

A brief guide to level 3 qualifications – Education Liaison Ambassador specialism

What is a level 3 qualification?

level 3 qualifications are needed to progress to university in the UK and are able to be converted into UCAS points. They come in different forms (more exam or more coursework based). Level 3 qualifications are more in-depth and intense than level 2 qualifications.

What are GCSEs?

GCSEs are level 2 qualifications. Most universities will look at GCSE Maths and English, though other subject specific criteria may apply.

We at Herts accept “functional skills level 2” (in either maths or English) as equivalent to their GCSE counterparts.

What are the main level 3 qualifications I will come across?

- A-levels
- Extended project qualification (EPQ)
- International Baccalaureate
- B-TEC/ C-TECs
- Access to Higher Education Diploma
- Advanced apprenticeships (level 3)
- T-levels

A-levels

Students who prefer an academic style of learning generally opt for A-Levels and are generally assessed via exams. Most students will complete 3 A-levels and most universities require the equivalent of 3 A-levels for most courses.

So, what is an AS level?

AS-levels are now equal to 40% of an A-level. AS levels are normally done in a year and are then built up to an A-level in the second year.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

EPQ is an A-level standard standalone qualification, though it is only worth half a full A-level. It requires students to conduct their own research project, similar to our final year project at university, though far less intense. Most universities (including Herts) love to see the EPQ and hear about it in the personal statement.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

A popular alternative to A-Levels. It allows students to study six different subjects of their choice and complete an extended essay. It is important to ask students what type of IB they have completed (e.g. H7) as these have different UCAS points.

BTEC/ CTECs

These tend to be more coursework assessed. students can either study three separate BTEC subjects (like A-levels) or take a two-year course going into a single subject (worth either 2 or 3 A-levels).

- Certificate = 1 A-level
- Diploma = 2 A-levels
- Extended Diploma = 3 A-levels

Access to Higher Education Diploma

The Access to Higher Education Diploma is equivalent to 3 A-levels. They are designed for students aged 19 and over and are typically completed by mature students. The grading for Access to HE courses is a little complicated as it is determined by how many 'credits'/ units (45 total) the student has achieved at Pass, Merit and Distinction. It is best to calculate UCAS points for these via the UCAS point calculator online:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>.

To give an example, if a student achieves 15 credits at Distinction and 30 credits at Merit (45 total), it is equivalent to 112 UCAS points.

Advanced or Level 3 apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are comprised of 80% full-time paid work and 20% part-time study, all in one. They are typically taken with an employer rather than at school. Advanced/ level 3 apprenticeships are considered to be equivalent to two or three A levels (they will need to check what they have). Students can apply to university after a level 3 apprenticeship but the UCAS points will be calculated differently. It is best to direct these students to the admissions team: admissions@herts.ac.uk.

T-levels

T-Levels are new two-year courses that are equivalent to three A-levels. T-Levels are based on the same standards as apprenticeships, designed by employers, and will offer around 1,800 hours of study over two years. This will include a 45-day work placement, so T-Levels are more suited to students who know what occupation or industry they want to move into.

UCAS Tariff points	T Level overall grade	A Level equivalent
168	Distinction* (A* on the core and distinction in the occupational specialism)	AAA*
144	Distinction	AAA
120	Merit	BBB
96	Pass (C or above on the core)	CCC
72	Pass (D or E on the core)	DDD

