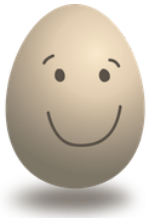
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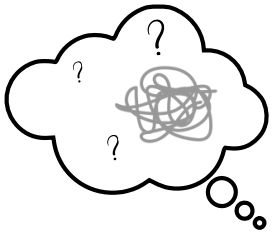


NEXT STEPS For Year 11s

AT HIGHAM LANE SCHOOL

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE 2027

Welcome to our Essential Guide!





You may be feeling unclear, confused or even overwhelmed with the choices available for after leaving school.

This guide will take you through the main options simply and clearly, and enable students to feel more confident in making the right decisions FOR THEMSELVES.

SCHOOL LEAVING AGE



Before we talk through the options available, it is important to be clear on what the legal requirements are for when someone can leave school and when they can legally leave education or training.

TURN OVER

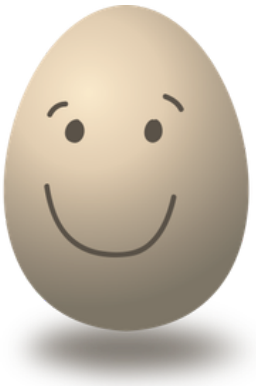
England:

You can leave school on the last Friday in June if you'll be 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

You must then do one of the following until you're 18:

- stay in full-time education, for example at a college.
- start an apprenticeship or traineeship.
- spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, whilst in part-time education or training.

Your local authority has a duty to make sure you are offered a suitable place by the end of September (of the year you've left school). This is known as the SEPTEMBER GUARANTEE.



LEVELS OF QUALIFICATIONS

Before we go through in more detail the options that are available for after you leave school, it is important that you understand what qualification levels are and what they mean.

In **England**, there are **9 levels** of qualifications.

There are many qualifications that fall within each level of study, and if you want a complete list, do visit the gov.uk website - but here is a summary, as a guide, to help you with deciding on your next steps:

Entry Level 1, 2 and 3
are below level 1 (GCSE, lower grade level), with Entry Level 3 being the highest here.

Level 1
is the equivalent of GCSE grades 3, 2, 1 or grades D, E, F, G.

Level 2
is the equivalent of GCSE grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A*, A, B, C and Intermediate Apprenticeship level. Includes BTEC Firsts, some Reformed Technical Qualifications, some Applied General Qualifications and the new 'Foundation Certificate' and 'Occupational Certificate'.

Level 3
is A Level & T Level standard and Advanced Apprenticeship level. Includes BTEC Nationals, Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs), some Reformed Technical Qualifications, some Applied General Qualifications; as well as the new 'V Levels'.

Level 4
Higher National Certificate (HNC) / Higher Apprenticeship level.

Level 5
Foundation Degree / Higher National Diploma (HND) level.

Level 6
Degree & Degree Apprenticeship level.

Level 7
Post Graduate / Masters level.

Level 8
Doctorate / PhD level.

NEXT STEP OPTIONS FOR YEAR 11s

When you leave school, you can either:

- continue in full-time education
- combine work and study
- combine volunteering and study

Here are the individual options you can follow:

A Levels / Level 3 Vocational Subjects
incl: AS Levels, BTEC Level 3, Applied General Qualifications, Alternative Academic Qualifications - (AAQs), V Levels & The Foundation Certificate (Level 2)
or
International Baccalaureate Programmes
(Only a small number of UK Colleges / Sixth Forms offer these)

OR:

T Level
or
T Level Foundation

OR:

Vocational / Work Related Course
incl: Reformed Technical Qualifications and The Occupational Certificate

OR:

Apprenticeship or Traineeship

OR:

Spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering alongside part time education

OR:

Foundation Learning Programmes, Life Skills Programmes & Supported Internships

(For young people with learning difficulties or learning disabilities, who need extra support)

SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR EACH OPTION IN MORE DETAIL...

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Full-Time Study Options (pages 6-29)

- pages 7-9 - **Introduction & Qualifications Changes**
- pages 10-12 - **A Levels & Level 3 equivalent subjects**
- page 13 - **AS Levels**
- page 14 - **AAQs (Alternative Academic Qualifications)**
- page 15 - **V Levels**
- page 16 - **Extra information if considering A Levels / Level 3 subjects**
- pages 17-18 - **International Baccalaureate Programmes**
- page 19-20 - **T Levels**
- page 21 - **T Level Foundation**
- pages 22-23 - **Vocational Courses**
- page 24 - **Reformed Technical Qualifications**
- page 25 - **Specialist Vocational Colleges**
- page 26 - **Animal / Agriculture / Horticulture Colleges**
- page 27 - **Sports Academies**
- pages 28-29 - **Uniformed Public Services**

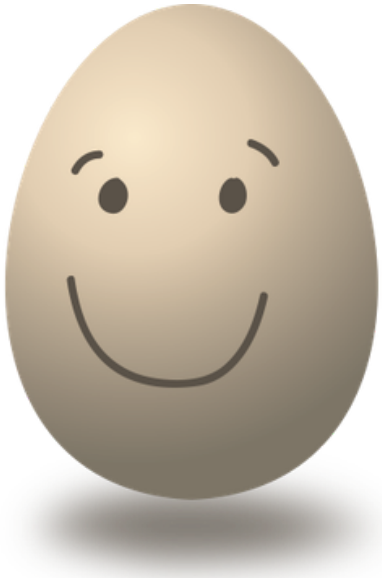
Combining Work, Study & Volunteering Options (pages 30-38)

- pages 31-34 - **Apprenticeships**
- page 35 - **Traineeships**
- page 36 - **Employment**
- pages 37-38 - **Volunteering**
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page 46 - **Important things to consider when considering your next steps**
page 47 - **Financial help and how to get further advice**
pages 48-50 - **Local College / Sixth Form information**

Full-time study options



TURN OVER

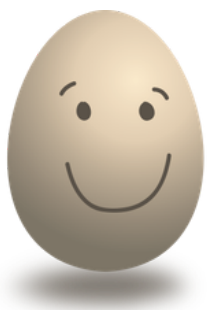
There are LOTS of choices available if you want to take a full-time study option.

You can take a more 'academic' route (similar to school) where you are studying different subjects or you can study a more practical / vocational / work related course. You can even combine the two for some options.

Think about ***WHAT* you want to learn, ***HOW*** you like to learn and ***WHERE*** you would like to learn.**

Visit websites of colleges / sixth forms of interest and see what they offer and look at their grade / entry requirements. Also visit them on open events so you can get a feel of the place and ask any questions you may have.

If you have a career idea in mind, there may be a preferred route you need to take and you can do some research into this *(more on this later!).*



TURN OVER



QUALIFICATION CHANGES



Over the last few years, there have been a number of changes to the qualifications young people can study after leaving school. The most recent change is the introduction of V Levels, which will begin from September 2027. The 'V' stands for 'Vocational'. There is a section later in this guide that explains V Levels in more detail, but, in summary, they are vocational and work-related qualifications at Level 3. A V Level is designed to be broadly equivalent in size to an A Level, and some V Levels can be studied alongside A Levels, as well as some BTECs and AAQs.

.

Remember:

WHAT do you want to learn?

HOW do you like to learn?

WHERE would you like to learn?

These three questions can help you work out which post-16 route could be right for you.

TURN OVER



QUALIFICATION CHANGES



It can be confusing trying to understand all the different qualifications available. We explain them in more detail later in the guide, but, broadly speaking, you will need to think about what you want to learn, how you want to learn it and where you want to learn it.

For example, you might want to:

- Study a range of academic subjects - such as A Levels.
- Study a range of vocational or industry subjects - through qualifications such as V Levels, BTECs or AAQs - perhaps alongside an A Level or A Levels.
- Learn in a more practical, technical way - perhaps through a T Level in a particular industry area.
- Work towards a particular job or occupation - through a qualification or apprenticeship designed for that career.

A Levels / Level 3 Subjects

What are they?

Advanced Levels (commonly known as A Levels) are subject-based qualifications that allow you to continue studying GCSE subjects at a higher level (level 3) or explore new subjects you may not have studied before; such as Economics, Law, or Psychology. Most students take three A Level subjects, though some choose to study four.

A Levels are offered at sixth form colleges as well as some general further education colleges and other training providers. However, the subjects available, course content, and entry requirements vary between institutions. It is important to check their individual websites for specific details.

Many sixth forms and colleges offer a combination of A Level subjects and Level 3 vocational subjects as part of a student's programme of study. The latter are generally equivalent to one A Level, and many of these are BTEC qualifications, Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) or V Levels (Vocational Levels).

The Level 3 subjects that are not A Levels, tend to be more vocational / work related and are more coursework based - whereas A Levels are the more traditional academic subjects and are mainly assessed by exam (although there may still be elements of coursework and exams for both options).

Who are they for?

If you're thinking about going to university: A Levels (and Level 3 equivalent subjects) are the traditional route for this.

If you're not sure what career or job you want to do: studying A Levels / Level 3 subjects can be a good way of keeping your options open.

If the career area you have in mind requires them.
(help with how to research this on page 12 and page 46 of this guide).

How are they assessed?

- A Level subject assessment is mostly exam based, but may have some coursework.
- Level 3 vocational subjects tend to be more coursework or assessment based, but may have some exams.

A Levels / Level 3 Subjects (continued)

What grades do I need to study A Levels / Level 3 subjects?

You normally need:

- at least five GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 / A* to C (usually including Maths and English Language).
- at least grade 5 in the specific subject(s) you want to study (although for some subjects, a grade 6 or 7 is needed - such as for science subjects and Maths).

However, the specific requirements needed to study A Levels / Level 3 subjects will vary across colleges, sixth forms and other training providers. It's important to check the entry requirements with where you are looking to study.

Duration of study

2 years

Next steps (after completion)

University or College course, Higher and/or Degree Apprenticeship or Employment.

Find out more

ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/qualifications-you-can-take/levels

TURN OVER



A Levels / Level 3 Subjects (continued)

How to decide what subjects to study

- If you have a career area in mind:

- **Choose subjects that are closely related / useful to move forwards into the career area of interest.**

To help with this, you can go onto the **National Careers Service** website, in the '***Explore Careers***' section and check what the entry requirements are for that profession and if there are any particular subjects you may be required to study: **nationalcareers.service.gov.uk**

If you plan to go onto Higher Education / University, you can check ahead to see what requirements particular institutions and courses have by going on the **UCAS** website - **ucas.com**
You can search by college / university or by course and look at their entry requirements. You can also look more generally at your subject of interest by going into their,'***Subject guides***'. These guides provide a general overview of the subjects you may need to study after Year 11, as well as the typical grades required at level 3 to progress to a higher education or degree level.
Some higher education / university courses will have some very specific requirements, whereas for some courses (and careers), the subjects chosen at A Level / Level 3 doesn't always matter. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO CHECK THOUGH!**

-If you don't have a particular career in mind:

- **Choose subjects that you feel you will enjoy the most / be good at.**
- Think about subjects you enjoy NOW at GCSE. Would you want to continue studying any of those at a higher level?
- **Think about possible subjects that you may not have studied before and whether these interest you.**
- Read through the subject / course outlines on the sixth form / college websites and visit open days and ask the staff / teachers any questions you have.

'Sports Academies' are also available in some colleges / sixth forms as part of your A Level / Level 3 programme (see 'Sports Academies' later on in the guide).

AS Levels

AS Levels are qualifications that essentially make up the first year of an A Level course. As most people continue studying the subject and do the full A Level, there is no need to take an AS Level. Therefore, you may not have heard of them due to their lack of popularity, but they are definitely still an option (in some colleges and sixth forms).

AS Levels are level 3 qualifications and are worth half of an A Level (and therefore half the UCAS points of the grade achieved).

An AS Level is a good option if you are struggling with the subject and do not wish to continue with it after the first year of study (into a full A Level). You would need to check with your college / sixth form though to make sure you could do this.

AS Levels are available in nearly all A Level subjects but you would need to check with your college / sixth form of choice to see what they offer and if they offer them at all.

TURN OVER

AAQs (Alternative Academic Qualifications)



What are they?

These are qualifications that have been offered since August 2025 in some colleges and sixth forms.

AAQs are available in subjects not typically covered by A Levels, such as Engineering, Medical and Applied Science and Health and Social Care - providing a broader range of study areas.

Like with other level 3 subjects (as detailed in this section), you can choose AAQ subjects alongside A Levels and level 3 BTECs to make up your full study programme. You can also combine them with some of the new **Reformed Technical Qualifications** and **V Levels.**

Small AAQs are usually the same size as an A Level but you can also study **Large AAQs** that can be studied alongside one A Level or as a stand alone qualification. Check with your college / sixth form of interest.

AAQs offer:

- Academic qualifications with applied learning - ensuring learners gain practical skills alongside theoretical knowledge.
- Progression to Higher Education: AAQs have UCAS tariff points, so they can be used for entry to university.

Who are they for?

If you're thinking about going to university: A Levels (and Level 3 equivalent subjects; including AAQs) are the traditional route for this.

If you're not sure what career or job you want to do: studying a selection of A Levels / Level 3 subjects (including AAQs) can be a good way of keeping your options open.

How are they assessed?

- They tend to be more coursework based, whereas A Levels are mainly assessed through exams. However, both options may include elements of both coursework and exams.

***Not all colleges / sixth forms offer them, so do check out your college / sixth form of interest to see what subjects / qualifications they are offering.**

V Levels (Vocational Levels)



What are they?

These are brand new qualifications available from September 2027 in some colleges and sixth forms.

Just like with AAQs and BTECs level 3s, V Levels are generally worth the same as an A Level and are in subjects not typically covered by A Levels. The first V Levels available will be in Digital Systems and Data, Accounting and Finance, and Education. Additional subjects will be introduced through to 2030/31.

Like with other level 3 subjects (as detailed before), you can choose V Level subjects alongside A Levels to make up your full study programme. You can also combine them with some of the new **Reformed Technical Qualifications**.

V Levels offer:

- Academic qualifications with applied learning - ensuring learners gain practical skills alongside theoretical knowledge.
- Progression to Higher Education: V Levels have UCAS tariff points, so they can be used for entry to university.

Who are they for?

If you're thinking about going to university: A Levels (and Level 3 equivalent subjects; including V Levels) are the traditional route for this.

If you're not sure what career or job you want to do: studying a selection of A Levels / Level 3 subjects (including V Levels) can be a good way of keeping your options open.

If you want a more **vocational subject that is more practical** and work related.

How are they assessed?

They will also be assessed in a way that reflects the applied and practical nature of the subject content, which will require the use of a range of other assessment methods, which may include more practical task-based assessments.

***Not all colleges / sixth forms will offer them in 2027.**

Extra useful information if you are considering A Level / Level 3 subjects

- If you choose an A Level subject that has a 'maths' element to it, your college / sixth form of choice *may* have an option where you can get extra help with this. It is sometimes called '**Core Maths**' but some colleges / sixth forms may call it something else (such as '**Mathematical Studies**'). You study this in the first year of your A Level studies alongside your other subjects. The qualification provides UCAS points too. If interested, have a look at the college / sixth form website to see if they offer this, and ask about it at their open event.



- Some larger colleges and sixth forms also offer a **foundation programme** of study for students who wish to take A Levels (and/or equivalent Level 3 subjects) but did not achieve all the required GCSE grades. Different colleges may call this programme different things, so it is worth checking their websites and asking about it at open events. Generally, you do not apply for this programme directly; instead, you may be offered a place on it when you receive your GCSE results. During the foundation year, you will usually retake certain GCSE exams while receiving support to prepare you for Level 3 study. If you are successful, you can then progress to A Level or other Level 3 courses for the following two years.

It can be a really helpful safety net, but usually only the larger colleges and sixth forms offer it.
KEGS in Nuneaton offer this if you have already applied, and they call it 'Route2'.

TURN OVER

International Baccalaureate Programmes

What are they?

There are two different kinds:

- **The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP)**
- **The International Baccalaureate Career-Related Programme (IBCP)**

They are the international equivalents to A Levels and some level 3 vocational (work-related) study, and there are many countries around the world that offer these; including some parts of the UK.

They do have some differences though (to A Levels) and tend to be broader in terms of what you study.

UK universities, generally, will accept these qualifications as an alternative to A Levels, but you would need to check your university of interest. You can do this via **ucas.com**.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

This is similar to A Levels. However, with A Levels, students generally study 3-4 subjects in depth over two years and for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, students study 6 subjects from 6 subject groups - including language and literature, language acquisition, maths, science, individuals & societies and the arts. There are also some core elements, including an extended essay and a demonstration of service to the community.

The International Baccalaureate Career-Related Programme

Students study two subjects and the core elements of the Diploma Programme (as mentioned above) - along with career-related studies, which include working with employers in their field of interest.



TURN OVER

International Baccalaureate Programmes (continued)

Where you can study them

The local colleges and sixth forms listed at the back of this booklet do not currently offer these programmes. In fact, only a small number of state-funded colleges and sixth forms in the country do. Private schools and sixth forms (where you pay fees) are more likely to offer them. They usually offer A Levels, the International Baccalaureate, or a mix of the two.

Where you can find out more

Read all the details here: **www.ibo.org**

Also look at the website or speak to your college / sixth form of interest.



TURN OVER

T Levels

What is a T Level?

A 'T Level' (Technical Level), is the 'technical' equivalent to studying A Levels. Students study **ONE** T Level and this is the equivalent of studying three A Levels.

T Levels are designed in partnership with employers to give young people the skills and knowledge to give them a head start in the workplace.

The list of T Level industry areas grows each year, but you can do T Levels in areas such as Education & Childcare, Health, Design & Development for Engineering & Manufacturing, Construction, Media and Management & Administration (to name but a few). Check your local vocational college for details on what they offer.

A T Level (Technical Level) combines classroom learning with real work placements. Students go out on at least 45 days of industrial placement - 80% of the course is at the training provider / college, and 20% of the course is within a workplace.

Level of study

Level 3

Duration

2 years

How is it assessed?

A mixture of exams, projects and practical assignments.







TURN OVER

T Levels (continued)

Entry requirements

Course dependent, but generally you need 5 GCSEs Grade 9-4 (usually including Maths and English Language).

Next steps (after completion)

Higher and/or Degree Apprenticeship, College / University courses, or Employment (Entry level skilled job).

If you plan to go to University / Higher Education

Like with A Levels and most Level 3 vocational subjects (in previous section), a T Level carries **UCAS points**. These are used by University / Higher Education providers to assess whether you meet their entry requirements for a particular course. You can find out more about applying for higher level / degree courses, UCAS points and how they work, by visiting: **ucas.com**

Find out more

By visiting - **tlevels.gov.uk**
Also visit your local colleges websites for details of the T Levels they provide and their entry requirements.



T Level Foundation

What is it?

The T Level Foundation year provides a high-quality route for students who would benefit from additional study time and preparation before they start their T Level.

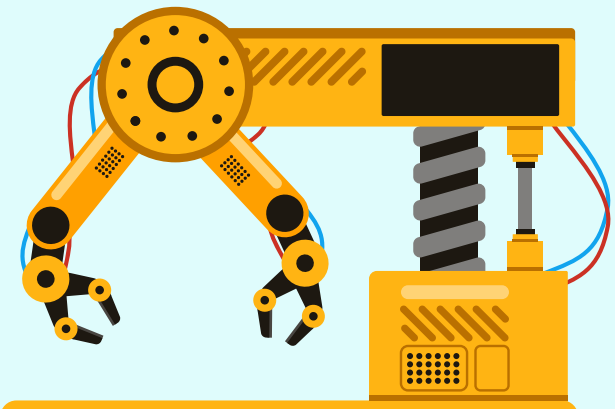
The T Level Foundation year was formerly known as the T Level Transition Programme.

The T Level Foundation year is a preparatory programme for level 2 students who plan to progress onto a T Level. The programme is for people aged 16 to 19 and for those with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) up to age 24.

Not all T Level subjects have this foundation year as an option, but it is worth checking with your local college if you are interested.

After successful completion, you would then progress onto the T Level 2 year programme.

This is a great option that may be offered if you don't quite get the required grades at GCSE to immediately begin the T Level course.



TURN OVER

Vocational Courses



What is a Vocational Course?

These courses teach you the practical skills and knowledge for a particular area of employment. They can prepare you for a broad employment sector, like engineering or travel and tourism, or for a specific job like a chef or a hairdresser. The course teaches you how to do tasks and gain qualifications specifically related to the industry and role you want to be involved in.

Level of study

Various - school leavers can study from entry level to level 3 courses. Check the college website on what is available and they will be able to advise you on the right level for you.

Entry requirements

Various - depending on course and level of course. Check each course entry requirements on the college website and get advice from them directly if needed.

Duration of study

Various - but usually 1-2 years in length.
For some courses, there is an opportunity to study the next level of the course after successful completion of the first one.

How are vocational courses assessed?

Various - usually a combination of coursework, skills tests and exams.

TURN OVER

Vocational Courses (continued)

Next steps (after completion of your course)

Apprenticeship, Employment, College or University.

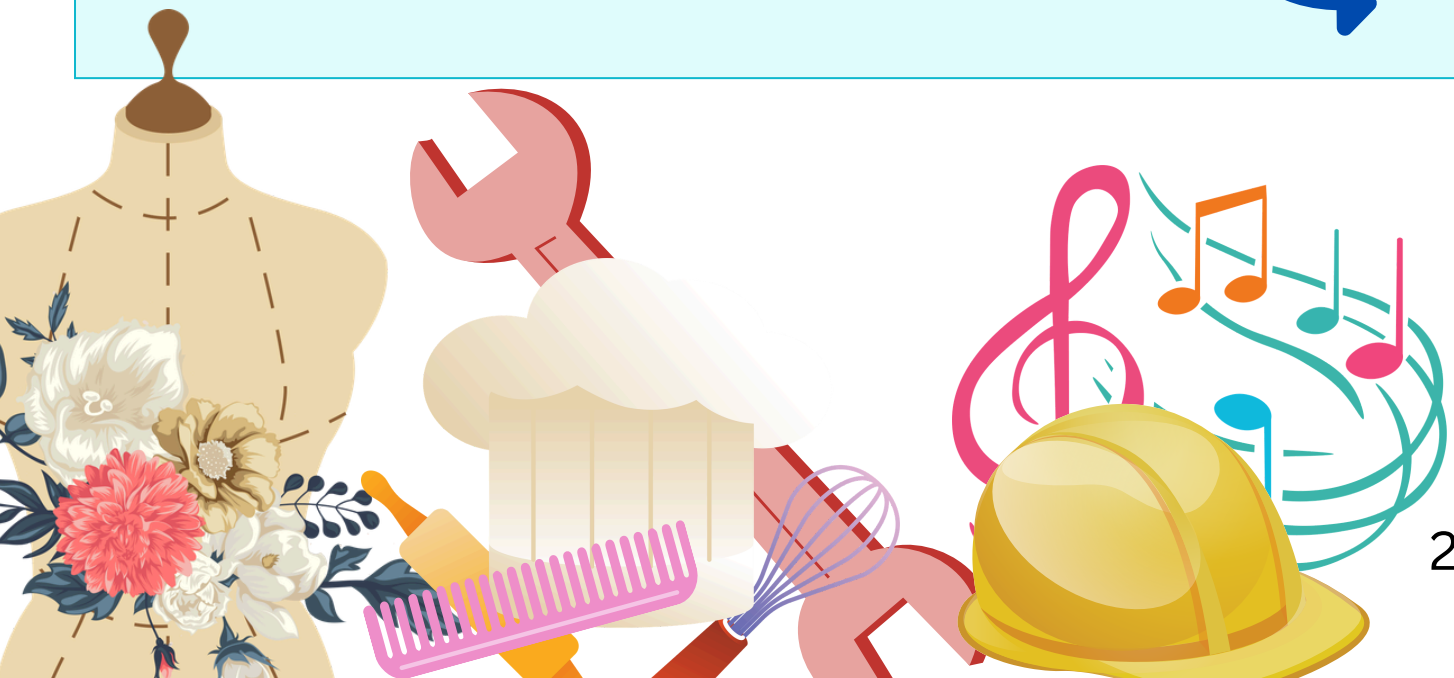
If you plan to go to University / Higher Education

If your course is level 3 standard, your qualification *may* carry what are known as '**UCAS points**'. These are used by University / Higher Education providers to assess whether you meet their entry requirements for a particular course. Check with the training provider if your course carries UCAS points.
You can find out more about applying for higher level / degree courses, and UCAS points and how they work, by visiting: **ucas.com**

Find out more...

By visiting the website(s) of your local further education college(s) or local training providers and attend open days.

TURN OVER



Reformed Technical Qualifications

What are they

These are new qualifications available from August 2025.

They are technical / practical / work related qualifications that are available at level 2 and level 3.

They are available as:
- **Technical Occupational Entry Qualifications** and
- **Additional Specialist Qualifications**

They are designed to give you a good foundation of learning towards the job / career area you are interested in.

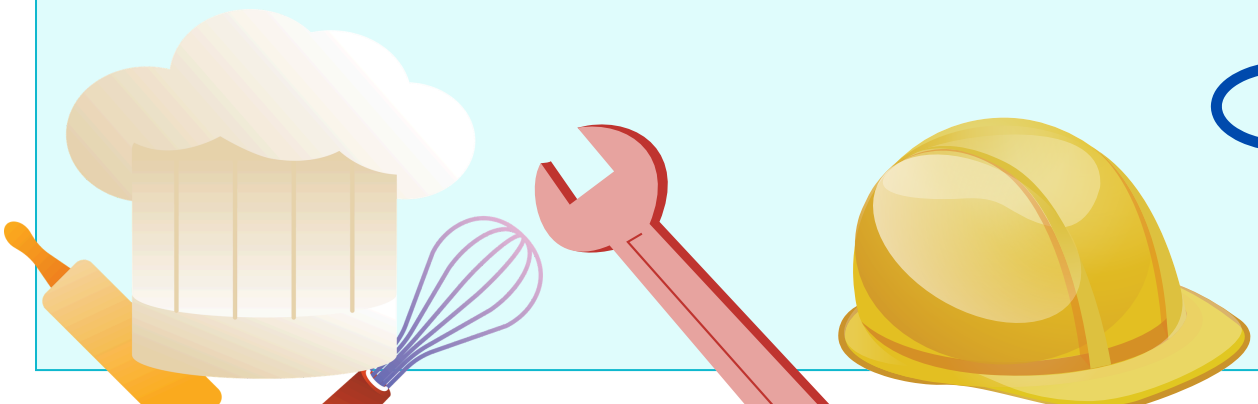
They are available in some of the occupational areas that T Levels do not currently cover.

You can use them to go into skilled employment, an Apprenticeship or further study.

Level 3 Reformed Technical Qualifications will also carry UCAS points, that you can use if you wanted to go onto Higher Education / University in the future.

These Reformed Technical Qualifications are not yet available in all colleges / training providers, so do check out the website of your college of interest to see what courses they offer and their grade / entry requirements.

(see overleaf for info. on specialist vocational colleges and academies...)



TURN OVER

Specialist Vocational Colleges

For some areas of interest, you may be able to apply to and attend a specialist college or an academy.

Examples include:

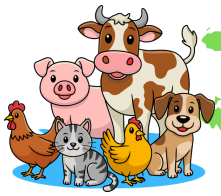
- a Performing Arts College or Academy (perhaps specialising in dance, acting and / or music)
- a Design / Fashion College
- a Land Based College (perhaps specialising in horticulture / agriculture and/or animal care)
- a Sports College
- a Technical Excellence College (TECs)
- an Army Foundation College
- ***and many more!***

This can be a great option if you are already pretty sure you want to pursue a career in this area and may already have experiences / skills in your area of choice that could strengthen your application.

Do some research on specialist colleges / academies that you may want to apply to and ask those around you for help and advice. Speak to your school subject teachers, your school career adviser and also teachers and professionals outside of school. For example, if you already attend a dance school or an acting group - there will be professionals there who can give you some really good advice.

For any application to a specialist college, the more you can demonstrate in your application your passion for the area of study, along with previous experiences - the more this will MASSIVELY improve your chances of being offered a place.





Interested in Animal Care / Agriculture or Horticulture?



Are you thinking about a career working with animals, or in agriculture or horticulture?

Maybe you are thinking of veterinary nursing as a role?

If so, there are specialist colleges you could consider.

We have listed the 3 most local to Nuneaton that offer these courses.

These 3 are all a little distance away from Nuneaton, but you could look at their websites and attend open events if interested - and even investigate transport options.

- **Moreton Morrell College**

(approx. 50 minutes away, southbound)
https://wcg.ac.uk/moretonmorrell

- **South Staffordshire College**

(approx. 50 minutes away, northbound)
https://www.southstaffs.ac.uk/

- **Solihull College**

(approximately 40 minutes away)
https://www.solihull.ac.uk/

!!!IMPORTANT INFO!!:

This route would not be suitable if you wanted to become a VET. In order to become a Vet, you would need to take the A Level route first and study science subjects, and then go on to Veterinary Medical School / University.

Sports Academies

Many local colleges / sixth forms, now offer a SPORTS ACADEMY as an option for school leavers.

Some colleges offer this as a stand alone level 2 or level 3 full time programme, or something students can do alongside other subjects (ie/ GCSEs or A Levels, or equivalents).

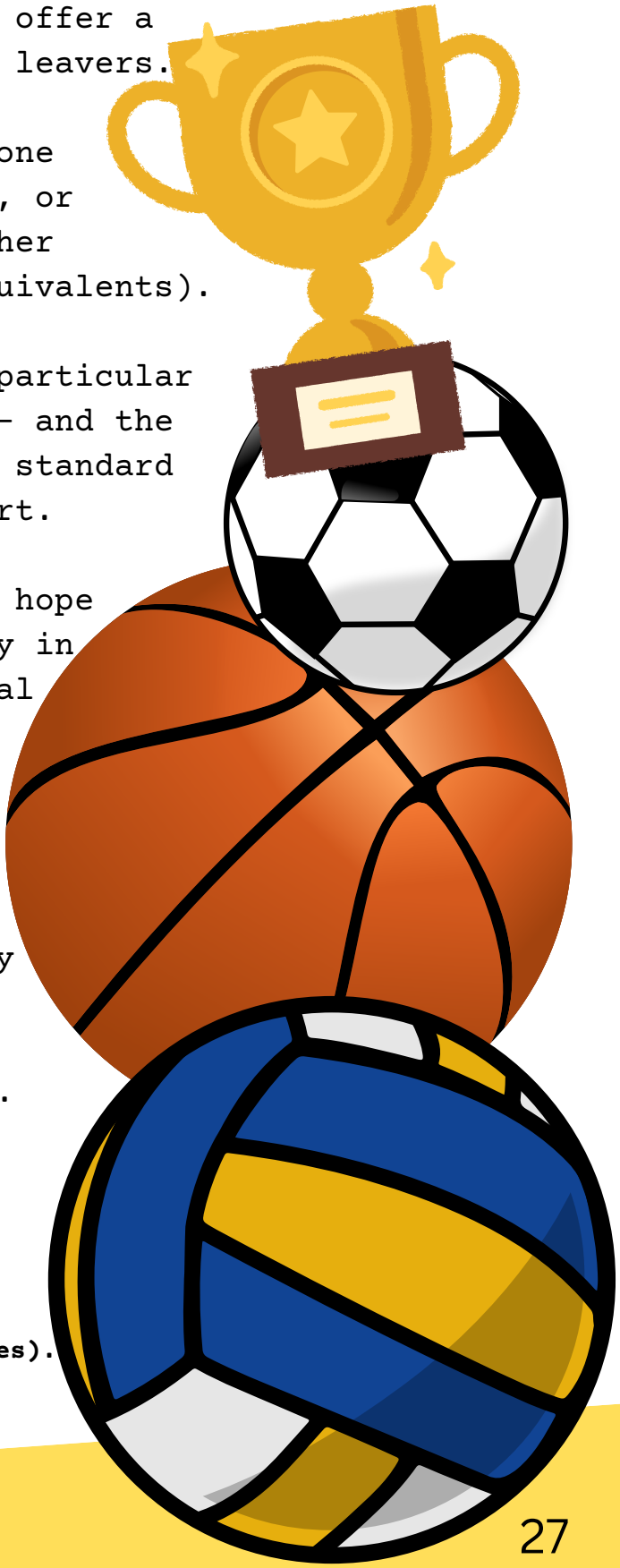
Some Sports Academies specialise in a particular sport - ie/ football, rugby or boxing - and the applicants are expected to have a good standard of skill already in the particular sport.

This option is fantastic for those who hope to have a career in the sports industry in the future - including as a professional player, coach or further sports study.

An alternative to the Sports Academy, would be to study a full-time sports course at college (available at various entry levels), or you can study sports or physical education as an A Level or a level 3 equivalent qualification alongside other subjects.

There may also be apprenticeship opportunities for some roles too.

(see later, 'Apprenticeship' section for more details on how to research for vacancies).



If you are already playing sports at a high level, there may also be opportunities to get a scholarship with a team / club straight after leaving school. Have a look at the websites of clubs / professional sporting bodies of interest for more information.

Uniformed Public Services

Thinking about a career in the Armed Forces / Military? The Police Force? Ambulance / Health Services? Fire Services? Rescue Services? Prison / Probation Service? Or similar?

If so, there are various routes you can take - either straight after leaving school, or later on in your studies or training.

The important thing to do is check per career area what your options are and consider the route that will suit you the best.

As a starting point, you can go onto the 'National Careers Service' website - nationalcareers.service.gov.uk and click on the 'Explore Careers' section.

Here you can search the various roles you can do under the various 'job categories', or you can type in a particular career area of interest. It will go through all the entry requirements and different routes into them. It will also give you links to the specific websites that will give you more information -
(such as; The Royal Navy, NHS Careers, etc...)

For some careers in the uniformed services / public services, you can become a 'Cadet' or an 'Apprentice' straight after leaving school. This is a great option if you are sure that this is a career you want to pursue.

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Uniformed Public Services (continued)

Another route would be to join the profession, or even become an Apprentice, at a later stage - post 18.
You could either study A Levels (or Level 3 equivalent subjects) first and then join or become an Apprentice at a higher level. OR you could do a more vocational course first and then join.

An alternative, and a great option if you think you may want to join the uniformed services, but are not quite ready after leaving school and / or want to develop some really relevant skills and qualifications first, is to study a programme called '**Uniformed Public Services**' (or '**Uniformed Protective Services**' as it's sometimes known).

Check out your local colleges / sixth forms for these programmes. You can either study it as a full time programme after leaving school (levels 1-3), **OR** you can study it as one of your subjects at college / sixth form - perhaps alongside A Levels (or equivalents).

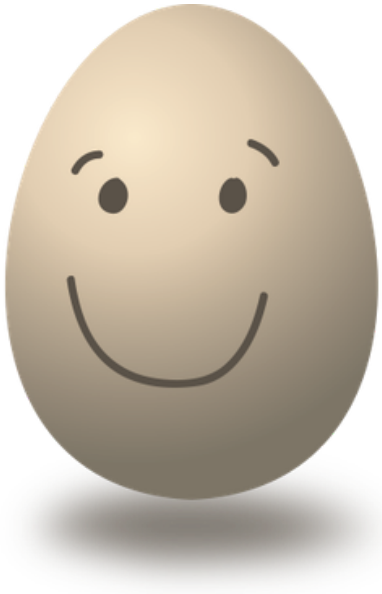
These courses carry **UCAS points** at level 3, and so you can use the qualification to gain entry onto some University / Higher Education courses also.

This can be a useful qualification if you are unable to join the profession until you are aged 18 (which is the case for the Fire Service and the Police). In this case, sports and fitness courses are also useful things to study in preparation for such a role.

As we said before, there are also further education training colleges for some uniformed services too - including, **The Army Foundation College** in Harrogate.



Combining work, study & volunteering options



TURN OVER

- **Do you feel clear on what you want to do for a career?**
- **Do you feel you would like to learn and train on the job (and get paid!)**

Well, an apprenticeship might be a good option for you. It combines on the job training (80% of the time) with study (20% of the time with a college or training provider).

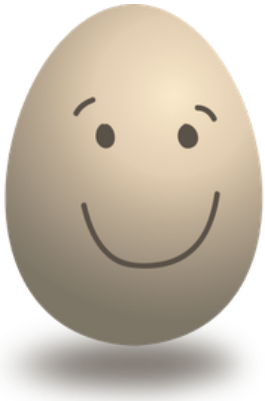
For some careers there might not be an apprenticeship option (at least at school leaving age), but the information that follows will help you check on this.

Even if an apprenticeship is your preferred choice, we still advise you to apply for a full-time college course option, as a back up plan (in case you don't manage to find a suitable apprenticeship in time).

It is important not to rush into an apprenticeship. Research the career area and the organisation you are applying to.

There is also the Traineeship option to help you get prepared for an apprenticeship.

We hope the following section will help you get more clear on combining work with training...



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Apprenticeships

What is an Apprenticeship?

An Apprenticeship combines practical on-the-job skills training with off-the-job learning. You'll get training that is relevant to your job and be employed by an organisation and paid a salary.

Location

You spend 80% of your time in the workplace and 20% off-the-job with some study in a college, training centre or Institute of Technology (IoT).

Levels of Apprenticeships

Straight from leaving school, you can either:

- Do an **Intermediate Apprenticeship** (which is level 2 / GCSE level).
- Do an **Advanced Apprenticeship** (which is level 3 / A Level equivalent).

The important thing is that you start at a level that suits you and apply for vacancies accordingly.

Length of an Apprenticeship

A minimum of 1 year (depends on level of apprenticeship).



Apprenticeships (continued)

Entry requirements

Depends on the industry, job role and apprenticeship level. Many do ask for GCSE passes in Maths and English Language - but each apprenticeship has different requirements. Check on the vacancy.

Qualifications you would achieve

Various - depending on level of apprenticeship.

Leads to

Employment, the next level of an Apprenticeship, Further Education, or Higher Education / University.

If you plan to go to University / Higher Education

If you are doing an **Advanced Apprenticeship (level 3)**, your qualification may carry what are known as '**UCAS points**'. These are used by University / Higher Education providers to assess whether you meet their entry requirements for a particular course. You can find out more about applying for higher level / degree courses, and UCAS points and how they work, by visiting: **ucas.com**

Where to find out more

Visit: gov.uk for information about Apprenticeships.

PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF FOR HOW YOU CAN SEARCH FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITY...

TURN OVER





Where to look for Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships - apprenticeships.gov.uk
(the national website for apprenticeship information, support & vacancies)
('**Find Me An Apprenticeship**', takes you to the same gov.uk listings)

Rate My Apprenticeship - ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk
(for information, vacancies & industry guides)

Amazing Apprenticeships - amazingapprenticeships.com
(lots of information & resources)

Get My First Job - getmyfirstjob.co.uk
(can search Apprenticeships, Work Experience & other useful career information)

Assessment Day - assessmentday.co.uk
(advice and online practice tests for assessments. General & specific major company ones are on there too)

Other things you can do...

- **Many further education colleges have a designated 'Apprenticeship' team, that can help people find placements. Check your local college website and contact them with any questions.**

- **Google search for apprenticeship training providers & colleges in your local area. Some training providers specialise in apprenticeships in particular industry areas (such as Engineering).**

For Warwickshire based providers & their specialisms, click on:
https://skillshub.warwickshire.gov.uk/schools/apprenticeship-providers

- **Google search and look directly on company websites for details of vacancies / programmes they have (within industry of interest).**

- **Use friends / family / teachers & other professionals to get advice and contacts they may know.**

Traineeships

What are they?

A Traineeship is a course that includes a work placement that will get you ready for an apprenticeship or a job. You can also improve your maths and english skills. You'll get work experience and some help to apply for your next steps.

Location of Traineeship

You'll spend a minimum of 70 hours in a work placement with the rest of your time in college or a training centre.

How long do they last?

6 weeks to 1 year.

Entry requirements

You need to be aged between 16 to 24 or up to 25 with an **Education Health and Care Plan** with no higher than a level 3 qualification.

What qualifications would you gain?

Various - including GCSE English, Maths, Digital and work-related qualifications.

Next steps after a Traineeship

Apprenticeship, Further Education, or Employment.

Find out more

- ask your local college or training provider.
- speak to your school career adviser.
- speak to your Jobcentre Plus adviser if you receive benefits.
- search for Traineeships in your area.

Employment

For advice on looking for work, applying for jobs, putting together a CV and interview techniques:

nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice#getting-a-job

Looking For and Applying for Jobs:

You can also use the GOV.UK -'Find a Job' service for full and part time jobs - gov.uk/find-a-job

For Benefits and Financial Help for Job Seekers:

gov.uk/browse/benefits/looking-for-work



Volunteering

Volunteering can help you make career decisions. You can test out different jobs to find out what you prefer. You also gain experience and develop skills that are useful in all career areas.

Benefits

Through volunteering you can:

- find out what's involved in a job to see if it's for you.
- try out different career ideas.
- learn new skills or build on ones you already have.
- meet new people and develop your network of contacts.
- boost your confidence.
- give back to your community.

Choosing a volunteering position

You may have to take small steps to get to your perfect volunteering opportunity. It can be very competitive and for some volunteering opportunities, you might need to be aged 18 or above.

Applying for volunteer positions

You'll need a CV and a cover letter to apply for most volunteering positions.

Whether you apply for an advertised role or approach organisations directly, you should show you are:

- eager to help and put your skills to good use.
- hardworking, trustworthy and reliable.
- able to commit to the time the organisation needs.

There are several organisations that can help you find a way to volunteer that suits you:

doit.life/volunteer is a database of UK volunteering opportunities. You can search more than a million volunteering opportunities by interest, activity or location and then apply online.

You can also contact National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), Volunteering Matters, & Search Out Warwickshire to find opportunities in your area.

Or contact your charity of interest directly.



As we said at the start of this guide, when you leave school, you have to continue on with education or training.

For some students, it may be possible for them to combine part-time study with volunteering.

If this is something you are considering, you will need to speak with your college / sixth form of interest so they can advise and make the necessary arrangements.



Other ways of getting some experiences...



As well as volunteering, gaining some work experience can really help you.

- It can help develop your skills, experience and confidence in a particular career area of interest.

- It can help you develop your skills, experience and confidence in a workplace environment.

- It can strengthen your CV and show you have developed skills outside of school (for college, apprenticeship, employment and university applications).



- It can help you explore different career areas, industries and working environments.

You may already have some work experience through school, or through a part-time job.

You can do both 'in person' and 'online' work experience.

Other ways of getting some experiences...



Here are some ideas and useful links:

Springpod - springpod.com
(explore opportunities and gain virtual work experience)
Forage - theforage.com
(free online work experience and job simulations from top companies)
Career Days - careerdays.co.uk
(online work experience & career information days)
InvestIN - investin.org
(in-person and virtual career tasting experiences)
Medic Mentor / Dental Mentor / Allied Healthcare Mentor medicmentor.org / dental-mentor.org / alliedhealthmentor.org (help and support, including online / virtual work experiences for students wanting to enter these professions)

Places like **George Eliot Hospital** also have a work experience department that you can apply to when you are aged 16: geh.nhs.uk/about-us/people-and-workforce/work-experience-george-eliot-hospital

Other ways of getting some experiences...



Please don't overwhelm yourself, but you could also develop your skills and knowledge through short / mini courses and by reading articles of interest online.

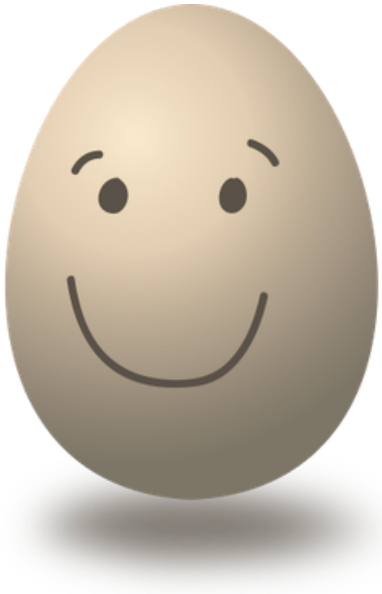
These can look great on your CV / applications,
and many are free!:

https://www.edx.org/
(formerly **MOOC** - helps develop skills and career knowledge through courses)

www.open.edu/openlearn/
(free courses and articles from the **Open University)**



Options for young people with learning difficulties or learning disabilities



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Foundation Learning Programmes, Life Skills Programmes & Supported Internships

What are these programmes?

They are for young people with learning difficulties or learning disabilities, who need extra support to get qualifications and employment experience; as well as develop life skills.

Entry requirements

You need to be aged 16-24 with an Education Health and Care Plan.

Qualifications you can gain

Various - depending on what programme you are studying. Your college or training provider will be able to give you advice on this.

What you can do after this

These programmes are good preparation for further study, a Traineeship, Apprenticeship or going into employment.

Who can help you with this

- Your school or local college
- Your social worker or transition worker
- Your Jobcentre Plus adviser

If you have an **Education Health and Care (EHC) plan**, you can get support to choose your next steps and extra help when you are in education, training or work.



Foundation Learning Programmes, Life Skills Programmes & Supported Internships (continued)...

What colleges are near me that offer these courses?

There are 3 main nearby colleges to us in Nuneaton:

Hereward College

Is a college for young people with disabilities and additional needs based in Coventry. It offers learners a varied curriculum that focuses on skills for independent living and employment.

The college has both day and residential provision, which caters for a whole range of needs ranging from students with autism, physical difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex disabilities.

North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College

Additional Learning Support (ALS) is available across all NWSLC campuses. They can tailor their courses according to the nature of the individuals' Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). They also offer Foundation Learning Programmes.

Coventry College

This college also offers a range of Foundation and Life Skills Programmes.

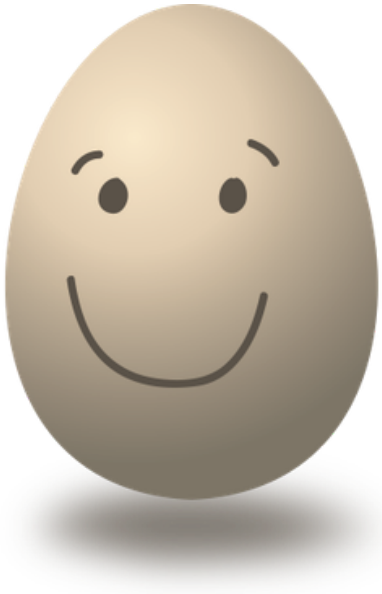
The back pages of this booklet provide the college website addresses. Have a look at what they offer online and contact the college(s) directly for further information & advice.

There are other special educational needs colleges.

Let the careers team know if you need any help!

Those are your main options for after Year 11.

The following pages may help you make your decisions clearer...



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IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Some careers may ask for specific qualifications, so do some research into this before making your choice. You can visit the **National Careers Service** website, in the 'Explore Careers' section as a starting point (**nationalcareers.service.gov.uk**).

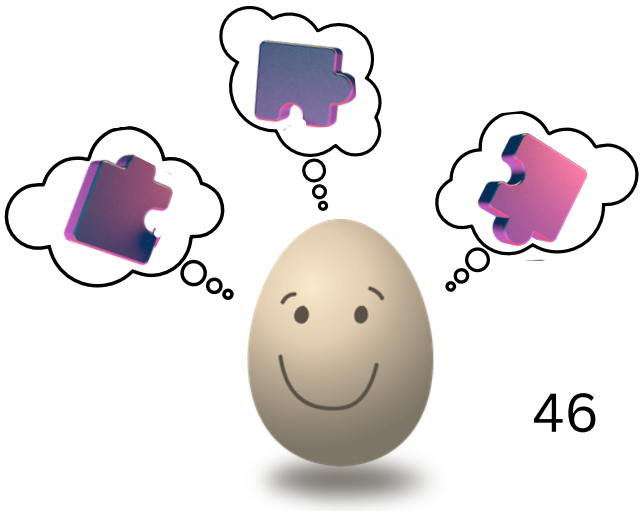
- Likewise, if you plan to go onto Higher Education / University post 18, and already have a specific course subject in mind to study, you need to ensure you pick the subjects / qualifications needed post 16. You can look on the **UCAS** website to check on this (**ucas.com**).

- Consider how you learn best - ***classroom? practical? workplace? mostly exams? mostly coursework?***

- If you are not sure what you would like to do as a career, pick subject(s) / a course area that you think you will enjoy best - in the style of learning that will suit you best.

HAVE A BACK UP PLAN!

You can apply for more than one option and more than one college / training provider. In fact, it's good to apply for more than one in case you can't get a place at your first choice, and also, to keep your options open should you change your mind in the coming months. For most opportunities, you don't need to make your FINAL DECISION, until you have received your GCSE results.



GETTING FINANCIAL HELP WITH EDUCATION COSTS:

In England, you can apply for a 16 to 19 Bursary Fund to help with education costs.

For more help and information on funding, visit: gov.uk

GETTING FURTHER HELP WITH YOUR DECISIONS:

During Year 11, all students at the school will have an opportunity to receive one to one support with a Career Adviser, to discuss their ideas and next steps for the future.

In the meantime, do talk through your ideas with others around you - including parents, carers, teachers and people you may know already...and use online resources.

We hope this makes things clearer for you!!



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Local Colleges / Sixth Forms for Nuneaton students

The following are the most local training providers to your school, and in brief terms, what they offer. To find out more, visit their websites and attend their forthcoming open events.

(Details of both are on the following pages)

	A Levels / Level 3 subjects	Full-time Vocational Courses	T Levels	Sports Academy	Apprenticeships / Traineeships	Foundation Learning Programmes (Special Educational Needs)
Higham Lane Sixth Form	✓					
King Edward VI College (KEGS)	✓			✓		
Etone College Sixth Form	✓			✓		
St Thomas More Sixth Form	✓					
Nicholas Chamberlaine Sixth Form	✓					
The Hinckley Sixth Form	✓					
North Warks & South Leicestershire College		✓	✓		✓	✓
Coventry College		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hereward College (Special Educational Needs)		✓				✓

Sixth Forms & Colleges

(these offer A Levels / Level 3 equivalent subjects)

Higham Lane Sixth Form (Nuneaton)

highamlaneschool.co.uk/sixthform

Open Event: Thursday 5th November 2026 (5.30pm-7.30pm)

King Edward VI Sixth Form (KEGS) (Nuneaton)

ke6n.ac.uk

Open Events:

Thursday 26th November 2026 (4pm-7pm) - **main campus only**
Saturday 28th November 2026 (9am-12pm) - **both campuses**
Thursday 25th January 2027 (4pm-7pm) - **main campus only**
(book online, but can just turn up on the date)

Etone College Sixth Form (Nuneaton)

etonecollege.co.uk/sixth-form

Open Event: Thursday 19th November 2026 (5pm-7.30pm)

St Thomas More Sixth Form (Nuneaton)

st-thomas-more.net/Welcome-to-our-Sixth-Form-V2/

Open Event: Thursday 22nd October 2026 (from 6pm)

Nicholas Chamberlaine Sixth Form (Bedworth)

nicholaschamberlaine-gst.org/about-sixth-form/

Open Event: Wednesday 11th November 2026 (6pm-8pm)

The Hinckley Sixth Form (Hinckley)

thehinckleysixthform.co.uk

Open Event: Wednesday 11th November 2026 (5-8pm)
(or book tour)

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Vocational Colleges

(these do not offer A Levels or Level 3 subject equivalents)

North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College (NWSLC) (Nuneaton & Leicestershire)

nwslc.ac.uk

Open Events:

(Nuneaton, Grayson Place, Hinckley, Harrowbrook, Wigston, MTI / MIRA Campuses)

Thursday 15th October 2026 (4pm-7pm)
Saturday 21st November 2026 (9am-12pm)
Thursday 25th February 2027 (4pm-7pm)
Thursday 24th June 2027 (4-7pm)
(book online)

Coventry College (Coventry)

coventrycollege.ac.uk

Open Events:

(City Campus and Alan Higgs Centre)

Thursday 15th October 2026 (5.15pm-7pm)
Tuesday 1st December 2026 (5.15pm-7pm)
Thursday 28th January 2027 (5.15pm-7pm)
(book online)

For Sports & Public Services Courses, go to Alan Higgs Centre

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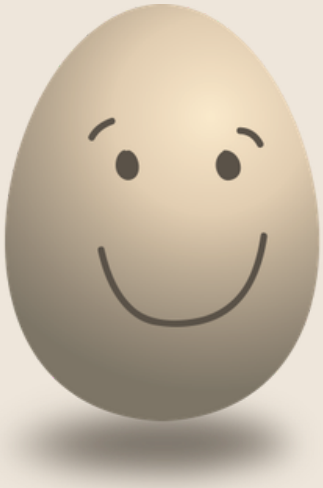
Hereward College (Coventry)

Special Educational Needs Only

hereward.ac.uk

Contact the college to arrange a visit

Of course there are many other colleges / sixth forms further afield that you may want to consider, so do explore these if you want to / need to.



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