

Adults to gain new skills on 400 free courses

Tens of thousands of adults will be able to benefit from almost 400 free courses next year, in the first major development in the Lifetime Skills Guarantee [announced by the Prime Minister](#) in September.

The fully-funded courses, ranging from engineering to healthcare to conservation, will be available to adults without a full qualification at Level 3 (A-level equivalent) from April 2021 to help them gain in-demand skills and open up further job opportunities.

Designed to help our country build back better after the pandemic, the qualifications in this offer have been carefully chosen to help adults improve their career prospects and meet the needs of the economy. They will be reviewed regularly so the courses offered can be updated as the economy changes.

The announcement marks an important step in the development of the government's landmark Lifetime Skills Guarantee, which will transform the skills system to ensure more people, no matter their age or background, can get the skills they need to progress in employment.

The offer is backed by £95 million from the £2.5 billion National Skills Fund, which is financing programmes that both support the immediate economic recovery and help meet future skills needs.

This funding will not only enable thousands of adults to gain new qualifications and access better job opportunities; a proportion will also be used to support education and training providers to scale up their provision to deliver the courses and meet the needs of learners.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Despite all our efforts, coronavirus is damaging the economy and putting people out of work. But I am determined to help everyone who has lost their job to retrain, develop new skills and find new opportunities.

The Lifetime Skills Guarantee will give thousands of adults across the country the chance to do exactly that – as we build back better after the pandemic.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

As we recover from the pandemic, we are focussed on making sure that individuals and businesses can build back better than before.

Throughout our lives we may all need to boost our skills, or gain new ones. These free qualifications will help open doors to better employment opportunities for thousands of adults and support businesses to access the workforce they need to grow.

Our new Lifetime Skills Guarantee promises to help you get the skills you need at every stage of your life. I'd urge all those eligible to see what course they can take from spring next year and start thinking about their next steps.

Stephen Phipson CBE, Chief Executive, Make UK, the manufacturers organisation:

Industry will be pleased to see manufacturing and engineering related level 3 qualifications as part of this new offer. Protecting existing vital skills and providing people with an opportunity to learn much needed new skills is crucial.

It is also an important first step in supporting individuals on the pathway towards higher-level qualifications as we transition to a digital economy. These new opportunities will be critical in the months ahead for the manufacturing sector as we build a workforce fit for the future.

Chief Executive of Association of Colleges, David Hughes said:

I'm pleased to see progress in the roll-out of the new Level 3 entitlement as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee. The qualifications will help people to get the skills they need in the labour market emerging from the pandemic so it is great to see that essential services like child and social care have been included alongside engineering, agriculture, construction and many others. Colleges are eager to start work and begin planning ahead of delivery in the spring of 2021.

This breadth of courses is vital in supporting rural and urban economies to build back better. The impact Covid-19 is having on people's livelihoods requires urgent action so we look forward to working closely with the Department to support the delivery of this new offer.

The government's plan to support people to upskill and retrain was also bolstered earlier this month by the announcement of £43 million from the National Skills Fund to expand the pioneering 'Skills Bootcamps' to other areas of England in 2021.

The Bootcamps – which were launched in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and the Liverpool City Region this autumn, offer free, flexible

courses of 12-16 weeks to give people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

Registrations have now opened for courses in the Leeds City Region, Heart of the South West, and Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire which will cover digital skills like software development, digital marketing, and data analytics but also technical skills training in such areas as welding, engineering, and construction.

Alongside the new Level 3 offer, the Lifetime Skill Guarantee will also include a Lifelong Loan Entitlement which will allow adults and young people to space out their study across their lifetimes and take high-quality courses in both further education colleges and universities.