



What is Higher Education?

What are Higher Education (HE) courses?

HE courses are those set at a higher level of difficulty than A-levels, level 3 NVQs, Access to HE Diplomas and other level 3 courses. HE programmes can be studied at universities, HE colleges and some Further Education (FE) colleges.

Who is HE for?

Nowadays HE is for anyone with the ability who wants to further their learning, regardless of their age or background.

You could be someone who has just finished school or college, someone who wants to return to education after having children, someone who is looking for a career change, or someone who feels they need a HE qualification in order to move into a more senior role. Alternatively, if you simply want to learn more about an area you are interested in, then HE could also be for you.

What types of HE courses are there?

There are two main types of HE courses – **Undergraduate** courses and **Postgraduate** courses. Undergraduate courses are those you can study if you do not already possess a degree. Postgraduate courses are either research or taught based and can usually only be undertaken once you have successfully completed an undergraduate degree.

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What subject could I study?

Undergraduate courses have either an academic or a vocational focus. **Academic** courses tend to be subject based and are general, not geared towards a specific career path, e.g. English, Sociology.

Vocational courses include more practical skills and are typically geared towards certain jobs, e.g. nursing, hospitality management. There are thousands of different academic and vocational HE courses available so you can study just about any subject you wish.

for schools
for individuals
for employers

What HE qualification could I study for?

Both academic and vocational (work related) HE courses can lead to a range of different qualifications.

1) Higher National Certificates (HNC) Higher National Diplomas (HND)

What are they?

These are vocational qualifications that will prepare you for a career in a certain occupation area. A HNC is equivalent in difficulty to the first year of a degree and a HND is equivalent to the second year of a degree.

What subjects could I study?

A wide range of subjects are available. These tend to relate to a certain area of industry, e.g. accounting, hospitality, fashion design.

What do I need to get on the course?

A range of academic and vocational qualifications allow progression onto HNC/HND courses. Relevant work experience may also be taken into account, particularly for mature students.

How long will it take?

A HNC takes one year full-time or two years part-time. A HND takes two years full-time and three or four years part-time.

What next?

After completing a HNC or HND you can enter employment in a related area or alternatively you could progress onto an Honours Degree. Typically you would be able to join the degree course in either the second year (if you've achieved a HNC) or the third year (if you have a HND).

The most popular undergraduate HE courses are outlined below:

2) Foundation Degrees (FDs)

What are they?

FDs are another, newer, type of vocational HE qualification. They have been developed by employers, in partnership with the HE sector, in order to ensure that their skills needs are being met. They are employment-related, integrating academic and work based learning.

What subjects could I study?

FDs are available in various work related subjects.

What do I need to get on the course?

There are no standard entry requirements for FDs. It's up to the place offering the course to take into account any qualifications and work experience and decide whether you are eligible.

How long will it take?

You can study FDs either full time or part time. FDs may also be available to those in work through distance learning or online options.

What next?

On completion of a FD you could progress onto an Honours Degree – typically being able to enter the degree course in the final year.



3) Honours Degrees

What are they?

These are subject based qualifications designed to give you a thorough understanding of a particular area. They are the most popular type of HE qualification.

What subjects could I study?

Almost anything! There are thousands of honours degree courses available in a wide range of subjects.

What do I need to get on the course?

A range of academic and vocational qualifications allow progression onto degree courses. Relevant work experience may also be taken into account, particularly for mature students.

How long will it take?

If you are studying full time the majority of degree courses last for three years although there are also some four year courses, where one year is spent in industry or abroad.

Honours degrees can be studied full time or part time, or through distance or flexible learning.

What next?

You could seek graduate employment or go on to gain a postgraduate qualification.



Want to know more about
the types of course available?
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4) Extended Honours/ Foundation Degrees

What is it?

An Extended Honours/Foundation Degree is a degree programme that includes an additional year of study at the start of the course. This year will enhance your knowledge and skills before you progress onto more specialist studies in the later years of the course.

This additional year is referred to as the Foundation Year. Honours degrees have an academic focus while Foundation degrees contain a large element of work based learning.

What subjects could I study?

You can study an Extended Degree in several different subjects in York. Extended Degrees are also offered at other universities/colleges across the country.

What do I need to get on the course?

You do not always need any formal qualifications to study an Extended Degree but you do need to be committed to studying at this level.

An Extended Degree/Foundation Degree is ideal for students with few, or no, formal qualifications who are returning to education. It is also a good option for students who do not have the required subjects/ grades at A-level (or equivalent) to be able to progress onto an Honours Degree/Foundation Degree programme.

How long will it take?

If you decide to study full time, an Extended Foundation degree will take three years to complete and an Extended Honours degree four years. If you decide to study part time it will take longer to complete the course.

What next?

Depending on the type of Extended Degree course you choose, on completion you will achieve a BA/BSc Honours Degree or a Foundation Degree. You could then seek graduate employment or go on to gain a postgraduate qualification.

Do I have to study full time?

No. You can also study any of the above qualifications part time or through distance or flexible learning (although not at all institutions). By studying part time you should be able to combine studying with other commitments such as work and family life.

If you study full time you will probably need to spend three or four days a week in university or college. Contact time in lectures and seminars is only likely to equate to several hours a week, with a significant amount of time, in addition to this, being required for independent study.

If you study part time you will typically be required in university or college between one and three days a week.

Distance learning means you don't need to actually attend any classes. Instead you will receive the course materials in the post or online, and get support from academic staff over the telephone or by email. There may also be monthly tutorials for you to attend. Distance learning is usually done part time. The Open University offers a wide range of HE courses through distance learning.

Flexible learning allows you to study at your own pace, effectively fitting your studies around any other commitments you have.



How do I get onto a HE course?

There are many different vocational and academic qualifications which allow entry onto HE courses. The main progression routes are detailed below:

A-Levels

The universities and colleges in York ask for a range of different grades/points from A-levels so it's best to check the website or prospectus for the institution you are interested in applying to.

Apprenticeships/ National Vocational Qualifications

The universities and colleges in York ask for different levels of achievement in these qualifications.

Typically they require an NVQ at Level 3 or an Advanced Apprenticeship. Progression onto work based Foundation Degree programmes is especially popular.

Experience of Work

The universities and colleges in York will take into account any experience gained through working. If you have experience of working in a relevant area you may be able to progress onto a **Foundation Degree** in a related subject without any formal qualifications.

Access to HE Diploma

The universities and colleges in York accept applicants who have successfully completed the **Access to HE Diploma** onto the majority of their Degree programmes. The length of this course is one year.

Many departments encourage applications from Access students as they value their maturity and willingness to contribute to discussion.

The **Upskill to Access** short course is designed to give students the skills they need in preparation to progress to an Access course or other course of study. This is a shorter course designed to prepare students for further study.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

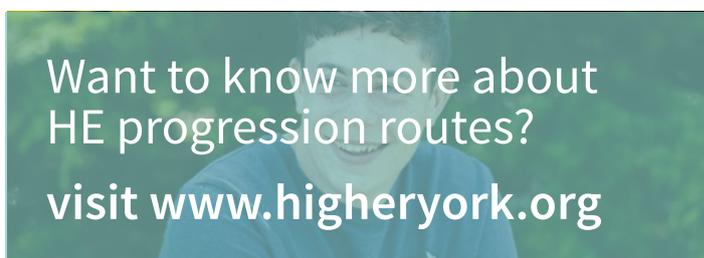
The universities and colleges in York ask for a range of different grades/points from the IB.

The majority require a pass or above, with a number of departments asking for a certain number of points or a diploma achieved at the 'higher' level.

BTEC Qualifications and other Diplomas

The universities and colleges in York ask for a range of different grades/points from these qualifications.

Typically you are more likely to be able to progress if you have completed the **Subsidiary** or the **Extended Diploma**.



What if I don't have the right qualifications?

Even if you don't think you have the qualifications required for entry onto a HE course, it's worth contacting individual admissions departments to discuss your situation.

Extended Degree programmes don't always require any formal qualifications for enrolment. However, as Extended Degree programmes take a year longer than standard degrees, students enrolling on these courses need to be extremely committed to the subject area.

Mature students who can prove that they have strong motivation and relevant experience may be eligible for entry onto a range of HE courses, even if they lack certain formal qualifications.

If admissions departments are not satisfied with your skills and experience they will be able to advise you what you need to do (i.e. qualifications to study, experience to gain) in order for them to consider you for the specific course. So, even if you don't have the appropriate entry qualifications, don't give up.

You can go back to college to take A-levels or enrol on an **Access course**. Access to HE Diplomas are specifically designed for adults with few or no formal qualifications and are a recognised entry qualification for HE courses. They teach basic study skills which are required for degree courses as well as subject specific modules.

The York HE Institutions' contact details are:

Askham Bryan College Central Admissions

Email
enquiries@askham-bryan.ac.uk

Phone
01904 772211

University of York Student Recruitment and Admissions

Email
ug-admissions@york.ac.uk

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01904 324000

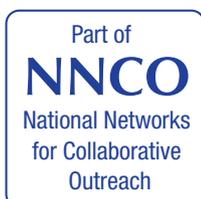
York College Central Admissions

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