

YOUR JOURNEY

If you're in year 10 or 11 at school, it's time to start thinking about your next step. This leaflet will break down the further education (FE) study options available to you at sixth form or college. Think of these as stepping stones to university or college, and your long-term career goals.

We also recommend searching for these websites:

- **Careerpilot**
Post 16 options
- **Which? University**
A-levels
- **UCAS**
Tariff point calculator
- **Prospects**
What job would suit me?
- **City and Guilds**
Technical and applied qualifications
- **Gov.uk**
Qualification levels and definitions, including apprenticeships



EXPLORE YOUR FUTURE

If you're unsure of what you want to do next, visit our website to start your research. You'll find information on:

- Why Higher Education (HE) matters
- Career paths and job sectors
- Courses subjects and qualifications
- Local events and activities
- Resources and videos
- Blog/
- HE Knowledge Hub podcast series
- Frequently asked questions



nextstepsw.ac.uk



nextstepsw@plymouth.ac.uk



@NextStepsSW

Find the route
that's right
for you



LEVEL 3 OPTIONS



APPRENTICESHIPS

Earn while you learn as a young apprentice.

Advanced apprenticeships are a form of work-based study, helping young people become ready for industry. They are equivalent to two A-levels and take place both in the workplace and in the classroom, balancing practical experience with theory. Subjects on offer include agriculture, business, catering, healthcare, marketing, engineering, transport logistics and more.

over 150,000 employers are currently offering apprenticeships in more than **200,000 locations**, covering more than **170 industries** across the UK.

UCAS.com

Apprentices typically work for 30 hours per week and study the equivalent of one day per week. The current minimum wage rate for an apprentice between the age of 16 - 18 is £4.81 per hour (correct as of Dec '22). As an apprentice you may also have the right to holiday and sick pay.

Entry requirements

You may need up to five GCSEs at grades 9-4 (A*-C), including Maths and English.

What next?

Apprentices qualify with the expertise to enter the workforce straight away, but many decide to develop their expertise further on a Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4 - 7) which is equivalent to a Foundation Degree.

WORK-RELATED OR VOCATIONAL LEARNING

**Want to get stuck into the workplace?
You might like to study a vocational course.**

Practical programmes are available in a diverse range of industries, including engineering, construction, accountancy, design, hair & beauty, IT and more. This style of training will suit you if you like getting hands-on and want experience in a specific field, developing practical skills and specialised knowledge of software and equipment. They can be studied at school or college, and often include some classroom based activities too. Assessments are usually both written and practical.

Types of qualification

- **BTECs**
- **City & Guilds** (Technicals or Techbac)
- **OCR Technicals**
- **Extended & Level 3 Diploma**
- **T-Levels**
- **NVQs** (usually work and college based)

Entry requirements

To enter at Level 3, you will need four GCSE grades 9-4 (A*-C), including English and Maths or prior achievement at Level 2. If your GCSE grades are lower than a C, you may enter vocational study at Level 2 – ask your teachers about your options.

What next?

Many students continue their professional development in the workplace or apply to a university, college, or to do a higher apprenticeship. You can still gain UCAS points from studying vocational courses.

A-LEVELS

If you want to keep your options open, go for an academic or subject-based qualification.

Often considered a traditional choice for students, A-Levels offer you the chance to carry on studying more than one subject at school or college. They take two years to complete and subject combinations vary, so check each provider's website for more information. Learning assessment usually includes a mix of exams and coursework.

There are hundreds of subjects to choose from, but consider how you combine them...

e.g. Art with Business would provide a practical understanding of how to market your creativity, whilst Maths and IT could teach you strong accountancy skills.

Entry requirements

To study A-levels you usually need at least five GCSEs at grades 9-4 (A*-C), with at least grade B in the specific subject(s) you want to study.

What next?

A-levels are recognised internationally, making them a smart choice if you'd like to study or work abroad someday. They provide a strong foundation for going into a range of courses and careers, and help prepare you for higher education level study. Grades translate into UCAS tariff points for applications to higher education, but some degrees have specific entry requirements. (e.g. Science A*), so do your research.