

GETTING HELP

Hopefully this booklet has given you an insight into the training and qualifications you could do once you have completed your Apprenticeship training.

If you would like to find more information on Higher Education the websites on the previous page will be a good starting point.

Consider some of the following when doing your research:

- * What qualifications do I need to have to get on to a particular Higher Education course?
- * How much will the course cost and how do I pay for the course?
- * Which Higher Education Institution should I choose?
- * Can I get some work experience in the job I'm considering before committing to the training?
- * How and when do I apply?

Making the decision to apply to Higher Education could be a life changing event. However, if you want to make sure you consider all the options and choose the right course, consider getting some help.

Connexions Northumberland provides confidential and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance to young people aged 13–19 years of age. You can arrange to see a personal adviser who can help you explore all your options and make sure the choice you make is the right one for you. Telephone your nearest centre and arrange an appointment.

Connexions Centres

Main Centres

Ashington Connexions Centre
Tel: 01670 811040

Hexham Connexions Centre
Tel: 01434 607097

Blyth Connexions Centre
Tel: 01670 798180

Part-Time Centres

Alnwick Connexions Centre
Tel: 01665 605982

Cramlington Connexions Centre
Tel: 01670 735653

Bedlington Connexions Centre
Tel: 01670 823267

Morpeth Connexions Centre
Tel: 01670 511666

Berwick Connexions Centre
Tel: 01289 331823

Prudhoe Connexions Centre
Tel: 01661 834620

You can also get information and advice from Connexions Direct by phoning Tel: 080 800 13 2 19 or visiting their web site at: www.connexions-direct.com.

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PROGRESS TO SUCCESS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Progression routes for apprentices in Northumberland

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WHAT IS PROGRESS TO SUCCESS?

This booklet is for Apprentices, Advanced Apprentices and people studying vocational qualifications.

You decided that work and training was better for you than full-time education. By now you should have a good idea about the world of work and the types of jobs people do in your industry. You will have improved your own skills and knowledge and gained loads of experience that employers will really value. Completing your Apprenticeship will be a great achievement, but it doesn't have to be the end of your learning. Have you thought about what you could do once your Apprenticeship is over?

You could increase your skills by further training and study.

This booklet will look at the opportunities available to you locally, to increase your qualification level in IT. It will explain some of the benefits you may gain by doing this, provide information on who offers qualifications locally and who can help you explore your options in more detail.

Qualifications at Level 4 or above are classed as Higher Education

Higher Education can be studied at universities, colleges, in the work place or by distance learning.



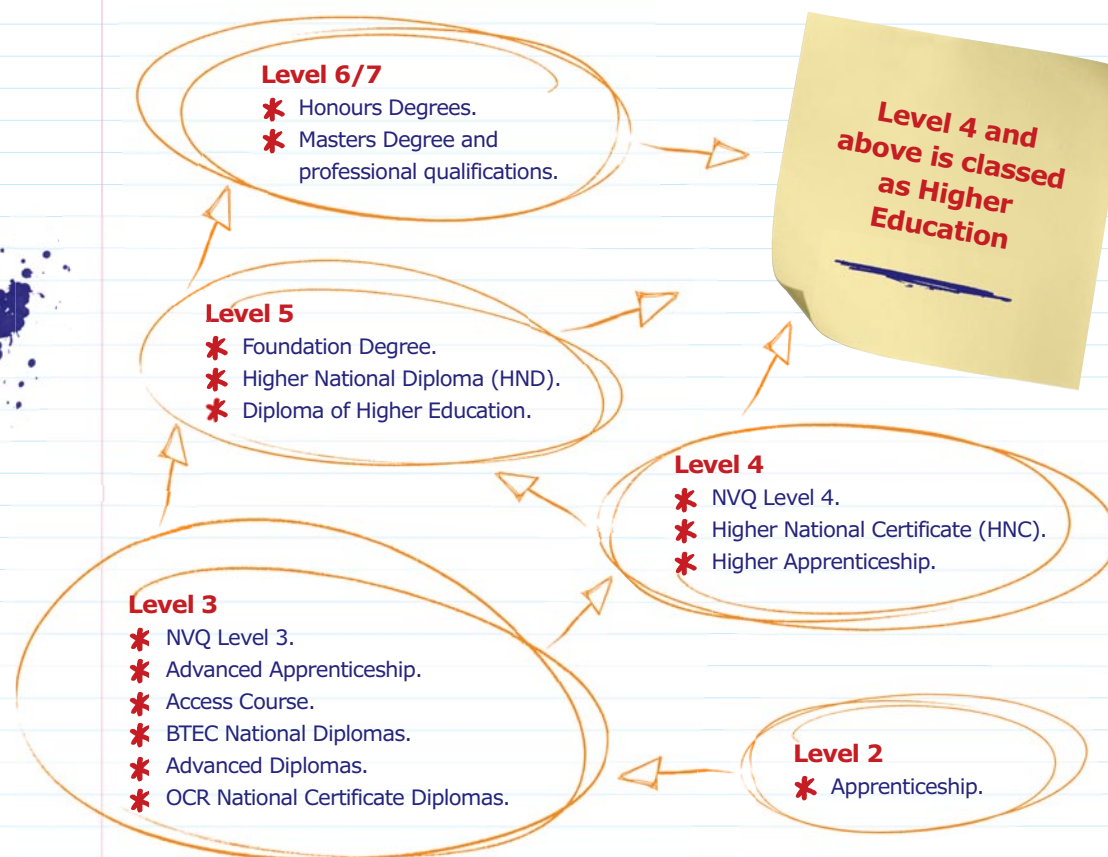
What can you do after your Apprenticeship?

Honours Degree

The most common type of qualification in Higher Education. Normally based on one or two subjects.
3+ years full-time.
5+ years plus part-time.
After this you could do a Masters Degree or PHD.

Foundation Degree

A type of degree that includes academic and work-based learning.
Can be studied full or part-time.
Many Foundation Degrees allow you to complete an extra year and convert this to an Honours Degree.



HND – Higher National Diploma

A Higher Education qualification which involves completing practical vocational training that prepares the student for a career in a particular area. You could top up this qualification to an Honours Degree.

Access Course

A set of courses offered at local colleges that allow adults (19+) to gain the qualifications needed to enter university. They can be studied full-time or part-time. Northumbria University run local courses and encourage people on Access Courses to apply for Higher Education if they meet the entry requirements.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE NORTH EAST

What's out there for me?

- * The IT and telecoms sector employs over 49,000 people in the North East of England, that's about 3% of the available workforce.
- * The majority (94%) of IT employers in the North East are small companies. Only 1% of businesses in the sector employ more than 200 staff.
- * Employment in IT in the North East is expected to increase by over 2% per year between 2006 and 2016.

From Technology Counts England: IT and Telecoms Insights 2008, e-skills UK, www.e-skills.com.

IT is essential to most businesses. Large organisations in finance, the public sector, NHS, retail and transport all rely on IT to support their work.

While large IT businesses such as Sage and TSG exist in the North East, many others are small enterprises working in fields such as online retailing, video gaming and IT support services.

What employers say they want

The most reported skills shortages are:

- * Specific technical skills.
- * Business skills.
- * Skills and knowledge specific to the employer's sector.
- * Customer skills.

From ICT Inquiry, Issue 11, 2009, e-skills UK, www.e-skills.com.

In the fast changing IT industry it's essential to keep up to date with new developments. There are a number of specific IT qualifications that may be useful. Some are offered by bodies such as the British Computer Society others by companies such as SISCO or Microsoft. Although these courses are expensive some companies support employees to take them.

Why should you consider further training & qualifications?

Employers pay higher wages to people with skills and qualifications that:

- * Take longer to learn.
- * Are in short supply.
- * Are specialised.
- * Are important to their business.

Gaining skills and qualifications that employers need is a good investment of your time.

In the table below you will see some examples of jobs at different levels and the average pay for each job. Generally speaking it shows that the higher your level of qualification, the more employers are willing to pay you.

Occupational Area	Average Annual Pay (for UK)	Level of Qualification
ICT managers	£51,277	Level 4
Software professionals	£37,630	Level 4
IT operations technicians	£31,380	Level 3
Computer engineers	£27,421	Level 3
IT user support technicians	£26,949	Level 2

From 2008 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Office for National Statistics. Crown Copyright. Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

These pay scales are average across the UK in 2008. Different employers and regions may offer different rates of pay.

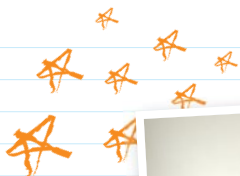
Gaining more qualifications isn't just about better wages. Research has shown that people with higher level qualifications, especially those gained at university will:

- * Gain more promotions at work.
- * Be less likely to be unemployed.



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CASE STUDIES



Liam is an IT apprentice working at Connexions Northumberland. He has completed a level 2 apprenticeship and is currently on a level 3 advanced apprenticeship supported by Northumberland Adult Learning Services (NALS). He has enjoyed learning on the job and he says that **"the level 3 apprenticeship has helped me build on what I already know."**

In the future he would like to work in server administration or second line support. He plans to continue to learn and hopes to take the certification route, gaining Microsoft qualifications.



Joe works in the Computer Services department of Northumberland County Council. Although he completed 2 years at college before starting work he feels that completing an apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship have given him the practical experience needed. He would like to progress in his current job in the next couple of years and realises that qualifications will help him to do this. He is currently taking a SISCO course at college.

Want more information on what's out there?

Information Technology Websites

www.e-skills.com

The Sector Skills Council for Business and Information Technology

www.bcs.org

British Computer Society

www.bigambition.co.uk

Digital careers website

Universities, Colleges & Training Providers

www.northumbria.ac.uk

Northumbria University

www.newcastle.ac.uk

The University of Newcastle

www.sunderland.ac.uk

The University of Sunderland

www.northland.ac.uk

Northumberland College

www.ncl-coll.ac.uk

Newcastle College

www.tynemet.ac.uk

Tyne Metropolitan College

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Northumberland Adult Learning Services
(Click on Education and Learning in the menu)

www.necc.co.uk

North East Chamber of Commerce

Higher Education Information

www.aimhighernorthumberland.co.uk

General information on Higher Education

www.ucas.com

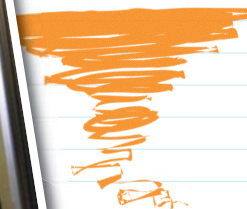
The site for applying to full-time Higher Education

www.foundationdegree.org.uk

Information on Foundation Degrees

www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk

Information on grants, loans and fees for Higher Education



For all local course information in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear check out:
www.my-steps.co.uk