



south essex college
ADULT EDUCATION
SKILLS | EDUCATION | CAREERS

Guide for **mature students**

“Going back to education really develops your creativity, is life changing in that you get to specialise in a subject that you really love, and you get to meet friends for life. It helps you progress to a great career.”

Andy Wyatt, 53, animator.



Guide for mature students

Returning to study after a long gap can be daunting. At South Essex College we understand the challenges facing mature students and can offer you the help and support you need to gain the qualifications that will help you make a brighter future. For the purpose of this guide mature learners are classed as anyone who is 19 or over.

Why return to study?

Your decision to return to education will depend on your goals, aspirations and whether further studies can provide something that meets your needs.

There are many reasons to become a mature student, they include:

- Enhance your career and employability prospects by upskilling
- A total career change – to a job you have always dreamed of or returning to employment after a period of not working such as after having children
- Improve your self-confidence by either revisiting a subject you once loved or by taking on a completely new one
- Be inspired by meeting new, like-minded people

Why choose South Essex College?

Whether you are already armed with qualifications or have left school with very few, we have a course to meet your needs.

We offer a huge range of courses including home learning courses, work-based learning, vocational diplomas and higher education programmes including degrees. We also offer a range of courses that are **completely FREE**.

When you study with us you'll get dedicated guidance from your tutors and our specialist support teams. Support does not end with your current course. We also support you towards your future. Our student services team are on hand to help you with nationwide university applications.

Can I afford to return to study?

There is no need to worry about how you are going to pay for your course as there may be financial support available to you.

Fee waivers of up to 100% are available, depending on circumstances such as your age and household income.

What further education courses are available at South Essex College?

Part-time courses

Courses to help you learn the skills to advance or change your career. Whether you want to retrain for a career in beauty, accounting or hospitality we may have a course for you.

I-Study courses (online)

FREE* online courses you can study anywhere with an internet connection. These courses are available in a range of subjects including business and administration, caring for children and young people, counselling skills and data protection and data security.

Work-based Learning

Courses for learners already in full-time employment. These courses are available in a range of subjects include early years, assessing vocational achievement, and social care.

FREE Courses for the unemployed

Our FREE*** i-learn courses for the unemployed are available in a range of subjects including accounting, forklift driving, basic IT, office skills, childcare, security and health and social care. Visit our website for details on the full list of courses.

FREE Adult English and Maths

If you do not already hold a C grade (grade 4 in the new grading system) at GCSE or a Functional Skills level 2 qualification, our English and maths courses will be FREE**

EFL, ESOL and IELTS 27

English language lessons.

Leisure courses such as part-time evening and weekend courses are not currently available but you can find lots of great subjects at your local Adult Community learning facility.

Access to Higher Education courses

Access courses are designed for people who have been out of education for some time. These courses provide you with a good foundation for studying at university level. Completing an access course will ensure that you are confident and well prepared to go on to study a degree. The Access to Higher Education Diploma is widely recognised by universities and is a full level 3 qualification. Examples of other level 3 qualifications include A-levels and BTEC Extended Diplomas.

We offer a range of Access courses in the following:

- Art and Design
- Business Management
- Counselling
- Digital and Technical Industries-Media
- Education & Childhood Studies
- Environmental Studies
- Forensics and Criminology
- Nursing & Midwifery
- Psychology & Sociology
- Science
- Social Studies
- Sport Science
- Teaching Early Years
- Special Education Needs & Disability Studies

Pre- Access courses (FREE)

Creative Industries.

*One free course available in each subject area, studying two courses in the same subject area will incur a cost.

** You must be living in the UK or an EU country for three or more years prior to starting the course for it to be free.

*** Free if in receipt of certain unemployment benefits
Please call on 01702 220409
to check your eligibility.

“I would recommend the Early Years degree to anyone interested in working with young children, I liked it so much that my mum is now in the first year of the course! The course is very hands-on and the small class sizes mean that you get a lot of one-to-one training and can build up a great rapport with your tutors. You are always fully supported.”

Lauren Dolphin Early Years Degree graduate .

Levels explained

The world of education is constantly changing so the following is a guide to what used to be called GCSEs or A levels.

Entry Levels, 1, 2 & 3

Entry levels are for beginners and ideal for anyone who wishes to gain a basic knowledge of a subject/ study area.

There are no formal entry requirements for these levels.

Level 1

A Level 1 course is the first fundamental step to gaining knowledge in a profession, job or industry. Students must demonstrate the ability to study at a Level 1 in English and maths.

Level 2

These intermediate courses require students to be working at Levels 1-2 in English and maths, depending on individual subject areas. Perfect for progression from a Level 1 course or for students who are not quite ready for a Level 3.

Level 3

Level 3 courses are for students who are looking to advance their education for employment and personal development. These qualifications are a gateway to higher education. Entry requirements are to have English and maths at Level 2 or GCSE English and maths at grade 4 (C grade).

Levels 4/5

These levels are the first steps into higher education.

Levels 4 and 5 are needed for specific professional careers, or will enable you to move into management roles.

Level 6

- Degree apprenticeship
- Degree with honours - for example bachelor of the arts (BA) hon, bachelor of science (BSc) hon
- Graduate certificate
- Graduate diploma
- Level 6 award
- Level 6 certificate
- Level 6 diploma
- Level 6 NVQ
- Ordinary degree without honours

Level 7

- Integrated master's degree, for example master of engineering (MEng)
- Level 7 award
- Level 7 certificate
- Level 7 diploma
- Level 7 NVQ
- Master's degree, for example master of arts (MA), master of science (MSc)
- Postgraduate certificate
- Postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE)
- Postgraduate diploma



What will I need to enrol?

- Passport or any other form of ID that shows your name, address and/or immigration status
- Proof of income including any benefits received over the last three weeks if applicable
- Method of payment to cover any fees or deposits if applicable.
- Qualifications proof of any previous qualifications etc

Further education funding – will I have to pay?

If I am in receipt of JSA, ESA or any other benefit?

Most Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 courses are funded. This does depend on each individual course. Please speak to a member of our funding team for more information.

If I am aged 19-23?

The exemption rule means you are entitled to full funding for your first Level 2 and Level 3 course. Entry Level or Level 1 courses first are also fully funded.

If I am aged 19 plus?

Your first full Level 2 course will be funded if you are unemployed, as will enrolment onto Entry Level or Level 1 courses. If you are looking for funding for a further Level 2 course, you may be able to apply for a Professional and Career Development Loan or be eligible to apply for a bursary to assist with your course fees.

If I am aged 24 plus and require funding for certain Level 3 courses?

You can apply for the Advanced Learner Loan. The Advanced Learner Loan is the most common way to fund one of our Access to Higher Education courses.

FREE* Adult English and Maths GCSE & Functional Skills courses

These courses are free if you do not already hold either GCSE at C grade or higher (grade 4 or higher) or a Functional Skills Level 2.

*You must be living in the UK or an EU country for three or more years prior to starting the course for it to be free. If you have not been living in the UK or an EU country for three years prior to the start of the course, please contact our funding team at:

Funding@southessex.ac.uk

None of this applies to me

There may be a percentage of the course fee waived. This depends on circumstances such as your income, age and employment status. If you have any other questions, you can

contact one of our course advisers for more information on fees and funding.

admissions@southessex.ac.uk
or phone **0345 52 12345**

FIND THE GRADUATE IN YOU

Higher education courses at the University Centre South Essex

At University Centre South Essex we offer a range of high quality higher education courses that are validated by some of the UK's top institutions such as University of Arts London, University of East Anglia, Pearson, City & Guilds and the Open University.

We offer:

HNC – Level 4 and HND – Level 5

Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND) are job-related qualifications. HNCs and HNDs reflect the requirements of professional organisations and meet the National Occupational Standards for each sector or industry. They are an ideal choice for students seeking a cost-effective, vocational pathway to higher education.

CertEd – Level 5

The Certificate in Education (Further Education and Skills Sector) is a Level 5 teaching qualification which has a teaching/training practice requirement.

PgCE – Level 6

The Professional graduate Certificate in Education is a teacher training programme that will gain you a teacher training certificate in the post-compulsory sector.

BA (Hons) – Level 6

A Bachelor of Arts, BA (Hons), is a bachelor's degree awarded for an undergraduate course or programme that follows a humanities curriculum.

BSc (Hons) – Level 6

A Bachelor of Science, BSc (Hons), is a bachelor's degree awarded for an undergraduate course or programme in science-based or technical studies.



Higher education funding

Do I have to pay anything up-front?

No, you don't have to pay anything before you start your studies. Student loans are available to UK and EU students to cover tuition fees and are repayable only after you graduate and earn over the UK repayment threshold which is currently £25,000 a year, £2,083 a month or £480 a week.

You can visit the following website for more information
www.gov.uk/studentfinance/who-qualifies

For full information on how to apply please visit:
www.southessex.ac.uk/he/he-fees-and-funding
 or if you have any questions you can email:
HEfinance@southessex.ac.uk

If you require further information on any issues regarding finance or feel you need to discuss your finances with an adviser please contact:
HEsupport@southessex.ac.uk
 or phone **01702 220696**.

Please note If you already hold a higher education qualification when applying for entry to our higher education programmes you may not be eligible for further tuition loan funding. We strongly urge you to visit
www.gov.uk/browse/education/studentfinance or contact Student Finance England direct:
0845 300 50 90

To find out if you qualify, contact our higher education team by emailing:
admissions@southessex.ac.uk
 For further information please visit:
www.gov.uk/student-finance



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