

What do SWAP students think of the access programmes?

Here are some responses from 2019's SWAP access students on what advice they would give to adults thinking of returning to study.

The SWAP programme has been life changing for me. When I began my course, my confidence was at an all-time low. I will not lie that it has been challenging, but it is rising to these challenges that has rebuilt my confidence. The challenges are also manageable. Even with parental responsibilities. If you are unsure what to do with your life or you are looking for a way into university as a mature student, there is no better path to take. The SWAP course was filled with people from all walks of life and our class became really close. We were all there for each other and friendships have been made that will last a lifetime.

My advice would be that if you're considering applying for an access programme, definitely go for it! I left school at 16 with absolutely nothing and here I am at 20 about to start university! This year has been brilliant and has totally flown by. I would recommend SWAP to anyone and can't believe the opportunities it's presented me with. SWAP access programmes are totally life changing! It is hard work when you're not used to it but it's totally worth it. Definitely apply!!

Even though there are hurdles, it is so worth it and the feeling of accomplishment once you have completed it is like no other. When you want to give up, don't, you can do it.

Go for it! It was one of the scariest but best decisions I have ever made. It has changed my life completely and made me realise just how capable I am for this journey I have chosen. I have rediscovered skills I had forgotten I had and discovered new ones along the way. I have fine-tuned my study and revision skills which will be of great benefit in the years to come at university. Furthermore, it has helped me build confidence both in meeting new people and in not being too afraid to put myself out there with an answer in class (no answer is a silly answer, it's just how we learn and grow!).

I would certainly encourage potential students to do this access course. I, myself, enrolled on the course, suffering from depression, with a great deal of trepidation and self-doubt, unsure of whether or not I had the necessary academic ability. Due to amazing lecturers, amazing classmates and the friendly atmosphere, the experience was a wholly positive one. I learned that I still had the capacity to learn. I overcame anxiety, met some wonderful people and made some solid friendships. It is because I enrolled on this course that I am not only going to university, but I am going to my first choice university, to study for my first choice of degree, and indulge a great passion of mine for the next four (hopefully more) years.

It's a big step to take but just do it! This course will allow you to have another shot at the career you've always dreamed of that, for whatever reason evaded you before. It's never too late to really make that change and thanks to SWAP and a lot of hard work on your behalf in one year you too could be entering university! Good luck!

Don't let yourself get overwhelmed and bogged down, always ask for help as my tutors made me feel a lot better if I had any issues.

And here are some more responses, this time from 2021's access students, when asked what they liked best about their SWAP programme.

The learning opportunity it gives to students with no qualifications. I missed several years of school, due to illness, and never thought I would get the chance to return to education – this course gave me the opportunity to learn a lot of new things and gave me a huge feeling of achievement. My tutors were also very experienced and supportive.

I'm amazed at myself and how, after an overwhelming first couple weeks, immersed myself in the course and enjoyed it. I liked that it was online as that meant I could continue working full-time alongside my study. Tutors were so helpful and approachable.

It was tailored to those returning to education which was fantastic and alleviated my concerns of returning to education.

Support from lecturers and SWAP was amazing.

It's been truly great to learn things I didn't have the confidence to learn or believe in myself enough to do in high school.

Getting back in to education and proving to myself that I could do it.

Tutors were brilliant, always available to answer questions

That all the students were mature students

The confidence I have gained and meeting new people from a variety of backgrounds and ages.

The lecturers were amazing and the lessons were enlightening, informative and fun.

Thank you for the opportunity and helping me progress into becoming a candidate for university. I have very much enjoyed this year although with great difficulties in place that could not be helped, there was always someone there to support me and my fellow students within the course and learn lots of new things and views into becoming the student I wished to be.

It is the best thing I have ever done and experienced. I am so glad I chose to go back and learn and if it was not for the SWAP course I would not be able to follow my dreams of becoming a nurse. It is such a fantastic opportunity and life changing. I would recommend it to everyone who wants to go back and learn, but are unable to go straight to uni.

I'm really glad that the SWAP programme exists. It's given me a second chance in life which I wouldn't otherwise have had. I'm a single mum with 2 kids and I need a better life for them and that means getting a good job and a good salary.