

Develop your ICT (information and communication technology) Skills

Knowing how to use a computer is increasingly essential for everyone. Whether you need help to get started with the basics or want to be able to use spreadsheets and data-bases, there's plenty of help available and much of it is free of charge. Use the embedded links below to go straight to the relevant information.

[Go on](#) is a free, easy to use course that will help you get started. If you don't have a computer or you want some help you can call (for free) 0800 77 1234 to find your nearest online centre. It takes an hour to get the basics.

[BBC Webwise](#) provides free online Courses and videos to help beginners with

- Computer Basics - how to use a computer
- Using the web - get started online
- Emailing - get connected
- Safety & privacy – keeping you and your computer safe from harm
- Leisure activities such as online shopping and social networking

[BBC Bitesize](#) has revision notes, activities and tests in all aspects of ICT and 'jargon' – useful even if you're not interested in a GCSE.

[Open Learn \(skills section\)](#) provides free access to some of the Open University Basic ICT courses – these will give you a much greater depth of knowledge – for example:

- Living with the internet: Learning online
- Using a computer for study
- SAFARI – skills accessing and retrieving information
- Web guide – using web based resources

Need a Qualification?

[Learn Direct](#) has IT courses that you buy and learn at home (although funding may be available depending on your circumstances).

[Direct gov](#) provides advice on different types of computer and IT courses:

- [CLAIT \(Computer Literacy and Information Technology\)](#) This qualification is available at three levels, from NVQ level 1 which focuses on using office software including word processing and spreadsheets for complete beginners, up to NVQ level 3 (A level standard).
- [ECDL European Computer Driving Licence](#) sponsored by the British Computer Society in the UK. This is a widely recognised general qualification in computing and some employers, for example, the NHS will sponsor their employees to take it. The **ECDL** is available through adult education centres and can also be taken as a distance learning course.

[The NEXT STEP course finder](#) can be used to find where you can take these and other courses - ranging from very basic entry level through to degree level - in ICT and computing.