

Post 16 Options – Student Leaflet

College or Sixth Form

College or Sixth Form is still the most popular option for Year 11 school leavers. There are a vast number of different courses available and many colleges or sixth forms offer **courses for every level of ability**.

Option 1: A Levels and AS Levels are often known as ‘academic qualifications’. They can prepare you for university, work or apprenticeships. You would normally pick 3 or 4 A level subjects and possibly an AS level to study (please check with each establishment) that:

- interests you
- relates to a specific career
- allows you to keep your options open and be flexible.

The **New A level** is linear, with all assessments being done at the end of two years of study. Assessment is mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where they are needed to test essential skills.

The **New AS Level** will be a high quality standalone qualification and will be the equivalent to 40% of an A level. AS assessments will take place at the end of the first year and AS level results will **NO LONGER COUNT** towards an A level in the way they have done in previous years.

A levels and AS levels being taught under new rules from Sept 2016 include Art & Design, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Classical Greek, Computer Science, Dance, Drama & Theatre, Economics, English Language, English Language & English Literature (combined), English Literature, French, Geography, German, History, Latin, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology and Spanish.

A levels and AS levels coming in under new rules from Sept 2017 include Accounting, Ancient History, Archaeology, Classical Civilisation, Design & Technology, Electronics, Environmental Science, Film Studies, Further Maths, Geology, Government & Politics, History of Art, Law, Mathematics, Media, Music Technology, Philosophy and Statistics.

Please note: you will need to check with each college/sixth form as to which subjects they are offering.

You will need at least 5 GCSEs grades A*- C or 9 to 5/4 the new GCSE grading system (depending on the course and college/sixth form you apply to – please check). Some subjects will require a higher grade for example a grade A or B at GCSE (6 or above in the new grading) for Maths or Science subjects.

Important things to consider when choosing A levels or AS levels:

1. This option will always have an external exam as PART OF or ALL of the assessment process. Some subjects will be 100% exam; others will be 80% exam and 20% non-exam. It is important to check when visiting the colleges/sixth forms.
2. You must be able to perform well in exam situations, be able to work independently and happy to revise.

Option 2: BTEC’s and OCR Cambridge Technical (known by some establishments as CTEC’s) qualifications are often known as ‘Vocational Qualifications’. They are practical work-related courses which give you the skills you need for a certain industry or even a particular job. These qualifications are nationally recognised, valued by employers and universities and they offer a clear route into employment, apprenticeships and higher education.

You would usually only **choose one course, although** some colleges/sixth forms are from September 2016 offering the chance to do a mixture of BTEC/OCR qualifications or to do a mix of A levels and BTEC’s/OCR’s – please check with each establishment.

There are a range of levels 1, 2 or 3. Which one you start on will depend on their GCSE's results and previous experience.

As a general rule the following applies:

- Level 3 requires a minimum of 5 GCSE's at A* to C grade (9 to 5/4 in the new GCSE grading – please check with the college/sixth form) including English and Maths. For some Level 3's you may also need Science GCSE's.
- Level 2 requires mainly D grades (3 in the new GCSE grading) across all GCSE's.
- Level 1 requires mainly E to G grades (2 and 1 in the new GCSE grading) across all GCSE's.

Courses on offer can include Animal Care, Business, Art & Design, Health & Social Care, Engineering (different branches available), Sport, Outdoor Education, Travel & Tourism, Hospitality & Catering, Public Services, Science are just a few. Check with each college/sixth form to see what's on offer.

Option 3: NVQ's (National Vocational Qualifications) are very hands-on, practical courses with regular and relevant work experience. These can be in areas such as the construction trades, catering, engineering and hair or beauty.

Examples you might study at college:

- City & Guilds Diploma in Professional Cookery or
- VRQ Diploma in Hairdressing or
- City & Guilds Diploma in Plastering

With NVQ's there are 3 levels and most people start on Level 1 then progress to Level 3. Sometimes you will complete Level 1 and /or 2 and then finish to Level 3 through the apprenticeship route.

Note: With Options 1, 2 or 3 if you don't achieve your Maths and/or English GCSE's the first time, then the college or sixth form will expect you to resit these again in addition to your other course(s). This is compulsory and not an option. The college or sixth form will discuss the options with you.

Important points to consider when choosing college or sixth form:

1. **If you achieve at least 5 GCSEs at A*- C or 9 to 4 in the new GCSE grading including English and Maths, you will have the widest choice.** Anyone who starts at a lower level can still work their way up to the higher level courses. It is important that you look at the different colleges and sixth forms in Hampshire as they all vary. It is also important to look at the types of courses available and ideally attend at least 3 or 4 **open days/evenings**. Where possible you should **apply before Christmas** in Year 11, as some colleges and sixth forms have application deadlines and popular courses can fill up early.
2. It is important to remember that **you can apply to as many colleges and sixth forms as you like!** So if you are not quite sure yet, then apply to all the colleges and sixth forms you are interested in. This will increase your chances of being offered a place.
3. You can accept more than one offer and then make your final decision once you are ready or when you get your GCSE results. Colleges and sixth forms also offer taster days to anyone who has accepted offers. This is another chance to find out more about the college, sixth form and course before making a final decision. It is better to apply early and turn down places, rather than leave applying too late and not getting the place you want.

An Apprenticeship

Another alternative you could think about is an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships offer the chance to earn a wage whilst learning. You will mainly train in the work place, but will also attend college or a specialist training provider as part of your apprenticeship framework.

The main starting point is the website www.getingofar.gov.uk. This site explains what is involved in an apprenticeship, the different levels and types of apprenticeships on offer. There are case studies that you can read through, to gain an insight of why people find apprenticeships beneficial. On the site www.gov.uk/apply-

[apprenticeship](#) you can view apprenticeship opportunities and then use the site to apply for any vacancies you are interested in.

Entry requirements vary, but for Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships most employers look for GCSE A* to C grades (grades 9 to 4 in the new number grading system) including at least English, Maths and for some jobs a Science or Technology subject. For Higher or Degree Apprenticeships A Level's or equivalent qualifications may be required. It is important to look at each apprenticeship's entry requirements. Most students who undertake an apprenticeship after Year 11 (at 16) start on a Level 2 Intermediate Level.

Apprentices are entitled to the apprentice rate if they're either:

- aged under 19
- aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship

The current apprentice rate is £3.30 per hour BUT from the 1st October 2016 will increase to £3.40 per hour. It should be noted that quite a few employers pay above this hourly rate.

Further details around the national minimum hourly rate and the national living wage can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>.

Important points:

1. If you are seeking an apprenticeship you will need to be well prepared. You should do some research on the company or companies; look at the different roles on offer and think about which one(s) interest you the most. Remember you will be competing against other people for the apprenticeship. Ideally you should also try and do some work experience or take part in something that allows you to demonstrate you have the skills for that job (for example being the finance director of your Year 11 business enterprise challenge or being the team leader on your Duke of Edinburgh Expedition). Doing some preparation will help you confirm your interest in the apprenticeship area and also prepare you for when you get invited for an interview.
2. For more information on what apprenticeships are about go to www.getingofar and www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk.
3. To look for National and local apprenticeship vacancies go to the apprenticeship website www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship. Most employers are now encouraged to advertise their apprenticeship vacancies on this Government Site, although some chose to advertise on their own company websites.
4. Make sure you talk to your EBP Careers Adviser and get a copy of the Apprenticeships 2016/2017 booklet.

Employed, Self- Employed or Volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

If you are planning to go straight into employment, self-employment or volunteering you need to be aware that it is **not an easy option**. If you are doing any of the above for 20 hours or more a week, you will now also be required to do some PT accredited education or training. The **minimum hourly rate for 16/17 year olds is currently £3.87 but will increase to £4.00 from 1st October**. Further details around the national minimum hourly rate and the national living wage can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>.

There are **few entry level jobs** available and **many** are now only **part time** e.g. in retail.

Important points:

1. You should start looking for work early; need to research employers well; have a good CV and show enthusiasm for the job.
2. You will require help to find PT accredited education or training. Talk to an employer, a school, college or sixth form careers adviser who will be able to help you.
3. Consider apprenticeships, as these are designed for young people and offer better long term prospects.

For local and weekly jobs bulletin go to the websites:

- www.access-southampton.co.uk/jobs
- www3.hants.gov.uk/newjob.htm
- <https://www.mfip.co.uk>
- www.schoolleaverjobs.co.uk

Traineeships

If you are not ready for college, sixth form, an apprenticeship or employment (FT, PT, Self Employed or Unpaid) then consider a Traineeship. A Traineeship is an education and training programme with work experience that is focused on giving you the skills and experience that employers are looking for.

At its core are work preparation training, English and Maths for those who need it, and a high quality work experience placement.

To check whether you are eligible and whether a Traineeship is the correct route for you visit

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/youngpeople/Pages/ApprenticeshipsTraineeships/Traineeships.aspx> or www.gov.uk/find-traineeship or talk to your EBP careers adviser in school.

What are the benefits of a Traineeship?

- A Traineeship will put you in a better position to compete for an Apprenticeship or other job.
- The opportunity to build your CV and get vital experience with local and national employers.
- Improving your English and Maths skills will boost your chances of getting a job, as well as improving your long term prospects and earning potential over your lifetime.
- Employers are at the centre of Traineeships to ensure they give you the skills you need to secure a job and succeed in employment.
- At the end of the work experience placement you'll get a job interview with the company if a role becomes available or a reference and an exit interview.

Will I be paid? Traineeships and the work experience placements are unpaid, but employers are encouraged to support expenses such as transport and meals and depending on your circumstances you may be able to access financial support from your training provider, through the 16-19 Bursary Fund or the 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund. All training costs are funded by the Government.

Additional web based resources you can use:

- <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> job profiles section. This site is a government sponsored website, is free and the job profiles section has over 800 different jobs on the database. This website has lots of useful information about the different professions, entry requirements whether degrees are necessary, whether you can do an apprenticeship, pay, training and skills needed. It also has links to the professional bodies' that are involved with that occupational area. You can use this website to look at any career area you are interested in.
- www.plotr.co.uk. This site is free and Plotr is a revolutionary website created to help 11-24 year olds discover and explore careers you'll love. It's built around the Game which uncovers careers matched to your skills, interests and personality. You can explore employer worlds, in depth career profiles, videos, articles and more to get a view of what the world of work is really like and find what inspires you. With the help of expert info, insider hints and tips - and thousands of work experience, apprenticeship and entry level job opportunities – the website guides you to what you love.

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