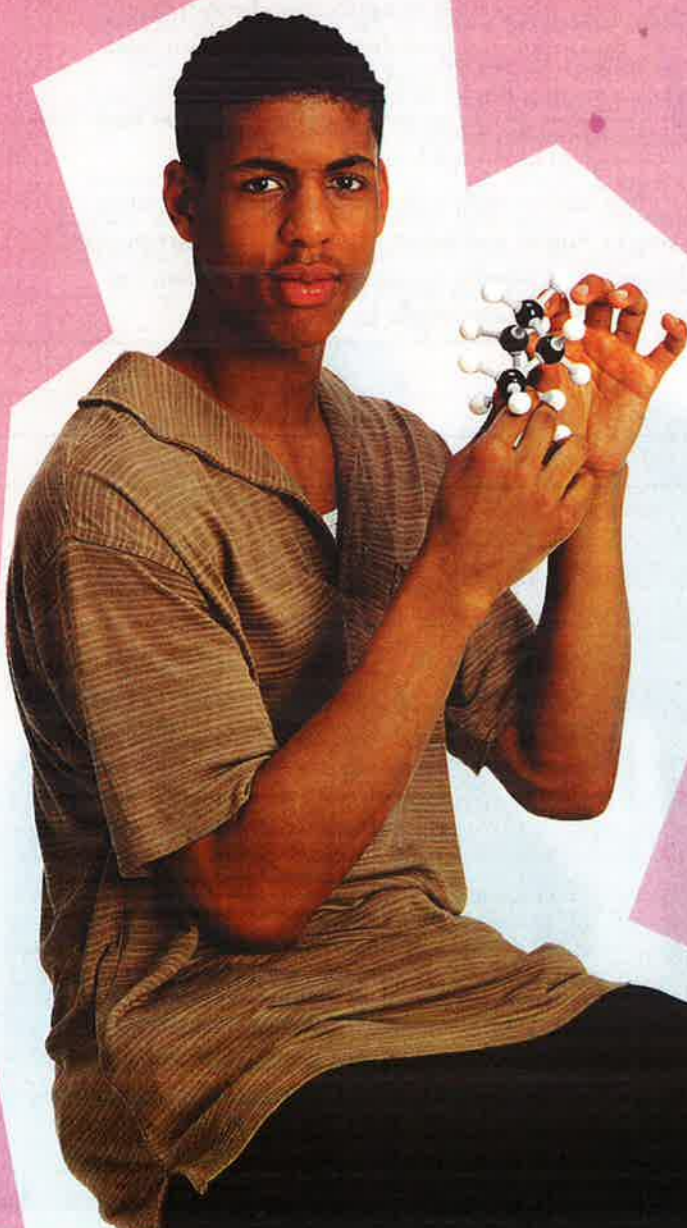


However please note the following exceptions where you should apply through UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service).

- Full-time degree, HND or HNC courses at the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC)
- Full-time degree courses at colleges which are academic partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). Phone the UHI Course Information Line on 0845 272 3600 for more information.

## UCAS (THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ADMISSIONS SERVICE)

UCAS processes application forms for all UK universities (except the Open University) and higher education institutions. For these institutions, you should apply online through Apply. UCAS sends information packs to schools on how to use Apply. Visit the UCAS website at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) for more information.



- Applications for 2013 entry should reach UCAS between mid September 2012 and 15 January 2013.
- Applications for Oxford or Cambridge universities or for courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or veterinary science should reach UCAS by 15 October 2012.

### WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

You can write to the colleges, phone them or visit their websites. You can ask for prospectuses or specific course information.

You can go along to college open days and local careers exhibitions. You may find that your school or college organises group visits to these events.

You can get more information from the PlanIT Plus website at [www.planitplus.net](http://www.planitplus.net)

Other useful sources of information on courses, colleges and careers include the books 'Careers in Scotland' and 'Further Education in Scotland' (published by Gateway). You can get copies from most Skills Development Scotland Centres and school careers libraries.

Careers libraries in schools, colleges and local Skills Development Scotland Centres also have prospectuses available for reference.

Remember that you can talk to your career adviser, guidance or pastoral care teacher or student adviser about which course is right for you.

### USEFUL ADDRESS

UCAS  
(Universities and Colleges Admissions Service)  
Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ  
Phone: 0871 468 0468  
E-mail: [enquiries@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ucas.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

# GOING TO COLLEGE

## WHAT'S ON OFFER?

At college you can:

- learn new skills
- train for a job before you go into it
- get a recognised qualification while in work or training
- take a step-by-step approach to getting your chosen qualification
- find out if you have the potential for more advanced courses
- get the qualifications you need to get into more advanced courses such as degrees
- develop your interests or skills in a particular area
- broaden your horizons and develop your full potential.

## WHAT CAN YOU LEARN?

Scotland's colleges offer courses in a huge range of subjects.

You can take general education courses like Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) units, National Qualifications such as Access, Intermediate and Higher courses, and even A Levels at some colleges. However, most college courses are job-related, such as business administration, hairdressing or graphic design.

You can go to college full time or part time. You can even study by distance learning for some courses, either at home, at work or elsewhere.

Most colleges also offer a programme of short courses and evening classes, some are leisure courses and some are job-related.

In many cases you can study in your own area as lots of colleges now have learning centres based in local communities. You may even be able to take some courses online.

## WHAT SORT OF QUALIFICATIONS COULD YOU TAKE?

Scotland's colleges offer a wide range of qualifications. Most of these are further education qualifications awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) including National Certificates (NCs), Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), Highers and Advanced Highers.

They also offer more advanced higher education qualifications including Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs). Some even offer degrees, usually in partnership with local universities. Here are some of the main types of qualifications on offer.

## NATIONAL UNITS

These are the building blocks which make up various qualifications. You can study for them singly or in groups.



## NATIONAL COURSES: NATIONAL CERTIFICATES (NCS) AND NATIONAL PROGRESSION AWARDS (NPAs)

These are usually made up of related groups of National Units and an external assessment. They are designed to prepare students for employment or further study. They normally take a year to complete and have no set entry requirements.

## SCOTTISH VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (SVQs)

SVQs are work-based qualifications that focus on job-related skills and knowledge. SVQs are available for most jobs at five levels - from Level 1 for routine jobs to Level 5 for complicated jobs.

You can study for a relevant SVQ in nearly all jobs in Scotland and will normally do the course part time while working. However, you can sometimes take a full time course.

Full time SVQs normally take one year but course lengths can be flexible. It can take more than a year to get more than one VQ level.

## HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATES (HNCs) AND CERTIFICATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION (CERTHEs)

Most HNCs are practical, job-related courses (at roughly first-year degree level). They normally take one year of full time study or two years of part time study. Some colleges offer 'Fast Track' HNCs that take only six months



to complete. HNCs normally lead onto more advanced courses such as HNDs or degrees, or employment.

There are very few CertHE courses. They take one year full-time and are usually the first year of a DipHE. Like DipHEs they are awarded by universities.

## HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMAS (HNDs) AND DIPLOMAS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (DIPHEs)

HNDs and DipHEs are more advanced courses (at roughly second-year degree level), and are usually job-related.

- HNDs take two years of full-time study or four years of part-time study. Some colleges offer 'Fast Track' HNDs that take only a year and six months to complete.
- DipHEs are available only at a few colleges. Most take two years to complete. Colleges offer DipHEs in association with a university, and the university awards the qualification.

Both HNDs and DipHEs normally lead onto degree-level study or employment.

## DEGREES

A few colleges also offer degree courses, for example, Adam Smith College and James Watt College, usually in conjunction with a university.

## WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU NEED TO GET IN?

That depends on the level and type of course! You would normally need:

- for NCs and SVQs levels 1 - 3, requirements vary from no formal qualifications to about four Standard Grades
- for HNCs, normally one to two Highers, plus extra Standard Grades
- for HNDs and DipHEs, normally one to three Highers, together with extra Standard Grades
- for a degree, three to four Highers, together with extra Standard Grades, though more often, for further education colleges, relevant Higher National qualifications.

Always check what individual colleges want so that you will have any specific subjects they need.

Entry requirements for adult learners are usually more flexible. Colleges will consider more than just academic qualifications, such as relevant work experience. Contact the individual colleges direct for more detailed information.

## WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

Student finance is complex and depends on a whole range of factors:

- the type and level of course you are aiming for
- your age and personal circumstances, the household income, your family situation.

The type of funding you might get will also vary:

- an Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- a bursary which is not repayable
- a loan which you have to pay back at some time in the future
- payment of tuition fees
- and, in some cases, a combination, of the above

The application process for the different types of student finance varies too. See the 'Funding your Studies' articles on PlanIT Plus for more information.

## WHAT OTHER TYPES OF SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE?

Colleges provide a range of student support services including help with:

- accommodation
- childcare
- finance
- learning support
- disabled access
- healthcare issues
- career guidance

Contact the individual colleges for detailed information.

## HOW DO YOU APPLY?

For most courses you apply direct to each college you are interested in. You can get an application form from the college, download a copy of the application form from their website, or you can apply online through most college websites. If you are still at school, you may find that the school has a supply of forms.

It's a good idea to apply early, before March for courses starting in August and before October for courses starting in January. It is possible to make a late application but remember that courses might be full.

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