



**L&W** LEARNING AND  
WORK INSTITUTE

# INFORMATION GUIDE:

## Routes In Education And Training

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Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. We strive for a fair society in which learning and work helps people realise their ambitions and potential throughout life. We do this by researching what works, influencing policy and implementing new ways to improve people's experiences of learning and employment. We believe a better skilled workforce, in better paid jobs, is good for business, good for the economy, and good for society.

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# ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study. This enables people to earn while they learn the skills needed for their career.

As an apprentice, you will learn skills on the work site and receive on-the-job training from supervisors and other staff. You will do some off-the-job training at a learning centre, to help you gain additional skills and qualifications for the world of work. You will also have the opportunity to develop your literacy and numeracy.

Apprenticeships take between one and five years to complete and cover 1,500 job roles available in all sorts of trades like construction, catering and health care. They cover different levels from Level 2 (equivalent of GCSEs) to level 6 (undergraduate degree) and 7 (masters degree).

Apprenticeships are open to all age groups (above 16 years), whether you are just leaving school, have been working for a few years or are looking to start a new career.

As an apprentice, you will be paid a wage and you will not have to pay any of the costs of your training or assessments. Instead, this cost should be covered by your employer and training provider.

The [Find an Apprenticeship Service](#) allows you to search and apply for apprenticeships online. You can find further useful information in the following places:

- visit [www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide](http://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide)
- visit [getingofar.gov.uk](http://getingofar.gov.uk)
- call the Apprenticeships helpline on 08000 150 400

## Supported Internships

Supported internships are a study programme based primarily with employer. They enable young people aged 16-24 with a statement of Special Education Needs, a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an Education, Health and Care plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. Supported internships are unpaid, and last for a minimum of six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Alongside their time with an employer, young people complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if appropriate, and English and maths.

For more information, visit [Preparing for Adulthood](http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships) (<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships>).

## Traineeships

Traineeships are an education and training programme with work experience. They are focused on helping young people aged 16-24 to prepare for an apprenticeship or other employment.

A traineeship will give you:

- work preparation training, to help ensure you are ready and have confidence to take your first step into a career
- English and maths support, to ensure you have the skills that are needed in the workplace
- a work experience placement, providing you with valuable insight and real experience of the world of work (at the end of this you would be guaranteed an interview and a reference).

You will generally not be paid for taking part in a traineeship but your study and programme costs will be met by government and your benefits should not be affected (although you may need to comply with some benefit rules). In addition, many providers pay travel and lunch costs.

Find out about applying for a traineeship by:

- contacting your local college or training provider
- talking to your Jobcentre Plus adviser
- visiting the [National Careers Service](https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk) website (**nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk**) or your local office
- visiting the [Get In Go Far](https://getingofar.gov.uk) website ([getingofar.gov.uk](https://getingofar.gov.uk))

## Volunteering

Volunteering is where you give your time or skills to help others without getting paid. It is a great opportunity to develop skills and learn new ones, whilst also having fun and getting experience in a particular job role or sector. It's also useful experience to put on your CV and can help you find out what kind of work you enjoy (and don't!).

Volunteering opportunities can be found in a wide range of jobs and sectors, for example sport and recreation, culture and heritage (e.g. museums and galleries), health and social care (e.g. care homes, nurseries), environmental (e.g. wildlife, conservation), education and learning (e.g. libraries, schools) and professions (e.g. media, retail, marketing).



Websites that allow you to search for volunteering opportunities include:

- <https://do-it.org/>
- [volunteering.org.uk](https://volunteering.org.uk)
- <https://vinspired.com/>

You might also want to think about participating in the National Citizen Service. It's free and you get two residential trips to help build your confidence, develop new skills and boost your CV, before running your own community project.

You can volunteer and claim benefits if the only money you get from volunteering is to cover expenses, like travel costs and you continue to meet the conditions of the benefit you get. However, it's a good idea to speak to your Work Coach at Jobcentre Plus or the person you speak to about volunteering to double check that this is the case.

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# FURTHER EDUCATION

Further Education (FE) includes any study after secondary education that isn't part of higher education. FE covers a wide range of levels and types of courses. Courses can be academic or vocational (i.e. focused on work) and can be anything from learning that you do for your own interest, through to courses which give you a formal qualification (e.g. an A Level). It can take place in an FE or sixth form college, in the workplace or even in your own home.

The [National Careers Service](#) lets you search for courses in your area. Alternatively, you can call them on 0800 100 900.

## How much does FE cost?

If you're aged 24 and under then you should be able to study for free for GCSEs, A Levels and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at Level 1, 2 or 3 if you don't already have these. You can find a list of fully-funded courses on the National Careers Service website. Alternatively, you can contact your local Further Education (FE) College.

If you're aged 19 or over and studying a course from Level 3 to Level 6, then you can apply for an Advanced Learner Loan to pay for up-front course fees (unless you don't have a Level 3 qualification, in which case you should be able to study for free). You'll have to pay your loan back when you've finished your course and you earn more than £21,000 a year.

As well as help with course fees, there are other funds available which can cover the costs of being in education, such as travel, childcare and equipment. All these funds and schemes have different rules about who is entitled to them so you should find out more from your learning provider before you apply.

## English and Maths

Many employers need you to have a grade C or grade 4 at GCSE or Functional Skills Level 2 qualifications in both English and maths. If you don't have these qualifications, there are lots of ways you can develop your English and maths, from community courses to learning online. All adults in England, regardless of whether they are on benefits or not, can get free English and maths tuition up to GCSEs and Functional Skills (English, Maths and ICT) at their local college or adult education centre. You can also support yourself to improve your maths and English by doing online courses, for example at:

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- [bbc.co.uk/skillswise](http://bbc.co.uk/skillswise)
  - [learningmathsonline.ac.uk](http://learningmathsonline.ac.uk)
  - There are also apps to help you learn. For example, an app called “Maths Everywhere” helps adults solve everyday maths problems and improve their skills. It is free to download for Android and Apple phones and available online at: [www.mathseverywhere.org.uk](http://www.mathseverywhere.org.uk).

## Community Learning

Community Learning gives people an opportunity to learn more about an interest they have, gain a new skill or develop the ones they already have. It covers a broad range of courses, for example, languages, maths and English, arts and crafts, digital skills, health and wellbeing (e.g. dance, fitness). You normally won't receive a qualification for doing these courses. However, it is possible to do GCSEs and A-Level modules through community learning.

Community learning takes place in friendly and easy to access community venues, for example schools or community centres. Many community learning courses are delivered by Local Authority Adult Education Service providers, but they are also delivered by FE Colleges, charities and voluntary sector organisations. The tutors on these courses often work with a wide range of people and are used to providing support to learners in lots of different circumstances.

To find a community learning course, you can:

- Look on the [National Careers Service](http://National Careers Service) website or call them on 0800 100 900.
- Look at the website or prospectus of your Local Authority Adult Education Service, FE College, voluntary sector organisation and/or Workers' Educational Association (WEA) branch.
- Look at local university or college websites.
- Use search engines such as [www.hotcourses.com](http://www.hotcourses.com)
- Look for notices in local newspapers or on notice boards in schools, libraries, children's centres, doctors' surgeries, community centres, church halls, voluntary groups or other local community venues
- Speak to friends, neighbours and colleagues to find out what is happening locally and what courses they have found enjoyable.
- Speak to the [Unionlearn representative](#) or [Workplace Learning Advocate](#) in your workplace (if you're employed and your workplace supports these schemes).

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## Massive Open Online Courses 'MOOCs'

MOOCs are free short online courses run by universities from across the world. They cover a wide-range of subjects, for example business, psychology, languages, technology, anthropology, policy, the environment and health.

MOOCs can be a good introduction to a higher level of studying and give you some insight into the wide range of subjects that you could study in Higher Education. You might find you really enjoy something which you didn't even know existed!

The courses are run using videos. If you miss any "classes" then the videos are saved and you can watch them later, which can make them easy to fit around any other commitments you have in your life. They often offer interaction with your "classmates", for example through submitting work and having others comment on it. Some courses may have assessments (for example quizzes) and written work. You may get a certificate to say you have completed the course, but they generally don't give you a qualification.

For more information and to find MOOCs go to: [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)

## Skills for employment and personal development

Some people may not feel prepared to move into formal education or employment quite yet. They may feel they want to develop new skills or build their confidence to help them with that transition. There are skills workshops and programmes that can help with specific and general skills development, for example writing CVs and interview skills, as well as personal development. Some of these are targeted specifically at care leavers.

For example, the Prince's Trust runs programmes across the country to help young people, including care leavers, to improve their confidence, skills and chances of finding work. They have different programmes depending on what you'd like to achieve, but they all provide tailored support and are all free. To find out more, visit the [Prince's Trust website](#).

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# HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is learning at Level 4 and above and includes higher apprenticeships, foundation degrees, undergraduate degrees and postgraduate degrees. It usually takes place at universities, but it is possible to do a higher education course at a college or another institution that awards higher apprenticeships, academic degrees, professional qualifications and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules.

## How much does HE cost?

For most courses (but not degree apprenticeships) you will pay an annual tuition fee to the university (these vary by university but can cost up to £9,250 per year). However, everyone is entitled to a student loan from the Student Loan Company to cover this. You will only have to start paying back the loan once you have graduated and are earning more than £21,000 per year or more than £25,000 from the 2018/19 academic year.

## What are the options in higher education?

The options in HE are huge, from the types of course or degree you could do, to where and how you might study. This section gives some information on the different ways you could “do” higher education to help you decide which route is right for you.

- **Awards, Certificates and Diplomas:** As well as full degrees, you can do shorter courses at a HE level. These can lead to an Award, Certificate or Diploma, depending on how many modules or credits you complete. These courses tend to be focused on a specific topic you’re interested in or skills you need to learn for a particular job.
- **Foundation Degrees:** This is a “work-focused” qualification developed between employers and universities. They cover sectors such as healthcare, hospitality, engineering education and the media. Most full-time foundation degrees take two years. However, it is usually possible to study part-time over three or four years. For more information on foundation degrees go to: [www.brightknowledge.org/knowledge-bank/education-pathways/studying-at-university/what-are-foundation-degrees](http://www.brightknowledge.org/knowledge-bank/education-pathways/studying-at-university/what-are-foundation-degrees)
- **Higher and Degree Apprenticeships:** This combines full-time work with free part-time university study between levels 4-7. Programmes last between one and five years and are co-designed by the employer and the higher education institution. For more information on higher and degree apprenticeships go to: [www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/apprenticeships/what-is-an-apprenticeship](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/apprenticeships/what-is-an-apprenticeship)

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- **Undergraduate degrees (Honours):** This is the degree that you would probably think of when people talk about going to university. It is usually a three-year full-time degree, although some courses will be more than 3 years (e.g. medicine, architecture). It is also possible to do some degrees part-time.
  - **Postgraduate degrees:** These are degrees which are completed after you have got an undergraduate degree and want to develop a more specialised and higher-level knowledge of a subject. They include Masters (M.A. or M.Sc.) - taught courses over one or two years - and PhDs/MPHils - a main component is independent research and it take four or more years to complete.

## Where to study

- **At a university:** Universities offer lots of different HE courses, but generally people go to university to study foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. You may live at home and commute in or you may move away from home to go to university. Either way, there's lots of support to help you study HE at a university.
- **At a FE college or provider:** You don't have to go to university to study a HE course. Many FE colleges and providers now offer HE courses in a wide range of subject areas. This can make it easier to manage your learning with a job, family or other commitments. To find out what's on offer, contact your local FE college or visit the National Careers Service website.
- **At home though distance learning:** Distance learning is when you study for your degree online. Personal tutors provide academic expertise, guidance and feedback and run group tutorials; and specialist advisers are on hand to help with any other aspects of the course. Courses often include day schools or residential weekends where you work with other students on a specific project. The biggest distance learning institution is The Open University. For more information go to: [www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)

## How to study

- **Full-time and part-time:** You don't necessarily have to study for a degree full-time. In the academic year 2014-15 nearly a quarter (24%) of first year undergraduate students were studying part-time. Studying part-time can help you manage your learning alongside other commitments such as work, family and running a home. For more information on part-time degrees go to: [university.which.co.uk/advice/choosing-a-course/part-time-degree-courses-pros-and-cons](http://university.which.co.uk/advice/choosing-a-course/part-time-degree-courses-pros-and-cons)
- **Sandwich years and work placements:** Some university courses will offer "sandwich years". This is where in this is when work placements are part of the course, often in the third year of a four-year course. The intention is that students who work a year in industry will develop real practical skills which will help when applying for jobs in the future. Some universities will organise these placements for you, whereas with others you will need to organise them yourself.

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## How do I apply for a HE course?

To apply for most full-time HE courses, you'll have to go through [UCAS](#) (the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). You'll need to write a personal statement, choose your preferred universities and/or colleges and give references. You'll also need to provide information about your qualifications. There's lots of information, advice and tips on how to apply for an HE course through UCAS, and their website includes a page for young adult carers.

If you're studying part-time or applying to a college or the Open University, you might be able to apply directly to your institution without going through UCAS. Speak to the student services at the college or university you want to apply to.

If you are interested in doing a degree apprenticeship, you will need to find and apply for a course through the government's [Find an Apprenticeship](#) website.

## Help to get into HE

Many colleges and universities offer taster days, open days and summer schools. For further information, speak to the student support services in your current learning provider, or, if you're not in education, contact the college or university you're applying to. Some universities offer free residential summer schools for young people. They are a great way to find out about university life and courses. Amongst other things you will often: stay at the university halls of residence; gain insight into courses you might like to study; and receive advice on applications. There are often eligibility criteria attached to who can participate in summer schools so make sure you check this before you apply. If you're interested in going to a particular university then it's worth looking at their website or contacting their widening participation team to see if they offer summer schools.



# **L&W** LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE

21 De Montfort Street  
Leicester LE1 7GE

T: +44 (0)116 204 4200

E: [enquiries@learningandwork.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@learningandwork.org.uk)

W: [www.learningandwork.org.uk](http://www.learningandwork.org.uk)

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