

Are you wondering whether you've made the right choice?

If you're unhappy or confused and wondering if university is the right path for you it may be because of the following reasons:

- Financial difficulties
- Unhappy with course
- Struggling with the workload
- Relationship problems
- Health issues, including stress, depression, anxiety and drink and drug problems
- Missing home, friends, family
- Accommodation problems

Need help with making a decision?

Talk to someone and discuss problems – family, friends, tutors, student support, counsellors, careers advisers or the nextstep service. Has it been your own decision to enter university or has pressure been put on you by another person? Are you or others expecting too much too soon? Do you need more time to adjust to the different way of life?

Change your course – if you have recently started university and find that you are on the wrong course for you, see if it is possible to change direction rather than dropping out – talk to the tutors or careers guidance officer at the university in the first instance.

Take a break – even if it is only for a few days, which could clear your head and help you to re-evaluate. However, don't just disappear – let a tutor or student welfare officer know that you will be out of university for a while and try not to miss any important deadlines without asking for extensions first.

Take a gap year – there is lots of advice on www.gapyear.com and you could come back refreshed and raring to go again!

Spend some time, either on your own or preferably with an adviser, to research options available. Can you still follow your chosen career without a degree? Do you have a clear idea about why you are doing the degree and what you will do with it once you have succeeded?

If you do decide to leave, a few points are important to remember:

- You are not a failure – university is not for everyone!
- Try to get a letter of accreditation from the university to confirm the study that you have already completed, as this may be useful if you wish to re-apply or when looking for work.
- Try to think of the positives about university and make a list of these: what have you learned, what experiences have you gained, how has your time at university benefited you? If you find this difficult, discuss it with someone else, preferably an

impartial person like a counsellor or nextstep adviser.

Places to go for help:

- **Student Support** services at your local university.
- **Bournemouth University Careers Guidance Service** will help students from other universities too. Please note that a charge is attached to this, contact 01202 965266.
- **nextstep** advice service, contact freephone 0800 138 5550.
- **Citizens Advice Bureau** especially if you have any financial, welfare, legal or accommodation problems, visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk to find your local office.
- **Jobcentre**: to register for Jobseekers Allowance whilst you are searching for the next opportunity visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk to find your local office.
- **Volunteer organisations** can offer you valuable experience and something to put on your CV whilst you are searching for work. See the nextstep volunteering fact sheet or visit www.navb.org.uk for your local volunteer bureau.
- **Samaritans** if you need a person to talk to, contact 08457 90 90 90 (local call rates).
- **Skill** The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities: if you are a disabled student and are facing difficulties or just want some additional support, Skill may be able to help. Visit www.skill.org.uk for more information.
- **Disability Rights Commission** if you feel you have been discriminated against and can't talk to the university support service. Visit www.drc.org.uk or ring the helpline on 08457 622 633.

BEST Training & NextStep provides information and advice on work and learning to adults 20+ across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

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