

Leila Massri, 22

User Type: Current Student

Occupation: Masters student: Education & Linguistics



**If I visit the site it's because I want to know something.
I'll Google opening times**

I'm half Egyptian and half Italian and came from Egypt for a year to do my Masters in Education and Linguistics; I focus on how to teach in a multilingual context.

I wanted to stay in the South of England because I'd heard it was sunnier and I liked the fact that Goldsmiths has students who come from lots of different countries – the website did a good job of making this clear.

I like living in New Cross. When I first arrived I worried that it was too quiet, it wasn't as central as I'd pictured. Now I like the fact it's quiet because I can write my dissertation and I can still get into central London in 15mins.

I was a bit worried before I started because I'd heard that you only have a good time at Goldsmiths if you're in the right clique and have

the 'right' taste in music, but that's not true at all. I've been really lucky that everyone in my halls is also an international student because it means we're all in the same boat, but I'd have liked to have made more British friends. I missed Freshers' Week so never really found out about societies and things.

Because I usually come in for classes and then head home I sometimes feel that I'm not very connected to what's happening on campus. I often miss events because I usually only go to them if I happen to see a poster, which is sometimes only after the event has finished.

I don't often visit the website now I'm a student, and I would usually do a Google search for information I want rather than use the site search.

Information Goals

- Library opening times
- Term dates
- Assessment information
- How to access student support services, e.g. fees/finance, healthcare, visas
- Dates for upcoming careers support events/ CV days
- What events are taking place across the campus
- Facilities booking
- IT support/ helpdesk
- Staff directory

Opportunities for the site to enhance the student experience

- Sustain the support offered when they first arrive
- Let societies and other student activities 'live on' beyond Freshers' Week
- Get students more involved in student life through:
 - better publicising events
 - giving the Student Union more prominence
- The above will also help international student integration and involve them more on campus during the quieter term breaks
- Increase utilisation of facilities by making sure they know about them before they even arrive
- Promoting inclusivity and minimising the perception of 'cliques'

We Must

- Clearly signpost to students union
- Ensure SU content is well-managed and up-to-date. Achieve this through social media at least if web content management resource is not available
- Profile upcoming University (and other local?) events and allow users to filter by preference
- Allow option for signup to events newsletter
- Links to other online applications used by students e.g. VLE
- Clearly signpost to student support services

We Must Not

- Allow a rigid departmentally-driven structure to get in the way of the content
- Bury access to SU and societies in a complex IA
- Allow SU and events information to become out of date

Behaviours

- Visits are task-driven; short but potentially frequent
- Often leaves tasks to last minute so needs things quickly
- Likes to engage on own terms
- Relies heavily on social media to find out about news and events on campus
- Highly web savvy and likely to be using mobile devices
- Will become your future advocates online (through forums such as The Student Room)

Lynda Bashford, 42

User Type: Influencer (Parent)

Occupation: Civil Servant



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I just want my son to be happy

If you were to ask me off the top of my head what's most important to me about where Jack goes to Uni, I'd probably say employment prospects. If I'm honest with myself though, the critical thing is whether it passes the '**will he be happy here?**' test. I don't want to see him struggle, drop out and move back home for another year only go through all this again, especially not as our other son is just 2 years behind Jack – it might put him off. Uni is such a fantastic opportunity; I just want make sure he's in an environment where he'll make the most of it.

Because we'll have both boys at University at the same time things are a bit tight, even though we've been saving for years. We didn't know tuition fees would be this high so my older sister Dawn (who doesn't

have kids) is helping out a bit financially, so I like to include her where I can.

Although I never went to Uni, I work with a lot of people who did and Jack's Dad, Alan, was the first person in his family to go to University – a huge point of pride for him. At least that means he understands quite a bit about academic credentials. I'm not really sure what Jack'll do with his degree because I don't know what the options are with computing, but I do want good career prospects for him.

Ultimately though, it's all Jack's decision. I'll support whatever he decides. His emotional wellbeing is, if I'm honest, the thing I'm most concerned about. If he gets a good job at the end of it, that'll be a bonus.

Need to Know

Lynda wants to make sure a certain level of care is offered, and the word she uses most frequently in talking about her involvement in this whole process is '**Support**'.

She uses words such as 'inspirational', 'motivational', and 'stimulating' often too because she sees this as part of the care and support on offer – i.e. intellectual stimulation that supports personality development.

She's influenced by course content but from a slightly different perspective; not just what Jack will study but how. How much practical experience? How much contact time? She's interested in **ethos** of the Uni, the learning **environment**, as well as safety and accommodation.

Influencing Factors

- Reputation
- Recommendations

Discovering Goldsmiths

- Jack has spent hours (days, weeks!) researching his options so he goes to his parents with a short list
- Alan is involved in helping to compile this shortlist. Although it's been over 2 decades since Alan went to Uni, he has a lot of opinions on the matter and has spent hours looking at league tables. He's involved in Jack's decision-making process from day one.
- Lynda doesn't get involved with this shortlisting – she's not overly concerned with the differences between institutions until a shortlist is presented to her. There are so many to choose from!
- Jack eventually sends his Mum and Dawn links to 9 different Universities – from all across the country. They're links to the course information pages which confuses Lynda a first because a lot of that info doesn't mean much to her. She starts exploring each one to find out the other information she's interested in (see below)

Information Goals

- What **food, shelter and support** is available?
- Accommodation: Will he be guaranteed a place in halls? Which ones are there – and where are they all?
- Activities: Are there plenty of societies he can join (that he'll be interested in)?
- Is it a campus Uni, or is everything spread out?
- How safe is the area?
- Will he live close enough to Uni to come in regularly? I don't want him just staying in his room because everything's far away
- Will he be close enough to all the local hotspots and nightlife to go out safely, or will he have to travel long (expensive) distances?
- How is the course taught? How much contact time will he get?
- What did other people who did this course think of it, and what did they go on to be? I don't just mean 'what did they learn?', but 'how did it help them to grow as a person?'
- How much will it all cost?
- What pastoral care (student support services) are there?
- (For Alan): What will Jack's career prospects be?

We must

- Signpost to related content from course information pages – specifically accommodation and student experience ('what it's like to live in new Cross')
- Profile students discussing what qualities in them their course nurtured, not just what careers they achieved
- Include employer validation (for Alan)
- Ensure accommodation pages are image-led
- Make fees information easy to understand and compare
- Demonstrate value for money

We must Not

- Market too heavily
- Rely on text-heavy course information pages; ensure rich media is included where possible along with student/staff profiles and image-led content

Behaviours

- Almost always uses desktop. Will revert to site search a lot
- Is extremely proud of Jack and his bother. She's forever saying to friends and colleagues 'did you know my son's going to be a...'
- Will go to all the Open Days with Jack – along with Alan and usually her sister Dawn too
- Sometimes finds this whole process quite upsetting. This is her first born moving away and the focus is all on him, but sometimes the reality of it hits her and she gets sad that Jack doesn't involve her as much as she'd like

Hua Li, 20

User Type: Prospective International PG

Occupation: Prospective Social Anthropology
MA, Hong Kong



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I'm looking for credibility but also the right balance between academic study, creativity and culture

I'm due to graduate next year from the Faculty of Social Sciences at HKU where my focus has been on gender imbalance and the impact of sex ratios in East Asia. I live in arguably the most Westernised Asian city, yet have never been to Europe or the US, so I'm really interested to see what my subject 'looks like' through the prism of Western culture and academia.

My parents are also pretty keen on the idea of me studying abroad – especially in the UK because they think it's prestigious and will help my career a lot because of the links to industry there. I speak really good English but my parents not so much.

This is a big decision for me, so although I want a strong academic experience, I'll be a million miles from home and don't want to feel like

I'm in a really competitive environment. Some of the more traditional UK Unis I've looked at have put me off a bit. I'm looking for a balance between academic study and chilled environment. A place with heritage but which also feels quite modern.

One thing that bothers me a bit is that it might be really cold so I don't want to go too far north! HK is a huge city, so it'd be nice if there was a bit of green space. Ideally it'll be a campus Uni with lots of other international students around.

Because I won't get to visit before I study there, seeing how good the facilities like media studios are will be important to me, as well as staff being friendly and responsive if I have any questions.

Information Goals

- How much of an 'international' scene is there? How many international students will be on my course? Have the tutors taught/studied abroad themselves?
- What's the score with visas and international fees?
- Can I get a scholarship?
- What are the academic entry requirements?
- What are the language entry requirements?
- Will I be guaranteed accommodation? Which halls should I choose and how do I apply?
- What's the local area like? Where, even, is it? How safe is it?
- How much will I need to live on?
- What should I expect in my first week?

Discovering Goldsmiths

- Both Hua and her parents are inherently keen on the idea of London and its connections to industry
- Searches for 'University of London' suggest it has 18 colleges and 10 institutes, which is confusing
- Searching for 'Social Studies + Masters' in the course search on www.lon.ac.uk returns just 1 result at Birkbeck and searching for 'Social Sciences + Masters' returns two results – at King's and LSE
- A search for 'top ten universities in London for social studies' soon results in multiple tabs being opened and a quick scan of each institution's 'nuts and bolts' (i.e. does it offer a relevant course? Is it actually in London?)
- A portal (such as Masterportal.eu) is then recommended by a friend, which is great as it allows Hua to search by sub-disciplines e.g. 'Social Sciences + Anthropology' and apply filters such as location and campus style
- Once a course at Goldsmiths is identified, Hua is taken to a deep link for the MA in Social Anthropology which gives her all the relevant course info, but no accommodation, facilities or departmental context
- Later, at a University fair, Hua meets a recruitment rep from Goldsmiths who tells her that it's a lot more challenging than some other places. He says that more is expected of you, there's more independent learning involved and that it's a place that's all about confidence, motivation and an independent spirit
- Apart from this one interaction, all of Hua's HEI research is done online
- However, when she starts doing some digging and asking academics at HKU, she begins to realise that some international Unis are better recognised - especially for employability - than others. Goldsmiths is one of them and this helps make up her mind

We must

- Focus on simplicity and clarity
- Offer rich media
- Show related content that's appropriate – fewer clicks please
- Make staff appear accessible - through their profiles but also their responsiveness
- Showcase facilities
- Play to the strengths of a campus Uni
- Showcase employer testimonies and links to industry

We must Not

- Overcomplicate
- Take her down rabbit holes
- Make her feel unwelcome through text or imagery
- Assume that the interdisciplinarity of her course is self-evident

Behaviours

- Is not overly bothered with words at first when completing the 'nuts and bolts'
- Looks for interesting pictures then clicks on them
- Is most interested in video content
- She'll share rich media with her parents

Influencing Factors

- Parents (who are keen on league tables)
- Reputation – London, London, London!
- Culture & connection to industry

Tamina Paige, 27

User Type: Prospective London-Based PG

Occupation: Social Care Worker (PT)



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I pass Goldsmiths every day and wonder what goes on

I currently work for a local authority (part time) in social care and look after my nieces full time. I'm really interested in learning more about child protection, expanding my knowledge in the field and getting some more formal qualifications, so my nieces' social worker suggested I look at doing further study at Goldsmiths.

I live in Catford and obviously can't move away because of the girls. This would be an easy commute and would mean I could easily balance childcare. I like living in SE London because it's more affordable and has its own identity.

I go past Goldsmiths every day on my way to work after dropping the girls off, and I've always been tempted to find out what goes on inside and whether it might be for me. I know that if I'm going to do this it'll be

a long and difficult journey for me, juggling work, study and the girls, so I guess inherently I'm looking for a department and team that will give me the support, encouragement and drive to succeed”.

One thing that really worries me is that I see a lot of trendy 'hipster' types hanging around New Cross when I pass through every day, and although I get that they're mostly the younger undergrads, I really don't want to spend 2 years of my life in a place where I'll feel...well, out of place!

I'm also really worried about funding and want to know what scholarships and support for working families is available. I've got some pretty specific questions so if I can't find the answers I'm looking for online I'll just call the enquiries team.

Discovering Goldsmiths

- Tamina will look at other Universities as a point of comparison and just to be on the safe side, but Goldsmiths is by far and away her first choice because of the location as well as the personal recommendations she's received
- She'll do almost all of her HEI research online but as Goldsmiths is her first choice, personal interactions at open days and responsiveness to questions she has will also be important
- She'll Google 'social work + Goldsmiths' and click on the MA in Social Work. That was really easy to find
- It says that the MA is a 2-yr course which surprises her because she thought MAs were usually a year. Is that a year FT or a year PT? She'll probably be studying PT so does that make it a 4-yr course?
- She was hoping to get a flavour for the department, staff and other students, but is missing a lot of this by only looking at course information pages at first
- There's a form to register interest in the course but it doesn't say how long it'll be before someone gets back to her, and she'd set aside the next couple of weeks to get her application sorted
- She spends a bit of time looking at course tutors' profiles but they're a bit bland, so instead she makes a note of their names and spends the next hour Googling them all, reading up on them across various news and academic sites

Information Goals

- Funding options, scholarships and, ultimately, whether she can afford it
- Course information
- Flexible (PT) study options
- Open days
- How to apply & interview process
- Entry requirements
- Testimonials from other students in her position
- To speak to a 'real person' as early on in the process as possible

We must

- Have a departmental 'flavour' across the course info pages
- Aim to 'support, encourage, drive' through content
- Ensure student support services are easily accessible
- Offer clear, not conflicting CTA's with detail on what to expect next
- Profile staff and students from all walks of life

We must Not

- Have 'diversity shots'. Tamina is quite cynical
- Appear like too much of a 'young' University through imagery
- Be ambiguous about anything
- Overcomplicate the enquiries process

Behaviours

- Has very little time. She does her HEI research and application mostly on the iPad once the girls have gone to bed
- Is locally-based so very keen to come in for face-to-face interaction on multiple occasions
- Wants direct (quick) answers to her questions

Influencing Factors

- Location
- Reputation
- Flexibility
- The testimony of other students in a similar position to her

Jack Bashford, 17

User Type: Prospective Undergraduate (Non London)

Occupation: Potential BSc Creative Computing / BSc Digital Arts Computing / BSc Business Computing



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I'm going to read literally everything I can find out about Goldsmiths; especially what other students are saying

It's the start of year 13 and time for me to think seriously about my UCAS application. It's always been kind of assumed that I'd go to University but that doesn't bother me because I really want to go and all my mates at school are going too. I'm predicted ABB in Business Studies, Design & Tech and Media Studies.

I don't know what course I want to do but I know that I want a job doing something in digital media eventually. I spend a lot of time playing computer games and love tech – I've even made some cash on the side building little websites for a couple of dad's mates. Trouble is, I'm not sure if I want to go into digital design, development, or whether something more business-focussed might give me better career prospects than a purely creative or technical degree. My A-Level subjects are all broad enough to allow me to do any of the above, but some of the courses I've looked at ask for evidence of an Arts background (even though they're computing courses), and I have no idea if my A-Level subjects and my GCSE in Art qualify me for this.

I feel a bit torn at the minute between going somewhere really traditional with a good reputation and going somewhere I think I might have more fun and meet like-minded people. I'd hate to go to Oxbridge or anything

like that (not that I'd ever get in!), but I don't want to end up somewhere that's not well-respected wasting the next three years of my life and £40k to boot.

I think what I'm trying to say is that I want to make sure my degree is useful, but I want to have a blast at Uni too. More than that – people have always told me that this is the bit of your life where you grow and really get to know yourself as a person, so I want to make sure I'm in a creative and stimulating enough environment to allow that to happen. I think London would be good for me – both personally and professionally. Isn't it dead expensive to live there though?

My Dad was the first person in his family to go to Uni and he keeps pushing me to book open days and make decisions, but I just want to do it in my own time. I know what the UCAS deadlines are. He's much more interested in league tables and career prospects than I am, largely based on things he knows about his own Uni and ones his mates went to, but I keep on telling him that things have changed a lot in the past two decades! In fairness though, this is all a bit overwhelming to me. There are literally hundreds of Unis to choose from and I haven't even got a clue where most of them are. This is gonna take some time...

Need to Know

Jack lives just outside York with his Mum Lynda (see persona), Dad Alan and brother Tony, who is two years below him at the same school. Because he's not that sure which programme of study is for him, Jack could be well-suited to an interdisciplinary programme of study but he

just doesn't know it yet – and he certainly wouldn't call it by that name. He's also probably not aware yet of the benefits of a campus University, although again he'd probably be best suited to that kind of environment.

Discovering Goldsmiths

- Jack starts with UCAS. He knows there are other Uni comparison-type sites because he's seen posters for them in school but UCAS is a trusted source
- He searches for 'Computing + London' and starts going through the 43 results. He starts with places he's heard of. Goldsmiths is one of them
- He goes on course title as Goldsmiths offers 13 courses that match his search. He doesn't have the time or energy to look at all of them at the moment
- He likes the sound of Creative Computing and Digital Arts Computing because they sound like a good mix of subject areas. In this 'first pass' he looks at entry requirements, course structure and location
- Over the next few weeks he consumes every piece of information he can find about Goldsmiths. He watches various things on YouTube including 'But is it Art?' which is the top hit. He researches staff on other sites and compares student satisfaction levels across different courses on Unistats
- What influences him most though is reading the first 8 pages of a thread on The Student Room titled What is Goldsmiths really like?
- When he's got a shortlist ready he shares this with Alan, who expresses concern that Goldsmiths doesn't perform so well in league tables. Jack thinks this is because they don't have a load of mathematicians pushing them up the league tables, right?

Information Goals

- Course content
- Entry requirements
 1. Whether 'subject-specific' means computing, or design and technology? What qualifies as an 'arts background'?
- Whether there's a year in industry option
- Understanding interdisciplinarity
- Employment prospects, validated by alumni profiles and employer testimony
- How far away everything is (NB we might call this question 'is it a campus University?')
- What sports facilities and societies are available
- Open days and campus tours
- Fees information
- Life in New Cross. The student experience
- Alumni stories
- Staff profiles – personality as well as academic achievements
- Facilities
- Student work and departmental news & events

We must

- Show him related courses and explain the benefits of an interdisciplinary approach
- Offer options for students to get in touch if they're not sure which course is for them
- Provide clear CTAs. Prioritise open day information
- Demonstrate reputation and credibility through
 1. Stories (avoid statistic fatigue)
 2. Heritage ('the Goldsmiths story')
 3. Alumni stories
 4. University of London parentage

We must Not

- Allow course descriptions to be inaccessible through an overuse of academic or management-speak. These pages must be succinct, clear, practical and image-led
- Allow a rigid departmental structure to get in the way of an intuitive IA

Influencing Factors

- Parents
- Teachers/ school councillors
- Friends
- Media