



Post 16 Options

College & Sixth Form

The main qualifications after Year 11 are:

- **A Levels.** Academic study for progression to higher education, apprenticeship or work. Primarily exams but some subjects include non-examined assessment.
- **Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs).** A blend of academic and applied learning for progression to higher education, apprenticeship or work. Designed to be taken alongside A Levels in a mixed study programme.
- **Technical Qualifications (TQs)** at Level 2 or 3 in occupational (work) areas, smaller than T Levels and available in non-T Level areas. You train in an occupational area designed to help you progress towards your chosen career.
- **Vocational qualifications** at Level 1, 2 and 3 in your area of interest, which include coursework, exams and/or practical assessment of learning (some of these qualifications will be removed in the next 3 years but alternatives will be offered).
- **T Levels** employer designed qualifications to prepare you for skilled employment or further study and includes a work placement.

Consider your learning style. Do you like to study and do exams or do you prefer a more practical way of learning with part exams/coursework or all coursework.

Understanding the difference between qualifications will help you make an informed choice.

If you have a career in mind, research what options are best linked to that career, and which college offers these courses.

If you're not sure, keep options open and seek advice from your Career Practitioner or Career Lead.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are real jobs with real employers. You can start an apprenticeship from 16 years old and over. They range from level 2 (foundation and intermediate) through to level 7 (master's level). As an apprentice you would be employed to do a job and would continue your studies towards achieving a related apprenticeship standard (which may include a qualification). You will gain knowledge, skills and behaviours to support you in progressing into your chosen career or to a higher or degree apprenticeship.

- <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/>
- <http://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/>
- <https://apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/>

Research what opportunities are available locally, this will give you an insight into local employers and labour market information. Learn about the companies you would want to work for and be able to explain why.

You will need to know what career area(s) you are interested in, for example, hair & beauty, construction, hospitality & catering, engineering etc.

Learn about yourself, your skills and write your CV, consider a day in the life of that career/job and whether it would suit you.

Apprenticeships are competitive, and not all applicants will be offered a place. Success requires a certain amount of preparation, and luck! It is useful to have a backup plan such as applying for college.

Understand the process; training providers/ colleges will support the process, but you are likely to be required to find your own employer.

For further help see your Career Practitioner or Career Lead.

Employment with Accredited Training

Another option is to go into full time paid employment, self-employment or volunteering for a minimum of 20 hours each week. If you are under 18, this must also include accredited training. An example of this would be working in retail and completing an NVQ in customer service alongside. The training aspect must equate to 280 Guided Learning Hours per annum (about one day per week) and be a nationally recognised qualification.

Looking for work can take time, commitment and organisation. You can look for vacancies online, through word of mouth, on company websites and via social media. It's a good idea to prepare a CV that you amend for each job accordingly. Recommended websites:

- <https://www.allaboutschooleavers.co.uk/>
- <https://uk.indeed.com/>

Total jobs [Uk job vacancies - Updated Daily](#)

To research regulated qualifications that you could take alongside your full -time employment or volunteering look at:

- <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-qualification.services>