

Foundation Degrees

– A guide for students



Transforming lives,
inspiring change

What is a Foundation Degree?

A Foundation Degree is a vocational higher education qualification that integrates academic and work-based learning and is built with the help of employers working in close collaboration with further education colleges and universities.



Foundation Degrees bring together experience in the workplace with academic learning to deliver a qualification which is readily accepted throughout industry and commerce. Foundation Degrees aim to encourage participation from learners who may not have previously considered studying for a higher level qualification or would not necessarily have the opportunity to study in the traditional, full-time manner.

Who are they for?

Foundation Degrees are relevant to a wide range of people, particularly those who:

- Are already in employment and want to further their prospects or change their career
- Have completed further education qualifications and are looking for vocational qualifications with the opportunity to later top-up to a full Honours degree
- Are returning to work/learning after a break
- Are already in employment, but have no formal qualifications
- Are unemployed and looking for a way into work

The design and development of Foundation Degree courses is completed in conjunction with employers and professional bodies so they are tailor-made to satisfy the needs of particular industries and those who work in them.

Employers can specify course content, ensuring that everything you learn is directly related to your industry and the development of your career.

With flexible modes of study such as part-time, work-based and distance learning at a variety of locations, students and employers are able to decide how much involvement they can afford in terms of time, cost and effort.

The University of Northampton offers a wide range of Foundation Degree subjects in the East Midlands through our partner college network. For the latest courses on offer visit

www.northampton.ac.uk/courses/foundation

Case studies

Caroline Bentley is currently studying for a Foundation Degree in Learning and Teaching at The University of Northampton. Once graduated, Caroline plans to top-up her Foundation Degree to a full Honours degree and work towards the Graduate Teacher Programme.



Caroline Bentley

Caroline, who now works as a Teaching Assistant at a primary school, chose to study for a Foundation Degree to further her career and prove to herself that she could do it.

"I think the course is excellent, aimed at just the right level, it has given me a massive insight into the Teaching and Learning process and made me more aware of children and how they think and learn."

Before the course commenced, Caroline was unsure if she would be able to juggle study with her other commitments, but has found the course has taught her to manage her time.

"Before I started the course I was extremely busy and I did wonder how I was going to fit studying into my work/home life. I have successfully done it and I think the key to it is organisation and time management. I have developed more of an ability to prioritise and juggle various demands."

I would recommend this course to anyone thinking of going into teaching as there is a lot of work-based learning,"

Chris Kerr (25) is studying a Foundation Degree in Enterprise (Business Development) at The University of Northampton, and is keen to start his own business.

The Foundation Degree teaches students to develop the necessary analytic and creative skills required to set up and run a successful business venture.

Chris believes the Foundation Degree course has helped him develop his social and communication skills, giving him extra confidence with IT and a general knowledge of business.

"If you are at all interested in starting your own business this course is for you as it provides a wealth of knowledge in the most important areas, like accounting and marketing, as well as having experts on hand to help with personal projects"

stated Chris, who says he now feels confident to open his own business.

"As an entrepreneur I am looking at more than one area and several markets, but after nine years as an architectural metal craftsman I am writing a business plan for a small bespoke furniture and metal craft business which, if feasible, I intend to begin manufacture in the next year."

"University is not only for school-leavers. I am 26 and I wish I had done all this sooner."




Frequently asked questions

What are the entry requirements for a Foundation Degree?


There are no set entry requirements, but you must be 18-years-old to start a Foundation Degree. Entry requirements vary by course and institution. You can gain entry on to a Foundation Degree if you have A-Levels, BTEC National, GNVQ, OCR

Nationals or NVQ qualifications. Even if you do not have formal qualifications you may be eligible, as relevant background and work experience is taken into consideration.


Level	Qualification		
Eight	PhD/MPhil Postgraduate Research Degree		
Seven	Master Degree/Post Graduate Certificate/Diploma		
Six	BA/BSc (Hons) Degree		
Five	NVQ Level 5	FdSc/FdA Foundation Degree	HND/HNC/BA/BSc
Four	NVQ Level 4	Level 4 Certificates	
Three	Adv Apprenticeship NVQ L3	BTEC Nat Cert / Dip	AS/A2, Access to HE, OCR L3
Two	Apprenticeship NVQ L2	OCR Level 2 / BTEC	GCSE Grade A-C, OCR L2
One	NVQ L1	OCR Level 1, BTEC Found	GCSE Grade D-G, OCR L1
Entry	Basic Skills / Skills for Life		



Work based learning



Vocationally related



General academic

National Qualifications Framework: For further information and older qualifications visit www.qca.org.uk

Where will I study?

Depending on which Foundation Degree you choose, you may study at a university, further education college, by distance learning or at work. At The University of Northampton, study often takes place through our partner colleges around the East Midlands and by distance learning. Many projects are work-based to minimise your time away from work and ensure relevance to your career path. To find out what study modes and locations are available for specific Foundation Degree courses at the University please call **0800 358 2232** or email study@northampton.ac.uk

How long does it take to complete?

Foundation Degrees take two years if studied full-time, or they can be taken over a longer period of time part-time or by distance learning – giving students the flexibility to both earn and learn.

How can I apply?

For full-time courses you will need to apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Visit www.ucas.ac.uk for further information. For part-time or distance learning courses please contact The University of Northampton on **0800 358 2232** or email study@northampton.ac.uk for further information.



What funding is available?

Foundation Degree students are eligible for the same level of student support as other students on undergraduate courses. Full-time students can get student loans to help with general living expenses. The amount you can borrow depends on whether you live at home, and on your income and that of your household. You don't have to start repaying your loan until you have finished studying and are earning more than £15,000 a year. Higher Education Grants are also available to students from lower income households. For further information visit www.foundationdegree.org.uk

Part-time students may be eligible for non-repayable grants for fees of up to £1,125. Grants are related to the amount of time it takes to complete the course and is dependent of personal circumstances. For further information visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

In addition, students can also apply for a Career Development Loan to cover fees and related expenses such as materials and travel. Visit www.lifelonglearning.dfes.gov.uk/cdl for more information

For information on The University of Northampton's fees and funding opportunities please call **0800 358 2232** or visit www.northampton.ac.uk/study/moneymatters

What further study can Foundation Degrees lead to?

Once you have completed your Foundation Degree, you can reassess your career options, and may even choose to progress with more higher education qualifications. With only a further year of full-time study you may be able to top-up to a full Honours degree.

You may also have the opportunity to study for industry-recognised professional qualifications upon completing your Foundation Degree.

At The University of Northampton the majority of our Foundation Degrees have a top-up option. For an up-to-date list of our Foundation Degree courses and related top-ups visit www.northampton.ac.uk/courses/foundation Alternatively, call **0800 358 2232** or email study@northampton.ac.uk

How much does it cost?

Fees vary depending on the institution and mode of study. For the latest fees at The University of Northampton, please call **0800 358 2232**, email study@northampton.ac.uk or visit www.northampton.ac.uk/fees



Contact information

The University of Northampton



With over 10,000 students, The University of Northampton offer hundreds of courses to meet all needs and interests.

The University of Northampton offer a wide range of Foundation Degree courses in collaboration with our partner college network in a variety of study modes including full-time, part-time work-based and distance learning.

The University's Office of Educational Partnerships and Lifelong Learning is responsible for the

development and implementation of the University's widening participation strategy-including outreach work and research.

The Unit works alongside staff and students in the development and delivery of innovative curricula with the express aim of improving admissions, retention and progression opportunities for those wishing to engage in lifelong learning and to ensure there is equality of access, opportunity and non-discrimination in all areas of provision for students.

For further information about The University of Northampton and the courses on offer visit www.northampton.ac.uk telephone **0800 358 2232** or email study@northampton.ac.uk

Aimhigher



Jointly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Aimhigher Northamptonshire aims to widen participation in Higher Education (HE) by raising the aspirations and developing the abilities of people from under-represented groups. This includes work-based and vocational learners and mature students, and may include students wishing to explore Foundation Degrees as a next step.

Aimhigher is involved in a wide range of activities to engage and motivate students and young people from all walks of life, who have the potential to enter HE, but may be undecided or lacking in confidence. The programme particularly focuses on people from under-represented groups, ethnic minority communities and those who find disability a barrier to entering HE.

Learn more about your choices, how to apply to university and what factors need to be considered such as finance and childcare by contacting Aimhigher Northamptonshire. Call **01604 893310**, email aimhigher@northampton.ac.uk or visit www.aimhighernorthamptonshire.co.uk

Foundation Degree Forward



Over the last year, Derbyshire Chamber has been working with the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Foundation Degree Forward (FDF) on a pilot project to raise the profile of Foundation Degrees in the East Midlands.

The partnership provides a gateway to information, promotes the benefits of incorporating Foundation

Degrees into training and development plans, and supports companies by sourcing the most suitable courses for employee development, student placements or skills gaps.

Further information can be found at www.fdf.ac.uk and www.foundationdegree.org.uk or you can contact our Foundation Degree Advisor on **01332 548137**.