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.
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?
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.
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**.
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.
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’.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
Where will I be?

Apprenticeships
You will **probably be living at home**, though 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.
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!
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.
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.
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
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.
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!
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.
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.**