

How to Get to University

Pathways into Higher Education
Activity Sheet Version





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In this session

- Explore the range of qualifications, skills and experience that can get you to university
- Consider the different combinations of qualifications
- Think about your learning journey -it's different for everyone





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Getting to university

- People often think that everyone who attends university starts at 18 and has taken A Levels
- University has students of all ages and backgrounds
- There isn't just one way to get there
- Whilst we have specific course entry requirements, we accept a range of qualifications
- Your skills and experience are also important
- There's no 'right' way, just the way that's right for you



What do I need?





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Qualification Levels

Level 2

GCSE, BTEC First

Level 3

A Level, BTEC National Extended Diploma,
International Baccalaureate, T Level, Access
Course

Level 4

**First Year of Undergraduate
Study**





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Key terms

- There are lots of different qualifications that can lead to university
- Experiences are also an important part of your application, as they give you *transferrable* skills
- A transferrable skill is something you learn in one place, and can use in another, e.g. communication, time-management or research





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Activity

Download the 'How to get to University' Activity Sheet from the link below then, match the qualifications and experience to their definition.

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/online-resources-schools-and-colleges/resources-secondary-schools>





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University of Chester How to Get to University

People choose to go to university for lots of different reasons. Whether it's to qualify for a specific profession, learn more about a favourite subject, or to try something new, university is a resource that you can access throughout your life.

Whatever your future plans it's always worth checking the qualifications and experience that your dream job requires, but whilst some courses have very specific entry requirements, others are much more flexible.

The skills and experience that you have gained over time are important too, and will form part of your application for university and employment.

The most important thing is to know which qualifications are right for you, whether that's at school, college or university.

Below are listed some of the qualifications and experiences available to you before university.

Match the qualification/experience listed below to the correct definition. Write your answers in the boxes.

GCSE	A Level	International Baccalaureate
Access Course	BTEC First	Extended Project Qualification
Interest and Hobbies	Access Course	Work Experience
T Level	Volunteering	Online Study
Experience	Personal Study	
BTEC National Extended Diploma	Employment History	

- Available in lots of different subjects, most people study between 5 and 12 at once. Maths, English and Science are compulsory, but you can usually choose which other subjects to study. Takes 2 years, studied age 14-16, studied at school. Answer:
GCSE
- A qualification equivalent to 4 GCSE's and often studied alongside them, this course allows you to focus on your favourite subject, before attending college/6th form. Takes 1-2 years, age 14-16, studied at school. Answer:
- A qualification available in lots of different subjects, most people study 3-4 at once. Some university courses or jobs require you to choose specific subjects at this level. Takes 1-2 years, age 16-19, studied at college or 6th form. Answer:
- A qualification that allows you to focus on your favourite subject, an alternative to A Levels, with a focus on employment skills. This course allows you to explore your chosen subjects in lots of different ways. Takes 2 years, age 16-19, studied at college. Answer:
- A qualification that allows you to study 6 subjects at once, with a focus on employment skills. Available in different subject 'pathways' such as Business, Humanities or Languages, takes 2 years, age 16-19, studied at college or 6th form. Answer:

- A qualification where you to study one subject in detail, whilst completing 45 days of work experience. An alternative to A Levels or BTEC National Extended Diploma, and similar to an apprenticeship. Takes 2 years, age 16-19, studied at college. Answer:
- A qualification designed for people that either left college over five years ago, or don't have the qualifications for university. Students study a subject relating to their chosen university course such as Humanities or Science. Age 19+, studied at college. Answer:
- Time spent at a place of work, learning about a particular job by watching and helping a professional with their work. Can help you to decide whether you to do that job in the future or help to prove your interest in that job to a university or employer. Answer:
- Working for an organisation for free, giving your time and energy to help a particular cause, such as a charity. Can be a chance to try a range of jobs, and can also be a route into competitive sectors such as charity or the arts. Answer:
- Time spent learning about an interest outside of your school work. Could include reading, online research, trips to theatres, art galleries, museums, historical sites and buildings. A chance to explore a favourite subject that may not be covered at school. Answer:
- Also known as 'distance learning'. Many companies and universities offer short digital courses for students over the age of 16. An opportunity to try a new subject that may not be taught at your school or to try university-style learning. Answer:
- Activities that you engage with during your spare time. They may not lead directly to a qualification or job, but they are usually something that you are passionate about, and can help you to develop lots of different skills which may be useful in the future. Answer:
- This qualification allows you to research a topic that interests you, and create a project about it. This could be an essay, an art work or an event. Can strengthen your independent study skills, and can be included on university and job applications. Answer:
- Something that helps you to develop skills like communication, organisation or teamwork. It could be a time where you tried something new, such as a trip, the Duke of Edinburgh award or helping with a school event. Answer:
- A record of the jobs you have had, and the skills that they've given you. This record will list where you worked, for how long, and what your role was. Even jobs that don't relate to your chosen university course can provide useful skills. Answer:

Let's see how you got on...



How did you do?

Check your answers against the
information contained in the
following slides



Qualifications

Key Terms





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Level 2

GCSE, BTEC First





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Level 2

- Designed to give you a broad range of skills in a range of subjects
- Helps to develop and 'prove' your numeracy and literacy
- Usually studied at school during Years 10 and 11 but can be studied at college too
- Particular Level 3 courses and jobs require particular GCSEs, so make sure you know what your college choices ask for





- Most UK students take at least five GCSE subjects including Maths, English and Science
- Colleges and 6th Forms are usually looking for 5 grades 9-4 (A-C) for progression onto A Level AND BTEC courses
- Maths and English are particularly important as they are considered essential qualifications for most careers
- GCSEs in Maths and English can be retaken whilst at college but are ideally completed whilst at school





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BTEC First

- Can be taken at school (if offered) alongside GCSE subjects
- Depending on your grades, it can be the equivalent to four GCSE's
- They are also offered at colleges, (if you don't gain the necessary GCSE grades to go straight onto A Level or BTEC) as a one year 'Level 2' course which will allow you to progress onto the Level 3





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Level 3

A Level, BTEC National Extended
Diploma, International Baccalaureate,
T Level, Access Course





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Level 3

- Designed to lead you into a job or higher education
- Helps to develop and ‘prove’ specialist knowledge
- Usually studied at college during Years 12 and 13 but can be studied in a range of ways
- Particular jobs and university courses ask for specific level 3 subjects, so make sure you know what your job/university choices ask for





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A Level

- Most UK students take at least three full A levels
- Designed for 16-19 year olds
- Takes two years
- May also choose to take an AS Level (one year)
- A Levels are designed to take you into higher education, but can also lead to employment
- Universities and employers are usually looking for grades A-C but there is flexibility
- Many university courses require specific A Levels, so make sure you check before choosing





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BTEC National Extended Diploma

- Most UK students take one BTEC National Extended Diploma in their favourite subject
- Designed for 16-19 year olds
- Takes two years and is the equivalent to three A Levels
- May also choose to study an A Level alongside if there is time and that option is available
- BTECs are designed to take you into employment and higher education, depending on your chosen career path





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BTEC National Extended Diploma

- Universities and employers are usually looking for some Distinction grades but there is flexibility
- Many university courses require specific BTECs, so make sure you check before choosing
- **When choosing a course, make sure that it is a full-time Level 3 BTEC, and complete both years if you wish to go to university straight after college**





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International Baccalaureate

- Study 6 subjects at once
- Designed for 16-19 year olds
- Gives you a broad subject knowledge, but still has pathways e.g. business, languages
- Emphasis on industry skills
- Only certain colleges offer it, but the number is growing
- It is accepted by most universities and employers





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T Level

- New qualification from September 2020
- Should become available nationally from 2021
- Designed for 16-19 year olds
- Equivalent to three A Levels
- Similar to the BTEC National Extended Diploma
- Focus on your favourite subject
- **Complete 45-60 days of industry placement over two years of study**
- Designed to take you into a specific career but will be accepted by most universities





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Access Course

- Designed for people who left education over 5 years ago, but available to anyone over the age of 19 who does not have the qualifications to progress to university
- Takes one year
- Focuses on one subject area, e.g. Health and Social Care or Humanities
- Designed specifically to get you on to a university course
- There is a cost attached to these courses (varied by college) but loans can be available



Skills and Experience

It isn't just qualifications that give you skills





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Work Experience

- A period of time spent at a place of work, learning about a particular job, usually by watching and helping a professional with their work
- This can help you to decide whether you would like to do that job in the future or help to prove your interest in that job to a university or employer
- Work experience also helps with transferrable skills such as team-work, communication and organisation





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Volunteering

- When you work for an organisation for free, giving your time and energy to help a particular cause, e.g.
- A charity
- A school reading scheme for younger students
- Volunteering can be a chance to try a range of jobs, and can also be a route into competitive sectors such as charity or the arts





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Personal Study

- Time spent learning about an interest outside of your school work
- Could include reading, online research, trips to theatres, art galleries, museums, historical sites and buildings
- A chance to explore a favourite subject that may not be covered at school
- Shows your independent learning and time-management skills, as well as increasing your knowledge





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Online Study

- Also known as 'distance learning'.
- Many companies and universities offer short courses for students over the age of 16, that are completed digitally
- An opportunity to try a new subject that may not be taught at your school or to try university learning before you go





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Interests and Hobbies

- Subjects or activities that you engage with during your spare time
- They may not lead to a qualification, or lead directly to a job, but they are usually something that you are passionate about, and can help you to develop lots of different skills which may be useful in the future





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Extended Project Qualification

- Usually completed by A Level students, and also known as the EPQ, this project allows you to research a topic that interests you, and create a project about it
- This could be an essay, an art work or an event
- An EPQ can strengthen your independent study skills, and can be included on university and job applications





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Experience

- It might not be a qualification or work-based, but this could be something that helps you to develop skills like communication, organisation or teamwork
- It could also be a time where you tried something new, such as a trip, the Duke of Edinburgh aware or helping with a school event
- Think carefully about any experiences you've had that have taught you something





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Employment History

- A record of the jobs you have had, and the skills that they have given you
- This record will list where you worked, for how long, and what your role was
- Even jobs that don't relate to your chosen university course can provide useful skills such as communication that can be transferred to a new role





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Putting it all together...

- If you want to go to university, qualifications and experience are essential

but

- There isn't just one 'right' pathway to get to university





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So....

- Think carefully about which qualification to choose next
- Make sure that it is compatible with your chosen university course/career
- Find out what grades you will need
- Think about what other skills and experience you have to offer
- Remember that your choices may be different to everyone else's
- Ask questions

