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Guidance

Free courses for jobs

Explains how to apply for a free level 3 qualification. These courses could help you improve your wage outcomes and job prospects, and gain skills that employers value.

From: [Department for Education](#)

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Applies to England

Contents

- [Courses available](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [How to apply](#)
- [Get help with careers and training](#)
- [Information for providers and employers](#)

 [Print this page](#)

If you're aged 19 or over, you could access a level 3 qualification for free. This is 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.

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A [level 3 qualification](#) is equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or A levels.

The qualifications could help you:

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

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

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

Eligibility

You can get a free [level 3 qualification](#) if you:

- are 19 or over and do not already have a level 3 qualification
- already have a level 3 qualification or higher but earn below the National Living Wage annually (£18,525 from April 2022)
- already have a level 3 qualification or higher but are unemployed

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.

If you're eligible, visit the [National Careers Service course finder](#) to find a suitable course near you.

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. Some of these qualifications are available to study online or part-time.
- 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](#).

Alternatively, you can search for courses on your local college's or provider's website. You can view the full [list of providers offering free places for level 3 qualifications](#).

Get help with careers and training

If you're 19 to 23 years old, you could also access additional qualifications for free. The [National Careers Service](#) offers free and impartial advice to help with decisions about careers, training courses and work.

If you are claiming 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.

If you're 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 you are at.

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

Information for providers and employers

Training providers can view the full list of qualifications included in this offer by selecting 'Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs' in the [qualifications search service](#).

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

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