

Higher Level Apprenticeships & University: A Guide for Young People

Introduction

Thinking of Higher Education? Two popular routes are higher level apprenticeships and going to university. This leaflet gives you the information you need to make the best choice for your future.

What Is a Higher Level Apprenticeship?

A higher level apprenticeship is a work-based programme that combines practical on-the-job training with study, resulting in a Level 4 or above apprenticeship (the equivalent of the first year of university or higher). You'll earn a wage while you learn, gaining valuable experience in your chosen field.

- Earn while you learn: You get paid a salary and have no tuition fees.
- Real-world experience: You'll work alongside experienced staff and develop practical skills.
- Recognised qualifications: Upon completion, you'll have industry-accredited qualifications that are highly valued by employers.
- Career progression: Many apprentices continue to permanent positions or further study.

If you want to find out what Higher Level Apprenticeships are available visit:

<https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/>

What Is University?

University is an academic route where you study towards an undergraduate degree (such as a BA, BSc, or BEng) over three or four years. It offers the chance to deepen your knowledge in a subject, gain independence, and experience student life.

- Academic focus: University study is more theory-based, with lectures, seminars, and independent research.
- Student life: You'll have the opportunity to join clubs, societies, and meet people from all over the world.
- Career opportunities: Many professions require a university degree, and graduates often have access to a wide range of careers.
- Financial considerations: Tuition fees apply, but loans and grants are available to help with costs.

To find out more visit:

<https://www.ucas.com/>

What is UCAS?

UCAS stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. It is the centralised organisation in the United Kingdom responsible for managing

applications to undergraduate university and college courses. UCAS acts as a hub through which prospective students can apply to multiple institutions across the UK using a single online application form.

How UCAS Works

Students typically use UCAS to research courses, submit their applications, and track the progress of their offers. The service also provides guidance on entry requirements, deadlines, and the application process itself. Most UK universities and colleges require applications to be made through UCAS for full-time undergraduate courses.

The Application Process

1. Research: Students explore courses and universities using the UCAS website.
2. Apply: Applicants fill out a single online application, choosing up to five courses.
3. References and Personal Statement: The application includes a personal statement and a reference, usually from a teacher or adviser.
4. Offers: Universities consider applications and may make conditional or unconditional offers.
5. Decisions: Students respond to their offers and, if successful, progress to their chosen course.

Why is UCAS Important?

UCAS streamlines the university application process, making it more accessible and manageable for students and educational institutions alike. It ensures fairness and transparency in admissions and provides essential information and support to applicants throughout their journey to higher education.

What Are UCAS Points?

UCAS points are a way of measuring the relative value of post-16 qualifications in the United Kingdom, such as A-levels, BTECs, and Scottish Highers, for the purpose of university applications. The system is managed by UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service), which is responsible for handling applications to higher education courses in the UK.

How Do UCAS Points Work?

Each grade achieved in eligible qualifications is assigned a specific number of UCAS points. The higher the grade, the more points you earn. For example, an A* at A-level is worth 56 points, an A is worth 48, and so on. Qualifications such as BTECs and the International Baccalaureate also have their own points tariffs, which can be combined to meet university entry requirements.

Why Are UCAS Points Important?

Universities and colleges often set their entry requirements using UCAS points, either as a total (e.g., 120 UCAS points) or by specifying required grades (e.g., BBB

at A-level). This system allows institutions to consider a broad range of qualifications and combinations, making the admissions process more flexible and inclusive.

How Are UCAS Points Calculated?

- Check the qualification and grade you have achieved.
- Use the UCAS tariff tables (available on the UCAS website) to find out how many points each grade is worth.
- Add up the points from all your eligible qualifications to get your total UCAS points.

Will my apprenticeship count as UCAS points

Typically, Level 2 apprenticeships do not carry UCAS points, but many of the Level 3 apprenticeships do. You will need to check on the UCAS Tariff Calculator for your individual Standard.

Where Can I Find More Information?

For an up-to-date list of UCAS tariff points and how they are allocated to different qualifications, visit the official UCAS Tariff Calculator.

<https://www.ucas.com/applying/before-you-apply/what-and-where-to-study/entry-requirements/ucas-tariff-points>

Which Route Is Right for Me?

Both options have their advantages, so think about your skills, interests, and career aspirations when making your decision. Consider:

- Do you prefer hands-on learning or academic study?
- Are you ready to enter the workplace, or would you like more time to study?
- What qualifications are required for your chosen career?
- Would you like to earn a wage straight away?
- How important is the social aspect of university life to you?

Where to Find More Information

- Speak to your Training Consultant
- Visit the Government Apprenticeships Site for apprenticeship listings
- Explore university courses at UCAS
- Attend open days and apprenticeship fairs (check out the diary on KEITS website)

Final Thoughts

There's no one-size-fits-all answer. Take time to research, ask questions, and talk to people who've chosen different paths. Whatever you decide, both higher level apprenticeships and university can set you up for a bright future.

Good luck with your next steps!