



University Degree Subjects you may not have considered

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Although the word Accounting may prompt quick dismissal, it is worth understanding the variety my course offers. In a brief breakdown there are 5 modules per semester, and 2 semesters a year. In each semester there will indeed be one Accounting module, but the other four can entail a diverse range of studies. I have looked at Contract law, Company law, Empirical research methods, Statistics, Corporate Finance (my favourite), Behaviour of firms, and other areas of the financial world including the stock market.

What attracted me to the course?

I have been at Bath nearly 2 years now and I'm on a 4 year course with a placement year 3rd year. I think what attracted me to my course was the employability aspect. I'm certainly not looking to become an accountant, but the course gives you a very solid and employable skill set. The great thing about Bath is you can get a placement, which really helps distinguish you post-graduation. I'm working in London next year doing Corporate Finance at Grant Thornton, getting paid 22,000 (relatively low amount surprisingly – some of my friends are earning up to 35,000). This placement aspect was particularly attractive, giving me excellent experience and it will also help narrow my decision for a future.

Any bad aspects?

I hate to join the bandwagon on accounting, but unfortunately I can't sell you the actual accounting part. Its methodical, logical and very employable, but I needed something more intellectually stimulating. It is important to note that my course does not bound me to accounting by any stretch, you learn a wide base of skills, and can apply for nearly any financial job on your placement year.

Any A Levels required?

Maths is the only A- Level I think it is an actual necessity. There is a lot of financial analysis and you need to be sharp in this area. But don't be put off if you don't think you're great at the harder A-Level stuff, 99% of

the Maths is the easiest parts of the A-Level. Indeed, you certainly don't need economics or business studies (I had neither), or accounting as I believe you can do some places. They go through the Economics A-Level course in a matter of lectures apparently!

Is it right for you?

I guess you will need some sort of determination to move in to the financial sector afterwards. A coherence with numbers and an interest in the current events in the business world will stand you in good stead. I still don't know what I will do post-graduation, but the financial sector will probably beckon if you choose this course. My main bit of advice is not to be put off by the word accounting, which I know a lot of people instantly are. The course provides you with a great set of financial skills to extrapolate into various jobs. It has given me a much better perspective into all things financial. I now completely understand the way a business is run, for example, and understand certain areas of the stock market, which has been really engaging.

American Studies

University of Nottingham

Katy Nolan

American studies is typically a 3 or 4 year BA course. You are given the option to do a year abroad in an American university during your third year of studies and then return to your home university in year four to complete your degree. You are required to meet a particular percentage (for us it was 55% or a mid 2.2) in your first year in order to be eligible for the year abroad. However, the better you do the more likely you are to get your first choice of university in America. It's a great chance to be immersed in American culture, with lots of opportunity to travel around the US during your holiday time and weekend. You also only pay for an extra year of English university fees, as opposed to the very expensive cost of typical American university fees. American Studies is largely based in the history of America, an interest in history is essential, however prior knowledge of American history is not, nor is a history A-level. The course also covers aspects of American culture, politics and literature although you have reasonable choice in what you choose to study, except for history which all students are required to cover from

beginning to end. If anyone is interested in studying American Studies, I would recommend English, History and Politics A levels to help establish analytical skills which are key to the degree, however again, no particular subject is essential. Contact hours for American studies are relatively low - you can expect a maximum of 12 hours per week in your first year, and fewer in subsequent years. However reading in your own time is required and essential and can often be quite time consuming. In terms of coursework and exams, they are usually balanced 50:50 across the board. Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed my course, more so than I expected having not known much about the course beforehand. Over my three years of university, I have had a choice of modules ranging from American Utopian Literature, the history of mental illness in America, the origins of the Civil War and Prohibition, to name a few. For anyone who particularly enjoyed A2 Politics covering America or takes a strong interest in the history and culture of America in general, I would highly recommend this course. If anyone has any questions they would like to ask or you want any more information feel free to ask Mr Buzzacott to forward them on to me.

Ancient & Medieval History

Rianna Langdale

University of Liverpool

I am just finishing my second year of an Ancient and Medieval History degree, although I did originally start off doing Ancient History and Egyptology I found after one term that Egyptology wasn't best suited to what I wanted from university. On my course I have covered a variety of subjects, from Medieval Britain, to War and Society in the Anglo-Norman World, to Sports, Games and Entertainment in the Greek and Roman world. These are just a few of the modules that I have done amongst a wide range of topics throughout various historical time periods.

I was originally drawn to ancient history because I had always been interested in it and wanted to pursue it further, even though I wasn't sure if it would be a career path or if it would just lead me to other interests. Though ancient history may not seem immediately transferable, I have still nevertheless found that the course requires skills such as presentation, information collating and presenting arguments that are useful in any work environment.

Despite the hard academic work I have thoroughly enjoyed being able to study and research a subject that I was at first curious about but have now grown to love, which is its own reward. A large factor in enjoying my course is the fact that I love all aspects of university and the environment I live in. I have been able to take advantage of the many opportunities university brings, such as actually going on a 9-day trip around Greece, where I was able to see the society that I had spent so long only reading about.

As it is a history-based degree, a history A level is an obvious choice and Classical Civilisation is also liked but isn't compulsory. It is a course which involves a lot of reading and essay writing and source analysis. If you are considering taking an Ancient and Medieval History course then my main advice would be to maintain an open mind; the subject doesn't just cover purely historical events and sources but also society, its politics and its people. The nature of the subject means that specialists in a particular field come to university to teach what they are passionate about, and as a result a huge range of subjects throughout different eras becomes available to you.

Ancient History

University of Bristol

Olly Horne

I have always been interested in history generally, and more specifically the societies and history of Ancient Greece and Rome, and wanted to explore this further. I am in my second year of study and have covered various periods, including the Greek Dark Ages (with emphasis on Homer), Classical Greece, Late Republican Rome and Late Antiquity. Some mandatory skills based units have featured as well, such as theoretical approaches to history, and the use of literary and non-literary sources. I have taken some literary optional units as well, my favourite covering Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and its reception in later art, such as Shakespeare and Picasso. I think, as outlined above, what I enjoy most about Ancient History is the variety available. There are so many possible approaches to studying the ancient world, and this course gives you the freedom to choose which route you want to follow, whether it is sticking strictly to history, exploring a poet, or translating ancient texts. The only thing I haven't really enjoyed is the mandatory unit that

focused specifically on using non-literary sources i.e. archaeology. I didn't find it as interesting as the other more standard historical units, and found the essays a bit forced (we had to focus on what kind of evidence we were using, rather than simply exploring the topic we were discussing). There are no required A-levels, but I found taking Classical Civilisation for A level extremely useful. History is equally useful for the skills required, and any Classics related subject for the familiarity it provides to the ancient world. If you don't study these, not to worry, the first year of the degree is designed to familiarise everyone with the ancient world to a suitable level. Anyone interested in the Greeks or Romans, their society, their history and their impact on us today would enjoy Ancient History. As with any arts degree there are a lot of essays to write, so an ability to make close analysis of evidence and incorporating lots of different ideas is necessary. My only advice to anyone thinking of studying this subject would be to get reading! There are so many great stories in the history of the ancient world, and some are bound to fascinate you. Staying interested I think is key.

Ancient History

University of Leicester

Antony Morgan

I've always enjoyed learning about the Romans, and because this is one of the main topics we learn about in Ancient History I figured it would be an interesting course to study! I'm in my second year now, and it really is brilliant. It's a great course because you can choose from a number of modules about lots of different things, as the Archaeology and Ancient History department at Leicester has a number of lecturers who are experts in different times, as do all the universities that teach Ancient History. So far, I've taken modules in the Roman Republic and Empire, Ancient Greece, Alexander the Great, and the Near East. My favourite so far has been the Near East module, because it was about Turkey, Syria and Egypt in 3000BC to 500BC (the Babylonians and Persians, and it was quite different to anything I'd studied before.

You really don't have to have taken History or Classical Civilisation as A-levels to do this course, because the first year really starts you from scratch in terms of learning and the writing techniques to write a good essay. For instance, the first module you take at Leicester is

'Introduction to Roman History', which takes you right from the beginning. I had taken History for A level, but I'd never taken anything to do with ancient history before coming to university, apart from Latin until 3rd year at RGS.

Ancient History is a great course for someone who likes to learn about any ancient civilisations, likes watching films like Gladiator (I'm taking a module next year about ancient history in film!), or even just if you play games like Rome Total War. The only advice I'd give would be that it's preferable that you took an essay subject for A-level, as most of the coursework you will do is in the form of essays, just so you don't struggle with the work. Other than that, Ancient History is open to anyone!

Archaeology & Anthropology

Jessye Aggleton

University of Oxford

I am in my final (third) year at the University of Oxford, Hertford College, studying Archaeology and Anthropology. I was attracted to the course after seeing near the top of the A-Z courses on the UCAS website - but I actually chose to apply because it covered a wide range of areas, gave me the chance to travel, and the course topics looked cool! The A-levels it required were non-specific (you don't have to have studied any particular A-levels) the universities preferred for a mix of arts and science (a mixture I had studied). At Oxford, I've studied a broad range of human past from 8 million years ago to the present; from human evolution, forensic anthropology and early civilisations, to how societies are structured, beliefs about witchcraft and how preserved seeds and beetles can say a lot about ways of life. The thing I enjoy most about the course is that we learn from so many disciplines - geography, zoology, biology, art, philosophy, chemistry and more! I was also lucky to get the chance to travel and excavate. The only thing I haven't enjoyed so far was once in my forensic anthropology option when we walked into the dissection room for a practical looking at bones, only to find the medics had left boxes of dissected body parts in the room! I think that anyone who is open-minded, curious, a pretty logical thinker, and enjoys a range of arts and science subjects will really enjoy the course. At Oxford, you do have to be able to write lots of essays for Archaeology

and Anthropology (2 essays over 3 weeks is standard) and once a week talk/debate with your tutor and fellow students about the essay topic. If you're interested in studying this subject, I would advise firstly to look at the topics each university offers for the course, the workload, and how the course is arranged so you can apply to the universities that most suit you. Just a note – there are only about 7 universities in the UK that offer the joint course – many others offer Archaeology or Anthropology as separate degrees. Also, make sure to go to the university open days, and definitely don't be afraid to apply to universities like Oxford if it sounds like it might be for you! My final advice would be to anyone who is interested in the course, researched it, and like the sounds of it - go for it!

Archaeology
University of Kent

Vicky Mann

The first thing that tends to come to people's mind regarding archaeology is Indiana Jones. The popular film hero leads an exciting life of running away from boulders to frequently finding lost civilisations. Unfortunately, archaeologists don't repeatedly find themselves in dangerous situations, in their hunt for lost treasure on some exotic location like Indy does. However, that's not to say that studying Archaeology is not an adventure itself. The subject offers many insights into the great past civilisations, from the Romans to the Aztecs and even to the Tudors themselves. All of this information is gained from investigating artefacts and material culture. Some may indeed be worth a lot of money, but it focuses rather on the intellectual value that a particular pot or mosaic mask may hold. Through the investigation of objects, we can collect a variety of information, from how past societies worked to how the Neanderthals utilised stone tools. There is also a practical aspect, methodological methods of excavation techniques that do not just comprise of digging. It may consist of taking advantage of the growth of technology, using cameras to capture miniscule details. So why should you consider archaeology? Perhaps you have wondered about the human past, the changes in relationships or technology and so forth. Ultimately, archaeology creates a rewarding experience as it

seeks out the answers of who we were. More importantly, it is a vital contribution to understand who we are and who we will be in the future.

Architecture

Jonathan Withers

Course synopsis:

It is a 7 year course. Broken down into a 4 year (with a year in industry) bachelors, 2 years of masters and a further year to become accredited. You do not have to stay at the same university for all 7 years.

What attracted you to the course?

When I was younger, it was mostly because I liked designing and building things. Later it was more about an interest in sustainability and reducing environmental impact.

How many years have you been studying architecture?

At the time of writing, I have just finished the first 2 semesters of the first year.

What have you covered?

Waterproofing shelters – we built shelters from cardboard and spent the night in them. Introducing light into space. Origins of modern architecture. Ancient and medieval architecture. Construction basics. Ecological footprints of buildings. Drawing [properly] and sketching. Introductions to Photoshop and Computer Aided Design (CAD). This was just the first year out of 7, and I have learnt so much! We also went on a field-trip to Barcelona for a week before Christmas.

What do you enjoy?

Learning new things and putting them to use within the projects we are assigned. We get to be creative.

I also enjoy working alongside my course-mates in the studios.

What do I not enjoy?

Architecture is subjective – like art. The marking is sometimes dependent on whether your tutor likes your work.

What A-levels are needed?

Maths, Physics, DT and Art are all useful A Levels for Architecture. You will need to look at the Entry Requirements on www.ucas.com because it varies from university to university.

What other skills are needed?

Creativity – but some students manage without this.

Any further advice?

Architecture is hard work – don't do it if you're not sure about it, and you don't want to push yourself. Architecture is incredibly fun, and I have enjoyed almost every moment of it, but it is not an “easy” subject. Before you start: Sketch! Get a sketchbook and fill every page with a drawing of something, anything! Good draughtsmanship is essential.

Architecture

University of Bath

Sam Bunn

I'm studying Architecture at the University of Bath and am coming to the end of my second year. I think that what first attracted me to Architecture was its great combination of science and creativity, having to understand a building structurally, as well as the design side of making something that has never been done before. It was also appealing to think that I could create something that would (hopefully) last for a long time, leaving a physical mark on the world. The course at Bath is fairly unique in that the department is combined with the civil engineering course. This means we do a lot of joint projects with engineers, with both parties learning from each other to help make us more aware of the engineer's point of view. From my placement I've started to realise how useful knowing where the engineer consultant is coming from helps in the design process. So the course overall involves a mixture of lectures teaching about environmental issues, structure, and history alongside 'studio' work where we are given a design brief to create a building (detailed drawings and 3D models mostly) for a client or purpose. In terms of A Levels different universities may want things like Art or DT but in general I think it is definitely necessary to have (and enjoy) and mix of sciences and arts. I think it does take a fair bit of

commitment to do the course, it's long (7 years to qualify as an Architect) and you end up doing a lot of all-nighters if you don't stay organised on project work as the course is coursework dominated. So advice I would give is that you need to have good self discipline for work and really be enthusiastic about buildings and the design process, otherwise they may begin to feel overwhelmed (especially early on). I would also really emphasise the need to research universities you want to go to as the courses do vary from heavily Art focused (UCL) to heavily science focused (Sheffield/Bath) so it is important to know which one would suit you more. However, if you are organised and enjoy it, it is one of the most fun degrees I believe you can do! You have an immense amount of freedom to create spaces and buildings that you believe in and there is no such thing as a bad idea. You end up knowing a lot about a great array of topics as each project is different and may require you to research about gorillas, for example, if you are designing a zoo, or why bamboo is becoming a great building material again if your designing a building in Eastern Asia. I hope this info is useful.

Automotive Design Technology
Sheffield Hallam University

Liam McLean

I am studying my first year of Automotive Design Technology at Sheffield Hallam. So far engineering principles, CAD, engineering drawings, mechanical technology and product analysis have been covered in my first year. An understanding of how vehicle components work and fit together is helpful as well as maths and CAD knowledge. I was attracted to the course because of the number of hands-on investigations and projects that are present in the modules. If you are like me and work better when given longer projects rather than lots of short tests and weekly work you will cope very well with the work load. I have found it challenging but enjoyable, as you do need to make sure you put in effort and research time outside of your lectures and labs but if you are interested in vehicles and the design behind them then the work isn't bad once you get into the routine of it. The biggest attraction for me overall though was the placement year offered in my third year; work experience is so hard to gain in this field and there are so many companies that work with the course for the placement year that I hope

it helps a lot further down the line. All of the modules give you a very good broad understanding of every aspect of the industry and if you aren't 100% sure which area you want to go in to you will have a wider choice after completing the degree. I personally want to go into the motorsport field, but all principles of automotive design are important. One thing that did catch me out was the lack of artistic car sketches I have been asked to do; my total stands at zero. At first I was worried by this and wondered if I had made a mistake with my course but after spending a year studying the course I have realised that this has actually worked in my favour as the engineering aspects coupled with the CAD/engineering drawing side of things will allow me to go into a lot of different areas rather than one quite narrow avenue within the industry. I would advise Product Design and Maths-based A Levels for this course. I actually stopped Maths at A Level and changed to Electronics which I still feel helped as I also studied Physics, Product Design and Geography. However if I could I would have continued with Maths; it takes some of the pressure off of you even though Physics is enough and I am not struggling, Maths will just add to your confidence. An added understanding of how vehicle components work and fit together is helpful as well as maths and CAD knowledge, but if you don't have this it isn't a huge setback as the tutorials are well planned to enable you to gain a good understanding of it all. Overall it is a very enjoyable course and Sheffield is a nice city to be in. Lots to do and friendly people make it easy to settle in.

Biochemistry

University of Oxford

David Whitlock

1) What attracted me to the course?

Biochemistry is a subject which is rarely mentioned at school in science, yet it actually requires a huge amount of all three sciences plus extensive maths. The closest we ever get to it is probably with A level Biology during the study of photosynthesis and respiration and some enzyme kinetics. Once I had "discovered" biochemistry was a subject, one huge attraction was this combination of all the disciplines... it requires everyone from the greatest organic chemists to the most powerful

supercomputers in the world just to study a single enzyme (of which a cell alone could have a thousand types). For anyone who enjoys a challenge and great complexity biochemistry is therefore the ultimate course! Another attraction is its applications. Biochemical research is essential in drug development, energy production, the chemical industry and the feeding of populations to name a few areas. To me it seems that the only thing better than studying something interesting is to study something interesting that also has real life uses (and can reap huge rewards). Another enjoyable part of biochemistry to me is that even in my first year, I am already meeting things that are not fully understood. This reflects the fact that in reality we know very little about the world around us and that this relatively new subject has a limitless horizon. I guess ultimately, I decided to biochemistry because, having enjoyed science at school I wanted to pursue it and biochemistry offered the most breadth and interesting topics.

2)The course structure:

The course changes over the years. In the first year (as occurs with most courses) we do a "from the floor upwards" approach to prepare students for the later work. This means we study 5 subjects:

- a) Molecular cell biology covering genetics, metabolism and cell structure
- b) Biophysical chemistry covering thermodynamics, kinetics and other topics like electrochemistry, acid/base and protein folding
- c) Biological chemistry covering varied topics such as enzyme mechanisms, membranes and certain important chemicals in cells (e.g. DNA, RNA carbohydrates, amino acids, lipids)
- d) Organic chemistry covering...organic chemistry!
- e) Maths and statistics

In addition, since biochemistry is a practical-based subject a continuous practical assessment occurs throughout the year with a practical every week. This must be stressed to all applicants. Biochemistry is not possible unless the research/theories can be proven so the university ensures all students master the necessary techniques.

In later years, the course narrows with emphasis on what you might call the "real biochemistry" with less maths, organic and biophysics and more

metabolism and cells. By the fourth year (at least at my uni) we work with a research team to be awarded the masters.

3) What I enjoy most about the course:

One of the best things I have found this year is that at the beginning it seems they just throw book after book of information at you- often appearing unrelated and random yet after a few months things start to join up. Also, the course is consuming (in a good way) whereby you have to devote A LOT of time to just keep up with the minimum workload which makes the moments of free time much more enjoyable. Furthermore, while the course is quite structured with a lot of contact hours, there is a huge amount of scope for independent study.

4) What I enjoy the least about the course:

Exams! At my university we have multiple exams every term (which means the holidays is revision time rather than relaxation time). Furthermore, the first year is oriented around our end of year exams which we must pass to continue. They put a lot of pressure and stress on us. Although I knew there would be exams, I had somehow thought university would be more about studying "because you like the subject" which holds true, but is sometimes lost amid the panic to pass exams. It seems A levels were just the beginning!

5) Subjects that would help for applicants:

Since the subject is so broad, while chemistry and biology are essential I would have thought as much maths and physics as possible can't hurt. The course uses both subjects extensively and while the first year is designed to get everyone up to the right level regardless of previous knowledge the more you arrive with the easier the first year will be and the less of a transition the move from school to uni will be. Having said that, even if physics and maths is only taken at GCSE, every little helps! Further maths is useful if only because the more you do the easier the previous stuff appears but honestly, there is nothing I have found that

wasn't in the single maths A level yet (although I have heard complex numbers and some transforms are used later on). I know a few who haven't done any maths past GCSE.

6) What kind of person would enjoy the course:

Anyone who likes complex problem-solving and science (obviously!), who wants to know how life works, likes to use multiple subjects as tools, wants to go into research and technology (although it sets you up for any job), liked science practicals...

(Note: the person also has to tolerate the fact that it won't be the easiest thing they've ever done and that where the A grade was standard before in school, the "pass" is the norm at uni!)

7) Advice for anyone interested:

The subject is not taught in schools and the name can be misleading! You may think it's just reactions and balancing equations, or that it's just a dumbed-down version of medical physiology... think again! Biochemistry is without a doubt separate from the rest and, while it does combine many disciplines the product is a view on the world apart from the rest. Also, note that choosing the right uni is not just a simple matter of grades and location. The subject is relatively modern and hence the course is different at each university. Some courses are very broad (like mine) while others have a huge emphasis on the medical applications (just to give an example). Also be wary of the course titles: several courses are not called "biochemistry" yet they have very close ties with other courses that are.

Lastly, if unsure the best thing to do is travel to the department and simply ask in person. Often what is on the brochures gives little truth on the course. I was certainly not expecting several details- even if they are good ones!

I would like to stress that my course may differ widely from others even with the same title.

What attracted you to the course?

I initially wanted to study Medicine, for about 2 weeks. This was before I did some more research into the elements involved in the course and realised that my interest actually lay outside of the medical field and more on a research science level. From there it was actually a really simple process. I worked out exactly what I wanted from a university course and Biochemistry was the best fit.

I knew I wanted to do a three year course and I also wanted to have an element of flexibility in the degree. All of the universities I applied to offered a system where by students studying Biological Science degrees (Biochemistry, Microbiology and Genetics etc.) all completed the same first year and specialised within the second year.

How many years have you been studying the course?

I'm in my first year at the University of Leicester.

Give a brief outline of what you have covered in the course.

Because of the combined first year I have covered a wide variety of topics. I have completed modules in Biochemistry, Genetics, Microbiology, Physiology, Evolutionary Biology, Diversity and Chemistry amongst others. Through these I have covered most aspects of biology at a fairly complex level.

What do you most enjoy about the course?

The thing I've enjoyed most about the course so far has been that I have been able to learn about aspects of Biology that I enjoyed during A level in greater detail. At university you're given the time and resources to really develop your interests and work out exactly what you want to do. I also really enjoy the lab work; there is a much greater level of independence than in the assessed practicals at school..

Is there anything that you don't enjoy?

Whilst I've honestly enjoy most things, the only thing that I haven't would be the fact that due to the combined first year I've ended up doing some modules such as Animal and Plant Diversity that may be

more suited to a person studying Zoology (who we also share a first year with). Having said that, they have been interesting modules and have given me an appreciation of the broader implications of Biochemistry.

Are there A Levels that you need or are particularly helpful for someone planning to study this course?

Definitely Biology, I know it's not on all the UCAS requirements for all the courses, some only require Chemistry, but I have friends on my course who didn't do it and have been at a definite disadvantage. A good understanding of Maths is helpful, but doing it at A level isn't essential, I actually had a dedicated Maths module in my first semester that covered everything we needed assuming only a GCSE knowledge.

What kind of person would enjoy this course? Are there any skills that you need?

I think the course appeals to a wide variety of people, but I think a key element of making the most of the course would be enjoying being in a lab and doing experiments. Whilst lab work isn't the entire course, there is a lot of theory, it complements the lectures well and can boost your grade if, as in my case, exams aren't your strong point. I've had weeks where I've been in the lab for 9+ hours and I'm lucky in that I really enjoy experiments, but I know people who can't stand it and the hours are tedious for them.

Have you any advice for someone thinking of studying this course?

My only piece of advice would be to really look at what the university offers in terms of modules. Most have a section on the course website where they give a brief outline of what you'll do if you go there; I personally think the combined first year model that many universities offer is a really good idea. It allows you to apply under Biochemistry but if by the end of the first year you have decided you really want to do Genetics instead you have done exactly the same modules and changing is easy, and often expected.

I really didn't know what to study at university. Biology was my favourite subject but I didn't enjoy the ecology modules - I much preferred human biology. I also liked the idea of studying medicine but didn't want to be a doctor. So when I discovered biomedical sciences, it seemed like a good fit.

The first year course is fairly broad. So far, the topics I've studied have ranged from cell biology, genetics, and physiology, to neuroscience and psychology. In my most recent exam, I had to answer questions about the cardiovascular system, Parkinson's disease, motor reflexes, and human rationality and reasoning. In addition, there is quite a big emphasis on statistics in the first year, with weekly statistics classes as well as lectures. I also study a little bit of chemistry and physics.

After the first year, there is a wide variety of choice of modules – nothing is compulsory. I haven't decided my options yet, but I'm thinking of choosing infection and immunity and cellular pathology, amongst other topics, because of the chance to study disease and cancer biology. However there is opportunity to specialise in pretty much any area.

I really enjoy the variety of the course. One minute I'm writing an essay on skeletal muscle and the next, I'm discussing whether human memory is reliable. It has been interesting to cover brand new topics, for instance neuroscience and psychology. I was quite nervous about the practical side of the course because I didn't really enjoy practical work at A level. However, I really like that our lab work is non-assessed and hands-on. For instance, we've examined our own cells under a microscope, measured our blood glucose levels, and given each other ECGs. What makes the course so interesting is that we can apply it to ourselves.

What I didn't realise when applying was how essay-based the course is. I had assumed most of the work would be problem sheets, but in fact I have to write a lot of essays – usually two or three a week in addition to one or two maths or statistics sheets. This was quite a shock at first! There are a lot of lectures in addition to tutorials and classes, so it's pretty full-on and you are expected to absorb so much information as

well as turning in a steady stream of essays, which can be a bit overwhelming.

Regarding A Levels, biology is essential, because the course builds on a lot of the topics that we studied. I would say maths is extremely useful, because, at least in first year, there is a lot of statistics to cover. Chemistry would also be helpful because some lecturers assume a basic knowledge of it with regard to topics such as protein structure and metabolism. Some universities require you to study chemistry if you apply for biomedical sciences. My main advice would be to look at the course description and A level requirements at each university you're thinking of applying to, because it does vary quite a lot and could affect your choice.

Biomedical Sciences

Lucy Donovan

I am currently in my first year studying Biomedical Sciences at the University of Oxford, and so far I am finding the course incredibly exciting and interesting.

I was attracted to Biomedical Sciences as a course because I was always fascinated with human biology, however I knew that I did not want to become a doctor. For my course, the requirements were three A-Levels, two of which had to be from Biology, Maths, Chemistry and Physics. When I was applying, this seemed a standard entry requirement across all universities, however many requested Biology and Chemistry A-Levels specifically. I did not take Chemistry A-Level, and therefore I was limited on the universities that I was able to apply to. However, so far, I have not found my lack of A-Level Chemistry knowledge to be a problem on my course. For my A-Levels, I took Biology, Maths, History and Art, and I have found the skills I learnt from each of these to be transferable to my course this year.

In my first year the course material has been extremely broad, from cellular and molecular biology to the functioning of whole organ systems, as well as integrating neuroscience and psychology. There is also a large focus on Statistics in my course, and I have had lectures in

maths, chemistry and physics as it is important to understand key concepts from these three subjects as many are implemented in human physiology. Next year, I will have to choose a selection of modules where I will learn about chosen aspects of the first year course in more detail, as well as undertaking a research project in a laboratory. In my third year, I will choose whether to specialise in either Neuroscience or Cells and Systems Biology. This breadth of course material is another reason that I was attracted to the course and am enjoying it so much, because it allows you to tailor the course to the areas of biomedical sciences that you find the most engaging.

One of the less attractive aspects of the course is that it is one of the courses with the most contact hours. This year, I have found the course to be heavily based on lectures and practical classes, and therefore you must be fairly diligent and have good time management. Personally, I prefer having more contact hours because it gives the day a lot more structure (and you feel like you are getting your money's worth!).

Biomedical Sciences is a highly dynamic and relevant area of study and I have received lectures and tutorials from leading scientific researchers. Our understanding of human physiology and disease is constantly changing, and therefore this is a field that will never be dull. I would recommend this course to anyone who is passionate about learning how the human body functions, from cells to whole organ systems.

Bioveterinary Science
Hartpury

Gemma Grabham

You cover all of the basics; in first year I studied anatomy and physiology, nutrition, behaviour, welfare, health and disease. Second year extended on health and disease, reproductive physiology, pathology and a couple of research projects. Third year has dissertation, but has also been my favourite year with epidemiology, pharmacology and disease. That was my university though and I know a few are different.

The Bioveterinary course at Hartpury does not have much choice but another option is Animal Science, it covers very similar things. I didn't feel the need for change however, there weren't any modules I didn't really want to do.

I have loved learning in a non-pressure environment. I can learn all of the things that I will need in the future (anatomy etc) but without the pressure of having to know everything now. The course was not particularly intense either so I could be eased in to university life, again without the pressure. I could also complete a lot more work experience than I was able to do previously, my original work experience came out at 13 weeks whereas this time I was well over 30 before I applied. I really enjoyed Hartpury. It seemed a lot more supportive than other universities; I had someone helping me with every essay, reading drafts. Its small year groups so everyone is closer

In the beginning I did not enjoy the fact that the course was not veterinary medicine but as I got older and realised that it was definitely for the best this changed. I didn't enjoy the area that I was in but I had lovely people around me so it made up for it!

Anyone who is passionate about animals and veterinary medicine but maybe lacks the ability that a-levels requires. Bioveterinary was 100 times easier than a-level, I can promise that!

You apply at the beginning of your third year just as you would at the beginning of A2. I believe RVC has a transfer scheme however it is minimal every year and there will be more pressure. I think you still need good a-levels to get into RVC.

RVC there is an accelerated course which overall is 4 years but every other university is 5. Unless you are involved in something that provides scholarships then there is not much funding. My previous flatmate for example works on the Yorkshire show every year so she has funding through them but it is few and far between.

It is worth noting that you can transfer to Veterinary Medicine after your degree, but that there is no student finance available for this.

I chose to do a business degree partially because I didn't know what else to do. I enjoyed my A-level subjects, especially Economics, but I didn't have a particular desire to carry on studying, nor have the right combination of A-levels, to carry on studying any individual one at degree level. I am interested in business and felt that taking a degree in it would be both enjoyable and keep the greatest number of doors open for life after university. What attracted me to the University of Bath especially was their reputation for business and their two six-month placements during the course.

I've been doing my course for two years out of four, and am really enjoying it. The first year comprised of compulsory modules that covered the basics of business, from accounting to HR and then in the second year I've had a six month placement, which the university sourced, and had five modules, four of which I chose. This set up has been really helpful as the first year allowed me to have a taste of many different aspects of business, then I was able to specialise in second year picking the modules I liked based on my preferences and first year experiences. However being forced to do some modules wasn't that enjoyable, but did serve to show me that certain areas of business aren't for me.

The course doesn't require any particular A-levels but taking economics really helped me and there are a number of numerical modules where maths would help your degree. Also having a wealth of extra-curricular activities on your personal statement will help as these demonstrate a lot of transferrable skills that will be useful for your degree and for finding a placement, whilst also helping you to get onto the degree programme.

This course is suited to driven people. All of my course-mates ultimately want to be leaders of industry or successful entrepreneurs and this course provides all the tools to do this. It's also suited to people who don't wish to undertake a purely academic degree as this course provides life skills that are more applicable than other academic degrees.

Cellular and Molecular Medicine **Benjamin Stevens**

Bristol

What attracted you to the course?

Course content was specific to the areas of Biology I found most interesting.

Extremely well recognised scientists/lecturers.

Department founded on ground-breaking research.

How many years have you been studying the course?

Just completed first year.

Give a brief outline of what you have covered in the course.

Biochemistry IG – protein structure and function, enzyme kinetics and mechanisms, DNA replication and the regulation of gene expression; recombinant DNA technology; cellular dynamics and membrane structure.

Normal and Tumour Cells – cell and tissue structure; membrane trafficking and growth control; developmental biology and differentiation; haemopoietic system; causative factors and mechanisms of cancer processes.

Pathological Responses of Cells - pathogenesis and how these relate to the development of specific human diseases; use of gross pathology and histopathology in the investigation of human disease.

Introduction to Microbiology - basic biology of viruses, fungi, protists and bacteria, and focussing on cell structure, metabolism, genetics, identification and classification and impact on society of microbes

Microbes and Disease - study of infectious disease: virulence factors, host/tissue specificity, microbiological niches, epidemiology, and intervention strategies.

What do you most enjoy about the course?

Specificity of the content - more applied Biology – less ‘wishy-washy’.

Extremely relevant – lecture content comes directly from lecturer’s research and is extremely up to date.

Is there anything that you don't enjoy?

First year labs are tedious.

Are there A Levels that you need or are particularly helpful for someone planning to study this course?

Chemistry is required with another science.

Biology should be mandatory – heavily recommend.

Either Maths (lots of calculations) or an essay-based subject (due to essay based coursework and exams).

What kind of person would enjoy this course?

Motivated, hard-working person heavily interested in the cellular/molecular details of Biology.

Would recommend anyone looking at doing Biochemistry to look at this course.

Are there any skills that you need?

If no Maths A/AS Level you have to be confident with learning new (quite difficult) maths.

Have you any advice for someone thinking of studying this course?

This course has a lot of hours per week (average of 18 hours) – benefits are that you aren't wasting time/money (the experiments cost a lot!).

Don't do the course if you expect to go out 5 times a week – I have found 2/3 nights a week manageable, but not easy.

Combined Honours, Arts
Exeter

Charlotte Hanwell

I didn't want to stop studying Spanish or English after A-Level so decided to apply for a course that would let me continue in both. For my first year I have split the degree into three modules of Spanish and three modules of English. In English, I have completed the three core modules: Introduction to Poetry, Introduction to Drama and Introduction to the Novel. This has been the side of the course that I have enjoyed the most for the breadth of literature that has been covered, from before the sixteenth century until the present day. As for

Spanish, I attended grammar and oral classes as well as lectures on cultural topics, studying a diverse range from recent Spanish film to Bolívar's political text *The Jamaica Letter* to medieval Spanish ballads. One thing that I have noticed about the language side of the course is that a lot more work must be put in at university to maintain a good level of fluency in the language. Whereas at school we spoke in Spanish almost everyday, I now have just one hour of oral practice a week. I would therefore recommend studying a language to someone who is self-motivated and willing to put in the effort to attend the extra speaking sessions held independent of the course and get as much exposure to the language as possible through reading and listening to the radio, films etc. However, the course also includes a year abroad in third year, which intends to immerse the student in the language and culture of their chosen country.

As for next year, the flexibility of the degree allows you to gain credits from a wide variety of disciplines, not only the conventional art subjects but also some of the social sciences such as philosophy, politics, geography, psychology and more (all A-Level depending). This means that in my second year I will be able to take a module in History of Art alongside three in English and two in Spanish. The ability to try out modules from different subjects is one of the best things about the degree, but I would also say that the best time to try the widest range of different subject modules would be in first year, as the result does not contribute to the final degree. Returning from my year abroad, I have the choice to complete a dissertation in either English or Spanish. Entry requirements in Durham ask for A*AA in general art subjects, sometimes specific to the ones you would like to study (in the case of English, History or Languages), while I'll add that it would appeal to students who prefer to study a range of disciplines rather than just the one, and are prepared for a degree that puts emphasis on independent study and reading with minimal contact hours.

I've just finished my first year at the University of the West of England studying Criminology with Psychology. I've known for a while that I wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement or something within the Criminal Justice System, so Criminology seemed like an obvious choice for a degree. As for Psychology, I knew it would be a challenging and interesting course to study as a minor. In Criminology, the first year has consisted of learning criminological theories about the types of people commit crime and what may motivate them to do so, and has also looked at several aspects of Criminal Justice agencies such as the police, prisons and the trial process, and whether these agencies are successful in achieving what they set out to do. Psychology has also been split into two parts, the first focusing more on the scientific side of things, and more specifically research methods and statistics, and the second part looking at Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Biological Psychology and Neuroscience. The best thing about the course is how directly it relates to real life; for example, one of my pieces of coursework required me to visit a court to watch a trial and write a report on it. It really showed how what we were learning could be applied to what's going on around us, and really opened my eyes to problems within society and the Criminal Justice System and how a lot of things, such as the way in which we are using prisons, need to be changed. I am also really looking forward to studying Criminal Psychology as a module next year, looking at psychopaths and what wills them to act the way that they do. Studying Biology and Maths at A Level has really helped me to have a prior understanding of some of the topics that we have studied, particularly Statistics and Biological Psychology and Neuroscience, and will no doubt continue to aid me throughout my degree. I also found that doing Philosophy and Ethics GCSE helped, as during the course we touched on the aims of imprisonment, which is a key part of the Criminology course. Anyone who has an interest in understanding how society functions both in relation to crime and psychology, and has an interest in ways in which society could be improved, would benefit from this course. Of course, anyone who thinks they would like to pursue a career within the Criminal Justice System or

in Psychology would also benefit. There are no specific skills required for this course, simply the desire to learn and the ability to keep an open mind and look at things from different perspectives than your own. The only advice I would have that you must be willing to completely change your outlook on the world.

Economic History

Alexander Fraser

London School of Economics

Economic History is a three year course and I have enjoyed every moment of it. A surprising majority of my mates are people who thought Economics would be what Economic History offers. So it is definitely worth checking it out before you have your heart set on applying for Economics.

I found this course by attempting to find a compromise between my favourite subjects at RGS of Economics and History. I really enjoyed the subject matter of economics but I also enjoyed learning about the past; I was also good at both which helped. Describing it is difficult because it has a massive range of topics and arguments within it. It is both a History of Economics, in the sense that some parts focus on explaining theory in Economics, e.g. the change in the 1980s from Keynesianism to Monetarism. Other parts of Economic History are to understand the development of economies over time. For example, why did Britain industrialise first? Why has Britain lost large parts of its once dominant manufacturing sector? Personally, I have done quite a range. From African Economic History, 1500-2000, with the economics of the slave trade and colonialism to Early Modern Europe with the rise of Capitalism over Feudalism. You can specialise if you want into modern economics, econometrics or developing economics quite easily, which is something most Economics courses don't offer.

The skills you need are also broad given the vast amount of subject matter you can cover if you wish. A historical mind is good but not essential. If you can structure an essay and write coherently then you shall be fine. Mathematically you have to be close to Economists but not stellar in Maths. I got a 'B' at AS level and haven't found things too taxing. You will have to understand at face value at least, the models and methods of economists and why they are pretty much constantly

inaccurate. Also, you need to have a wide ranging knowledge. Lots of reading before university is a godsend. Newspapers, like the FT, and publications like the Economist, are a staple of EH students. When it comes to A-levels I would suggest Economics, History, Maths, and a relevant humanity (e.g. Geography) or something impressive like a hard science.

English with Creative Writing Goldsmiths

Miriam Spindlove

I study English with Creative Writing at Goldsmiths University. The English side is probably pretty straightforward - read this and that and write some essays. The creative writing side is most likely the one people are not too familiar with. Writing your own things can be invaluable to learning how to read other people's things. I was attracted to this course for actually quite a superficial reason - a lot (a massively-huge amount) of people do English, doing something a little extra that's stuck on the end of your degree's name makes you stand out. I personally want a job in the 'creative' industries (media, advertising etc) and doing a degree which requires you to constantly think outside the box and always use your imagination, is not only helpful to you, but is also appealing to prospective employers. Of course you also actually have to want to spend hours writing poems and stories. I have just finished my first year where, week by week, we dissected how to write. We looked in detail at endings, cliches, even footnotes, whilst also taking turns to read out things we have written to the group and handing out a piece of our writing to the group to get feedback on. I have really enjoyed knowing how far I have progressed, I started off the course believing stories I wrote had to be intensely clever to be good but through constantly looking at other writer's work it turns out that is completely not the case and it's okay for stories to have ambiguous endings and boring plot lines (writer's bitterness - something you'll come to understand if you do the course - 'how are they published?? Everyone in the workshop can write better than this!!'). One piece of advice that I find invaluable is, 'You're not writing for yourself, you're writing for other people'. Through always writing, analysing and observing you do truly understand and read better.

Workshops can get a little bitchy however, so be good at writing or don't do it. Also don't try and be someone you're not, the best writing usually stems from personal experiences. You will definitely find yourself progressing, I started off the course thinking I could only write stories and absolutely not poems (urgh how restrictive - form, meter... how can I possibly fit everything I want to say in something so small?) but by the end of the year I found what I was best at and what I enjoyed the most is actually writing and reading slam poetry - who knew?! Would you learn how to write well, think imaginatively extremely quickly (and cry whilst praying to the gods of literature who might potentially exist (or at least in that moment you hope they do) because you have nothing to say and you have to read a story out before 15 peers the next morning) if you were doing a degree which simply makes you learn textbooks? NOPE. For this course you have to be fairly egotistical (believe your writing is good, because if not, why should anyone else?), see all experiences as potential writing material and have things to say. Enjoy it!

Environmental Science

University of Leeds

Louisa Mamalis

I am in my second year of studying Environmental Science at Leeds University, which I really enjoy. Environmental Science is an extremely broad course which is what attracted me to it, as opposed to doing a subject like Geography, which would have been interesting but in my view gave me less scope and fewer science topics, which is what I was interested in studying. I wanted to learn how the different systems of the world work together and how they influence each other, as well as how humans are influencing the systems through climate change. In Environmental Science I have covered meteorology, sustainable development, oceanography, ecology and geochemistry; these give you you a great depth of knowledge.

In the first year you are introduced to all these topics and in second year you can then whittle them down as you find out what you like the most. My favourite modules have been oceanography, ecology and climate change interactions with people and the environment, so I still have a broad range of interests.

With regards to A-level choices I would definitely say that Geography is a great choice as it gives you a good grounding for the topics covered in Environmental Science. As Geography is such a broad subject itself I found that I knew something about most things we covered even if it was only a tiny bit of meteorology that we studied in first year! Biology is also useful as the ecological data collection we learnt about at A-level gave me some basic skills that I could use at university. I didn't do Chemistry, Maths or Physics; these are recommended subjects, however you by no means have to do them. I ended up doing compulsory modules in all three during my first year to get me up to speed so they are not essential as the university will give you a basic knowledge so you can do the work in the later years; it would not harm to have some previous knowledge though, in hindsight, I wish I had done one of them, maybe Chemistry as I have discovered that I actually really enjoy geochemistry so some Chemistry knowledge would have been useful.

The sort of person who would enjoy this course would be someone who has a broad range of interests in the environment and science, as well as some sustainability topics. You would need to enjoy working outdoors collecting data as there is quite a lot of fieldtrip work involved in the course, which is really fun, and gives you some great skills and experiences for your CV. Skills in essay writing as well as answering shorter questions and some maths or chemistry are useful.

Electronic Engineering with Nanotechnology

University of York

Omesh Kapur

I am currently in my second year. My course has a large range of content that it covers, from learning to code by making a game from scratch to creating, analysing and debugging circuits. However where my course differs from others is the nanotechnology section. This part of the course has truly been enjoyable. It has provided me with many opportunities that otherwise would not have been available on a standard engineering course. I have been able to work inside cleanrooms with machines worth hundreds of thousands of pounds. These machines are usually not allowed to be handled by undergraduates and are mainly used by professors and phd students under heavy supervision. However

as part of my course assessment I was able to use these machines to explore the possibilities of tackling current problems for a new type of TV display. This is a topic that current professional researchers are looking into with billions being invested into this field. As a second year I was told to use as much research as I could as well as my current knowledge to try to alter a given solution and come up with a better one.

I have found that maths is a key A-level for any Engineering degree. For nanotechnology, I have found that I have needed my A-level knowledge of Physics, Chemistry and Biology. As with any course there are areas that I don't like, whether it be specific course content or the way it is taught by a lecturer. However I have found that as long as you enjoy yourself and work hard, everything will fall into place. It is better to know and understand which areas you need to give priority to in your course, rather than stress about an area that does not really matter in your overall degree. I would say that if you can easily apply any theory to a given situation, engineering is perfect for you. It is all about finding an elegant, and most importantly, a simple method for any given problem. Specifically for Nanotechnology I would suggest doing research on the internet about all the different things going on in the field and if you find that you are interested in any form of 'tiny science' or even the bridging gap between all the sciences than this is for you.

Geology

Durham University

Catherine Goddard

At A-level I studied Chemistry, Maths, Further Maths and Geography. Enjoying all of my subjects equally I found that Geology was a good combination of them all, as it is essentially a more scientific approach to Physical Geography.

I have been studying my course for nearly two years and have done a broad range of subjects. During my first year I took Physics and Maths applied modules. This year I have had to take a module in computer coding so as to be able to make geological images from data. A large part of this course is field work based; you need to be comfortable with being outdoors in any weather conditions as you average two 'week

long' field trips each year. For each of the six modules, for every one hour of a lecture you have two hours of practical.

What do you most enjoy about the course?

I like the variety in the things that we study. You range from understanding massive processes that are occurring in physical outcrops to looking down a microscope and determining the precise location in the mantle that a volcanic magma came from. You get to develop a broad range of skills. At Durham they are willing to help explain concepts outside lectures and are very good at responding to emails.

Is there anything that you don't enjoy?

The work load is heavy and constant; this year I haven't had a single week where I haven't had some piece of summative work due so it occasionally feels like you never get a break. At Durham there is a limited choice in modules, which considering the degree of difficulty of the modules, can be frustrating.

Are there A Levels that you need or are particularly helpful for someone planning to study this course?

I would say that doing at least two of the following A-levels would definitely be necessary: Physics, Maths or Chemistry with Chemistry being the most helpful of the three. Contrary to popular belief Geology is very much a science and therefore being able to understand scientific concepts is more important than essay based skills.

What kind of person would enjoy this course?

The Durham course is definitely coursework based and therefore would be suitable for someone who is not as confident in exams. Anyone who has an interest in the world around them would find this course fascinating. I would however say if you find science and maths hard then you would struggle. Also if you're not the "D of E type" then you would find the field trips utterly miserable.

If anyone would like any further information about either Durham (University College specifically) or Geology then please contact me through Mr Buzzacott and I will be more than happy to help.

International Relations

Kings College London

Struan Clark

I was attracted to the course as I had an interest in current affairs and it was a combination of my 3 favourite subjects at school (economics, history and politics), I was also unsure what I wanted to do later on life so it I decided to choose a broad subject which could keep many potential career paths open. I'm currently in my 1st year of study. My modules for the year were world politics since 1945, introduction to political theory, comparing political systems, reading politics (which entails studying significant political books in the last 75 years) and studying politics(which entails analysing research methods in politics; this is as dull as it sounds) the first three I have studied the first three throughout the academic year and the last two have been for a semester each. The thing I enjoy the most about my course is that at Kings they have institutes for many different countries such as Brazil, India and China; thus instead of your normal lecturer you get a lecture from the head of the country's institute. A further aspect that I enjoy is the fact that as Kings is in the centre of London, the university is able to get a range of guest speakers from MPs in Westminster to ambassadors of various countries. The worst aspect for me is the philosophical side, as I have little interest in philosophy. I wouldn't say there are any particular A-levels required for my course except Politics, but may be useful to have history and philosophy and ethics. The one bit of advice I would give to someone thinking about studying this course would be to understand that the course has some strong philosophical aspects, especially when studying theory, and that it is quite different from Politics at A-level.

Management

Will Guise

What attracted me to Management?

During A levels my favourite subject was business studies by far. Management or business management was one course I looked at first. When looking through the course outline for management it seemed as though it was business studies but to a higher level. I also briefly looked at doing something history related and I also looked at a few joint

honours degrees, however I knew that continuing down the business path was where I wanted to go. Even if you don't enjoy the hard work for A levels, they did show me the path I wanted to take at uni.

What have I covered?

So far in my first year of studying management I've largely done topics that have continued on from what I learned at A level. The modules do cover the basics of business management in order to give you a good general understanding. However next year I get to choose most of my modules so I can focus on what I want to. This first year is really an introduction so you can get settled in and so you can understand what you really want to learn in the following years.

What will I cover in the next few years?

In the next few years I get to pick what I want to do really. In my second year I get to pick half of the modules I want to do, so it really depends on what you are like. There is so much choice as well. For example, you can do modules in tourism or you can move more into psychology. Some of the compulsory modules for me next year are: human resource management, marketing management, strategic management, contemporary economic policy, technology and organisation. I can also take a year in industry if I want to, however I probably won't.

What do I enjoy about it?

Doing management at university is great. The modules I've been forced to do in my first year have largely been helpful and interesting so I'm really enjoying the course! The fact that I can choose where I want to go is also a really good thing, it means I don't have to do any more modules I don't like! And of course the whole university life is amazing, I would recommend my course to anyone who enjoys business studies at A level and I would 100% encourage anyone to go to The University of Nottingham for it!

What don't I enjoy?

There are some compulsory modules which I don't enjoy as much as others. For example, I don't enjoy economics yet I am forced to take one module which involves it. However, that is the only thing I don't really enjoy if I'm honest. I also only have one 9am lecture a week so that's a real bonus!

What A levels are needed?

I think business studies is ideal, my course really does feel like business studies but continued into a greater depth. It would be useful to have some knowledge of economics for it but that isn't completely necessary as I didn't do economics or know much about it. There is also some emphasis on accounting in my first year, so maths would be a useful skill to have some knowledge on. I did Maths at A level but was never very good at it, but it has helped me with accounting. Although if you don't do maths, you can take a module which teaches you A level maths and I've heard that is meant to be easy (but you can only take this if you did not take maths at A level).

What other skills are needed?

There aren't many extra skills that you wouldn't have been previously taught. I would say that being able to write an essay is important, taking history at A level helped me with me essay writing. In general for university you need to have good time management as well, its all down to you to get things done.

Any further advice?

I cant think of any further advice for my course. I would say work hard for your A levels because it really is worth it to get to your first choice unis. You will get the longest holiday after your A levels and the first year of university really isn't a very stressful one!

Management with Entrepreneurship

Royal Holloway University of London

David Drage

Why did I choose this course? It offered an opportunity to understand how to start a business, included modules that appeared to be interesting (such as 'creativity and problem solving') and offered an opportunity to spend the penultimate year within a business.

What have I enjoyed? The wide variety of topics that are covered. Eight modules were studied this year: *Interpreting Management, Marketing, Quantitative Methods, International Business, Organizational Studies, Accounting, Information Systems, and Economic and Social Foundations for Sustainable Organisations*. 'Political systems', 'sustainable economic development,' 'ethical branding', 'Max Weber's work on bureaucracy', 'using information systems/IT to create a competitive advantage', and 'how to create financial statements' were some of the specific topics

within these modules. Furthermore, many of the lecturers made the course very engaging.

What have I disliked? Difficult to get to know tutors and lecturers as there are a lot of students and you don't spend a lot of time with them within your timetable (13 hours overall per week, 1 hour with each seminar tutor per week; 4 hours of seminars). Some of the lecturers and tutors were not great this year. The course has not included any of the 'entrepreneurship' modules as of yet, but it will do the 2nd half of the 2nd year and throughout final year.

Useful A levels? Business Studies and Economics would make your first year a lot easier. IT and Politics could be very useful at certain stages of the course too. For example, organizational structures, financial statements, motivational theorists and many other aspects of A Level Business Studies are part of the course. I don't think it would be a huge problem if you hadn't studied these A levels (many students on this course have not); you would just have to work a bit harder than those that have.

Who would enjoy this course? If you enjoyed A level Business Studies then you probably will enjoy this course, or if you are interested in business generally (e.g. How does politics impact upon businesses? How can businesses be more sustainable? How do businesses develop strategies? What are businesses like now compared to 50 years ago?) .

Skills needed? Being able to write essays and the ability to work in a group and present are skills that are needed to succeed. The course has also involved reading many academic journals in preparation for seminars and for assignments; being able to comprehend and communicate these was necessary. However, you can learn new skills you need for the course as you go along.

Advice? Focus/try to learn in lectures and seminars; it will make life a lot easier when it is time for exams/assignments, and enjoy the course. Thus far, this course has been pretty good and the work load is reasonable. The assignments have been challenging and the content is wide ranging and largely practical/interesting.

Modern Languages & European Studies

University of Bath

David Assender

I was attracted to the BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies course mainly because I'm a keen linguist, but the Bath course allows you to focus on the political and cultural side of France and Spain / whatever language combination you're doing (2 of French, Spanish, German, Italian and Russian). Alternatively there is a BA (Hons) Languages and Politics, where you study one of these languages along with the politics of that country. I've been studying my course since October 2012, so coming to the end of my 2nd year now. The course is 4 years and we have a compulsory year abroad for our 3rd year where we have to spend a minimum of 3 months in each country of our languages (although the university insists you spend as much time abroad as possible during the 15 month gap from June of Second Year to September at the start of the 4th year) The course comprises 5 elements; - Written/spoken language and grammar for both the languages (in the target languages), Political/cultural studies for both countries (in the target languages), European Studies unit (in English). The political/cultural and European studies units have a strong focus on modern European culture, politics and history, so for a student who has done languages at A-Level (and who may also have done English Lit, Politics, History or Economics for example, but of course by no means necessary), then the course is ideal in my opinion. I like the fact that your language and grammar improves considerably over the first 2 years of the course, to the extent that when you go away for your 3rd year abroad, you're ready to throw yourself out there, but also in the knowledge that when you come back for your final year it's very possible that you'll be fluent or near enough fluent in your languages. Bath University as a whole put a great deal of emphasis on placements, not just for our course specifically, so I'd sat it's important that all A-Level students considering the university know that! In terms of advice, I would say the course would by default suit someone more interested in humanities, but the fact that it's so broad is very appealing to people, and it's looked upon very favourably by employers. The timetable is relatively light compared to most other courses, and there's a fair amount of reading (but it always looks worse than it really is!)

MORSE

Oliver Harvey

MORSE (Maths, Operational Research, Statistics and Economics) at its core is maths based degree but it focuses on how this maths can be applied to the real world of economics and finance. The first year of the course is fairly maths intensive with half of my modules being common to those doing pure maths but this is needed so that you have the sufficient grounding in later years to choose options that interest you. Due to the breadth of the course you get the opportunity to study a huge number of modules and by your final year it is possible to take nearly any module in any of the Maths, Economics or Business School departments as well as a large choice from the sciences as well. The course doesn't assume any prior knowledge of economics and even those people who did study it at A-level aren't at a significant advantage to those of us that didn't, this was one of my biggest but unfounded concerns about the course. My favourite module this year is teaching us to use computer programs to input and manipulate large amounts of data in order to find the best way to model it, this was all completely new to most people and although it can be difficult at first I find it particularly rewarding. MORSE can be tough at times but it is a very rewarding course and definitely worthwhile considering if you enjoy the applications of maths and statistics.

MORSE

Clare Zheng

What attracted you to the course

I did Maths, Further Maths and Economics in A2, so I wanted to do a degree that connects Maths and Economics with application in finance and management. Dr. Stones introduced me to this MORSE course (Mathematics, Operational research, Statistics and Economics) which was originated at University of Warwick. More importantly, Morse degree provides a wide range of different career paths with options to tailor the degree to personal preference.

What have you covered?

We have done modules from departments of Statistics, Mathematics and Business. The core modules we have done are: Introduction to Statistics,

Mathematical Analysis, Quantitative Economics and Mathematical programming. The Maths and Stats modules are very different from A-levels because they are mainly focused on proofs.

No previous knowledge of Economics is needed but would be extremely helpful if having done A-level Economics.

What sorts of things will you cover in the next few years?

I cannot answer that yet because I haven't decided what modules to choose as MORSE does provide a wide range of module options to choose from. A full list of modules can be found on the course website.

What do you enjoy about it?

I like how flexible this degree is, in terms of module options. (Such as computer science related ones or even business/finance related ones) But the core will always be some Stats module.

Also, as I am not very confident in Maths myself, the MORSE Maths modules are hard, but not as hard as Maths degree ones.

What do you not enjoy?

The first year is the hardest when it comes to MORSE as all modules in first year are core. For me, I am not particularly good at programming and coding so I do struggle a lot in that aspect.

Also, in comparison to other degrees, MORSE is a VERY intense degree. Throughout the whole year, starting from October, I had to work as hard as I was during exam period in A2 in order to keep up with coursework.

What A Levels are needed?

Maths and Further Maths definitely, especially Statistics. Economics is optional but strongly recommended.

What other skills are needed?

Independent study skills (Very important)

Good self-discipline

Ability to organize things (As there is always an awful lot going on, so its important to have things organized-remember the deadlines for coursework, attend society events etc.)

I'm currently in my 2nd year of physiotherapy at King's College London. I was first attracted to physiotherapy as I wanted to work in a job where I would get to experience different things every day, and found many of the things covered in a physiotherapy course such as anatomy and physiology really interesting when it was covered at A-level; I wanted to take it further. The course covers a really wide variety of topics as there are so many areas that a physiotherapist can work in – it's basically split into musculoskeletal, neurological and respiratory units. At King's we have a small year of 42 which is one of the best things about the course – you get to know everyone really well and it makes it a lot more fun. Quite a lot of time is spent in practical classes, which is good as it breaks up the lectures a bit. Unfortunately due to several weeks of placement during the summer holidays we don't get a normal university holiday of several months, which is definitely one of the worst things about the course! Different unis vary in their placement timings, but in general, holiday time is limited to a few weeks. To enjoy the course and be suited to this choice of career you definitely have to be a 'people person' – you're constantly expected to be interacting with other people and communication skills are one of the key skills they want you to have. You also have to be prepared to work hard from the very start as it is one of the most intense courses there is, as so much is crammed into the three years! You have to expect to be in lectures or practicals the majority of the time – days off are extremely rare! Make sure you do your research as physiotherapy involves so many different areas and you will be exposed to all of them throughout your time at university – it isn't just sports injuries like a lot of people think, and if you don't show that you are aware of all the different areas at interview you won't get in. Regarding A level subjects, sciences and PE are usually the way to go, although most courses only ask for one science course (normally Biology) and PE is an added benefit as a lot of the material is included in the course at a more advanced level.

During 6th form, I was wary of keeping my options open. I contemplated vocational degrees and I knew I wasn't confident in committing myself to them so early. Single subject degrees also seemed at the time perhaps a bit repetitive and laborious. I wanted to keep using my maths (which features strongly in the economics I have taken up) without doing a Bsc; I knew I wouldn't be able to hack it in a lab or do endless amounts of stats. PPE was a good choice, and in fact the right choice for me. So my advice: firstly, study what you want to study at A-level and not what you think will look good and secondly, you'll be surprised what you can study at university given your A-level choices, and finally, if you're struggling to choose between subjects don't feel obliged to pursue a single honours.

What attracted you to the course?

Like many, I was fairly (well very) undecided as to what I wanted to study at university, never mind what career path I ought to pursue. I simply wanted a degree that provided me with a lot of variety. Economics is fantastic for building your quantitative and scientific skills, Politics really develops your ability to digest information and argument structure, while Philosophy really pushes your critical and analytical thinking. All three disciplines, despite content overlap, require three very distinct ways of thinking and unique skills. Obviously doing 3 disciplines has its pros and cons:

Pros: You're rarely ever bored – there's always something new and interesting. If you end up doing a bad module or you're sick of political debates it need only take up a fraction of your time.

Secondly, you get the pick of the bunch and this has been really important in my 2nd year. When it comes to module choices, you can (at least at York anyway) pick the one philosophy module you really wanted to do, or really pursue your interest in developing economies by selecting those modules that will really support you across politics and economics (even back it up with ethics in philosophy!). Doing a PPE degree you're not going to be restricted – you will in effect be spoilt for choice.

Cons: It's a tall order. Now I could've put this as a pro and said it's a challenge – it is. It really is. The problem/challenge with studying 3 disciplines is that when you're in your second or even third year, you're doing an economics module with someone who has studied nothing but economics for 2/3 years straight. Meanwhile, you might have swung your degree toward philosophy or politics and you are expected to be at the same level of competency despite all the other work you have done. You'll find that some modules require relatively little background knowledge, i.e. next year I'm studying the Philosophy of Criminal Law, but most modules assume a base level of knowledge.

I think one of the things I didn't enjoy, was the compulsory politics module in my first year. Having never studied politics before, I didn't warm to the subject at all. It's fairly common for students not to enjoy certain modules during their first year but this is especially true for those studying PPE. The good news is you can swing your degree to one side – I certainly have, although now I'm returning to do more politics next year after enjoying human rights this year.

Are there A Levels that you need or are particularly helpful for someone planning to study this course?

Whatever, the more bizarre and different the better. Well to a point obviously. I studied Maths, Chemistry, Latin and R.S. I think maths is fairly fundamental to economics but I know people with very little mathematical knowledge who have really enjoyed studying it. It helps if you've done an essay subject before, but essays are so very different at university – Philosophy especially. Doing a variety of A levels at least prepares you take on a variety skills at university.

What kind of person would enjoy this course?

If you're interested in current affairs then this is absolutely the one for you. Ashamedly, I wasn't at all at school, but PPE does give you the insight to understand current affairs and very quickly arms you with your own opinion and argument.

I wouldn't necessarily say this course is for hard workers or people who can labour through hours upon hours of reading. However you do need to be interested and active in your studying (which you would be if you enjoyed it anyway). There's no doubt you need to be relatively capable, but if you're able to achieve the grades needed at A-level then I really

wouldn't worry from then on. If you're happy to have an opinion and more than happy to change it, then you'll really enjoy this course.

Are there any skills that you need?

I'd say skills – no. No-one you will meet will have studied all 3 subjects at school; you will all start at the same base level in your first year and take it from there. Maths is helpful – but you can get by without it.

Have you any advice for someone thinking of studying this course?

Be honest with yourself. What don't you like and why don't you like it? With so much scope to study so many amazing things, niche or broad, current or old you will find something. As with most things, the more you put in, the more you get back. I was relatively ambivalent about my module choices for my 2nd year (last spring) and just made the deadline in changing them during the Autumn term. If I hadn't changed them I wouldn't have enjoyed this year half as much. At university it's very easy to get side-tracked by so, so many things going on, but remember why you're there! There are a surprisingly large amount of people who trudge through their degree, but studying PPE you don't really have that excuse.

Portugese
Oxford

Alissa Machin

After attending an admissions talk, I was persuaded that taking up Portuguese from scratch at university was for me. I had already discovered some Portuguese writers and enjoyed reading them in translation and it was the literature-heavy structure of the course which attracted me to it. As a language which is offered in few university Modern Languages departments as entirely separate from Spanish and which nevertheless has a unique cultural history, learning Portuguese appealed to me. As one admissions tutor put it "if you want to be the graduate who can take that business call from Rio, learn Portuguese". A brief visit to Lisbon to "break the ice" with the language, as well as some introductory grammar materials, before my first term at university, served me very well in what was to come.

So far, I have been formally studying the language for eight months. The course is very intensive: by the end of the year, students who have taken Portuguese up from scratch must sit the same exams as those who have continued it from A level. The first year is designed to introduce students to a range of genres and periods in Portuguese literature, whilst bringing their language up to scratch. Each week, beginners' Portuguese students have around 4-5 hours of taught language a week as well as literature tutorials and lectures. The best thing about taking a language up from scratch is being able to chart, week after week, the incremental improvements that you are making. I have also really enjoyed exploring a very contemporary Portuguese play from 2011, a retelling of *The Tempest* which blends together Portuguese heritage and Greek myth.

A background of A level languages, especially French, Spanish or Latin would be particularly helpful for this course; previous knowledge of Romance languages will help you to make connections between words and their origins, making learning vocabulary a lot less of a chore! The analytical skills developed through the study of English literature, Latin, Greek, Classical Civilisation, Philosophy or History would also serve you very well. While the first year is designed to accommodate students who have little prior experience of studying literary texts, having English Literature A Level has proved to be a big advantage this year in both written expression and familiarity with technical terms. I would recommend this course for anyone who really enjoys reading, discussing and writing about foreign literature, and who has enjoyed the cultural and arts modules offered in the A Level languages. In reality, the course is very literature-heavy, in spite of the 50% literature; 50% language weighting of the first year exams.

Portugese (Beginners) and Spanish
Oxford

Hugo Evans

I'm in the final term of my first year studying Portuguese and I've been really enjoying it so far - it's been really fun to start a language from scratch as you can really see how far you've progressed.

We have grammar, oral, aural and translation classes each week, so the

language work is quite intensive, which is mainly because our tutors want us to progress quickly from absolute beginners to post-A Level standard in the first year (!) However, the course is also quite literature heavy (typical of modern languages at Oxford) and this can seem overwhelming at times, as it involves lots of reading (many of the texts aren't available in translation) and essay writing, but I've found it really interesting so far. I would definitely recommend English Literature A Level since reading literature, criticism and writing essays are core elements of the course here, and I think it has really helped me - friends of mine who don't have English A Level have said that they have found writing essays on literature difficult. Clearly having another language (probably a Romance language like Spanish/French) is also a great help, but I've also found knowledge of Latin to be useful- not only in terms of etymology and translation skills, but also because the close analysis of the foreign language set text is essentially exactly what I have to do now. In fact, since my exams at the end of this term are made up of translation papers and literature papers (involving essays and commentaries on a selection of Portuguese novels/plays/poetry), they almost mirror what we had to do for Latin A Level (the same can be said for the Spanish side of the course).

Whilst the more you know the better, I wouldn't worry about how little Portuguese you know when you apply - they are just looking for people who are interested and have the capacity to pick up the language quickly.

Primary Education

Roehampton

Zoe Munday

I have just finished my first year on the BA Primary Education course at the University of Roehampton in London, specialising in PE. I have always known that I want to be a teacher, however I never imagined myself attending university in London, having lived so close to the city my entire life. I was first attracted to the course by the excellent reputation Roehampton has for graduate teachers, which I knew about from the work experience I gained before applying for the course. The fact that the course is 100% assignments with no exams was also a major factor in making Roehampton my first choice. The Roehampton

Primary Ed course is one of the only ones that offers you the opportunity to specialise in a subject, which I thought would add to my employability at the end of the course. The course so far has covered everything from food technology and sculpturing to long division and inclusive education. Unlike some of the other universities I looked at, Roehampton focuses on how to teach, rather than what to teach. My second favourite thing about the course so far is the wide range of subjects that I have studied; some days it's like being back in primary school! But my favourite part of the course has to be the six weeks I spent teaching in a school at the beginning of the Spring Term. Being on placement was the most rewarding experience and as if I wasn't sure already, I am now certain that I am on the right course for me.

In order to get onto this course or indeed any Primary Education course it is advisable to be studying at least one national curriculum subject at A level. Ultimately, however, your acceptance comes down to how well your interview goes. Be prepared to work hard as I have found that my course has more contact hours than other courses. This is essential, as the course not only gives you a degree at the end of the three years, but also a qualification, allowing you to go straight into teaching, avoiding the need for a PGCE. This course is most suited to someone who is passionate about their own and children's education, someone who is bubbly, bright, imaginative, and friendly and likes working with others. In my opinion Primary Education is the best course for almost anyone because not many other courses involve finger painting and blind football!

Psychology

Canterbury Christ Church

Hannah Goel

Whilst most of my friends knew what they wanted to do at university before they even got into 6th form, I hadn't even given it a thought until lower sixth when a friend of mine said she was going on a 2-day psychology course in Nottingham. I'd never really considered Psychology but I thought I'd go with her anyway. I was never very good at concentrating at school but I found myself really interested in everything that was said at that course so I decided to study psychology at university.

I've been studying psychology at Canterbury Christ Church University for three years now and I am nearing the end of the course. Psychology is (to me) a fascinating subject. There are statistics involved and I haven't always understood it all. Having said that, any time I've had to use statistics in an assessment I've managed to do so without too much of a headache and I am currently working at a 2:1. Basically, if I can do the statistics, they're not hard (so don't worry when they tell you "there WILL be statistics" at open days).

During my course, I've particularly enjoyed modules such as Health Psychology and Therapeutic Processes in Psychology (but that is because I want to go on to be a counsellor) but there are also much more science-y modules such as Psychobiology and the Evolutionary Psychology (obviously the modules will differ according to which university you look at).

Most A level subjects are relatable to psychology so don't worry too much (just make sure you relate them as much as you can in your personal statement). I didn't do a science at A level and wasn't asked to but each University will be different.

If you're thinking of studying psychology, I would definitely recommend it as a subject, but I do think you have to be careful in choosing a good university (maybe one that is well known for having a good psychology department) as I have found the psychology department at Canterbury Christ Church to be a bit difficult at times. However, as a subject psychology opens a lot of doors in terms of employment. Even HR, management and advertisement roles sometimes ask for a psychology degree so it's useful even if you don't want to go into a typical 'psychologist' role.

Experimental Psychology

University of Bristol

Hannah Wing

What attracted me to the course?

I was attracted to the course because of my interest and enjoyment of Maths and Biology at A-level, and the course seemed a good mix of the two. I also had decided after doing medicine work experience that I

didn't want to do medicine, but I still wanted a degree subject involving science. I wanted to learn a mixture of skills with my degree course that would be useful post Uni, as I didn't want to limit my career choices. Other psychology courses did not seem to have such an emphasis on the scientific nature (hence the degree name experimental psychology), and other Unis were not as strong in terms of the research aspect as Bristol. The fact that the course was accredited by the BPA (British Psychological Association) was also a bonus, and the structure of the course with a 3rd year research project in an area of my choice was exciting, as I knew I'd be able to study something that really interested me in my 3rd year.

How many years have you been covering the course?

I'm in my second year at the moment – I hadn't studied psychology before Uni.

Give a brief outline of what you have covered in the course.

The first two years of the course are split between core psychological modules and statistics, involving exams and coursework (lab reports and essay writing). The first year gives you a grounding in all 4 areas (Biological Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology and Cognitive Psychology), and the second year builds on this core knowledge with no choice of units (as the BPA specifies this). The first year covers basic statistics, and this advances in the second year. In the first year you take 2 open units which you can choose and there is a really wide choice- for example you can study a language. The third year of the course involves more choice in the core units you take, and a lot of the third year is taken up by an individual research project where they link you to a researcher and allow you to focus on an area of psychology you are interested in- for example I will be doing research into the effect of trust, prior knowledge and certainty on decision making in social psychology.

What do you most enjoy about the course? Is there anything that you don't enjoy?

I most enjoy the nature of the course in terms of doing a lot of experimentation ourselves. For example, when it comes the statistics units we all participate in experiments then are taught how to analyse

the results and we then have to write this up in a lab report. I also enjoy all of the main units that are taught, as everything is very interesting. There are particular areas that I prefer to others, but I like the fact that you get a good basic knowledge in a lot of different areas. One thing I don't particularly enjoy is the fact that a lot of my marks are made up by coursework, and so the course is quite relentless and has a lot of deadlines. However, some people prefer coursework to exams so that seems to suit most people. I really enjoy the fact that the second year of the course involves making presentations, as I think this is a very useful and transferable skill when it comes to applying for graduate jobs after uni. After applying for internships this summer I have found it a very useful skill as a lot of employers ask you to make presentations in their assessment days, and with experience your presentation skills definitely develop.

Are there A Levels that you need or are particularly helpful for someone planning to study this course?

I'd advise not to be put off if you haven't studied psychology, as A level psychology isn't as well regarded as many other A levels, and the content you learn can be easily caught up on. Subjects like biology and maths would be particularly helpful, along with any other science subjects. Even subjects like history and English that involve essay writing would be useful.

What kind of person would enjoy this course?

Someone who enjoys learning a range of transferable skills would enjoy psychology. Someone who also enjoys science subjects and maths would enjoy the course, but I think most people would find the content of the course very interesting. Someone who enjoys being assessed in many different ways would enjoy this course, as it involves assessment over such a wide range of areas (essays, lab reports, group presentations and exams). Although this course doesn't have loads of contact hours, it involves a lot of different things and tasks to juggle at once, and there is rarely a long period of time without any deadlines. Someone who is not entirely sure what career they'd like to go into after university would enjoy the course, as it does not confine you with choices after university.

Are there any skills that you need?

I'd say analytical skills and being an all-rounder are beneficial on this course, as it is not a test of either being good at sciences or humanities.

Have you any advice for someone thinking of studying this course?

I'd advise you to look closely at the content of the course and the department you are going into. I'd advise you not to be put off doing psychology simply because you haven't studied it before, as I'm certain I've enjoyed it more than any other degree subject I could have chosen. It really is a great degree and very interesting if you're not looking at doing something vocational, as it leaves you open to a lot of different opportunities after university whether it be working in business or even becoming a clinical psychologist.

Psychology with Cognitive Neuroscience

Goldsmiths

Kirstie Stewart

I've just finished my first year studying Psychology with Cognitive Neuroscience at Goldsmiths University of London. I had wanted to do Psychology for quite a while before I even began the university application process in 6th form, and I chose to do it with Neuroscience because I'd always loved science at school, and doing this alongside a normal Psychology degree makes it that bit more scientific. Furthermore, Psychology is a degree that is becoming increasingly popular and therefore competitive and I think applying for a course that isn't just straight Psychology may not only help you get a place more easily but could make you stand out from other candidates when applying for jobs after you've graduated.

For the first two years of my degree I studied all the same modules as everyone doing straight Psychology. However, my tutorial/mentor group consists of around 10 of us who are all taking the Cognitive Neuroscience stream and when we meet fortnightly we are encouraged to discuss Neuroscience and include it in our essays and presentations. These sessions are really fun as you get to have conversations and debates which makes a change from lectures. The Cognitive

Neuroscience part of the degree isn't assessed until third year where we must take 4 modules in Neuroscience and carry out a project on a Cognitive Neuroscience related topic.

Like most Psychology courses, this course prefers you to have at least one A level in Maths or a Science and good GCSE grades in English and Maths. I'd definitely recommend doing A level Biology or Chemistry to anyone thinking about doing Psychology, as I feel like my Biology AS and Chemistry A level definitely helped with my understanding in the biological module and the processing and cognition module. It really doesn't matter if you're not great at Maths (as long as you have a good grade at GCSE you will already have a basic knowledge of things like probabilities) because you never actually have to do any calculations or equations; you just need to be able to use statistics software, which they take you through step by step. I'd also say that doing an essay subject would help because people who don't take one at A level may struggle with adjusting to essay and lab report writing more than others. Taking Business Studies taught me how to structure essays well.

Before applying for a Psychology course I would really recommend someone to look closely at every module they would be studying to see if the course is for them, because a lot of people turned up to lectures in the first week of university surprised that they would have to be studying Biology and Statistics, complaining that they didn't realise Psychology was 'mathsy' or 'sciency'. I also think some people may be put off doing a 'Psychology with _' degree because they think they may not be able to handle the work load, but you take the same number of modules as everyone else, and the only difference is that in the final year your modules are more specialised towards your stream. Therefore, if you're interested, apply!

Real Estate

University of Reading

Rory Gale

I'm currently in my first year of a 3 year course studying Real Estate as an undergraduate at the University of Reading. A lot of people are often confused when I tell them I'm studying Real Estate, as they instantly associate it with being an estate agent; you don't need a degree to

become an estate agent, you do to become a surveyor.

This year, modules have included, Building (learning about structures of building/materials/building regulations), Planning (how the built environment is planned/permission for developments), Investment Appraisal (Property Valuation/looking at how viable developments and rental projects are), Law – both a general introduction and specifically looking at property law, and finally Economics (this covers topics learnt in both AS and A2 Level Economics). In the first year it gives you a good covering of the main core topics that are involved in property. Those who are taking Economics/Maths/Geography would certainly be the best position for the course; however none of these are required, and if you are not doing them you certainly shouldn't be put off.

This course has been enjoyable for me as I am interested in the topics it covers and you can appreciate their application into the real world. One of the best things about studying Real Estate is that it is all around you, and you are constantly learning from the environment you live in. Unlike many other courses it gives you a direct pathway into the property industry, which is an extremely sociable profession, meaning that those professionals are constantly networking and meeting new people. Therefore I would encourage those who are good with people and socialising to certainly consider this career path. All of the big firms are looking for confident, sociable professionals.

The course has a huge drive for you to seek work experience, and many of the firms have internship schemes that can be applied for; this helps to explain why such a large proportion of students who graduate come out with jobs. Also, there is no denying that property and buildings are something that will never go away and there will always be jobs available; n.b. these jobs can be very rewarding and it is by no means a low paid profession if you work hard.

I think that Real Estate is almost a hidden career for many at school, and only those with family or relatives in the industry are aware of it. I would certainly urge you to consider Real Estate. Reading is the best place to study it, and it is the best course that Reading offer.

What attracted you to the course?

At A-level I was not certain of the career that I wanted to go into, but knew that I wanted to go to university, so I thought that it was best to do something that interested me. Having researched many options, this was a course that I found particularly interesting and it gave me a wide variety of career options once I graduated. The way that it was taught across many universities also meant that I had a great deal of choice when it came to picking modules so I could tailor my degree to topics that I was genuinely interested in.

How many years have you been studying the course?

I am currently a 2nd year student on a 3 year course at Leeds however I had the option to extend to a four year course with a year in industry/year abroad.

Give a brief outline of what you have covered in the course.

Social Policy looks at the kind of society we live in asking questions such as: 'Do we want to ensure equality for all?'

In studying this, I have therefore looked at what social justice is and how we can tackle issues such as discrimination, poverty, crime, unemployment and homelessness. The key difference between social policy and sociology is therefore that social policy looks at the welfare of people and responses to these problems including the difficulties faced by policy makers. Sociology on the other hand focuses on how society works, developing and testing theories that engage with real world puzzles and problems.

Below is a list of my 2nd year modules:

Semester 1

Crime, Law and Regulation

Race and Hollywood Cinema

Research Methods

Semester 2

Urban Disorder & Social Control
Debates in Childhood and Youth
Disability Studies: An Intro

What do you most enjoy about the course?

While there are many aspects which I enjoy about my course, the main one would have to be the way in which it relates to everyday life and gives me the opportunity to look at current issues. In the past two years, in my studies we have looked at some fascinating issues which all lead back to real life cases. Below are a few examples of high profile media cases which we have covered:

The Tesco horse meat scandal

The London 2011 riots

The Moors Murderers, Ian Brady and Myra Hindley

Starbucks tax evasion

The James Bulger, child murder case

The Nestle baby milk scandal

The Stephen Lawrence racist murder case

The Hillsborough disaster

Is there anything that you don't enjoy?

The course is heavily assessed through essays so deadlines occasionally overlap with multiple pieces of work due on the same date. However this is not a common occurrence as we generally only get 4/5 essays per year (excluding exams).

Are there A Levels that you need or are particularly helpful for someone planning to study this course?

At A-level, I studied:

Philosophy and Ethics

Business Studies

History

Art

I have found that not studying sociology or social policy prior to my degree has left me at no disadvantage. While philosophy and ethics and business have both overlapped with my course, there are a wide variety

of subjects which could prepare you to study this including:

Geography
English
Politics
Economics
History

Theology **Florence Yardley Rees** Durham University

I have just finished my second year studying Theology at Durham and I genuinely believe that it is the best degree that you can do. During the sixth form I considered studying other arts subjects at university including ancient history, anthropology or philosophy. I knew that I wanted to do something a bit different and I was eventually attracted to Theology because I had enjoyed philosophy and ethics so much at school and I thought that it encompassed many subject areas I was interested in. During first year we were quite restricted in the modules we took so that we had a general overview on the whole course including, Old Testament, New Testament, Church history, religious studies and philosophy of religion. However in second year there is far more flexibility. I love pretty much every aspect of the course, especially the fact that it is so diverse. You have huge flexibility in the modules that you choose which range from philosophy of religion, the Reformation to a module I did this year on Death! It incorporates philosophy, biblical studies, sociology, history and literature. It is obviously a myth that you have to be very religious/ want to be a vicar/ nun to do theology and I managed to drop all scriptural modules after the first year. Theology is also a particularly friendly course and we are probably the closest group of any other subject at Durham. Being a relatively small subject (not as small as you might think- there are 75 of us) we all know each others names and lectures can be just like being back at school! As you can imagine there are also some real characters who do theology! The same is true of the lecturers who all know you personally and would be happy to help/ talk to you about anything at any time. The one thing I don't enjoy so much about the course is its

disorganisation. The department is somewhat as archaic as the subject and they haven't really embraced technology yet. (this may only be true of Durham but I can imagine other departments are small and similar). On the one hand this is great as lecturers actually really engage you during lectures rather than relying on power points, however it obviously means that you have to take notes and cannot rely on online slides in the same way many other subjects do. Similarly essays are handed in in person and handed back in person (friends find it hilarious that lecturers will literally walk around calling peoples names out like they did at school or literally just leave a pile of essays by their door for collection). Philosophy and ethics is a VERY useful A level though you do no need it. I found that in first year we had actually already covered most of what we learnt. Latin could be useful if you plan on studying ancient Greek and by sheer coincidence I did the Reformation in history at AS so Imme and I are experts in that! I think that anyone could enjoy this course as much as me, especially someone who wants to do something slightly different. It is so so so interesting and it is worth bearing in mind that the oldest and most famous scholars you can think of were almost defiantly theologians.

Vet Nursing

Izzie Davies

Middlesex

1). What is involved in the course?

It's usually blocks of uni-based module learning and placement blocks in practice (mine tend to be either 10 or 14 weeks long as a guide). Holidays are sadly pretty non-existent.

There are typically 2-3 modules a year, and in the final year its typical to get to choose an elective eg. exotic/equine/behaviour.

Most courses are 3 year FdSc where you qualify as a nurse with the option to top-up to BSc.

Middlesex (my uni) does the BSc in three years as its condensed the course - I don't know if other places do this.

Some unis have placement they can offer at their own hospitals (eg. Royal Vet College has the Queen Mother Hospital) but most you will either have to organise placement yourself or the uni will get it near

your home address.

There are also specific equine vet nurse courses if someone is interested in that field.

2). What you have enjoyed about it?

My uni isn't solely for veterinary courses so I've met a wide range of people and I get to experience London and travels really easy (not too far to come home as well).

It's really rewarding work, and my placement although it's annoying its based in Surrey is really lovely.

3). What you have not enjoyed about it?

My university aren't as involved with feedback and are very strict with passing exams compared other locations or the diploma route (not uni-based). From speaking to other trainee nurses on placement and in general RVC and Edinburgh Napier are really good at this.

My placement couldn't be done in London at uni so I've had to pay for a house in London whilst living at home for placement in Surrey which is a nightmare.

4). Any advice you would give someone who wants to apply for this course?

- Definitely visit the campus
- Ask questions about how they organise placement blocks and where they are
- Ask about their exam regulations eg. if you fail a task will you get 1 or more retakes (MDX is one retake or you retake the module/year)
- Try and find placement yourself ASAP where the uni/your uni accommodation is if they aim to send you home (unless this is preferable)
- Work experience is usually mandatory, but it's really helpful to have some knowledge/experience anyway (interviews will test your knowledge of the profession - if I remember correctly we got asked in

our group interviews to discuss badger culling, the ethical considerations of zoos and were given items from a vets and asked what they were eg. Xray markers, bones, blood tubes)

5). What job opportunities are there in the field of Vet Nursing? Are there plenty of jobs? How do you go about getting them?

When you graduate (FdSc or BSc) you're a qualified RVN so you can get work at any veterinary centre/hospital and it's pretty easy to get work as most places are in want of nurses. Hiring rates are really good for RVNs from degrees as its preferred to have a degree nurse than diploma nurse.

You can also go into

- pharmaceutical work/laboratory work
- apply for zoological work
- work as a nurse abroad (there are loads of programmes for treating strays in European countries at the moment)
- veterinary technicians in the army (work with working dogs, the troops families personal animals or rarely the household cavalry)
- specialising (courses to become specialist surgical nurse, orthopaedic nurse, equine vet nurse)

Jobs are usually easiest to get by looking online or reading veterinary magazines (Vet Times, The Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary Practice are the best ones for this).

For zoos and more unusual work I would imagine you'd contact the companies directly, I know of a nurse from a few years back who went to work with London Zoo but this isn't a commonly available job.

The army occasionally have promotional stalls for VNs at events (I saw them at Burghley last year), and they're easy to apply to at army.mod.uk ("veterinary technician" not nurse)

I am in my final year at Cardiff University and have nearly completed my 3 years of B.Sc. (hons) in Zoology. Zoology, as the name suggests, is a great subject for anybody interested in the scientific study of animals. A great deal of Zoology can be and is often studied in the field so anybody who enjoys being outdoors, travelling and getting involved in the science is likely to enjoy the course! You don't necessarily need any particular skills to start the course as you will pick up a huge number during your time doing the degree, however enthusiasm, willingness to put the effort in and learn will definitely get you through the course.

My course at Cardiff has placed a big emphasis on how animals interact with the environment and so you can gain a wide but very detailed picture of how ecosystems work at different levels and how different species fit in to that bigger picture. Despite the fact that I thought ecology was the least interesting aspect of Biology whilst at school, at university level it is a far more interesting topic, and especially when combined with some evolutionary study, you can begin to understand how life works at every level! Some examples of subjects I have looked at whilst studying Zoology include: Parasitology, Evolution, Animal Diversity, Conservation Biology, Animal Physiological Adaptations, Animal Behaviour, Molecular Ecology and loads of others. In addition, studying this side of zoology gives you a great excuse to go abroad and look at different animal species interacting with their native environment around the world, for example, a Caribbean beach somewhere?

On the other hand, some universities spend a much greater amount of time looking at the anatomy and physiology of animals in which they undertake a greater amount of dissections and lab-based work looking at the structure and function of animal anatomy. Anybody considering this side of Zoology might also want to consider Bioveterinary science (the non-clinical side of Veterinary science!)

Biology at A-level is a must to study Zoology; Bioscience subjects show a huge amount of overlap and you will find that bits of A-level genetics/

cell biology/physiology will be great background for particular aspects of Zoology. I would personally recommend taking another science, especially chemistry, as a lot of Biology is essentially applied chemistry and certain analytical and scientific thinking and skills will put you in a great position to begin studying Zoology at uni. Other than that, take an A-level that you will enjoy and can do well enough in to make sure you get your place at uni.

Finally, if you can find a course with some flexibility in terms of modules and degree schemes then that is always a great bonus. Some universities will allow you a great deal more freedom to study exactly what you want than others, so make sure you research your university choices well before applying!

Anybody wanting any more information on Zoology or studying at Cardiff can contact me through Mr Buzzacott.

