

Next steps – university

Information correct at time of writing - February 2020

Option	Notes
University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is this an option for you? ■ Why do you want to go to university? ■ Do you know how to apply? ■ Do you know how much it costs? ■ Do you know what a student loan is and how to apply for one? 	<p>To be able to go to university, you'll need to have gained A levels or equivalent BTECs or NVQs. However, many universities offer a foundation year. This lets you join with lower grades and develop your skills for a year before moving on to a full degree programme</p> <p>There is more to going to university than simply the qualification you receive at the end of it – it's the whole experience. Potentially moving away from home, becoming more independent, and making new friends can all be positive and life-changing experiences.</p> <p>Universities offer a variety of courses to suit different interests and ambitions. Thinking about how you might use your degree in the future might help you decide on the right course for you.</p> <p>Holding a university degree could make it easier to get your career started. That said, getting the job you want afterwards isn't a certainty – people have varying levels of success for all sorts of reasons. But a degree can help to 'open doors'.</p> <p>Applications are made via UCAS (University and Colleges Admissions Service). You need to apply via your school or college, although mature students can apply independently.</p> <p>Going to university costs money. You can find out more about tuition fees on the UCAS website. You may need to apply for a student loan to cover tuition fees and living costs (maintenance) whilst studying. You may need further financial support to help you with your living costs if the loan is not sufficient.</p> <p>You may need to apply for a student loan to cover tuition fees and living costs whilst at university.</p> <p>Once you have accepted your offer of a university place, you can apply for student finance.</p> <p>If you still live at home and are financially dependent on your parents, they will have to support your application. Students who come from care or who are financially independent, or mature students will be assessed independently.</p> <p>You start paying back a student loan after you've finished university and are earning the threshold. Paying back a student loan is structured and based on how much you earn. Student loans accrue interest. Repayments stop if you are not earning the threshold.</p> <p>Visit the Prospects website for further information.</p>

Next steps – apprenticeships

Option	Notes
Apprenticeships	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is this an option for you? 	<p>Apprenticeships provide a great way to study for qualifications and gain experience and new skills whilst earning money.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What does it involve? 	<p>You will have the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills, you may even study towards a degree in some instances. You'll have the opportunity to learn lots of workplace skills – which you might not be able to do at university. And it lets you see whether you enjoy a certain job before committing to it for your career.</p> <p>Apprentices can appeal to employers because when they finish their training, they already have plenty of real-life work experience, which is as useful for them as it is for you.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you know how to apply? 	<p>Applications can be made via the Apprentice Hub on www.gov.uk. If you are still at school or college, your teachers or tutors can help you with your application. But if you're already in work and want to gain qualifications or learn new skills, ask your employer whether they can support you with it. Many employees offer apprenticeships to existing employees in order to retrain them, or as part of their ongoing commitment to continuing education and development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you know what apprenticeship pay rates are? 	<p>Because you earn money whilst doing an apprenticeship, you avoid the student loan debt associated with university education. Apprenticeship pay rates are based on your age and how long you've been an apprentice. For more details, check the national minimum wage on the government website. But if you're undertaking an apprenticeship as part of continuing development, then your pay could be higher.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How will an apprenticeship impact your finances? 	<p>Depending on your pay rate, and whether you are living independently, you may need to apply for additional support, like Housing Benefit or Universal Credit in order to be able to cover all of your living expenses. You'll also need to consider travel costs.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How long does an apprenticeship last? 	<p>It can take between one and six years to complete an apprenticeship, depending on which one you choose, the level it's at, and your previous experience. Different apprenticeships are available at companies large and small, and across a wide range of industries and organisations.</p> <p>Visit the government apprenticeship website for further information.</p>

Next steps – working

Option	Notes
Working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is working an option for you? ■ Do you know what sort of job you may like/want to do? ■ Do you know how to write a CV/letter of application? ■ Where might you look for work? ■ How far will you have to travel to work and how will you get there ■ Do you know what the National Minimum Wage/ National Living Wage is? 	<p>In the UK, everyone has to stay in some form of education or training until they're 18. This can be full-time education, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or part-time education alongside being employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 or more hours per week.</p> <p>But you can, of course, still work in a part-time job before you're 18.</p> <p>At 18, you can start full-time employment without the requirement to be studying or training at the same time.</p> <p>At work, you'll learn new skills and knowledge – as well as meeting new people and making new friends. Many of the workplace skills you gain will be transferable to another job.</p> <p>You might want to change jobs a few times before you settle on a role or company that you can see yourself staying with into the future. Depending on the job you choose, it may be possible to build a career through progression and promotions as you become more skilled and confident.</p> <p>In order to apply for jobs, you'll need to have a CV, which covers your qualifications, skills and experience. Schools, colleges and other organisations can help you write a CV, and there are plenty of resources on the internet, too. It's important to have a CV, because it will help you whether you are applying for a job, going for an apprenticeship, or moving on from university.</p> <p>When you're looking for employment, there are many job search sites and recruitment agencies that can help you.</p> <p>Remember to look at how far you'll have to travel, hours you'll be required to work and what the starting salary is. Knowing this will help you to decide whether you can manage to get work and back easily, along with whether you can afford the cost of travel in addition to your other living expenses.</p> <p>Minimum pay rates are £6.83 per hour if you're over 18. This rises to £9.50 aged 23 and over. (As at April 2022.)</p> <p>Note: Check the government website for the most up to date information.</p>

Next steps – starting you own business

Option	Notes
Starting your own business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is starting your own business an option for you? ■ What is a business plan and what does it include? ■ What are some of the things I need to know about setting up a business? ■ When will the business start to make a profit? ■ Will I be able to pay myself a salary? 	<p>Starting a business can be challenging, and there is always a lot to think about. But you can start small to get a feel for things, and gauge whether it's for you.</p> <p>Creating a business plan will help you map out the steps for building your business. It's a great way to identify your business and financial goals and projections.</p> <p>You may need some money to get your business started. This could come from savings, investments from other people or a start-up loan from a bank. It's worth seeking advice from your financial services provider and doing some research to decide which would be best for you.</p> <p>You can set your business up as a sole trader, partnership, Limited Company or a charity or non-profit making entity. Do some research first – there are plenty of websites providing information on setting up a business, types of company and paying the right taxes etc. You'll need to register your business with HMRC to ensure you pay the correct taxes. If the threshold is met, taxes are paid through the completion of a self-assessment tax return. Need some inspiration? Look at other similar successful businesses to get ideas.</p> <p>Visit the government website for further information.</p> <p>Cash flow is important to consider when starting a business, so it can be a good idea to think about how you will keep the business running, and consider having savings set aside to cover essential living expenses, just in case you need it.</p> <p>Remember, starting your own business can be great, and the potential is limitless, but you'll also be forfeiting the security of a regular salary, sickness cover, paid parental leave and workplace pension contributions. So you will need to fund these separately through insurance contracts and a personal pension.</p>