

LIFT OFF Investigates

Questions

1. How long does it take to finish a course at college or university?
2. Is it hard work?
3. Do you have to study most nights and in your free time?
4. Do you have to move away to go to college/university?
5. What if I don't make any new friends?
6. Do you have to be in for a certain time when you live in halls of residence?
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12. How can people afford to pay back the student loan?

Answers

1. How long does it take to finish a course at college or university?

It depends on the level of the course. NCs, NQs and HNCs take a year to complete, HNDs take 2 year (1 if already completed HNC), Ordinary Degrees take 3 years and Honours Degrees take 4 years. However, if you already have a relevant qualification and/or experience you may be able to enter a degree in second or third year.

2. Is it hard work?

Of course! But it's great fun too. There's plenty of support available to help you through your studies and lots of time for studying. If you enjoy what you're studying it makes it a lot easier.

3. Do you have to study most nights and in your free time?

You may have to study in the evenings, especially when exams are coming up, but there is usually free time built in to the timetable to allow for studying. College and university are different from school, as you might not be in class all day, every day of the week.

4. Do you have to move away to go to college/university?

Not unless the course you want to study is only offered by a college or university that is not near you. If this is the case you can live in student halls of residence, where students share accommodation on campus.

5. What if I don't make any new friends?

There lots of people with different backgrounds and interests at college and university, and remember – everyone is in the same boat at the beginning. Student's unions provide loads of social events and clubs/societies to join. By the end of fresher's week, you'll wonder what you were worrying about!

6. Do you have to be in for a certain time when you live in halls of residence?

No!

7. How can I find out what courses I can study?

There is loads of info out there. Searching the college and university websites is one of the easiest ways to get an idea of the courses on offer. You can also speak to your careers advisor and guidance teacher. Prospectuses should be available from the school library or you can contact the college/universities to request one.

8. What kinds of things can I study?

Once you leave school, the choices of what you can study are vast. If you have a particular interest, there's a good chance you can study it, or something related to it at college or university. Have a look at our "what next" section for a few useful pointers.

9. What if I don't get the grades I need?

Don't panic! There are usually loads of different routes to the course of your dreams. If you want to, you can top-up your highers at college before applying. Colleges run Access courses too, which lead onto and prepare students for further study. Some courses are very popular and competition to gain entry to them is high (e.g. medicine or veterinary medicine). Students who miss the grades for this type of course should speak to a careers or guidance adviser about alternative courses within a similar field.

10. What if I change my mind about the course?

Still don't panic! If you change your mind it's often possible to change course. Guidance advisors and Student Support Services are there to offer help and advice too.

11. Won't I earn more money if I go straight into a job after school?

Generally, people who go into work with a college or university qualification, earn significantly more over their lifetime than those who go in straight from school.

12. How can people afford to pay back the student loan?

You don't start paying the student loan back until you are earning £15,000 or over. The payments are taken off the pay slip each month automatically.

If you have any more questions then leave a post on <http://lift-off.org.uk/blog/> or email us on lift.off@fife.gov.uk.