Insight
An Alumni Guide to Studying at the University of Aberdeen

www.abdn.ac.uk/study
Principal’s Foreword

One of our many strengths at the University of Aberdeen is our vibrant international community which attracts students and staff from around the world. Our alumni and our future students are extremely valuable to us, and we’re thrilled that the Insight Programme gives us an opportunity to engage with both groups.

The programme provides our offer holders with the opportunity to communicate with alumni from their home country before they join us on campus. Our alumni can give their first-hand insight of what it is like to be a student at the University of Aberdeen, which will help our prospective students navigate the important decision of choosing where to study.

We understand that choosing the right university can be a daunting task and we hope that the Insight Programme will give future students the chance to ask the questions that are important to them in a relaxed and informal environment to someone who has been with us before. We hold the experience and knowledge of our alumni in high regard, and we are delighted that they are willing to share this with future students. It’s always great to catch up with our alumni and hear about the many excellent things that they have gone on to achieve since they graduated.

Our students are at the forefront of everything we do, and the Insight Programme further reflects this approach and we hope it will help inform them about what it is like to live and study in Aberdeen. The University was founded in 1495 to be open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others. These have been our guiding principles and will shape our direction in the years to come.

Professor George Boyne,
Principal and Vice-Chancellor,
The University of Aberdeen

Welcome

The University of Aberdeen is extremely proud of our Alumni network, both at home and internationally.

It’s important to us all that every member of our student body feels that they are part of the wider Aberdeen Family. With this in mind, I’m delighted that the Insight Programme will allow our offer holders to experience this before making the important decision of where to study.

This guide is designed to make the Insight Programme as easy as possible for you to take part in so that you can concentrate on getting to know your Alumni or Future Student.

Our alumni are here to offer experience and advice on studying here and we hope that you feel this gives you a clearer idea of what it might be like if you do decide to accept an offer with us.

I would like to wish you the best of luck with the scheme and hope that you find it a useful networking opportunity and insight into life at the University of Aberdeen.

Joe Whimster,
Head of International Recruitment

Future Students are able to gain a valuable insight into life in Aberdeen from the alumni.
Insight - Alumni Guide to Aberdeen

The Insight Programme is an initiative introduced to support offer holders to help them prepare for their time at the University of Aberdeen. It provides the opportunity for an offer holder to spend some time with one of our Alumni, gaining insight into life here in Aberdeen and what the University has to offer.

The programme begins when you are matched with your Alumni Guide or Future Student.

The initiative involves as much or as little time as you would be prepared to give, however we recommend that you think about 4 short interactions as a good starting point. These can take place on the telephone or Skype/FaceTime or by email.

Being an Alumni Guide

An Alumni Guide is an individual with a sound and broad knowledge of life as a student here at the University of Aberdeen. You will have studied here already and know what the city and university life is like.

Typical roles of an Alumni Guide include:

Advise - provides advice, which the future student decides how best to use

Sounding board - testing ideas and suggestions

Motivator - encouraging and motivating to achieve

Being a Future Student

A Future Student is an individual who holds an offer of study at the University of Aberdeen and is looking for some more information from a recent graduate.

Preparing for the First Meeting

Come prepared to talk about expectations and hopes for the mentorship, but more specifically to share some experiences and anecdotes to establish common ground.

All Future Students should take time to plan meetings ahead, what questions do you have about the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen city and life here in Scotland?

Important to discuss and agree at your first meeting:

- Set meeting dates.
- Decide on the frequency and length of meetings.
- Choose an appropriate way to carry out the meetings: Phone, Skype, FaceTime.
- Discuss the expectations of the programme.
- Agree objectives for future meetings.

Areas for discussion:
- Getting here
- Accommodation
- Culture / Food
- Home sickness
- Banks / Post Offices / Travel
- The city
Role of an Alumni Guide
Previous experience of mentoring is not necessary, all you need is good communication skills and a non-judgemental manner.

Benefits to You
- Career development - polish your people management and relationship building skills.
- A new perspective - look at your own development with fresh eyes.
- Satisfaction.
- Keep up to date with developments in higher education and qualification structures.
- Broaden your professional network.

What Skills and Abilities do I Need?
- Be able to communicate effectively with students and the University of Aberdeen staff involved in the programme.
- Be able to apply your own knowledge and life experiences when advising and supporting offer holders.
- Be clear about confidentiality and understand the importance of mentoring boundaries.
- Be willing to ask for support when and if needed.

As an Alumni Guide you will be able to offer ‘expert’ advice on life as a student at the University of Aberdeen.

Some ideas to get you started:
- Why would I encourage someone to come to the University of Aberdeen?
- What do I wish I had known before I came to Aberdeen?
- How to get the most out of my time in Aberdeen - Academic, Cultural, Social?
- What experiences have helped me most in my own professional and personal development?
- What were the important lessons learnt from my own time at the University of Aberdeen?

Commitment
The initiative involves as much or as little time as you would be prepared to give and you are free to meet with your Future Student as much or a little as you feel is necessary. This programme is designed to best suit your needs, and who better to know what they are than you!

We would recommend 4 ‘touch points’ from the time you are matched to the time the Future Student joins us here at the University of Aberdeen, however you are free to meet more or less often than this.

This programme is for you and is completely flexible. So make it your own!