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STUDENTS: LOOK AFTER YOUR FINANCIAL WELLBEING

Financial wellbeing is all about feeling secure. It's having enough to get by, but also being aware of how money can affect your physical, mental and social health.

Looking after your financial wellbeing is extremely important, particularly as a student. University life is expensive, and there's no shortage of things to spend your money on.

Moving away from home and having complete financial independence can be a big shock to the system. Try and be aware of the risks, particularly with all the new lending options available to you. The trick is learning how to manage your money whilst enjoying the experience.



CHOOSE THE RIGHT BANK ACCOUNT

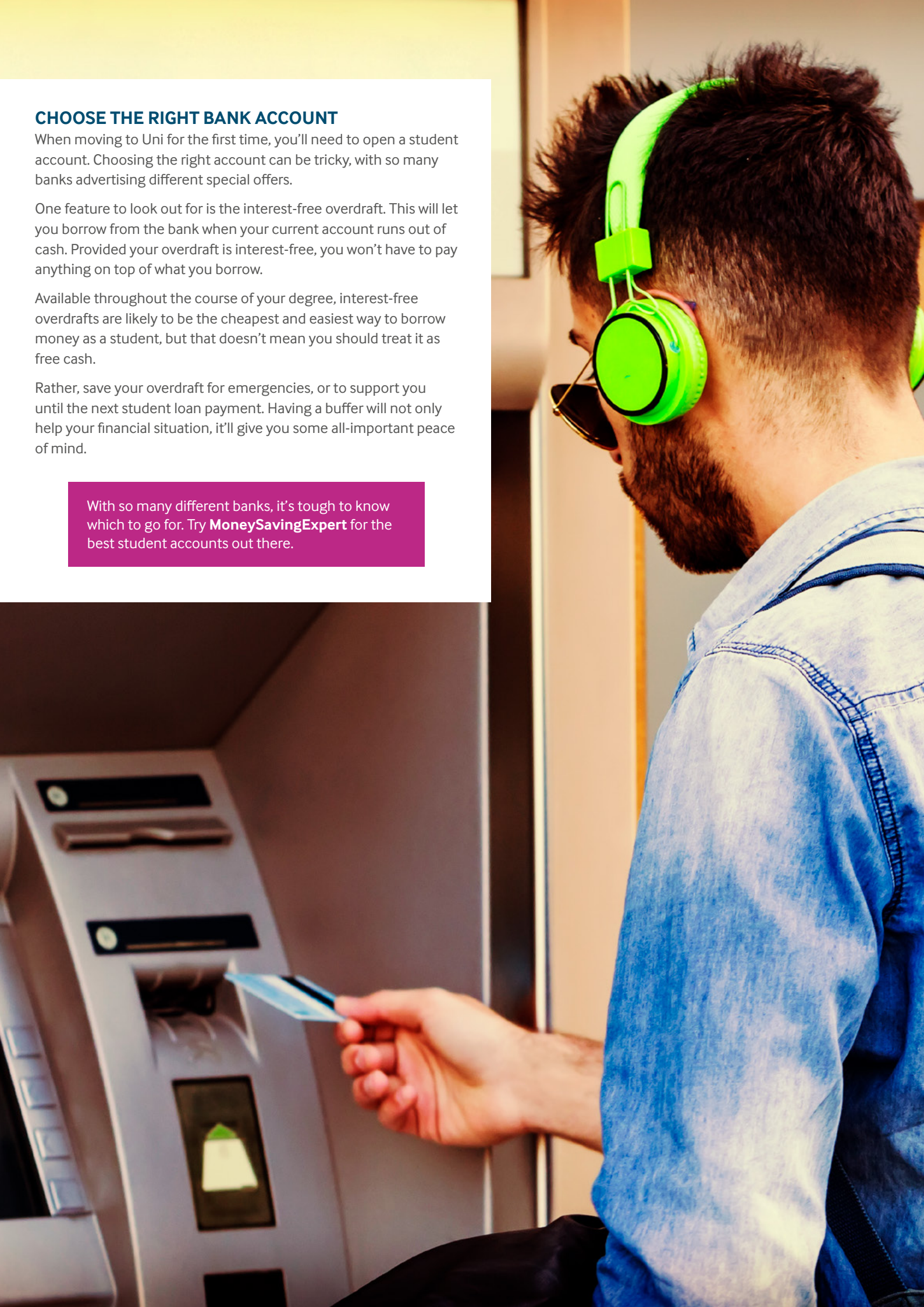
When moving to Uni for the first time, you'll need to open a student account. Choosing the right account can be tricky, with so many banks advertising different special offers.

One feature to look out for is the interest-free overdraft. This will let you borrow from the bank when your current account runs out of cash. Provided your overdraft is interest-free, you won't have to pay anything on top of what you borrow.

Available throughout the course of your degree, interest-free overdrafts are likely to be the cheapest and easiest way to borrow money as a student, but that doesn't mean you should treat it as free cash.

Rather, save your overdraft for emergencies, or to support you until the next student loan payment. Having a buffer will not only help your financial situation, it'll give you some all-important peace of mind.

With so many different banks, it's tough to know which to go for. Try **MoneySavingExpert** for the best student accounts out there.



BACK YOUR BUDGET

Once you're comfortable with where your money is, the next step is working out how (or how not) to spend it.

If you're getting Maintenance Loan payments, they usually come in three big instalments. Bear in mind that this may be the first time you're faced with such a large amount of cash, so it's normal to feel somewhat overwhelmed.

The best thing to do is note down exactly how much money is coming in, through a maintenance loan or otherwise, as well as what you need to spend it on: accommodation, bills, food etc.

If you can, try and set some money aside each month for an emergency fund. It doesn't have to be a massive amount – just enough to help towards any unforeseen costs.

Once you've got everything accounted for, you can break it down using the following equation:

TOTAL INCOME – ESSENTIAL EXPENSES

NUMBER OF WEEKS IN A TERM

Alternatively,

UCAS has a great budgeting calculator you can use.

Seeing the amount on paper can really help your mind process what you need. Plus, working out what's coming in and going out will give you much more confidence in your spending decisions, meaning you can enjoy yourself without fretting about the cost.

Did you know? App-based banks like **Monzo** and **Starling** are great for organising your budget and keeping track of your spending.



EARN SOME EXTRA CASH

Many students have part-time jobs to help with their finances. The staff at city bars, restaurants and shops are usually packed full of students, so you shouldn't have any trouble finding work. **Make sure your CV is in good form** before applying!

Of course, your studies should take first priority. But if you find yourself with some free time between lectures and nights out, a job can not only help your finances – it's a great way to meet new people and settle into a new environment.

Some other ways to earn as a student:

Advertise yourself – through apps like **UniTaskr**, you can make some extra dosh through odd jobs in ways that suit you – influencers, freelance artists, even cleaning jobs.

Get on your bike – you'll be no stranger to food delivery services like **Deliveroo** and **UberEats**, why not sign up to make drop-offs? Plus, you only ever work when it suits you!

Sell your old stuff – one man's trash is another man's treasure! If you've got bundles of unwanted clothes or books, stick them on Facebook Marketplace or apps like **Depop**.

Did you know? If you're struggling to find a job at the moment, you can easily earn some cash from the comfort of your own bedroom. See **SaveTheStudent's top 40 ways to make money at Uni**.



BE CREDIT-CONSCIOUS

Once you've turned 18, you can legally apply for a credit card. Like an overdraft, a credit card involves borrowing money from the bank, though you'll have to pay at least some of it off at the end of every month. This is known as making the 'minimum payment'.

In return for making the minimum payments (usually £5), the credit card may remain at 0% interest. Paying off such a small amount every month may seem inviting and without risk, but think about it like this...

...Let's say in your first year of Uni – aged 19 – you borrowed £2,000 and only ever paid £5 per month. Assuming there was no interest added, you'd be 33 before it was paid off, and even older if interest was involved!

On top of this, many students struggle to bring in a significant income with such demanding degrees. If this is the case for you, you'll be racking up debt without any real means of paying it off in the future, so we'd always recommend caution.

Another way of getting credit is through Buy Now, Pay Later schemes like Klarna and Clearpay. Usually found in the checkout of online retailers and in some high-street stores, these schemes give the option to pay at a later date or through instalments.

Even if you are spreading the cost, you will need to pay it back at some point. If you've opted to 'pay later', you'll usually have a month to do so. Should you miss the deadline, you'll owe interest on top of what you've already borrowed.

Your credit score may also be affected if you miss a payment to any credit agreement, so it's important to stay on top of what you've borrowed.

To save yourself from getting in debt further down the line, ask yourself: 'Can I afford it now, and will I be able to afford it then?'

Hopefully all this gives you a bit more insight into what to expect when starting Uni. It's important to stay on top of your finances, but also that you enjoy yourself and get the most from your experience.

If for any reason you are struggling to manage your money at Uni, know that help isn't far away. Our advisers are always available for a free chat, either online or by phone.

You can call us for free on **0800 280 2816** or chat to us online at **www.payplan.com**



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