors).
- Student panels where you can ask questions.
- Information stands where you can speak to staff from admissions, student services, funding, the Students' Union and more.
- Drop-in desks with academic staff so you can ask all the questions you need to on a one-to-one basis.

Most universities will release the schedule of their event in advance. Make sure to look at this, so you can plan your visit in advance to make the most of your time. Arrive early (especially if parking is limited and you're driving), check the schedule, and highlight key sessions you want to attend.

Don't hesitate to reach out to the universities you're visiting if you have any questions about the day – they'll be more than happy to help!

Top Tip

If you're planning to commute to university, travel to the Open Day the way you would from home. This is a good chance to check out the route and how well it works for you.



Preparing for your visit

Use this space to write down key questions you want to ask staff and students during your visits – take this handbook with you, so that you're prepared for each trip!

Think about what your essentials are for university: What support do you need? What are you looking for from the student community? Are there particular modules you want to make sure you'll be studying? Do you have any questions about contextual admissions? These questions can be used when attending online events, higher education or career fairs, and other university related visits.

Your key questions

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

University Open Day Calendar

Keep track of upcoming open days! Write down all the universities you'd be interested in learning more about, and when their upcoming open days are. You don't have to attend them all, this is just to help you plan. Some institutions may also offer online opportunities and resources too.

Name of the university you'd like to visit	Date and time of event	Have you registered?

Top tips for your visit

- 1

Set clear goals: Write down key things you want to learn about to make sure you don't miss anything important.
- 2

Talk to students: Speak to current students for an honest, firsthand understanding of campus life, assessments, workload and the overall student experience.
- 3

Join interactive sessions: Make sure to participate in workshops or group activities to get a real feel for what university life might be like – chat to other students who might be thinking about applying.
- 4

Check non-academic spaces: Take a look at the Students' Union, cafés, gyms, and other social areas at the university – they'll be a big part of your daily life too.
- 5

Explore the surrounding area: Check out nearby shops, cafés, and transport links to see if the local vibe suits your lifestyle. Whether you're commuting or living at the university you choose, their local area will play a big part in your time there!
- 6

Bring a friend or family member: A second opinion is always helpful. Plus, talking through your thoughts with someone can give you new insights into your visit.

After your visit: reflection and comparison

Once you've attended an Open Day, take notes on what you liked and disliked about each university. If you don't have enough space here to write down everything, we've included some note pages at the back of this handbook for you.

University	What I liked	My concerns

By taking the time to visit universities, ask questions, and reflect on your experiences, you'll be in a strong position to make an informed decision about where to apply.

Good luck!

A place for your notes

