

# Your Future - Your Choice

Education and training opportunities  
for young people aged 14-19.



Working in Partnership

# Introduction

## How do you decide on the best education and training options for you?

We have put this booklet together to help you understand what education and training options there are and provide you with information to help you make your choices.

There are lots of different starting points for thinking about the course or training you might want to do. Everyone is different so what might work for a friend, might not work as well for you. One rule that does seem to apply for everyone is that the more thought you give to it, the more confidence you can have in your decision.

Remember that you are now required to participate in education or training until at least your 18th birthday. It is well known that better qualified and more highly skilled people generally earn more and have more job options. Continuing in education and training and making the most you can of that experience post-16 will certainly help you to succeed. If you are planning to go straight into a job, check that your employer will allow you to access part-time training to gain qualifications. This will mean that you have better promotion prospects and, usually, higher wages in the longer term.

## Contents

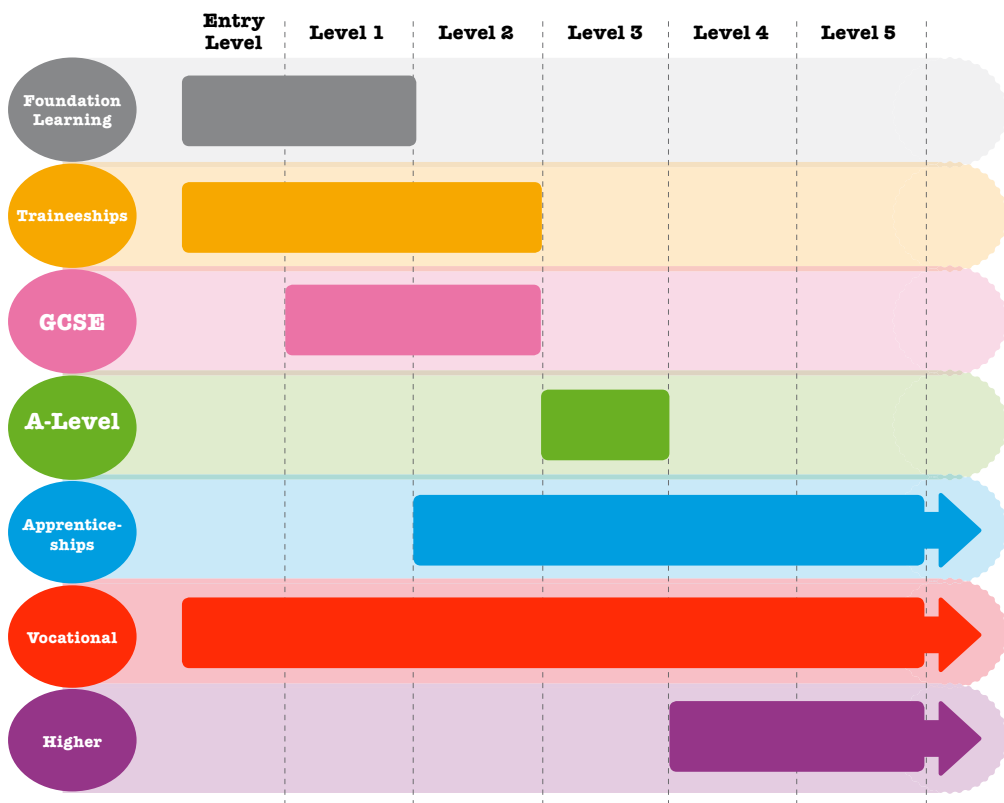
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# Levels

Throughout this booklet you will see 'levels' mentioned. Levels are the only way to explain how the qualifications stack up against each other. So for example A-Levels are classed as a Level 3 qualification but you can also gain a Level 3 Apprenticeship. Take a look at the chart below to see how the different routes compare.

The level you choose will depend on what qualifications you have already or are expecting to have at the time you choose your next course.

You need to know that if you have not achieved a GCSE at grade 'C' or above in English and Maths you will have to continue studying these subjects whatever level you choose.



# Foundation Learning

Foundation Learning is the name given to learning at Entry Level and Level 1, but it may be known as something else in your school or college.

It is mainly for young people working below GCSE A\*-C (new GCSE grades 9-4) wanting to develop basic or specific skills. A Foundation Learning course is flexible and linked to things of interest to you. Your programme will include at least one substantial vocational qualification as well as English, maths and ICT skills that are useful for situations in everyday life.

It will help you to develop your personal and social development skills, improve your organisational skills and build on your ability to work with other people. It will move you towards your next goal which might be further education, Traineeship, Supported Internship and employment or independent living.



## Special Educational Needs and Disability

If you are 16-25 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a Statement of SEN or a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) you can access the services available through your 'Local Offer' – see website addresses below.

[www.bournemouth.gov.uk/ChildrenEducation/LocalOffer/LocalOffer.aspx](http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/ChildrenEducation/LocalOffer/LocalOffer.aspx)

[www.poolefamilyinformationdirectory.com/kb5/poole/fis/localoffer.page](http://www.poolefamilyinformationdirectory.com/kb5/poole/fis/localoffer.page)

[www.dorsetforyou.com/local-offer](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/local-offer)

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# GCSEs

Generally, whatever GCSEs you choose there will still be a wide range of pathways open to you after Year 11. There are, however, some advanced level courses where you may be required to have taken the same subject (or a related subject) at GCSE and achieved a good pass or specified higher grade. Some Higher Education courses also specify certain GCSEs as entry requirements, particularly in areas of Science and Engineering.

GCSE courses that started in September 2015 in English, English Literature and mathematics are very different to those we have become used to. The grading system runs from 1 (low) to 9 (high) with the grade being decided entirely by exams at the end of the course.

More GCSE subjects will be in this format from September 2016. Clearly, as the GCSE system changes, for the next few years students will end up with mixed collections of 'old' and new' GCSEs with lettered and numbered grades respectively.



## A Levels

A Level courses tend to focus on academic study with subjects ranging from History, Maths and Sciences to more applied subjects such as Business, Media Studies and Information Technology. The A-levels you choose differ in schools and colleges, so if you have an A-level subject in mind then you will need to find out where you can study it. It is worth bearing in mind that if you are studying A-levels, three subjects is the normal requirement for university entrance.

A-levels are one of the main routes into higher education, but are also useful if you want to progress straight into employment. You normally need at least 5 GCSEs at grade 'C' or above (including English and maths) but often it is higher than this and certain subjects require higher GCSE grades in particular subjects. Advanced level courses take two years to complete.

A-levels are significantly harder than GCSEs and require in depth study. You will need to work much more independently and use your own time for research, tasks and assignments.



[www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices)

Useful website to learn more about A-levels and which subjects are best for certain degrees.

**A-levels are changing** they have become linear which means that all exams will be taken after 2 years of study in June rather than as modules with no re-sits available in January. The only A-levels to have coursework will be those where assessment cannot be carried out through an end of course exam. **AS levels are not the same either!** They are now a standalone qualification and will not count as part of your A-level grade. All will be assessed after one year by exams. They will be at the same standard as an A-level (just worth half as much). More subjects will move to the new format from 2016 and 2017 so for the next few years you will achieve AS and A-levels in both the new and existing formats.

# Vocational Qualifications

Vocational Qualifications can be at any level from Entry Level right up to Level 4 and above (degree level). Whatever the level, vocational education prepares you for jobs that are related to a specific skill sector, occupation or vocation. Vocational qualifications enable you to learn skills relevant to a variety of jobs and might suit you if you know what area you would like to work in.

Courses include a mixture of practical learning with theory, subject-based and practical work-based learning. You will complete a range of assignments and case studies as well as building a portfolio of evidence of your work. Whatever the level of qualification if you are 16-18 you will take it as part of a \*study programme and so it has to be a substantial qualification and will vary in length from 6 months to 2 years.

## Applied General Qualifications (Level 3)

If you want to continue your education through applied learning in a vocational area rather than a single occupation, then these vocational qualifications will interest you. Examples are applied science and business, and are usually known by their 'brand' name such as BTEC, OCR or City and Guilds.

## Technical Level Qualifications (Level 3)

These are very like the applied general qualification with one important difference which is you need to have a clear idea about the occupation you want to pursue. They will equip you with the specialist knowledge and skills you need for a specific occupation such as engineering, computing, accountancy or hospitality.

## Technical Professional Education

From 2019 there will be radical changes to vocational courses. Over 20,000 courses will be replaced by just 15 high quality routes called Technical Professional Education (TPE). These will include for example Business and Administration, Digital and Social Care. Each route will include a common core of English, maths, digital skills and a work placement. These will be equal to A level and approved by employers.



*\* A study programme is a personalised programme which is designed to provide students with a structured and challenging individualised learning programme that supports their development and progression in line with future career plans.*

# Traineeships and Supported Internships



## Traineeships

Traineeships are individualised programmes that focus on your own specific needs and help to get you ready for an apprenticeship or job. You will learn specific work related skills which take into account your personal needs such as confidence building and interpersonal skills.

The programme lasts up to 6 months and consists of a work placement, work preparation training such as CV writing, interview preparation and practice and learning to work in a team. You will need to continue with English and maths unless you have already got a GCSE at 'C' or above (grade 4 or above). Employers are not required to pay you but they must give you an interview and a reference. The programme may sometimes include a qualification that is designed to help you obtain the maximum benefit from the course.

## Supported Internships

Supported Internships are the programme for you if you have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities are aged 16-24 with a Statement of SEN, a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.

These personalised study programmes are based primarily at an employer's premises. The internship will contribute to your long-term career goals and fit with your working capabilities. The internship must meet a real business need, with the potential of a paid job at the end of the programme of study, should you meet the required standard.

Supported internships are similar to traineeships and apprenticeships but differ in that far more support is available for you, they last longer than a traineeship, there are no entry requirements and they are highly personalised programmes.



# Apprenticeships

If you would like to work for an employer, earn a salary and obtain a qualification whilst gaining valuable workplace skills and experience an Apprenticeship is the best option for you. Anyone living in England, over 16 years old and not in full-time education can apply to be an apprentice. There are different entry requirements depending on the sector and job.

You would work for at least 30 hours a week and receive at least the appropriate national minimum wage -however many employers will pay more than this. An apprenticeship combines a range of on and off-the-job training and can vary in its completion time. As a guide an intermediate apprenticeship (Level 2) usually takes around 12 months and an advanced apprenticeship (Level 3) usually takes around 24 months.

Most young people currently undertaking apprenticeships will be working towards a framework which consists of:

- A nationally recognised vocational qualification
- Functional skills (e.g. literacy, numeracy, and ICT)
- A technical certificate such as a BTEC or City & guilds (relevant to the specific apprenticeship)
- Other professional qualifications or requirements as specified by the particular job

The core components for Higher Apprenticeships are as above but exclude the functional skills element.



New apprenticeship standards are being developed by employers. These standards will differ depending on the occupation they are being developed for.

See [www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship) for more information.

## Higher Education (HE)



Higher Education is a general term used for the qualifications available after you have finished Level 3. When you finish school, college or an apprenticeship a range of opportunities are available to you.

After level 3, you could go straight into studying for a full Degree at university. You could also do a Foundation Degree, or perhaps a Higher National Certificate or Diploma at a college or university. Whichever route you choose, the courses available can be studied full or part-time depending on how it fits into your lifestyle.

Locally, higher education is available at the Arts University Bournemouth, Bournemouth University and Bournemouth and Poole College. However, if you would like to go further afield, there are over 300 universities and colleges across the country offering over 43,000 courses so you should be able to find a course that interests you!

### **For general information and advice on university:**

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

<http://unistats.direct.gov.uk>

[www.university.which.co.uk](http://www.university.which.co.uk) – information and advice on university; includes advice on GCSE and A-level choices and implications for higher education.

[www.gov.uk/studentfinance/](http://www.gov.uk/studentfinance/) contains information on the costs, financial support and repayments including a simple repayments calculator (with payments based upon the starting salary of the selected career).

# Where can I go for further help and advice?

## People/organisations

Parents and family are often the people who know you best and a second opinion from someone who knows you well can help you organise your thoughts. Teachers have a wealth of experience with dealing with answering questions on education.

Your school careers' co-ordinator or student support officer can be very helpful when trying to understand career paths. The school, college or training provider where you might be interested in studying are best placed to answer questions on their facilities and courses.

Speak to other young people who are doing the course you are interested in, or studying in the place where you are considering going. Youth Advisers are trained to be aware of the opportunities available to you and can give you sound impartial advice.

For services in Poole see [www.upinpoole.co.uk](http://www.upinpoole.co.uk) and for Bournemouth see <http://b-townyouth.co.uk>

## Financial Support

The 16-19 Bursary Fund - You can apply to your intended school sixth form, college or training provider for the 16-19 bursary which is for young people who may need some financial help to stay in publicly funded education or training. For more information go to [www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund](http://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund).



## Child Benefit and Tax Credits

If you continue in education your parents/carers should be able to continue claiming Child Benefit and any Tax Credits that they are entitled to until you turn 20. See [www.gov.uk/child-benefit/overview](http://www.gov.uk/child-benefit/overview) for more information.

## Care to Learn

This is a scheme that provides financial support to you if you are a parent under 20 years of age at the time you start your course and you are the main parent/carer for your child. For more information go to [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)

## Free Meals

To be eligible for the free meal entitlement you need to have an Education Health Care Plan or meet criteria relating to receipt of benefits. For more information go to [www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals](http://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals)

# Websites

## Local Help

<http://b-townyouth.co.uk> - Bournemouth engagement and advice services

[www.upinpoole.co.uk](http://www.upinpoole.co.uk) - Poole engagement and advice services

[www.ansbury.co.uk](http://www.ansbury.co.uk) - Dorset engagement and advice services

[www.dstpn.co.uk](http://www.dstpn.co.uk) - Information on local training providers and apprenticeship vacancies.

[www.gettingabout.co.uk](http://www.gettingabout.co.uk) - Information on different ways to get around Bournemouth and Poole and a journey planner tool

## National Help

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> - Careers information and advice online.

A careers advisors is available by phone, email, text or web chat

[www.careerpilot.org.uk](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk) - Gives information about choices at 14, 16 and 18 and helps you explore different jobs sectors and how you can study and work at the same time

[www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship) - Details on Apprenticeships

[www.gov.uk/find-traineeship](http://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship) - Details on Traineeships

[www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk](http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk) - Information for young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities to help with transition to Adulthood

[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk) - Has live apprenticeship/job vacancies and gives information and advice about apprenticeships, college courses, distance learning, work experience, employment and training, traineeships and jobs

[www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk](http://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk) - Help with getting a job

## Volunteering

[www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk) - To search for volunteering opportunities

<http://volunteermatters.org.uk> - To search for volunteering opportunities

Bournemouth & Poole  
14-19 Team  
Tel: 01202 458 988



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