



**Next Steps
South West**

What is **HE?**

HE - Higher Education is degree-level study after compulsory education. It covers a wide range of courses, and you can study at universities, colleges, or other learning providers. It also includes work-based learning.



Part of the
**National Collaborative
Outreach Programme**



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Higher National Certificate/Diploma (HNC/HND) - These are vocational courses usually provided by further or higher education colleges. An HNC takes one year (full time), and is the equivalent of the first year of a degree. An HND is the next step and takes two years (full time). It is the equivalent of the second year of a degree.

Certificate/Diploma of Higher Education (CertHE/DipHE) - These are academic qualifications. A CertHE takes one year, and is the equivalent of the first year of a degree or an HNC. A DipHE is equal to two years or an HND. They can be awarded if you leave a degree course early, or taken as standalone qualifications.

Foundation Degree (FdA) - An FdA is a vocational course combining practical work-based learning with academic study. FdAs usually take two years; after that time you can 'top-up' your studies to achieve a full degree.

Top-up Degree - These are available after completing an FdA/HND/DipHE or equivalent Level 5 qualification. A top-up course usually takes a year and allows you to upgrade your qualification to a full degree.

Degree - A 'Bachelor's degree' is the broad term given to a full undergraduate degree. There are different titles depending on the course, e.g. Bachelor of Arts (BA Hons) and Bachelor of Science (BSc Hons). A standard degree usually takes three years, but some courses will have the option of a placement year which will extend the duration of the course.

There are four-year courses that integrate masters-level study with a degree; the qualifications received are known as MA Hons/MSci Hons (or other subject specific titles). These courses are for those interested in technical or research-based careers.

Higher/Degree Level Apprenticeships - Apprenticeships are work-based qualifications combining on-the-job training with classroom study. You can study both Higher and Degree Apprenticeships from Level: 4 - 7.

For more information about these and other HE courses, visit our website, where you can see an interactive qualification chart



nextstepssw.ac.uk/qualifications



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