# STAKEHOLDERS IN THE UNIVERSITY PROCESSES

Employers have a huge interest in what happens in universities, both for the purposes of collaboration with university researchers, and from the perspective of being future employers of the graduates produced. Most universities will have numerous links to national businesses and organisations, and you may come across a number of these in your lectures and in career-oriented presentations.

However, there is a real difference between what is done at school/college level and what is done at university level, and the difference is this: until you are 18, you are seen as a child, with rights and responsibilities that are different from those of an adult. (It is nice to be a child in some respects, but at some stage we are expected to grow up.) After we are 18, we ‘become’ independent. That number changes the way the university relates to parents and aspects of the Data Protection Act start to play a role – basically, any information that the university has about you is under your ownership, *and yours alone*. That means that others – including your parents – do not and cannot have access without your explicit permission.

There are also university administrative staff, student union representatives, personal tutors, careers advisers, welfare representatives, course representatives, deans, associate deans, professors, course managers, external examiners, course directors, international student advisers, educational specialists and a range of other individuals with a variety of job titles whose role is to help you somehow through your university studies – either at a distance or via a closer relationship. These individuals work together on teams, in committees and in their various offices to compile what is commonly called ‘The University Experience’. Not all of these roles exist in every university, but in a ‘typical’ university, these would be as follows:

* **Student Union representatives** – To be advocates on behalf of the student body generally for students’ views and opinions.
* **Personal tutors** – To ensure that you are making good progress on your academic studies and to help you adapt to the differing demands of being a student over the next few years.
* **Careers advisers** – To give you some guidance and ask some challenging questions to help you identify how best to prepare you for life after university.
* **Welfare representatives** – To provide advice on welfare-related issues (financial, disability, etc.) for you if you need it.
* **Course representatives** – This could be you. Students attend meetings with relevant academic staff to discuss problems that the student group is experiencing.
* **Deans** – To provide leadership for the academic school or department where you are studying. They may or may not do a great deal of teaching.
* **Associate Deans** – To have responsibility for a significant part of the school’s activities (e.g. Research, Teaching and Learning, Faculty Management, International Programmes, etc.).
* **Professors/lecturers/tutors** – To provide academic teaching for you as a student, and to undertake research and leadership/administrative duties as needed.
* **Course managers** – To give you administrative support around university processes (such as changing your degree course, mitigating/extenuating circumstances).
* **External examiners** – Individuals who have academic jobs at other universities but who have an oversight role in terms of assessment processes for courses and modules.
* **Course directors** – To provide academic leadership for your degree programme.
* **International student advisers** – To provide personal and sometimes academic support to international students.
* **Educational specialists** – To provide you with guidance on your learning and academic work.

Of course, as mentioned earlier, there are other stakeholders and other roles that universities fulfil. Those benefits – relating to research, training and consultancy – for businesses, public and charity sector organisations (locally and nationally), and for other individuals and groups, are very important for universities.