

Choosing a course, university or college in Buckinghamshire

There is a wide range of colleges and universities in Buckinghamshire. Colleges also deliver university level courses, part time or full time, so you may be able to study more locally than you think. Whether you are returning to work after a break, wanting to progress in your present career, or looking for a career change, you'll find work-related and work-based learning opportunities in Buckinghamshire.

What is the most important factor for you?

Some people know where they want to study, and then choose a course from what's on offer. Others know that they want a particular qualification and need to investigate where that is being offered.

Students choose a course for a variety of reasons:

- you may have a specific career or job in mind
- you may have a broad range of interests and want to keep your options fairly open
- you know what you're good at and you're looking for something that will use those gifts and aptitudes
- Whatever your starting point, the value of a vocational or work-related course is to equip you with the knowledge and skills relevant to your level of work and give you a recognised qualification.

Where can you find the relevant information?

- If you know that you want to do a Foundation degree you can search by subject or institution at:
www.foundation-degrees-in-the-southeast.org.uk
- Attend an Open Day to find out more about individual institutions and courses. For dates of Open Days go to:
www.opendays.com
- Find out how to apply and request a prospectus online. For some courses, including foundation degrees, you can apply direct to the institution, for others you need to go through UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service at:
www.ucas.com.

How do you choose the right course for your situation - what do you need to find out from the individual institutions?

Here are some suggestions to help you make the right decision:

1. Research your chosen career area carefully. Visit a careers library, or search online to make sure you will gain the right qualification for what you want to do. For two good places to start researching online try:
www.learning-opportunities.org.uk/career-matters
www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk

2. Find out which colleges you can get to and then read the prospectuses or look at their websites to find out what would be a suitable course for you to start with, whether you can meet the entry requirements (not all courses ask for formal entry qualifications), what qualification you would gain and how long it would take.
3. Find out if you might need to have an interview, take a test or maybe provide examples of your work. You are sure to have a form to fill in so think about who to ask if you need a reference.
4. Identify where the course is being delivered especially if the institution has more than one site or campus. Find out how easy it will be to get there and what the cost of travel is likely to be. If you plan to drive, check the parking provision.
5. If you're interested in doing a Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) or Foundation degree, information about everything available in the southeast and includes direct links to the colleges and universities is online at: www.foundation-degrees-in-the-southeast.org.uk
6. Are they asking for any work-related experience, IT skills, or perhaps CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) clearance?
7. Talk to employers and to students who are a stage or two ahead of you.
8. Make good use of an Open Day to speak with tutors and see the facilities. For dates of Open days go to: www.opendays.com
9. Think about what style of study would suit you best: full time or part time, in the workplace, in college or by distance learning? Find out how courses are structured and assessed.
10. Check the price of the course, learning materials (books and equipment), and travel. The Learning Opportunities finance information sheet will help you consider what costs are involved. If some employment is included be sure you know what salary is being offered. Find out whether you can get help from your employer.
11. Check things like computer facilities, learning support and easy access. This information is available on individual college and university websites.

Universities and colleges in Buckinghamshire offering higher education courses

University of Buckingham

Hunter Street, Buckingham, MK18 1EG

T: 01280 814080

F: 01280 822245

E: info@buckingham.ac.uk

W: www.buckingham.ac.uk

Bucks New University

Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 2JZ

T: 0800 0565660 (prospectus)

T: 01494 522141 (general)

F: 01494 524392

E: advice@bucks.ac.uk

W: www.bucks.ac.uk

Amersham & Wycombe College

Amersham Campus Stanley Hill, Amersham, HP7 9HN

T: 01494 585555 and 0800 614016

F: 01494 585566

E: prospectus@amersham.ac.uk

W: www.amersham.ac.uk

Amersham & Wycombe College**Chesham Campus**

T: 01494 585555

High Wycombe

T: 01494 585555

Aylesbury College

Oxford Road, Aylesbury, HP21 8PD

T: 01296 588588

F: 01296 588589

E: customerservices@aylesbury.ac.uk

W: www.aylesbury.ac.uk

Milton Keynes College

Woughton Campus, Chaffron Way, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5LP

T: 01908 684444

F: 01908 684399

E: info@mkcollege.ac.uk

W: www.mkcollege.ac.uk

Open and distance learning**The Open University**

PO Box 197, Milton Keynes, MK7 6BJ

T: 0845 300 60 90

E: General-Enquiries@open.ac.uk

W: www.open.ac.uk

Other useful websites

www.hotcourses.com

www.nusonline.co.uk

www.unistats.com