



Why not visit the Leeds College of Art at www.leeds-art.ac.uk for creative foundation information?

FORWARD THE FOUNDATION

After a qualification that gets you involved with the working world? You'll be after a foundation degree, then...

'FOUNDATION DEGREE STUDENTS ARE HERE FOR A CAREER AND NOT JUST A JOB. QUICK TO LEARN AND MOTIVATED, THEY ARE ALL AMBITIOUS AND WANT TO GET AHEAD.'

- KEITH PAGE, NORWICH UNION

MORE INFORMATION

The place to start is the very helpful Foundation Degrees website and advice to be had here, from funding to case studies. Foundation courses, subject areas and the institutions offering them. And, of

WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

Danielle Tatton

Newspaper & Magazine Journalism Foundation Degree

For Danielle, a journalism graduate from Cornwall College, the great thing about the course was the opportunity to study for professional qualifications in addition to her foundation degree.

Cornwall College's journalism course enables students to gain additional related qualifications, in Danielle's case, with the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). 'I won't forget the sense of achievement I felt when I was told I had passed all of my NCTJ exams', she recalls.

'I would recommend the Journalism Foundation Degree at Cornwall College to anyone who is serious about a career in journalism', Danielle explains, 'because it prepares you for the real media world.'

She gained invaluable skills needed for first jobs in both newspapers and magazines, by studying feature writing, production and shorthand. 'I'd always dreamt of going to university but didn't have confidence in my abilities. But I was worried that if I didn't take the challenge I would regret it.'

Danielle took the challenge, though, and since completing the Foundation Degree with Cornwall College, she has progressed to the final year of a BA (Hons) Degree in Journalism at Falmouth College of Arts. 'The progression is optional after completing the course with Cornwall College, but soon I will be NCTJ qualified, and have a full degree!'

WHAT CAN YOU STUDY?

There's loads. You could try courses in Accounting, Automotive Engineering (oh, a crossover! See our feature on page 46 for more on this – **etc.**), IT & Business, Law, Construction – even Wine Production. Wine Production? Why didn't we think of that?

Some major employers are involved, too: BMW, Rolls Royce and the NHS have all had a hand in devising foundation degrees. As Chris Keane from Rolls Royce puts it, 'Foundation Degree students have really hit the ground running by gaining a thorough knowledge to underpin their work. This knowledge is augmented by practical work-based projects. They will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the business.'

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU END UP WITH?

A foundation degree is equivalent to level five in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) National Qualification Framework (NQF). In English? An honours degree is level six, and the credits you earn are transferable – so once you've graduated, you can go on to the third year of an honours degree, if there's a corresponding course. Find out more about the QCA, NQF, and many other initials, at www.qca.org.uk. LOL.

IS IT EXPENSIVE?

Although they tend to be lower than most honours degrees, fees can be up to £3,000 a year, depending on where you go. Ow. But! There are plenty of funding options. If you're a full time student you can get a loan to cover the fees (which you won't repay until you're earning £15,000), or you could be eligible for a grant of up to £2,700. Part time, there are non-repayable grants of up to £1,125 available (all grants depend on your financial situation at home).

Go to <http://studentfinance.direct.gov.uk> to find out more about funding. Or email your local MP and tell them what you think about the cost of being a student (find your MP at www.locata.co.uk/ commons). That's the beauty of democracy, friends.

WHERE CAN YOU STUDY?

Foundation degrees are available in England, and are in development in Northern Ireland and Wales. No plans for Scotland yet, apparently, but we still love you, Scotland (and you can still study in England, of course). There are currently 1,300 foundation degree courses available, with a further 700 planned. For a full list of available courses, it's back to UCAS for you. That's wwwucas.com, by the way.

WHO CAN DO THEM?

You can, once your A levels are tucked snugly under your belt. The number of points on the UCAS tariff you'll need depends on the course you apply for, so check with individual institutions. The UCAS website (wwwucas.com) is the place to start.

HOW DO YOU STUDY?

It's very flexible. You can study full time, and complete the course in two years; or you can study part time and fit your studies around a job; there's the option of distance learning, and a 'mixed mode' option allows a combo of work-based, uni-based and online learning. Flexible as a freaky gymnast, in other words.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Let's start this from the ground up (see what we did there?). Foundation degrees are unique creatures. They're developed in partnership with employers as well as universities, and are designed to give you the academic skills of a traditional honours degree, combined with the practical skills for work that employers are looking for – kind of an honours degree/vocational qualification hybrid, if you like.

'Foundation Degrees help equip students with skills admired and valued by employers,' says Derek Longhurst, Director of Foundation Degree Forward. 'Employers involved with the qualification have overwhelmingly found that students studying Foundation Degrees have been able to take on more responsibility and increase their chances of promotion and progression at work. The idea is that you'll leave with classroom knowledge and workplace experience, combined into a tasty little package that will make employers want to lick you all over and give you a job. Uhm, maybe just the last part, actually. Sorry – etc.'

YOUR FOUNDATION TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER AT SEA

Do you want a career opportunity with a difference? Ever considered a career at sea?

The Ship Safe Training Group currently have a number of training opportunities for candidates to obtain a professional qualification as either a Deck or Engineering Officer. Both programmes incorporate a Foundation Degree and allow the student to progress to an Honours Degree. Sponsorship includes a generous personal allowance and ALL tuition fees paid. During the year out the individual can travel the world, while completing the required sea service – at OUR expense!

Find out more by visiting:

www.sstg.org

or call the SSTG on 01634 820 820

