***Higher education in Great Britain***

After finishing secondary school or college you can apply to a university, polytechnic, college of education or you can continue to study in a college of further education.

The academic year in Britain's universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of education is divided into 3 terms, which usually run from the beginning of October to the middle of December, the middle of January to the end of March, from the middle of April to the end of June or the beginning of July.

There are 46 universities in Britain. The oldest and best-known universities are located in [Oxford](http://study-english.info/uk-photos-001.php), Cambridge, [London](http://study-english.info/uk-photos-004.php), Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Southampton, Cardiff, Bristol and Birmingham.

Good A-level results in at least 2 subjects are necessary to get a place at a university. However, good exam passes alone are not enough. Universities choose their students after interviews. For all British citizens a place at a university brings with it a grant from their local education authority.

English universities greatly differ from each other. They differ in date of foundation, size, history, tradition, general organization, methods of instruction and way of student life.

After three years of study a university graduate will leave with the Degree of Bachelor of Arts, Science, Engineering, Medicine, etc. Some courses, such as languages and medicine, may be one or two years longer. The degrees are awarded at public degree ceremonies. Later he/she may continue to take Master's Degree and then a Doctor's Degree.

The 2 intellectual eyes of Britain – [Oxford](http://study-english.info/uk-photos-002.php) & Cambridge Universities – date from the 12 & 13 centuries. They are known for all over the world and are the oldest and most prestigious universities in Britain. They are often called collectively Oxbridge, but both of them are completely independent. Only education elite go to [Oxford](http://study-english.info/uk-photos-003.php)and Cambridge.

The Scottish universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen & Edinburgh date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries the so-called Redbrick universities were founded. These include [London](http://study-english.info/uk-photos-004.php), Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, and Birmingham. During the late sixties and early seventies some 20 'new' universities were set up. Sometimes they are called 'concrete and glass' universities. Among them are the universities of Sussex, York, East Anglia and some others.

During these years the government set up 30 Polytechnics. The Polytechnics, like the universities, offer first and higher degrees. Some of them offer full-time and sandwich courses [sandwich course курс обучения, чередующий теорию с практикой; сочетание общеобразовательного и профессионального обучения с работой на производстве] (for working students). Colleges of Education provide two-year courses in teacher education or sometimes three years if the graduate specializes in some Particular subjects.

Some of them who decide to leave school at the age of 16 may go to a further education college where they can follow a course in typing, engineering, town planning, cooking, or hairdressing, full-time or part-time. Further education colleges have strong ties with commerce and industry.

There's an interesting form of studies which is called the Open University. It's intended for people who study in their own free time and who 'attend' lectures by watching TV and listening to the radio. They keep in touch by phone and letter with their tutors and attend summer schools. The Open University students have no formal qualifications and would be unable to enter ordinary universities.

Some 80,000 overseas students study at British universities or further education colleges or train in nursing, law, banking or in industry.