

Post 18 Pathways

After taking a level 3 course, leading to qualifications such as A levels/ BTEC Level 3 Diploma, students could consider Higher Education, Further Education, Apprenticeship or Employment.

Higher Education (HE)

HE means courses that lead to a degree (BA, BEd or BSc, for example), foundation degree, Higher National qualification (HND/C) or Diploma of HE (DipHE). HE courses are offered at universities and colleges of HE, and some HE courses can be studied at further education colleges. Students could choose to continue with a subject they are already studying, or opt for something completely new.

Degree courses

Bachelor degrees are level 6 qualifications. Most degree programmes are full time and last three years. However, there are some part-time courses and certain full-time programmes that last for four years. These include sandwich courses (i.e. those that involve a year or equivalent in industry) in subjects such as science, engineering and business and finance, and modern foreign language courses (because a year is normally spent abroad).

For entry to a degree course, you need a minimum of two A levels or the equivalent - e.g. an OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical qualification – plus supporting GCSEs. In practice, three A levels, or equivalent, are often needed, especially for the very competitive and demanding courses. Certain grades and subjects may be specified. Various combinations of AS/A levels, BTEC Level 3 National and other level 3 qualifications may be acceptable because universities often give offers based on UCAS Tariff points. Note that for entry to some courses, applicants with certain types of qualifications (such as an OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical or BTEC Level 3 National) require a relevant A level alongside. Other qualifications are taken into account by many institutions.

Foundation degrees

Foundation degrees are level 5 qualifications. They are offered in a wide range of work-related subject areas - from business management to zoological conservation! There are no set entry criteria, but level 3 (A level or equivalent) qualifications are usually needed; other applicants, such as those with relevant employment experience, may be considered on an individual basis. Foundation degrees usually take two years full time, but are also widely available on a part-time basis, suitable for those who wish to study while working. It is possible to continue studying to 'top-up' a foundation degree to a full degree.

Higher National courses

These are generally offered in work-related subjects such as travel and tourism management, business or construction. HND (Higher National Diploma) courses are at level 5 and usually last two years full time - or three if they include a sandwich year in industry. HNC (Higher National Certificate) courses (which are at level 4) are normally aimed at those in related employment and are taken part time. However, there are some part-time HNDs and full-time HNCs. For entry to a Higher National course, you usually need at least one A level, or equivalent. On completion, it may be possible to continue to study further, to 'top-up' an HND to a degree.

CertHEs and DipHEs

CertHEs (which are at level 4) generally take one year to complete on a full-time basis. DipHEs (which are at level 5) usually take two years and are sometimes linked to professional training (e.g. they are available in paramedic practice and operating department practice). Entry requirements are similar to those for degree courses. It is often possible to continue your studies to a full degree.

Some useful HE websites

www.ucas.com : Tells you how to apply and provides information on courses as well as financial support.

www.unistats.direct.gov.uk : The official website for comparing UK universities includes official data for undergraduate courses on each university and college's satisfaction scores in the National Student Survey, jobs and salaries after study and other key information for prospective students.

www.whatuni.com : Helps you find universities and courses in the UK. Provides ideas for degree subjects to study based on the A levels/BTEC L3 Diploma you are studying.

www.university.which.co.uk : Provides help with finding the best university and degree course for you.

www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk : Has information about university rankings, where and what to study, how to apply, student finance, student life etc...

Student Finance

www.gov.uk/student-finance : To sign up to Student Finance online

www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator : For a quick estimate of what student loans, grants, bursaries and other funding you could get.

www.thescholarshipclub.org.uk : Database of UK scholarships, grants and bursaries for university.

www.scholarship-search.org.uk : A comprehensive resource for UK student funding from Hardship Funds & Grants to Bursaries, Awards & Academic Scholarships.

Taking a Gap Year

www.gap-year.com : Provides information relating to work and travel opportunities for students during this period. Also offers an online and printed directory of gap year organisations and opportunities.

www.bunac.org/uk: Offers opportunities for either a two-year working holiday, a six-month internship abroad or a six week volunteer expedition in various country in the world.

www.gapyear.com : Search for trip advice, travel inspiration, jobs and volunteering ideas.

www.yearoutgroup.org : Includes over 30 gap year organisations that provide opportunities at home and abroad.

www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry : UK's leading student placement experts. We provide high-quality, paid placements for students in their gap year

Higher/Degree Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer a valid alternative to university, with the qualifications to match. If Students choose a degree apprenticeship, they still get to graduate with their cap and gown, along with several years of work experience under their belt.

First and foremost, though, an apprenticeship is a job with substantial training and the development of transferable skills. It's a way to earn and learn, gaining a real qualification, long-term career path and the possibility for higher earnings.

And, best of all, no university debts: they'll have been earning for the length of their apprenticeship and there are no tuition fees.

For more information click on this link: <https://university.which.co.uk/advice/choosing-a-course/is-a-higher-or-degree-apprenticeship-really-right-for-you>

Some useful website addresses for Higher/Degree Apprenticeships

- National Apprenticeship website: www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
- Not going to uni: www.notgoingtouni.co.uk
- UCAS: <https://careerfinder.ucas.com/searchjobs>

