

Guidance

Free courses for jobs

Details of the free courses and qualifications to help adults (19+) gain skills for life, including eligibility criteria and how to apply.

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Applies to England

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Overview

If you are aged 19 or over you could access a course for free, as part of the help available from the government to help you access the skills you need to get the job you want - whatever your stage of life.

The free courses include level 3 qualifications and Skills Bootcamps.

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The government pays the course fees.

Free qualifications for adults

If you are 19 or over and do not already have a level 3 qualification or higher, you can access a [free level 3 qualification](#). Level 3 is equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or A levels.

Some of these qualifications are available to study online or part-time.

You may be able to [get help to pay for childcare, travel and other costs](#).

The qualifications could help you:

- gain skills that employers value
- improve your job prospects
- earn a good wage

Read real-life examples of [how a free qualification could help you get ahead in work](#).

Eligibility

You can access one of the [free level 3 qualifications](#) if you are aged 19 or over and do not already have a level 3 qualification (equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or A levels) or higher.

If you're 19 to 23 years old, you could also access additional qualifications for free. If you're in this age group, contact your local college or the [National Careers Service](#) for further information.

If you earn below the National Living Wage or are unemployed, from April 2022 you will also be able to access these qualifications for free. This is regardless of any prior qualifications you have.

You may also need to meet the admissions criteria for your chosen course. For example, you may need to have studied a particular subject before at a lower level.

If you are not eligible for this offer, [Advanced Learner Loans](#) are available to help you cover the costs of learning, which you pay back when you are earning over a certain amount.

Courses available

Qualifications are currently available in:

- accounting and finance
- agriculture
- building and construction
- business management
- childcare and early years
- digital
- engineering
- environmental conservation
- health and social care
- horticulture and forestry
- hospitality and catering
- manufacturing technologies
- mathematics and statistics
- medicine and dentistry
- public services
- science
- teaching and lecturing
- transportation operations and maintenance
- warehousing and distribution

For more information, you can:

- visit the [National Careers Service course finder](#) to find a suitable course near you
- view the full list of [free level 3 qualifications](#) included in the offer
- view the full list of [providers offering free places for level 3 qualifications](#)

How to apply

If you're eligible, you will not have to pay for your level 3 qualification. The government will pay the course fees.

- Use the [National Careers Service course finder](#) to see which courses are available for free in your local area or online. You can set the distance you are willing to travel.
- Contact the college or training provider. You can confirm they offer the qualification you're interested in, check the admissions criteria and apply for the course in the normal way.

- If you're accepted onto the course you will not have to pay a course fee. You may also be able to [get help to pay for childcare, travel and other costs](#).

Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks. They help you to build up specialist in-demand skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

Skills Bootcamps are being delivered in partnership with employers, providers and local authorities to help people gain skills for life.

Subjects available

Skills Bootcamps are available in:

- digital courses such as digital marketing or coding
- technical training in skills like construction or logistics
- green skills like solar energy

View the [list of Skills Bootcamps](#) to see what's available in your area, or online, and what's coming soon. This list will grow as more Skills Bootcamps become available.

Eligibility

You are eligible to apply for a Skills Bootcamp if you are:

- aged 19 or over
- employed, self-employed, have recently become unemployed (in the past 12 months) or are returning to work after a break

Some Skills Bootcamps have additional eligibility criteria.

How to apply

The [list of Skills Bootcamps](#) provides links and locations for existing, new and upcoming courses. You can find out which providers are offering courses in your area, and visit their webpage for further information.

Read real-life examples of [how a Skills Bootcamp could fast-track you to a better job](#).

Get advice and support

The [National Careers Service](#) offers free and impartial advice to help with decisions about careers, training courses and work.

Your local authority or Jobcentre Plus may offer additional free courses.

If you claim Universal Credit, you can apply for one of these free courses, provided it will improve your chances of securing work. Many Universal Credit claimants can currently take full-time training up to 12 weeks, and up to 16 weeks for a full-time Skills Bootcamp in England. Your local Jobcentre Plus can offer further guidance about this and help to identify the learning that works for you.

Find out more about how the government is supporting you to gain [skills for life](#), whatever stage of your life.

Information for providers and employers

Information is available for colleges and training providers on the [National Skills Fund](#).

Information is available for employers about these offers and other support available through the [Plan for Jobs](#).

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