

Title: **Progression Routes into Public Services 1/4**

Theme: **Routes into Higher Education**

Within the Focus on Careers website, we are restricting our definition of 'Public Services' to a career pathway into the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force etc.) and the uniformed services (Ambulance, Police, Fire Brigade etc). Each service offers their own career structure and entry requirements. You will need to search relevant websites and possibly visit recruitment offices. All of these websites are available in one place within the 'Public Services' section of www.focusoncarrers.org.uk Look at it in your own time. You may need to study to higher education level, depending on the career you hope to have.

As a quick guide to plan your next step, you will need to find out the level of qualification you will require for the job you hope to achieve. The website www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u can help. See final page of this document for further information and use in your own time.

Level 1

(same level as GCSE Grades D-G)

Level 1 qualifications give you the knowledge, skills and ability to apply learning with guidance or supervision.

The forthcoming new Foundation Diploma is a Level 1 qualification. It is equivalent to five GCSEs grades D-G.

Level 2

(same level as GCSE Grades A*-C)

In schools, the most popular qualification at Level 2 is the **GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education)**. A GCSE pass is graded A*-C and is a Level 2 qualification. You usually need between 4-5 GCSE passes to go on to Level 3 qualifications.

Soon, some schools and colleges will be offering a new qualification called the **Higher Diploma** (a different qualification to a National Diploma), which is the equivalent of seven GCSEs at grades A*-C and is linked to a career area.

Your local college may offer the First Diploma in Public Services. This one-year full-time course will enable you to then move on to the Level 3 Public Services qualification available at most colleges and would suit anyone who feels their GCSE results may prevent them from moving on to the next level of course just yet.

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Level 3

(same level as 'A' Level)

You may decide to take 'A' Levels either at Sixth Form or FE College. The first year of 'A' Levels is called 'AS' (Advanced Subsidiary). You may start by taking four subjects at 'AS' Level and choose to drop one after the first year, concentrating on three 'A' Level (Advanced) subjects in your second year. The grade you get for each subject, including any 'AS' Levels is given a points score. If you decide to apply for university or college to take higher education qualifications, the total points you have achieved will be used to decide whether you are accepted, or asked to come for interview.

Local FE colleges often offer the two year National Certificate or National Diploma in Public Services. On these courses you will gain essential skills for all Public Service careers. They are also excellent courses for developing your skills while deciding which career you would like to follow.

Sixth Forms and Training Providers in your Area

Don't forget! All courses available at Levels 1, 2 and 3 in your area and all the schools, sixth forms, colleges and training providers who offer them, are listed in your local Area Prospectus. In your own time see www.futures4me.co.uk and click on your local area.

Level 4

(Level 4 and above is known as 'higher education')

You could go on to take an **NVQ Level 4** qualification or perhaps a **vocationally-related qualification (VRQ)** for those already in work.

Level 5

(Level 5 and above are degree-standard qualifications)

Generally speaking, the first year of an Honours Degree, HND (Higher National Diploma), or a Foundation Degree represent achievement at Level 4. By completing the second year of an HND or Foundation Degree you will have achieved a Level 5 qualification. The completion of the third year of an Honours Degree is achievement at Level 6.

Level 5 qualifications include the **Higher National Certificate (HNC)** or **Higher National Diploma (HND)**, which are the same level as the Diploma in Higher Education or Further Education. **HNDs** and **HNCs** are widely recognised and highly valued by employers.

Foundation Degrees

Are a new Level 5 qualification, a degree linked to a career area and combining academic and work-based learning. They are designed in partnership with employers to make sure they give their students the skills they require for work.

- A full-time course will usually take two years to complete, part-time courses will take longer.

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- Many students study while they are employed, to improve their skills and job prospects.
- You don't necessarily need traditional academic qualifications to gain entry to a course.
- Many courses have flexible teaching arrangements involving part-time or evening attendance at college, distance learning or learning via the internet.

Access to Higher Education

There is an alternative route called the Access to Higher Education course. Access courses have traditionally been the route to HE for adults who have left formal education and want to return to learning, but haven't got the necessary qualifications to continue. Now Access courses are available to anyone 18+ who has left school, who has the potential to succeed and has higher education as their goal. Access courses usually take one year full-time to complete, or two years part-time. However, you would normally have been expected to have at least one year away from school before starting the course.

Levels 6-8

are Honours, Masters and Doctorate (PhD) level qualifications.

An **Honours Degree**, at Level 6 will usually take three years to complete. A 'sandwich' course, with an extra year out in industry, will take four years.

A **Masters Degree** is the next level up at Level 7, and is usually taken within the same subject area as the Honours Degree.

A Masters usually takes one year to complete.

A **Doctorate (PhD)** is the highest level of qualification available and is based on research. A PhD can take several years to complete.

Here are some of the areas covered within Public Services by colleges and universities in the UK. To find the full course listings go to the UCAS website (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) at www.ucas.com

- Community and Public Services
- Police Studies
- Policing
- Public Administration
- Public Services
- Public Services Management
- Uniformed Services

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Some career examples

The Armed Forces

- Armed Forces Musician
- Army Officer
- Army Soldier
- Royal Air Force (RAF) Airman/Woman
- Royal Air Force (RAF) Officer
- Royal Navy/Marines Officer
- Royal Navy/Marines Rating

Police

- Crime Scene Investigator/Scenes of Crime Officer
- Detective
- Forensic Crime Analyst
- Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)
- Police Financial Investigator
- Police Front Office Staff
- Police Officer

Fire and Rescue Services

- Coastguard Watch Assistant/Officer
- Emergency Services Control Room Staff
- Firefighter/Officer

Security

- Close Protection Officer/Bodyguard
- Diver
- Dog Handler
- Door Supervisor
- Parking Attendant
- Prison Instructor
- Prison Officer
- Private Investigator
- Security Officer/Manager
- Store Detective
- Traffic Warden

Every career is different, so go to the 'Career Examples' section of Focus on Careers (www.focusoncareers.org.uk) and using the Jobs4u web link, find out what you will need to start your chosen career.

Don't forget to talk through your ideas with your careers or Connexions adviser.