



THE MOUNTBATTEN SCHOOL

Post-16 Options

Planning your future 2023/24

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As the great Charles Dickens said: “My advice is to never do tomorrow what you can do today. Procrastination is the thief of time”. You will soon have to decide whether you will go to college (and choose which college and courses), or whether you will look for an apprenticeship or another form of training.

Use the coming months wisely to start investigating different options so that you are making your decision from an informed position, not having to rush at the last minute.

Key events to support your decision-making:

- Careers Fair & Work Enrichment Day (completed)
- College assemblies (autumn term)
- College Open Events (throughout the year)
- Careers interviews

Below are some ideas of where to start looking for future options, depending on your individual situation.

I don't know what I want to do!

<i>Request a careers interview</i>	Contact Mrs Shakya in the Careers Office (details on front page)
<i>Investigate careers via quizzes</i>	Careers Companion, CareerPilot, iCould, Kudos, National Careers Service, Not going to uni, Prospects, UCAS
<i>College</i>	Look at the different college websites and course offers
<i>University courses</i>	Kudos, Prospects, UCAS
<i>Not college or university</i>	Amazing Apprenticeships, Find an apprenticeship, Not going to uni, Traineeships, individual companies, Armed Forces

I know what I want to do as a career!

Find out what you need to study / how to train	Professional bodies i.e. Law Society, apprenticeships, colleges, training providers, Prospects
Investigate where	Take part in college assemblies and open events, look out for information events organised by individual companies. Details will be posted in the Careers Google Classroom, the Careers Instagram page and your tutor board.



LINKS

Careers exploration

CareerPilot	careerpilot.org.uk
icould	icould.com
Kudos	kudos.cascaid.co.uk/#/
National Careers Service	nationalcareers.service.gov.uk
Not going to uni	www.notgoingtouni.co.uk
Prospects	www.prospects.ac.uk
UCAS	www.ucas.com

Apprenticeships & Traineeships

Amazing Apprenticeships	amazingapprenticeships.com
Find an apprenticeship	www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
Find a traineeship	www.gov.uk/find-traineeship

Apprenticeship training providers

Kiwi Education	kiwieducation.co.uk
PETA	www.peta.co.uk
SETA (Southampton Engineering)	www.setatraining.co.uk
Steve Willis Training	stevewillis.com

Colleges and Sixth Forms

Barton Peveril Sixth Form College	www.barton-peveril.ac.uk
Bishop Wordsworth's Grammar School	www.bishopwordsworths.org.uk/sixth-form
Brockenhurst College	www.brock.ac.uk
Eastleigh College	www.eastleigh.ac.uk
Fareham College	www.fareham.ac.uk
Itchen College	www.itchen.ac.uk
Peter Symonds College	www.psc.ac.uk
Richard Taunton Sixth Form College	www.richardtaunton.ac.uk
Southampton City College	www.southampton-city.ac.uk
South Wilts Grammar School	www.swgs.wilts.sch.uk/sixth-form
Sparsholt College	www.sparsholt.ac.uk
St Anne's Sixth Form	www.st-annes.uk.com/web
Totton College	www.totton.ac.uk
Wiltshire College	www.wiltshire.ac.uk

Universities (local)

Arts University Bournemouth	aub.ac.uk
Bournemouth University	www.bournemouth.ac.uk
Solent University	www.solent.ac.uk
Southampton University	www.southampton.ac.uk
University of Portsmouth	www.port.ac.uk
Winchester University	www.winchester.ac.uk/find-your-course
Directory of university events for everyone	www.unitasterdays.com

Armed Forces

Army	www.army.mod.uk
Royal Air Force	www.raf.mod.uk
Royal Navy	www.royalnavy.mod.uk

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

Some important aspects to consider when it comes to choosing a career are:

- What is the potential growth or decline a particular industry is set to experience in the future?
- Where are these jobs located around the country?
- What qualification do you need?
- How much do people get paid?
- How many people work in this job / industry?
- Where can this job / industry take me in the future?

You can find this information with the help of 'Labour Market Information', which can be accessed from a variety of sources:

Local Enterprise Partnership
Careers Websites

solentlep.org.uk
nationalcareers.service.gov.uk
www.careerpilot.org.uk
sacu-student.com

Job portals








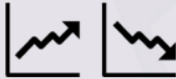
www.monster.co.uk
www.reed.co.uk
www.indeed.co.uk
www.glassdoor.co.uk/index.htm
www.hampshirechamber.co.uk

Chambers of Commerce

Research publications

www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-labour-market-projections-2014-to-2024
www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs
<http://www.ippr.org/research/topics/jobs-skills>

LMI means finding out the following things about different job roles or career pathways...

 <p>What do people actually do in this job/industry?</p>	 <p>How many people work in this job/industry?</p>	 <p>What qualifications do I need to do this job?</p>	 <p>How much do people get paid to do this job?</p>	 <p>What skills or qualities do I need to do this job?</p>
 <p>What are this typical working hours for this job?</p>	 <p>What percentage of men and women work in this job/industry?</p>	 <p>Where can this job/industry take me in the future?</p>	 <p>Where are these jobs located around the country?</p>	 <p>How many of these jobs will there be in the future?</p>

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:

Full-Time Study

This could be a qualification taken at a sixth form, college or training provider, totalling 540 hours of learning time per year, or around 18 hours per week.

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.

Traineeships – are an option for students who would like to do an apprenticeship but may not have the experience, skills or qualifications to do so yet. Traineeships can last up to six months and involve a work placement, Maths and English qualifications and support with finding an apprenticeship.

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 and is over 20 hours per week) or volunteering (again, over 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 are free for young people until they turn 19. In addition, there is a **16-19 Bursary Fund** to help students (who qualify) to pay for things like transport, food and stationery, which can be accessed at any sixth form, college or training provider you attend after Year 11. www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

Families in receipt of financial benefits from the government, such as **Tax Credits, Child Benefit or Universal Credit** need to be aware of how these can be affected once their child leaves school.

Students who remain in full-time education, such as sixth form or college, will continue to receive these benefits

Children who progress into paid employment or an apprenticeship, will no longer be considered dependants and benefits for them will stop.

More information can be found via the Gingerbread website:

<http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/find-information/benefits/benefits-child-turns-16/>

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

SIXTH FORM COLLEGES AND 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 A*-E, with a similar structure to GCSEs but looking at the subject in a lot more depth. Students can study:

Traditional A-Levels:

Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English Literature, English Language, Mathematics, Geography, History, Languages, Religious Education, Music, Art etc.

Alternative A-Levels:

Photography, Law, Sociology, Psychology, Business Studies, Film Studies, Media Studies, Economics, Politics, Sports Science etc.

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, providing a viable alternative to the more theory-focused A-Levels (they are equivalent to A-Levels). Subjects can include Health and Social Care, Applied Science, Travel & Tourism and Engineering. More information about BTECs can be found here:

www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/a-level-choices/what-are-btecs

How many A-Levels should I select?

Students studying A-Levels usually select three or four subjects (depending on their GCSE grades) that they want to study at college. It is preferable to take 3 subjects and achieve higher grades than 4 subjects potentially resulting in lower grades.

There are additional courses and awards that can help to make students stand out, such as the Extended Project (a research project of your choosing equivalent to half an A-Level and highly regarded by employers and universities), Duke of Edinburgh Award, clubs, work experience etc.

A-Level Entry Requirements:

Most colleges ask students to have 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above, including English and maths. Make sure that 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.

Vocational qualifications:

Colleges and Training Providers also offer BTECs and other vocational qualifications, alongside the more traditional A-Level subjects. They can include:

Animal Management, Sport Studies, Uniformed Public Services, Engineering, Hair and Beauty, Business Management, Performing Arts, Construction, Games Design and many more.

BTEC Entry Requirements:

Level 1	can require anything from no qualifications up to 3 GCSEs
Level 2	usually requires 3 GCSEs at grade 3 or above
Level 3	usually requires 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above

A list of our local Sixth Forms and Colleges can be found under the Links section on page 4.

MATHS AND ENGLISH RE-SITS – WHAT ARE THE RULES?

It is important to remember that if you get lower than grade 4 in your GCSE maths and English exams, you will need to re-sit these qualifications as part of any course you study at college or as part of an apprenticeship. The college or training provider will help you with studying for these qualifications. If necessary, they will get you to complete an alternative qualification called **Functional Skills (in maths and/or English)**, which is available for students who achieve lower than grade 3 in their GCSE maths/English.

Each re-sit subject requires at least 3 hours of study time per week, which may impact some of the course you are able to study at college. It's also worthwhile knowing that nationally only 30% of students pass the re-sit exams so it would be better to achieve grade 4 in school.

WHAT ARE THE NEW T-LEVELS?

T-Levels (or Technical Levels) are new courses, introduced in September 2020. A T-Level is equivalent to 3 A-Levels. These two-year courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work.

T-Levels will offer students a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days). They will provide the knowledge and experience needed to open the door into skilled employment, further study or a Higher Apprenticeship. The following colleges currently offer T-Levels:

- Brockenhurst College (*Education & Early Years*)
- Eastleigh College (*Education & Early Years, Management & Administration*)
- Fareham College (*Accounting; Building Services, Design & Development for Engineering; Digital Production; Digital Support Services; Education & Early Years; Health; Management*)
- Itchen College (*Education & Early Years*)
- Peter Symonds College (*Education & Early Years, Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy & Barbering*)
- Richard Taunton College (*Adult Nursing; IT Digital Production, Design & Development*)
- Sparsholt College (*Agriculture; Animal & Zoo Management; Arboriculture; Equine Studies, Horticulture*)

More T-Level courses will be available from September 2024.

Good to know: T-Levels carry UCAS points. A T-Level at grade Distinction* is worth the same as 3 A-Levels at A* and will be recognised by universities and other education providers.

More information about T-Levels can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels

TRAINEESHIPS

Are a good opportunity for students aged 16-24 who do not have the relevant qualifications, experience or skills to start an apprenticeship but are interested in progressing to one in the future. Traineeships involve a programme of up to six months of study, including a work placement, qualifications in maths and English and support with finding a job or apprenticeship once the course is completed. Students are not paid for taking part but can apply for a 16-19 Bursary Fund to help with costs.

More information on Traineeships can be found here:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/participation-lifelong-learning/professionalsandemployers/firsttraineeship>

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships are real jobs, with hands-on experience, a salary and the chance to train while you work. You're treated just like all the other employees, with a contract of employment and holiday leave.

If you're 16 or over, you can become an apprentice as long as you spend at least 50% of your working hours in England - for the duration of the apprenticeship and you are not in full-time education.

When you're an apprentice:

- you get paid and train at the same time, with at least 20% of your time spent in off the job training, often at a college, university or with a training provider
- you train to be fully competent in your chosen occupation
- you're on a career path - with lots of future potential for you

The current minimum wage for apprentices is £5.28 (if aged under 19 or over 19 and in their first apprenticeship year). However, many companies pay more. For example, a recent position for the NHS as an Administrator paid £22,800/year).

Apprenticeships can now be undertaken in almost all industries, including Agriculture, Animal Care, Business & Administration, Care Services, Catering & Hospitality, Construction, Creative & Design, Digital, Education & Childcare, Engineering & Manufacturing, Hair & Beauty, Health & Science, Legal & Accounting, Protective Services, Sales & Marketing, Transport & Logistics and many more.

There are four different apprenticeship levels:

Intermediate/Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE)	usually requires maths/English at GCSE
Advanced/Level 3 (equivalent to A-Level)	usually requires 5 GCSEs at Grade 4+
Higher/Level 4-5 (equivalent to Foundation Degree)	usually requires L3 or A-Levels
Degree/Level 6-7 (equivalent to University Degree)	usually requires 3 A-Levels or similar

Links to some useful apprenticeship websites:

amazingapprenticeships.com

www.ucas.com/apprenticeships-in-england

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/blog/five-most-popular-types-apprenticeship

How to find an apprenticeship:

- Register on the government website to receive new apprenticeship vacancy alerts:
 - www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
- Register with a job portal such as Indeed and use the search function to look for apprenticeships
- Contact local colleges, such as Eastleigh, Brockenhurst, Southampton City and Totton College to register interest
- Contact training providers to register interest. Details can be found on page 4
- Look on the careers section of individual companies you are interested in.

Important!

There is still the misconception that apprenticeships are only for those who are not academic and are seen as the easy option after college. Nothing could be further from the truth! It can be very difficult to secure an apprenticeship and a recent trend has indicated that many of our students had to go to college first before securing an apprenticeship.

It is strongly recommended that when you apply for an apprenticeship you also apply to college as a back-up option, in case the apprenticeship is no longer able to go ahead. Once the apprenticeship has started, contact the college and decline their offer. It is perfectly ok to do this.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SEND STUDENTS

COLLEGE

There are a number of courses available for students who may struggle with a full college curriculum. For example:

Eastleigh College – Kickstart course

This is a level 1 full-time, two-phase preparatory programme that supports and rewards personal development, resilience and commitment by developing learners working towards their goal of gaining entry to a vocational programme of their choice. For more details: <https://www.eastleigh.ac.uk/school-leavers/kickstart/>

Eastleigh & Totton College – Building Independence

This is a programme specifically designed for students with a moderate learning difficulty / disability. Students will learn a range of skills such as communication, ICT, road safety etc.) www.eastleigh.ac.uk/careers/other-progression-opportunities1/course-listing/building-independence-full-time/
<http://www.totton.ac.uk/courses/skills-for-life-application-introduction-to-your-course-2/>

Eastleigh & Totton College – Exploring Enterprise

A one-year programme for learners with moderate learning disabilities / difficulties, designed to give a flavour of working on an enterprise activity while maintaining the development of English, Maths, & IT and personal and social skills. For more details: www.eastleigh.ac.uk/careers/other-progression-opportunities1/course-listing/exploring-enterprise-full-time/
www.totton.ac.uk/courses/employability-and-enterprise/

Eastleigh College – other courses:

Other courses include 'Skills for Independence and Work', 'Skills for Supported Employment' and 'Supported Internship. www.eastleigh.ac.uk/school-leavers/supported-learning/

Totton College – 'Junctions' course

Designed for students with high-functioning autism, Asperger syndrome or mental health needs (anxiety, OCD, depressive illness etc.). The course is designed to support students' individual needs whilst allowing them to explore their full potential. www.totton.ac.uk/courses/junctions-level-1-and-level-2/

Brockenhurst College

The college has recently opened its brand new £4.9 million SEND Independence Hub. The building contains 14 new classrooms, social space, staff space, meeting rooms, a medical room, a hygiene room and a sensory room, among other facilities. <http://www.brock.ac.uk/the-college/support/>

APPRENTICESHIP

Clicking on the 'disability confident box' when registering for an apprenticeship shows employers who are able to support those with additional needs.

(www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch).



STUDENTS AGED 16-25 NOT IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR WORK (NEET)

The Princes' Trust has teamed up with the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and developed a programme which is designed to help those who are not in any form of education, training or work. The 12-week programme works on a young person's confidence, teaching new skills, gives them a residential week away, helps to establish new friendships and thus preparing them for the world of work. After completing the programme, participants will earn a recognised qualification. More details can be found here:

<http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/community/young-people/princes-trust/>

Other programmes and opportunities include:

- Enham Trust 'Skills to Achieve' - www.enhamtrust.org.uk/skills2achieve
- Hampshire Future - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/participation-lifelong-learning/education-participation>

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE DIFFERENT COLLEGES?

Students have the opportunity to listen to a range of colleges during assemblies taking part in September and October. Colleges also offer Open Events; it would be beneficial to visit at least two or three different colleges.

College Open Events Dates 2023/24

Date	College	Time	Telephone number	Website
22 September 2023	Bishop Wordsworth Grammar School – Sixth Form	14.30 – 16.30	01722 333851	www.bishopwordsworths.org.uk
26 September 2023	Eastleigh College	16.30 – 19.00	02380 911000	www.eastleigh.ac.uk
27 September 2023	Brockenhurst College	16.30 – 20.00	01590 625555	www.brock.ac.uk
28 September 2023	Richard Taunton Sixth Form College	18.00 – 20.30	02380 511811	www.richardtaunton.ac.uk
29 September 2023	Bishop Wordsworth Grammar School – Sixth Form	9.30 – 11.30	01722 333851	www.bishopwordsworths.org.uk
October				
3 & 4 October 2023	Peter Symonds College	17.30 – 20.30	01962 857500	www.psc.ac.uk
4 & 5 October 2023	Barton Peveril College	16.30 – 20.30	02380 367200	www.barton-peveril.ac.uk
4 October 2023	Fareham College	16.00 – 19.30	01329 815200	www.fareham.ac.uk
7 October 2023	Sparsholt College	10.00 – 14.00	01962 776441	www.sparsholt.ac.uk
9 October 2023	Bishop Wordsworth Grammar School – Sixth Form	14.30 – 16.30	01722 333851	www.bishopwordsworths.org.uk
10 October 2023	Bitterne Park Sixth Form College	17.00 – 19.30	02380 325200	www.bitterneparksixthform.org.uk
10 October 2023	Totton College	17.30 – 19.30	02380 874874	www.totton.ac.uk
11 October 2023	St Anne's Sixth Form	18.00 – 20.00	02380 328200	www.stannes6th.uk
11 October 2023	Wiltshire College	17.00 – 19.00	01225 350035	www.wiltshire.ac.uk
11 October 2023	St Anne's Sixth Form	18.00 – 20.00	02380 328200	www.stannes6th.uk
11 October 2023	Eastleigh College	16.30 – 19.00	02380 911000	www.eastleigh.ac.uk
12 October 2023	Itchen College	17.00 – 20.00	02380 435636	www.itchen.ac.uk
12 October 2023	City College Southampton	17.00 – 19.00	02380 484848	www.southampton-city.ac.uk
14 October 2023	Brockenhurst College	9.30 – 13.30	01590 625555	www.brock.ac.uk
14 October 2023	Itchen College	10.00 – 13.00	02380 435636	www.itchen.ac.uk
20 October 2023	Bishop Wordsworth Grammar School – Sixth Form	10.00 – 12.00	01722 333851	www.bishopwordsworths.org.uk
November				
4 November 2023	Brockenhurst College	9.30 – 12.30	01590 625555	www.brock.ac.uk
9 November 2023	Eastleigh College	16.30 – 19.30	02380 911000	www.eastleigh.ac.uk
10 November 2023	Totton College	17.30 – 19.30	02380 874874	www.totton.ac.uk
11 November 2023	Sparsholt College	10.00 – 14.00	01962 776441	www.sparsholt.ac.uk
14 November 2023	Fareham College	16.00 – 19.30	01329 815200	www.fareham.ac.uk
14 November 2023	Itchen College	10.00 – 13.00	02380 435636	www.itchen.ac.uk
16 November 2023	Richard Taunton Sixth Form College	18.00 – 20.30	02380 511811	www.richardtaunton.ac.uk
18 November 2023	City College Southampton	10.00 – 14.00	02380 484848	www.southampton-city.ac.uk
23 November 2023	Brockenhurst College – Marchwood Maritime & Construction	16.00 – 19.00	01590 625555	www.brock.ac.uk
25 November 2023	Richard Taunton Sixth Form College	11.00 – 15.00	02380 511811	www.richardtaunton.ac.uk

HOW DO I APPLY FOR MY POST-16 CHOICE?

COLLEGE

Applications are submitted via the college website, students need to have their personal statement and monitoring grades available (please use 'maximum effort' grades).

Below are the college application deadlines. Peter Symonds and Barton Peveril will not accept late applications!

Peter Symonds College	11 December 2023 (4pm)
Sparsholt College	ideally by Christmas 2023
Barton Peveril College	19 January 2024
Brockenhurst College	end of March 2024
Richard Taunton College	end of March 2024
Southampton City College	no fixed date but ideally before end of March
Itchen College	no fixed date but ideally before end of March
Eastleigh College	no fixed date but ideally before end of March
Totton College	no fixed date but ideally before end of March

Some suggestions:

- Apply to at least two colleges and accept both places. Once you have received your results in the summer and have decided which college you will go to, please ring the other college and cancel your offer.
- Do not leave your application until the last minute! Late applications may result in your chosen subject not being available!
- Do not choose the college based on where your friends are going! You are unlikely to study the same subjects and will meet many new friends!
- Interviews may be conducted on the phone or in person.

Although many students achieve the grades that they want from their GCSE examinations, it is important to prepare a back-up option in case students change their minds about what subjects they want to study or are unsuccessful in getting the grades required in order to progress on to their college/apprenticeship/course of choice.

The great news is that students can apply and accept offers from as many sixth forms, colleges and training providers as they want and can then make their mind up about which education provider they wish to progress on to in September after visiting the campus, meeting the staff and finding out what GCSE grades they have received in August!

APPRENTICESHIPS

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 form or college and may require students to find their own placements if taken via colleges.

Some suggestions:

- Set up an account via the Government apprenticeship website and set an alert when new vacancies become available.

- Contact training providers and colleges which offer apprenticeships and register your interest. Often they have vacancies which are not advertised!
- Start looking early and be prepared that it may take until July of Year 11 to find an apprenticeship.
- **ALWAYS** apply for a college course as a back-up.

The application form is very similar to a college application form and sometimes asks additional questions such as:

- What are your main strengths?
- What skills would you like to improve up during your apprenticeship?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- Details of education and qualification, work experience, training courses
- Why are you interested in this apprenticeship?
- What motivates you and where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Apprenticeships can attract high number of applications so it's very important to double-check your spelling and sell yourself, making your details relevant to the job application.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

In 2017 the grading scheme was changed from letters to numbers. Please see below.

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
	8
A	7
B	6
C	5 STRONG PASS
	4 STANDARD PASS
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	1
U	U

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 **BTEC** and **VCERT** 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 the Russell Group and Oxford!

Do your research!

No matter what you hear from friends or on social media, it is important to check all information carefully. Although the Department for Education have stated that a Grade 4 will be considered the official 'Pass Mark' for students, not all colleges or universities may agree with this. For example, Kings College London and UCL both now ask for a Grade 5 at GCSE in English and Maths as part of their entry requirements, but Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool (all Russell Group universities) still consider Grade 4 the equivalent to a C.

Different post-16 and post-18 providers may ask for different entry requirements depending on the course and/or college. For example, some apprenticeships require only GCSE English and Maths at Grade 3 and above (English and maths would have to be re-taken to achieve a 4 alongside the apprenticeship training), while some sixth form colleges ask for a Grade 5/6 in specific subjects. For example, Peter Symonds and Barton Peveril require GCSE grade 6 in biology to study biology, whereas Richard Taunton College require a grade 5 in biology.

Apart from checking each college's course entry requirement, using the following websites can help you to find the exact entry requirements you need:

www.ucas.com

www.prospects.ac.uk

Which University – How important are my GCSEs?

www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/gcse-choices-university/how-important-are-my-gcse-grades

QUALIFICATION LEVELS GUIDE - OVERVIEW

L6	University Degree (BA/BSc/BEng)	University Degree (BA/BSc/BEng)	Degree Apprenticeship (NVQ L5 + L6)
	Grades Needed: Usually GCSE Maths/English at grade 4/5 and 2-3 A-Levels/BTEC L3 Extended Diploma (check first!)	Usually GCSE Maths/English at grade 4/5 and 2-3 A-Levels/BTEC L3 Extended Diploma (check first!)	Usually GCSE Maths/English at grade 4/5 and 2-3 A-Levels/BTEC L3 Extended Diploma (check first!)
L5	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 20%;"> Foundation Degree (FdA, FSc) </div> <div style="width: 20%;"> HND (Higher National Diploma – L5) </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 20%;"> Foundation Degree (FdA, FSc) </div> <div style="width: 20%;"> HND (Higher National Diploma – L5) </div> </div>	Higher/Degree Apprenticeship (NVQ L4 + L5)
L4			
Grades Needed:	Usually GCSE Maths/English at grade 4 and 1-2 A-Levels/ L3 Diploma/Extended Diploma	Usually GCSE Maths/English at grade 4 and 1-2 A-Levels/ L3 Diploma/Extended Diploma	Usually GCSE Maths/English at grade 4 and 1-2 A-Levels/ L3 Diploma/Extended Diploma
L3	A-Levels	L3 Diploma / Extended Diploma (BTEC or other) / Access to HE courses	Advanced Apprenticeship (NVQ L3)
Entry Grades Needed:	Usually 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or higher, including Maths and English	5 GCSEs at grade 4 or higher (usually including Maths and English)	Usually at least 3-5 GCSEs (but sometimes no formal qualifications)
L2	GCSEs (grades 9-4)	L2 National / BTEC Diploma / Functional Skills	Intermediate Apprenticeship (NVQ L2)
Entry Grades Needed:	None	3-4 GCSEs at grade 3 or higher (usually including Maths and English)	Usually none, although sometimes GCSE Maths and English and a skills test
L1	GCSEs (grades 3-1)	L1 Diploma / Functional Skills	Traineeship (preparation for apprenticeship)
Entry Grades Needed:	None	None (sometimes basic Maths and English)	None
Entry Level 3	Key Stage 3	E3 Diploma (Foundation)	-
Entry Grades Needed:	None	None	-
	School / 6th Form	College / Further Education	Apprenticeships

WORK EXPERIENCE

We are of the opinion that students can never have 'too much' work experience and suggest that if students are still unsure about their future options or wish to enter a highly competitive job sector, such as medicine, they complete further work experience in either the autumn, Christmas or summer holidays; during college or complete an online placement with providers such as Springpod (www.springpod.com)

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Following on from the mock interviews held in September all students should have an updated personal statement. Guidance on how to write a personal statement can be found on the UCAS website:

<http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement>

Please contact the Careers Department if you wish for us to double-check your statement.

POST-18 OPTIONS

Introduction

This is a very brief introduction to some alternatives to university. There are more and more viable opportunities to a university degree education which are outlined below. You may decide that further study isn't for you, you know what career you want and may need practical experience - rather than more study. You may want a mixture of both working and studying, you may decide you don't want a student loan. You may feel you are ready for the world of work. The choice is yours.

You do need to think about the future long-term, making sure you are setting yourself up to be employable, particularly if you want to progress to management or leadership levels.

The process and timing of applications differ for each type and sometimes from company to company. For example, a School Leaver Programme application for PWC could start in Sept / Oct of Year 13 whereas an apprenticeship with Lloyds Bank may not start until Easter. You need to look very carefully at each company for information as you will be applying directly to the company concerned.

What employers want

Ultimately they want to know that you are employable – i.e. you are going to be effective in the workplace whether it is for a job without training attached or with. You will have to demonstrate this through various means from an application form, CV, on line tests, telephone and or face to face interview or maybe even an assessment centre. Apart from the skills specific to a particular role they are looking for:

- Required academic and/or practical qualifications
- Problem solving skills and a 'can do' attitude
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively
- IT literacy and numeracy
- Commercial awareness

Think about where you have these skills and how you can demonstrate them if you were in an interview.

Apprenticeships

There are many routes into apprenticeships. Some students choose them straight after school, some choose to have the college experience first and then start an apprenticeship. Some people work for a few years and then decide to study, choosing a degree apprenticeship. There are two types of apprenticeships that combine studying:

Higher Apprenticeship (NVQ Level 4/5)

Working towards a learning-based qualification such as a Foundation Degree. These will have A levels as an entry requirement.

Degree Apprenticeship (NVQ Level 5&6)

Where the non-practical aspect of the qualification will be taught at degree level. They work as a collaboration between companies and universities. They are relatively new, but more are developing rapidly. Currently they are mainly in technical fields such as IT and engineering but more are opening up in finance, science, health and public relations.

Consider an apprenticeship if you want to take a vocational route and earn a degree without the debt.

School Leaver Programmes

School leaver programmes may differ slightly from degree or higher apprenticeships as they may not have a formal academic aspect included in the programme. They are not as easy to find as they are not always registered on the National Apprenticeship Scheme. You may find details on the company's website or the following websites:

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

<http://www.ucas.com>

School leaver programmes are most frequently found in the finance, business, science and engineering sectors. Previous offers we have come across include:

Tesco	Marks and Spencer	John Lewis
PwC	Civil Service	Deloitte
Goldman Sachs	KPMG	IBM
RBS	Barclays Bank	Santander
Proctor and Gamble	MOD	Civil Service
British Airways	Network Rail	Dstl
Siemens	Unilever	National Space Centre
Qinetiq	National Composites Centre	BBC
Eon	Leonardo	GSK

These programmes require you to obtain a certain number of tariff points or A level grades and an interest in the profession and motivation to work hard and do well. Their application process is likely to include the following: on-line selection test, telephone interview, assessment centre and interview. See individual company websites for more information.

Employment and Training

Some employers, particularly accountants, offer a training contract whereby you will be based in the company learning 'on the job' and then have a day at college to learn the technical aspects of the role and gain a qualification. For accountancy you would be expected to sign a training agreement for 3-5 years and over that time would take 15 modules covering related topics. Upon completion of the training you qualify as an accountant. Many accountancy companies offer this type of contract – speak to the company directly.

Employer Funded Study

As more companies develop degree apprenticeships, there are fewer opportunities to do sponsored degrees (either fully funded or part funded) but there are still some companies that are looking at how they can work with universities to secure graduates from early stages. You can also apply for an Army / RAF or Navy Officer Bursary which, if successful, will give you a bursary towards your living costs whilst at university and a place at Sandhurst (Army), Dartmouth (Navy) or Cranwell (RAF) for Officer Selection. If you pass that you will be required to serve for 3-4 years.

Cadetships

Throughout the Armed Forces there are cadetships available, for example nursing or engineering. In the Merchant Navy there are two types – Deck Officer and Engineering Officer where cadets take block leave to study at college or university and then return to sea for a period of time.

Distance Learning

Distance Learning simply means studying for a qualification away from school, college or university. It usually means that you study at home and the course comes to you in the form of books, CDs, online learning and virtual communities. Some courses have local tutorials available and may require you to attend a residential course. Distance learning is often thought of as a path more suited to mature students but is becoming more of a recognised option for school leavers. In fact, 34% of Open University (the most well-known provider of distance learning courses) students are under 25.

Many distance learning students work full time and study in their spare time. It takes organisation and self-motivation to do this but can be a very worthwhile way of studying. See <http://www.open.ac.uk> for further information as well as individual universities.

Fees are paid by module and you are able to take a break between modules if it suits you. It is possible to access Student Finance (<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login>) to assist with the payment of fees.

Gap Years

It's not just about travelling and sitting on a beach for a year - you are unlikely to be travelling for a whole year! Most people who travel, spend the first 6 months working and saving for their travel. Remember also, if you are planning to do something abroad and are planning to apply to university in your gap year, you may be required to be in the UK for an interview. There are many different things to do on a gap year and for some it becomes a way of life and employment rather than a year before going to university. Please ensure that you check the validity of the Gap Year organisation. Activities could include:

- Volunteering – world-wide or UK
- Summer Camps
- TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language
- Travelling
- Year in industry
- General employment

Where to look for available employment

Fewer than half the jobs available are actually advertised. You need to think beyond a local paper to find the job for you. You can try Indeed.com, Totaljobs.com, the JobCentre, employment agencies (on line and in towns), direct with the company and of course networking.

Many national companies, (including Waitrose, Marks and Spencer, The National Trust) have their application process centralised in their early stages so you need to visit the website and you will then be able to see if they have vacancies and where. Networking is, in the nicest possible way 'using the people you know' and in turn the people they know, to discover what opportunities are available. Whenever you speak to people, think about whom they might know and what they do and what opportunities they may know about. Even if they don't know about a specific position, they may still know something useful about a company.

IMPORTANT NOTE – your chances of making a successful apprenticeship application at some of the most competitive companies, improve hugely if you have done an internship or work experience with them before the start of Year 13.

ACTION – Highlight options that appeal and list the skills you have acquired to build a profile of yourself for your CV or job application!

HIGHER EDUCATION

Deciding to apply to university and to spend between 3 – 6 years studying is not a decision to be made lightly. It is however an exciting, challenging, social, opportunity-filled time that many people value throughout their lives. Not only will it develop your skills academically and vocationally, you will make new friends, you will learn to live independently and you will become involved in a large community that is a Higher Education Institution. You will also improve your job and earning prospects.

Most students who decide to go to university do so after completing their A Levels or after taking a gap year. However, provided you have the right qualifications, it is possible to apply at any stage later than this as those who are termed 'mature students' will confirm. There are also online and distance learning options if you can't or don't want to attend full-time. The Open University is the best-known organisation within this sector.

Your college can help you to choose the right course and university depending on what you want to study, how you want to study it and what you want to do after university. For some of you that will mean applying to highly selective universities and competitive courses: often known as research intensive universities e.g. Russell Group Universities. For others, it will mean applying for an equally competitive course at a university known for its quality of teaching in that field but not necessarily part of those groups. Ultimately it is about choosing the right course for you at the right institution.

Bear in mind, the more competitive and selective the university and course are, the higher the requirements are. Russell Group universities offer good research facilities, which apart from providing the latest knowledge, also attract external funding. However, these are not the only universities to consider as many other universities are highly respected and also attract funding. Certain universities such as Bath and St Andrews are not members of the Russell Group but are just as renowned for their research facilities. This means that students who will to apply for these universities must have a track record of consistently good grades and expect to get high grades – usually between A*A*A and ABB depending on the subject. You must also be able to articulate your enthusiasm and full understanding of the subject you are applying for. These universities can afford to be highly selective (Bristol for example has 23 applicants for every 1 History place) but if you are willing to work hard consistently and put in the research to your chosen subject, you will have a good chance of obtaining an offer.