

QUALIFICATION CHART

Higher Education

Level 8

Doctorate/PhD

NVQ
Level 8

Level 7

Masters Degree &
Postgraduate
Certificates & Diplomas

Masters Degree &
Postgraduate Certificates &
Diplomas

Higher
Apprentice-
ship

Degree
Apprentice-
ship

NVQ
Level 7

Level 6

Integrated Masters Degree

Honours Degree
(2-year degrees also available)

Top-up
Honours
Degree

Top-up
Honours Degree

Higher
Apprentice-
ship

Degree
Apprenticeship

NVQ
Level 6

Level 5

Dip
HE

Dip
HE

Foundation
Degree

HND

Higher
Apprentice-
ship

NVQ
Level 5

Level 4

Cert
HE

Cert
HE

HNC

Higher
Apprentice-
ship

NVQ
Level 4

Secondary/Further Education

Level 3

A, AS-levels and
AAQs (from Sept '25)

Level 1-3 qualifications such
as:

Advanced
Apprenticeship

NVQ
Level 3

Level 2

GCSE (grades 4-9)

T-levels, TOQs (from Sept '25
onwards), Certificate or
Diploma, OCR and City &
Guilds (BTECs defunded
from '25)

Intermediate
Apprenticeship

NVQ
Level 2

Level 1

GCSE (grades 1-3)

(Some of these
qualifications can lead all the
way to Level 7/8)

NVQ
Level 1

Academic

Vocational

Work-based



QUALIFICATIONS EXPLAINED

As you can see there are a variety of different qualifications and possible routes, specifically designed to cater for individual learning styles.

Although there are three broad categories of study: Academic, Vocational and Work-based, some qualifications may sit in more than one category. The Cert/Dip HE, for example, appears in the Vocational column as they can lead to specific careers, but are usually considered Academic qualifications.

It is possible (although there are some exceptions) to progress onto qualifications that are in different categories, as long as you have completed the previous level of study .e.g. from A-levels to an HNC.

For more information on specific types of qualification, we recommend the following sites:

gov.uk

"Guide to the post-16 qualifications landscape at level 3 and below for 2025 and beyond", for information about the new AAQs and TOQs.

apprenticeships.gov.uk

This is the official site providing essential guidance on Apprenticeships of all levels, including how to find and apply for them.

studential.com

Search 'vocational qualifications' for information about HNCs, HNDs, NVQs and Foundation Degrees.

discoveruni.org.uk

The official higher education course comparison site, with information about Degrees, Apprenticeships, HNCs, and HNDs.

cityandguilds.com

This site explains the flexibility of NVQs and other vocational qualifications.

tlevels.gov.uk

Comprehensive guidance about T-levels, designed for students.

Scan the QR code to view our interactive qualification chart, with comprehensive explanations of all the qualifications.



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Uni Connect
Programme