



LIMAVADY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Higher Education

SEPTEMBER 2026 – YEAR 14



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Career Planning Pathways

HLAs / Degree Apprenticeships

Foundation Degrees

University UCAS / CAO

Finance Scholarships Bursaries

Events this year



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Personal Statement Draft - Friday 18th Sept

Meet with Referee - 3:30pm Tues 22nd Sept (bring a copy of Personal Statement)

Predicted Grades Completed - Fri 25th Sept

UCAS Early Applications Deadline - 15th October (school Fri 2nd October)

Mock Interview Evening - Tues 20th October

UCAS Applications Deadline - 13th January 2027 (school's deadline 27th November)



Events this Year

University Road Show - Thursday 27th August

Personal Statement workshop Stirling University - Friday 11th September

CAO Talk: Friday 6th November

QUB Medicine talk - Friday 18th September

Personal economics workshop - 7th December 2026

Workplus Higher Level Apprenticeship talk - February TBC

MEGA degree apprenticeships Talk - January / February TBC

How to use AI more effectively- February TBC



Career Planning

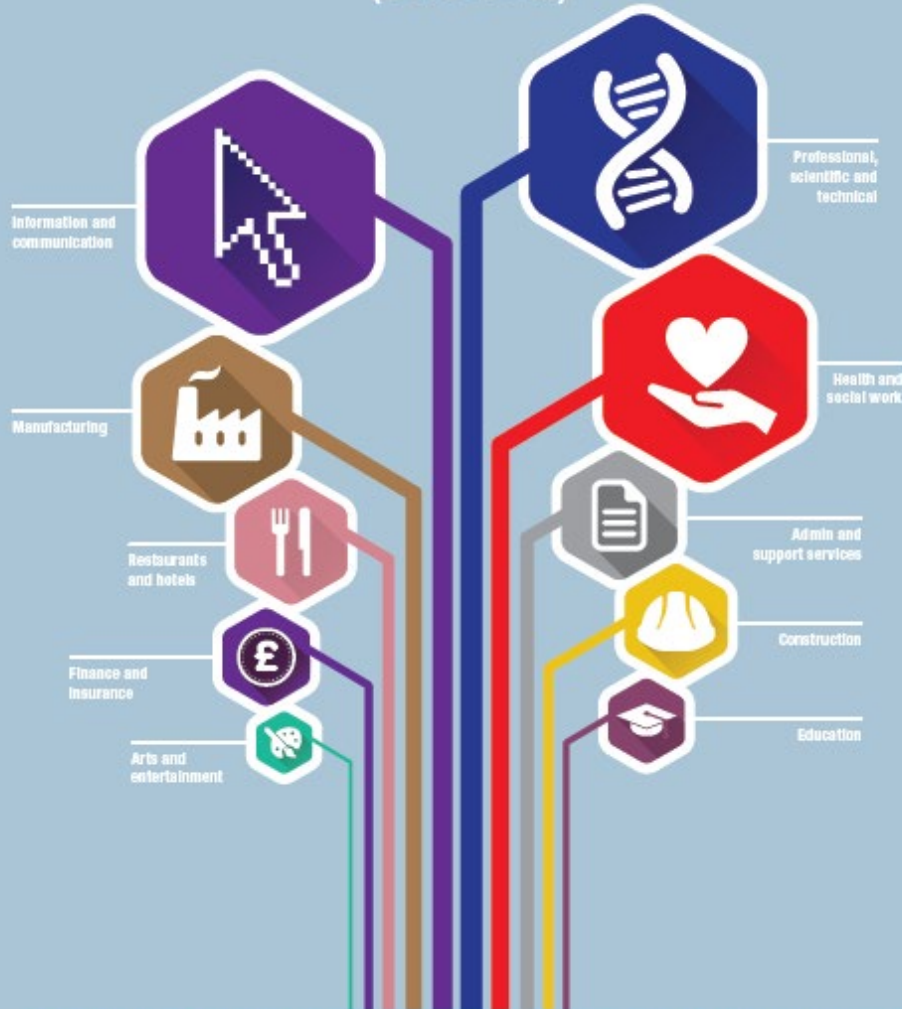
“What Next?”

- Higher Education
- Work/Training – Higher Level Apprenticeships
www.apprenticeshipsni.info
- Gap year (www.yearoutgroup.org)
- Employment



EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Top 10 growth sectors (2018-2028)



There will be growth opportunities for all skills levels across a range of sectors - the focus will be predominantly on higher level skills.



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- Professional, Scientific and Technical
- Information and Communication
- Health and Social Work
- Manufacturing
- Admin and Support Services
- Restaurants and Hotels
- Construction
- Finance and Insurance
- Education
- Arts and Entertainment

The Right Choice



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- We believe that informed, sensible and realistic choices are invariably made over a long period of time.
- Be assured the proactive, self-reliant student is best placed to succeed in the 21st century.





Please remember....

Many sixth formers do not know what they want to do eventually; that's the norm.

Approximately 40% of all graduate careers are not related to the subject studied at university.

1. Outstanding journalists are far more likely to have read English Literature, History or Politics than Journalism at university.
2. Lawyers can study a subject they're passionate about, get a very good degree and then "convert to law".
3. Chemists can become City bankers and politicians

What is more important than the subject studied?



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Class of degree;

Ability, initiative and determination;

Internships/work placements/

Volunteering;

University references

ALSO REMEMBER



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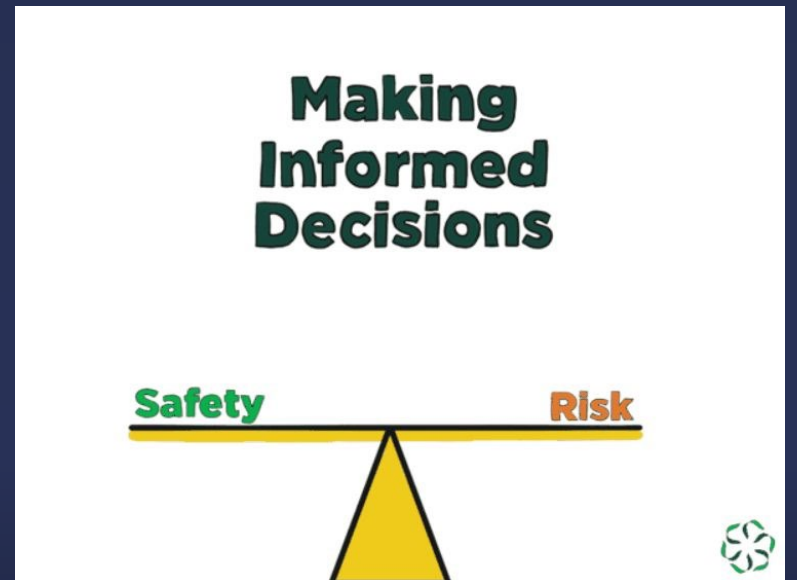
- ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS YEAR.....
- GET THE GRADES AND THEY CAN DO ALMOST ANYTHING!

Informed Choices



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Justify your choice of course and institution.





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Pathways

Good reasons not to go to university.....



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- If they get a job the moment they leave school they'll make money now and not be in debt.
- A degree may be completely irrelevant to their ambitions
- If they are a good employee they'll have a head start on the career ladder. There are plenty of good role models.
- Some management trainee programmes and apprenticeships for 18+ students are excellent
- They may have had enough with education, essays exams...

<https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/alternatives-higher-education>



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MY-SCHOOL UCAS - IOS Career 2026 Year 14 UCAS Alternative Options Entry level Early CAO opening date Early Careers | Deloitte BrightSparks Deloitte BrightSparks Early Careers Program

ucas.com/discover/where-start/alternatives-higher-education

Managed bookmarks Facebook Video Downloader

UCAS Discover Applying Money & student life International

Search Heart User Sign in

Discover > Where to start > Alternatives to higher education

Clearing 2026



Alternatives to higher education

If you're undecided about uni or your plans have changed, there are other options after secondary education, such as apprenticeships, gap years, overseas study, and more. This page explains university alternatives.

Apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships give you the chance to earn while you learn and gain a qualification. They're a good way to gain the skills and experience you need for many careers. Traineeships prepare you for the future world of work. They're tailored to your needs and provide you with the experience to get an apprenticeship or job.

[More about apprenticeships](#)



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APPRENTICESHIP



APPLICANT



TRAINING



WORK EXPERIENCE



SKILLS



CAREER



PROFESSION

Higher Level
Apprenticeships HLAs

Degree
Apprenticeships

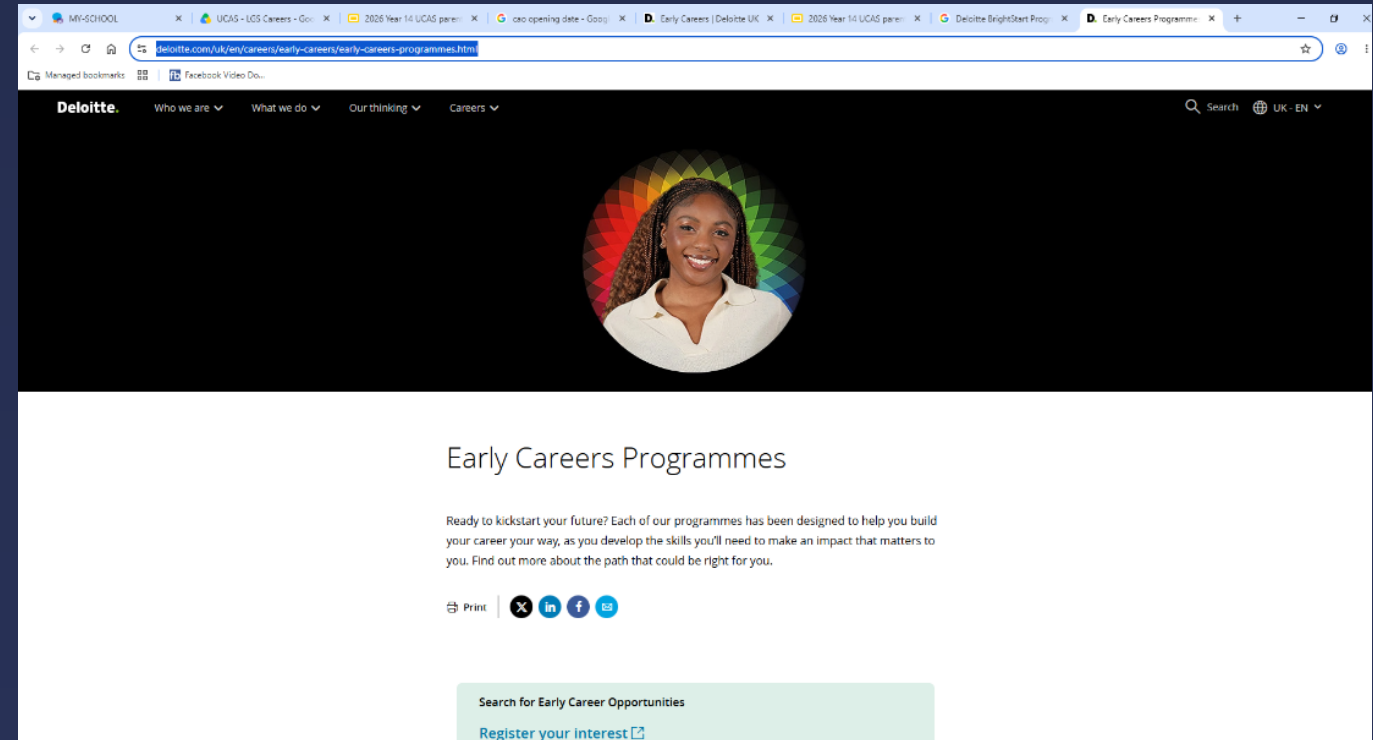
<https://www.deloitte.com/uk/en/careers/early-careers/early-careers-programmes.html>



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Deloitte Early Careers Programmes

Consultancy to Technology
Higher Level Apprenticeship
Earn while you learn
Professional qualification
Started in world of work
entry requirements 104 UCAS points
(BCC) 5 GCSEs including Maths and English
3-5 years



Information evening in Belfast - tbc

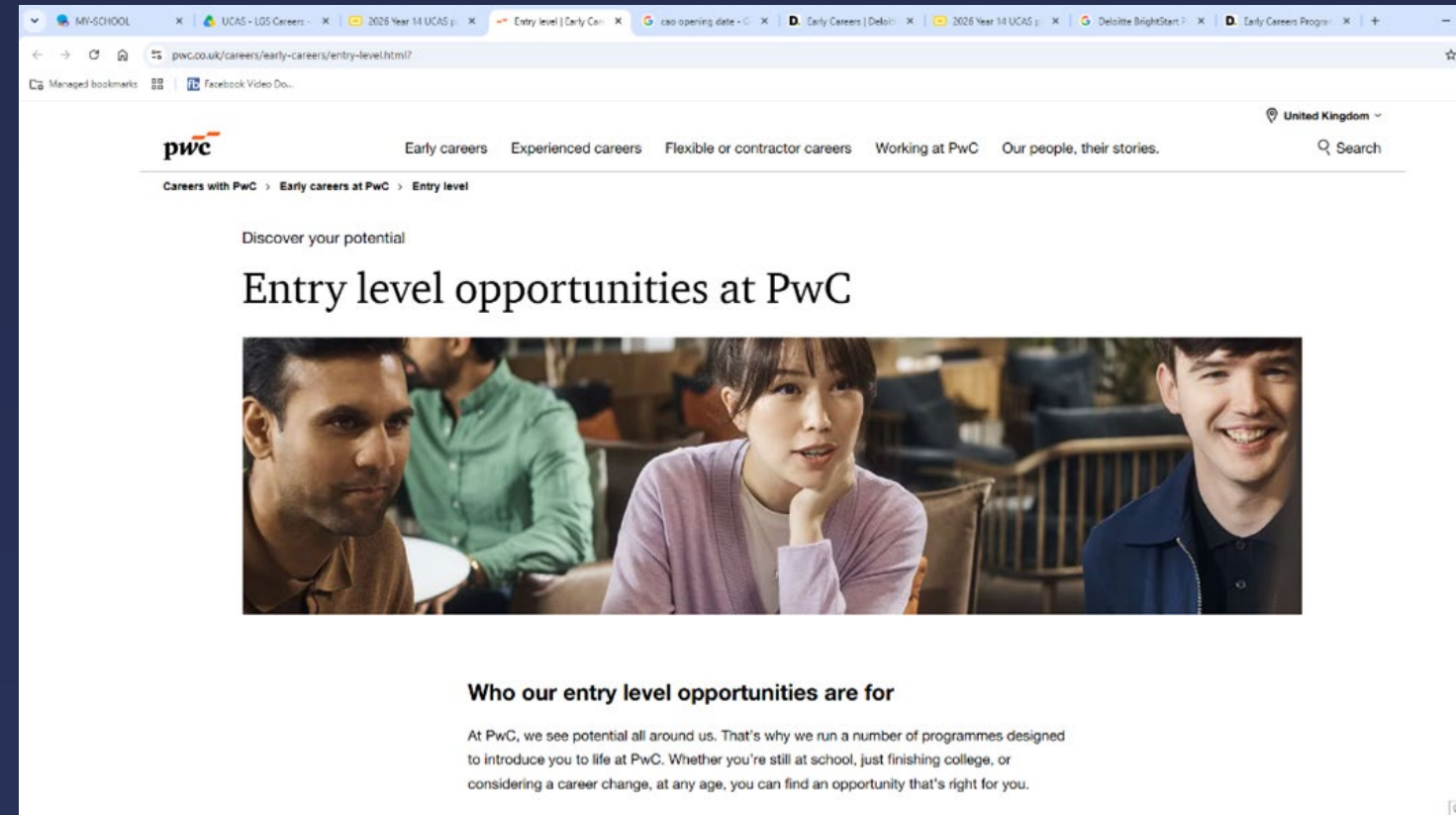
<https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/early-careers/our-programmes/join-us-from-school.html>



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Accounting, Technology, Business

- Full Time school leavers programme
- Real client work
- formal training
- studying towards qualifications
- earn a competitive salary

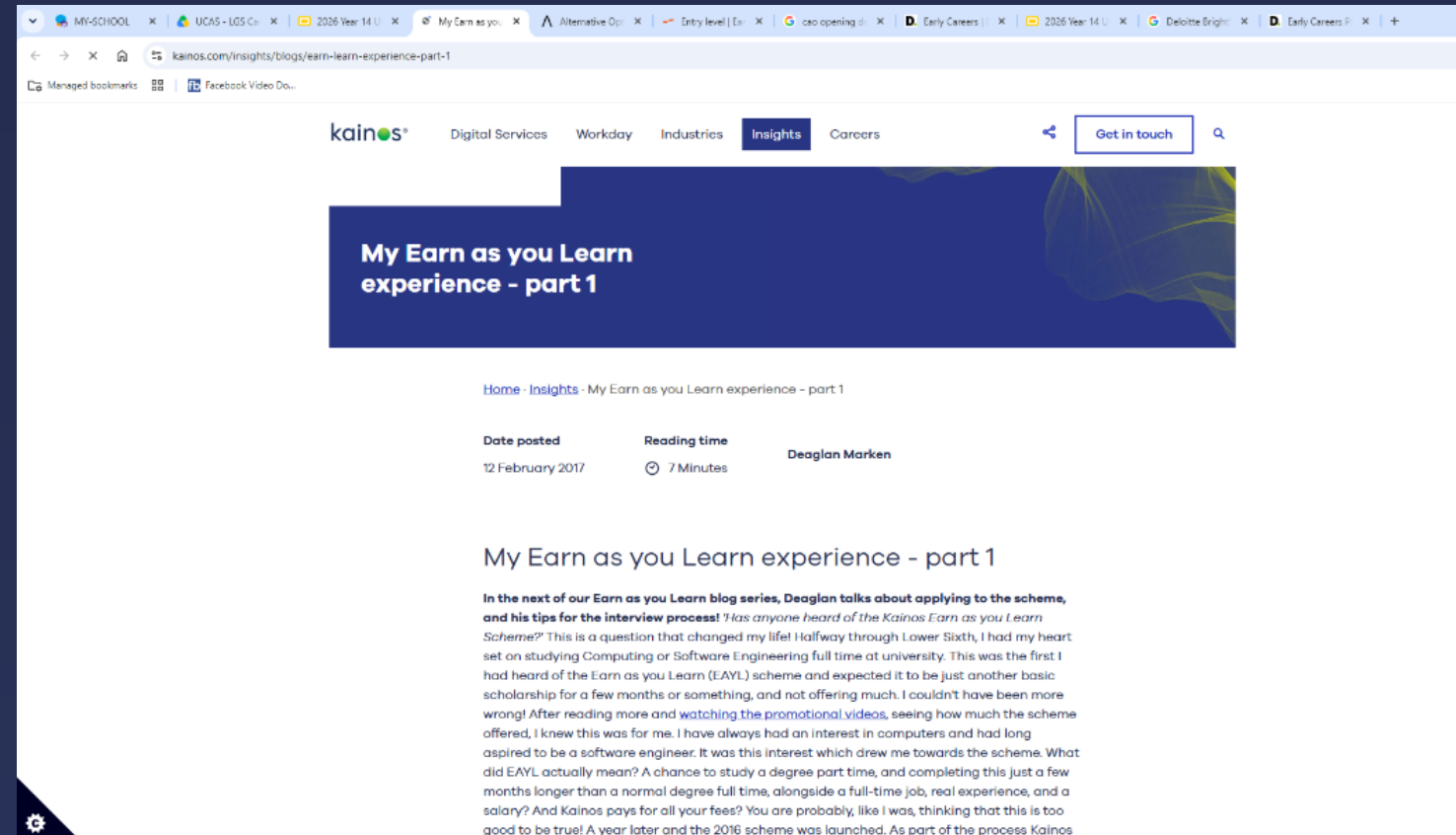


<https://www.kainos.com/insights/blogs/earn-learn-experience-part-1>



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- Digital Services
- Earn as you learn
- Computing systems degree apprenticeship scheme
- Graduate Programme 18 months
- Placement Scheme 1 year, secure permanent job before starting final year university.



Belfast Metropolitan College

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/apprenticeships/higher-level-apprenticeships/>

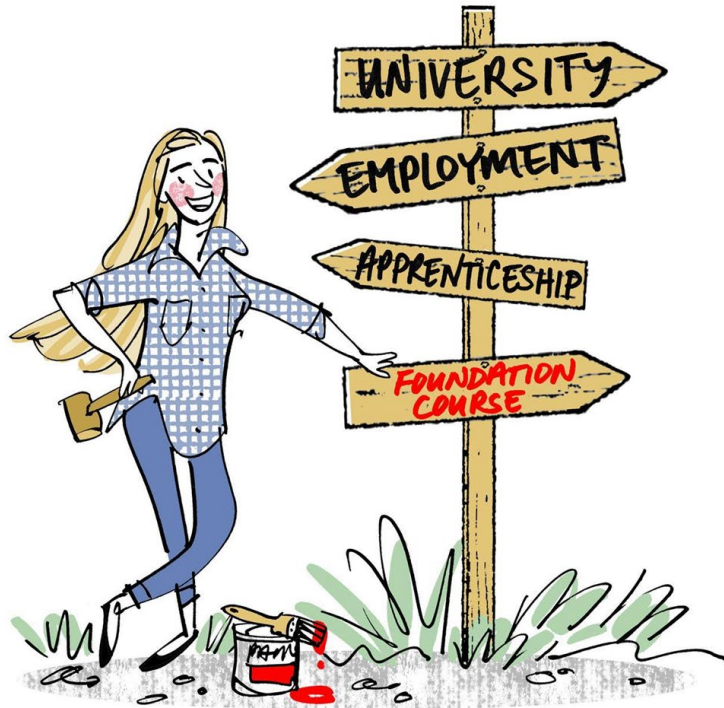


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The screenshot shows a web browser with multiple tabs open. The active tab is 'Higher Level Apprenticeships' on the website [belfastmet.ac.uk/apprenticeships/higher-level-apprenticeships](https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/apprenticeships/higher-level-apprenticeships). The website has a dark blue header with the 'belfast met' logo on the left and navigation links: 'About Us', 'Job Opportunities', 'Media Centre', and 'Contact Us'. On the right of the header are search and login icons, and a 'Log In | Helpful Tools' dropdown. Below the header is a dark blue navigation bar with links: 'Full-time', 'Part-time', 'Apprenticeships & Traineeships' (highlighted), 'Business', and 'Life at Belfast Met'. A search bar with the text 'Find Your Course' and filters for 'Full-time' and 'Part-time' is located below the navigation bar. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Apprenticeships / Higher Level Apprenticeships'. Below this is a horizontal menu with tabs: 'Higher Level Apprenticeships' (selected), 'Apprenticeships', 'Traineeships', 'IT Apprenticeships', and 'Employ An Apprentice'. The content area lists various apprenticeship sectors: Accounting, Business & Management, Childhood Studies and Playwork, Computing & IT, Construction, Hospitality & Catering, Marketing, and Travel, Tourism, Aviation & Events. A link 'Click here for further information on Higher Level Apprenticeships >' is provided. The page title is 'Higher Level Apprenticeships'. The text describes the program as a new and exciting employed pathway for learners to gain professionally recognised qualifications at level 4 and level 5 whilst actively working in paid employment with partner employers. It mentions that Belfast Met proactively works with national, regional and local employers to develop partnerships to provide the level of mentoring and support to offer learners the opportunity to undertake a Higher Level Apprenticeship. The entry requirements for the Higher Level Apprenticeships target both those with A Level qualifications who wish to explore a different learning journey and provides a valuable upskilling opportunity for current employees seeking to develop new skills. Each programme has varied entry



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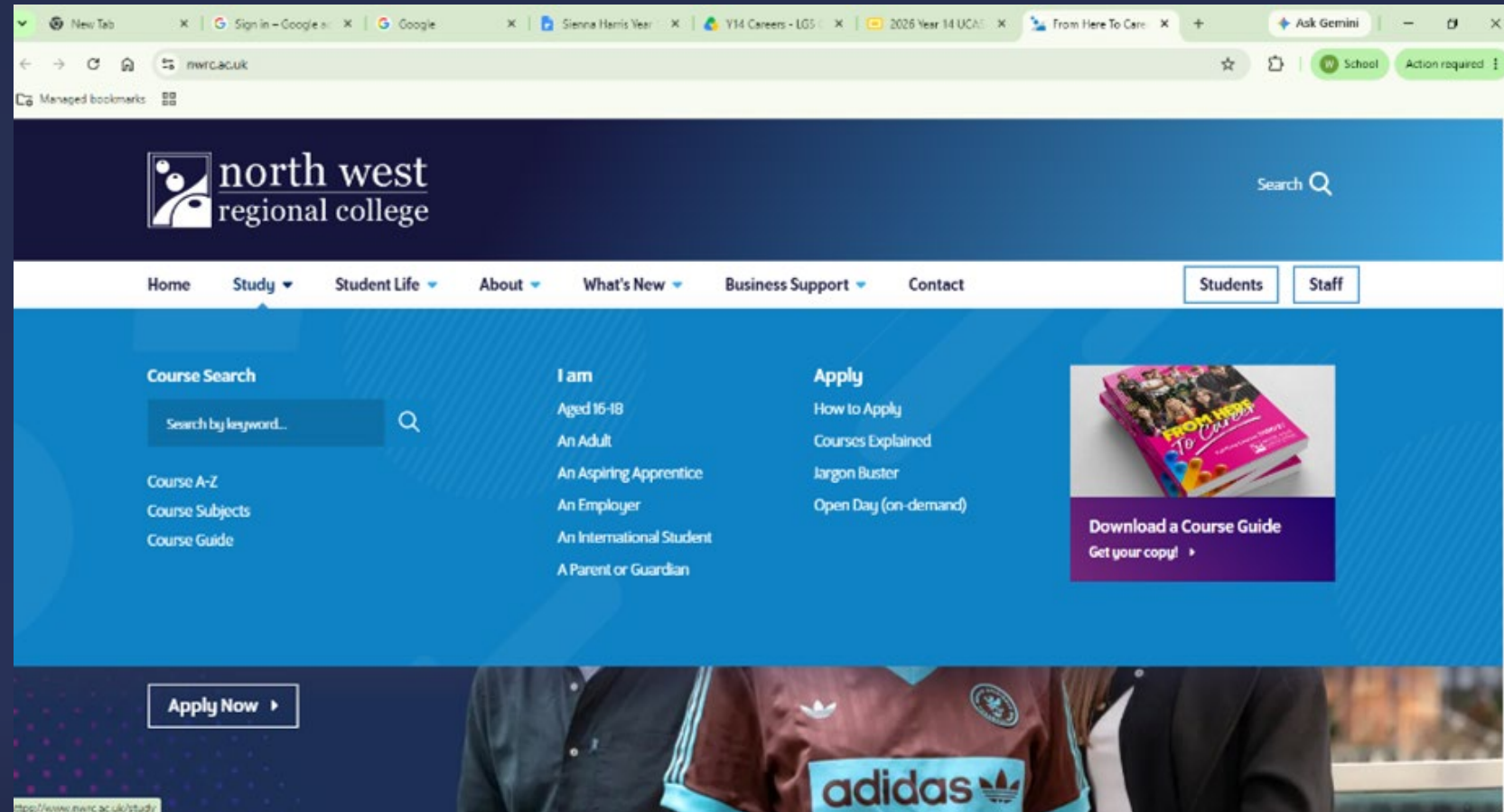
Foundation
Degree

Contingency Plan



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<https://www.nwrc.ac.uk/>



Belfast Metropolitan College

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/courses/?keyword=foundation%20degrees>



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The screenshot shows the Belfast Metropolitan College website with the search results for 'foundation degrees'. The page features a dark blue header with the college logo and navigation links. A search bar in the header contains the text 'foundation degrees'. Below the header, the search results are displayed, showing 20 courses found. The first two results are highlighted in blue boxes and feature the Ulster University logo.

Filters

- Type
 - ☐ Clearing
- Study Mode
 - ☐ Full Time
 - ☐ Part Time
- Level of Study
 - ☐ Higher Education
 - ☐ Further Education
 - ☐ Level 9
 - ☐ Level 7
 - ☐ Level 6
 - ☐ Level 5
 - ☐ Level 4

20 courses found

Clearing Course

Foundation Science Degree Accounting
Validated by Ulster University
P00005-AA - 26/28
Titanic Quarter Full Time Higher Education

Foundation Degree Architectural Technology
Validated by Ulster University
P00196-AA - 26/28
Millfield Full Time Higher Education

Level 3

• Queen's University Belfast (QUB)



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Students enrolled on a Belfast Met course run in collaboration with QUB will also have a number of benefits such as access to the library and computers centres, membership of the sports facilities, clubs and societies.

QUB Courses:

- Foundation Degree in Biological Sciences Foundation Degree in
- Mechanical Engineering
- Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies
- Foundation Degree in Physical Education and Sport



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University

<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/>



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 **UniGuide**

Find a course ▾ Where to study ▾ Get advice ▾ [Log in](#) 0

What to study, where to go and how to get there

Courses Universities Advice

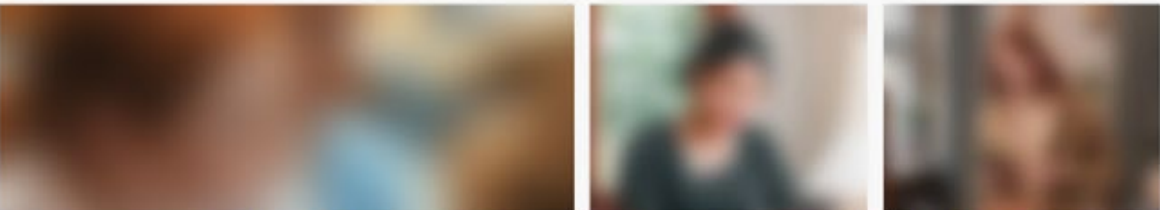
Course name eg psychology Location: city, town or county

[Search](#)

Your journey to uni starts here

We'll keep you on track with the right advice, when you need it

[Browse all advice](#)



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University allows your young person to....



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- Further particular academic interests
- Develop new skills and personal qualities – independence, self-reliance, adaptability and the ability to communicate effectively
- Obtain a better job
- Some professions have been graduate only. For others a Higher Education qualification is increasingly becoming the norm.
- Graduates experience quicker promotion and earn more money.
- Delay the decision for a few years.

IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER WANTS TO STAY IN N.IRELAND THERE ARE NOT TOO MANY OPTIONS.....READ EACH PROSPECTUS/WEBSITE AND DECIDE ON THE COURSE!!

- Grades will determine. You must stress this to students.
- Does a student need to be doing 4 subjects? If grades drop to AABB, the offer of AAA will not be met: rejection/more difficult to get that place.
- What contingency plans do they have in place?



UCAS Application

- We want all students to complete the UCAS application form. They may not submit it but it should be completed.
- The form will prove very useful in the future if they are applying for jobs, courses etc.
- The Personal Statement form must be “completed” by the Friday 18th September in preparation for the Ucas reference meeting.
- Early applicants for Medicine, Dentistry etc should have their application completed by Friday 2nd October.



Decision Time

- What to Study?
- Where to Study?
- How to Apply?
- What about Finance?





What to Study?

- Something they have done before?

They enjoy it, know what it involves and they want to study it in more depth

- Something vocational?

They have very clear career plans ie they know that they want to be a doctor, vet, dentist

- Something completely different

Philosophy, Archaeology

STEM Courses



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- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.
Government is keen that more young people take courses in these disciplines. Certainly the job prospects with these subjects are better and are expected to improve in the future. There are also more bursaries available in these subjects.



Length of Course

- Normal Degree – 3 years
4 years in Scotland – offers more flexibility studying 3 subjects in 1st year
- Medicine/Dentistry – 5 years+
- Sandwich Courses – periods of paid work between periods of study (4 years).
- Languages – year abroad.
- Accountancy, Biomedical Sciences, Physio. etc – Check accreditation/exemptions from professional examinations.



Beware....

- An astounding 20% of students drop out in their first year at university. Top reasons
- Course was not what I expected/wanted
- Financial Problems
- Lack of support from university
- Course too difficult
- Feeling isolated and lonely
- But the most common reason? They were in the wrong place at the wrong time, for them.
- Your child must feel right about both the course and the university.

****It is important to attend open days if possible****



Choosing the Right Course

- Interest/enthusiasm for subject area
- Entry requirements
- Type of course/teaching style
- Subject and course content
- Assessment
- Opportunities for placements/work related skills
- Professional accreditation
- Career prospects





How do They Apply?

- UCAS
 1. Five Courses
 2. Personal Statement
 3. Forecast Grades
 4. Reference
 5. Application Fee **£34.50** (FSM free)
 6. Internet Application





Reference

Sources of information?

- Subject teachers
- School Records
- Work Experience Reference

EARLY APPLICATION IS ADVISED



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All students applying to University
are advised to make early
application.





Required Tests

- It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they are registered for OXBRIDGE TESTS, UCAT, HPAT, MSAT and LNAT.
- They need to arrange a chat with myself or Mrs Skuce. Most have been given information and told to visit the websites!



PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Opportunity to influence admissions tutors
- Opportunity to explain their motivation
- Approximately 500 words (4000 characters)
- Avoid waffle
- Several drafts required
- Complete final draft by
Monday 28th September
- May form basis of interview questions



NEW Personal Statement Structure



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1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?
2. How have your qualifications and studies helped prepare you for this course?
3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences helpful?



Statement should include..

- Course Choice – reasons and interest in subject. May fill up to two thirds of the finished statement. Evidence that they understand what they are applying for and have thoroughly researched it:
 - Books they have read?
 - Work experience?
- Current Studies – interests, enjoyment. Show what a keen and committed student they are.
- About themselves – have they attended taster courses, open days, lectures? Responsibilities, interests, extra-curricular etc.



Then What?

Considered by each university and response is:

1. Conditional offer made
2. Rejected
3. Unconditional offer

- Offers made on tariff points or grades
- UCAS sends each decision to applicants via the UCAS Hub.



How many UCAS Points do I have?

Use the following to calculate how your AS and A Level grades are converted into UCAS Points:

AS Level	A Level	UCAS Points
–	A*	56
–	A	48
–	B	40
–	C	32
–	D	24
A	–	20
B	E	16
C	–	12
D	–	10
E	–	6



Extended Certificate	Certificate	AS level	A level	UCAS tariff points
D*			A*	56
D			A	48
			B	40
M			C	32
	D*			28
	D		D	24
		A		20
P	M	B	E	16
		C		12
		D		10
	P			8
		E		6

BTEC conversion to UCAS points

In applications submitted for 2026 admissions onwards, the new Level 3 BTEC Nationals 2025 (AAQs) will qualify for the following UCAS points.

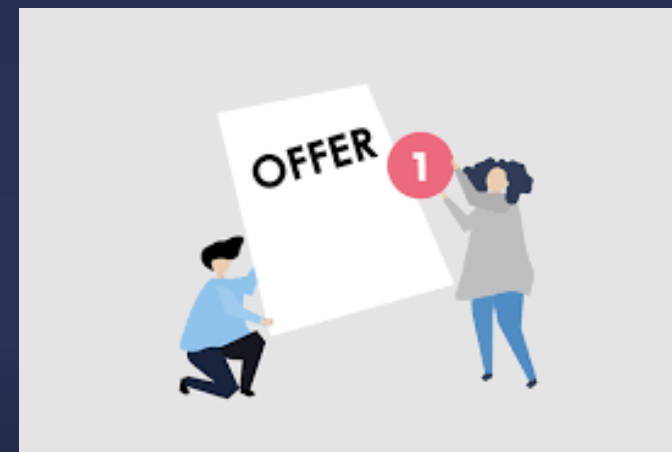


And Then?

Student selects two offers

1. Firm Offer
2. Insurance (should be lower grades)

- A two-way contract



UCAS Extra – before results (Feb-early July)

Examination results decide all
Clearing



How can you support the application process?



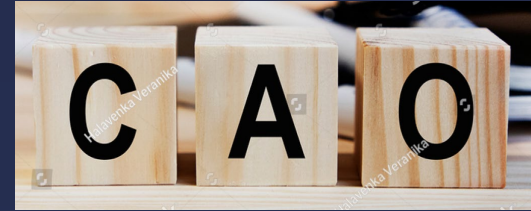
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- Don't book holidays at key times e.g. results day. Don't let them book holidays at this time.
- Support your son or daughter's management of their application.
- Make sure they read everything they are sent..... carefully!
- Prepare them for living away from home:
 - cost of living – paying bills
 - independent living skills – cooking and washing
- comforting, proofreading, encouraging, testing, practicing etc.
- **Be there...**

Applying to Institutions in the Republic of Ireland (Central Applications Office)



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- Apply online at www.cao.ie
- No personal statement is required
- No fees except for a contribution fee in recent years (3000 euros)
- The same access to a student loan
- Opening date 5th November and closing date 1st February
<https://www.cao.ie/index.php?page=timetableevents&bb=importantdates>
- Level 8 courses are honours degree courses
- Some of the most competitive courses require 4 AS subjects (Vet, Med, etc). Test required HPAT Ireland for Medicine

****Some colleges require an additional language at GCSE****



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Student Finance



The logo for studentfinance ni, with 'ni' in a stylized script.

Search this site...

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Undergraduate Students

Are you studying full-time or part-time?

This helps determine what types of funding you can get. Read both the options and decide which one applies to you.

Full-time

For students who'll be studying full-time for a Degree, Higher National Diploma (HND) or Higher National Certificate (HNC).

Next >

OR

Part-time

For students who'll be studying part-time for a Degree, Higher National Diploma (HND) or Higher National Certificate (HNC).

This also includes armed forces distance learners studying full or part-time.

Next >



For February time students will need:

- A bank account that their loan can be paid into 3 times per year
- A passport or original birth certificate as proof of identity
- You will need your P60 from the previous year

University costs



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1.Fees - NI £4985

UK £10,050

ROI 2500 euro (student contribution)

2.Accommodation - halls from approx £120 per week (£4800 per year). Ensuite approx £163 per week (£6520 per year)

3. Food - £50 per week (£2000 per year)

4. Transport, entertainment, clothes, books.....

Finance available



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1. Tuition fee loan - not means tested
 2. Maintenance loan - means tested (£8352 - £11,699)
 3. Maintenance grant - means tested (up to £3569)
- If you get the full grant, your loan is reduced.

NHS Course Funding



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NHS bursaries

Nursing and midwifery courses

- Students on pre-registration nursing and midwifery courses who are from and studying in Northern Ireland can get:

Tuition fees paid in full

A non-means-tested bursary for living costs (approx. £5000)

But, please note that you won't be eligible for a Maintenance Loan alongside this bursary.

Medical and dental courses (5th year of course)

- Tuition fees paid in full
- A means-tested bursary for living costs
- A reduced rate, non-means-tested loan for living costs.



NHS Course Funding cont...

AHP courses

- Northern Irish students who are doing an AHP course in Northern Ireland could be eligible for the following:

Tuition fees paid in full

A means-tested bursary for living costs

A reduced rate, non-means-tested loan for living costs.

- NHS Learning support fund (if studying in England) £5000 per year

<https://www.savethestudent.org/student-finance/nhs-bursaries.html>

Repayment



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1. Start to repay once you earn £26,900

2. Employer takes 9% of your income above £26,900 via tax

e.g. Earn £26,900 (£2,242 a month / £560 a week) before tax

Repayment = £22 per month

3. After 25 years, any outstanding debt is written off

<https://www.savethestudent.org/student-finance/a-guide-to-student-finance-for-northern-irish-students.html>



Scholarships and bursaries

Academic Achievement

Sports Scholarships

Disabled

Dependants

Specified subjects

Household Income

Specified Postcode or Region

The Value of a Degree



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- There is value in every degree but it is what the individual does with their time during their degree and their learning after the degree that is the key.
- Employability skills can be greatly enhanced through work placements.
- An employer wants an employee who learns quickly, reflects on what he/she has learned and applies it.



SUCCESS



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Being a Graduate makes a real difference:

- improves specialist knowledge
- improves transferable skills
- improves job prospects
- improves earning potential





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- Mrs Skuce (Careers)
rskuce928@c2ken.net
- Mrs Olphert (Head of Sixth Form Careers)
wolphert422@c2ken.net

Google Classroom Code: [oong3da](#)