

Top Ten Tips for Access to HE Diploma Learners planning to go to Higher Education (HE)

- ✓ **Start planning early!** Unlike students on two-year courses like A Levels, Access learners on a one-year course have to hit the ground running. So start your [research](#) into what you want to do after your Access course as soon as you can. It's worth signing up to the [UCAS Hub](#), which is a personalised space to explore your next steps. The main HE deadline to apply is the end of January so time is ticking!
- ✓ **Think about where you want to study** Do you need to stay local or are you looking to move away to study? If staying at home how long will it realistically take to travel to the HE institution(s) you have in mind? Have a look at this [map](#) of HE providers in the UK to find out more about the wide range of institutions and where they are based.
- ✓ **Do you have a career in mind?** If so, are there particular subjects or courses you need to study? For particular professions, like nursing or social work, you will need to study these subjects, but for many careers, what you have studied in HE is less important. Try out the [National Careers Service](#) as a good starting point to find out more about routes into careers.
- ✓ **Think about what subject you might enjoy studying** This will help to keep you motivated when in HE. Have a look at these [subject guides](#) and dig around on individual [HE websites](#) to find out what you would be studying on a particular course, as well as what options you can choose from. It's also worth checking how the course would be assessed – e.g. by exams, project work, dissertations or practical's and consider what suits you best.
- ✓ **Check out entry requirements** These will vary depending on the [course and institution](#) you want to apply to. Some will ask for a mixture of passes, merits and distinctions, others might ask for a [UCAS Tariff](#) score. Most will also ask for a certain number of GCSEs, including English and maths at grade 4 or higher, although some will accept other qualifications like functional skills. For some vocational courses, like social work, you may also need relevant work experience.
- ✓ **Go visit!** Find out about when you can visit the institutions you are interested in. All will have [open days](#), plus most have subject specific events you can attend. Many will also have online events and webinars and [virtual tours](#) of the institution to give you a flavour of what it would be like to study there.

Top Ten Tips for Access to HE Diploma Learners planning to go to Higher Education (HE)

- ✓ **It's good to talk!** Discuss your plans with your tutor and college careers adviser. Many HE institutions provide opportunities to talk to staff as well as [students](#) on the course you are interested in. Also, if you are thinking about applying for a course that leads to a career, try to speak to people in the same line of work about their experiences.
- ✓ **Start putting together your personal statement** Don't leave it until the last minute. It's important as the [personal statement](#) is your chance to show you are the right person for the course. Most students go through several drafts before finalising.
- ✓ **Apply on time** While the UCAS deadline is the [29th of January 2025](#) for courses starting next Autumn, your college will likely have an earlier deadline to check your application and add a reference. (Its earlier, [15th October](#), for applications to vet science, medicine, dentistry and to Oxford and Cambridge) Also apply on time for [Student Finance](#). You can usually apply from February onwards and the deadline to make sure everything is set for when you start is usually the end of May.
- ✓ **Get ready to go** There are plenty of things you need to [think about and plan](#) before you go, including ensuring your finances are set, accommodation if needed, and what you need to bring on your first day.

Fingers crossed you get the results you need for your chosen course. If not, don't forget you can try to find a place in [Clearing](#), where unfilled places are advertised.

You can find out lots more about choosing your course and institution, applying and getting ready to go in our section on the OCN London website. Good luck!