

Higher Education in Britain.

After sixteen

Since 1988, most sixteen-year-olds have taken the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or the Scottish Certificate of Secondary Education (SCE) in five, ten or even fifteen subjects. Pupils going on to higher education or professional training usually take "A" level examinations in two or three subjects. These require two more years of study after GCSE, either in the sixth form of a secondary school, or in a separate sixth-form college. Other pupils may choose vocational subjects such as catering, tourism, secretarial or building skills. Subsidized courses in these subjects are run at colleges of further education.

There are forty-seven universities in Britain and thirty polytechnics, plus 350 colleges and institutes of higher education (some of which train teachers).

Undergraduate courses normally take three years of full-time study, although a number of subjects take longer, including medicine, architecture and foreign languages (where courses include a year abroad). They lead in most cases to a Bachelor's degree in Arts or Science. There are various postgraduate degrees, including Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy, the last two being awarded for research in Arts or Sciences.

Degrees are awarded either by the institution itself, or by the Council for National Academic Awards, particularly in vocational areas. Students of law, architecture and some other professions can take qualifications awarded by their own professional bodies instead of degrees.

At present, students who have been accepted by universities or other institutions of higher education receive a grant from their local authority, which covers the cost of the course, and may cover living expenses, books and travel, although parents with higher incomes are expected to make a contribution. Until 1990 the grant did not have to be paid back, but now a system of loans has been introduced.

Universities accept students mainly on the basis of their "A" level results, although they may interview them as well. The Open University was started in 1971 to teach adults who did not have these formal qualifications. Nearly a quarter of all adult part-time students follow its degree courses on radio and television.

Vocabulary

Certificate - аттестат

Vocational – профессиональный

Subsidized – финансируемый

Undergraduate courses – программа колледжа

Full-time study –дневная форма обучения
Post-graduate course –аспирантура
Degree –научная степень
Bachelor –бакалавр
Master –магистр
Grant –безвозмездный грант, выдаваемый на учёбу
Loan –ссуда
Adult – взрослый
Council for National Academic Awards – национальный совет академических наград

Comprehension check

1. How many universities and institutes of higher education are there in Britain?
2. How long does an undergraduate course last?
3. What fields of knowledge take a longer period of studies?
4. What bodies are the degrees awarded by?
5. What does a grant cover?
6. Do wealthy parents pay for their children's education?