



# Families On Campus

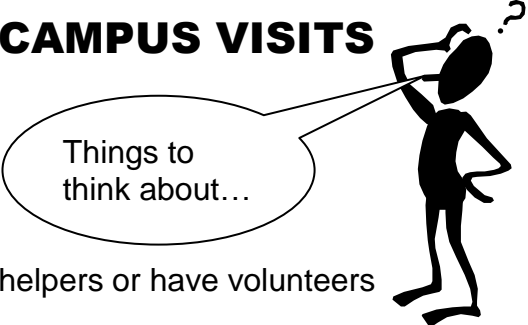
## WHY ORGANISE CAMPUS VISITS?

Campus visits at college or university have many benefits for families. They can help reassure families in a humanistic way that is not possible via a HE web page by allowing families to have:

- questions answered and sometimes concerns alleviated
- myths about HE addressed
- a real insight into the feel and look of a particular HE environment
- opportunities to talk to current students
- a chance to see what typical facilities are available for students
- a chance to consider if their child would be happy in that particular environment

## PRACTICALITIES OF ORGANISING CAMPUS VISITS

- Degree of choice given to pupils
- Level at which departmental activities are pitched
- If, and how you will use outside speakers
- If, and what you will pay departmental staff, student helpers or have volunteers
- Extent to which activity is about HE generally or institutional promotion



Things to think about...

## POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING A CAMPUS TOUR:

1. Size and age of group
2. Gender of the group
3. Educational background of group
4. Social background of group
5. Religious background of group
6. Physical ability of members of the group
7. Time !!!



**DON'T FORGET!**

- Weather
- Religious festivals
- ANYTHING ELSE?**

## 1. **Size and Age of group of Families**



- Think about size of group, and make sure you have enough help.
- Take account of the range of ages in your group when planning activities.
- Adults' interests may be different from those of children or young adults.
- Older adults may have different preconceptions to younger people.



## 2. **Gender Issues**

- Be aware that issues such as single-sex accommodation and security may be of interest.
- Most campus accommodation is single sex, with most social areas being mixed.
- Sports societies can be single-sex or mixed. Does your swimming pool run women-only sessions?

## 3. **Educational Background of the Families**

Be aware that there will be a range of educational backgrounds, including:

- School
- Community-based learning
- Family-based learning
- College
- University



## 4. **Social Background of the Families**

Consider the social backgrounds of the group. Many will have no previous experience of higher education, and may therefore wish to see a wider number of facilities.

- From talking to members of the group as you show them around, you will learn more about what is socially important to them. Try to include this in the tour.

## 5. **Religious Background of The Families**

This may be very important and is worth finding out before starting the tour. It may influence where you take your group.

- Consider different religious needs – is there a multi-faith centre, any specific religious facilities such as prayer facilities?
- Non-alcoholic spaces are important to Muslim visitors for example

## 6. **Physical Ability Of The Group**

Be aware that there may be different levels of physical ability in the group!

- You may need to consider wheelchair routes.
- You may need to consider places to pause and rest for those who tire easily.
- You may need space to let children let off steam !!!



## 7. **Time**

One of the biggest factors in organising your tour is time.

- If time is limited, use the information above and decide your priorities
- Don't worry if you do not cover everything – a good reason for another visit!

## **FAMILY ACTIVITIES WHILST ON CAMPUS**

In addition to a campus tour, campus visits can provide opportunities for families to try out FE and HE facilities through the use of family learning activities. The use of workshops and presentations for parents also allows families to raise common concerns and address these in more depth.

### **Using HE Facilities**

A useful way to gain a real insight into the facilities and resources that HE can offer is to provide an opportunity for families to use those facilities.

#### ***Multi-faith or religious facilities***

The on-campus religious facilities and student societies enable parents to see what is possible for those who want to retain their religious and cultural identity and can help to convey the idea that Universities are 'not a foreign body' but another community in which other people of similar faiths and cultures are able to live and study.

#### ***Computer Activity***

Getting families to work together using computers to find out information can be an ideal activity for encouraging intergenerational learning.

The focus can be on finding out about higher education (use the Family Activity 5) or to encourage exploration of subject based websites.



Practical issues: Pre - set up computers with web sites on screen. This ensures:

- Computers are functioning
- Web sites are appropriate for age range
- Participants are not distracted or waste time looking for web sites
- Divide people into small groups of 2-3 with at least one person who is IT literate

#### ***Sports or Leisure facilities***

Colleges and Higher Education Institutions often have sports facilities, theatre or performance space, art gallery or display area. By working in partnership with a school or community group to enable them to access sports or leisure facilities for a sports day or cultural performance you can encourage families to visit a campus and help breakdown barriers.



This is an indirect use of resources check Briefing Sheet 9: Family Learning: Using Research To Inform Practice

### **Parent Presentations / Workshops**

This can be an opportunity to address common concerns of parents using experienced HE staff. It is important to appreciate that experts in particular aspects of university life, such as finance, may not necessarily have the experience of delivering workshops for parents and may need support or advice in translating technical information to a family friendly format.

Common areas to cover within a parent workshop include:

- Finance
- Admission process
- Choice of course
- Student support services.

## Using Role Model Students

When working with minority ethnic families, do not underestimate the importance of **role model undergraduates** and members of minority ethnic or religious societies such as the Islamic and Asian Societies. The presence of students from a similar cultural background can be one of the most important features of the visit day, as it conveys what is possible. The informal exchanges e.g. in their own mother tongue, with Asian families can create a relaxed environment and allow parents to feel more comfortable and ask questions that they may not otherwise ask a standard tour leader.



Remember to take a similar approach and use role model students when working with families from:

- Different cultural backgrounds
- Different geographic locations
- Different disabilities
- Different social backgrounds

## PARENTS FOR PROGRESSION

The University of Central Lancashire UCLAN decided to build on early success of Flying Start Bridging project for GNVQ students that involved workshops for parents. Partnership 4 Progression aimed to equip parents with information that will enable them to offer practical support and guidance to their children during their life as an undergraduate through a series of workshops, guided tours, involvement with existing students and an opportunity to meet advisors and receive one to one guidance. The intervention provided a forum for parents to air concerns with other parents and with members of staff and for UCLAN to gather market intelligence. For a powerpoint presentation on the project



[escalate.ac.uk/downloads/2677.ppt](http://escalate.ac.uk/downloads/2677.ppt)

## RESOURCES TO USE WITH FAMILIES:

- ① Lancashire Aimhigher - Family Activities, Parent Leaflets or Parent Presentation
- ① Lancashire Aimhigher – Aim for Higher Education, A Resource Pack for Widening Participation Activities
- ① Aimhigher resources available from <http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/practitioner/home/>

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### Prepared on behalf of Lancashire Aimhigher

For further information about working with families, or copies of other briefing sheets, contact:

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<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/reap/Documents/Briefing%20Sheet%202.pdf>