

A Guide to applying for Further Education

How to apply to college and for apprenticeships

A guide for students and parents



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What are my options?

A Levels

Advanced level qualifications (known as A levels) are subject-based qualifications that can lead to university, further study, training, or work. You can normally study three or more A levels over two years. They're usually assessed by a series of examinations.

Usually, students:

- Study four subjects in their AS year;
- Drop one, which they achieve an AS-level in;
- Continue with the other three in their A2 year to achieve full A-levels in these.

Who are they for?

- If you're thinking about going to university, most higher education courses require specific A levels or combinations of A levels (or alternative level 3 qualifications).
- If you're not sure what career or job you want to do, studying a selection of A levels can be a good way of keeping your options open.

Do you still get A-levels with coursework?

A-levels are now primarily assessed by exams, which take place at the end of your second year. You'll still take exams at the end of your first year, but these won't count towards your final A-level grades.

Some subjects will be exception to this, including:

- art and design, which understandably involves coursework projects you work on throughout the year;
- chemistry, biology, and physics, include a practical element throughout the course.

Regardless of the subject, these non-exam assessments only ever account for 20% or less of your final grade.

1 You enjoyed and were good at the subject at GCSE level. This is a logical progression to take it to a higher level, but be aware that some subjects are distinctly more difficult at A-level.

2 You need certain subjects to enter a chosen career or course at university. But beware - there can be misconceptions about what you need for certain careers or degree courses.

3 You have not studied the subject before but feel that it will be very interesting or suit your strengths. For example, if you enjoy history or essay-based subjects, politics may be a logical addition.

BTECs

BTEC stands for the Business and Technology Education Council. A BTEC is a *vocational qualification*, which means that it has a career focus and is grounded in the world of work. BTEC students study to gain skills and knowledge in their subject area; then those skills are put into practice in real-life scenarios.

With both BTECs and A levels, you will gain a certificate and qualification that will enable you to impress work employers or do further study at college or university.

A key difference is that a BTEC provides a way to learn through practical work as well as study, while an A level course structure typically involves more written work and exams.

Another big difference is that A-Levels are geared towards big exams at the end of two years of studying, whereas BTECs are continually assessed throughout the course through coursework and practical projects.

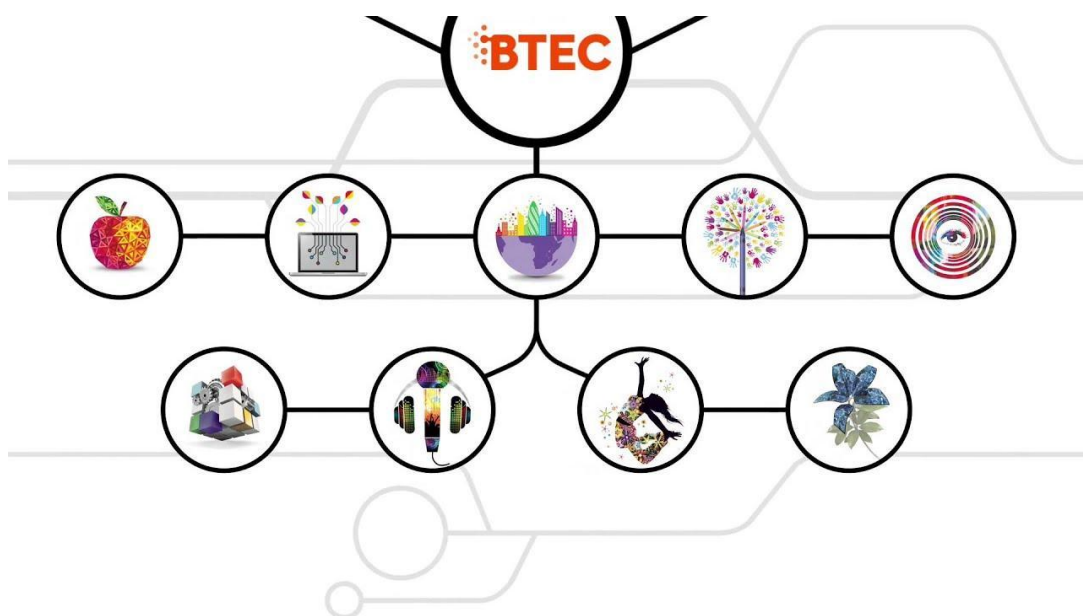
BTECs are also different to A-levels in that you can get varying BTECs and some are equivalent to GCSEs, depending on the level you do.

BTEC levels breakdown:

- BTEC levels 1-2 – GCSE equivalent
- BTEC level 3 – A level equivalent
- BTEC levels 4-7 – Degree equivalent

Did you know?

- 90% of BTEC students are employed full-time after graduating
- Over 1 million learners choose BTECs every year
- With a BTEC you can become a professional worker, entrepreneur or go to a top university



T Levels: what they are

T Levels are new courses which follow GCSEs and are equivalent to 3 A levels. These 2-year courses, which launched September 2020, have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work, further training or study. T Levels offer students a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days).

In time, students will be able to take a T Level in the following subject areas:

- accounting
- agriculture, land management and production
- animal care and management
- building services engineering for construction (starting September 2021)
- catering
- craft and design
- design and development for engineering and manufacturing
- design, surveying and planning for construction (now available)
- digital business services (starting September 2021)
- digital production, design and development (now available)
- digital support and services (starting September 2021)
- education and childcare (now available)
- finance
- hair, beauty and aesthetics
- health (starting September 2021)
- healthcare science (starting September 2021)
- human resources
- legal
- maintenance, installation and repair for engineering and manufacturing
- management and administration
- engineering, manufacturing, processing and control
- media, broadcast and production
- onsite construction (starting September 2021)
- science (starting September 2021)

The Manchester College, Bury College, Oldham College and Hopwood Hall all offer the new T.Levels

Apprenticeships

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

Your apprenticeship can take between one and six years to complete, depending on which apprenticeship you choose, what level it's at, and your previous experience.

Different apprenticeships are available all over England, at companies large and small, in a wide range of industries and organisations; from local organisations to large national brands, including the Co-op.

You get valuable hands-on experience working whilst you learn, which helps you progress in your working life.

Completing your apprenticeship means you've earned and learned. Given your training is funded by contributions from the government and your employer, and you receive a regular salary, apprenticeships are a great option for getting on the job ladder or supercharging your career.

Why apply?

- Earn a real wage
- Be trained in the skills employers want
- Set yourself up for the future – apprentices enjoy marked salary increases when they complete their training, and those completing a higher apprenticeship could see increased earnings of an estimated £150,000 over their lifetime.

Finding out about my options

What grades do I need to take A levels?

You normally need:

- at least five GCSEs at grades 9 to 4
- at least grade 6 in the specific subject(s) you want to study

English, maths and sometimes science are the important subjects to get this in – not just when applying to A-levels, but to university and jobs too – as well as any subjects you plan to study at A-level.

However, the specific requirements needed to study A levels will vary across schools and colleges. It's important to check what you will need with the school or college you are looking to study at.

There are around 80 different subjects available to study at A-level. However, the options available to you will depend on which your school or college offers.

Typical A-level subjects include:

- Ones you've studied before: history, music, chemistry etc.
- Variations on ones you've studied before: e.g. you could choose between English literature, English language, or English literature and language; or you could take maths and further maths
- Subjects you've never had the chance to study before: e.g. law, philosophy, psychology etc.
- Colleges offer a vast range of A Levels from languages, to business to religious studies and politics

Did you know?

A levels are the most popular qualification for 16 to 19 year olds in the UK, but they are not right for everyone, make sure you know what they involve and that they will work for you.



What grades do I need for a BTEC?

BTEC Level 3

Structure

BTEC Level 3 courses are two-year programmes made up of approximately 18 units or subjects (core units and specialist units) related to your chosen industry. They are graded pass, merit or distinction and upon successful completion of your course.

BTEC Level 3 is the equivalent to achieving 3 A Levels.

How do I get on this course?

To get straight onto a BTEC Level 3 course you will need 5 GCSE passes at grades 9-4 in a range of subjects. You will be required to have both GCSE English and maths. To support your future progression plans we strongly recommend these are both at grade 5; if not, one can be at grade 5 and the other must be at grade 4. All students without a grade 4 in GCSE maths and English will have re-sit classes timetabled as part of their study programme.

BTEC Level 2

Structure

BTEC Level 2 courses are one-year courses made up of a number of units or subjects, related to your chosen industry/vocational area; they are equivalent to GCSEs at grade 9*-4. BTEC Level 2 courses contain core and specialist units covering the aspects of knowledge, understanding and skills necessary for employment within the sector. Alongside the Level 2 BTEC you will also complete a work placement or work related study and GCSE maths and/or English, where required, as part of your study programme.

How do I get on this course?

To get onto a BTEC Level 2 course you will need at least 4 GCSEs at grade 4 in a range of subjects or a Vocational Level 1 qualification e.g. BTEC Level 1. You will be required to have both GCSE English and maths. To support your future progression plans we strongly recommend that these are both at grade 4; if not, one must be a grade 4 but the other must be no less than a grade 3.

Progression

A BTEC Level 2 course is a great stepping stone onto the BTEC Level 3 and most students will go on to study at this higher level to give them more knowledge, skills and experience for working in their chosen industry or studying at a higher level. Alternatively you may choose to continue learning in the workplace, gaining employment-based training.

BTEC Level 1

Structure

A BTEC Level 1 is an excellent introduction to learning about the area of work you are interested in. This is a one-year course which is made up of a number of units which are related to your chosen industry. Each unit within the qualification has specified assessment criteria in order

to pass. In addition to this we have introduced a pass+ which means that you can extend the level of work you produce in readiness for progression onto a Level 2 course.

Work Experience and Work-related Study

Alongside your chosen vocational qualification, you will complete a work placement and work related study. This will support you to develop valuable transferable skills that will help you to reach your full potential in education, work and life in general.

GCSEs

All students who study a BTEC Level 1 course will also study GCSEs in maths and English. These qualifications are essential in helping you to succeed in education, employment and life. They will help you to build future employability skills and improve your future prosperity and well-being.

How do I get on this course?

To get onto a BTEC Level 1 course you will need 2 GCSEs at grade 2 and 1 grade 3 including maths or English Language.

Progression

Most students will carry on learning about their chosen industry and progress on to a BTEC Level 2 course. Some students choose to carry on learning in the workplace, gaining employment-based training.

What grades do I need for an apprenticeship?

Entry requirements Apprenticeships are available to anyone over the age of 16, living in England and have no upper age limit. The National Apprenticeship Service is committed to ensuring that high quality apprenticeships are a prestigious option, accessible to all people from all backgrounds.

All vacancies on Find an apprenticeship will clearly state what the entry requirements are for the job role being advertised. There will be different entry requirements depending on the industry, job role and apprenticeship level.

- 2 (Intermediate), which is considered equivalent to GCSEs: The only actual requirement is the applicant's age, a minimum of 16. Employers may ask for a demonstrable interest in the area covered by the apprenticeship, as well as the ability to complete it. (Some of the more technical Apprenticeships require level 3 and above in English & Maths.
- 3 (Advanced), which is considered equivalent to A-levels: At this level, employers will typically seek GCSEs, usually four or more at grade 4 or above, particularly in English and Maths. Relevant experience will also be useful

Typical industries for apprenticeships include:

- construction, planning and the built environment
- leisure, travel and tourism
- agriculture, horticulture and animal care
- arts, media and publishing
- business, administration and law
- engineering and manufacturing technologies
- retail and commercial enterprise
- health, public services and care
- education and training
- information and communication technology



How do I apply?

Apprenticeships:

This site collates all the available apprenticeships in England that are live:

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

Search [Browse](#)

Keywords (optional)
Can include job title, employer or reference number

All

Your location
Enter postcode, town or city or [use current location](#)

Within
5 miles

Apprenticeship level
All levels

Only show
 Disability Confident

[Search](#)

Help
[How to search for an apprenticeship](#) (interactive walk-through)

0800 015 0400
Start tour
If you'd like some help on how to use the search to find apprenticeships that are suitable for you, start the tour here.
[Start tour](#)

Add the required information to get links to the apprenticeships available in your industry and area.

The following is an example searched from the academy around the engineering industry:

Search results

We've found 4 apprenticeships in your selected area.

[Receive alerts for this search](#)

Edit search [More/less detail](#) **Sort results** Distance

Keywords (optional)
Description
engineering

Your location
M9 7SS
[Use current location](#)

Within
5 miles

Apprenticeship level
All levels

Only show
 Disability Confident

[Update results](#)
[Start again](#)

Apprentice Bicycle Mechanic
Butterfield Bicycles
(Added 20 Sep 2019 - 1 position available)
Apprentice Bicycle Builder required. This is an excellent opportunity for someone wanting to begin a career in mechanical engineering and maintenance.
Distance: 0.3 miles [Journey time](#)
Closing date: 15 Oct 2019
Possible start date: 30 Oct 2019

Business Administration Apprentice - Level 2
Sudlows Limited
(Added 13 Sep 2019 - 1 position available)
Due to the continued expansion of our highly successful specialised engineering company, including our award winning data design and build business, we have an exciting opportunity for an enthusiastic Business Administration Apprentice.

Apprentice Bicycle Mechanic

Butterfield Bicycles

Apprentice Bicycle Builder required. This is an excellent opportunity for someone wanting to begin a career in mechanical engineering and maintenance.

[View apprenticeship](#)

Your details

Full name Anderson **Email address**

Date of birth 27 Sep 1998 **Phone**

Address
300 Victoria Avenue East
Manchester
Greater Manchester
M9 7SS

Once you have signed up it will ask you to fill in an application form in the boxes provided.

Education

Name of most recent school or college

About you

[Help with this section](#)

What are your main strengths?
Please provide examples of when you've demonstrated your strengths

4000 characters remaining

What skills would you like to improve during this apprenticeship?
Think of what your main duties would be and whether there are skills you'd like to develop

4000 characters remaining

What are your hobbies and interests?
Remember to include any personal achievements

4000 characters remaining

Once completed, this will be automatically sent to the employer to review.
Who may or may not offer you an interview.

Additional questions

BTECs:

College websites will have a how to apply section. For this section The Manchester College will be used as an example as they are a vocational subject provider:

<https://www.tmc.ac.uk/study-with-us/how-apply/14-18>

2 Results

Sort results by: Course Title ¹/₂ Level

health and social care

Subject Area: Health, Care & Wellbeing

Qualification: Diploma

Age Group: 16 to 18

Campus: Openshaw Campus

Search our courses Reset

Health and Social Care Health, Care & Wellbeing

Qualification: Diploma

Location: Nicholls Campus/Openshaw Campus/Harpurhey Campus/Northenden Campus

Age Group: 16-18/19+

Level: 3

View course

Health and Social Care Health, Care & Wellbeing

Qualification: Diploma

Location: Nicholls Campus/Openshaw Campus/Harpurhey Campus/Northenden Campus

Age Group: 16-18/19+

Level: 1

View course

This option lets you look at courses and what is available before applying

Subject Areas

Decided which subject area you'd like to study? Select your chosen department, and discover the fantastic range of course types, incredible career options and outstanding facilities available at The Manchester College.

The grades you are predicted will effect which of the courses you will apply for.

For more information about which to apply for see pages 5 and 6.

health and social care

Subject Area: Health, Care & Wellbeing

Qualification: Diploma

Age group: 16 to 18

Campus: Openshaw Campus

Find your course

Personal Details

Residency

Qualifications

Add Qualification

Fields with * are required.

Subject *

Maths

Qualification Type *

GCSE

Year Achieved or predicted to achieve *

2020

Grade *

5

Is this the predicted or actual grade? *

Predicted

Save

Save and add another

Back



Once registered you can apply for the course inputting the information required.

You can do this in stages by pressing save and complete later, once finished it will send the application to the college.

A Levels

For the purpose of the example Xaverian College was used:

<http://www.xaverian.ac.uk/courses/application/>

<http://www.xaverian.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/App-Form-2020.pdf>

Once downloaded and edited you will need to send to: **HYPERLINK** "mailto:admissions@xaverian.ac.uk" \t "_blank" **admissions@xaverian.ac.uk** there will be an admissions email for all colleges for a paper application.

Alternatively, if printed and hand filled in this can be given to school no later than 11th November for postal admission.



Xaverian
College

**APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION IN
SEPTEMBER 2020**

The closing date for applications is Friday 10th January 2020

Personal Details Please give your full name as shown on your **birth certificate** or **passport**. Print clearly.

Surname: Forename(s)

Date of Birth: Age on 1st September 2020: Male Female

Country of Birth: Nationality:

Have you lived in the UK for the last three years? Yes No

If you were not born in the UK, what date did you come to live here?

If you are Catholic what is your Parish? Have you applied to this college before?

Finding out about more about training providers

- Manchester airport <https://careers.magairports.com/>
- Total People: <https://www.totalpeople.co.uk/>
- UKFast: <https://www.ukfast.co.uk/apprenticeships.html>
- The Army
<https://apply.army.mod.uk/what-we-offer/regular-soldier/apprenticeships-and-skills>
- The Growth Company <https://www.gceducationandskills.ac.uk/apprenticeships/>
- Bury College <https://burycollege.ac.uk/courses/apprenticeships/>
- Hopwood Hall College <https://www.hopwood.ac.uk/search-apprenticeships>
- CitySkills <https://www.salfordcc.ac.uk/apprenticeships-salford-city-college/>
- Stage Coach:
<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/national/apprenticeship-schemes-with-stagecoach-bus>

Useful Careers Quizzes if you are not sure what you could like to do in the future!

Discover your Strengths and what makes you tick: <https://icould.com/buzz-quiz/>

Find out what interests you and motivates you :
<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/skills-assessment>

Jobs related to your qualifications and interests: <https://www.eclips-online.co.uk/career-wizard>

NHS Quiz: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/FindYourCareer>

Engineering Quiz: <https://mtfy.org.uk/>

We have also had assemblies from a range of colleges and apprenticeship providers.

| College OPEN DAYS! | Day/Date | Time |
|---|----------|---|
| Access to Music | | You will need to book online www.accesstomusic.co.uk |
| Bury College | | 5.30pm-7.30pm 5.30pm-7.30pm 11.00am-1.00pm 5.30pm-7.30pm |
| Connell 6 th Form | | 10am-1pm 5pm-7.00pm |
| Loreto | | 10am-1pm 10am-1pm |
| Hopwood Hall (Both Campuses) | | 4pm-7pm 10am – 1pm 4pm-7pm |
| Holy Cross | | 10am-1pm 5.30pm – 8pm |
| Manchester College Openshaw Campus Shena Simon 6th Form All campuses | | 9:30am – 12pm 5pm-8pm 5pm – 7.30pm |
| Salford City College City Skills Future@ Media City Pendleton 6th Form | | 5.30pm-7.30pm 5.30pm-7.30pm 10am-12pm |
| Trafford College | | 4.30pm – 7.30pm 10am – 2pm |
| UTC @ Media City | | 6:30pm – 8:30pm You need to book online www.utcmidiacityuk.org.uk |
| Xaverian | | 10:30am – 2pm 10:30am – 2pm |

Helpful tips, links and key dates

Tips!

How do you feel about entering the next stage of your education? Excited? Nervous? Intimidated? It's natural to feel all three when you're embarking on a new challenge. If you haven't yet decided whether A-levels, BTECs or an Apprenticeship would be right for you, here are some do's and don'ts to consider

- DO ask yourself what you'll want to do in two years. Use our A-level Explorer to see what degree subjects will be open to you, based on your combination of the A-level subjects you're thinking of taking.. Not studying A-levels? You can still use our tool by selecting similar subjects to those you're considering studying.
- DO look for inspiration in unexpected places. Netflix, passions, family members and part-time jobs can all ignite a spark for that future career. Then, work backwards from there.
- DON'T blindly copy your friend or older sibling: The right path for your best mate might be wrong for you. A-levels, BTECs and IBs can potentially all lead to the same degree, but the experience of studying them will be considerably different (and could affect the grades you walk away with).
- DON'T forget about extracurricular activities for your personal statement. Regardless of the qualifications you decide to pursue, think about the experiences that will help you stand out from other university applicants, such as completing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or reflecting on your Saturday job.
- DON'T think it's too early to have university in your sights.



Websites

- <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cv-sections>
- <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentice/what-is-an-apprenticeship>
- <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk>
- <https://www.hopwood.ac.uk/courses/explore-courses-for-school-leavers/how-to-apply>
- <http://www.xaverian.ac.uk/courses/application/>
- <https://www.holycross.ac.uk/>
- <https://www.tmc.ac.uk/study-with-us/how-apply/16-18>
- <https://www.oldham.ac.uk/our-courses/>
- <http://www.osfc.ac.uk/admissions/>
- <https://www.loreto.ac.uk/courses/>
- <https://www.connell.ac.uk/courses/>

Key dates:

- Careers fair in school
- Schools deadline for postal college applications – 11th November
- Xaverian college and Loreto college official deadline
- Apprenticeships for September 2020 go live in and after March

For any more advice the careers advisors are in Mondays, and Fridays in the Careers office facing 2W20.

Each student receives one appointment but we can help after school if extra information is needed

Careers Lead – Ms L Parkinson

Careers advisors – Jacqueline Dawson and Louise Barnett