



Case Study

Glenys Caswell
4th year Sociology Student

What were you doing before QM/what made you decide to do a degree?

I had been working as a Senior Support Worker for people with Mental Health problems in supported accommodation for about 13 years. Was thinking about doing something else for a while and wanted to do something to exercise my brain more.

Did you do any preparatory study before applying?

I'd done all sorts of courses over a number of years. These included an A Level and quite a range of Open University courses.

Did you feel well prepared?

Yes, because they don't expect you to have any particular knowledge in 1st year (for my course). I used 1st year as a preparatory year in itself, getting used to the library, finding out what was expected etc.

What's student life been like?

Overall it's been a very positive experience. Level 1 was stress free compared to my work. It was mainly about learning how to be a student and 'learning to learn'. I didn't enjoy Level 2 as much. I realised I had initially chosen the wrong subject, I started doing health promotion and so I changed to sociology - and then felt a lot more comfortable. Level 3 was good and 4th year has been even better. I've had a lot more free time and been

working on my dissertation. My husband lives at home in Easter Ross so I tend to go home most weekends and holidays but live in digs at term time. Living away from home has been the most difficult thing.

Has age been a barrier at all?

No, although it did mean that I thought it's 'now or never' (I'm 47 now). There are other mature students on my course and once term gets started age doesn't seem to matter anymore. Lecturers have told me that age won't be a barrier to my future plans either.

What's next for you?

I have applied to both Aberdeen and Edinburgh University to do a Master's in Social Research and then a PhD. Staff have been very supportive and have encouraged me to make the most of the opportunities open to me.

Any tips/advice for those considering University?

I'd say go for it. If like me, you pick a course that has a common foundation year - keep an open mind about where it might lead you. Relax and enjoy it - remember that the more pressure you put on yourself the harder it becomes to do well. Also, try to get to know your Personal Academic Tutor (PAT). They are there to help and its best to get to know them before any problems crop up.