



# A GUIDE FOR STUDENT AMBASSADORS



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**Alexandra**  
 BSc Accounting and Finance


See profile
Ask question

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 Speaks: English, Spanish  
 Year: Second Year  
 Studied: A-Levels

  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND SETTING UP

### What is Unibuddy all about?

Unibuddy is a platform where students who are interested in your University can get in touch with real students (that's you!) to get a real insight into what life might be like for them if they choose to study at your University. They will typically find you on the University website, read a bit about you in your profile and blog posts, and then contact you via the 'chat now' button. To use the service they'll have a light-touch sign-in process.

### Setting up on Unibuddy

Setup is simple. You will receive an invitation to join via email. Click on the link and complete your profile. Your profile will show your first-name, photo, what you study and which year you are in, where you are from and which language you speak, where and what you studied at school, plus a short sentence or two about yourself. Prospective students can then find an ambassador who they most closely identify with. Once setup, you can access your dashboard at any time by visiting <https://unibuddy.co> and logging in using your email and password.

### Your dashboard

You will find the following sections in your Dashboard when logged in:

- **Inbox**

"My Conversations" contains messages you send and receive from prospective students. You'll be able to see who has been in touch and click through to see the full conversation and send a reply.

- **Student blog**

Here you'll be able to see the blogs already written and can post your own. Give your post a category, a title, upload a suitable photo and type away. Once you are happy, hit submit.

- **Profile**

Click on your picture and you'll be able to write a mini biography, edit your profile and see/edit the blogs you have written.

- **Logout**

Finally you will see the LOGOUT button, which you should use if others are able to access your computer or mobile device.

- **Chat with Unibuddy**

On each page there is a chat facility where you can raise any questions with the Unibuddy team.

Finally, whenever you receive a new message, a comment on one of your blogs, or there is a new discussion item on a group chat, Unibuddy will send you an email and a text to prompt you to login.

## 2. HINTS AND TIPS ON GETTING THE BEST OUT OF UNIBUDDY

### **Answering questions and keeping students engaged**

Unibuddy chat is all about having a conversation with prospective students, not just answering their questions. Some prospective students will have a whole load of questions and will keep the conversation going naturally. Others may need a bit of encouragement, and so rather than just answering the question, it's good to finish your response by asking them a question back. That way you can expect them to come back and engage further.

- **Using your experience**

You can expect questions on a whole range of matters, such as accommodation, social life, scholarships, how hard the study is and what you enjoy best about the university. From our experience, most of the questions students tend to ask are things you will easily know about from your own experience. Sometimes you may need to draw on experience of your friends (e.g. if they ask about study abroad, and you didn't do it, but you know others who did) and sometimes you might want to find a useful web address or staff contact to refer them to.

- **When you don't know the answer**

If you really don't know the answer to a question, or even where to find it, you should probably have a chat with your Ambassador Co-ordinator - though we think this situation will be rare.

- **Tricky situations**

Even more rare will be if a conversation starts to get a little overly personal. If this happens, then just shorten your answers a bit and the student will probably get the idea. Never feel pressure to reveal anything you are uncomfortable with and never give out personal contact details or social media contacts. If things start to get weird, see Part 3 below!

## **Writing a great blog post**

Writing a great post is your way to show off how good you will be at answering students' questions. It is a brief window on your life that should grab the reader and make them want to ask more. So what should you do to make a post great? Here are our top tips...

- **A good title really matters**

Your title should be short and attention grabbing, but should make crystal clear what the subject of the post is. Don't be too clever or too mysterious, or people will simply move on.

- **Make your first sentence count**

You have two lines of text – or around 40 words – to grab the attention of your reader, so make these words count. They need to show that you write in an interesting and informative way and that you have something useful to say about the topic. Only then will the reader bother to click on “read more”.

- **How long?**

On a site like this, anything less than 100 words is probably a waste. You won't say enough to be of use. However, more than 500 words, and the reader will probably become bored – unless you write like JK Rowling or have crafted something genuinely special, witty or important.

Break your post up into several paragraphs. A paragraph could be as short as one sentence, but will rarely be more than about 120 words. Vary your sentence length. Four words is fine - but 40 words is probably too long.

- **Write from your own experience**

The most important thing about posts is that you write about what you have experienced, and not the general experience of students. If writing a post about housing, don't write about all the options – students can read that on any university website. Instead, tell them about what you chose, what you liked about it, and whether you would recommend it to others. If you are writing about clubs and societies, don't tell them what to join, instead tell them about the groups you joined.

- **Giving advice**

Generally, we would suggest you don't give out advice. Chances are you are not an expert on all the options and choices in higher education, and to be blunt, the reader is not going to follow your advice anyway. Instead, give the reader information, give them your view, your perspective, even your opinion – and if someone wise gave you some good advice along the way, then please do pass it on! The reader will come to their own conclusions, and will value the insight that you have given them.

- **Style**

These posts should be informal, personal and written in your own style. However, spelling, grammar and punctuation DO matter. Your reader won't be impressed if you can't write properly, and your University will be even less impressed, as bad writing reflects badly on them! So take care with your writing – and if you are not a native English speaker, consider preparing your posts on MS Word, so you can check spelling and grammar before you post.

- **Putting in links**

Don't put in links to other websites within the text your post – the last thing you want is your reader clicking to go elsewhere halfway through reading your post. If you must put in links, put them right at the end of your post.

- **Enjoy writing and remember, practice makes perfect!**

Writing well is one of the most important skills that you will develop over your lifetime. Good writing will open so many doors that it is worth making the effort to become good at it. This will come naturally to some people, but for most people it takes time and it takes effort. And the more you do it, the better you will become. So take the plunge – write posts and put them up, even if they are not perfect! Take feedback from friends and know that every time you write, it'll get easier and your posts will get better.

### 3. ON-LINE SAFETY AND IMPORTANT LEGAL STUFF

#### Safeguarding and safety on-line

This is the serious bit. While we don't expect there to be much in the way of inappropriate behaviour on Unibuddy, it is important to be aware and take precautions, as with any activity conducted over the internet. We want you to protect yourself from any potential threat, but also to protect yourself from any potential allegations.

- **What not to discuss**

As you don't know with 100% certainty that others on Unibuddy are exactly who they purport to be, never discuss anything of a private or sensitive nature over Unibuddy. This includes matters of a sexual nature and anything about personal relationships. You should never give out personal contact details such as your address, phone number, email address or social media contacts.

- **Meeting a prospective student**

If you agree to meet with a prospective student who you have chatted with over Unibuddy, you should only do this within a public, safe and appropriate environment. This might include meeting on an Open Day, or arranging a campus tour, meeting for example, at your University student recruitment office. It is vital that you inform your Ambassador Coordinator about any such meetings.

- **Report any inappropriate or abusive behaviour**

If anything comes up in a chat or on a post that you feel is not appropriate you must report it. You can contact the Unibuddy team via the chat facility available from every page on our site. We can take action to remove posts or block users if necessary. You can also contact your Ambassador Co-ordinator at your University to report or discuss anything you are uncomfortable with and they can help decide what is the appropriate action to take.

## **Consumer protection and the Competition and Markets Authority**

The Competition and Markets Authority has recently issued guidance to universities relating to the accuracy of information it provides. Whilst this doesn't specifically cover social media or student ambassadors, we feel it is important for you, as representatives of the University, to be careful not to make false or exaggerated claims about your University which might mislead prospective students.

The sort of information you might want to be careful of are things like scholarships, professional accreditation, employment statistics, access to visas etc. These areas frequently change and professional expertise is often necessary to provide advice. By all means talk from your own experience, but steer clear of definitively saying what a prospective student will get in these areas.