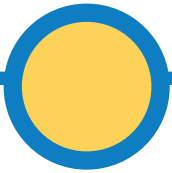


Develop your workforce

Employer's Guide to Higher Education



This booklet sets out to explain how higher level skills can benefit your business. We'll show how you, your business and workforce can benefit from work-based higher education and the various levels and types of qualification available. We'll direct you to where you can access higher education near you and provide other useful contact addresses.

What are higher level skills?

“High level skills – the skills associated with higher education – are good for the individuals who acquire them and good for the economy. They help individuals unlock their talent and aspire to change their life for the better. They help businesses and public services to innovate and prosper. They help towns and cities thrive by creating jobs, helping businesses become more competitive and driving economic regeneration. High level skills add value for all of us.”

Foreword, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education

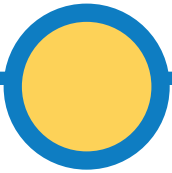
'Higher Education at Work – High Skills: High Value', DIUS, April 2008



Why?

There are good reasons why you should consider supporting your workforce to achieve qualifications which formally recognise their skills and why those skills will improve your business opportunities:

- you will be equipped with the skills needed to meet current and future challenges in line with your business needs
- new ideas and business solutions can be generated by assigning employees key project work as part of their course based assignments
- your commitment to staff development will increase motivation and improve recruitment and retention
- skills and knowledge can be passed on and shared by employees



Is it relevant to my business?

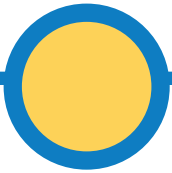
Universities are keen to work with employers to ensure that courses reflect the real needs of business and industry and suit a wide range of training requirements. Courses can often be tailored to individual specifications and can be delivered as 'bite-sized' modules or complete programmes of study, taught either in-house or off-site.

Professional expertise is always welcomed and by assisting in the development of a course you can have a direct influence on what students are taught. You may also wish to become involved by offering a work placement, a work-related project or by offering to give a short presentation or seminar to undergraduates.



Work-based learning

Courses are often referred to as 'work-based' meaning that the employee's day to day work activities contribute to their course assignments. It is in this way that existing skills are evidenced and formally recognised as a major contribution to the academic qualification being taken. A work-based course can require attendance at college or university and various attendance options that best meet your needs can be discussed with the college or university providing the course. On-line 'virtual learning environments' are now regularly used whereby students can access course materials, submit assignments and communicate with their tutor over the internet at any time.



Qualification levels

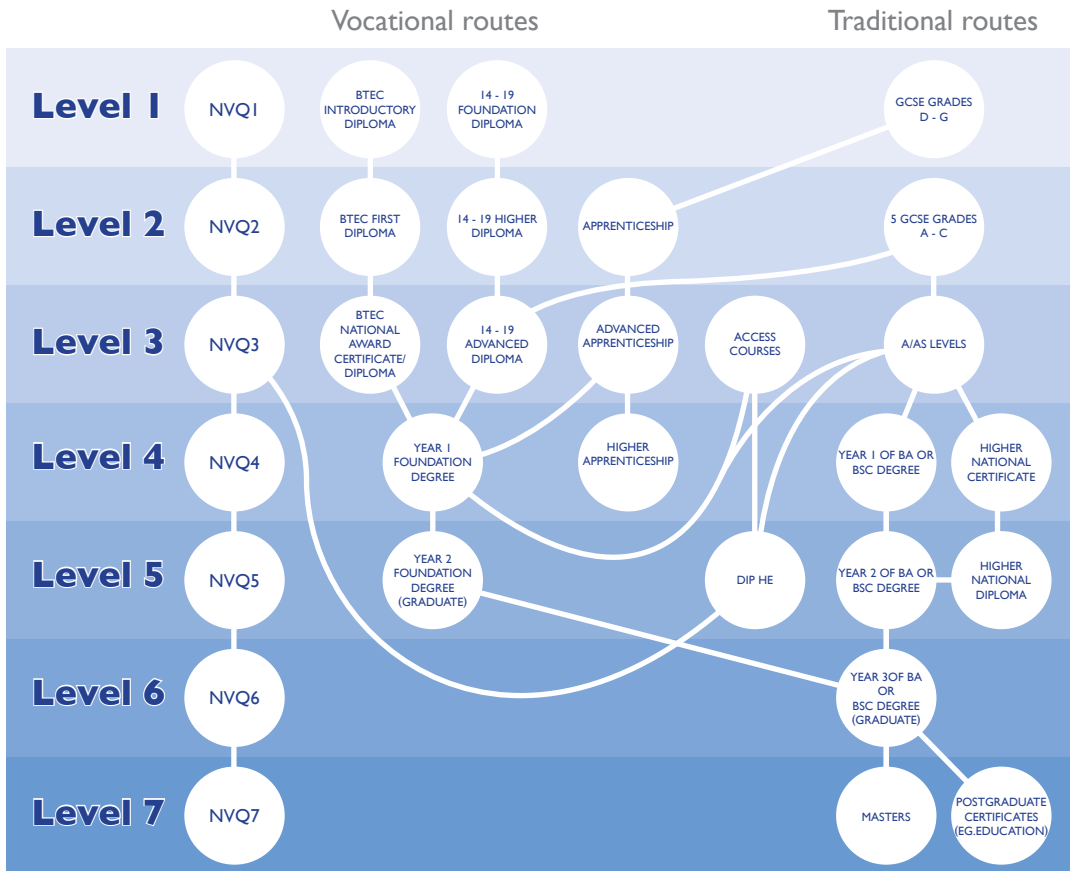
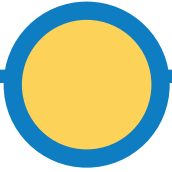
Education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are separated into 'Levels'. **Higher education** qualifications start at **Level 4** and rise to **Level 8**.

Typically a **Level 4** qualification could be a **NVQ4, Certificate of Higher Education** or a **Higher National Certificate**:

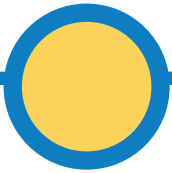
A **Level 5** qualification would be a **Foundation degree**, a **Diploma of Higher Education** or a **Higher National Diploma**.

Level 6 qualifications are first degree 'Bachelor' awards such as Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc). Most classifications include an Honours element; BA (Hons), BSc (Hons).

Level 7 includes Masters degrees (MA/MSc) and **Level 8**, Doctorate degrees (PhD). A Masters degree is undertaken usually after completing a Bachelors degree and lasts for one year full-time or two or more years part-time. A PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) is a longer thesis based research degree.



Comparison of vocational and traditional routes in higher educational by level



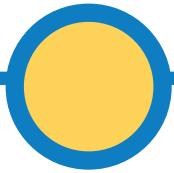
Foundation degrees

Foundation degrees are a relatively new qualification that have been developed with employers' requirements in mind and where previous work experience can count as the entry requirement. Knowledge and skills are developed throughout the course leading to a nationally recognised qualification. Foundation degrees integrate academic and work-based learning and are usually taught (part-time) over 2 or 3 academic years.

A Foundation degree provides a pathway for life-long learning with an opportunity to progress to a BA or BSc degree with additional study.

Foundation degrees offer employers:

- valuable professional learning and development opportunities
- a workforce qualified with specialist skills and knowledge relevant to business needs which will improve performance and productivity
- minimal disruption to the business operation by having employees study a work-based course – and they can still earn while they learn
- an opportunity to employ a graduate prepared for the world of work and able to apply the right skills immediately

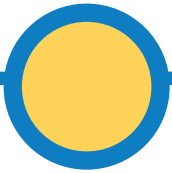


Entry requirements

The entry requirement for a course will be specified by the university or college, but learners without the formal entry requirement can often use their professional work experience or existing skills as an alternative. Many people at work will have acquired a large amount of experience and knowledge relating to their business, industry or profession. Universities and colleges of further education have a system to identify, assess and recognise this prior learning and achievement and allow it to count not only as the entry requirement but also count towards the higher education qualification itself.

Tuition fees

Tuition fees for courses are set by the providing university or college. The employer may choose to pay the full fees or share the costs with the employee. Some financial help to support work-based study may be available to eligible students; full details can be found at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.



Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)

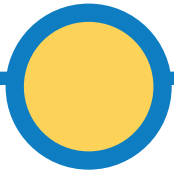
A Knowledge Transfer Partnership is a partnership between organisations and a university or further education college, which is designed to assist the organisations to improve their productivity and effectiveness by accessing the knowledge and expertise held by the knowledge base. The partnership also includes the recruitment of an Associate to facilitate this transfer of knowledge. The Associate works within the organisation on a project central to the needs of the business and is jointly supervised by company personnel and a senior academic. A KTP is supported by a Government grant of up to 67% of the project costs. As a measure of the value KTP brings to a business, the average return from a single project is an increase of over £220,000 annual gross profit, the creation of three new jobs and an increase in the skills base of existing staff. Currently around 70% of the KTP Associates are also offered a permanent full-time job by the organisation on completion of their project.



Developing the workforce

Universities and colleges have well established departments and business schools to serve the needs of employers. They are able to offer courses leading to qualifications ideally suited to all aspects of workforce development from basic National Vocational Qualifications through to MBA. The contacts list overleaf shows the web address and the tab you can use to access a wealth of information about courses and professional qualifications available locally to you. It is here that you'll find details of training opportunities, short courses and Foundation degrees as well as qualifications, at all levels, offered by:

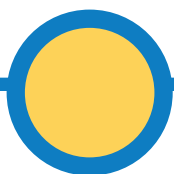
- **AAT** – Association of Accounting Technicians www.aat.co.uk
- **CIM** – Chartered Institute of Marketing www.cim.co.uk
- **CMI** – Chartered Management Institute www.managers.org.uk
- **CIPD** – Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- **IAB** – International Association of Book-keepers www.iab.org.uk
- **ILM** – Institute of Leadership & Management www.i-l-m.com



Higher education providers in your region

Berkshire

Institution	Web address	Link	Contact email / phone
University of Reading	www.reading.ac.uk	Working with Business	workingwithbusiness@reading.ac.uk 0118 378 8628
Basingstoke College of Technology	www.bcot.ac.uk	Business unit	business@bcot.ac.uk 01256 306237
Bracknell & Wokingham College	www.bracknell.ac.uk	Employers	business@bracknell.ac.uk 0844 701 8304
East Berkshire College	www.eastberks.ac.uk	Employers & employees	Request a callback
Berkshire College of Agriculture	www.bca.ac.uk	HP Business Solutions	lsaint@bca.ac.uk 01628 827481
Newbury College	www.newbury-college.ac.uk	Businesses/Workforce development	business@newbury-college.ac.uk 01635 845000
Sparsholt College	www.sparsholt.ac.uk	Westley Business Solutions	westley.business@sparsholt.ac.uk 08458 500916

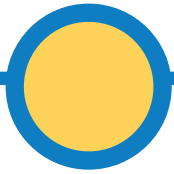


Buckinghamshire

Institution	Web address	Link	Contact email / phone
Bucks New University	www.bucks.ac.uk	For Business/Open 4 Business	admin@open4business.com 0844 357 6564
Aylesbury College	www.aylesbury.ac.uk	Business	business@aylesbury.ac.uk 01296 588568
Amersham & Wycombe College	www.amersham.ac.uk	Services to Business	s2b@amersham.ac.uk 01494 585508

Oxfordshire

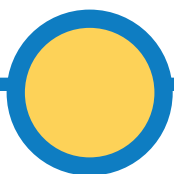
Institution	Web address	Link	Contact email / phone
Oxford Brookes University	www.brookes.ac.uk	Services for business and employers	business.services@brookes.ac.uk 01865 484204
Abingdon & Witney College	www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk	Employers	enquiry@abingdon-witney.ac.uk 01235 555585 (Abingdon) 01993 703464 (Witney)
Oxford & Cherwell Valley College	www.ocvc.ac.uk	Employers	employer-enquiries@ocvc.ac.uk 01865 551015
Ruskin College	www.ruskin.ac.uk	Courses	enquiries@ruskin.ac.uk 01865 554331



Higher education providers in your region

Surrey

Institution	Web address	Link	Contact email / phone
University of Surrey	www.surrey.ac.uk	Services for Business	res@surrey.ac.uk 01483 689110
Brockenhurst College	www.brock.ac.uk	Employers	businessservices@brock.ac.uk 01590 625589
Brooklands College	www.brooklands.ac.uk	Business Focus	01932 797933
Farnborough College of Technology	www.farn-ct.ac.uk	Business / Business Sector	traintogain@farn-ct.ac.uk 01252 407299
Guildford College	www.guildford.ac.uk	Employers	employerenquiries@guildford.ac.uk 01483 448530
Nescot	www.nescot.ac.uk	Adults, Employers and Training	020 8394 3038



Other regional locations

Institution	Web address	Link	Contact email / phone
Highbury College	www.highbury.ac.uk	Services for Business	employers@highbury.ac.uk 023 9231 3624
Swindon College	www.swindon-college.ac.uk	Business & Professional Training	businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk 01793 498407
Solihull College	www.solihull.ac.uk	Employers	sales@solihull.ac.uk 0121 678 7181
Uxbridge College	www.uxbridge.ac.uk	Employers	employerservices@uxbridgecollege.ac.uk 01895 853605

Other useful links

Learning Opportunities in the South East	www.learning-opportunities.org.uk	For employers	info@learning-opportunities.org.uk
Train To Gain	www.traintogain.gov.uk		0845 600 9 006
Business Link	www.businesslink.gov.uk		
fdf – Foundation Degrees Forward	www.fdf.ac.uk	Information for Employers	'contact us' (via website)

Produced and published by



Progress South Central is the Lifelong Learning Network for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey. We are a partnership of four higher education institutions; University of Reading, Buckinghamshire New University, Oxford Brookes University and University of Surrey and their partner colleges. Our priority is to respond to the needs of current and potential students and to work with employers to develop higher level learning opportunities.

www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk

Tel: 0118 378 2330

Email: psc@reading.ac.uk

Information in this booklet is believed to be accurate at the time of going to press.
Please refer to information on individual websites for the most up-to-date information.

October 2009