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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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If you are aged 19 or over you could access a course for free, as part of the support available from the government to help you gain 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. 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.

If you already have a level 3 qualification or higher, but you earn below the National Living Wage annually (£18,525 from April 2022) or are unemployed, you can also access these qualifications for free. This is regardless of any qualifications you already have.

In some areas there may be a slightly different low wage threshold. Check with your local training provider to find out the low wage threshold in your area.

Related content

[Find a free level 3 qualification](#)

[Find a Skills Bootcamp](#)

[National retraining scheme](#)

[National Skills Fund](#)

[Cyber security training for business](#)

[Further education courses and funding](#)

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

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 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.

You can also find out more about other learning opportunities and how the government is supporting you to gain [skills for life](#), whatever stage of your career.

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 an 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 areas like construction, logistics (HGV driving), or engineering
- green skills, for instance solar energy or agriculture technology

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

Eligibility

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

- aged 19 or over
- employed, self-employed, unemployed or are returning to work after a break
- serving a prison sentence and you are due to be released within 6 months of completing a Skills Bootcamp, or you are on temporary release

Some Skills Bootcamps have additional eligibility criteria.

If you access a Skills Bootcamp between 1 April 2022 and 31 July 2023, you will not be eligible again before 1 August 2023.

How to apply

The [list of Skills Bootcamps](#) provides links and locations for existing, new and upcoming courses. You can find out which training 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.

You may also be interested in other government-funded training opportunities that can help you gain [skills for life](#), including apprenticeships. An [apprenticeship](#) is a real job where you learn, gain experience, and get paid.

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 for up to 16 weeks and continue to claim benefit. Your local Jobcentre Plus can offer further guidance about this and help to identify the learning that works for you.

Information for providers and employers


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

Information is available for employers about [training and employment schemes](#).

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