

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST of an **OPEN DAY:** A parent's guide

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With your son/daughter facing so many choices, how can you help them make the right one? One useful thing you can do is to take them to a university Open Day so that you and your son/daughter can see the facilities for yourselves.

In this article you will find helpful hints on how to help your son/daughter to prepare for an Open Day, what they and you need to think about on the day, and finally what you need to do once you have got back home.



Before you visit

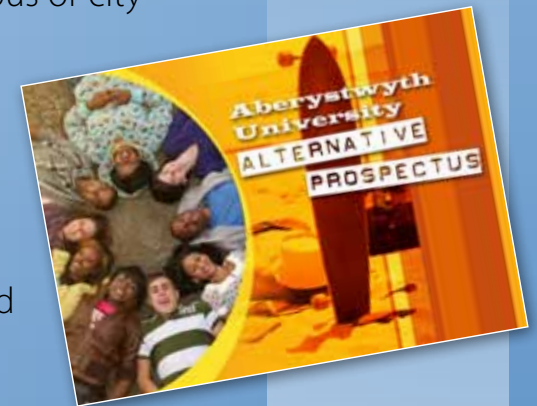
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Encourage your son/daughter to **read up on the university** looking at alternative guides, as they offer another perspective – Aberystwyth University has an alternative prospectus written by students. Make sure your son/daughter has advised the university that you're visiting; most universities need you to register for an Open Day.

Discuss the visit with your son/daughter, and help him/her to prepare a plan of action so that he/she's focused on what's about to happen. **Look at the programme together**, and help him/her decide what they want to do and see, before the Open Day. Make sure he/she knows where the department he/she wants to visit is located.

Help your son/daughter to **think of things they want and need to know** about the university, such as:

- Is the university too close or too far away from home?
- Do they want a campus or city environment?
- Will it have the sporting and social scene they want?
- Could they spend and enjoy 3 years there?
- What is the accommodation like?
- What aspects of university life are essential to them?
- What features can they cope without?



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Make sure that they don't go to the Open Day alone. It's important for them to have someone to discuss things with, to give an honest second opinion, and to ask any other additional questions. Most prospective students take their parents/guardians or a friend with them. **Don't be afraid to ask some potentially 'embarrassing' questions**, as most of the time others are often thinking the same thing.



Things you will need to take with you include:

- a copy of the campus map
- the Open Day timetable
- pen and notepad
- a list of important issues to consider
- a coat - you won't be able to concentrate if you're cold or wet

It's a good idea to **leave home early** so that you can have time to relax before the day starts, the last thing you want to do is get out of the car and go straight onto a tour, especially after a long journey. Try to visit one university in a day, as they can be long and tiring days.



On the day

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You are likely to have to **register** and attend some kind of welcome talk. Some of these initial presentations are essential for your son/daughter to attend so don't let them miss these, and make sure you arrive on time.

Encourage your son/daughter to **talk to current students** who can offer a different perspective, and make sure they find a tutor from the department to speak to about the course.

Try to **go on all the appropriate tours**. Take a tour of the campus, departmental tutorial and lecture rooms, and look at the labs, computing and library facilities. Take a look around the available **accommodation** and ask questions such as:

- Is there internet access and is it free?
- What are the cooking and toilet facilities like?
- How secure are the rooms?
- How much is the rent per week, how frequently does it need to be paid and what happens during the holidays?



On the day

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Find out about financial assistance, including bursaries and scholarships. At Aberystwyth University the bursaries and entrance scholarships are amongst the most valuable and extensive available at any British university.

Try to **eat in the campus refectories** to make sure they are good! If you get a chance, try to **see parts of the university which are not normally seen**, but that you will use when you're a student, e.g. the launderettes.

Don't be restricted by the official timetable, many prospective students hang on until the day officially ends as this can be the best time to grab a tutor to ask more in-depth questions, as well as a good way to soak up the university's atmosphere once all the chaos is over.

Once the Open Day has officially finished, **take a walk around the town**, to get an idea of what living there could be like. Aberystwyth offers a range of small boutiques and high street stores, all the amenities you could possibly need, and even has a great view of the sea from the promenade and has beaches everywhere.



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Your son/daughter will have a lot of information to consider. Make sure he/she doesn't feel pressured into choosing, and that they take their time to review all the information. **Having an informal 'debrief' in the car or once you're home**, can really help you all to put the day into perspective, and put some order to their thoughts.



Remember that he/she have to spend three or more years at the university, so it's important that you **make sure that he/she makes her/his own decision** on the university that best suits their needs.

Review the visit again after a few days, looking at everything with a fresh perspective. If your son/daughter is still unsure, help them to make a list of pros and cons for the university. Although this seems like a tedious task, it can help them see things more clearly for themselves.



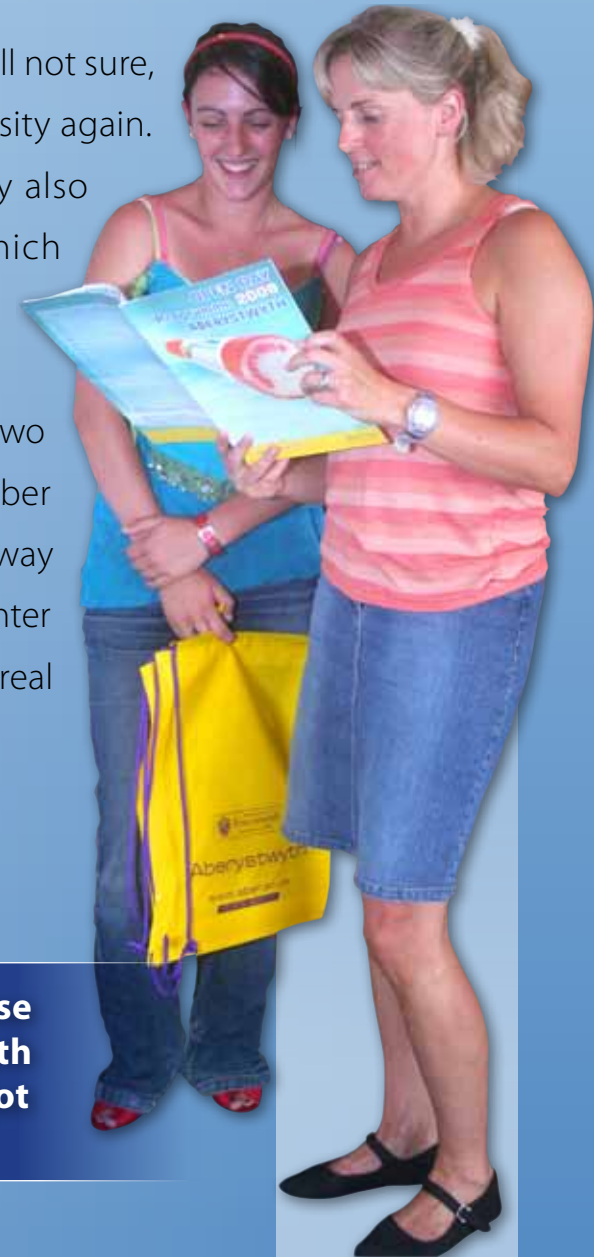
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If they still have uncertainties, encourage them to prepare some new questions and phone the university for answers. Staff at Aberystwyth University will be more than happy to help.



If after all that, they're still not sure, why not visit the university again. Aberystwyth University also offers visiting days which look at the individual department in more detail, taster days, and a two day visit known as the 'Aber Experience', as another way of giving your son/daughter an opportunity to get a real feel for the place.



You can do all of these things at Aberystwyth University, so why not visit us!

Open Days 2011

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Wednesday 6th July,
Wednesday 14th September,
Saturday 15th October 2011

Voted best in the UK for student satisfaction
Come and see our great facilities for yourself...

"I would recommend that you go on an Open Day, so that you can go around the University and speak to lecturers about the course."

**Angharad Llewellyn, BSc Geography with Welsh,
Llandissilio, Pembrokeshire**

"I came to Aberystwyth on an Open Day, and I said if I couldn't come to Aberystwyth I wouldn't go to university. I fell in love with it straight away."

**Leo Henley Lock, BSc Countryside
Management, Crawley, Sussex**

To register to attend an Open Day at Aberystwyth University, visit our website:

www.aber.ac.uk/en/open-days

or contact the Recruitment and Marketing Office on **01970 622065**

