Brunel alumna Courtney Wood made it to the final of hit BBC One show *The Apprentice* in 2016 and has since proven his skills as a successful entrepreneur with his novelty gift business, bubblegumstuff.com. Courtney attributes his success to the skills he learned whilst studying his degree, particularly his networking skills.

Since finishing his degree, Courtney has visited the University a number of times, mentoring and supporting current students. “I hope to inspire some of those students to go on to set up their own company and become successful designers.”

Welcome to Brunel University London

Starting university is an exciting time for your family and loved ones.

It’s a period of their lives in which they will make new friends, try new things and learn to be independent. It will be the most fun they’ve ever had, and it will no doubt bring some challenges along the way.

Your job in supporting them will change, but it will be just as important. You have given them the confidence to make their own choices and the strength to overcome their problems, but you’re still their rock; and your support and encouragement is a crucial part of their university experience.

We want you to know that we place the utmost importance on their education and wellbeing, and that we are here to help them every step of the way.

This guide has been put together to answer some of the questions you might have about university life and to tell you about all the things we do here at Brunel to make their experience a brilliant one.

I hope you find it useful and that it helps you support them at such an exciting time in their lives.

With all my best wishes

Professor Julia Buckingham CBE
Vice-Chancellor and President
Brunel University London

brunel.ac.uk/parents
Discover Brunel

Applied learning for the real world

Few universities offer a better learning environment than we do. We sit in the top 25% of UK universities for research.

Support that gets you ready for work

Getting a job can be a full-time job. But at Brunel that work starts the day you arrive, with lots of support and placements available in over 95% of our courses.

No wonder it’s called Greater London

Brunel is a single site university. One campus with thousands of benefits. Everything is within a 10-minute walk.

The whole world on one campus

The world’s students call Brunel home. Something we’re extremely proud of. In fact, 150 of the world’s countries are represented at Brunel.

brunel.ac.uk/parents
Brunel was established in 1966 as a technology university set up not just to fill students with theoretical knowledge, but also to give them the skills and attitudes they needed when they joined the world of work.

Though our approach has changed with the times, our vision remains the same – our graduates get a world-class education geared towards giving them the brightest of futures. They’re ready for work or further study, and they share the imagination and entrepreneurial drive of our engineering namesake Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Over 150 societies and sports clubs to join
Guaranteed campus accommodation ranked 3rd best in London (THE 2017)
Top 5 university for careers support (Student Hut, 2019)
Top 10 UK university for boosting graduate salaries (The Economist, 2017)
Placements available in over 95% of courses
93% of Brunel students in further education or employment (DLHE, 2018)

About Brunel

Love of literature inspires award-winning singer

Ray BLK #IamBrunel

Brunel alumna, Ray BLK (English BA), beat a host of top UK music talent and followed in the footsteps of Adele, Ellie Goulding and Sam Smith to be crowned the winner of the BBC Music Sound of 2017.

The singer and rapper from London, who has collaborated with grime star Stormzy, creates edgy R&B music in the same vein as American icons such as Lauryn Hill, Mary J Blige and Missy Elliott. Ray BLK’s EP, ‘Havisham’ is inspired by Miss Havisham, the jilted Charles Dickens character in Great Expectations that she learned about during her English Literature degree at Brunel.

Although she has been making music for herself since the age of 10, Ray BLK’s only music training came in the form of opera-singing lessons during a short scholarship programme at Brunel.

Photo © Hayley Louisa Brown

Guide for parents, family, carers and friends
brunel.ac.uk/parents
Writing the personal statement and university finance

Writing the personal statement and applying for student finance can be key concerns for both you and students. The good news is there's lots of information to help. Here are our tips for the perfect personal statement:

1. Get it all down on paper
Write a draft first, the first version doesn’t have to be the last. Don’t worry about the character limit at the start as they can always cut down later!

2. Why this course?
Show motivation and enthusiasm for the chosen subject – in detail and with examples, tell us why they want to study the course and show us passion for the subject. Draw on knowledge from what they’ve already studied.

3. Show us all their skills
It’s not just about what they want to study – what other skills do they have? Strong organisational, communication and/or analytical skills? Make sure they tell us! (But be honest)

4. Why should we choose them?
What are their strengths? How do they use them? This could include relevant work experience, volunteer work or experiences such as a Gap Year.

5. Tell us more about them
What are their hobbies, interests and achievements? But please don’t be cliché!

6. How mature are they?
Show us they are mature and ready/excited for university life. Consider the words they choose carefully and make sure they are putting themselves across in the best way possible.

7. What about after their degree?
(Yes, we know it seems far away!) Tell us where they see themselves in the future. How will university contribute to their career plans?

8. Structure
Structure the personal statement carefully. The majority (50-75%) should explain why they want to study their chosen course. Ask them to read it out loud to you to help check it makes sense.

9. A second opinion
This is where you can really help to proof read and spot any mistakes.

10. Do not plagiarise
Do not copy. The university will check this.

Funding their studies
Undergraduate students will have two main types of expense at university – tuition fees and living costs. The Government’s funding system has loans and grants to support both of these. They may also get extra financial support – this could include Disabled Students’ Allowance, a Childcare Grant or an Adult Dependants’ Grant. Find out more at gov.uk/studentfinance. Applications open in the February before they enrol.

Brunel also offers over 400 scholarships each year based on a whole range of criteria including their grades, where they live, their school/college and if they’re a mature student. There are also sport scholarships and music awards. Find out more at brunel.ac.uk/scholarships.

“Be there if they need to talk about money worries – it’s much better to find out before the problem gets too big.”

“My daughter and most of her friends have part-time jobs to earn some extra money. It’s also a great way for them to get valuable work experience.”

“Help them work out a rough budget before they go to uni – even simply how much loan they’ll get and when.”
How they’ll learn

Our students learn from world-leading academics who are passionate about their subject. In fact, many are involved in research into the areas in which they teach – and they bring that knowledge back into the classroom.

But studying at Brunel is about a lot more than just knowing your subject. We help our students to develop their academic skills throughout their degree, teaching them everything from how to work independently to being able to understand and use complex information in their studies.

They will have learnt so much about studying at school or college, even if that was some time ago, but there are many things about a university education that might feel quite different.

More flexibility

There are more choices to make, from module options to assignment titles and how/when to study best. This means students can learn in a way that suits them, but it can also be overwhelming at first, so it’s important for them to think carefully about their choices. Talk to them about their options and encourage them to speak to their tutors if they’re unsure.

Independent learning

Students are responsible for their own workloads at university and that depends on how they use their spare time. Often the biggest challenge they face is realising there’s a lot of space for independent study in their timetable. They might have 10-12 hours a week of timetabled lectures and seminars but they’d be expected to do at least that again in independent study. Some find it useful to form study groups. This makes learning social and helps keep them on track. We can also help students manage their time and understand the feedback they’re given.

New ways of thinking

They’ll be asked to delve into much greater detail with their study topics. This will include thinking in new ways and considering cutting-edge theories. Tutors will expect more sophisticated academic writing and essays will have higher word counts. There are also different types of assignments such as group work or presentations. For the most part, the transition will be gradual and one they are more than capable of taking on.

Reading

When people say they’re ‘reading for a degree’ it’s for good reason – there’s a lot of reading! Most courses have a reading list with essential and recommended books and journal articles. It’s a good idea to visit the Library soon after they arrive and use the catalogue so they can easily find the information they need. They’ll be expected to read critically, meaning they should question what they read and not take everything at face value.

“University is a big step and is very different from school or college. One of the biggest challenges I faced was realising there’s a lot of space for independent study in my timetable. Independent study means being responsible for managing my own time and for getting assessments done. I try to use my free time productively by doing independent study in the library, taking part in clubs and societies, preparing for lectures and seminars, reading and researching for assignments.”

2nd year student

“Encourage them to speak to their personal tutor as early as possible if they have difficulties. Don’t let it drag on until it becomes a big problem. Struggling in the first year doesn’t mean they’re not up to it.”

Parent

Award-winning

Professor of
Creative Writing

Prof. Bernardine Evaristo MBE

#IamBrunel

Bernardine is Professor of Creative Writing. Her award-winning works span eight books of fiction and verse fiction as well as numerous dramatics, non-fiction, poetry, literary criticism and writing for BBC radio. She is also an editor and literary prize judge and she has been on over 150 international tours as a writer.
A week in the life of a Brunel student

Before they leave home, teach them to cook at least five meals from scratch. Get them to practice by making their favourite dish for the whole family. They can prepare for student life by doing their own washing, drying (and ironing) at home a couple of times.

**Monday**
- Lectures (need a coffee!)
- Sports training
- Independent study
- Seminars

**Tuesday**
- Chill time
- Meet Personal Tutor
- Careers talk
- Independent study
- Library

**Wednesday**
- Lectures
- Careers talk
- Independent study
- Sports training
- Library / group study session

**Thursday**
- Chill time
- Attend session on ‘How to reference’
- Seminars
- Independent study
- Library / group study session

**Friday**
- Lectures
- Meet course lecturers during office hours to discuss content and assignments
- Sports training
- Society catch up
- Seminar preparation work

**Saturday**
- Part-time work
- Cleaning / laundry
- Visit central London with friends to go clothes shopping

**Sunday**
- Chill time
- Library
- Watch the football at Locos
- Gym

Wake up early for a 9am lecture and then onto the sports field.

Looking at the presentation slides before lectures will give them an advantage.

Gaps in the timetable allow them to get a part time job either at the university or elsewhere. We recommend working no more than 15 hours a week.

Mainly visiting family & friends and chill.

- Take time out to do independent reading and prepare for seminars.
- Evening spent socialising with friends.
- Volunteering opportunities in Brunel and in the wider community.
- Last lectures for the week, finishing off any notes ready for the weekend.
- Uxbridge has a great range of restaurants and shops.
Useful terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>An undergraduate academic degree awarded upon completion of studies. Subjects are classified as follows:</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts, <strong>BEng</strong> – Bachelor of Engineering, <strong>BSc</strong> – Bachelor of Science, <strong>LLB</strong> – Bachelor of Laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree classifications</td>
<td>First class honours (1st) – typically 70% or higher equates to an A grade.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Second class honours upper division (2:1) – typically 60–69% equates to a B grade.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Second class honours lower division (2:2) – typically 50–59% equates to a C grade.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third class honours (3rd) – typically 40–49% equates to a D grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation or final year project</td>
<td>An extended essay or report, usually between 7,000 and 15,000, words completed in the final year on a specific subject/research area chosen by the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresher's Week / Welcome Week</td>
<td>The first week at university. Activities are focused on making friends (social activities) and finding out about their course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>A formal presentation of ideas and information by an academic staff member to a large number of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>A smaller group of students in a classroom environment with more interaction than a lecture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>A practical technical lesson; this may include the use of specialist equipment and/or computers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>A group or individual meeting with an academic staff member to discuss work or get feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>Using someone else’s writing or ideas as though it were your own. Learning how to reference properly is an important university skill – students should always ask if they’re unsure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Justin is Head of Brunel’s Department of Social and Political Sciences, and a Professor of Political Science. His research looks at the methods used by political parties to fund electoral campaigns and gain votes – and how successful they are. As political campaigning becomes increasingly important, the techniques parties use could make all the difference once General Elections come around. As a leading voice on the subject Justin has appeared on TV and radio, and his research feeds into his teaching.
Making friends

Our graduates often tell us that the friends they made at Brunel will be their friends for life. But we all know that making friends doesn’t come easily to everyone and they might be anxious about this part of their university experience.

Fortunately there are lots of opportunities to meet new people on their course, in their halls of residence or through joining a club; and so many of our students will have made lifelong connections by the end of the first week. We call it Welcome Week and it’s a great time to meet other students through a whole range of social events and academic activities.

We want our students to feel at home on campus, and that means plenty of places to meet and hang out. There’s a student bar with pool tables and comfy sofas; a choice of cafes and restaurants catering to all tastes and diets; and there’s the Academy nightclub at the heart of the campus too.

Another good way for students to make friends, while helping them learn new skills, is to become a Brunel Volunteer. Last year, our students put more than 21,000 hours of volunteering into the community and in support of local charities.

Entertaining

From day one at University, we’ve got students covered for events and meeting each other. We cater for every taste and make sure each and every one of our students has something which interests them. We have an on-site bar and nightclub, where our students can spend the night safely with events put on by notable DJs, our own regular nights and student led events.

Representing

The Union is the primary democratic representative body for Brunel students and is led by elected full and part time officers who all studied at the University. We run elections each year where students vote on who should represent their views to both the University and the Union. This can be any position from course reps to the Student Union’s President. Their voice matters and we want to hear it.

Supporting

We have a friendly Advice & Resource Centre (ARC) for any students who need support and guidance on academic, financial, health and housing issues – and many more, too. If the ARC can’t directly help, they make sure students are connected with the right person to support them when they need it. Our professional advisors are on hand via email or drop in sessions, and have resources online too. We regularly run events to increase awareness of issues such as drink and drugs, sexual health and guidance, and stress relief. And have recently been awarded a Silver Award for Green Impact following incredible work on recycling and environment awareness on campus.

Engaging

We have 150+ sports clubs and societies from Game of Thrones Society to Ultimate Frisbee for students to be involved in, as well as an Active@Brunel programme which offers weekly sessions of yoga, salsa and tag rugby to name a few. We have a free sport programme to encourage as many students as possible to join Team Brunel, with a small £33 annual insurance fee only. Students can take part in competitive sport through the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) leagues or just to keep active in our social sports teams. Our societies and sports clubs regularly hold their own events – from boat parties to international trips to weekly screenings of their favourite TV show. There’s something for everybody.

To find out more, visit brunelstudents.com or connect with us on social media.

T: +44 (0)1895 269269
E: union.reception@brunel.ac.uk
How family and friends can help

“Brunel is a very friendly and supportive environment so they don’t need to be shy. There are lots of things to do on campus from day one so tell them to get stuck in! Also look out for introductory and welcome sessions from the various support teams across campus. For example library tours and study support sessions.”

“Be interested in their studies and life at university – ask them what is going well and what isn’t.”

“If they live at home, make sure there is a designated space for studying and agree a quiet time if there are younger children around.”

“Work out how and when to keep in contact. A Tuesday evening call might work for you but be rubbish for them. We found FaceTime or Skype great for this too.”

“Trust them to have a successful life outside the home. They will need space to try new activities and friendships (and maybe new relationships too).”

Brunel Counselling and Mental Wellbeing Service

brunel.ac.uk/parents
Supporting our students

We all need a bit of extra help from time to time and we’re here to support students from the minute they arrive. If you’re coming along to help them move in, join one of our parent/carer talks to answer your questions about Brunel.

Health and wellbeing support

When they arrive, students will be given a copy of The Student Health Guide, which gives them tips about university life. It also tells them about the support they can get on campus. For students living off campus and commuting to Brunel, we’ve created a special area for them on campus where there is always coffee and support available from staff and fellow students.

Study support

Our UniSmart live presentations during Welcome Week are designed to help students be more confident and better prepared to manage the transition to university. Students can sign up to these sessions, which highlight the range of support on offer at Brunel.

Personal tutor

Their personal tutor (an academic staff member) will support them throughout their studies. Tutors will get in touch before students arrive to say ‘hello’.

Academic Skills Service (ASK)

ASK teaches students the skills to learn independently and thrive academically, whatever their level or subject. They can also advise on presentations, or help if they’re struggling with maths and numeracy.

E: ask@brunel.ac.uk

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)

PAL gives first-years the opportunity to discuss their work with higher-year students who have already studied the topics and modules. Run for students by students, these informal sessions tackle any problems together, while sharing study skills and experiences.

E: PAL@brunel.ac.uk

Library

Our library is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week in term time. There are library tours, specialist subject librarians and a popular laptop loan scheme, as well as 400 computers and lots of quiet space for them to learn alone or in groups.

E: library@brunel.ac.uk

“Try not to be too clingy or sentimental (at least don’t let them see that you are) – you have given them wings and now is the time to let them fly.”

“Thank you whatever form it takes – you’ve helped them settle in.”

“Maybe they’ve enrolled on the wrong course. Check with their tutor what opportunities there are to change.”

Student Centre

Our Student Centre is a great place to start if students have a specific query or question. It’s based in the Howell Building on campus, and advisers are also available by phone, email and online. As our students are over 18 we’ll need to speak to them rather than you, so encourage them to get in touch.

T: +44 (0)1895 268268
E: student.centre@brunel.ac.uk
W: brunel.ac.uk/studentcentre

Brunel Buddy

Students can sign up for a Brunel Buddy (a current student) to help them settle in during their first four weeks. If they’re new to the area, they can take them to Uxbridge and some local sites too. There are also Residences Mentors on hand to help students living on campus.

W: buddies.brunel.ac.uk

Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS)

We offer specific advice and support for disabled students, including those with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. Our disability advisers will help students access the support, specialist equipment and funding they need to make the most of their studies. We have an induction day in early September so that disabled students can meet the team and find out about the support available.

T: +44 (0)1895 267045
E: studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk

Career and part-time job support: Professional Development Centre (PDC)

The centre helps students develop the broader skills required by employers and can advise on placements, internships and career opportunities. Our Job Shop helps students find part-time jobs to balance work and study. We advise that student’s work no more than 15 hours a week to avoid it impacting on their studies.

T: +44 (0)1895 266840 / 265759
E: careers@brunel.ac.uk
E: jobshop@brunel.ac.uk

More information on the above services can be found at the following websites:

brunel.ac.uk/parentsGuide for parents, family, carers and friends
Advice and Representation Centre (ARC)
The ARC is run by our Students’ Union and offers confidential advice and guidance to all Brunel students on student funding, housing, budgeting and study.

E: advice@brunel.ac.uk

Counselling and Mental Wellbeing Service
A team of qualified counsellors and mental health advisers are available to support students who book individual appointments or attend workshop sessions. There are wellbeing activities throughout the year and before exams. Students should look out for Well@Brunel events.

T: +44 (0)1895 267045
E: studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk

Wellbeing activities schedule:

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<tr>
<td>Bike Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breast Cancer Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Anxiety Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyslexia Awareness Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking After Your Mates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>ParkRun – fortnightly to encourage group exercise</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staying Safe – online tips to stay safe on campus and whilst studying</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stoptober – quit smoking campaign</td>
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Faith and religion
Students can explore faith and spirituality at prayer facilities around campus. The Meeting House is a dedicated space where they can enjoy the Quiet Room or relax in the lounge. The team offer a listening ear, advice and spiritual support.

T: +44 (0)1895 266459
E: meeting-house@brunel.ac.uk

Medical Centre
There is a NHS GP surgery on campus. New students can register. New students can register during welcome week.

T: +44 (0)1895 266904

Brunel Pharmacy
Offers a range of services including flu vaccinations, prescription services and health advice.

T: +44 (0)1895 257187

ProtectED
We’re a founder university of this scheme to recognise our commitment to student safety, security, wellbeing and mental health.

W: protect-ed.org

If you notice a loved one seems particularly ‘out of sorts’ or down encourage them to speak to someone. If you would like to tell us about it, you can report your concern using our Report and Support website reportandsupport.brunel.ac.uk. We cannot share information with you without the specific consent of the student, but we always take appropriate steps when anyone shares a concern.

Putting student safety first
#IamBrunel

Brunel is one of the safest universities in the UK, thanks to our friendly and caring Community Policing and Security team. Recently, the team picked up the prestigious Security Partnering Initiative of the Year Award.

We are also the first university in London to achieve the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme and our officers are among the most highly trained in the country.

Our security team, (including our very own policeman – Brunel Bobby) patrol the campus 24/7 and are always happy to stop and chat.

All our buildings are accessed by student ID cards and over 500 CCTV cameras keep an eye on things around campus. And if they decide to bring their car to the campus, you can rest assured it will also be well looked after as we’ve received the Park Mark for Safer Parking.

+44 (0)1895 255786
security-operations@brunel.ac.uk
Connect with us

bruneluniversity  @bruneluni  bruneluni

T: +44 (0)1895 274000

Students can keep in touch with us on social media, through the intranet and via a weekly newsletter, which shares news and events, gives tips and practical advice, and tells them about upcoming activities such as careers fairs and workshops.

brunel.ac.uk
#DiscoverBrunel