

Sophie from Bristol University gives you her top tips for applying to higher education.

Before you start a course:

- Find out the pass levels of previous students and if the college or university has a record of the jobs previous students have gone into after graduating from the course.
- Find out typically how many other mature students you can expect to find on the same course.
- **ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW!!** Most courses do not require students to attend an interview for acceptance but it is an ideal time to discuss with the course leader or tutor if this course is going to suit you.
- Find out what funding is available from each institution, your LEA (local education authority) and Student Loans Company.
- If you are thinking about taking a vocational course do a search of companies who will potentially employ you in the future and find out about any sponsorship you may be able to get.
- Visit the institution on their open days **AND** on a non-open day so you can get a feel for the place on a 'typical' day and not just when they are blatantly trying to recruit students!

Applying for a course:

- Make sure you apply as early as possible. Your reference should be done not just by someone who will make you sound amazing but someone who as closely as possible relates to the course you are applying for.
- Being a mature student is a positive aspect in your application. Talk about how your life experiences have helped shape your decision to return to study.