

STUDENT SERVICES
**LIFE AFTER
LEVEL 3**



Life after Level 3

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1. Introduction

Studying a Level 3 qualification at college can be a rewarding and challenging experience for many students. During your studies however it is important to start thinking about your future.

Planning what you are going to do after college is a big decision and will impact your future career, so it is important that you take your time to ensure you make the right choices.

This booklet aims to give you all the information that you need to take the next step after your level 3 course. If once you have read the information you have more questions please contact either your course team or a member of Student Services staff.

2. Moving forward

Deciding what to do once you have finished your level 3 course can feel quite daunting. Many students will have a clear idea of what they want to do in their future career and will know what they need to do to get there. Other students however might be less sure and will need to give this some careful thought. Taking time to plan out your next move can be really helpful as well as saving you time and money on courses or qualifications that you either won't enjoy or won't give you the qualification you need to achieve your goal.

What do you want to do?

This is a pretty big question, but thinking about this now will help you narrow down what you are going to do when you finish college. You need to think in quite general terms to start with, so for example subject areas such as photography, product design, marketing or architecture, rather than specific jobs.

Once you have selected a subject area talk to your course team about the type of job roles that might be available. Your Course team are highly skilled and knowledgeable people with real world experience. They may be able to provide you with new ideas or guidance about the type of career that would suit you.

Once you have an idea of what it is you want to eventually do you need to start planning how you are going to get there. You might need to think about further qualification, or work experience for example. Your course team can guide you in these areas, but don't forget to do some research yourself too.

3. What are my options?

Now that you have made some decisions about what you want to do in the future, you need to start thinking about how you are going to get there. Again your course team can provide you with some guidance in this. They will have made these sorts of decisions themselves so they understand how important it is to get it right.

Start writing a plan. Your plan needs to detail your route from where you are now, to where you want to be in the future. To do this you need to look at all the options that are available to you to help you get where you need to be:

University/HE College

For many students the next logical step from a level 3 course such as an extended diploma or A-levels, is to go on to University or a Higher Education College such as CCAD in Hartlepool. Choosing the right course and the right place to study however is not always easy.

There are three types of course that you can choose after completing a level 3 course;

Foundation degree

These are usually either a 2 year full time, or 4 year part time course. Once you have completed a foundation degree you will have achieved a level 5 qualification. When you complete your foundation degree you will receive either a pass or fail mark. If you receive a pass mark you can then use this to apply to top your foundation degree to a full degree by completing a further year of study. Alternatively, you might want to go into employment after your Foundation Degree.

Degree programme

Normally referred to as either BA (Bachelor of Arts) or BSc (Bachelor of Science) a full degree will take you 3 years full time or up to 6 years part time. A full degree programme will provide you with a Level 6 qualification. These qualifications will be graded as either a 1st—Top marks A*, a 2:1—an A grade, a 2:2—a B grade, or a 3rd—a C Grade. In addition you can also get graded as a pass.

Vocational Qualification

If a degree is not right for you and you would prefer to study a more practice based course, then a vocational qualification may be right for you. These are often referred to as NVQs. You can study NVQs from a level 1 right through to a level 7, which is the same level as a masters degree. NVQ courses offer the same levels of study as other courses but include an increased practical element, and require students to apply what they have learned to their employment. In most cases however you will need to be in employment to study an NVQ but it is well worth looking to see what is available in your local area as each course and college will be different.

NVQs and University not for you?

If the idea of doing more study is not right for you then you have a couple of options here too.

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is where you get a work placement with a company. They will pay you a small amount, but also train you at the same time. There are a wide range of apprenticeships on offer, from learning the building trade, engineering, tattooing, retail and many more besides.

Getting an apprenticeship can be difficult however and there is a lot of competition from other young people in the same position as you. You can find out more information at:
<http://apprenticeships.org.uk>

Employment

If nothing else appeals to you, and you do want to leave education, then seeking employment is your next step. This can be hard however as although the jobs market is doing reasonably well at the moment, there is high competition from other young people for local jobs. It can also be hard to find employment in the area that you have achieved your level 3 qualification in.

If you are thinking about going into employment you will need to register with your local Job Centre Plus as you may be entitled to some benefits while you are seeking work. For more information on benefits that may be available to you please go to: <http://direct.gov.uk>

Who can I talk to about my next steps?

This is *your* future, and it is important that you take charge and explore all the options before you make any decisions. Don't dismiss anything before you have done your research.

For most students the first person you should talk to is your course leader. They will be able to talk to you about possible progression routes and what your employment options might be.

As well as your course leader you can also talk to a Student Services Adviser who can put you in touch with services that will be able to support you with your decisions making. Making contact with the Job Centre is also very helpful, as they will be able to give you advice about what employment opportunities are available and talk to you about registering for any benefits that you are entitled to.

Take your time

The decisions that you are making here can impact the rest of your life, so take your time. Don't rely on information that you hear from friends and family, do proper research and find out all the facts. Things like how much financial support you will get if you go to University, what hourly rate of pay you will get if you are on an apprenticeship, and so on.

If you want to talk about this further, please come and see us in Student Services

Our Middlesbrough office opening hours are:

Monday	8:30 – 17:00
Tuesday	8:30 – 17:00
Wednesday	11.00 – 17:00
Thursday	8:30 – 17.00
Friday	8:30 – 16:30