



Post 16 Qualifications and Progression routes information September 2026

Department for Education Post 16 Choices Video
– https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_xAQNNi4pA

Click on the link below for more detailed information about all of the Post 16 Options available. It covers:

Full-time education (A-levels, T-levels, Vocational and Technical qualifications and Applied qualifications).

Combining working and learning (Traineeships, Internships, Apprenticeships and School Leaver Schemes).

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/career-choices-at-16>

The Get the Jump campaign on the National Careers Service website promotes the full range of exciting opportunities

available to young people to help them to work out their next move.

[Skills for Life: it all starts with skills | Skills for Careers \(education.gov.uk\)](#)

T-Levels are the emerging technical qualification available for post 16 study. By clicking this link you can access a short 6 minute information film and some other quick read resources.

[Amazing Apprenticeships | Explore Vocational Education & Apprenticeship Opportunities](#)

We strongly recommend that you watch this with you child whilst you are planning post 16 progression routes. If you require any further assistance regarding all matters concerning post 16 progression please contact Mr Parker parkert@wes.swecet.org .

Click on the link below to access a 4 minute introductory YouTube video titled 'Using Careerpilot to help students with their Post-16 Options.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYHEmcjQhlo>

Careerpilot is a great, free-to-use website for both young people and their parents/carers.

It provides detailed information to help young people plan their future study and career, including:

- all career choices at 14, 16 and 18;
- 19 job sectors and 100s of job profiles;
- courses and apprenticeships;
- places to study in the South of England.

Careerpilot's Career Tools help young people make choices and identify their skills.



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Careerpilot's Parent Zone helps parents and carers get answers to career-related questions. The Parent Zone also has a quiz, helping help parents find answers to key questions that can impact on young people's decisions.

Click on the link below that will take you directly to the 'Your choices at 16' page containing the latest information about:

- A-levels
 - T levels
 - Thinking about a degree in the future
 - Help with choosing your post 16 options
- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Apprenticeships | Vocational qualifications |
| Work or voluntary route | Places to study at 16 |

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/your-choices-at-16>

Essex Opportunities website contains very useful information about post 16 progression routes that are available in Essex.

[Search for apprenticeships, courses and jobs in Essex \(essexopportunities.co.uk\)](https://www.essexopportunities.co.uk)

An 'easy' summary of the post 16 options 'What's your next move?' is below:

What's your next move?

Compare your options after GCSE



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QUALIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH OF TIME	ASSESSMENT	LEVEL OF STUDY	AWARDS UCAS POINTS?	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	WORK EXPERIENCE	WHAT DOES IT LEAD TO?
APPRENTICESHIPS www.apprenticeships.gov.uk	A real job with training and a salary.	1 Year minimum	Apprenticeship dependent (inc. demonstrations, presentations and/or exams)	2/3 with the possibility to progress to higher apprenticeships up to level 7	No	- Employer dependent - Age 16+ - Evidence of interest and ability to complete	Yes (paid job, with at least 20% off the job training)	- Higher level or degree apprenticeship - University/College - Work
A LEVELS www.apprenticeships.gov.uk	An academic qualification, similar in style to GCSEs, that prepares you for further study.	2 Years	Mostly exams at the end of the course	3	Yes	For individual schools and colleges to decide (commonly 5 GCSEs at grades 4 and above)	No	- Apprenticeship - University/College - Work
T LEVELS www.tlevels.gov.uk	A technical study programme, equivalent to 3 A levels, with an industry placement that makes up 20% of the course. T levels are designed to give you the skills that employers need.	2 Years	Exams, projects and practical assignments	3	Yes	Set by each school/college	Yes (80% classroom, 20% work)	- Apprenticeship - University/College - Work
TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (e.g. some Pearson BTECs, Cambridge Technicals, OCR and Btec Diplomas, AQA Technicals, CIPD Diplomas and many others)	Qualifications which teach you how to do tasks specifically related to the industry and role you want to be in.	Course dependent	Course dependent (coursework & exams)	1+	Some (course & awarding organisation dependent)	Course dependent	Course dependant	- Apprenticeship - College - Work
APPLIED QUALIFICATIONS (e.g. some Pearson BTECs and some Cambridge Technicals, OCR Diplomas and many others)	Qualifications that prepare you for further study by combining academic learning with practical skills to give you a broad overview of working in a sector.	Course dependent	Course dependent (coursework & exams)	3	Yes	Set by each school/college	Course dependant	- Apprenticeship - University/College - Work
TRAINEESHIPS www.gov.uk/government/collections/traineeships	A work focused study programme that prepares you for an apprenticeship or work.	6 Weeks - 6 Months	A formal job or exit interview with written feedback. Coursework and exams are course dependent	N/A	No	Have little to no work experience and qualified below Level 3	Yes	- Apprenticeship - Work

Levels are designed to indicate the complexity of qualifications and apprenticeships, allowing people to draw comparisons and understand where they sit in relation to the other options which are available. There are 8 levels plus entry level, with the higher levels offering the highest difficulty. Find out more about the different levels at www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean. Visit nationalcareers.service.gov.uk for information about careers, training and work.

Applies to England only



HM Government