



POST-16 OPTIONS

How does it all work?

2025



Post-16 Education- what are my options?

Since 2013, the Raising of the Participation Age law has stated that young people must be in some form of 'education or training' until they are 18. This can include:



Apprenticeships – this involves working for an employer while studying for a qualification as part of your training. Usually work makes up 80% of an apprenticeship and at least 20% (or one day a week) should be dedicated to studying.



T – Levels – are new 2-year courses which are taken after GCSEs and are broadly equivalent in size to 3 A Levels. Launched in September 2020, these courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and education providers so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for entry into skilled employment, an apprenticeship or related technical study through Further or higher education.



Part time study with Employment or volunteering – this could be working in a full time job (classed as any work that takes place over more than two months is over 20 hours per week) or volunteering (again, totalling 20 hours per week) while studying part time at a college or training provider (totalling 280 hours of learning per year)



How do I pay for post – 16 education and training?

Education and training in the UK is free for young people until they turn 19. In addition there is a 16-10 Bursary fund to help students from low income families pay for things like transport, food and stationary, which can be accessed at any sixth form, college or training provider you attend after year 11 -

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>



USEFUL
LINKS

Many organisations have their own financial support for students, so check first!

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels>

<https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school>

Sixth form colleges

Sixth form colleges typically focus on A – Level (Advanced Level) qualifications – two-year courses that end in an overall examination and a grade from 1-9, with a similar structure to GCSEs but looking at the subject in a lot more depth. Students can study:

TRADITIONAL A-LEVELS:

Subjects like, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English Literature, English Language, Mathematics, Geography, History, Languages, Religious Studies, Music, Art

ALTERNATIVE A-LEVELS:

Subjects like, Photography, Law, Sociology, Psychology, Business Studies, Film Studies, Media Studies, Economics, Politics, Sports Science

BTEC L3 DIPLOMAS:

Some sixth form colleges offer BTEC qualifications that can be taken alongside A-Levels. These are usually made up of a number of separate modules and include practical assessments and coursework, as well as exams. Subjects can include: Health and Social Care, Applied Science, Engineering, Travel and Tourism

Students studying A-Levels usually select between three or four subjects (dependent on their GCSE grades) that they want to study at sixth form. Sixth form colleges also offer something called the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), an independent project that can provide students with UCAS points to put towards university.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:

Most sixth form colleges usually look for students to have achieved 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above but make sure you do your research, as some courses, such as A-Level Maths, Physics, Biology and Chemistry, require students to achieve a Grade 6 at GCSE in order to demonstrate their deeper understanding of the subject.

SOME LOCAL OPTIONS:

Biddulph High Sixth form - <https://biddulphhigh.co.uk/welcome-to-the-sixth-form/>
Stoke on Trent Sixth Form college - <https://www.stokesfc.ac.uk/>

Colleges and Training providers

Colleges and training providers usually offer BTECs or other vocational qualifications that focus on a specific area of study in a practical way, which can include:

SPECIFIC VOCATIONAL COLLEGES:

Reaseheath College – Animal management and Agricultural courses, including foundation and Extended Diplomas - <https://www.reaseheath.ac.uk/>

Army Foundation College, Harrogate – junior soldier training and other pathways - <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/our-schools-and-colleges/afc-harrogate/>

Equality training – Childcare, Hair and Beauty, Barbering, Health and Social care and Business Admin - <http://equality.training/about/>

North Staffordshire Engineering Group Training Association – specialise in Engineering qualifications and apprenticeships - <https://www.nsegta.co.uk/about-nseg/>

Nacro Training – Construction careers - <https://www.nacro.org.uk/courses-and-training/>

Rebus Training – Electrical apprenticeships and courses - <https://www.rebustraining.co.uk/>

GENERAL FE COLLEGES:

Offer everything from Hair and Beauty, Childcare, construction to Business Management, Games Design, Automotive Engineering. Food Technology, Fashion Design, Performing Arts and Photography:

Stoke College - <https://www.stokecoll.ac.uk/>

Newcastle College - <https://nscg.ac.uk/newcastle-campus>

Leek and Buxton College - <https://www.blc.ac.uk/>

Macclesfield College - <https://macclesfield.ac.uk/>

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:

Entry Level/Level 1 – can require anything from no qualifications up to 3 GCSEs (any grade)

Level 2 – usually requires 3 GCSEs at Grade 3 or above

Level 3 – usually requires 5GCSEs at Grade 4 or above

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships – involve working for an employer in a specific role whilst being trained to do the job by experienced staff, in a combination of on-the job and off-the job training at a college or training provider (this must be at least 20% of the apprenticeship).

Apprenticeships must be at least one year long and all apprentices must be paid a minimum of £4.15 per hour (although some companies pay more!). Apprenticeships can be taken in a host of industry areas including:

Engineering, Graphic Design, Software Development, Hair and Beauty and Catering (and can be started as soon as an individual turn 16 and has left full time education, although you can apply before this)

APPRENTICESHIPS COME IN DIFFERENT LEVELS:

Intermediate/Level 2

(equivalent to GCSE) – usually requires Maths/English at GCSE

Advanced /Level 3

(equivalent to A-Level) – usually requires 5GCSEs at Grade 4+

Higher/Level 4-5

(equivalent to Foundation Degree) – usually require L3 or A-Levels

Degree/Level 6-7

(equivalent to University Degree) – usually requires 3 A-Levels or similar



Local apprenticeship information:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Jobs-and-careers/Jobs.aspx>

<http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traineeships--2>

Applying for post-16 – How does it work?

Students will start to make their applications for post-16 study in the Autumn term and the application process will continue throughout the academic year.

October – sixth forms and colleges begin their open events to promote courses and opportunities. They also open their application processes – online

December – January – closing dates for most sixth form college applications

NOTE: colleges do not have the same deadlines but early applications are still advisable!

March – students begin to receive and accept/reject offers

September – application for that year close

Students can apply via sixth form or college website using their APPLY tab.

NOTE: Apprenticeship and Traineeship applications run throughout the academic year and students must be 16 and have finished full time education before starting. Apprenticeships have a much more detailed application process than sixth forms or college and may require students to find their own placements if taken via colleges.



Entry requirements – what do I need to achieve?

The recent changes to the grading system are set out below. Look at the information to make sure you know what grades you may need to get at GCSE in order to progress on to your chosen destination after year 11.

KEY POINTS:

- A **Grade 4** is a standard pass, while a **Grade 5** is a strong pass
- Only around 2-3% of students will achieve a **Grade 9**, making it a little higher than the old **A***
- Although the new grades don't exactly match the old grades, colleges will mostly view them as follows:

9-7 = A*-A 6 = B 4-5 = C 3-1 = D and below

- Vocational qualifications like BTECs match up with GCSEs as follows:

L1 – GCSE Grades 1-3 (Pass-Distinction) L2 – GCSE Grades 4-9 (Pass-Distinction)

- Most colleges, sixth forms and apprenticeships accept BTEC-type qualifications, as do 95% of universities, including Russell Group and Oxford!

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	A*
8	A
7	
6	B
5	C
4	
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U



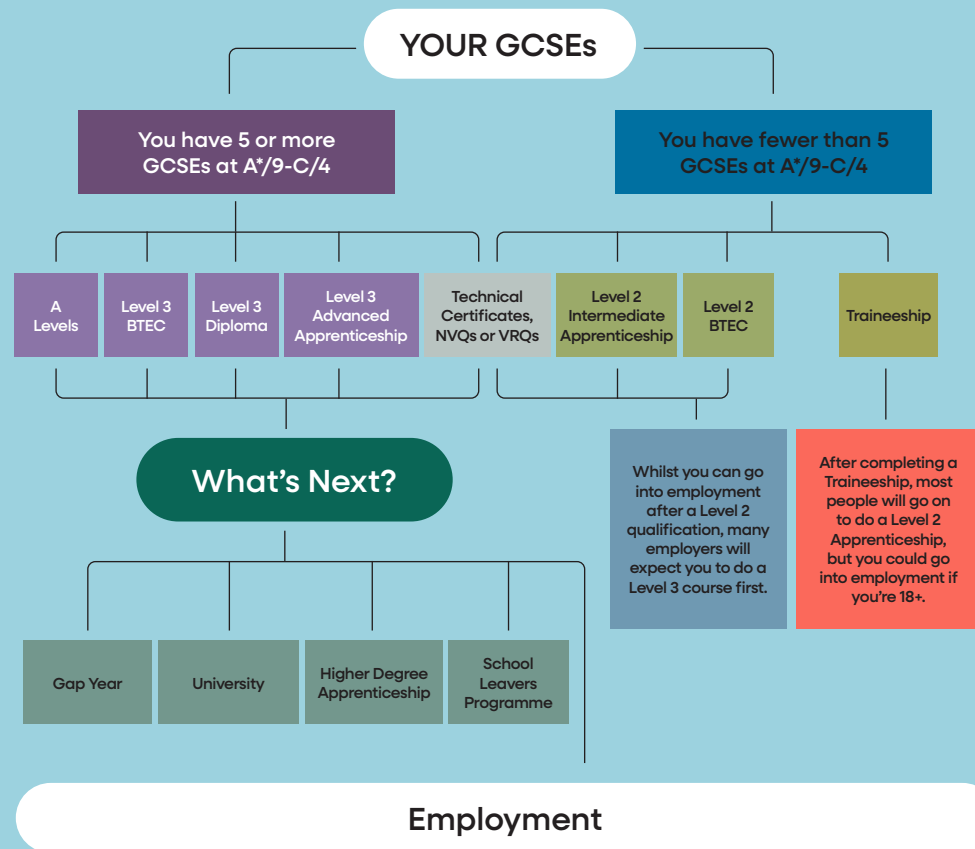
USEFUL LINKS

Which university – how important are my GCSEs?
<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/gcse-choices-university/how-important-are-my-gcse-grades>

The student room
<https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/gcse/exams/new-gcse-grades-explained>

Qualification Levels Guide – GCSE to Degree Level

YOUR CHOICES



Employment

How do I make my final decision about post-16?

Making a decision about where to go after year 11 can be tricky, particularly while you are busy revising for your exams, so it is important to consider the following factors that might help with your decision making:

Where can this option take me in the future? If you are thinking about a destination after your post-16 options, such as university or higher/degree apprenticeships, it is important to know whether the qualifications you are taking from 16-18 can help you to progress on to these pathways.

Use websites like UCAS - <https://www.ucas.com/> or which University - <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/> to find out whether the course you are considering after year 11 will allow you to progress onto what you want to do afterwards. Speak with the sixth form, college or training provider you are applying to get further details!

For example:

- If you want to study Dentistry at university you will usually need to take A-Levels in Chemistry, Biology/Maths/Physics
- Some universities do not accept BTEC L3 Extended Diplomas (although 95% do)
- Apprenticeships have varying entry requirements – some ask for 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above while others ask for 2-3 A-Levels
- What will doing this option be like? Whatever you choose to do after year 11, you will probably be doing it for at least a year, so it is important that you know what the learning environment will be like and whether the style of teaching is for you.

You could:

- Speak to the sixth form or college staff and students at one of the open days/evenings which take place throughout the year – dates for these can be found on their websites.
- Research more about the sixth form, college or apprenticeship provider online to find out about what you would study as part of your qualification, what support is offered while you study, e.g. help finding work experience, financial support like a free bus pass or food allowance, assistance from the careers team to help you move on after finishing your course etc.

Get prepared!

Learn more about the options available after Finishing school, including sixth form, college, apprenticeships and University.

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

Explore hundreds of careers profiles to gain a better understanding of different industries. Complete a skills health check to see what your careers your skills match you to.

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Improve your employability skills and start recording your experiences on a CV.

<https://barclayslifskills.com/>

The complete destinations platform designed to support you to investigate your careers ideas in more detail.

<https://www.unifrog.org/sign-in>

Miss Campbell will be working with all Year 11 students from September, you can also email her on ccampbell@bhs.potteries.ac.uk with any questions.

Don't forget the BHS website has links for websites to support you as well as lots more on the subject of careers.

Assessing your interests and skills

IDENTIFYING YOUR PASSIONS

Remember that passions can evolve, and having multiple interests is okay. Embrace the exploration process, and as you identify your passions, look for ways to incorporate them into your life, whether through hobbies, volunteer work, or even a career change. Pursuing your passions can bring a sense of purpose and Fulfillment, leading to a more enriching and satisfying life.

RECOGNISING YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Recognising your strengths and weaknesses is an ongoing process. Open to feedback and committed to personal growth. Embrace your strengths, be compassionate with your weaknesses, and use this self-awareness to make informed decisions and pursue an optimal life journey.

EXPLORING DIFFERENT CAREER OPTIONS

Career exploration is an ongoing process, and it's okay to take the time to find the right match. Embrace a journey of self-discovery and be proactive in exploring various career options. By investing time and effort in this exploration, you can make informed decisions that match your passions and set you on a better career path.

Creating a career action plan

BREAKING DOWN YOUR GOALS INTO ACTIONABLE STEPS

Breaking down your goals into actionable steps not only makes them more achievable but also provides a clear roadmap for success. It allows you to maintain focus, stay organised, and make steady progress toward your desired outcomes. Remember that taking small, consistent steps towards your goals can lead to significant accomplishments over time.

ESTABLISHING MILESTONES AND TIMELINES

Establishing milestones and timelines is crucial for effective goal management, time management, and progress tracking. It keeps you focused, accountable, and adaptable, leading to higher chances of success in achieving your objectives.

DEALING WITH POTENTIAL OBSTACLES

Dealing with potential obstacles is an essential skill for personal and professional growth. Whether you face challenges in your personal life or your career, here are some general strategies to help you navigate obstacles effectively.



Job search strategies

Job search strategies are methods and approaches students can use to find and secure employment opportunities. In a competitive job market, having effective job search strategies can significantly increase your chances of landing a job that aligns with your skills, interests, and career goals.

Balancing work and life

Balancing work and life is crucial for maintaining overall well-being and ensuring a fulfilling and sustainable lifestyle. Many need help finding the proper equilibrium between their professional responsibilities and personal life. The goal is to continuously strive for a balance that makes you feel fulfilled and content in both your professional and personal life. Flexibility and the willingness to adapt to changing circumstances are key to maintaining a healthy work-life balance.



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