

WHAT IS... AN NVQ

NVQ stands for National Vocational Qualification.

NVQ's showcase a person's ability to do certain tasks and there are six different levels of NVQs and they are equivalent to academic qualifications like GCSEs and A levels.

There are no exams, instead you gather a file of evidence and you are observed by a qualified assessor who verifies that you can do all of the tasks. A qualified assessor is somebody who has a lot of knowledge in this area and who knows what has to be done for each task. You will be observed on each unit when you're ready, so there is no time limit on completing the modules and you can be observed doing the tasks until you can do them competently.

NVQs are usually delivered in the workplace.

WHY STUDY FOR AN NVQ?

- > NVQs give many people the opportunity to work and achieve a qualification at the same time. They are usually studied part-time and can be taken as a stand-alone qualification, or as part of an Apprenticeship.
- > NVQs offer proof that you can do a job to the required standard.
- > NVQs allow you to progress at your own speed.
- > NVQs are sector-specific qualifications. They are available for a huge variety of careers across a wide range of industry sectors, ranging from hairdressing and engineering to policing and design.

How are NVQs graded?

The overall grade for each qualification is a 'pass'. To achieve this, you must pass all the required units studied on the course.

How long does an NVQ take?

- > Each level of the NVQ can take any amount of time to complete, but it usually takes around a year to complete each NVQ Level 1 and NVQ Level 2. On reaching NVQ Level 3 it may take a further year or even two further years due to the higher level.
- > Once you've earned your NVQ, it's a life-long qualification.

WHAT IS...

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DIFFERENT NVQ LEVELS

Each NVQ is a grading which shows how able you are at a particular job, therefore the higher your level the higher your ability to complete a task. You can either start at level 1 or a higher level depending on your current ability, up to level 5.

NVQ Level 1: this is the entry level NVQ and shows that you are able to apply a range of basic skills and knowledge in a routine and predictable way within the workplace.

NVQ Level 2: achieving the second level allows you to use your range of skills and knowledge in a variety of contexts and varied tasks, as well as complex issues or non-routine aspects of the job. You are required to demonstrate your teamwork skills and must showcase some individual work and individual responsibility.

NVQ Level 3: to reach level 3, you must use your range of skills and knowledge in complex or non-routine aspects more often than not. You must be trusted with more responsibility, and you are often left to guide others, which is essential in NVQ level 3 courses.

NVQ Level 4: this higher level showcases your good knowledge of workplace skills and knowledge in all situations. You will hold a substantial degree of responsibility, and you will direct others, it will often be left up to you to allocate resources

NVQ Level 5: As the hardest level to achieve you will hold a high degree of responsibility for other workers, taking responsibility for their work as well as allocating resources. You will be able to use a variety of skills in any situation that may occur, including those that are unplanned and unpredictable. You are responsible for analysis, diagnosis, design, planning, executing and evaluating.

WHAT'S NEXT?

WHAT CAN I DO ONCE I HAVE ACHIEVED MY NVQ?

- > Once you have got your NVQ, you may decide you want to continue with further training, like an NVQ at the next level or another related professional qualification.
- > If you've studied an NVQ at level 3, you could also achieve a full Apprenticeship by completing the remaining qualifications in the framework including the BTEC Specialist qualification for the sector. You could also go to University to get a degree.
- > There are literally hundreds of NVQ subjects to choose from. From construction NVQs to hairdressing NVQs, customer service NVQs to laboratory science NVQs, and even racehorse care, NVQ in care, Arabic, aeronautical engineering, and childcare NVQs.

