

Skills, Development and Employment

Education and skills development

If you are thinking about a career change, or want to update your skills, going back into learning is the right move. Many adults return to education for all sorts of reasons and find it a very useful and enjoyable experience. There is a lot of support available, and you might be able to get funding. ^(1.)

Don't worry if you haven't studied for a while. Many people return to learning after a break, and really enjoy the experience. You can study in a variety of different ways now, including at home. The more skills you have, the better your chances of finding the right job and getting more out of life. ^(2.)

⇒ Hampshire Learning offers locally accredited and qualification courses. Their steps into employment includes programmes for those who are seeking employment or for those who are hoping to advance their career or change direction. Programmes of learning can be tailored to suit learners' needs.

- Learning to Learn (Level 1)
- Employability Skills (Level 1)
- Making Progress (Entry Level)
- Working Together (Level 1)
- ICT (Entry and Level 1)

For more information on the courses provided by Hampshire Learning visit: www.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-learning/hl-providers/ncfe-accreditation. You can also view a list of all the locally accredited units in alphabetical order. If you don't see a unit which meets your needs they can work with you to get your courses accredited.

⇒ Communication, maths and computer skills are some of the essential skills needed. Courses in all these areas are available from beginners' levels upwards, so there will be a course that suits your current skill level. You can take a free English and maths qualification if you:

- are over 16
- have left compulsory full-time education
- have English and Maths skills below level 2 (GCSE) standard

For more information and to find courses in your area visit the courses and learning section of the National Careers Service website www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk or call the helpline. 0800 0968 336.

⇒ Many local libraries run courses and workshops from CV writing to computers for beginners. Find out what's available at your local library by visiting www.hants.gov.uk/learning-in-libraries.htm.

⇒ A CV is your chance to show an employer that you've got the skills and experience that they need. National Careers Service's CV Builder helps you create a CV in bite size chunks and provides advice on application forms, covering letters and interviews. Alongside this, you can complete a Skills Health Check report that will help you decide what kind of job would suit you. It can also show you which skills you might want to brush up on. All of these fantastic tools can be found in the 'Careers Tools' section of the National Careers Service website. nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk. ^(3.)

Top Tips

- Make sure you have an up-to-date CV, with information on your skills, abilities and experience.
- Get yourself online – many companies now advertise their vacancies on the internet, so make this a key part of your job search.
- If you've been out of work for a long time, explain the reasons why to employers. If you have brought up a family, felt unwell, or simply been unlucky in the jobs market, explain your absence in a few sentences
- Consider temporary work. This is often a very good way of getting a foot in the door and securing a permanent post later on, as well as building on your skills and experience.
- Doing voluntary work can be personally rewarding and also provides the chance to learn new skills and improve on existing ones.
- Keep focused. Don't give up. Job hunting can take time and persistence.
- Take all the help you can get. There's a lot of support out there for the unemployed and most of it is FREE.

1. Returning to Learning. National Careers Service. 2012. [Accessed 26 March 2014] <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/courses/whylearn/Pages/return.aspx> 2. Why learn? National career service. 2012. [Accessed 26 March 2014] <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/courses/whylearn/Pages/default.aspx> 3. CV Builder: Career tools. National career service. 2012. [Accessed 26 March 2014] <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/tools/cv/Pages/default.aspx>

Education & skills development

Education and learning

Get help if you're at school, planning to go on to further or higher education, looking for training or interested in a student or career development loan. www.gov.uk/browse/education.

Grants and bursaries

Adult learners can apply for grants and bursaries to help pay for courses and training. Usually, you don't have to pay this money back. For more information on grants and bursaries for adult learners visit www.gov.uk/grant-bursary-adult-learners.

BBC adult learning - free lessons and courses online

Adult learning guides and courses. From French to computers, spelling, maths and more. Online lessons with audio, games, vocabulary, grammar explanations and exercises. www.bbc.co.uk/learning/adults.

Opportunities for informal learning

There is no time like the present for following an interest, brushing up an old skill or getting to know an entirely new subject. Get started by finding out what is on offer in Hampshire. Explore the subject areas for inspiration - and follow the links to discover information and contact details of hundreds of clubs, societies, individuals, organisations and associations offering learning opportunities in Hampshire. www.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-learning/hampshire-learners.htm.

Improving your skills

Learning new skills is a great way to improve your chances of getting a job, or getting more from the job you already do. A new qualification can also help you to feel good about yourself, and get more out of life in general. National Careers Service offers a range of support and help for anyone who is thinking of improving their skills. www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx.

Improve your English, Maths and IT skills.

Improving your reading, writing, maths or information and communication technology (ICT) skills can lead to a better job or to further study like National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). www.gov.uk/improve-english-maths-it-skills.

Learn at your local library

Many local libraries run courses and workshops from CV writing to computers for beginners. Find out what's available at your local library by visiting www.hants.gov.uk/learning-in-libraries.htm.