

Pointers for choosing a course to study on with your Advanced Learner Loan

Advanced Learner Loans help give people aged 19 and above the opportunity to train to enhance their career or to start a new one.

Whether you qualify for an Advanced Learner Loan depends on:

- The course chosen, it must be a level 3, 4, 5 or 6 qualification
- The college or training provider chosen in England
- Your age, you must be 19 or older on the first day of your course
- Your nationality and residency status

Check out the Governments website for more information www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan

With so many courses, colleges and training providers out there it is important that you find out as much about the course and the college or training provider you choose before committing yourself.

CHOOSING YOUR PLACE OF TRAINING

When considering further education, you need to decide what subject, course type and course provider is right for you. Here are a few tips to help you to make your decision.

You are making a big decision about your future, so it is important that you do lots of research when choosing your place to study.

- Look at least three different training providers or colleges on line and compare them to each other
- Visit at least two of your chosen training providers or colleges, these could be on open days or by appointment, see if you like what you see, do the learners seem happy, are they happy to talk to you and share their experience, is the working area clean, tidy and well organised?
- See if you can book an appointment as a client or customer at the training providers or colleges to experience the course in action
- Ask to meet the tutors, prepare yourself beforehand by putting together some questions, it can be anything , but may include, how you will be tested, what evidence you will need to produce, what support is in place for you (see choosing a course for more guidance)
- Ask for testimonies from learners that have attended the course from the training provider or college
- Get recommendations from a friend or colleague that has completed a course at the training provider or college
- How near to your home is the training provider of college?
- What are the transport links like? Is there student parking available?

CHOOSING A COURSE

It is very important to pick a subject that you are interested in and that you will enjoy that will also help you achieve your ultimate goal. This could be either a new career or to expand on your previous qualifications and training.

Here are a few things to think about to help you choose the correct course you'd like to study for at your chosen centre.

- What do you enjoy or find interesting on a daily basis? Could the course be a way for you to start a new career or improve your income by expanding the skills that you can offer?
- Check out different job websites to look for inspiration and to identify what qualifications employers are looking for
- What are the entry requirements for the course?
- What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 or 15 years' time?
- When looking at a training providers website, take a good look at the subjects within the courses offered, read the information through to ensure that it covers what you think it should
- Look at the expected level of commitment needed to achieve the qualification e.g. what days will you need to attend the training centre? For how long? How much home study or how many case studies are required to achieve the qualification?
- How is the course assessed? Is it per unit? Exams, Coursework, Presentations, Practical Assessments or all of the above?
- Not all courses with the same or similar names are identical in content so it is always important to double check before signing up

During your research, as long as you investigate all of your evidence thoroughly you should be able to identify the correct course for you to achieve your future goal! Good luck!

Remember that you will have to pay back your loan when both of the following apply:

- You've finished your course
- You earn more than £25,000 a year

This information does not constitute funding, training, education or legal advice and is offered as signposting to information about funding, education and training, published by the UK government.