

MATURE STUDENTS' GUIDE

Advice for returning to learning



**FIVE
SIX
EIGHT
TEN
TWELVE
SIXTEEN
NINETEEN**

Welcome to Goldsmiths

The benefits of studying at university

Finding the right route

Choosing the best course for you

Support to succeed

What next?

Get in touch



WELCOME TO GOLDSMITHS



Welcome to Goldsmiths, University of London's Mature Students' Guide. Here you'll find everything you need to know about becoming a student again.

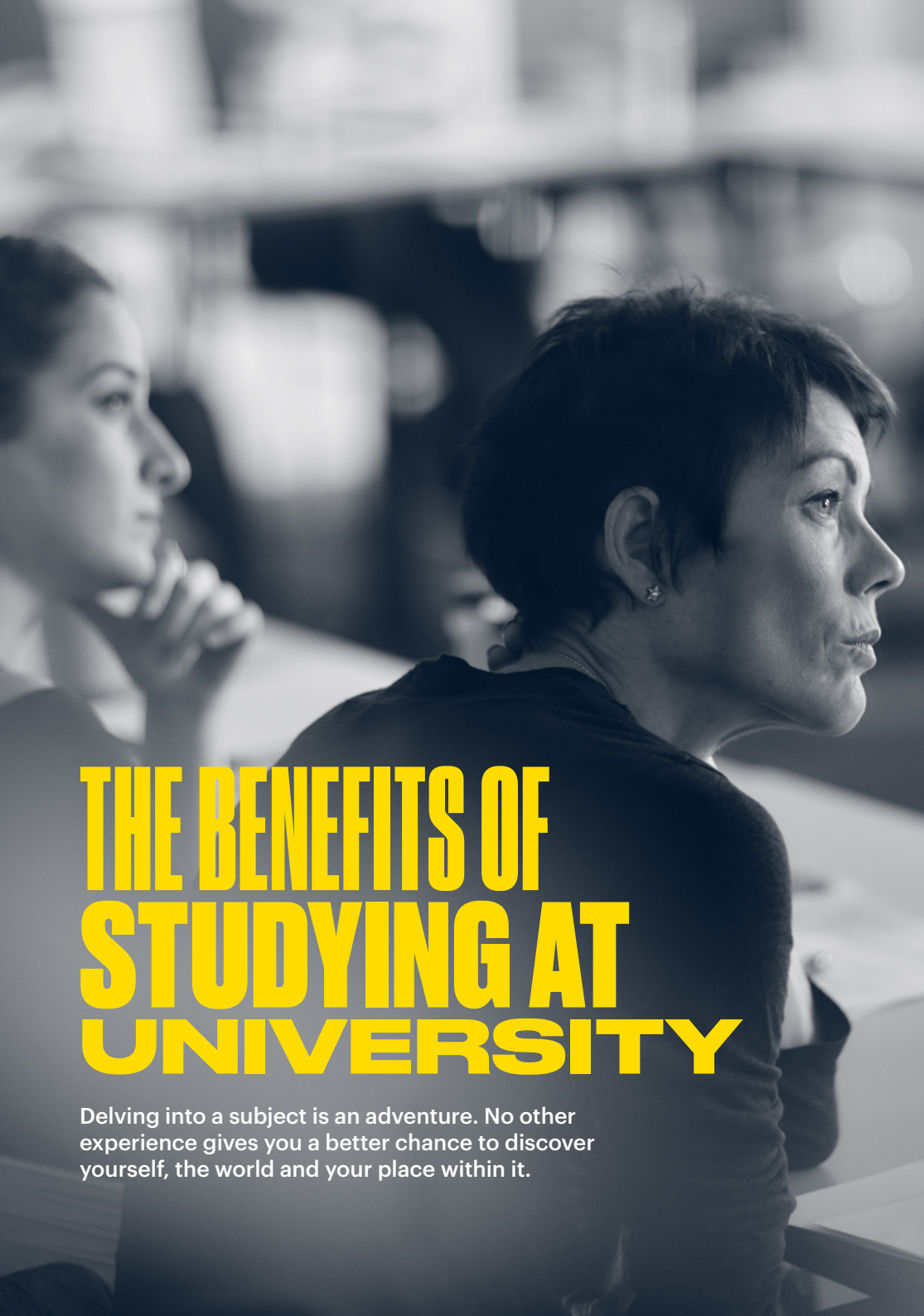
At Goldsmiths our mature students come from all kinds of backgrounds and study every kind of course. Over 52% of our students are mature students*, so whether you want to fulfil a career goal, study something new, or develop yourself personally, you'll find a community learning at every age and stage of life.

We value the contribution our mature students make in enriching the diversity of our campus and offer a range of bursaries and support to benefit your studies. We've created this guide to give you information on everything from choosing a route and applying, to finding resources and further advice.

We hope it gives you all the information you need to get started. If there are questions we haven't answered, please get in touch – we're always happy to help.

James Ringer
Head of UK/EU Recruitment
& Widening Participation

*A 'mature student' is an adult who is over 21 when they begin a course of study.



THE BENEFITS OF STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY

Delving into a subject is an adventure. No other experience gives you a better chance to discover yourself, the world and your place within it.

The benefits of studying at university

At Goldsmiths our mature students enrich our community, bringing value through the diversity of their skills, background and experience.

We understand that returning to higher education is a life-changing decision so we offer support throughout your time with us. Whether you want to discover new things, change direction, or broaden or boost your career, we'll help you achieve your ambitions.

Why get a degree now?

Going to university is a life-changing experience. Beyond the benefits of studying a subject at degree level, as a graduate you can access a wider range of professional options, fast-track your career, boost your earning power and secure your future*.

Why choose Goldsmiths?

We're a university that champions individuality so we respect the unique context each student brings. You may decide to study one of our integrated degrees or come to us through an access course, but whichever route you take you'll learn in new and unconventional ways, experiment with ideas, and approach subjects in your own way.

Change your thinking

Studying is transformative. It can make you think differently, reveal a new career path or be personally liberating.

Meet new people

Learning with others is vital. Being part of a community gives you an insight into other perspectives that will challenge and develop your own.

Secure your earning power

Getting a degree is valuable. Graduates on average earn more over their lifetime than non-graduates*.

See the average salaries our graduates earn at: university.which.co.uk/goldsmiths-university-of-london-g56/courses



I decided on the Integrated Degree in History because I felt it would be perfect to get me back into the world of education. Now I am about to go into my final year and I've enjoyed every bit of my degree so far. The university is great, and there is a real community spirit here, frankly I don't want to leave next year.

Rabia
BA History

*Source: Office for National Statistics



FINDING THE RIGHT ROUTE

There are several paths into higher education for mature students, and for many courses your life experience and passion for the subject can be just as important as your educational qualifications.

Finding the right route

Universities look at a wide range of qualifications, work experience and life skills when assessing applications from mature students. While some undergraduate courses will ask you for specific qualifications, others will be more open. In all cases though, our admissions tutors will be looking at these areas:

- An enthusiasm for the subject
- A range of life experience
- A specific course or qualification

Access and foundation courses

You may need to take a course that prepares you for studying at degree level. The Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma is for students who want to go to university but don't have the qualifications. There are over 300 different sites where you can study an Access to HE course across England and Wales. Find out more at: [accesstohe.ac.uk](https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk)

Alternatively, some universities offer integrated foundation degrees. These are four-year degrees where the first year is a foundation year. If you successfully achieve the progression requirements of the foundation year, you can continue with the full-time three-year degree. At Goldsmiths there are no formal entry requirements, you just need to demonstrate your interest in the subject. Find out more at: [gold.ac.uk](https://www.gold.ac.uk)

For more information about the different routes into higher education visit:

[ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/mature-undergraduate-students](https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/mature-undergraduate-students)

Find out more about the kinds of qualifications we accept at:

[gold.ac.uk/ug/apply/entry-requirements](https://www.gold.ac.uk/ug/apply/entry-requirements)

Explore our degrees covering the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, computing and law at:

[gold.ac.uk/course-finder](https://www.gold.ac.uk/course-finder)



CHOOSING THE BEST COURSE FOR YOU

There are thousands of courses to pick from, but don't feel overwhelmed – spending some time identifying what you want to get out of your degree can help you make the best choice for you.

Choosing the best course for you

When it comes to choosing a course, it's good to have an idea of what you want to get out of your degree. You may already have certain criteria in mind, such as an industry accreditation, but it's also worth thinking about what you want to achieve and how long you want to study, as well as what interests and engages you. Here are our tips.

Start researching now

Choosing the right course is important as three years can feel like a long time if you don't enjoy the subject. We recommend researching routes and courses as soon as you can. Go to ucas.com to get started.

Examine the detail

Look into at the course modules within degrees as they can vary, and there will be some that are unique to certain universities, which you won't be able to study elsewhere.

Get personal

Find out who'll be teaching the course and how much contact time you'll have with your tutors. Also, if you can, check how many students will be in each study group - this way you'll find out how personal the learning experience will be.

Future-proof your studies

Look at the kinds of career prospects, placement opportunities, and industry links the university offers and find out what graduates have gone on to do through student case studies and testimonials.

Consider the location

Universities can range from 2,000 to 40,000 students so it's also worth considering the size and location. Some larger universities are based in the centre of cities with campuses spanning several locations, whereas others can be single-site campuses. You'll probably instinctively know whether you'd prefer to study within a larger population, or within a smaller student community.

Explore the Goldsmiths accommodation options at: gold.ac.uk/accommodation



Enrolling into Goldsmiths aged 22, I was categorised as a 'mature' student. This worried me a bit as I didn't want to be the oldest in the class. In my home country of Sweden, people normally go to university a bit later than in the UK. However, I was far from the only 'mature' student. Not that it mattered much. Since we all shared the interest for the subjects studied, age became irrelevant – we had so much else to talk about.

Moa
BA Media & Sociology



SUPPORT TO SUCCEED

Universities have a commitment to their students and there will be lots of support in place to ensure you're able to make the most out of the study experience.

Support to succeed

At Goldsmiths we offer a range of practical support to help mature students manage their time and studies. We know that balancing higher education alongside existing commitments can be challenging, so we make a point of taking each student's circumstances into account.

Financial support

Funding your studies is a major consideration when thinking about going to university. Here we outline a range of options to support this side of student life:

Tuition fee loan

First-time home/EU students are eligible for a tuition fee loan. You can find out more about how these loans work on the government's student finance pages: gov.uk/student-finance

Mature student scholarships

Goldsmiths currently offers scholarships for mature students, as do other universities. It's worth exploring all the scholarships available to you - for example, if you live locally you could also be eligible for local student scholarships. Find out more: gold.ac.uk/ug/fees-funding

Support when you're a student

It may be possible to access additional financial support once you're a student. At Goldsmiths we have a fee bursary to help with paying your accommodation fees, and discretionary hardship funds. Discover more at: gold.ac.uk/students/financial-support

Part-time work

Most students work part time to support themselves while studying. Many universities offer a paid student ambassador programme that can give you valuable skills and experience - as well as the chance to meet new people. Find out more about Goldsmiths' Student Ambassador programme: gold.ac.uk/schools-and-colleges/working-with-teachers/student-ambassadors

Discover more about fees and funding at: gold.ac.uk/ug/fees-funding



I must give credit to Goldsmiths for the help they give to their students. I applied for a scholarship and was awarded a financial bursary. This extra money will enable me to focus on my studies instead of working too many hours in a job, and for that I am very grateful. This scholarship has taken a burden off my mind.

Christopher
BA Media & Communications

Pastoral support

Childcare support

We know that many of our mature students may be juggling work, study and raising a family. Goldsmiths Students' Union manages a nursery for children aged between three months and five years: goldsmithssu.org/services/nursery

Academic skills

Study sessions are designed to help students enhance their academic skills - whether that's preparing for assignments, meeting deadlines or juggling a packed timetable. At Goldsmiths we have a dedicated Academic Skills Centre as part of our library services: gold.ac.uk/eas

Wellbeing

One of the most important aspects to your life as a student is being able to get help when you need it. This service includes free counselling sessions, a drop-in service, and dedicated Campus Support Officers providing friendly, out-of-hours support: gold.ac.uk/students/wellbeing

The Disability and dyslexia support service helps you make adjustments in terms of equipment or study support. Resources include an Assistive Technology Centre and on-site Disability Advisers: gold.ac.uk/students/disability-support

The Student Centre offers general advice on enrolments, fees, housing, and finance: gold.ac.uk/students/visit-the-student-centre

Find out more about studying at Goldsmiths: youtube.com/goldsmithslondon

Support to succeed

Careers support

Careers Service

At Goldsmiths we take our students' futures seriously. Many of our degrees are supported by expert industry knowledge, whether that's through teaching from current practitioners or professional links and placements. We have partnerships with commercial brands such as Intel and Yahoo! together with cultural ones such as the Horniman Museum and Tate.

At Goldsmiths we offer:

- Over 1,400 placements across our degrees
- Talent Gold, a dedicated employer engagement team
- Workshop programmes
- CareerSPACE, an online jobs and internships listings site
- Personal development opportunities such as the Gold Award and the Higher Education Achievement Report
- Professional accreditation on completion of some of our degrees
- CV checks
- Mock interviews
- Access to careers advice from day one

Many universities offer employability programmes and placement opportunities within degrees. Find out more at: gold.ac.uk/careers



There's an ease to being a bit older at university. My overarching advice for mature students would be to ask, and put yourself forward and do things. Engage with university life, don't just treat it like a job that you go to, and let it change who you are.

Edwin
BSc Psychology



WHAT NEXT?

Take the next steps towards a fulfilling university experience by visiting the institutions you're interested in, and investing some time in writing your personal statement.

What next?

Open days

Open days give you a sense of a university firsthand. You can discover the local area, look at accommodation, and meet staff and current students. You'll also be able to get more detail on specific course content. Visit [opendays.com](https://www.opendays.com) and [gold.ac.uk/open-days](https://www.gold.ac.uk/open-days) for a full list of upcoming dates.

Campus tours

You can also book on to campus tours here: [gold.ac.uk/campus-tours](https://www.gold.ac.uk/campus-tours)

And if you can't make it, have a look around the campus remotely with our virtual open day: [gold.ac.uk/open-days/virtual](https://www.gold.ac.uk/open-days/virtual)

Personal statements

Personal statements can have a real impact on your application, particularly if you're applying through a non-traditional route. Find out more about how to showcase your skills in writing: [gold.ac.uk/schools-and-colleges/personal-statement](https://www.gold.ac.uk/schools-and-colleges/personal-statement)

Useful links

- [ucas.com/maturestudents](https://www.ucas.com/maturestudents)
- [gov.uk/student-finance](https://www.gov.uk/student-finance)
- [unistats.ac.uk](https://www.unistats.ac.uk)
- [moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-loans-tuition-fees-changes](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-loans-tuition-fees-changes)



Get in touch

We hope this guide has been useful, but if you have further questions please feel free to get in touch.

Your Goldsmiths contacts:

Course enquiries
course-info@gold.ac.uk

Widening Participation Team
outreach@gold.ac.uk

UK/EU Recruitment & Widening Participation
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