

Guidance

Free courses for jobs

Details of the free courses and qualifications for adults (19+) available through the government's Plan for Jobs including eligibility criteria and how to apply.

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Applies to: **England**

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Overview

As part of the government's [Plan for Jobs](#), if you are 19 or over you could now access a course for free.

The free courses include level 3 qualifications and Skills Bootcamps.

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The courses are paid for by the government through the National Skills Fund.

Free qualifications for adults

If you are 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, you can access a free qualification.

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 courses will help you:

- gain qualifications that are needed and valued by employers
- improve your job prospects
- progress in work
- earn a good wage

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.

Some of these qualifications are available to study online or part-time, and you may be able to [get help to pay for childcare, travel and other costs](#). In some instances, you may need to meet admissions criteria for the course you choose to apply for. For example, you may need to have studied a particular subject before at a lower level.

Previously, if you were aged 24 or over, you would have had to pay the course fee for these qualifications. Now, many colleges and training providers have funding available to cover this cost for you.

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.

Subjects available

You can choose from hundreds of level 3 qualifications to help you on the path to a better, well-paid job.

Qualifications are initially 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

See the full list of [free level 3 qualifications](#) available.

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

Locations

Free level 3 qualifications are available to eligible adults across England.

See the full [list of colleges and training providers able to offer free places for level 3 qualifications](#).

This list will be updated as more colleges and training providers receive funding to deliver these qualifications.

Contact the college or training provider directly to find out if they are offering the qualification you're interested in.

How to apply

If you're eligible, you will not have to pay for your level 3 qualification. The course will be paid for by the government from the National Skills Fund.

- Find the qualification you are interested in (see the list of [free level 3 qualifications](#) available).
- Check to see which colleges and training providers are able to offer free level 3 qualifications in your area (see the [list of colleges and training providers able to offer free places for level 3 qualifications](#)).
- Contact the college or training provider to check if 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, giving an opportunity to build up specialist skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. New courses are being added to the [list of Skills Bootcamps](#) as and when they become available during 2021.

Subjects available

These popular courses are developed in partnership with employers, colleges and training providers and local authorities, to help people develop the skills that are in demand in their local area and get a better job. They are available across regions of the country and include a range of digital courses, technical training in skills like construction or engineering, and green skills like electrical vehicle maintenance.

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 and are employed, self-employed, have recently become unemployed 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, so you can find out which providers are offering courses in your area.

Each provider has its own webpage where you can find out more about the courses and which might be the right choice for you.

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.

You can study English or maths GCSE or functional skills qualifications for free if you do not already have them. You can also take essential digital skills qualifications for free if you do not have basic digital skills. Find a maths, English or digital skills course in your local area through the [National Careers Service](#).

[The Skills Toolkit](#) provides access to free, high-quality digital, numeracy and employability courses to help you build up your skills, progress in work and boost job prospects.

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

If you already have a level 3 qualification, [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.

If you claim Universal Credit and you're in the [intensive work search regime](#) you may be able to apply for one of these free courses for adults. The length of training that you can take to support your search for work has been extended from 8 weeks to 12 weeks, or up to 16 weeks for a full-time Skills Bootcamp, in England. This extension is running for 6 months. You will be permitted to complete a training course of this length whilst claiming Universal Credit provided you are referred to the course by your Work Coach on or before 26 October 2021. Your local Jobcentre Plus can offer you further guidance about this.

Respond to the National Skills Fund consultation

We want to build on the solid foundation from the first year of National Skills Fund investment. We are inviting stakeholders to give their [views on the National Skills Fund](#), including on:

- free qualifications for adults
- Skills Bootcamps
- meeting critical skill needs

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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