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UNIVERSITY  
OF ABERDEEN



Parents' Guide

# WELCOME FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER IS CONSIDERING CHOOSING ABERDEEN FOR THEIR EDUCATION. IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT DECISION TO MAKE – FOR APPLICANTS BUT ALSO FOR PARENTS. WE HOPE THAT THIS GUIDE WILL PROVIDE YOU AS A PARENT WITH THE INFORMATION YOU NEED IN ORDER TO HELP YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER MAKE THIS IMPORTANT CHOICE.

At Aberdeen, we consider the quality of our teaching and student experience to be of paramount importance. The results of the 2009 National Student Survey reported that 89% of our students were satisfied with the quality of our teaching – a result which maintains our position as one of the top twenty universities for student satisfaction. We are equally highly regarded for our excellence in research. In the most recent UK wide Research Assessment Exercise around 90% of the research conducted at Aberdeen was of international quality. We consider excellence in research to be intrinsically linked to the excellence of the teaching we provide and a defining feature of a university education.

It is an exciting time to be joining the University. We recently experienced the biggest increase in applications of any of the Scottish ancient universities. That reflects our growing reputation as a university of choice and that students appreciate the significant investment we are making in the teaching and facilities that we provide. In recent years over £170 million has been spent on new facilities for students with a further £270 million of investment underway. Two examples of the kind of world class facilities you will find are the newly opened Olympic standard Aberdeen Sports Village and the new Library which is due to open in 2011. We are also committed to making Aberdeen an environment that welcomes new students and which supports them in what can be a challenging new phase in their life. The welfare and success of your son or daughter are our top priorities.

We also know that what happens to our students after they leave here is an important consideration. You can be assured that a degree from Aberdeen will be recognised and respected by employers the world over. The records show that after leaving Aberdeen our graduates are highly sought after by employers. We intend to keep it that way and in the past few years we were one of the first universities in Britain to redesign our curriculum in partnership with students and employers to ensure that Aberdeen graduates are equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century. We are confident that an Aberdeen education will, more than ever before, give your son or daughter the combination of academic and personal skills they will need to succeed in life and in the job market.

While I hope that this guide will give you the information you need, I would encourage you to visit the University, to tour our facilities and to meet our staff. If you do I am sure that you will get an even better sense of why we believe Aberdeen to be a very special community.

We look forward to welcoming you to Aberdeen in the near future.



Professor Ian Diamond FBA FRSE AcSS  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

# THE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY HAS AN EXCELLENT REPUTATION FOR TEACHING QUALITY AND RESEARCH, AND HAS DEVELOPED A BRAND NEW CURRICULUM TO FURTHER ENHANCE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

## HELP... TO ACHIEVE TOP QUALIFICATIONS

Your son or daughter probably chose Aberdeen because of our academic reputation, our wide choice of subjects, and the flexibility we offer to accommodate changing interests and career aspirations. We offer that flexibility, both in terms of entry qualifications and throughout our courses, recognising that young people leaving school do not often have a clear idea of where they wish their career to go.

Academically, we have the strength you would expect of a 500-year old university with a growing international reputation. Every few years the quality of research in British universities is reviewed and the results are used by higher education funding bodies to distribute public funds for research. The most recent Research Assessment Exercise results proved a triumph for Aberdeen. 89% of Aberdeen's research activity was recognised to be of international quality and 55% is world-leading or internationally excellent.

In total eleven of our research areas were ranked amongst the top 25% in the UK: Agriculture and Food Sciences, Computing Science, English Language and Literature, French, Health Services Research, History, Hospital Based Clinical Subjects, Mathematics, Property, Sociology, and Theology, Divinity and Religious Studies.

The University has also recently been ranked 129th in the world by the Times Higher World University Rankings – the biggest advance in rankings of any UK university in the top 200 this year, which places the University of Aberdeen in the top 0.5% of universities in the world.

## HELP... TO CHOOSE A TAILOR-MADE DEGREE

Flexibility and individuality are our real strengths, and this starts with entry. If your son or daughter doesn't get the grades he or she had hoped for, it may still be possible for us to offer a place.

Similarly, if they have second thoughts about the degree they have chosen, and are considering a different course, we would be delighted to discuss options. We're always here for prospective students and their parents to get in touch.

This flexibility continues throughout the years of study. Our courses have built-in flexibility so that students can plan their own, individual programme of study from our wide range of options.

Every student is allocated their own personal Adviser of Studies who is always on hand with advice and guidance to help the student tailor their degree to suit their interests, talents and the career they have in mind. Their Adviser will follow their progress throughout their studies, meet with them regularly, and provide advice and help when required.

## HELP... TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Following an extensive review process, the University has now taken significant steps to modernise the structure, content, delivery and flexibility of our degree programmes in line with major international universities such as Harvard, Yale, Melbourne and Hong Kong.

This comprehensive review and resulting proposals will help Aberdeen graduates to leave the University intellectually flexible, whilst also being critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens. To find out more, visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/thedifference](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/thedifference)

## HELP... TO HEAD FOR A REWARDING CAREER

We aim to use all our prestige, reputation, experience and skills to give our students a vital advantage in the job market. 97% of our students enter into good jobs, research posts or further study within six months of graduating. Our Careers Service is available to offer all the help it can to secure that important first rung on the ladder to a satisfying and successful career.

We encourage students throughout their courses to 'bolt-on' vocational skills that we know from experience will make them attractive to employers. For instance, students can combine arts subjects like Languages or History with Modern Social Sciences or with vocational subjects like Management, Accountancy, Economics or Law. For Engineering students this could mean adding Management Studies, or perhaps a Modern European Language, to their core subject.

Our partnerships with industry, major research centres, and universities throughout Europe and beyond, mean that our graduates really do have the world at their feet.



# THE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY BOASTS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC CAMPUSES IN THE UK, WITH EXCELLENT TEACHING AND LEISURE FACILITIES SIDE BY SIDE.

## HELP... TO QUICKLY FEEL 'AT HOME'

Aberdeen is unusual for a city university in that it has most of its student accommodation within walking distance of the campus in Old Aberdeen. Places in Halls are guaranteed for all new students who apply before the set deadline. Our Student Accommodation Office is happy to provide full details of University accommodation and to help students who prefer to make their own arrangements. University owned Halls and flats have trained wardens in residence, to ensure that students are in a secure and well-supported environment. These wardens, who may be teaching staff, research staff or mature students, can help new students to get the most out of communal life and can be consulted in confidence about academic, domestic or personal matters.

You can find out more about our accommodation by visiting [www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation)

## HELP... TO MAKE FRIENDS IN A FRIENDLY CITY

Aberdeen is a friendly city which welcomes students. Big enough for the big city experience, it is still small enough to make it easy for new students to make friends and quickly find their way around. The Students' Association plays a vital role in giving new students all the help they need to settle in.

Aberdeen is also generally a safe city, with crime statistics well below many other cities. However, we do encourage and help our students to take sensible precautions. Free transport is often provided for late-night events.

To find out more about this bustling yet beautiful area of North-east Scotland you might want to look at the following websites:

Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board:  
[www.aberdeen-grampian.com](http://www.aberdeen-grampian.com)

Aberdeen City Council:  
[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Visit Scotland:  
[www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)

Aberdeen City and Shire Portal:  
[www.aberdeencityandshire.com](http://www.aberdeencityandshire.com)

Lonely Planet Study Aberdeen Guide:  
[www.abdn.ac.uk/documents/lonely-planet.pdf](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/documents/lonely-planet.pdf)

## HELP... WITH MONEY MATTERS

You may be anxious about how you will support your child at university and you might find the whole issue of student finance rather complicated.

For Scottish-domiciled students the first step to find out more about, and apply for, financial support is to contact the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS): Tel: **0845 111 1711** or visit the SAAS website at [www.student-support-saas.gov.uk](http://www.student-support-saas.gov.uk)

Students from elsewhere in the UK coming to study in Scotland will be liable to pay the standard Scottish rate of tuition fee, currently £1,820 per year for all programmes other than Medicine, which is £2,895. The 2010 fees are expected to rise by the rate of inflation. It is possible for students to borrow this and re-pay it after graduation, just as they would if studying in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. You can find out more about student finance at [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)

You may also be worried about how your son or daughter will manage their own finances whilst at university. This is where the Money Advice Service can help students with personal budgeting and can advise on problems. Many students rely on part-time and vacation work to support their studies. Our Joblink service can help students find suitable work. Advertised jobs do not exceed 15 hours a week, except during vacations, so should not impact upon studies.

Extra help is available at Aberdeen in the form of scholarships worth £1,000 a year for new undergraduate entrants. Many other scholarships and sponsorships are awarded each year. Our Student Recruitment and Admissions Service can tell you more about these. Further information on costs and funding is available on our website [www.abdn.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance)

# STUDENT SUPPORT

WE AIM TO MAKE SURE RIGHT FROM THE START THAT STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO ANY SUPPORT THEY MIGHT NEED, FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE EASY TO CONTACT AND WHO CAN GIVE FRIENDLY AND EXPERT GUIDANCE.

## HELP... AND SUPPORT FROM A CARING COMMUNITY

Our student support services rank with the best in the UK. We aim to look after the health and wellbeing of every member of our community in the widest sense and have a network of support in place to help students with their academic, personal and social life.

This includes helping new students to settle in when they arrive, and continuing to support them throughout their stay. It also extends to help with course choices and health, finances, careers, personal and social life, and any other needs, as well as a Welfare Advice Officer to offer confidential advice on anything from grants and accommodation to employment and legal problems.

There is a nearby Medical Practice, providing a full NHS medical treatment service plus confidential advice on health and lifestyle issues. This team of doctors, nurses and support staff are all experienced in the health issues which affect and concern young people.

The team is keen to be notified of new students who have any health condition, such as diabetes, asthma or epilepsy, which might affect their studies, so that they can give any advice required. The Medical Practice operates from a well-equipped health centre and provides an emergency callout service outside normal hours and weekends.

The University also provides a free, confidential and professional Counselling Service, offering one-to-one sessions with trained counsellors for students who may be experiencing personal, social, emotional or academic difficulties. The Counselling Service also runs workshops to help students cope with the stress of exams and to help build self-confidence.

There is also a Chaplaincy which is accessible to students of all faiths or none, and a team of chaplains drawn from a range of denominations and faiths.

We extend a special welcome to students with disabilities and medical conditions. We are always happy to show students around the campus to help assess the suitability of our facilities.

We also have dedicated Disability Advisers to support students with disabilities and medical conditions throughout their stay with us.

**Tel: +44 (0)1224 273935** or  
**E-mail: student.disability@abdn.ac.uk**

## HELP... TO BROADEN HORIZONS

Aberdeen offers a truly international university experience, with students from more than 120 countries.

In addition, our close links with a variety of international universities means that on many courses students have the opportunity to widen their horizons by spending a period of time studying abroad. We have exchange programmes with universities in Europe, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan and the USA.

## HELP... TO KEEP IN TOUCH

And finally - we are not as far away as you might think! Cheap and regular rail and bus transport makes for quick connections with the rest of Scotland and the UK, while cheap flights touch down in London in a little over an hour.

Visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/undergraduate/travel](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/undergraduate/travel) for help with travel plans.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN CONTINUES TO PURSUE BEST PRACTICE AND HIGH STANDARDS OF SERVICE FOR ALL STUDENTS.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS DOCUMENT IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT, PLEASE CONTACT THE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS SERVICE FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

**TEL: +44 (0)1224 272090/91**  
**E-MAIL: sras@abdn.ac.uk**

# HEAR FROM US



## WILL WHITEHORN, HISTORY, 1981

Having worked for Richard Branson's Virgin Group for 20 years, Will Whitehorn's current role is as President of Virgin Galactic, Virgin's space tourism company, which will carry paying passengers on a flight into suborbital space. Will has had a hand in almost all of Virgin's major projects over the last decade, and now looks forward to being the first native-born Scot to be fired into space. Despite his high-profile position, Will still feels the education he received at Aberdeen has been enormously helpful to him during his career;

**"My years at the University of Aberdeen were great fun and the friends I made then have become friends for life. I think I have used the knowledge passed down to me during those years almost every day of my working life since, and I would not hesitate to recommend Aberdeen to anyone. That may well be the reason my nephew is an undergraduate student right now!"**

## PARENT PROFILE

Majella and Charlie Reid, Karen Reid, MA History & International Relations

Karen was our first child to go to University so naturally we were apprehensive about her leaving home and going to live in halls at Aberdeen. We needn't have worried, however, the support from the university was excellent, allowing Karen to settle quickly in her new home.

The other students were all very friendly and Karen quickly made new friends both through her course and through the wide range of clubs and societies available. She became particularly involved in the debating society which has enabled her to travel all over the UK and abroad as well.

Aberdeen as a city has also been a great place to live with excellent facilities, a vibrant social life and a proud history. It is also just a couple of hours drive from Edinburgh so we are able to visit easily. Karen has really taken the city to heart and has already indicated she would like to stay there after she has completed her studies.

We would thoroughly recommend Aberdeen as a great place to study and live.

## PARENTS' EVENINGS

The University of Aberdeen is set to host its annual series of parents' information evenings throughout Scotland, England and Ireland in the Spring.

These events provide you with a valuable opportunity to receive information on various aspects of university life, such as finance, accommodation and student support, as well as give you a chance to air any concerns about your son or daughter leaving home and entering into higher education. The evening is also open for your son or daughter to come along and hear more about student life at the University and in Aberdeen.

An invitation will be sent out to you, and the Evenings will take place in **Aberdeen, Inverness, Glasgow, Perth, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Birmingham, Manchester, London, Belfast and Dublin**. We hope to see you at one of the events!

**If you would like to receive electronic updates from the University of Aberdeen, or invitations to any future events, please send details of your name, email address, and home address to [srasreply@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:srasreply@abdn.ac.uk)**

TO HEAR MORE FROM OUR GRADUATES, VISIT [WWW.ABDN.AC.UK/ALUMNI](http://WWW.ABDN.AC.UK/ALUMNI)