



# What I wish I'd known before university

We asked students from RO Partner universities what they wish they'd known before starting university and what surprised them most when they got there. Read on to see what they said...



## University of Birmingham

Name: Urjuwaan

Course: Pharmacy

Year of study: First  
Year



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

“One thing that surprised me about studying my course at UoB is how full and structured your timetable can be, along with placement weeks. I found that having a solid daily routine that I stuck to regularly kept me motivated and organised, making my transition to university smoother”

## University of Exeter

Name: Aryan

Course: Natural  
Sciences

Year of study: Third  
Year



University  
of Exeter

“You don't need to reinvent yourself to belong. Many people spend freshers week trying to fit in, but the friendships that last are the ones where you're just being yourself. Don't perform a version of yourself: the right people will find you exactly as you are.”

## Loughborough University

Name: Anu

Course: Media and  
communications

Year of study:  
Third year



Loughborough  
University

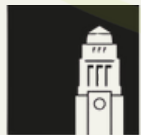
“One thing that surprised me most about university is how much you can grow personally alongside academically/professionally. From societies to pop-up workshops and events, there is always a chance to explore your passions and level up your skills!”

## University of Leeds

Name: Amun

Course: Medicine

Year of study: Third  
Year



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

“Something I wish I'd known would be how much more study there is compared to being at school or college and how much independent study you have to do. One thing that surprised me is how I changed as a person during the period I have been at university and when you start you feel like you aren't going to fit in but eventually you do find your "people" and they become friends and support each other. There is always lots of support around too if you need help.”

## University of Leicester

Name: Claire

Course: Law

Year of study: Third  
Year



UNIVERSITY OF  
LEICESTER

“What surprised me the most about university is how your degree is just one aspect of many parts of university life. You will spend a lot of time studying at university, but you will also make new friends, explore new cities and learn new skills/hobbies through societies. If you want to get ready for university, it doesn't have to be extra reading. You can have a look at what societies you want to have a go at or any places in the city you want to see.”

## Queen Mary University of London

Name: Tayebur

Course:  
Neuroscience

Year of study: Third  
Year



Queen Mary  
University of London

“One thing that surprised me most: University is a place where if you engage a little bit, you get a lot back. There's a place to grow and develop any passion or hobby you have - if there's a Taylor Swift Society, then chances are we have a society for your specific interests. They can even go beyond casual projects with opportunities to bring them into the professional spotlight with international placements, competitions, and publishing - which is way easier than you think because of all the support from staff. The course you choose is only a small section of your development over the three years and university makes your wild interests a reality.”

## University of Warwick

Name: Ben

Course: Politics and  
International Studies

Year of study:  
Second Year



“One thing I wish I’d known before applying: Clearing isn’t just for if you don’t get your predicted grades! It’s for everyone regardless of if they got into their firm/reserve university, and a normal part of the application process! One thing that surprised me most about uni is how quickly you make friends with so many people, societies really helped with this!”

## University of York

Name: Pharrell  
(former RO student)

Course: History

Year of study: Third  
Year



“One thing that surprised me most about university was the level of support available both academically and personally which was especially helpful during my first few months. Initially it was slightly difficult balancing my studies and academic reading with other aspects of university life, but there were so many specific teams and individuals that could be contacted such as my academic supervisor that answered any questions I had and helped me settle, giving me a really great university experience!”

## Newcastle University.

Name: Ethan

Course: Dentistry

Year of study: Fourth  
Year



“When applying to university, take the time to thoroughly research the universities that offer your chosen course. While the course title may be the same, each university provides a unique learning environment, teaching style and student experience. Understanding these differences will help you choose the university that's the best fit for you.

One of the biggest surprises for me was how friendly and open everyone was when it came to meeting new people and making friends. I found the transition from GCSEs to A levels quite challenging, so I was worried that moving to university would be just as difficult. However, university brings together people from all walks of life, with different backgrounds, experiences, and interests, making it much easier to find people you connect with.

My biggest piece of advice is to get involved in as much as you can. Join societies, attend events, and make the most of every opportunity, because university goes by much faster than you expect. Enjoy the experience, make lasting memories, and take every chance to make the most of your time there.”