



The University of  
Nottingham

# Mature and Part-time Students' Guide

Undergraduate studies





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“Huge lake, views over Trent Valley, rolling Downs that sweep away into the distance, all a neat ten minutes by bus from town.”

*The Virgin Guide to British Universities 2010*

# Welcome



First of all, thank you for your interest in studying at The University of Nottingham. We are delighted that you are interested in joining our friendly and vibrant community, and hope that you become one of the thousands of students who choose to fulfil their potential with us.

Returning to education is a hugely exciting step, but it can also seem daunting. This guide is intended to give you a feel for studying here and answer some of the questions you might have. We've also included interviews with mature and part-time students studying at the University. If you would like more information after reading this guide, please get in touch using the contact details on page 19 or come along to one of our open days.

While mature and part-time students do face certain challenges, we believe that you can take these in your stride. Like all students, you need to be prepared to work hard, but you can be assured that The University of Nottingham will support you both academically and pastorally. Our student mix is extremely diverse and includes all ages and backgrounds, and many of the things you are concerned about will be common to lots of students. While mature students may have different circumstances, they can also bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their studies.

At Nottingham, we are very proud of our students, the contribution they make to the University and their achievements after graduating. We hope you will choose to become part of this continuing success story.

# Mature and part-time study explained



## What is a mature student?

Mature students are over 21 when they enter university as an undergraduate.

## What is part-time study?

Part-time students complete a degree programme over a period of five to eight years, whereas full-time students normally complete the same programmes in three or four years.

## Part-time study at The University of Nottingham

Most part-time students at The University of Nottingham are required to attend lectures and seminars during the day. Timetables depend on the modules you select.

In most cases, you will be able to complete essays, reports and other coursework in the evenings and at weekends.

The University's School of Education teaches undergraduate degrees and other courses in a range of subjects using a flexible pattern of delivery, designed to suit busy people from all walks of life. Nursing, which is taught by the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, is available in an extended part-time option, designed to fit into school terms. For other courses, the fact files in our prospectus indicate whether the course can be studied part-time.

At The University of Nottingham, part-time study is available only to students from the UK and the European Union.

# Why The University of Nottingham?

At The University of Nottingham, we are committed to helping all our students achieve their ambitions. Spending time at university is an investment in your future and we want to make sure you receive a quality education that helps you realise your potential and discover new opportunities.

## Teaching

Independent reviews show that our teaching is of the highest standard. Students benefit from a wide variety of teaching methods, ranging from traditional lectures, seminars and small-group tutorials, to sessions that use the latest in multimedia and internet technology.

Our courses are taught through modules – self-contained units of study that usually run for one semester (so 14-16 weeks). Degree courses are generally made up of a mixture of core and optional modules which means you will acquire a thorough grounding in your subject(s) while having the opportunity to specialise in areas you are interested in. The number of optional modules available to you usually increases as you progress through your degree.

## Research

The fact that so many of our lecturers are involved in cutting-edge research means that their teaching is informed by the latest discoveries and lectures are brought to life by their enthusiasm for the subject.

The University's research is of international importance and contributes to life-changing developments in the UK and overseas.

## Support

Although students are encouraged to work independently, we believe that the student-tutor relationship is an important aspect of study. That's why every University of Nottingham student is allocated a personal tutor who will guide and support them through their studies. Please see page 12 for more details of our support services.



# Qualifications



Sutton Bonington Campus

## Matching your qualification to your university course

The entry requirements for some university courses can be quite specific; for example, you may need to take certain modules and achieve a specified grade in those modules. If you are thinking of studying in order to gain entry to a university course, you should bear this in mind when choosing your modules. If you are well into your college course and have already chosen all your modules, you need to check carefully whether these match our entry requirements. Please contact us if you are in any doubt. At The University of Nottingham, a place on a related course may be open to you even if your qualifications do not match your first-choice course.

The best place to start is the UCAS entry profiles where there is detailed information about what we require from alternative qualifications. Simply go to [www.ucas.ac.uk/students/coursesearch](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/students/coursesearch), search for your course, then look for it under The University of Nottingham and check the entry requirements. If you cannot find what you are looking for, you will need to contact the relevant school, faculty or admissions office.

## Access to Higher Education qualifications

Many mature students progress to higher education via an Access to Higher Education (HE) Certificate or Diploma and find that these are excellent preparation for studying at university.

A large number of our courses accept Access to HE qualifications. Access courses can be in broad areas such as social sciences, humanities or science, or for specific pathways such as nursing or midwifery. Where possible, you should check whether your Access course is accepted by your chosen university course, before you enrol at college.

In addition, it is important to be aware of any specific requirements universities might have. For example, a university might require an Access student to have achieved a certain number of credits at level three in a specific subject.

## Other qualifications

Most of our schools and faculties accept a range of other qualifications, including:

- Advanced Diploma
- BTEC Higher National Certificate
- BTEC Higher National Diploma
- BTEC National Diplomas
- Foundation Programmes
- Irish Leaving Certificate
- Scottish Advanced Highers
- Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma



This list is not exhaustive; the University treats applicants with other qualifications on an individual basis. Some courses will consider applicants without conventional qualifications and will consider life or work experience as part of the entry requirements. Please contact the relevant school or faculty to discuss your options. Knowing as much as possible at an early stage can help you achieve your goals.

## School of Education undergraduate courses

The School of Education welcomes mature applicants without formal qualifications and offers flexible study routes in a range of subjects:

- BA Humanities
- BA Creative and Professional Writing
- BA Humanistic Counselling Practice
- BA Fine Art

If you are a mature applicant without formal qualifications and wish to study for a degree, you will need to provide a full CV together with a written piece or portfolio of art work and attend an interview.

# The application process



Djanogly Learning Resource Centre, Jubilee Campus

## Full-time courses

To apply for a full-time place at any university, you need to apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Once you have completed your UCAS form it will be sent to all the institutions you applied to for their consideration. As all applications received by the 15 January deadline must be given equal consideration, this stage of your application may take a few months, especially if you have applied for a popular course. During this time you may be invited to attend an interview, open day or UCAS visit day at some or all of the universities to which you have applied.

Once a decision has been made you will be notified by the university and through the UCAS Track system. You do not need to decide which offers to accept until you have heard back from all the institutions that you applied to. You will be given a deadline for this.

You are able to apply for up to five courses through the UCAS system. These can be different courses at the same university or the same course at different universities. Different rules apply for medical and veterinary medical courses – you can only enter four of these choices. The fifth option can be left blank or used for another course.

## Part-time courses

The process of applying for part-time courses varies from university to university. At The University of Nottingham, potential part-time students are required to complete an application form and submit it to the Admissions Office along with any transcripts, certificates or references required.

Admissions staff will assess your application and some may wish to interview you. The University will notify you of the outcome of your application.

Application forms for part-time study at The University of Nottingham are available from our website – see [www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/prospective/undergraduate/apply.aspx](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/prospective/undergraduate/apply.aspx) Please see below for advice on what to include in your personal statement.

Courses available through part-time study are identified in the fact file for each course in the University's Undergraduate Prospectus.

## The personal statement

For both full-time and part-time study, you will need to complete a personal statement. For mature students this is an excellent chance to highlight the relevance of life experiences and to showcase skills such as time management, determination to succeed and commitment to study.



Many mature and part-time students worry about what to write in a personal statement. This can be because they are concerned about 'explaining' their reasons for wanting to study part-time or taking a break from education; or about giving too much away regarding their personal lives; or because they don't think they have enough experience in a particular area. Most of the time these worries are unjustified.

Experiences don't always have to be directly related to the course you are applying for, and mature students should never feel negative about life experiences which have brought them to the point of applying to higher education.

Mature applicants who can talk about their life experiences in a way that highlights relevant qualifications, skills and attributes present strong personal statements. Examples can include talking about current and previous study, caring for a relative or child, overcoming disadvantages or simply the huge achievement of returning to education.

You must show in your personal statement that you understand the course you are applying for and, where applicable, the profession that the course leads to. You should relate your own experiences and skills to the course (and profession). This will make you stand out from other applicants.

# Supporting your studies



Reception, Cripps Health Centre



At The University of Nottingham, you can expect top teaching and state-of-the-art learning facilities. University life is packed full of new challenges and there might be times when you need extra support. That's why our student services are always there to help.

## Academic Support

The University of Nottingham encourages all students to achieve their personal and academic potential. Academic Support (part of the Student Services Centre) provides a personal and practical approach to academic study that is designed to complement the support and advice provided by schools and departments and to help students to develop their study strategies.

Support is available in the form of individual appointments, drop-in sessions, one-to-one sessions, workshops and group support, dissertation sessions, and revision and examination workshops.

## Disability Support

We also provide specialist academic support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Students are able to access individual specialist support, including initial screenings for dyslexia and access to educational psychologists' assessments. We can also help organise alternative examination arrangements such as extra time and a scribe.

Disability Support includes specialist support for students with long-term medical conditions, visual and hearing impairments and mental health difficulties, as well as offering ongoing support for all disabled students. Each school appoints a disability liaison officer who offers support and guidance on disability issues.

If you have a disability that affects your learning, we encourage you to contact the Student Services Centre, which houses both Academic Support and Dyslexia and Disability Support, as early as possible in the application process.

## Child care

We aim to offer a broad range of quality child care services. Our day nursery and play centre provide day care for children aged six months to five years. In addition, a school holiday play scheme, toy library and out-of-school club are also available. For more information about the services available please visit [www.nottingham.ac.uk/child-care](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/child-care)

## The University of Nottingham Health Service

The Department of Health strongly recommends that students register with a local GP practice while at University.

The University of Nottingham Health Service (UNHS) is conveniently situated in Cripps Health Centre on University Park Campus. The practice specialises in looking after students and staff at the University and their families. In the building there is also a dental practice, the University Occupational Health Unit, and a pharmacy.

As well as treating illnesses, the centre offers:

- help with healthy living
- contraception
- gynaecology and sexual health
- specialists in travel and tropical medicine
- mental health issues
- sports medicine
- minor surgery
- dermatology/acne clinics
- acupuncture
- physiotherapy
- midwifery
- health visitor
- stop smoking clinic

To register with the practice you must be a student on a course of a minimum of six months and live within the practice catchment area.

These services are free of charge and can be accessed all year round, by students and their families and dependants.

Further information can be found at [www.unhs.co.uk](http://www.unhs.co.uk)

# Finance



University Park

## Financing a higher education course as a mature student

Managing your finances while studying at university may seem a daunting prospect. For mature and part-time students there is often a greater sense of worry about finances because of other commitments; children, caring responsibilities for dependent adults, mortgages and existing debts are common examples. The important thing to remember is that there is help out there.

There are many sources of financial support, from student loans for tuition fees and subsistence to non-repayable bursaries and government grants. Each individual case will be different, and this is particularly so for mature or part-time students.

## Financing a full-time course

At The University of Nottingham, approximately one third of our full-time undergraduate students are entitled to our core bursary. This is currently around £1,000 per year and does not have to be repaid. Other sources of funding include the Parents' Learning Allowance, the Childcare Grant and the Access to Learning Fund. In addition, the University provides extra help to students from the East Midlands region who are the first in their family to attend higher education, and anyone who has progressed from courses such as an Access to Higher Education or BTEC National Diploma.

Many mature students are entitled to a number of different bursaries. If you check what you're entitled to early on, you will be able to decide the best way to use those monies. For example, students can borrow money for tuition fees and subsistence and then top up their income through bursaries and grants. Alternatively, students may find that they are able to finance their course through bursaries and grants alone, without having to borrow any more.

There are no hard and fast rules to financing a course and we strongly encourage all students to investigate their individual options as soon as possible. Our Financial Support Team is happy to advise any student thinking of applying to The University of Nottingham and can be contacted using the details on page 19. You can also use our online financial estimator – [www.nottingham.ac.uk/financialestimator](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/financialestimator) – and the sources quoted at the back of this guide.

## Financing a part-time course

Finance for part-time students is very different. Part-time students usually work alongside their study, so there are fewer sources of funding available. The biggest difference for part-time students is that course fees cannot be deferred – they must be paid at the beginning or throughout the course. Normally, course fees for part-time students are worked out on a pro-rata basis, in comparison to the full-time course.

There is help available for part-time students for both course fees and subsistence, albeit at a lower level to full-time students. There is a Course Grant and Tuition Fee Grant available from the Government. The grants will be means-tested, which means that your income and any partners' or parents' income will be taken into account when assessing your eligibility.

Some University bursaries and other sources of funding are open to part-time students at a reduced rate. Please see the University's website for further details.

## Financing an NHS-funded course

Students on NHS-funded courses such as dietetics, midwifery, physiotherapy or nursing (not including MNursSci) are funded differently. Students on NHS courses don't pay tuition fees as the NHS pays them on your behalf. However, this means you won't be eligible for some University bursaries. NHS-funded students are entitled to either a means-tested or a non-means-tested bursary to help with living costs and this bursary could also include a Dependants' Allowance, Childcare Allowance and Parents' Learning Allowance, if applicable.

## Funding if you already have a degree

If you already have a bachelors degree (BA, BSc etc) and you study for another bachelors degree, this will be classified as studying for an 'Equivalent or Lower Qualification' (ELQ).

Here at The University of Nottingham there will be a supplement over and above the subsidised fees listed in the undergraduate fee table – see [www.nottingham.ac.uk/fees](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/fees)

Students studying for a second undergraduate degree are not eligible for a Tuition Fee Loan or Maintenance Loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC), nor are they eligible for a Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant.

## Exemptions

There are some exemptions to the ELQ legislation. Students taking undergraduate courses in medicine, veterinary medicine, architecture, social work and initial teacher training (SCITT and PGCE) will pay the regular tuition fee and are eligible for a Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant.

Students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance are exempt from ELQ legislation and therefore do not have to pay a higher rate of tuition fees. However they are not eligible for a Maintenance Grant, Maintenance Loan or Tuition Fee Loan from the SLC.

Students on courses where they are eligible for a means-tested NHS bursary (eg BSc Nursing) will continue to be eligible for a Reduced-Rate Student Loan, whether or not they already hold an equivalent or higher-level qualification.

# Practicalities and university life

## Accommodation

At Nottingham all full-time first-year students are guaranteed a room in University accommodation (providing they make Nottingham their firm choice and reply by the accommodation deadline), if they want one.

Should you choose to live in University accommodation, you will have a wide range of options to choose from, including catered and self-catered accommodation and various room types. You can log on to the University website to view a virtual tour of various options, attend an open day or contact the University directly to view accommodation. Of course, you may prefer to live at home or look for accommodation in the private sector.

If you have a disability, or any specific personal requirements such as a medical condition or a preference for single-sex accommodation, the University is able to provide accommodation that suits your individual requirements.

Our website contains useful information to help you find your ideal place and apply online: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/nh/students/accomm](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nh/students/accomm)

## Applying as a mature student

If you are applying for accommodation in halls of residence and would like to be allocated a room near to other mature students, please indicate this in the notes section of the application form.

## Family accommodation

A variety of family accommodation is available, including on University Park and Sutton Bonington Campuses. Please email [university-houses@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:university-houses@nottingham.ac.uk) for more details.

Alternatively, contact the student housing charity, Unipol, for advice on +44 (0)115 846 8599 or email [info@nottingham.unipol.org.uk](mailto:info@nottingham.unipol.org.uk)

## Parking

Parking on Jubilee and University Park Campuses is limited; however, there are instances when students may be granted a parking permit. These include:

- living outside a 15-mile radius
- having no access to public transport from your residence to campus
- medical reasons
- child care arrangements – needing to take children to school or nursery before or after lectures

Students studying at Sutton Bonington Campus can park for free provided they have a permit.

There are also public car parks available on campus although space can be limited, especially during term-time. The current charges are £2 for three hours or £5 for up to nine hours. For more information visit [www.nottingham.ac.uk/estate/parking.htm](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/estate/parking.htm)



## The Students' Union

The mission of the Students' Union (SU) is "to improve the experience of student life by providing quality service, representation and development opportunities for all our members".

The SU offers social activities and support services and represents more than 35,000 students across the University's campuses in the UK, Malaysia and China.

For day-to-day needs, the SU has a variety of shops, including a book shop, a print shop, Boots, Natwest and HSBC banks, and the SU Shop which sells food, stationery and other essential items.

You may also be interested in our:

### • Mature Students' Network

A student-run group open to all mature students, the network offers welfare services and campaigns on a number of issues. They also arrange events suited to mature students to help them get the most out of their time at Nottingham. For more information, email Martin Gowans, Mature Students' Officer: [sumatureofficer@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:sumatureofficer@nottingham.ac.uk)

### • Students with Caring Responsibilities

Organised through the SU, the Students with Caring Responsibilities group provides opportunities to meet students in similar situations at family friendly events, activities and outings. For more information please email [supgofficer@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:supgofficer@nottingham.ac.uk)

### • Regional Students' Association

The Regional Students' Association (RSA) is a society set up at The University of Nottingham for local students of all ages who are not living in halls of residence.

The RSA ensures that these students have the opportunity to get involved in Week One (also known as Freshers' Week) if they wish to do so. The RSA organises a get-together for local students before the start of university.

The RSA also arranges activities for local students living in and outside of halls of residence, such as sports events, a Christmas formal event, kick-about in local parks and various other social events throughout the year. Their aim is to ensure that local students enjoy the social side of university life, do not feel 'left out' and are included in any events organised primarily in halls.

### National Union of Students

As a member of the University's Students' Union, you also become a member of the National Union of Students (NUS). The NUS represents students nationally and provides support and services to its member unions.

The main benefit for many students is the discount card that can be collected from the SU each year. This card gives you discounts at major high-street stores such as Topshop, Burton and HMV, as well as a number of pubs, clubs, theatres and cinemas in Nottingham.



### Student profile

**Name:** Michael Gray  
**Course:** BA Humanistic  
Counselling Practice

"I studied psychology, sociology and health studies on a Modular Access Foundation Programme. I found that there was a great array of support regarding study skills, careers advice and guidance and UCAS advice. The tutors were also willing to listen to any concerns I had, both academic and personal.

I am now studying humanistic counselling practice as a mature student at The University of Nottingham, having received an unconditional offer, and have found the same level of support from the staff and tutors here.

I am thoroughly enjoying the course and cannot imagine studying at another university. There are aspects of the course that I found challenging at first, namely the assignments, but my tutors have been very supportive and willing to offer guidance if needed. This has made the transition between the Access course and university-level study a smooth one."

### Student profile

**Name:** Kelly Hartland  
**Course:** BMid (Hons) Midwifery

"After 12 years out of education and being stuck in jobs that bored me and didn't challenge me, I decided I wanted a change of career. I researched a few different possibilities and I decided to take up a new career as a midwife.

The only qualification beyond GCSEs that I had was a vocational one in leisure and tourism. I was advised that I would need to do an Access to Higher Education course to qualify for entry onto the Bachelor of Midwifery BMid (Hons) programme at The University of Nottingham.

I studied Access to Higher Education in biology and health professions on two evenings a week at my local college. The course was specifically designed to allow mature students to gain enough qualifications to progress onto nursing and midwifery degree courses.

It was difficult to manage my studies as well as working full-time but I did manage it and passed the course. Now I am a mature student at The University of Nottingham on the midwifery degree programme. I love the course and the University and cannot believe it took me so long to decide that this is where I should be!"

## Contacts at The University of Nottingham

### The University of Nottingham

t: +44 (0)115 951 5559  
e: undergraduate-  
enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk  
w: [www.nottingham.ac.uk](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk)

### Student Services Centre

t: +44 (0)115 951 3710  
e: ssc@nottingham.ac.uk  
w: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/ssc](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ssc)

### Financial Support

t: +44 (0)115 823 2071  
e: financialsupport@nottingham.ac.uk  
w: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/financialsupport](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/financialsupport)

### Disability Support

w: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/disability](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/disability)

### The University of Nottingham Health Service

w: [www.unhs.co.uk](http://www.unhs.co.uk)

### Chaplaincy

w: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/chaplains](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/chaplains)

### Counselling Service

w: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/counselling)

## Other useful contacts

### Aim Higher: [www.aimhigher.ac.uk](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk)

The Aim Higher website provides information about getting started on the road to higher education. It will also give you details of specific services and facilities available to mature students. You can request the latest guide by calling +44 (0)115 848 4872.

### Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS): [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)

All full-time students need to use the UCAS system to apply for a university course.

### Open College Network (OCN) East Midlands Region: [www.ocnemr.org.uk](http://www.ocnemr.org.uk)

For information relating to Access qualifications in the East Midlands, please contact the OCN on +44 (0)1332 861 999.

### QAA: [www.accesstohe.ac.uk](http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk)

For information about qualifications nationally.

### Financial help:

[www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)

This site has information about applying for financial help and the application process for the Tuition Fee Loan, the Maintenance Loan and the Maintenance Grant.

### NHS courses: [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk)

This NHS website has information about health-related NHS bursaries and application packs.

### General Social Care Council (GSCC): [www.gsc.org.uk](http://www.gsc.org.uk)

English residents applying for a GSCC-approved undergraduate social care course should check this site to find out if their course is approved by the NHS and eligible for the Social Work Bursary.

## Key dates

**15 October** – UCAS deadline for medicine and veterinary medicine courses

**15 January** – UCAS deadline for equal consideration for all other courses

**30 June** – final UCAS deadline

**25/26 June; 10/11 September 2010** – The University of Nottingham open days

**For general undergraduate enquiries contact:**

**The Enquiry Centre**

t: +44 (0)115 951 5559

f: +44 (0)115 846 8062

e: [undergraduate-enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:undergraduate-enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk)

w: [www.nottingham.ac.uk](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk)

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e: [alternativeformats@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@nottingham.ac.uk)

