

Higher Education and Apprenticeships

Who, what, where, how, when and why?
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Who is this information for?

This information is for you if you're:

- a student at sixth form or college
- on a Level 3 course (A level, BTEC or equivalent)
- considering your next steps after Level 3 study.

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The need for balance

We will take a balanced look at the differences between higher education and apprenticeships, considering:

- What could I do?
- Where will I be?
- How and when do I apply?
- How do I pay?
- Why should I consider apprenticeships?
- Why should I consider higher education?
- What are the risks?

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What is the difference between higher education and an apprenticeship?

- There are many differences between HE and apprenticeships including the way you will learn, how and when to apply and how much it will cost.
- We'll look at each option in more detail.

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Higher Education

- An undergraduate degree is normally a **full-time course** undertaken at a university or college.
- You fund it by taking out a **loan** to pay for your tuition fees and your living costs.
- Most undergraduate degree courses lead to **honours degrees in three years**.
- Some have a **work placement** year or a **year abroad** and are four years long. In subjects such as medicine and architecture, courses may take even longer.
- Undergraduate degrees are available in a **huge range of subjects**.
- Remember, different degrees offer **different outcomes**.

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Apprenticeships

- An Apprenticeship is a **job with training** which allows you to earn while you learn, whilst gaining a **nationally recognised qualification**.
- Apprenticeships take between one and five years to complete and cover **1500 job roles** in a wide range of industries, from engineering to accountancy, public relations to veterinary nursing.
- Apprenticeships are available at a range of levels up to **degree level and beyond**:
 - An **Advanced Apprenticeship** normally requires GCSE passes at C or equivalent
 - A **Higher Apprenticeship** normally requires A Levels or equivalent
 - New **Degree Apprenticeships** are being introduced in job areas including engineering, surveying, laboratory science and digital.

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What could I do?

When you're working out which option might suit you, it's important to consider your abilities, interests, values and attitudes.

Most students fall into one of the following categories:

'I have **some sort of career idea**'

'I'm looking at options related **to my current studies**'.

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Students with some sort of career idea

Student 1:

Studying BTEC Level 3 Business

Feels he is capable of getting Distinctions

Really likes the marketing element of the course

A bit techy

See himself in a business or sales environment.

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What next for Student 1?

- He decides to explore marketing so could consider the following options, for example:
- Advanced Apprenticeship in (Digital) Marketing e.g. QA Apprenticeships
- Higher Apprenticeship in Marketing e.g. Lloyds Banking Group
- Degree in Marketing e.g. Aston University (with placement year)
- Degree in Business or Management with a Marketing specialism e.g. Westminster
- Degree in something else/related e.g. Fashion Management at Nottingham Trent then Marketing Internship with L'Oreal
- Degree in any discipline, then Postgraduate course e.g. MSc Marketing, University of Manchester.

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Students with some sort of career idea

Student 2 is:

- Studying Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Psychology AS Levels
- Obsessed with becoming a Doctor
- Aware that she has to go to Medical School at university.

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What next for Student 2?

She has two options, both of which are full-time university courses:

- Undergraduate medicine and surgery degree
- Graduate medicine and surgery degree completed after an undergraduate degree, normally in a life sciences field.
- There are no Apprenticeship routes to Medicine.

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Students with some sort of career idea

Student 3 is:

- Studying English, French, Sociology and Politics AS Levels
- Happy to watch anything on telly or YouTube about property or design of buildings
- Confident using numbers, although didn't choose Maths for A level.

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What next for Student 3?

Through speaking to a Careers Adviser student 3 is considering Quantity Surveying, options include:

- Advanced Apprenticeship in Quantity Surveying, e.g. Chartered Surveyors Training Trust
- Higher Apprenticeship in Quantity Surveying e.g. Balfour Beatty
- Degree in Quantity Surveying e.g. Kingston
- Degree in something else e.g. Politics and French at Kent, then MSc Construction Cost Management, Reading.

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Students looking at options related to their current studies

Let us look at two students who when we ask about their abilities, interests, values and attitudes **can only relate to their current studies.**

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Students looking at options related to their current studies

Student 4:

- Loves his Economics A Level
- Feels indifferent about his other subjects
- Didn't choose Maths A level.

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What next for Student 4?

He could consider:

- Advanced Apprenticeship in Insurance e.g. AON
- Higher Apprenticeship in Asset Management e.g. Investment 2020
- Degree in Economics e.g. Hull (do not need Maths A level)
- Joint degree e.g. Economics and Politics (with placement year) at Brunel.

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Students looking at options related to their current studies

Student 5:

- Loves the idea of the university experience
- History is her least worst A level
- Is happy to study History as it means she can go to university and leave home.

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What next for Student 5?

She might consider:

- Degree in History (or related subjects)
- Some apprenticeships such as CILEX (Lawyer) would use some of the research skills of a Historian
- She will need to think about ways to access the graduate labour market, for example, postgraduate conversion courses.

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Where will I be?

Apprenticeships

You will **probably be living at home**, though there are some instances of going away such as: Merchant Navy, Network Rail, National Grid and some Hospitality Apprenticeships. Sometimes there may not be an appropriate apprenticeship in a particular locality.

Higher Education

While some students will still live at home and commute to a local university, **many students will leave home**, supported in this transition by their university. There are increasing opportunities to study at a university abroad, such as a UK university with a foreign campus, a year abroad, or the whole university course studied at a foreign university in English.

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How and when do I apply?

You can apply for **both** apprenticeships and higher education at the same time, though it can be complicated keeping on top of everything!

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Applying for Apprenticeships

- You can find vacancies and apply through the government apprenticeship website www.gov.uk/further-education-skills/apprenticeships
- You can also find vacancies and apply through company or training provider websites.
- Opening and closing dates for applications vary widely and finding these out may involve some detailed research.
- It can often be helpful if you can seek advice from a Careers Adviser on available opportunities and how to apply.

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Applying to Higher Education

- UCAS offers a clear and straightforward way to find courses and apply at www.ucas.com
- You can also find courses using other sites, for example, Which? University at www.university.which.co.uk
- As long as you make 5 realistic choices you should receive some offers.
- Schools and colleges are very comfortable with this process.
- There is a uniform series of opening and closing dates.

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How do I pay?

To put this into its simplest terms:

Higher Education – you pay!

But what you pay back will depend on what you earn, it's basically a graduate tax and you don't pay upfront.

Visit: www.gov.uk/student-finance

Apprenticeships – they pay!

There is a national minimum wage for Apprentices, but many are paid more. You also get holiday pay and your courses are paid for.

Visit: www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide

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Why should I consider Apprenticeships?

- If you know a career area that interests you, there is a strong possibility that there is an apprenticeship out there that will be an excellent route into this career.
- Many employers now consider apprenticeships as a main route into their employment roles.
- Some employers will support you through your training to the highest professional levels that can be achieved.

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Why should I consider Higher Education?

- You want the “gold-standard higher education experience”:
- Possibly leave home
- Live in halls of residence
- Meet new people and have a great social life
- Study something you enjoy
- Possibly be in a better position regarding employability.
- Many people say that going to university gave them the best years of their life. If this is what you genuinely want, then do it!

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What are the risks?

Beware: some students drop out.

- 6.7% of students starting university in 2011/2012 didn't complete their degree (HESA).
- An employer survey from 2012/2013 estimated that 11% of apprentices didn't complete their apprenticeship (BIS).
- It is essential to consider your options carefully and research thoroughly so you find the right option for you.

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However.....

The only assumption we should perhaps look at here is the **employability** one:

- Some careers require a degree and some will have to be done full-time at university.
- There is likely to be a growth in Degree Apprenticeships.
- Many professional, management, technical and skilled roles will be achievable through starting on a Advanced, Higher or Degree Apprenticeship.
- You will need to be **honest with yourself** about why you are making your choices.

If employability is your main concern, then it is crucial that you consider the apprenticeship route.

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