



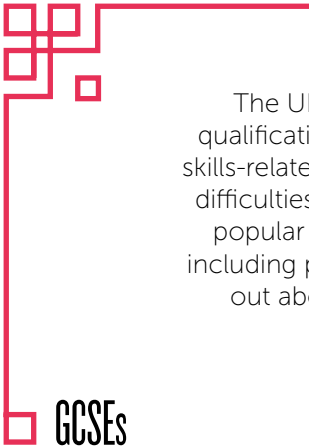
# THE MOVING ON

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# QUALIFICATIONS GUIDE

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**Moving On**<sup>↗</sup>  
careers and qualifications



The UK education sector offers a wide variety of qualification types including academic, vocational and skills-related qualifications at different levels and different difficulties. We have outlined in brief some of the most popular qualifications below. There are many more, including professional qualifications, which you can find out about on the [Moving On magazine website](#).

## GCSEs

GCSEs (General Certificates of Secondary Education) are Level 2 academic qualifications which are ordinarily taken by 14 to 16 year olds as part of their core secondary school curriculum and studied full time. They consist of a combination of exam, controlled assessment and coursework, depending on the subject and are graded A\* - G or 9 - 1.

Some GCSE subjects are compulsory, including maths, English language, English literature, Welsh (if in Wales) and science whilst others can be chosen by students.

In Scotland students study for the equivalent National 5 qualification.

## A Levels

A levels are subject-based qualifications that can lead to university, further study, training or work. Students can normally study three or more A levels over two years and are usually assessed via a series of examinations.

The grades that you achieve in your A Levels are assigned UCAS points and these will all get added together to give you an overall UCAS Tariff points score. If you look on the UCAS website or at individual university websites, you will see that many universities set a minimum tariff score as an entry requirement.

The other thing to bear in mind is that some university courses also ask for particular A Levels – so it's important to check what universities ask for before choosing and starting to study for A Levels. It's important that the right subject choice is made when it comes to A Levels and that A Levels are combined well to give the best possible rounded education.



## □ Bachelor's Degree

Most bachelor's degrees come with honours, which is an indication of achievement at a certain standard. Honours are awarded at third, second or first class depending on the standard of achievement. Degree courses are awarded by universities and can be three to five years in length depending on the subject and the mode of study.

### **Types of Bachelor's Degree**

BA: Bachelor of Arts  
BSc: Bachelor of Science  
BEng: Bachelor of Engineering  
BM: Bachelor of Medicine  
Bed: Bachelor of Education  
LLB: Bachelor of Law

In addition to traditional degrees, universities also offer alternative courses and qualifications such as the Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) which is a one-year course of study and the Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) which is two years.

## □ Master's Degree

For those who love learning, once they have completed their first degree, they may choose to continue in higher education and gain a master's degree. This will take another year of study full time or another two years studying part time. Many complete their master's degree as part time whilst working.

## □ PhD

PhD stands for doctor of philosophy – it doesn't mean that students study philosophy though; it refers to the love of wisdom that goes with study at this level. A PhD normally takes between three and five years to complete and is research intensive





# VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Vocational qualifications are work or industry related qualifications. They come in all shapes and sizes and are designed to develop and evidence competence and knowledge in a particular occupational field through practical demonstration or through project work. These qualifications involve practical learning through which the candidate is able to gain hands-on experience related to the job role or careers that they wish to pursue.

## □ NVQ

National vocational qualifications are competency based. They are based on national occupational standards (NOS) and therefore offer learning and training that is in line with industry expectations. NVQ candidates are expected to demonstrate competency in their chosen field.

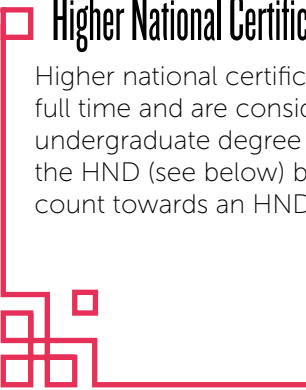
NVQs are available at five different levels, from introductory to senior management level and can be studied at a local college, training provider, online or via distance learning programmes. NVQs at level 4 and 5 are equivalent to higher education qualifications.

## □ National Diploma (BTEC)

National diplomas are knowledge based. Unlike NVQs, national diplomas do not require students to necessarily demonstrate their competency but they will be expected to evidence their knowledge and understanding through project work.

## □ Higher National Certificate (HNC)

Higher national certificates usually take one year to complete when studied full time and are considered equivalent to completing the first year of an undergraduate degree course. An HNC covers many of the same subjects as the HND (see below) but at a level below and achievement of the certificate can count towards an HND.





## □ Higher National Diploma (HND)

An HND takes two years to complete, unless you have completed a HNC (see above), in which case the HND takes only a year to complete and is considered to be roughly equivalent to the second year of a university degree. Many people who complete an HND go on to complete a university degree, bypassing the first two years of university study.

## □ IVQ

International vocational qualifications are designed especially for the international marketplace. They measure a candidate's theoretical knowledge as well as their practical skills.

## □ CVET

CVETs are Welsh continuing qualifications linked to occupational competencies in the same way as NVQs are.

## □ VRQ

Vocationally related qualifications such as security guarding are linked to specific areas of employment and evidence the skills and knowledge required to meet the standards of that particular industry.

## □ IVET

IVETs are Welsh introductory vocational qualifications suitable for learners of all ages.

## □ SVQ

Scottish vocational qualifications work in much the same way as NVQs. They are based on national standards, can be studied at college, with a training provider or in the workplace. These qualifications are available exclusively in Scotland.





## Vocational Qualifications As A Route To University Study

Vocational qualifications at Level 3 and above provide entry to university should you wish to go in exactly the same way as A Levels do and they carry UCAS points in the same way too.

## Foundation Degree

Foundation degrees are available in England and Wales in a variety of work-related subjects. Many students who complete a foundation degree progress to study for a bachelor's degree although a foundation degree is a degree in its own right. Foundation degrees are great for those who are unsure about committing several years to a specific course or subject.

## Regulating Qualifications

All qualifications are managed and regulated to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Any qualifications that are not regulated will not be funded by Government.

In England and Northern Ireland, the body that regulates qualifications is the Office of Qualifications and Exams Regulation (Ofqual), in Wales they are regulated by the Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), and in Scotland they are regulated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).





# THE FUTURE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Latest Government plans to ensure that young people develop the skills needed for employment in key industry areas include the introduction of Technical (T) Levels. The first teaching of T Levels is planned for 2020.


## **What are T Levels?**

T Levels are not qualifications in themselves in the same way as individual A Levels are. T Level is the term being used to describe the 15 new technical routes being created. Within these 15 routes there are likely to be many qualifications, grouped according to the pathway.

Each of the 15 new technical routes shown below will be designed in partnership with employers to make sure that they include learning and training in areas and skills which are needed in industry.

1. The agriculture, environment and animal care route
2. The business and administrative route
3. The catering and hospitality route
4. The childcare and education route
5. The construction route
6. The creative and design route
7. The digital route
8. The engineering and manufacturing route
9. The hair and beauty route
10. The health and science route
11. The legal, finance and accountancy route
12. The protective services route
13. The sales, marketing and procurement route
14. The social care route
15. The transport and logistics route





***Where Qualifications sit on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).***



***Level 1***

- GCSE (grades D-G or 3-1)
- NVQ Level 1
- BTEC Level 1 (award, certificate or diploma)



***Level 2***

- GCSE (grades A\*-C or 9-4)
- NVQ Level 2
- BTEC Level 2 (award, certificate or diploma)



***Level 3***

- AS and A Level
- NVQ Level 3
- BTEC Level 3 (award, certificate or diploma)



***Level 4***

- HNC
- NVQ Level 4
- BTEC Professional (award, certificate or diploma)  
Level 4







### Level 5

- HND
- BTEC professional (award, certificate or diploma) Level 5
- Foundation degree
- Diploma of FE / HE
- NVQ Level 5



### Level 6

- BTEC Advanced Professional (award, certificate or diploma) Level 6
- Bachelor's degree



### Level 7

- BTEC Advanced Professional (award, certificate or diploma) Level 7
- Master's degree
- Post graduate certificates and diplomas



### Level 8

- Doctorate
- Level 8 Vocational qualifications



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