

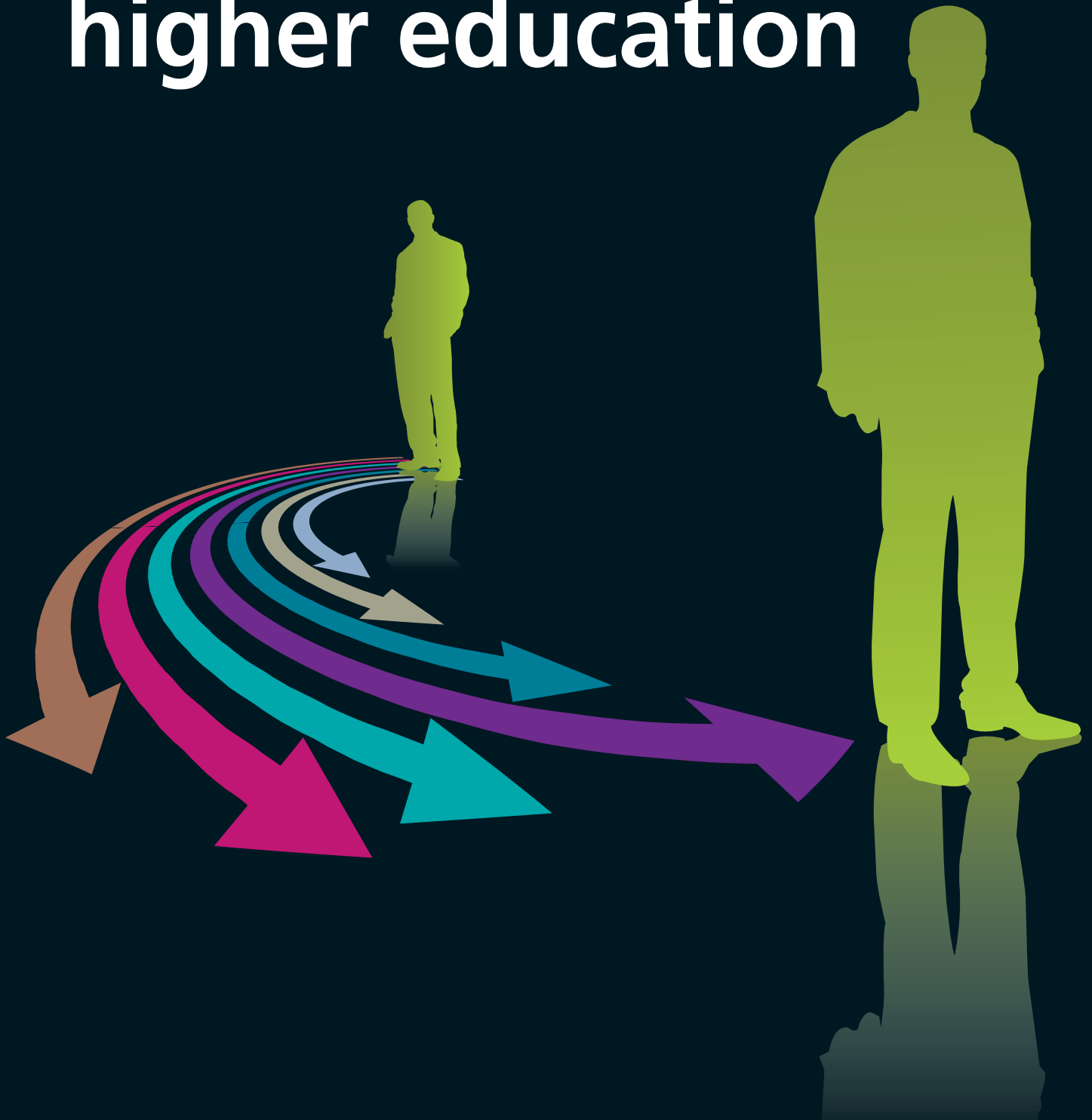


University of
Leicester

The Leading Edge

Tailored Education for Business Needs

A guide to higher education



What is higher education?



Higher education means a course or programme taken after secondary education which can be studied at university, higher education college, many further education colleges and in the workplace in the form of work based learning programmes.

Higher level learning develops the ability to reflect, analyse and understand information and then apply it. Learning at a lower level is generally more concerned with developing the 'how' and the skills to do a job.

Higher level learning also develops knowledge of 'how' but crucially it also develops understanding of 'why'. This understanding is needed in the workplace where people are required to be flexible, adaptable and think autonomously and innovatively.

Higher education develops important transferable skills, which can give employers the edge over competition and employees opportunities to progress in their chosen career paths.

To find out more contact **The Leading Edge** at leadingedge@le.ac.uk or on **0116 252 5926**

“

Performance at work has improved significantly as a result of our staff undertaking the Diploma in Management.

”

“

The course has helped me to make progress in a new career by giving me my first degree.

”

”

How is higher education studied?



Universities and colleges are becoming more responsive to varying demands from industry and now offer much more flexible methods of study. Many courses are designed so that the learner can progress at their own pace. Some are broken down into bite-sized chunks where a learner can step on or off whenever they choose to.

A lecture theatre or classroom is what most people imagine when they think about how higher education courses are taught but this is not the only way.

Distance learning makes it easier for learners to fit study time into their busy lifestyles but this mode does require a degree of self-discipline. It allows people to study in their own time rather than attending regular sessions at a university or college. Course materials are provided by post and/or online and can include podcasts or scripts of lectures, case studies and readings from books or journals.

E-learning is becoming more and more popular. It includes the use of web, CD-ROM or computer-based learning resources in the classroom, workplace or home, as well as online access to course activities such as group discussions and online assessment activities.

Blended learning combines face-to-face learning with a mixture of on-line activities. It takes the best of self-paced, instructor-led, distance and classroom delivery to improve instruction. Learners can be more stimulated and motivated than if using just one method of delivery.

Work-based or work-related learning is directly relevant to the workplace and relies upon a person's own experience. Learners will reflect on their current practice in the context of new theories and consider how their activity at work may be enhanced or improved in the light of their learning. Assignments can include real work related activity so that the employer can benefit from completion of projects linked to organisational performance.

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“

The University's flexible teaching methods and online support systems can help students to learn anywhere and anytime. ”

Levels and routes into higher education

This diagram shows the different levels of qualifications, how they compare and possible progression from one to the other.



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Higher education qualifications

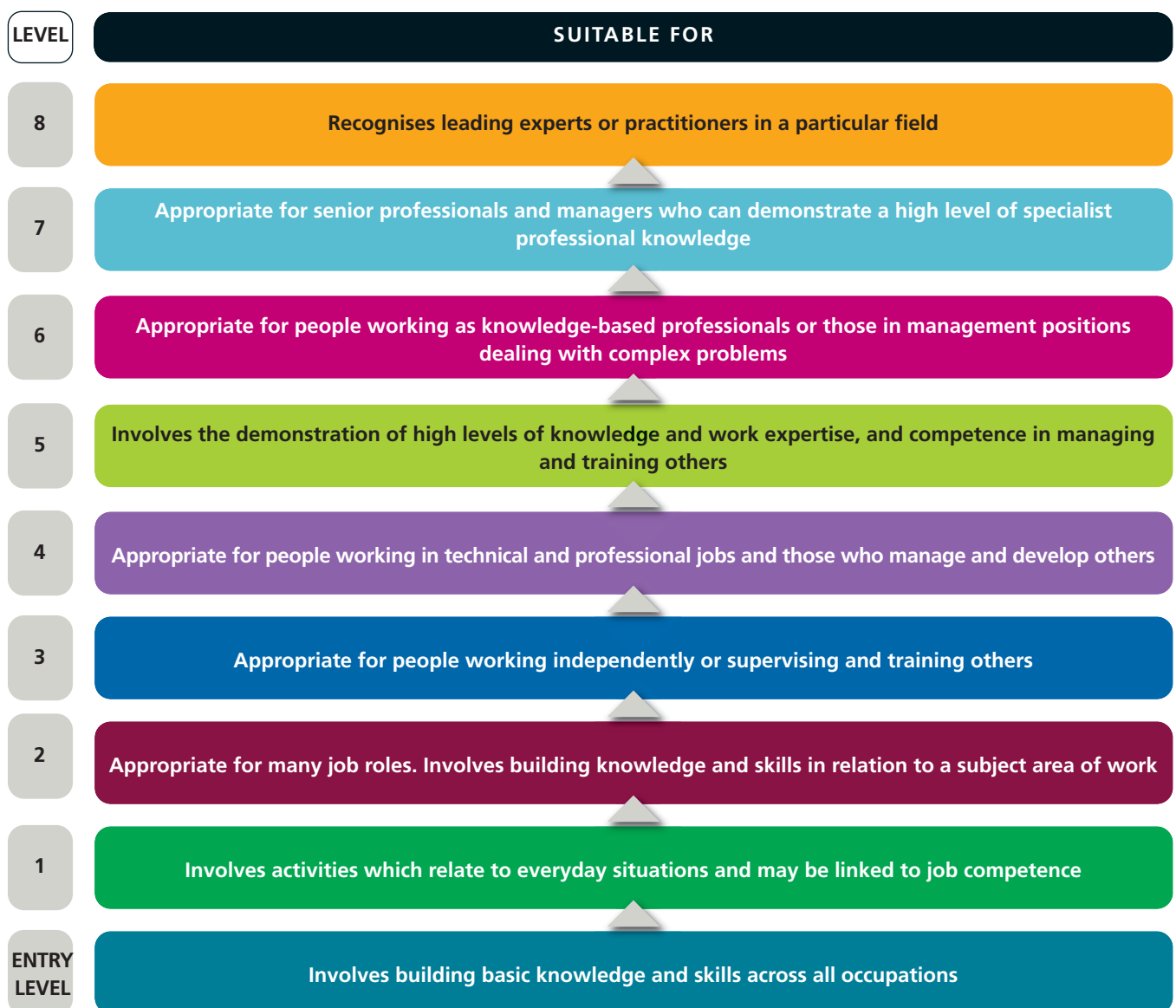
This diagram shows the different types of qualification; the level and credit* value against each particular qualification; the suggested length of time it takes to complete and a short description. (*One credit usually corresponds to 10 hours of theoretical or practical teaching, or its equivalent.)

Qualification	Level	Credits	How long does it take?	What is it?
PHD/Doctorate	8	University Doctorate	Typically three years, full time or extended	Develops new and creative approaches that extend or redefine existing knowledge or professional practice.
Masters e.g. MSc, MBA	7	University Masters 120 credits	One to two years	Highly developed and complex levels of knowledge, enabling learners to develop original responses to complicated and unpredictable problems and situations.
Post Graduate Diploma	7	University Masters 120 credits	One year or more	Develops learning into more subject focused specialist skills for direct application within a business.
Post Graduate Certificate	7	University Masters 60 credits	One year or more	Gives a thorough understanding of a subject and helps develop further analytical, intellectual and writing skills.
Top up from Foundation Degree	6	120-160 HE credits	One to two years	Continuing the learning turns a foundation degree into a full Bachelor's degree.
Bachelors Degree	6	360 HE credits	Three to four years	Gives a thorough understanding of a subject and develops the learner's analytical, intellectual and writing skills.
	5			
	4			
HND – Higher National Diploma	5	240 HE credits	Two to three years	Enables the learner to analyse and solve practical problems through the development of work-related solutions.
	4			
Foundation Degree	5	240 HE credits	Traditionally two years but fast track options are available in some subjects	Degree level qualifications that combine academic study with workplace learning.
	4			
Higher apprenticeship	5	120 to 240 HE credits	Traditionally two years	Lead to work-based learning qualifications such as NVQ Level 4 and sometimes foundation degrees.
	4			
HNC – Higher National Certificate	4	120 HE credits	One to two years	Provides work-related skills and knowledge.
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	4	120 HE credits	Traditionally one year	Develops a sound understanding and application of the principles in the required field of study.
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	120 HE credits	Traditionally one year	Provides a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and develops problem solving and communication skills.

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Which is the right course?

The diagram below gives a guide as to which course would suit employees depending on their level of responsibility and competence.



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Does higher education have to mean a qualification?



All qualifications are made up of credits which are units of value given to higher education teaching. One credit usually corresponds to ten hours of theoretical or practical teaching, or its equivalent. For example, a typical undergraduate degree usually consists of 360 credits, which is made up of a series of 15-30 credit modules. There are different levels of higher qualifications each with a set number of credits. If all credits are completed and assessed successfully then the relevant qualification is awarded.

Sometimes a shorter programme of study in the form of one or more stand-alone modules is preferred. If completed and assessed successfully, a 'transcript' can be awarded which allows the learner to keep the credits and use at a later date to gradually build up into a full qualification. This approach ensures that learning is relevant to the company's or the individual's needs and offers a more flexible option of study.

Accreditation of Prior Learning and Experience is where some higher education institutions will give prospective students recognition and formal credit for learning they have done in the past through study and work. There are numerous benefits to this. Companies can make savings as they won't have to train staff to develop skills and knowledge they already possess. Also, people will be attracted to companies where their previous experience and knowledge is valued.

Entry requirements will differ between courses and institutions. It is therefore advisable to get in touch with the institution in question to find out how, or if, relevant work experience can be taken into account.

Accreditation of in-house training can be done for organisations that deliver their own training but are looking for formal recognition and external verification of the quality and standard of this training. Real value can be added to the company's training programme and it can give staff an extra incentive to study as they have a chance to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

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“

Taking a stand-alone module is an ideal taster for someone who works full or part-time and who fancies going back in to Higher Education.

”

How to identify training needs in your organisation



Many universities and colleges can help companies identify training needs by carrying out a Training Needs Analysis (TNA). This is a health check on skills, talent and capabilities and will enable an organisation to:

- Assess the current skills levels of staff
- Quantify the total skills available to the organisation
- Identify the skills required to take the business forward
- Prioritise the learning needs that are identified
- Analyse the gap between the organisation's current skills resources and future skills needs
- Plan for bridging that gap with appropriate training.

When a TNA is performed, the full range of training available such as professional and personal training, and process-related skills will be considered. In addition, the different levels at which training can occur across different areas of the organisation will be taken into account. It also makes good business sense to carry out a full cost/benefit analysis for each training need that has been identified.

A TNA can be carried out at a number of different levels: for the organisation as a whole; for a particular department, project or area of work; for individual employees. The analyses at these three levels should be considered all together as it is important to ensure that any training delivered is aligned to the organisation's overall strategy.

Once current skills have been assessed the university or college can then help an organisation to produce an action plan and timetable so that the skills to be enhanced are mapped out against suitable and appropriate development programmes. It is best to talk to the particular institution you are considering working with to find out the process they would employ for identifying and satisfying training needs.

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“As a result of doing a Training Needs Analysis, overall staff morale and attitude have improved noticeably and we're confident that this will decrease staff turnover.”



Higher education - company benefits



Encouraging and supporting staff to progress in their career and education can lead to many business benefits including:

- Improved motivation and commitment to the company
- Employees develop better communication, team working and problem solving skills
- Organisations being able to address any skills gaps
- Learners undertaking live, problem-based projects aimed at resolving real issues and situations
- Increased confidence in applying skills and knowledge and taking on new tasks and being able to innovate
- Knowledge acquired being cascaded to other colleagues
- Employees gaining a broader understanding of job and industry
- Helping the business compete and secure new contracts
- Increased performance and added value
- Ability to bring current and relevant knowledge to the company
- Flexible study options ensuring learning fits around work
- Options for customised training designed to meet specific needs

“ *We now have an employee talent development programme that gives a commercial understanding of our industry.*



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Our managers are now more productive and solution driven and using their initiative more.



Higher education - employee benefits



Progressing onto higher level learning can provide a number of benefits to the learner:

- Opportunity to gain higher level skills whilst working
- Increase in relevant subject knowledge and an understanding of theories linked to workplace practices
- Increased confidence, self esteem and initiative
- Opportunity to develop a range of transferable skills e.g. group working, communication and team leadership
- Opportunities to share experiences and working practices and learn from others
- Opportunity to develop skills such as critical reasoning and evidence-based evaluation
- Chance to work on real, problem-based projects to contribute to increased organisational performance
- Increased job satisfaction and motivation

“*Enjoying studying, feeling more confident, progressing in my career and support from my employer motivated me to complete the Foundation Degree.*”

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“*I wanted a new challenge, something to develop my knowledge and help my career.*”

Impact assessment/ Return on Investment



Impact assessment can give a real insight into how training makes a difference to an organisation. It can provide a systematic process of assessing the way learning and behaviours developed during a training programme are being applied at an operational level and are bringing about measurable changes in staff and company performance.

Measuring impact assessment can help an organisation validate training as a business tool and justify associated costs. It can also assist in improving the design of training programmes and in the selection of appropriate training methods.

Many organisations plough vast amounts of money and time into workplace learning but do not then measure how effective and beneficial the training intervention has been. The effectiveness of a course should really depend on the actual utilisation and application in the workplace of what people learned during the programme. An end of course evaluation form is not a sufficient measure. Neither should it be simply assumed that any business change is attributable to the training intervention in question.

There are different established and proven approaches for measuring business impact from learning and development. The data used can be both qualitative and quantitative. Certain approaches emphasise measures of direct cost recovery through direct revenue generation following training, whilst others take a more holistic approach, focusing on more easily measured indicators of impact and potential financial benefit.

It is recommended that any investment in training should be aligned with an identified business need. This should then be accompanied by an embedded process in which benefits and the return on that investment (ROI) are estimated at the start or prior to the programme and then measured and assessed in a systematic way during and after the programme.

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“*We’ve been able to link the learning to the benefits we are gaining within the company.*”



Facts and figures



Ranked 12th in the Guardian University Guide 2011, Leicester benefits from a growing reputation for **world-changing research and inspirational teaching.**

As a member of the 1994 Group of internationally renowned universities engaged in leading-edge research and high quality teaching, our research feeds directly into our teaching, ensuring our students learn from **cutting-edge developments** as they occur and develop the knowledge and skills to bring a **new perspective** to an organisation.

The **quality of our teaching is high** and, amongst mainstream universities, our students are the most satisfied in England. In 2009 91% of full-time students were satisfied with their programme. The Sunday Times described Leicester as "top... amongst mainstream multi-faculty universities for student satisfaction".

As well as developing academic knowledge and skills, our students also benefit from **fantastic support** from within and beyond their department of study. This is the reason we won the Times Higher Education's award for Outstanding Student Support.

To find out more contact

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