

## **FAMILY LEARNING and ENGLISH LESSONS:**

If you would like to learn English with your children or find out ways in which you can help your children with their schoolwork, there are free courses available in many areas. Ask the school.

There are many places that run classes. Most further education colleges run English classes that are usually free. Your employer may arrange English classes for you at one of the centres or at your place of work. They may also allow you to take a couple of hours off every week to go to classes. Some unions also organize English classes.

## **CHILDREN with DISABILITIES or with SPECIAL NEEDS:**

There is help available for children with 'special needs' such as a physical disabilities, learning difficulties, or psychological problems. Wherever possible, your child will be given extra help in a mainstream school.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16 - 19:**

Between the ages of 16 and 19, young adults are entitled to both free education, and free ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes. After the age of 19 there might be some fees payable if they wish to continue studying. They may be eligible for work-based learning as well.

You can find out about ESOL classes at your local college or library. If you want to go to university, your local school or college may be able to help you to apply.

## **ADULT EDUCATION, TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT – An OVERVIEW:**

After the age of 16 you can apply to go into further or higher education. You may be offered a free place if you meet the entry requirements, but you will usually have to pay fees. You will not normally have to pay for English classes or for basic skills or vocational courses. If you are on any form of benefits it is unlikely that you will have to pay more than a token fee. You can attend courses in adult education colleges, further education colleges or universities.

## **FURTHER EDUCATION:**

Further Education courses offer full-time, part-time, day-release, block release and evening institute courses. The qualifications obtained include not only what young adults might have taken at school (i.e. GCSE and A levels) but a whole range of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and other examinations concerned with practical and professional competence.

Day-release students have jobs elsewhere and are usually sent to college for a day a week with some support from their employers.

Block-release is when people are able to leave their jobs for longer periods to study in college.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION:**

Higher education involves degree courses, or their equivalent, usually at a university. There are nearly 100 universities in Britain including the Open University, which specialises in part-time distance learning.

To get into university you normally need 2 passes at A level, but the equivalent qualifications from another country may be acceptable. You may also get credit for a course you have started, but not finished, in another country.

The University and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) passes your application form around the universities you have applied for until (hopefully) you are accepted. The UCAS website is at [wwwucas.ac.uk](http://wwwucas.ac.uk)

The universities make their choices, usually after interviews, and offer provisional places based on expected A level results. There is some assistance available from UCAS where results are poorer than expected.

Universities charge tuition fees so most students borrow money from banks at an especially low interest rate. The money is to be repaid over a few years on graduation.

Students on 1<sup>st</sup> degree courses can get some financial help to pay fees, and cover some living costs, if they have lived in Britain for at least 3 years. Special loans are also available to students.

People with degrees and diplomas from universities in other countries, and who want to continue their studies here, can contact The World University Service on 0171 426 5801 for advice.

### **LIBRARIES:**

Libraries will let you borrow books, music and videos, look up information and use a computer. There are libraries in many towns and some places have mobile libraries. To borrow books you need a library card, which is free. Anyone can apply for a library card, but the library usually asks to see proof of your name and address. If you do not have a fixed address, they may accept a host address (e.g. the place where you work). The library will post your card to this address.

In most libraries there are a few books in languages other than English. These usually include Chinese French, Spanish, German, Italian, and some in Polish, Portuguese, Russian, and Czech. If you ask your local library for books in your own language, they should be able to arrange to get some for you. Libraries also have books for children, and run the BookStart project that gives books to parents to new babies. Visit [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk) or call 020 8516 2977 for details. They can arrange for books in English or other languages.