

The Parents' Guide to

Post 16 Options

2019-2020

Summary





Introduction

What your child chooses to do after Year 11 can have a big impact on their future. The choices they make now will influence how easily they will be able to get a job or enter further education when they are older. The main options at this stage are for them to go on to full time education or take an apprenticeship / training. Things they need to consider are the type of qualification they are going to study; what type of learning suits them best (classroom or practical); and which subjects they enjoy (students usually do better at subjects they enjoy).

If they already know the career path they're hoping to take, they may want to choose subjects that offer a more obvious route to that career. In theory that can make choosing subjects easier, but sometimes there's a conflict in the subjects they enjoy and do well at versus the subjects they will need. Of course, they can also go straight into employment, but this must include 280 guided learning hours each year (about one day per week excluding holidays).

There's much more choice at sixth form than GCSE, so there will be many subjects available that are new to them. Don't worry about them taking something they have never studied and then finding out they don't enjoy it or aren't good at it; they can make changes at the start of Y12.

It's important to bear in mind that whatever they choose to study in sixth form, whilst it will influence what they do afterwards, it will not close any doors. If they make a mistake, there's still plenty of opportunity to change direction (of course, this may take a little additional work on their part). Additionally, should they choose to go straight into work and change their mind later, there's always the chance to pick up their education at a later date.

Post-16 studies are very different from studying for GCSE. They go into each subject in much more depth, there is more information to absorb, and the teaching style starts to transition to independent learning (researching and finding out for themselves rather than being told). A minimum standard of English and Maths is required for all courses, but help is provided where needed.

This guide offers a brief summary of all the options your child might want to consider for sixth form and how this might impact their choices after sixth form. If you want to delve deeper and find out more, we've included useful links to other reliable sources. Simply click on the picture icons to be taken to our recommended websites.

A levels

Qualification type

General Certificate of Advanced Level qualification

Type of learning

Mostly theory

Qualifications needed to sign up

At least 5 GCSEs grades 4 - 9

At least grade 5/6 in the subject/s chosen for A level

Subject choices

Three subjects

Length of commitment

2 years full time

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

More information

UCAS

UCAS points awarded for passing

56 points – A*

48 points – A

40 points – B

32 points – C

24 points – D

16 points – E

Can lead to

University, further study, training or work

Things to consider

If your child chooses to study a subject for Y12 only, they can take an examination and obtain an AS level which counts as 40% of an A level.

AS levels count towards UCAS points, ranging from 20 points (A grade) through 6 points (E grade).

Additionally, many schools offer EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) which is a dissertation or project created on the basis of independent research and worth between 8 and 28 UCAS points.

A LEVELS CAN BE STUDIED
ALONGSIDE OTHER QUALIFICATIONS
SUCH AS BTECS OR AN EPQ





International Baccalaureate

Qualification type

International Baccalaureate Diploma

Type of learning

Mostly theory, some practical

Qualifications needed to sign up

Set by the school, up to 5 GCSEs

Subject choices

Up to six subjects (three standard level and three at higher level)

Length of commitment

2 years full time

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

UCAS points awarded for passing

56 points – Higher Level 7

48 points – Higher Level 6

32 points – Higher Level 5

24 points – Higher Level 4

12 points – Higher Level 3

Can lead to

University, further study, training, or work

Things to consider

The international Baccalaureate is mostly offered through private schools, although there are a small number of state schools where it is available. The International Baccalaureate Organisation (“IBO”) does not inspect schools once they have been approved to run IB, believing that results reflect standards, so it’s important to check recent results.

More information



BTEC Nationals

Qualification type

Business and Technology Education Council
Diplomas

(Level 3 are similar standard to A levels)

Type of learning

Combination of practical and theory

Qualifications needed to sign up

Up to 5 GCSEs

Subject choices

Three vocational subjects at level 3

Length of commitment

2 years full time

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

UCAS points awarded for passing

56 points – D* (distinction)

48 points – D

32 points – M (merit)

16 points – P (pass)

Can lead to

University, further study, training, professional development programmes or work

Things to consider

BTECs offer the chance of earning the same points for UCAS as A levels, but provide a way to learn through much more practical application and coursework whereas A levels focus on written work and exams. However, some universities have a preference for A levels over BTEC, so if your child has their heart set on a specific university or course, it's worth checking their entry requirements to see whether this will influence their sixth form choices.

Most schools offer the option to take a combination of BTEC and A level.

More information

UCAS

BTECS COMBINE PRACTICAL
LEARNING WITH CLASSROOM
STUDY



**T LEVELS ARE A NEW TECHNICAL
BASED QUALIFICATION BEING
INTRODUCED FROM 2020**

T Levels (England only)

Qualification type

Technical Level Qualification

Type of learning

Classroom learning (80%) with industry placement (20%)

Qualifications needed to sign up

Set by the school, up to 5 GCSEs

Subject choices

One industry field, such as construction (includes design, surveying and planning) or Education (includes early years, assisting teaching and supporting and mentoring students)

Length of commitment

2 years full time

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

UCAS points awarded for passing

168 points – Distinction*

144 points – Distinction

120 points – Merit

96 points – Pass (C or above)

72 points – Pass (D or E)

Can lead to

University, further study, training, professional development programmes or work

Things to consider

Technical Level Qualifications (or T Levels) are a new government backed qualification that's being introduced as of September 2020 in three industries: digital production, design and development; design, surveying and planning; and education. As of September 2021, a further seven industries will be added and further expansion will take place through 2023.

T Levels offer a mixture of classroom learning with an on-the-job placement equating to 20% of the course time with a view to students obtaining the right technical skills to get ahead in their chosen industries.

More information

Gov.uk

Pearson
Education

T Levels
Gov. UK

The Institute
for Technical
Education

Cambridge Technicals

Qualification type

A Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate (equivalent to an A level) or Cambridge Technical Diploma (equivalent to x2 A levels)

Type of learning

Practical course with lots of coursework based on real life case studies

Qualifications needed to sign up

At least 5 GCSEs

Subject choices

Range of vocational subjects

Length of commitment

2 years

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

UCAS points awarded for passing

Cambs Tech level 3:
56 points – D* (distinction)
48 points – D
32 points – M (merit)
16 points – P (pass)

Can lead to

University, further study, training or work

Things to consider

With examination marks split 50%-50% between coursework and examinations, the Cambridge Technicals offer a very practical route to learning, but students must be well-organised, able to handle lots of projects at once and be able to meet deadlines in order to succeed.

More information

UCAS

AN ALTERNATIVE QUALIFICATION
FOR STUDENTS WHO MAY
STRUGGLE WITH EXAMINATIONS





Other qualifications

Qualification type

City and Guilds; National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) or Tech Bac (similar to International Baccalaureate)

Type of learning

Dependent on the qualification, most contain practical on the job training

Qualifications needed to sign up

Usually 5 GCSEs grade 4 - 9, but check individually

Subject choices

Range of vocational subjects

Length of commitment

2 years (level 3)

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

UCAS points awarded for passing

In most cases no UCAS points are awarded but there are some exceptions.

Can lead to

Further study, training, professional development programmes or work

Things to consider

National Vocational Qualification is a work-based way of learning. There are no examinations, assessment is made on a student's competence to complete the task. Whilst NVQs are vocationally focused, they can be studied at school and college as well as at work.

More information

Gov.uk

City Gateway

City and Guilds

BTEC Apprenticeship (job with training)

Qualification type

Advanced Level 3
(equivalent to 2 A levels)

Type of learning

Work based including off-site learning

Qualifications needed to sign up

Advanced Level 3 - depends on employer, some require at least 3 GCSEs
Students need to show they can complete the programme

Subject choices

Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered

Length of commitment

1-2 years

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

Can lead to

Further study, training, professional development programmes or work

Things to consider

Unlike BTECs, which are studied at school or college, BTEC apprenticeships also include an element of study at work, so there is a real-life component to the course.

ON-SITE TRAINING MIGHT BE
MORE ENJOYABLE THAN
CLASSROOM TRAINING



More information

UCAS

Pearson
Education

TRAINEESHIPS CAN BE VERY HELPFUL FOR NON-ACADEMIC STUDENTS TO GAIN PRACTICAL SKILLS



Other options

Qualification type

Traineeship / volunteer with training / internship – all to help your child get enough skills to take on an apprenticeship or other form of qualification if they do not already have the minimum qualification requirements.

Type of learning

Work based

Qualifications needed to sign up

None

Subject choices

Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered

Length of commitment

6 weeks – 6 months

Tuition costs

None

Can lead to

Further study, apprenticeships, job offers

Things to consider

If your child is struggling to get the minimum qualifications required to move on to sixth form studies, they can undertake a traineeship (or they can volunteer) which will help them get some skills so they are ready to take the next stage in studies / development. This can be very helpful for non-academic students who may be better at picking up practical skills.

More information

Gov.uk

Personal contacts

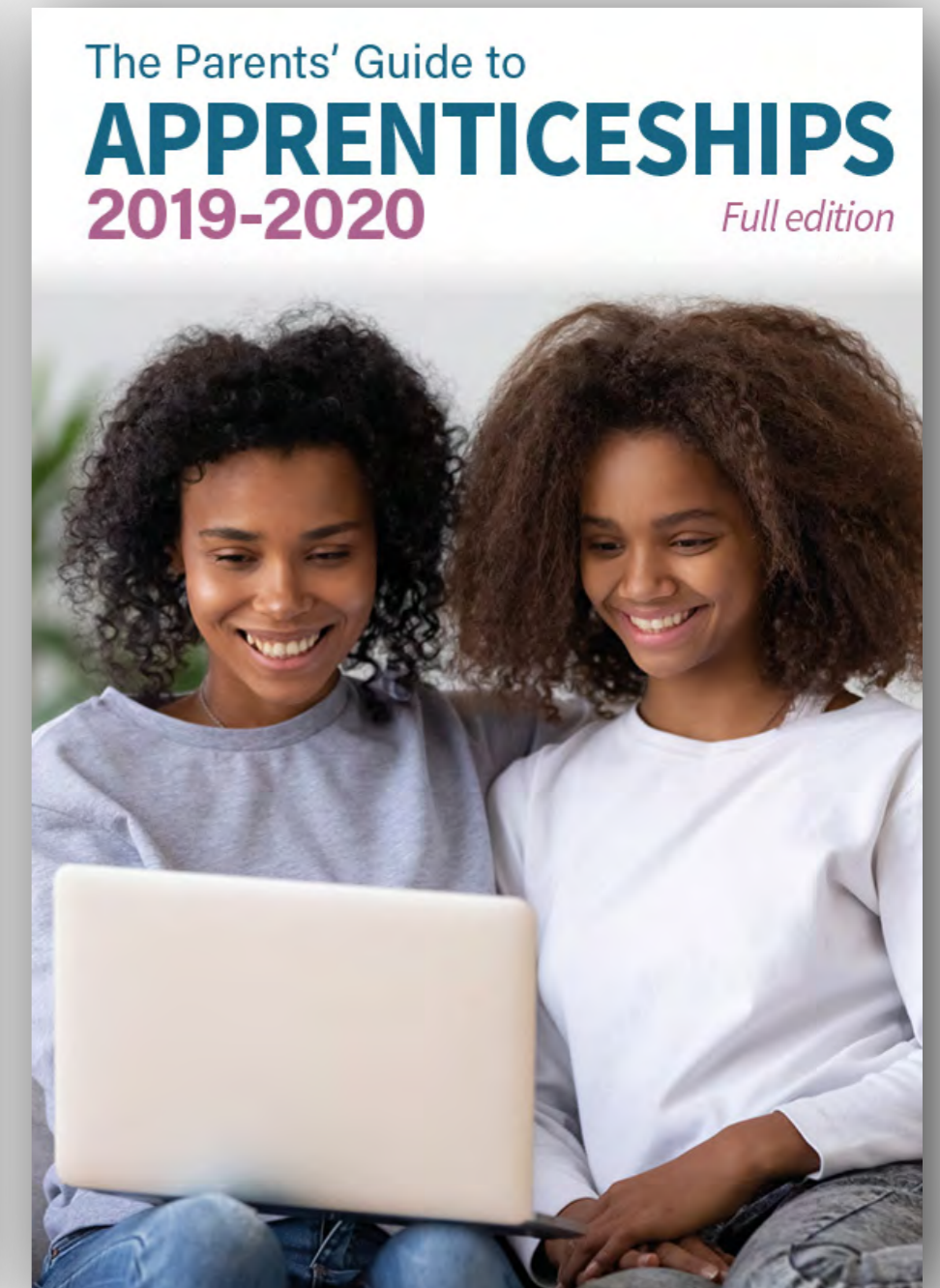
Summary table (pt 1 / 2)

	A levels	International Baccalaureate	BTEC Nationals	T-Levels (England only)
Qualification type	General Certificate of Advanced Level qualification	International Baccalaureate Diploma	Business and Technology Education Council Diplomas (Level 3 are similar standard to A Levels, with subsidiary diploma equivalent to one A level, BTEC diploma equivalent to 2 A levels and extended diploma equivalent to three A levels).	Technical Level Qualification
Type of learning	Mostly theory	Mostly theory, some practical	Combination of practical and theory	Classroom learning (80%) with industry placement (20%)
Qualifications needed to sign up	At least x5 GCSE grade 4 – 9. At least grade 5/6 in the subject/s chosen for A level	Set by the school, up to 5 GCSEs	Up to 5 GCSEs	Set by the school, up to 5 GCSEs
Subject choices	Three subjects	Up to six subjects (three standard level and three at higher level plus some compulsory modules including an extended essay)	Three vocational subjects	One industry field, such as construction (includes design, surveying and planning) or Education (includes early years, assisting teaching and supporting and mentoring students)
Commitment	2 years full time			
Tuition costs	Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)			
UCAS points awarded for passing	56 points – A* 48 points – A 40 points – B 32 points – C 24 points – D 16 points – E	56 points - Higher Level 7 48 points - Higher Level 6 32 points - Higher Level 5 24 points - Higher Level 4 12 points - Higher Level 3	For subsidiary diploma: 56 points – D* (distinction) 48 points – D 32 points – M (merit) 16 points – P (pass) <i>Points are doubled for diploma and tripled for extended diploma</i>	168 points - Distinction* 144 points - Distinction 120 points - Merit 96 points – Pass (C or above) 72 points – Pass (D or E)
Can lead to	University, further study, training or work	University, further study, training or work	University, further study, training, professional development programmes or work	University, further study, training, professional development programmes or work

Summary table (pt 2 / 2)

	Cambridge Technicals	Other qualifications	BTEC apprenticeship	Other options
Qualification type	A Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate (equivalent to an A level) or Cambridge Technical Diploma (equivalent to x2 A levels)	City and Guilds; National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) or Tech Bac (similar to Baccalaureate)	Advanced Level 3 (equivalent to x2 A levels)	Traineeship / Volunteer with training / internship – all to help your child get enough skills to take on an apprenticeship or other form of qualification if they do not already have the minimum qualification requirements.
Type of learning	Practical course with lots of coursework based on real life case studies	Dependent on the qualification, most contain practical on the job training	Work based including off-site learning	Work based
Qualifications needed to sign up	At least x5 GCSE passes	x5 GCSE passes	Advanced Level 3 - depends on employer, some require at least 3 GCSEs Students need to show they can complete the programme	None
Subject choices	Range of vocational subjects	Range of vocational subjects	Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered	Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered
Commitment	2 years	2 years (level 3)	1-2 years	6 weeks – 6 months
Tuition costs	Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)			
UCAS points awarded for passing	Cambs Tech level 3: 56 points – D* (distinction) 48 points – D 32 points – M (merit) 16 points – P (pass)	In most cases no UCAS points are awarded but there are some exceptions.	n/a	n/a
Can lead to	University, further study, training or work	Further study, training, professional development programmes or work	University, further study, training or work	Further study, apprenticeships or job offers

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The Parents' Guide to Post 16 options 2019 - 2020

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