

# A learner's guide to a career in plumbing

City &   
Guilds

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# A learner's guide to a career in plumbing

There's no doubt that people will always need a good plumber. They're vital to public health through providing clean drinking water and proper sanitation, as well as ensuring our day to day comforts like hot baths and warm houses.

As a plumber you can choose to focus on a range of different areas; from piped water systems for bathrooms and radiators to drainage or even branching out into the gas industry to install central heating systems. A career in plumbing can lead you down many different career paths, to good wages and the chance to run your own business.

Whatever route you take, you must be suitably trained and hold the right qualifications. At City & Guilds we've been designing qualifications for the plumbing industry for many years. We're the leading body for the sector's trade qualifications and we work with the plumbing industry to make sure our qualifications provide you with the skills you need.

## How do I become a plumber?

There are several qualifications that you need to become a fully qualified plumber. Keeping up with trends in the industry, we have recently revised our complete range of awards:

### Level 2 Certificate in Basic Plumbing

### Level 2 NVQ in Plumbing

### Level 3 Certificate in Plumbing Studies

### Level 3 NVQ in Plumbing

The **Level 2 Certificate in Basic Plumbing** gives you the theory that you need to take the level 2 NVQ. You learn the key plumbing principles and the theory of areas such as hot and cold water systems, electrical supply and safety. You can take this through a college or training provider and you will have to pass a multiple choice test to gain the qualification.

For the **Level 2 NVQ in Plumbing** you'll put into practice what you've learnt for the technical certificate. It's a qualification that you do 'on the job' so you must be in employment to do the NVQ. You show that you're able to perform various tasks by using your practical skills. These will include installing, fitting and maintaining cold and hot water, central heating and sanitation systems as well as preparatory work, pipework and sheet lead weathering. Generally, the NVQ at this level takes between 2-3 years to complete and you'll be assessed while you're working. You'll also produce a portfolio that provides evidence of the jobs you've performed.

The **Level 3 Certificate in Plumbing Studies** is an advanced level qualification and provides the knowledge and theory you need to do the level 3 NVQ. You'll cover some of the same areas as for the level 2, but at a more advanced level, as well as some new areas. This is a qualification that you will complete through a college or training provider and there is a multiple choice test at the end of the course.

The **Level 3 NVQ in Plumbing** is the qualification that proves you are a fully qualified plumber. You'll undertake this while working and will be performing tasks such as fitting gas appliances, electrical wiring and sheet lead systems. It covers all the areas that you need to be a fully competent plumber and normally takes 12-18 months to achieve.

Although a new range of qualifications will not be introduced until September, there may still be waiting lists at centres due to extremely high demand. Our Customer Relations team will have the latest details for you.

## Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships

These are for people that aged between 16 and 25. They combine a technical certificate, an NVQ as well as Key Skills qualifications which show employers that you have skills like communication, IT and numeracy. You'll combine your training between work and college. Apprenticeships are funded by the Government and they take between 2-3 years to complete.

## Are there any other qualifications that may be of interest to me?

Qualifications in plumbing can lead you to progress to other careers in industries such as the gas, heating and ventilating industries. Contact our Customer Relations team for more details on qualifications in these areas.

## How can I find out more?

You can find out more by contacting your nearest City & Guilds approved centre that provides qualifications in plumbing. You can find their contact details by logging on to our website or by contacting our Customer Relations team at:

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## Key points

- This is a new suite of qualifications available from September 2003 that will take you from absolute beginner to fully qualified plumber.
- We jointly award these qualifications with the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors and the Joint Industry Board for Plumbing Mechanical Engineering Services (England and Wales).
- City & Guilds is the UK's leading provider of work-related qualifications.