

## SECTION 2

MAN: As I said earlier, there is I think at Rexford an excellent combination of physical and geographical advantages – as well as having a rural setting and still being close to central London, something that will certainly be of interest to you is that Rexford is just 35 minutes from London Airport. At Rexford we have a strong research capability. We came 7th out of 101 universities in last year's research assessment, carried out by a government body and did particularly well in your particular subjects, engineering and science. Actually we got a top research grade of five for engineering, geography and computer sciences. One further point – and I know from talking to you individually that a number of you may be looking for some experience in industry after the course – is that all our science and engineering research departments have unusually close relationships with industry in the area. Anyway that's enough sales talk from me . . . I'll just take a sip of this coffee that's just arrived, thank you, and then I'll say something about what actually happens when you apply.

Q11/Q12

Right . . . Now if you do decide to make an application, what you do is send it directly to me in my department. I will then immediately send confirmation and the application process begins. Er . . . I'd like to say at this point that you shouldn't worry if this process doesn't work all that quickly – I mean occasionally there are postal problems, but most often the hold-up is caused by references – the people you give as referees, shall we say, take their time to reply. Anyway, it's absolutely normal for this process to take three to four months. What I do in this period is keep in touch with you and reassure you that things are moving along.

Q11/Q12

Q13

One of the ways we've devised to help you decide about applying as well as later when you've been accepted . . . hopefully . . . is to put you in contact with, if possible, a student from your own country who is at present studying with us. What you can do is phone them up – we will, of course, liaise between you – and discuss your concerns with them. That way you can get an objective opinion of what you can expect if you come to live and study at Rexford – not only the academic atmosphere but important details like what the leisure

Q14

facilities are like and whether the English weather and food are really as awful as everybody says! Q15

If you decide you can face it, the contact can also help you just before you leave, with tips on what to pack and that sort of thing. At the moment I think we've got two second-year students and one postgraduate from this country.

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Now to move on to the other concerns you expressed earlier. At a UK university – as I'm sure you know – you will be in an environment where independent learning is the norm, which takes most students a while to adjust to, and at a time when you will be separated from your normal surroundings and, in most cases, your family. This can be a difficult time. But remember that something like 25% of our student body are international students like yourselves, and that there are several organisations in the university and city whose main purpose is to offer help and ensure that your time with us is enjoyable and useful. Q16

One or two of you touched on the subject of accommodation earlier. So I'll just add a few points: it is the University's policy to give priority in the allocation of residence places to three categories, and those are: visiting students, exchange students and new postgraduate students. However, demand exceeds supply, so there is still a need to put your name down early for campus accommodation, particularly if your family is accompanying you. This means that the earlier you decide whether you want to study with us . . . and so get the procedure moving, the better it will be for everybody. Yes? Q17

WOMAN: What if you would prefer to live outside the university?

MAN: If you're planning to live off-campus, you've got to sort things out even earlier. As with everything in short supply, the good accommodation gets snapped up months before the beginning of term – in other words if you're starting in October you need to be thinking about it in June or at the very latest July. So you do need to think very carefully about what you need, how much you can afford to pay, well in advance. What you can't do is leave it until a few days before the start of term. The agencies in town are pretty good – it's just a matter of contacting them in good time. Of course, we have a full-time accommodation officer available to help all students. She'll get in touch with you when you're accepted – she's got plenty of contacts in the town and will deal with the agencies on your behalf. Q18  
Q19

One or two of you asked me earlier about your level of spoken English. Obviously most of you have already achieved a lot – I wish I could speak your language half as well. Having said that though, I'm afraid the lecturers will make little or no allowance for the presence of non-native speakers in the audience. So anything you can do to improve your spoken English – even beyond the pretty high levels most of you have already reached – will help make your stay with us that bit more fun for you. Some extra practice before you arrive is worth more than . . . for example private lessons afterwards, when you won't really have time. Oh . . . and one last thing before I invite further questions: it's very important that you . . . Q20