

# 360° DEGREE

Opportunities in Higher  
Education for **Adult**  
**Learners** aged 19+

MAKE  
—  
HAPPEN



Have you  
done something  
for yourself lately?

Learning • Career Progression • University

# WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION?

Whether you call it higher education (HE), studying a degree or going to university, they all mean the same and this opportunity is available to all adult learners; whether you are interested in a course that can give you a qualification, you are reaching for your dream job or pursuing a passion project!

One thing that is available is choice. There are a large number of places you can study and a vast number of subjects with various qualification levels. The length of a degree course is usually around 3 to 4 years, but this can vary depending on the type of course and subject.

There are also part-time and flexible options available, so talk to the higher education providers about the options available for you.

A great place to start your research is on UCAS, the Universities Colleges Admissions Service:



**AN ADULT LEARNER OR MATURE STUDENT IS ANYONE INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING ONCE THEY HAVE COMPLETED THEIR INITIAL EDUCATION AND IS AGE 21+**



**YOU WON'T BE ALONE, IN 2020,  
THERE WERE AROUND 254,000  
MATURE UNDERGRADUATE  
ENTRANTS; THAT'S 37% OF ALL  
UNDERGRADUATE ENTRANTS?**

## **IS IT FOR ME?**

**YES**  
absolutely

Higher education is accessible with part-time and full-time opportunities

- Study something you enjoy and

take the opportunity to develop your knowledge and skills

- You can learn for fun or gain qualifications to improve your job prospects
- Higher education thrives on diversity, welcoming people from all ages and backgrounds

**EVERY SINGLE ONE OF  
THEIR JOURNEYS IS  
UNIQUE AND...**

**1.7 MILLION  
STUDENTS 21  
& OVER IN HE'**

**YOUR JOURNEY  
STARTS HERE**

## FOCUS ON SUCCESS

JUST OVER 50% OF ALL ADULT LEARNERS ARE AGED BETWEEN 21 AND 24, 38% BETWEEN 25 AND 39, AND 10% ARE OVER 40 WHEN THEY COMMENCE THEIR STUDIES<sup>3</sup>.



“I have really enjoyed my experience as an adult learner...”, “I feel you are more driven and more sure of what you want out of the courses as an adult. It is also a really good experience to meet people of various different ages, backgrounds and life experience”

(Humanities and Social Science Access to HE Student, 2022)

<sup>3</sup>(<https://www.ucas.com/file/35436/download?token=2Q6wiw-L>)



# YOUR HIGHER EDUCATION JOURNEY

Everybody's journey is unique and depending on your existing qualifications, will start at different points on this route map. Create your journey and learn more about how you could achieve your aim to become a higher education student.

**DO YOU KNOW  
WHAT SUBJECT YOU  
WANT TO STUDY?**

**NO**

A great place to start is with the National Careers Service but there are a whole range of career websites available to help you find learning and training opportunities suited to supporting you in career and skill progression.

**YES**

## **FURTHER YOUR RESEARCH IN YOUR SUBJECT AREA**

Local, or somewhere further away? Full-time, part-time? Confident with your subject choice? The UCAS website has everything you need to help you research and inform your decision making!



## **CHECK YOUR QUALIFICATIONS**

To be accepted onto a degree you will need to meet the entry requirements of the university you wish to study at. These vary between places, but the majority will require Level 2 qualifications in English and Maths and a relevant Level 3 qualification.

You can find out more information on what your qualifications mean here:



## FILL ANY EDUCATIONAL GAPS – ENROL AT A LOCAL COLLEGE

Local Further Education Colleges centres, and Adult Community Learning offer courses and qualifications that you might need for entry into higher education.

There are many local providers in the area that can help and support you to reach the required level to study at higher education. A great place to start is Adult Community Learning Essex.



## APPLY FOR STUDENT FINANCE

In addition to university applications, you'll also have to apply for student finance via Student Finance England to support your studies.

There are plenty of financial opportunities, including tuition and maintenance loans, scholarships, grants and bursaries to support and fund your studies as an adult learner.

Apply online for student finance - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

Higher Education providers will usually have a Money Advice Team who are available at Open Days for you to speak with.



## APPLY FOR YOUR DEGREE THROUGH UCAS

UCAS is a one stop hub for all things higher education. This is where you'll also make your university applications and find heaps of resources on not only how to make a successful application but also dedicated information for mature and adult learners.

# GLOSSARY

**Access to HE Diploma** – A nationally recognised Level 3 qualification

**BA** – A Bachelor of Arts is the award for an undergraduate degree, usually in an arts based subject

**BEng** – A Bachelor of Engineering is the award for an undergraduate engineering degree

**BSc** – A Bachelor of Sciences is the award for an undergraduate degree, usually in a science based subject

**Bursary** – A non-repayable award for students who meet a certain criteria

**Clearing** – A time of year when universities and colleges fill the last spaces on their courses

**Conditional Offer** – If a university offers you a conditional place, this means you need to meet certain conditions, usually exam results

**Degree Apprenticeships** – A nationally recognised level 5-7 vocational qualification

**Firm choice** – Your first choice of university when confirming your place

**Insurance choice** – Your back up choice of university when confirming your place

**Open Day** – Universities host events so prospective students can experience what they offer

**Scholarship** – A non-repayable award for students who have excelled in a certain area

**UCAS Hub** – Where you complete and monitor your university applications

**UCAS Tariff Points** – Translates your grades into a numerical value which is sometimes included in university entry requirements

**Unconditional Offer** – A university offer where you have met the entry requirements and have a place to study

**Undergraduate** – A student completing a level 6 degree at university



# SPOTLIGHT ON THOMAS...

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—  
HAPPEN

## FROM ADULT LEARNER TO ACADEMIC LEAD AND TRUSTEE



Thomas Empson was an adult learner and now works for London South Bank University as Academic Lead and Marketing Manager on a European Social Funded project called Dagile. The social impact project aims to up-skill Londoners for the digital economy through training in leadership and digital skills so they are better equipped for the changing jobs market. Thomas is a Trustee for the homeless charity Emmaus Colchester and shares his story to inspire others.

"I went to school in Tiptree, Essex and didn't do too badly in my GCSEs, but failed all of my A-levels. This was, in part, due to being dyslexic, which went undiagnosed until I was 35 so I didn't receive the additional support I should have in school.

I started a BTEC in Fine Art at Colchester Institute to follow in the footsteps of my graphic designer friends, but left wanting to be a fashion designer. My portfolio of work secured me a conditional offer with the very prestigious Central Saint Martins (CSM), part of the University of the Arts London. Suddenly, I was the first in my family to get into university, and I hadn't just got into any old university, I had got into THE university to study fashion, studying a course that had alumni like Stella McCartney and Alexander McQueen!





Being an adult learner, starting university at the grand age of 23, meant I

approached my studies with a different attitude. I knew the value of money, and what it was costing me to study. I worked part-time in a pub during term-times to make ends meet and worked three jobs over the summer holidays.

Today, 19 years after I first went to university, I have 15 years' experience of lecturing across Marketing, Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability subjects. I've delivered several social impact projects for funders, including the Big Lottery Fund; the Department for Education and the European Social Fund. I've also created a portfolio of collaborations between higher education institutions and leading high street fashion brands."

Read the rest of Thomas' and other student stories on our website.



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