Higher Education: making an informed decision

What is Higher Education?
- Higher level qualifications, usually studied post 18 at university, or sometimes offered in colleges.
- Wide range of courses including:
  - Bachelor degrees: 3 years full time, or 4 years with a placement year (sandwich course)
  - Foundation degrees and Higher National Diplomas: 2 years full time, often lower entry requirements. Can do extra one year top-up to qualify as full degree

Benefits of Higher Education
- Long term
  - Less chance of unemployment
  - Greater choice of careers
  - Increased earning potential
- Short term
  - Academic interest
  - Independence
  - Friends and socialising

Choosing a course
- Talk to your tutors and careers advisers, consider your potential career
- Make sure the entry requirements are right for you (not too high or low)
- Consider what modules you want to study and how you want to be assessed
- Decide if you want to study one subject (single honours) or two (joint honours)

Choosing a University
- Type of institution (campus based / traditional / modern) and does it offer the course you want?
- Consider the location (North/South? town/city? How far are you willing to travel? What size city?)
- Look at statistics (e.g. League Tables, unistats, KIS data by subject area)
- Check out the facilities (e.g. computer suites, gym, science laboratories, student union...)
- Check out the city where you will be living – does it suit your lifestyle?
- Atmosphere – go to Open Days and visit different universities

Tuition Fees
- Can be between £6,000 and £9,000 per year
- No up-front costs - all UK students are entitled to receive a full Tuition Loan every year

Living costs
- Estimate of £7,000 per year of study, to live away from home but outside London
- Can apply for a Living Cost Loan (up to £4,375 at home, up to £5,500 away from home, up to £7,675 away from home and living in London) but the amount you get depends on your household income
- Some people may also be entitled to a Living Cost Grant - which you do not have to pay back

Repayment of loans
- You only pay back your loan when you are earning £21,000 p/year or above
- No matter how much you borrow you pay it back at the same rate, in small instalments
- It comes out automatically out of your wages (like tax or national insurance)
- Anything you still owe after 30 years is written off.

Useful websites
- www.ucas.com
- www.unistats.co.uk
- http://yourfuture.direct.gov.uk
- www.push.co.uk
- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual earnings</th>
<th>Gross monthly income</th>
<th>Monthly repayment (30 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>£1,250</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£21,000</td>
<td>£1,750</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>£2,083</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£30,000</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
<td>£68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£40,000</td>
<td>£3,333</td>
<td>£143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td>£4,167</td>
<td>£218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>