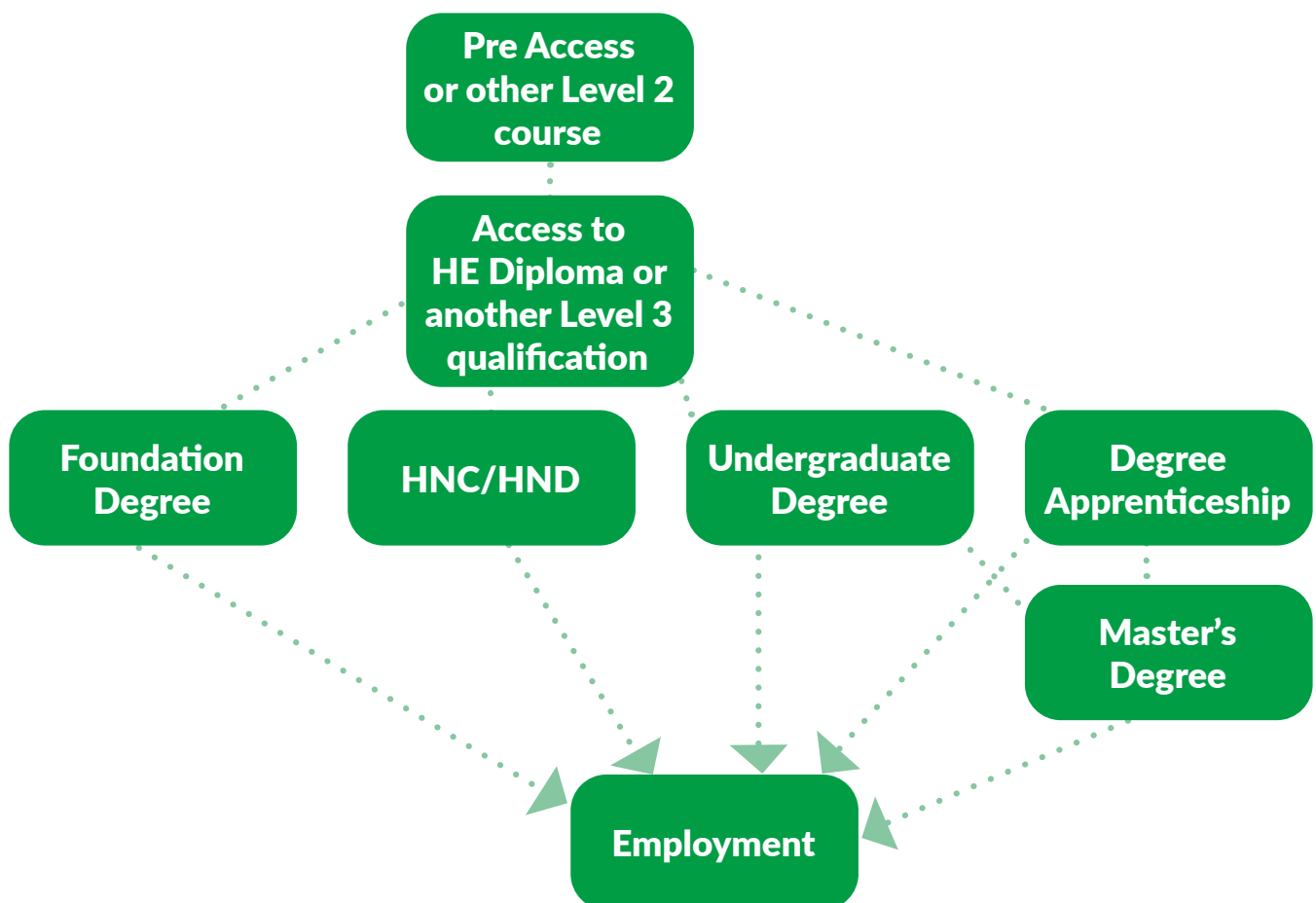


A Guide for Adult Learners

**Supporting you into
higher education from
your Level 2 course**

Why start a Level 2 course?

Studying a Level 2 course will provide you with the base knowledge to pursue a career in your chosen area. It will allow you to experience the subject and allow you to decide whether this truly is the subject/area that you wish to focus on. You may be concerned about your ability to study at a higher level, a Level 2 course will allow you to develop skills and prepare you for further study, as well as give you a bit of confidence. It will also give you some time to gain the necessary GCSE/Functional Skills qualifications that you may require to progress on to higher education. These are usually English and Maths but sometimes include a science depending on your chosen future course. A Level 2 course will put you in a good position to go on to a Level 3 and complete it successfully.



[click here for an explanation of different kinds of university courses](#)

Choosing your Access Course:

- Have your career in mind or at least the area in which you would like to work on completion of your education
- Find out what subject(s) you need to study based on this choice and do your research!
- Find out where you can study, think about how far you are willing to travel, how you would get to your preferred place of study, whether this is the best education provider for the subject(s) you want to study, etc.
- Decide how you would like to study, do you need flexibility because of care commitments? Would part-time suit you better? Or are you happy to study full time? Perhaps distance learning might be a possibility
- Visit campuses! Just as you do with university, visit the college campus to get a feel of the place which will help you decide whether or not you want to be a part of that institution and you will also have an idea of the travel needed and whether that would be possible for you on a regular basis
- Think ahead to university, does the course you have decided to progress on to provide you with the entry requirements necessary to apply to your chosen university course?

Advantages of entering HE as an adult

- Your own life experience will likely mean you are more motivated to achieve a specific career goal than your younger peers might be
- Your life experience makes you well equipped to deal with challenging situations
- You may be able to relate the lectures and course content to experiences you have had, especially if you have already worked in the sector
- Bonding with lecturers and tutors will likely come easier as you may share similar experiences both in work and in life
- You are eligible for student discounts! This will save you a lot of money!
- You are used to managing multiple priorities in ways many younger people are not
- Life experience means you are better at networking and forming new relationships. Make sure you get involved with societies and clubs and extend your network
- Your experience (both work and life) might give you an edge over younger peers when looking for part time work

Why go into HE?

- Potential for higher earnings
- To gain the qualifications needed for a career in a field you are passionate about
- To gain confidence and build a strong network of likeminded people

The UCAS process

It's not too early to start doing your research around potential courses. All UK courses can be found on UCAS.com. Use the handy search tool to search for the course you are considering, in the area you are considering. Make sure you read the course information, including module choices, for each course that appeals to you so you know which one would suit you best. Think about location, entry requirements, work placement opportunities and sandwich years.

Register in the UCAS HUB and complete the 'details' section. It is very important to ensure that all your personal details are correct and as they are on other official documents. You can select up to five courses to apply for, it will cost you £22 to apply for one course and £26.50 for two to five courses. If you are applying for a part time course, you do not do this through UCAS but instead apply directly to the provider.

Remember, it's not too early to start thinking about what you can include in your personal statement. Think about the things that you have experienced/achieved that could be included and things you can do from now until you apply to improve your chances!

Funding your studies

Funding Level 2

Whilst English and Maths GCSE's should be freely available to you, some Level 2 courses may incur costs. Make sure you check with your provider, which will usually be an FE college.

Funding Level 3, including Access to HE Diplomas

Fees can vary depending on the college so make sure you do your research. If you are 24 years old (or older), you may be eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan to cover your course fees and you will not be required to repay this until you are earning over £27,295 per year. If you complete an Access to HE Diploma and then go on to complete a higher education qualification which is eligible for funding via Student Finance England, you will not have to pay back the Advanced Learner Loan. For students aged 19-23, there may be other funding available if you do not already have any Level 3 qualifications - check with your college.

Funding your full degree

If you are eligible, Student Finance England (SFE) will provide loans for both foundation and undergraduate degrees. You can find information about eligibility criteria here:

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/who-qualifies>



Where you live and where you plan to study will be taken in to account. You'll be able to borrow more if you are studying in London. You will have to apply through the SFE website. You need to include information about who you live with, household income and so on. SFE will decide how much financial support they will offer you to support you through your studies. If you wish to continue on to postgraduate study, loans are also available for this.

Financial support in HE

Some universities will offer special bursaries you may be eligible for. Bursaries can cover Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), childcare, funding for those from low income households, and many other things.

Student parents and carers

This information applies to you if you are a biological or step parent, a foster carer or an adoptive/legal parent or someone who provides kinship to a friend or family member's child. You may have access to additional support if any of these apply to you. As always, make sure you know what the college/university you are applying for has to offer you. Support can include but is not limited to: childcare facilities, academic support, financial support in the form of hardship funds, family accommodation and health and wellbeing support. If you are unsure of what is on offer at your chosen institution, contact student services to discuss this with them.

It is important to note that when applying for student finance, if you care for someone under eighteen, you will be considered an independent student and loan amounts will be based on your own income whether you still live at home or not.

The childcare grant means that 85% of childcare costs will be covered if the child is under 15 and attending an Ofsted registered facility. You will not be required to repay this.

Other financial support exists so make sure you do your research!

If you are a carer for another individual, whether this is a family member or friend, there is also special support in place for you. This could be in the form of personal support but also financial support depending on your circumstances. Again, make sure you do your research and identify what kind of support is on offer for this within the university you're applying to.

It's really important that you consider how you will balance your responsibilities alongside your course, and particularly alongside any work placement components the course may include as you rarely have the option to pick your own hours.

Engaging with employers

Although it is not essential, engaging with employers in some capacity will be really beneficial for you. Voluntary or paid experience can be very valuable.

- It can help you understand the sector you want to work in and be sure that this is the right one for you
- Work experience can go on personal statements and increase the likelihood of you being accepted on to your chosen course
- It will further your knowledge of the area and put you at an academic advantage as well as providing you with more experience than others in your position
- Work experience will increase your soft skills, for example, time keeping, communication, decision making and organisation skills
- Networking and building relationships in your chosen sector might stand you in good stead for when you want an internship during your time at university or a job on completion
- If you currently work full time or part time make sure you consider the skills you have gained when applying for future courses