

EXPLORE YOUR FUTURE



A young woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black sweatshirt, is smiling and looking towards the right. She is seated in a lecture hall with other people and teal-colored seats visible in the background. The image is framed by white and teal diagonal stripes.

**A HIGHER EDUCATION
GUIDE FOR YEAR 9-11**

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NO.1

**UNIVERSITY IN THE NORTH
WEST AND IN THE TOP 10 IN
THE UK FOR GRADUATES
INTO EMPLOYMENT
WITHIN 15 MONTHS (97%)**

(HESA GRADUATE OUTCOMES 2025)

JARGON BUSTING

Exploring university can feel like entering a whole new world. Get ahead by learning some key words and phrases with our handy Jargon Buster.

A

ALUMNI

A former student of a particular school, college, or university.

B

BA/BSC

Types of degrees: Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc).

BURSARIES

Financial support given to students based on personal circumstances, usually linked to household income.

C

CAMPUS

The main university area with places to study, eat, and meet friends.

COURSE

The subject you choose to study.

D

DEGREE

The qualification you receive after successfully completing higher-level studies at a university.

F

FRESHERS

The nickname for students in their first year at university.

G

GRADUATION

The big ceremony where you celebrate finishing your degree.

H

HALLS

Flats or houses where students live together, usually on or near campus.

HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

Studies that you complete after college or sixth form that result in a Level 4 or above qualification.

L

LECTURE

A teaching session with lots of students, sometimes in a big room or hall.

M

MAINTENANCE LOAN

Money to help you pay for rent, travel, food and toiletries at university.

O

OPEN DAY

A chance to visit a university and to explore its campus, facilities, and courses.

P

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Part of a university application where you talk about your interests, story and skills.

PLACEMENT/INTERNSHIP

A period of work experience related to your course that supports your learning at university.

S

SCHOLARSHIPS

Money awarded to students, often for academic achievement, talent, or other special skills.

SEMINAR

A smaller class where you can ask questions and discuss ideas.

STUDENT FINANCE

The loans, grants and bursaries available to help you pay for university.

STUDENTS' UNION (SU)

A student organisation that provides support and runs clubs, societies, and events (like Freshers' Fairs).

SOCIETIES

Groups and clubs where you can meet new people and explore hobbies, interests, or causes (like drama, gaming, or a sport).

T

TUITION FEE LOAN

Money you borrow to pay your university fees, which you repay later once you are earning above a certain income.

U

UCAS

The organisation that manages applications to higher education institutions.

UNDERGRADUATE

A student who is studying their first degree.



WHY HIGHER EDUCATION?

Higher education is the study you do after finishing secondary school, typically after Sixth Form or College. It is generally for students aged 18 and above. Higher education usually takes place at a university, where you choose a subject you're really interested in and explore it in much greater depth.

STUDY SOMETHING YOU LOVE

University lets you explore your passions in depth. Whether it's science, the arts, sport, business or something else, you can focus on what excites you most.

MEET NEW PEOPLE

Make friends from all over the country and the world. University is a place to connect, collaborate, and build lifelong friendships.

LEARN IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Not all learning is in a classroom. At university, you'll take part in hands-on practical sessions, work on projects and placements, and collaborate with experts who have real-world experience.

EARN MORE

On average, graduates earn significantly more over their lifetime compared to those who don't go to university. In fact, data shows that graduates typically earn around a third more than non-graduates over the course of their careers (Department for Education, Graduate Labour Market Statistics).

MORE OPPORTUNITIES

University opens doors to exciting careers and internships, travel, volunteering, and creative projects. Along the way, you'll build skills, confidence, and connections for the future.

DISCOVER YOURSELF

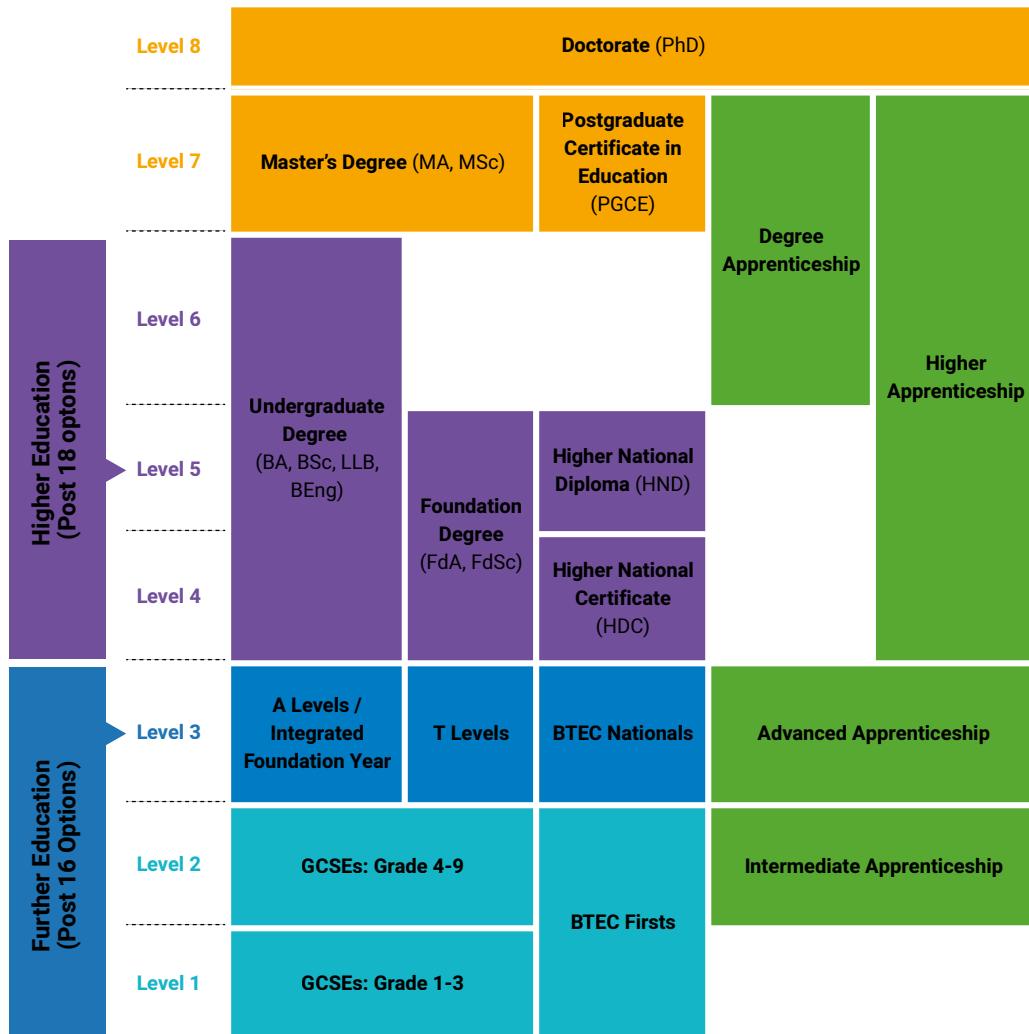
University is a place to try new things, explore your interests, and figure out what you really enjoy. It's about finding out who you are and what you want to do in life.



DID YOU KNOW?

Some of the most skilled jobs, like being a doctor, architect, vet or teacher, require a university degree

POTENTIAL ROUTES TO HIGHER EDUCATION



There are different ways you can get into higher education after your GCSEs. Many students choose A-Levels, which are usually three subjects studied over two years. You can also do T-Levels or BTECs, which are more practical and focus on certain subjects like health, business, or engineering.

Another option is an apprenticeship, where you work, earn money, and learn at the same time. Some apprenticeships can lead straight to university or a degree apprenticeship, though it's worth noting that not all Level 3 apprenticeships currently provide UCAS points. If you don't have the usual qualifications, you can take a foundation year or access course, which helps prepare you for university study.

The important thing is that there are lots of routes into higher education, so you can choose the one that suits you best. To help decide, it's a good idea to talk to your teachers or tutors in school or college, as they can give you further advice and guidance.

DID YOU KNOW?

An **Integrated Foundation Year** (IFY or Year 0) is a one-year course that helps you get ready for university study if you need some extra support.

It works like a stepping stone between school/college and university – you study a Level 3 course, but you do it at the university, so you can build your confidence, skills, and knowledge before starting your full degree.

DEGREE VS DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP

After finishing school or college, you have different options for your next step. Two of the most common are studying a degree full-time at university or doing a degree apprenticeship. Both lead to qualifications, but they offer very different experiences.

DID YOU KNOW?

You are equipped with practical skills and work placements on many standard degrees, providing you with real-world experience and problem-solving skills while you study. Check out the specialist industry facilities University of Cumbria students use to be work ready on page 24.

WHY A STANDARD DEGREE ROUTE?

Greater choice and flexibility

With a wide range of courses and often optional units, you can tailor your degree around your interests and keep your options open as they develop.

Time to explore your future

A degree gives you more time to explore different subjects, career paths, and employers before committing to a specific job or industry.

Independence from a single employer

You're not tied to one company, giving you the freedom to change direction during or after your course and access a wider range of opportunities.

The full student experience

Enjoy university life alongside your studies – including clubs, societies, sports, events, study abroad opportunities, and support from dedicated careers services.

Financial and personal support while you study

Student finance is available to cover tuition fees and living costs, with repayments linked to your earnings. You can also focus fully on your studies while building confidence and independence before moving into full-time work.

WHY A DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE?

Work and study at the same time

You are employed in a real job whilst studying for a degree, so you gain qualifications and work experience together.

Focus on one career area

Your learning is closely linked to a specific job role and industry, helping you build specialist skills from the start.

Earn while you work and study

You receive a salary while you work and study, and your tuition fees are paid for by your employer and the government.

Apply learning straight away

What you learn at university is directly used in your day-to-day work, helping you understand how your studies apply to your role and industry.

Clear career progression

Many degree apprentices move straight into a full-time role with their employer after finishing their apprenticeship.

WHAT CAN YOU STUDY?

There are thousands of subjects available all across the country. Find the perfect course for you by using the UCAS course search (ucas.com).

At the University of Cumbria, you can pick from a wide range of courses, including...

UCAS WEBSITE



SOCIOLOGY



SOCIAL WORK



PARAMEDIC SCIENCE



ADULT NURSING



SPORT REHABILITATION



PHYSIOTHERAPY



MIDWIFERY



BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE



ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE



FOREST MANAGEMENT



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE



CHILDREN'S NURSING



PRIMARY AND
EARLY YEARS
EDUCATION



DIAGNOSTIC
RADIOGRAPHY



PHOTOGRAPHY



PSYCHOLOGY



WILDLIFE
MEDIA



CRIMINOLOGY



UX/UI DESIGN



LAW



TOURISM
MANAGEMENT



WOODLAND
ECOLOGY AND
CONSERVATION



GEOGRAPHY



ECOLOGY AND
WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION



OUTDOOR
ADVENTURE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDIES



FINE ART



FILM AND
TELEVISION



GRAPHIC DESIGN



ILLUSTRATION



MECHANICAL
ENGINEERING



INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT



SECURITY
INTELLIGENCE



BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT



ZOOLOGY



LAW



TOURISM
MANAGEMENT



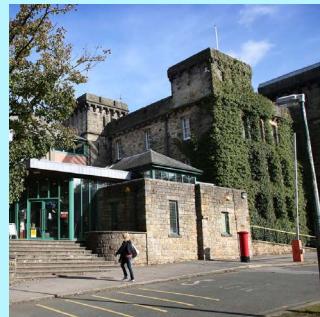
WOODLAND
ECOLOGY AND
CONSERVATION



OUTDOOR
ADVENTURE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDIES

WHERE CAN YOU GO TO UNIVERSITY?

There are over 160 higher education providers in the UK, offering a range of courses and experiences. Universities can be found in cities, towns, and even rural areas, each with its own unique atmosphere. Some are large and lively with thousands of students, while others are smaller and more close-knit, helping you feel part of a community. You might choose to live at home with your family and commute to campus, or move further away and live in student accommodation. There's an option to suit everyone!



DID YOU KNOW?

The University of Cumbria has six campuses: five in the North West of England (Ambleside, Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle Brampton Road, Carlisle Fusehill Street, and Lancaster) and one in London.

Our campuses are surrounded by natural beauty, vibrant student communities, and endless career opportunities. We're also the only university in the UK to have a campus in a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Our latest transformational project will see the construction of a new flagship campus within the city of Carlisle.



CAMPUS VS CITY

FUSEHILL STREET
CAMPUS, CARLISLE



WHERE WOULD I LIVE?



If you choose to move away from home to study you will need a place to live. Student accommodation is housing (like a flat or house) where you live with other students at university. It can also be referred to as living in halls of residence.

Where are halls?

Student halls are usually located right on campus or just around the corner. Living close to campus helps you settle in, make friends, and explore everything university life has to offer.

What's in my room?

Here's what you'll typically find in your room in halls:

- Comfy bed
- Desk for studying
- Wardrobe or chest of drawers for your clothes and shoes
- Super-fast Wi-Fi

In some halls, you may also have an en-suite bathroom

Who would I live with?

You'll live with other students – some might be studying the same course as you, others something totally different. It's a great way to make new friends from all over the country (and the world)!



"I ABSOLUTELY LOVED LIVING IN ACCOMMODATION AT UNIVERSITY. IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE, AND I'M SO GRATEFUL THAT I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE IT."

Abby Clarke - BSc (Hons) Geography

STUDENT LIFE

Student life is about more than just studying – it's about trying new things, meeting new people and having fun along the way. Beyond lectures and coursework, you'll find opportunities to join clubs and societies, attend social events, explore your campus and city, and build friendships to last a lifetime.



CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Through our Students' Union, we have a range of groups available to our students, including Women and Men's Hockey, Football, Netball, Mountaineering, Christian Union, and more. At each of our campus locations, we can also help you find groups and societies which are available to the wider community outside of the university.



CHRISTIAN UNION



WILDLIFE SOCIETY



MOUNTAINEERING



WOMEN'S HOCKEY



PARAMEDIC SOCIETY



NURSING SOCIETY

WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS DO AFTER UNIVERSITY?

Our graduates don't just find jobs – they make a difference. Many become teachers, nurses, physiotherapists, midwives, police officers, and scientists, shaping lives and supporting communities every day. They deliver babies, care for people in emergencies, teach children, and help others enjoy sport and outdoor activities safely. They coach athletes, protect our forests and environment, solve crimes, fight climate change, and engineer solutions to real-world problems.

Others take their talents into creative and global industries. From artists, performers, and designers to photographers, filmmakers, and animators, our alumni work behind the scenes of Hollywood movies, collaborate with major studios like Disney and Pixar, produce in Bollywood, and run arts-driven businesses that change lives. Wherever they go, they carry the skills and experiences gained here – making an impact across the world.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some of our alumni include
TV presenter Helen Skelton,
Turner Prize winner Keith
Tyson, and Paralympic gold
medalist Karen Darke!



NO. 1
UNIVERSITY IN THE
UK FOR PRODUCING
CEOS AND MDS

(NOVUNA BUSINESS CASH FLOW, 2025)

WE HAVE OVER
82,000
ALUMNI WORLDWIDE

97%
OF OUR GRADUATES
ARE IN EMPLOYMENT
OR FURTHER STUDY
WITHIN 15 MONTHS
OF GRADUATING.

(HESA GRADUATE OUTCOMES 2025)

FACILITIES

When you go to university, you get access to lots of amazing places that help you learn, be creative, and have fun. These spaces aren't just for studying — they're also for building real-world skills, relaxing, and staying active.

At our campuses, you'll find:

- Libraries and study areas
- Classrooms and lecture theatres
- Science labs and simulation suites (like hospital-style rooms)
- VR suites for immersive learning
- Art, design, film, and photography studios
- Workshops and creative spaces
- Gyms, sports halls, and outdoor-adventure equipment (campus-dependent)
- Cafés, food outlets, and social spaces



HEALTH SIMULATION LAB



PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO



OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT STORES

“WE HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, INDUSTRY-STANDARD EQUIPMENT THAT HAS HELPED ME EXPLORE MY ABILITIES AND GAIN EXPERIENCE.”

Victoria Ward - BA (Hons) Wildlife Media

SUPPORT AND WELLBEING



University is an exciting time, full of new experiences and challenges. It's normal to need help along the way – and just like at school, advice and guidance will still be available when you get to university. There are lots of people and services ready to support you.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

If you ever feel stressed, worried, or just want someone to talk to, there are teams at university who can help. At the University of Cumbria, our wellbeing team offers:

- One-to-one chats
- Group sessions
- Workshops with tips and self-help tools

Inclusion & Disability Support

If you have a disability or learning difference, you can get extra support to help you succeed. At Cumbria, we'll work with you to make a plan, provide useful tools, and make sure you have the right adjustments from the start.

Social Support & Making Friends

University is also about meeting new people and feeling part of a community. You can join clubs, sports teams, and societies, or take part in events run by the Students' Union. At Cumbria, there are loads of ways to get involved, make friends, and feel at home.

STUDENT STORIES



ABIGAIL SING

**BSC (HONS)
DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHY**

"What has stood out most to me during my time at university so far is the experience I've gained on placement, particularly the opportunity to work with a diverse range of patients. Seeing the positive impact I can have on a person's day is one of the main reasons I love what I do."



ELLEN CHARTERS

**BSC (HONS) ANIMAL
CONSERVATION SCIENCE**

"What I really value is the connection you build with the lecturers. You get to know them on a more personal level, and they get to know you - what you're interested in, what motivates you. If they know you're not especially excited about a certain topic, they'll find a way to get you engaged, that kind of teaching has made a big difference for me."



MILLIE ROUTLEDGE

LLB (HONS) LAW

"I live local to Cumbria and I love it here. I knew I wanted to live in the area following my degree and so when it came to looking at universities and I saw that Cumbria offered a degree in Law, I knew it was right; it gave me the opportunity to get the qualifications I wanted, whilst being able to stay close to home."



AIDAN DAWSON

BA (HONS) - FINE ART (WITH IYF)

"I love the atmosphere at the University of Cumbria. At the Brampton Road campus, it feels like a community; everyone knows each other and works alongside one another, exploring the many aspects of each other's professional and artistic skills."



MICHELL KANTOH

BSC (HONS) PSYCHOLOGY

"The highlight of my time at university so far would be meeting some of the greatest people I've ever had the pleasure to be friends with. I would not have been able to come out of my shell and establish myself like I have if it weren't for them, and I am so thankful!"

UNIVERSITY CAN BE AFFORDABLE

When you go to college or university, you may be able to get student finance to help pay for your studies and everyday life. Student finance is designed to help you focus on learning and enjoying student life, while supporting your independence.



Tuition Fee Loan

- Helps pay for your course fees
- Paid directly to the college or university
- You don't pay it back until you are earning over a certain amount

Maintenance Loan

- Helps with student life costs like accommodation, food, travel, and books
- Paid into your bank account
- The amount depends on where you live and your household income

Grants and Bursaries

- Extra money from the government, colleges, or universities
- Often for students from lower-income households or with special circumstances
- Usually does not need to be paid back

Scholarships

- Money awarded for things like specific grades, sport, music, or other talents
- Does not need to be paid back



THE FACTS ON LOAN REPAYMENTS

- You don't pay anything back while you're studying.
- You only start paying it back after you've finished your course and are earning more than £25,000 a year.
- You only repay based on money you earned above £25,000. This comes out of your wages automatically, just like tax.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN REAL LIFE

If you earn £26,000 a year, that's about £7.50 a month.

STUDENT FINANCE



DID YOU KNOW?

Many students choose to work part-time to earn extra money, which helps them build valuable skills and manage the cost of student life.

WHAT'S NEXT?

You've found out what university life can be like – from where you might live, to the support available, and how studying is paid for. You might already have an idea of what subject you'd like to study, or you might still be deciding. Either way, university is about exploring and learning new things – and we'll be here to help you along the way.

Explore subjects you might want to study

Think about what you enjoy learning at school, your hobbies, or future career ideas. You don't need to decide now, but it's great to start exploring.

Visit a campus or attend an open day

Open days are a chance to see what university life is really like. You can tour the campus, meet students and staff, and ask questions about courses, accommodation, and support. It's a great way to picture yourself there. At the University of Cumbria, we hold Open Days throughout the year, and they're one of the best ways to explore what university life could look like for you. Find out more - <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/events/open-days/>

Talk to your teachers or family about your goals

Share your ideas and ask for advice. Teachers, careers advisers, and family members can help you understand your options and support your journey. You're not expected to figure it all out alone.

Follow us online to see what student life is really like

Check out the University of Cumbria on Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube to see real student stories, campus life, and behind-the-scenes moments. It's a fun way to learn more and get inspired.



BOOK AN
OPEN DAY



OPEN DAY

USEFUL WEBSITES

Applying to university:

<https://www.ucas.com/>

Choosing a university or course:

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

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Student Support and advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

<https://www.savethestudent.org/>

The University of Cumbria:

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

<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/student-life/>

<https://www.ucsu.me/>

Degree Apprenticeships:

<https://www.ucas.com/applying/before-you-apply/what-and-where-to-study/study-options/traditional-degree-or-degree-apprenticeship>

<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/blog/articles/degree-vs-degree-apprenticeships/>

<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/>

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