

Case Study

Student: Gregor Murray

Advanced Highers: Music, Physics and Computing

Home Town: Dundee

University: Dundee — Faculty of Arts and Social Science

Degree: MA (Hons) Geopolitics and International Relations

18 year-old Gregor is the first pupil from Braeview Academy in Dundee to participate in an 'Advanced Entry Initiative' which Dundee University runs with local schools. This allowed him to do a module in *Politics and Public Policy* at the university whilst studying for Advanced Highers in his sixth year. This module gave Gregor 20 points credit towards his degree and, along with his three Advanced Higher passes, led to him being made the offer of direct second year entry.

Studying for this module whilst in sixth year also gave Gregor a good indication of what it would be like to be at university. Gregor received three unconditional offers for similar courses at other universities, but Dundee gave him a conditional offer for direct second year entry and he decided to accept this offer and stay and study in the 'City of Discovery'. Normally the University would have asked for three Advanced Highers at grade B, but Gregor's offer was for a 'B' and a 'C' plus the university module.

Gregor's school did not have a lot of experience in presenting pupils for Advanced Higher and this was the first year the school had been invited to participate in the 'Advanced Entry Initiative'. Gregor found the school guidance staff consequently had no previous experience to draw on and limited knowledge, but were really supportive and did all they could to assist him access all the information he needed and complete his application.

As far as he knows, Gregor is the only person on his Course to come from school directly into second year, but there are others, such as foreign and mature students who have also come straight into this year and a few who have repeated a year, so he was not the only new face in his classes. As well as being able to participate in freshers week activities that were not exclusively for first year students, Gregor found that the university ran events for those who were coming direct into later stages of courses and he found these were useful, both in terms of the information imparted and in meeting others in similar situations.



Asked about negatives, Gregor could only think of a year less of university social life. 'It has been less scary than I thought it would be, and you are not alone — there are lots of others who have come into my degree course by some alternative route.' He has found all the university staff friendly, approachable and helpful, but adds that it is an advantage if you are a confident, outgoing person. He has also made friends in other courses and years by playing clarinet in the university orchestra and through university clubs and social activities.

Benefits were seen by Gregor as mainly financial in saving a year's costs and in entering employment a year earlier and starting to earn a salary. Finishing his degree in three years instead of four is in itself a benefit. He has lived at home for his initial year but is looking to move into a flat next year. In Gregor's case, his bank has given him a higher loan limit treating him as a second year student.

Gregor's advice to others eligible for and considering direct second year entry is to go for it and to be confident and outgoing. He makes the point that university staff told him that if they didn't think he could cope with it they wouldn't have offered him this option. To parents he says 'your support is important, have confidence in your son/daughter'.