

FURTHER LEARNING

What next?

These days you do not always have to attend a college if you want to continue your education. People have a variety of reasons for choosing an alternative route - bad memories of the schoolroom, living in remote areas or transport problems. Whatever your reason, if college is not an option, there are other ways to get a qualification or learn a new skill. Learning opportunities are available at alternative locations all around the country - from community halls to workplaces and libraries.

Community Learning

Community Learning is often aimed at adults. All around the UK organisations exist to offer qualifications and courses to mature students. They include Community Education Colleges and Adult Education Institutes. A trip to your local reference library will be able to provide information of others.

Community learning may be college based. However, organisations across the

UK are increasingly reaching into the community to offer learning opportunities to those who might have missed out before. Here are some examples: YMCA centres, Primary Schools, Faith and Community Halls, Libraries, Family Centres.

Community learning is a way of involving the members of a community in their own learning and development. In one area, a college has been able to encourage Asian women to train as lifeguards by offering women only swimming programmes. The range of courses available is vast. You can choose to study for general interest or accredited courses.

There are some one-day taster courses to whet your appetite. There are also personal development courses for people with learning disabilities or difficulties. These normally do not require any previous qualifications to enter.

You will need to check entry requirements for the accredited courses on offer. These are courses that offer a recognised qualification. The list of accredited courses is endless, ranging from Counselling and Childcare to Sound

Engineering and Soft Furnishing.

However, there are non-accredited courses in areas like Languages, Art and Craft, and Health and Fitness, amongst others. These allow you to study a general subject for your own interest. Instead of a nationally recognised qualification, you will be given a college certificate when you complete the course. You can use this to progress on to further study.

Fees may be charged for these courses, although it is always worth asking about discounts. Classes in English as a Second Language and Basic Skills - literacy and numeracy - are sometimes free or subject to a very small charge.

Adapted from the BBC "Returning to Learning" website.

