

# Busting myths about higher education

## What is higher education?

Compulsory education stops at the end of secondary school. If you continue your education, you would go into further education. This could be at school or college or work-based (vocational education). After that you could move into higher education. This covers qualifications of all types at level 4 and above (see table). It is in your best interests to continue your education and to go as far as you can.



“ Education is a doorway to a better future.

What you have learned from your education – and how you have used these opportunities – will set you apart from the rest. These are the sort of people we want to employ.

– Chief executive officer of Cadbury Schweppes ”

## Routes into higher education

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
<b>Work-based</b>	NVQ Level 1	NVQ Level 2	NVQ Level 3	NVQ Level 4	NVQ Level 5	NVQ Level 6
	Foundation learning/Diploma	Apprenticeship (includes NVQ Level 2)	Advanced Apprenticeship (includes NVQ Level 5)	Professional qualifications		
	GCSE grades D-G	GCSE grades A-C	A levels AS and A2	Professional qualifications		
<b>Academic</b>		English Baccalaureate	International Baccalaureate	Certificate of Higher Education	Diploma of Higher Education	Honours degree
	Functional skills	14-19 Higher Diploma	14-19 Advanced Diploma			
<b>Job-related</b>	BTEC	BTEC First Diploma	National Diploma or Certificate	HNC	HND	Foundation degree
	Key skills/skills for life	GCSEs at A-C in job-related subjects	A levels in job-related subjects			

The Government is developing the qualifications framework and the table above is subject to change

### MYTH: There is only one way to get into higher education

No. There is much more to higher education than ever before. There are many routes into higher education:

- the well-known academic route: GCSEs and A levels;
- International Baccalaureate (IB), available in some schools and colleges in North Yorkshire. The IB is equivalent to A levels and involves studying certain subject areas;
- the Progression/Advanced Diploma, which combine classroom learning with hands-on experience;
- job-related courses, such as BTEC National/Level 3 qualifications and A levels in job-related subjects, which are more practical and focus on a particular job area; and
- the work-based route, including apprenticeships and qualifications such as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), which involve learning at work or on a work placement.

### MYTH: You have to decide on a route and can't change direction

No. You can plan your journey and change your direction to suit your needs. The diagram shows some of the choices you could make to gain the qualifications for a higher education course; the routes shown are very flexible.

All the qualifications are set at a level, depending on the knowledge, skills and understanding required. The Progression/Advanced Diplomas, International Baccalaureate, BTEC National/Level 3 qualifications are all at the same level as A levels. This means they can all be suitable for getting onto many degree courses. Advanced apprenticeships and NVQs at Level 3 can

lead to NVQs at Level 4 and 5 and normally, with additional qualifications, to all kinds of degrees and HND and HNC courses.

### MYTH: You cannot choose a job-related or work-based route

Yes, you can. This is good if you know pretty well what job you want to do. If you are still unsure, a more general course would keep more options open.

Job-related and work-based qualifications can be great for getting a job and progressing at work. They give you specific knowledge and skills for a particular kind of work. Courses such as NVQs (apprenticeships) and foundation degrees have been designed with the help of employers. This means they provide exactly what employers want.

You can earn while you learn. Job-related courses can be full-time, but there are plenty of options. Many people study part-time alongside their work, so they can carry on earning. They may study by day release at college, at weekend or evening tutorials and lectures, or by distance or online learning at home.

### MYTH: You have to go to your local university or college

No. You can go anywhere, but you will have to think about living away from home, travel costs etc.

Visit the UCAS website or call 0871 468 0 468 for a list of full-time higher education courses.

### MYTH: Higher education is too expensive

Often, it is not. Many students will be better off under the new system, especially those from a poorer background. Visit the DirectGov website to find out about grants,

bursaries and other financial support and repaying loans.

You can also find out about the Disabled Students' Allowance. Remember, you would not have to pay back loans you take out to go to university until you were earning £21,000 a year.

### Where can I get support and more information to help me to make career choices?

Talk to your Connexions Careers Adviser. Careers advisers are available in all schools and colleges to help you to make a plan for what you would like to do in the future. Talk to your school/college Careers Co-ordinator to find out how to arrange a meeting.

Visit [www.getconnectednow.co.uk](http://www.getconnectednow.co.uk) - the website that links you with careers, learning and work. Here you will find how to access support, information and advice and links to all websites that you may need to help you to make informed decisions.

Look on the Get Connected Now ask-a-careers-adviser Facebook page to find out what is new.

Contact the ask-a-careers-adviser service:

- Call the ask-a-careers-adviser service on 0845 0349577 between 5pm and 9pm on Monday to Friday to talk to a Careers Adviser.

- Text ask to the ask-a-careers-adviser service on 81066

- Email the ask-a-careers-adviser service at [getconnectednow@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:getconnectednow@northyorks.gov.uk) and a Careers Adviser will contact you.

- If you would like to talk to an adviser at one of our centres, look on Get Connected Now for opening times.