

Title: **Progression Routes into Retail 1/4**

Theme: **Routes into Higher Education**

There are many different jobs within Retail, some that require qualifications at higher education level, and others that don't require qualifications beyond Level 2, and will offer training 'on the job'. 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](http://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.

There are also **Young Apprenticeships** – the Young Apprenticeship programme allows 14 to 16-year-olds to take a qualifications in a range of industry sectors. Under the scheme you can spend up to two days a week gaining experience in the workplace or in college. And it can help you move on into a full apprenticeship after 16.

For further information about Young Apprenticeships, please ask at your school.

### **Apprenticeships (Work-based learning)**

Once you have the qualifications you need to specialise in the career of your choice, you can either go to college full-time, or get an Apprenticeship or take an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) at Level 2.

With work-based learning you train part time at college or with a training provider, while in work or on a training programme. Apprentices work and learn on the job, building up knowledge and skills, gaining qualifications and earning money, all at the same time.

Whatever qualifications you achieve at school, it is advisable to have Maths and English, as most colleges and employers will expect you to have them.

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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.

Or, you could move on to the next level of work-based training – for example, an **Advanced Apprenticeship** or **NVQ, both at Level 3**, where you earn and learn at the same time.

There are also work-related courses like the National Diploma, available in FE colleges and some schools. Soon some schools and colleges will be offering a new qualification called the Advanced Diploma (a different qualification to the National Diploma), which is the equivalent of three and a half 'A' Levels.

### **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](http://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 Retail 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](http://www.ucas.com)

- Fashion Buying and Merchandising
- Fashion Retail
- Food Retail Management
- Hospitality and Licensed Retail Management
- Marketing
- Retail Buying
- Public Relations and Retail Management
- Purchasing and Supply
- Retail Buying (Fashion)
- Retail logistics
- Retail Management
- Visual Merchandising and Promotional Design

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### Some career examples

#### Retail

- Antique Dealer
- Builder's Merchant/Assistant
- Butcher
- Buyer
- Car Salesperson
- Checkout Operator
- Customer Service Assistant/Manager
- Florist
- Forecourt Assistant
- Market Trader
- Merchandiser
- Retail Assistant
- Retail Manager
- Retail Merchandiser
- Shoe Repairer
- Store Demonstrator
- Store Owner/Manager

#### Transport, logistics, distribution and freight forwarding

- Distribution Manager
- Freight Forwarder
- Port Operative

#### Purchasing

- Importer
- Purchasing Manager/Administrator

#### Warehousing and storage

- Stores Assistant
- Warehouse Worker/Manager

Every career is different, so go to the 'Career Examples' section of Focus on Careers ([www.focusoncarrers.org.uk](http://www.focusoncarrers.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.**