

2021

choices

Helping you choose the
right path after year 11

How do I apply
for sixth form
or college?

Can I apply for an
apprenticeship and a
full-time course?

What financial
support is available
to help me?



Education
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If you have any comments or feedback on *Choices*, please
email us at choices@educationdevelopmenttrust.com

Welcome to Choices

This booklet contains information about making all the important decisions you are facing. It contains information on the education, work and training available to you when you leave school or college.

It has been written for mainly year 11 students, but may be useful if you are in year 12 or in the first year of a Level 3 course.

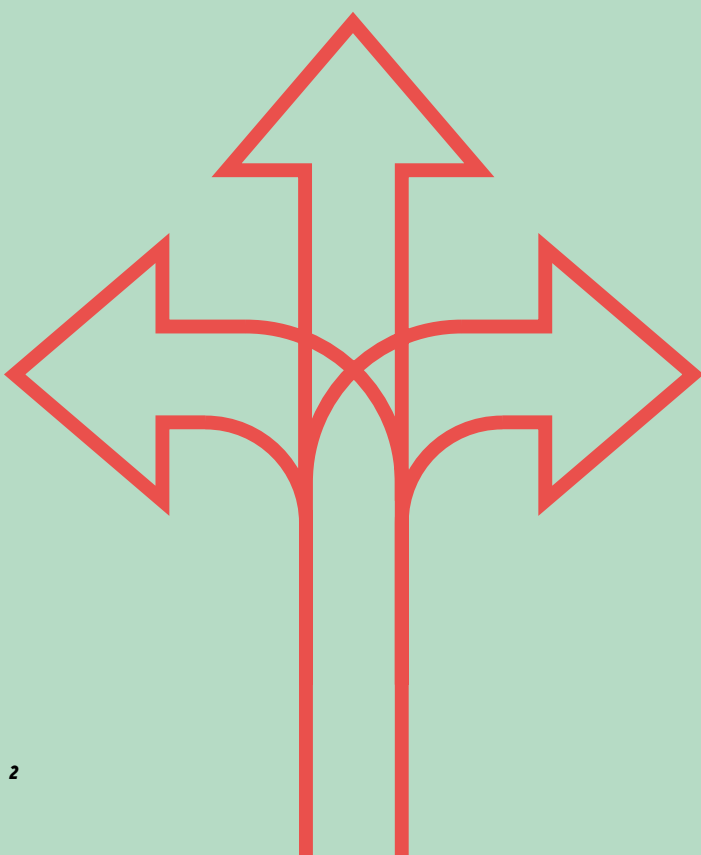
We have also included some information for your parents or carers (on page 19). Please show it to them, as it will help them to help you with the choices that you have to make over the next few months.

You can get help from your careers adviser at school. All advisers are fully trained to support and advise you. They can give you information, advice and guidance on:

- qualifications and subjects
- choosing a sixth form, college or apprenticeship
- choosing a career
- job applications – such as CVs and interviews
- higher education (university).

For advice via phone, email or secure web chat, you can also contact the National Careers Service. Visit nationalcareers.service.gov.uk or call 0800 100 900.

Making post 16 choices is always an uncertain time. We know that you may feel this more so due to COVID-19 and the uncertainty which surrounds this. To help we have included links to lots of useful sites to support you through this time. These can be found throughout the publication and are also listed on page 20. Our advice to you however remains the same as ever, speak to a careers adviser, do your research and always have a back-up plan!



These are your three choices

Did you know?

All young people in year 11 must continue in education and training until the academic year in which they turn 18.

You will have lots of options, including continuing on at school, going to college, getting an apprenticeship or even starting your own business.

The information in this booklet outlines your options and tells you where you can get help to make the best decision.

Making your choice

To make your choice, you need to think about yourself and consider what you are interested in. What are you good at? What do you enjoy? What are your favourite subjects at school? What are your current career ideas?

You then need to find out about the opportunities out there, the different routes you can take, and how and when to apply. Check providers websites or give them a call as application procedures may have changed due to COVID-19.

Who can help?

Your careers adviser can provide up-to-date information on different options. Advisers are impartial, which means they won't try to push you in a particular direction. They simply help you to decide what is right for you. You can also discuss your choice with your teachers, your family and others who know you well.

If you are unsure about what you want to do, you might have access, through your school or college, to online career programs that help you to examine your interests and suggest careers or courses that could be appropriate. Examples include Kudos and Discover your Skills and Careers on nationalcareers.service.gov.uk. It's best to use one of these programs with help from an adviser.

You can take the Buzz Quiz to find out what sort of person you are and what careers might suit you: icould.com/buzz

There is a free career interest quiz, which could help with your ideas: pearson.com/uk/learners/secondary-students-and-parents/career-choices.html

This brochure is a guide but there are lots of other places to get further support. Please see the back page for further information.

A levels

Although specific entry requirements vary between schools, you may want to consider A levels if you are expecting to get at least five GCSEs at grades 9–4 (grades required can often be higher, depending on where you study and the subjects you take). A levels can be a good route if you want to go on to university, although you can also do vocational study or an apprenticeship after your A levels.

Vocational education

Vocational qualifications such as BTECs can be studied at further education colleges. You may now be able to study for one of the new T levels (these are equivalent to three A Levels). Find out more about them here: gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels. Vocational qualifications are related to a particular area of work and are especially suited to those who enjoy hands-on, practical learning.

Apprenticeships or traineeships

An apprenticeship means that you can learn on the job. Apprenticeships are offered across hundreds of job roles and are available up to degree level and higher.

Traineeships are designed to help you get an apprenticeship or a job where you don't already have appropriate skills or experience.

Your choices

In year 11 (or year 12, if you're doing a one-year course), you will have to make some big decisions about your future.

AUTUMN TERM SEP–DEC

Research what you want to do.

Consider your interests, best subjects and potential exam grades.

Discuss your options with your adviser, teachers and family.

Visit your school or college careers library.

Find out which courses are available and where, by accessing local school/college prospectuses and websites.

Check dates of open evenings/events via school and college websites.

Decide which sixth forms/colleges you are interested in and apply from September of year 11. Remember that lots of courses fill up fast, so it's best to get your application in early. You can apply to more than one school or college.

Looking for work or an apprenticeship? Prepare your CV for work or training. Start to contact employers. Talk to your adviser about how to apply and about deadlines.

School/college and job application forms will ask for a reference, so decide who you would like to be your referee and ask their permission first.

SPRING TERM JAN–APR

If you haven't applied for schools/colleges yet, you must apply this term.

Start applying for traineeships if they interest you. Find out more at gov.uk/find-traineeship

Check the apprenticeship website gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship This will give you information about the types of apprenticeships there are, and you can search online for vacancies.

Find out if you can apply for a 16-19 Bursary, which offers funding support if you intend to stay in education or are considering work-based training. Schools, colleges and training providers are responsible for awarding bursaries to students.

Interviews for further education colleges run from January to August. To make sure you are prepared, you will need to explain why you have applied for that particular college and course. Ask your adviser for help, if you need it.

SUMMER TERM APR–JUL

Find out about bursaries, if you haven't already.

You will probably go on study leave in May – most exams take place in May and June.

If you are looking for an apprenticeship or a job with training, check on the apprenticeship website gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

Keep in regular touch with your adviser.

If you are in year 11, the date you officially leave school is the last Friday in June. Regardless of when you turn 16, you cannot legally undertake an apprenticeship or full-time employment until this date.

EXAM RESULTS JUL–AUG

BTEC results are announced from July onwards. GCSE results come out in August. If your results are not what you expected and you have to reconsider your options, talk to your adviser or teacher and get some advice. If you have applied for college, there are likely to be enrolment sessions in late August to early September. Some colleges also have a few last-minute spaces on courses during the enrolment period. However, this may mean that you might not get your first choice.

Academic year calendar

Here is a guide to what you need to do when this year. Tick the boxes when you've completed the task.

Top tip – ensure you apply for a range of options so you have a back-up plan.

ACTION POINTS

Use this page to record your progress

ACTION POINT 1 FULL-TIME STUDY & QUALIFICATIONS (SEE PAGE 7)

What further study or courses am I interested in?	How do I apply (eg online, application form)?	Application deadline

ACTION POINT 2 APPRENTICESHIPS & TRAINING (SEE PAGE 10)

Company/apprenticeship	Contact details	Application deadline

ACTION POINT 3 WORK EXPERIENCE (SEE PAGE 12)

Organisation	Contact details	Application sent

ACTION POINT 4 HOW TO APPLY FOR TRAINING, APPRENTICESHIPS & JOBS (SEE PAGE 14)

Organisation	Closing date for application /date sent	Outcome

ACTION POINT 5 WORK & SKILLS IN A CHANGING WORLD (SEE PAGE 16)

Your transferable skills	Examples of where I have used these, eg I'm a member of a sports team	Benefits of these skills

ACTION POINT 6 MONEY FOR STUDY & TRAINING (SEE PAGE 17)

What funding do I want to find out about?	Where do I need to look & by when?	Application deadline

Routes through learning

Here are examples of the qualifications and training available from Entry to Level 8. It's possible to move across qualification types and from one level to another, eg. A level study to a Degree Apprenticeship.

LEVEL	ACADEMIC	VOCATIONAL	APPRENTICESHIP
8	<p>↑ DOCTORATE – PhD, DPhil</p> <p>Entry = degree and often Master's or postgraduate study</p>	<p>↑ POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS</p> <p>Entry = degree and often Master's or postgraduate study</p>	<p>↑ This option is not available at present</p>
7	<p>↑ MASTER'S DEGREE – MA, MSc, MPhil</p> <p>Entry = degree or professional experience/other qualifications</p>	<p>↑ POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS</p> <p>Entry = degree or professional experience/other qualifications</p>	<p>↑ MASTER'S LEVEL</p> <p>Entry = degree or professional experience/other qualifications</p>
6	<p>↑ DEGREE AND OTHER GRADUATE CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS/LEVEL 6 QUALIFICATIONS</p> <p>Entry = Level 3 qualification</p>	<p>↑ DEGREE AND OTHER GRADUATE CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS/LEVEL 6 QUALIFICATIONS</p> <p>Entry = Level 3 qualification</p>	<p>↑ DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP</p> <p>Entry = Level 3 qualification</p>
5	<p>↑ FOUNDATION DEGREE, HND, DipHE AND OTHER LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS, ETC</p> <p>Entry = Level 3 qualification</p>	<p>↑ FOUNDATION DEGREE, HND, DipHE AND OTHER LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS/NVQs, ETC</p> <p>Entry = Level 3 qualification</p>	<p>↑ HIGHER APPRENTICESHIP</p> <p>Entry = usually a Level 3 qualification</p>
4	<p>↑ HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE (HNC)/LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS/NVQs</p> <p>Entry = Level 3 qualification</p>	<p>↑ HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE (HNC)/LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS/NVQs</p> <p>Entry = Level 3 qualification</p>	<p>↑ HIGHER APPRENTICESHIP</p> <p>Entry = usually a Level 3 qualification</p>
3	<p>↑ A LEVELS AND IB DIPLOMA</p> <p>Entry = 5/6 GCSEs grades 9–4 minimum*</p>	<p>↑ LEVEL 3 ENTRY (DIPLOMA; EXTENDED DIPLOMA; BTEC; CACHE; C&G; NVQ; OCR; UAL QUALIFICATIONS)</p> <p>Entry = 4 GCSEs grades 9–4, Level 2 qual or T levels</p>	<p>↑ ADVANCED APPRENTICESHIP</p> <p>Entry = 4 GCSEs grades 9–4 or Level 2 qualification</p>
2	<p>↑ GCSEs GRADES 9–4</p>	<p>↑ LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS (BTEC; CACHE; C&G; NVQ; OCR; UAL QUALS)</p> <p>Entry = generally 3/4 GCSEs grade 3 or above, or Level 1 qual</p>	<p>↑ INTERMEDIATE APPRENTICESHIP</p> <p>Entry = some GCSEs grade 3 or above or Level 1 qualification</p>
1	<p>↑ GCSEs GRADES 3–1</p>	<p>↑ BTEC LEVEL 1</p> <p>GCSEs grades 2–1 including English & Maths or Entry Level 3 qualification.</p> <p>Entry = interview or assessment</p>	<p>↑ TRAINEESHIP</p> <p>Entry = interview and/or assessment</p>

ENTRY LEVEL CERTIFICATES IN SKILLS FOR WORKING LIFE, FUNCTIONAL SKILLS, FOUNDATION LEARNING

* Grades required can often be higher, depending on where you study and the subjects you take.

Please note: Entry requirements can vary, so you need to check with schools, colleges and training providers.

Full-time study & qualifications

Look ahead.
What could your course lead to?

How to choose

You may already have an idea about your future, such as going to university or aiming for a particular career. Some careers and university courses require you to have qualifications in particular subjects. Speak to an adviser or check the individual courses. If you're not sure, it's usually best to go with subjects you are likely to do well at and that you enjoy.

You will still need to check what you can do with these subjects and try to keep your options open.

Your adviser will be able to discuss this with you in more detail, but you will need to find out some information yourself.

Vocational courses

There are different vocational qualifications and awarding bodies that you will come across. These include: BTEC, City & Guilds, OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA), UAL (University of the Arts London), CACHE and VTCT (Vocational Training Charitable Trust).



Entry level courses

Entry level courses are designed for students with no qualifications or for those with lower qualifications. They help students to improve their reading, writing and IT skills and they boost students' knowledge and confidence.

There are three entry levels: entry level 1, entry level 2 and entry level 3. Entry level 3 can lead on to Level 1 courses.

Some courses are aimed specifically at ESOL students (English speakers of other languages) and those students with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

Levels 1, 2 and 3

Vocational courses train you for specific jobs, such as catering, hairdressing, carpentry, bricklaying, motor mechanics and childcare. Vocational qualifications include those at Level 1, 2 and 3 and others such as City & Guilds qualifications.

During a vocational course, you will be assessed on your practical skills and your ability to do the job. These courses can often be studied part-time as part of an apprenticeship.

Vocational qualifications are available from colleges, training providers, employers and some school sixth forms. They are best suited to people who know exactly what career they want to do and who are practical learners. Although vocational courses train you for a particular job, they can lead to a higher-level job or an apprenticeship in your chosen area or to higher-level study.

BTEC courses

BTEC courses are work-related qualifications combining theory with practical learning. They are ideal for students who are interested in a vocational area such as health and social care, travel and tourism, engineering, sport, business, art & design, performing arts, and public services. There are over 2,000 BTEC qualifications across 16 sectors.

BTEC courses consist of core units, and optional units, and may include work experience. They are available at Levels 1, 2 and 3, and entry will depend on the GCSE or BTEC grades you gain at the end of year 11.

BTEC courses are assessed by assignments, practical assessments and tests. BTEC courses are graded Pass, Merit, Distinction (and Distinction* for BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma).

At some schools and colleges, it is possible for students to combine different Level 3 BTEC courses together, or to combine BTEC Level 3 courses with A levels.

BTEC courses can lead on to university courses (after Level 3), apprenticeships or straight into employment.

Academic courses

Level 3 courses

The most common academic qualifications are A levels.

With A levels, most students study three (or maybe four) subjects. There are more than 40 different A level subjects available and the range will depend on the school or college you attend. Some subjects will be new and you may not have had the opportunity to study these subjects at GCSE, such as Psychology or Government & Politics.

At some schools and colleges, you can study a mix of A levels and BTEC Level 3 qualifications. AS levels are now stand-alone qualifications and will no longer contribute towards the overall A level grade.

T-Levels

T-Levels are being introduced from September of this year. They are equivalent to three A levels and offer a mix of classroom and on the job learning. You can find out more about T-levels at [gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels)

Core Maths

'Core Maths' is an umbrella term for a Level 3 qualification in maths equal in size to an AS level. It is graded A-E and has the same number of UCAS points as an AS qualification.

Core Maths is aimed at students who want to continue with maths and who have a grade 4 or above at GCSE but aren't taking A level Maths.

The qualification supports A level study and is valuable preparation for

many degree courses, particularly in subjects such as psychology, business-related courses, sports and social sciences, and natural science courses that do not require A level Maths.

IB Diploma

With the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, students choose six subjects, three at higher level and three at standard level. They combine this with the Diploma Programme core, consisting of study and life skills, which is taken by every IB student.

Choosing your Level 3 subjects

Your choice of subjects at Level 3 could have an impact on which university courses will accept you, so you need to plan carefully.

Some higher education courses require specific subjects, specific grades (at GCSE as well as at Level 3) plus relevant work experience, so you'll need to do some research before making your final choice.

Higher education applications are made electronically through UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). There is one application form and you have up to five course choices.

The UCAS deadline is usually **15 January** of your final year in the sixth form or college, but for applications to the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, and for most courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/science and dentistry, the deadline is usually **15 October**.

To search courses and to find out about entry requirements, see the UCAS website [digitalucas.com/search](https://www.digitalucas.com/search) It is also important to check individual university and college websites.

General information about applying to higher education can be found at [ucas.com/undergraduate](https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate)

The Russell Group of universities has produced a helpful website called Informed Choices on making decisions about sixth form and college courses. See [informedchoices.ac.uk](https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk)



What to find out before applying

Before making your choice of a college course or applying for a sixth form at a school, it is important to research your ideas thoroughly.

Sixth forms and colleges will want to know why you have chosen what you have, so you need to be able to give good reasons! Ask your adviser for help.

For information about courses, see school/college prospectuses or look on their website.

Application forms are often inside the prospectus or you might be able to apply online.

Schools and colleges have open days/evenings or virtual events for potential students. You should attend open events for all the places you are interested in. It's your chance to find out what a place is really like and to ask questions that will help you make a decision.

What to find out before applying

- How easy is the school/college to get to?
This is very important.
- What facilities are there (eg sports, library, computers)?
- How many students are there?
- What are class sizes like?
- Did previous students get good exam results?
- What did previous students progress to (eg jobs or further study)?
- What support is available to students?
- What was the school's/college's latest Ofsted report and rating like?

Applying for September 2021

If you are applying for entry in September 2021, make sure that you get your applications in as early as possible.

Some courses are very popular and will fill up quickly. You may need to have applied at the latest by the Easter holidays. Some popular schools/colleges have application deadlines as early as December 2020.

If you are considering an apprenticeship or work with training, you need to look at the range of opportunities available to you.

Apprenticeships & training

There are many exciting opportunities, where you can gain qualifications that will help you progress in your chosen career.

COVID-19 has had an impact on the world of work and the labour market, so it's a good idea to keep up to date with labour market changes (see page 16) and to make sure you have a back-up plan.

Make sure you check to see what sort of training you will get and whether the qualifications will be recognised – the more skills you learn, the greater your earning power will be in the future.

Apprenticeships

As an apprentice you will:

- earn a wage
- develop your key skills
- get practical experience through work
- spend 20% of your time in off the job training, often at a college, university or with a training provider.

You will be treated like any other employee, for example with an employment contract, sick pay and an annual leave entitlement.

Levels of apprenticeship

There are different levels of apprenticeship. The level that you start at will be determined by your experience, qualifications and what is available locally.

Intermediate Apprenticeships

– no set requirements, but some GCSEs at grade 3 or above are expected. You will be employed, earn a wage and may gain a qualification.

Advanced Apprenticeships – usually require four GCSEs grades 9–4. You will be employed, will earn a wage and may gain a qualification.

Higher Apprenticeships – require a Level 3 qualification, eg A levels or BTEC. You will be employed, will earn a wage and may gain a qualification.

Degree Apprenticeships – require a Level 3 qualification, eg A levels or BTEC, and allow you to combine practical, workplace training with a university degree. They can lead to a Level 7 qualification, depending on the apprenticeship you are doing.

Apprenticeships involve being employed full-time, and you may be released on certain days to go to college, or training may be given in the workplace.

Wages

There is a National Minimum Wage (NMW) for apprentices. From 1 April 2020, all apprentices are paid a minimum of £4.15 per hour. The apprentice NMW applies to all 16–18 year olds and to those aged 19 and over in the first year of their apprenticeship.

However, as you progress, your wages may increase. Research has found that apprentices earn an average of £277 per week.

If the apprentice reaches 19 and has completed the first year of their apprenticeship, their employer must pay them at least the full NMW rate for their age. For further information see [gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates](https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates)

You can search for apprenticeships on [gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship) and you can register and apply online.

Traineeships

Not ready for an apprenticeship? You could start a traineeship, which will last from six weeks up to six months.

You will:

- improve your English and maths
- get help with job hunting, applying for jobs and going for interviews
- do a work experience placement, to give you useful skills.

Successful students may have the opportunity to progress to a Level 2 apprenticeship. See [gov.uk/find-traineeship](https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship)



Liam's apprenticeship experience

Liam decided to go on to sixth form, starting with A levels then changing to a BTEC Level 3 in Business Studies, as this was more suited to his way of learning.

He applied for a number of apprenticeships before he was successful. He is now doing a Level 7 Degree Apprenticeship with NatWest and he studies part-time at BPP University to gain his qualification.

The average starting salary for a Level 4 Finance apprentice is £19,000–£25,000. This figure increases throughout the apprenticeship course. Liam feels really lucky to be working and gaining a qualification at the same time, and his university fees are paid by NatWest.

Liam advises students to:

- research the market they want to go into, making sure it interests them
- gain work experience to test out potential jobs – you can also talk about this on your applications and at interviews
- apply for as many apprenticeships as you can that interest you.

For year 11 students, NatWest also offers Customer Services Apprenticeships (Level 2) and Relationship Manager Apprenticeships (Level 3), both based in high street branches. Many banks offer apprenticeship opportunities so check out their websites for details.

Work experience is a great introduction to the world of work and can provide a valuable insight into how organisations function.

Whatever work experience you choose to do can help you later on, and it can be very useful when you are making important decisions about your future.

Work experience in the future may look different to the traditional placement offered at an employer's premises and could be a combination of online and face to face engagement. It's still important to approach employers to see if they can support you with a placement be it an online interactive placement, a face to face placement or a mix of both these approaches.

Work experience

Your National Insurance number should arrive automatically in the post just before your 16th birthday. You need your National Insurance number to start apprenticeships and work with training. If it doesn't arrive, telephone 0345 600 0643 for help. Textphone: 0345 600 0644. Lines are open 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

[gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number](https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number)

Why is work experience important?

You will learn a lot of skills, like the importance of timekeeping, how you should behave in the workplace, how you should dress and present yourself, and how to get on with people of all ages. You may also get an idea of the skills that you need, in order to get on in the workplace. It'll help you to identify your own skills and perhaps highlight areas that you might want to work in.

Some work experience placements might even give you the opportunity to take on really interesting and challenging responsibilities. You may get the opportunity to work as part of a team, and may work with other people and benefit from their experience.

While most work experience is unpaid, it is a perfect way to sample different career options and even think about a fresh career idea. You'll get to speak to employees and ask them questions. It's a way of exploring different jobs, without actually committing to anything. You may well come across jobs that you have never heard of – and they might be just the job for you.

You are more likely to be successful in your job hunt, if you have had the opportunity to do work experience. You might not use your work experience straight away, but it might become useful in the future. Work experience is very good for building contacts and for networking. Again, this might help you later on. It will help you to gain confidence and build your self-esteem too.

“It was the opportunity to see so many different parts of the industry and the amount I learnt from the people I met that made the experience so worthwhile.”

Chris, sixth form student, undertook work experience at Transport for London

Work experience is never wasted, and of course it is something extra to put on your CV. It will also make you stand out from everyone else – and just may get you your dream job.

How to choose a work experience placement

- Think about your interests, skills and the type of person you are.
- Take into account your hopes and expectations and how a placement may help you in the future.
- Consider your future career ideas and aspirations.
- Link it to what you are studying.

How to find your own placement

- Speak to your family and friends as well as your school.

- Contact employers and send them your CV and a covering letter, clearly outlining why you wish to complete your work experience with them.

There may be lots of other people applying for work experience at the same time as you, so don't become disheartened – it can sometimes take a while to secure the placement that you want.

Volunteering

Anyone can volunteer. It can be very rewarding and it is a great way to:

- meet new people
- gain new skills or develop existing ones
- get experience
- make a big difference to your community.
- develop skills which employers look for.

There are lots of easy ways to give your time to help others – from helping in your local area or making a regular commitment to volunteer with a charity or community group.

There are several organisations that can help you find a way to volunteer that suits you. **Do-it.org** 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.

Young people can also volunteer either at school or in their own time. If you're aged 16 or 17, you can take part in the National Citizen Service (NCS). See ncsyes.co.uk

Part-time employment

Many students would like to find a part-time job while at school or college, to gain experience and to earn some money.

Part-time opportunities are often found in shops, supermarkets, cafés or catering companies. These vacancies aren't always advertised, so it is sometimes about being in the right place at the right time. Depending on the type of work you do, you might need to be 16 years or over and to have a National Insurance number (see box on page 12).

If you would like a part-time job:

- ask your family, friends and neighbours if they know of any vacancies
- write or update your CV, and draft a covering letter
- contact employers direct – go into shops or ring companies, to ask if they have any opportunities.

It is important that any part-time employment does not interfere with your school studies. There are certain guidelines about the hours you can work and restrictions on the type of work you can do. See gov.uk/child-employment

Most local councils say that businesses intending to employ school-age children must apply for a child employment permit form from the education department, before they can be employed.

How to apply for training,

You will be asked to complete an application form, send a curriculum vitae (CV) or write a letter of application. Employers use these to decide whether to offer you an interview, so getting them right is important.

Application form

Application forms are usually completed online. Some employers may still use paper application forms.

Before you complete the form:

- take a photocopy (of paper forms) or print a copy (of electronic forms) to practise on
- read the form and make sure you follow the instructions (this could be using black ink or block capitals)
- remember to highlight your skills and qualities and how they will help you in the job you are applying for – refer to the ‘person specification’ (which describes the type of person they are looking for in their ideal candidate), if the company sent you one
- check that your information is correct – particularly the dates
- check spelling, grammar and presentation
- make sure you include all your interests and abilities (especially those that are relevant to the application)
- be honest – you may have to answer questions based on your application form at the interview
- keep a copy of the completed form – photocopy it or save and print it off, so that you can remind yourself about what you said before an interview
- ensure that you have completed all sections of the form, and attach any information requested.

Curriculum vitae (CV)

Employers often ask for a CV when they advertise. You can also send your CV to employers, to see if they have any vacancies.

Compiling your CV:

- remember to include all personal details – your full name, address with postcode, telephone number and email address (make sure your email address is fairly normal – not necessarily one you might use with your friends!)
- be concise – one side of A4 is usually enough for school or college leavers
- check spelling, grammar and presentation
- keep it simple and to the point – employers may have lots of CVs to read
- use positive language about your abilities and qualities
- include information on work experience and any part-time jobs
- include interests – particularly any that are relevant to the job
- get someone else (for example a careers adviser) to check your CV for errors or to suggest improvements.

Digital methods

Developing your digital profile

Have you ever tried typing your name into Google? The results that come back say a lot about you as a person. Ensuring that information about you that appears online is positive and professional is a great way to get ahead in the employment market in a number of ways. Ensure that you use the correct security settings for social media, and think carefully before posting anything about what that content may look or sound like to others. Consider joining LinkedIn as a way of building a professional profile online.

Search for opportunities

There are lots of jobs posted through websites and social media platforms like LinkedIn. It’s a great way for you to develop your understanding of what employers are looking for – and even apply for jobs.

Showcase your experiences

If you’ve taken part in a work placement or internship, sharing your experiences via LinkedIn is a great way to demonstrate the skills and knowledge you have developed. Ensure that you keep your profile up to date with work experience, training and qualifications undertaken. Endorse and recommend suitable colleagues and contacts online, and ask them to do the same for you.

Build your network

You can also join groups and networks relating to careers that you may be interested in, to find out more and keep up to date with the latest developments, as well as making connections with employers you are interested in working with or colleges and universities.

Covering letters

An employer may ask you to send a covering letter with your CV. The purpose of a covering letter is to show how the experience on your CV relates to their vacancy and to highlight why they should employ you. You must write a new covering letter for each new job for which you apply. This is so you can show that you have researched the company and say why you are applying to them in particular.

Writing your covering letter:

- plan carefully what you are going to write and do a rough draft first
- type the letter (or handwrite it, if the employer requests it)
- if you have a named person to write to, sign the letter ‘Yours sincerely’; if not, address it to ‘Dear Sir/Madam and sign it ‘Yours faithfully’
- remember to highlight your skills and qualities and how they will help you in the job you are applying for – look carefully at the ‘person specification’, if you have one
- keep the letter short and to the point – on one side of A4 if possible
- get someone else (such as a careers adviser) to check over your letter for errors or to suggest improvements.

apprenticeships & jobs

Useful interview tips

Before the interview day

- Find out where the interview is being held and work out how you will get there – a practice run is useful and allow time for travelling
- Find out about the organisation – a Google search can help
- Read the information you have about the job
- Read through your application; check it against the job details and ensure that you are ready to answer questions on the information that you provided
- Ask a friend, careers adviser or parent/carer to help you with interview practice
- Plan what to wear and choose clothes that are smart, neat and tidy – it is better to be too smart than too casual.

On the day

- Get ready in plenty of time
- Check you have everything you need – the letter inviting you for interview, a map and directions to the company, and any paperwork they may have requested
- Don't forget your phone
- Give yourself plenty of time to get there; if you get held up, make sure you phone to say you are going to be late

- When you arrive, introduce yourself at reception and ask for the person you are going to see.

During

- Remember: it is an interview, so switch off your phone and don't chew gum
- Greet your interviewer in a friendly but professional manner – smile, say good morning/good afternoon and shake hands
- Be polite at all times
- Body language is important – sit up straight and make eye contact
- Give full answers to the questions – don't just say 'yes' or 'no'
- Tell the truth
- Ask relevant questions about the job and the training (avoid asking about pay, as it could look as if that is all you are interested in!)
- Thank the interviewer at the end of the interview.

Other forms of interview

Increasingly, employers don't just use standard interviews in recruitment. They are also using other methods. No matter what recruitment method an employer uses, treat it like a

regular interview – it is just as important. Prepare just as you would for any interview and have your CV and the job description to hand.

Online interviews

An online interview is very similar to a regular interview, but you will be speaking to the employer via web based software, such as Zoom or Teams. Check in advance that you are able to access and use the software. The employer will be able to see you if it is a video call, so dress smartly and ensure that you will not be disturbed.

Telephone interview

If it's a telephone interview, double-check the details – will they call you or do you call them? If you're using a landline, make sure it is free. If you're using a mobile, ensure that it is charged up.

Assessment centre

You will probably be given some details of what an assessment centre will entail, if you are invited to attend one. This could include presentations, group activities and discussions. All activities will be designed to see how well you would work in a team and how you fit the role, so make sure that you participate.

Factors affecting the world of work

Living longer

Medicine and healthcare are advancing all the time, and we are also much more aware of leading a healthy lifestyle – therefore people are living longer. This means that we need people working in health and social care, to look after older and frail people. Job areas that are important to this include:

- healthcare
- social care
- bioscience
- pharmacology
- leisure.

Developing new technologies

Technology is constantly changing, which creates new jobs and means that other jobs are disappearing. For example, artificial intelligence, robotics and the introduction of smart phones have created new work. Some of the new jobs that have emerged are:

- IOS developer
- social media and digital marketing apprentice
- cybersecurity analyst
- big data architect.

Doing global business

There are constant changes in where businesses are based, as companies move around the world to find the best place to operate. Over a quarter of larger firms in the UK (those with over 250 employees) are foreign-owned. To keep up to date with these changes, language skills can be useful, as is knowing how to use technologies such as Microsoft Teams to hold meetings with colleagues across the globe.

Caring for the environment

The UK government has set targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to almost zero by 2050. To achieve this target, new low-carbon technologies need to be implemented. This is leading to a requirement for new skills and new jobs, for example:

- wind turbine engineer
- solar panel installer
- smart meter installer.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the labour market in many ways. It has forced some employers to implement more flexible working practices, changed the way businesses operate and increased demands on other businesses and services. As the threat of further outbreaks remains, employers will be looking for those who are flexible and adaptable to change.

The skills you'll need

So what skills are useful for the world of work, now and in the future?

Employers want people with skills, attributes and strengths that they can apply to different settings. These are called 'transferable skills', such as:

- working in a team
- goal setting
- coming up with creative ideas
- problem solving.

How to demonstrate your skills

You already use transferable skills all the time. This could be at home, at school or by taking part in activities or hobbies.

Writing these down is useful, as you can then use this on a CV, on an application form or in an interview, to demonstrate to employers how you have used a particular skill. Look at the examples below:

Example: *Time keeping – I attend a dance school at weekends and some evenings. When I have classes or performances, I ensure that I am on time, allowing myself enough time to get where I need to be and to get changed into any costume that I have to wear.*

Example: *Written communication – I write articles for the school newsletter. When I do this, I make sure that my writing is clear and easily understood.*

Work & skills in a changing world

When you're thinking about what job you would like to do, it can be useful to consider the changes that are affecting the world of work. This is called labour market information.

How to access labour market information

National Careers Service:
nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

icould (an online charity providing career ideas and information for young people):
icould.com

Or get more local information from your school careers adviser



Money for study & training

**Thinking of staying in
education or training?
Financial support is available.
Read on to find out more.**

The 16 to 19 Bursary

If you're aged between 16 and 19 years and think you might need help with the costs of continuing with full-time education or training, you may be entitled to receive a bursary.

Students who are most in need will be eligible to receive a bursary of up to £1,200 a year. This group includes:

- people in care
- care leavers
- people claiming income support or getting Universal Credit
- those who get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- those who get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their name and either ESA or Universal Credit

Other students facing genuine financial difficulties may be awarded a bursary at the discretion of their school, college or training provider.

Schools, colleges and training providers are responsible for awarding bursaries to students. With the exception of the £1,200 bursaries for students most in need, they decide on the amount. They will also decide when bursaries are paid and will set conditions that students should meet to receive a bursary, for example regular attendance.

For more information, see [gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund](https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund)

Care to Learn

You can claim Care to Learn if you are under 20, caring for your own child, and doing a school and college course or training programme that receives public funding (fathers are eligible, if they are the main carers). An application can be made as soon as you have a confirmed place on a learning programme.

Funding is available for childcare costs, any registration fee where charged, any childcare fees you must pay in holidays and any additional travel costs you must pay to take your child to the carer. Your childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted.

For more information, go to [gov.uk/care-to-learn](https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)

Further education residential support

You may be interested in studying a course that is not available within a reasonable travelling distance from your home. This is sometimes the case for young people wanting to study particular specialist courses, for example in dance, agriculture/horticulture, music, or art and design. This may mean living away from home at a residential college. Payments are for a maximum of three years.

For more information about financial support for this, go to [gov.uk/residential-support-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme) or contact the college you are interested in, as they may be able to offer some help.

Dance and Drama Awards

Dance and Drama Awards are available at 17 accredited dance and drama schools. The professional courses cover acting, dance, musical theatre and production skills. You must be 16 or over and show talent and a likelihood to succeed in the industry.

A Dance and Drama Award can help you to pay for your tuition fees and can contribute towards living costs. The amount you get depends on your household income and where you live and study.

For more information, check [gov.uk/dance-drama-awards](https://www.gov.uk/dance-drama-awards)

Other financial support

Learning providers, such as colleges and training providers, have access to additional funding to support those facing difficulties in paying for books, equipment or field trips. If you face difficulties, you will need to discuss this with your tutor, or student support/welfare department.

GrantFairy is a mobile app, which matches students with thousands of scholarships, bursaries and grants to help pay university tuition fees, etc. For further information, see [grantfairy.com](https://www.grantfairy.com)

Additional funding

If you are continuing your studies or are on an approved traineeship, your parents or carers will still be able to carry on receiving child benefit (if they are eligible). There is more information at [gov.uk/child-benefit](https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit) Helpline 0300 200 3100.

They will also still get child tax credits and any other dependants' benefits they may receive for you. Check out the HMRC site on [gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs) to find out more information on both child benefit and tax credits. For tax credits help, call 0345 300 3900.

If you have no parent or carer to support you, you may be entitled to claim benefits yourself. See your careers adviser or visit your local Jobcentre Plus for advice.

Other support may be available for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. See your adviser for more details.

Travel support

In London

Apply online at tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/16-plus-zip-oyster-photocard or at post offices in London.

Outside London

If you are not in London, you will need to check with your school, college or local authority for any available help with travel costs. Your local council has information on the services, discounts and concessions available in your area for travel to school sixth form or college.

Find out more by inputting your postcode at [gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19](https://www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19)

Higher education costs

It's never too early to start your research. You need to be aware of the costs of university, as well as of the long-term benefits. Loans are available for tuition fees, accommodation and living costs.

For more information on funding for higher education, see [gov.uk/student-finance](https://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

Advice for parents & carers

It can be difficult to know where to start in supporting your child. By encouraging your child to research carefully the courses and qualifications on offer locally and to talk to the professionals who will be able to explain what is available, you will help them to make an informed decision.

How you can support your teenager

There is such a wide choice of post-16 options, it is easy to become confused by everything on offer.

Here is a summary of key areas for you to consider, when encouraging your child to investigate further.

- Read the information that they will have received from school.
- Talk to people who can help them, such as their teachers, careers advisers and the people who run courses (such as college lecturers and subject teachers in schools).
- Attend college and school open days/events and check application deadlines. Be aware that popular courses fill up quite quickly.
- Investigate apprenticeships, as these can provide an alternative career route: **amazingapprenticeships.com/parents** Apprenticeships can lead to degree-level study through Higher Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships.
- Remind them that better qualifications can improve job prospects and that there are fewer jobs available that don't require any qualifications.
- Remind them that more young people are continuing with their education and qualifications – either through courses or training in a job.
- Help them to see that their choices now will have an effect on their immediate and their long-term future. The 'best' choices are those that keep their options open for longer.
- If they have a career in mind, they may need to take specific subjects and get specific grades and qualifications, as well as doing relevant work experience too.
- They can find out about specific career requirements, by talking to their adviser or by looking online at **nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/job-profiles/home**
- Encourage them to have a back-up plan, just in case. It will help them – and you – feel that there are other options, and will give them a sense of having more control over their lives.

For more information on careers and on advice aimed at parents, see parentalguidance.org.uk

GCSE grades

To see how the current GCSE grades compare to the previous grades, see **gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-new-grading-scale-factsheets**

Useful information

GCSE grading scale

gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-new-grading-scale-factsheets

Information about the new GCSE grades for parents, employers and further and higher education providers

Careers information and career planning

nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

National Careers Service with access to an adviser by phone, text, email or live webchat, 8am–10pm, seven days a week. Calls from landlines and mobiles are free.

Tel: 0800 100 900

Text: 077664 13219

Facebook: /nationalcareers

Twitter: @nationalcareers

futurefinder.yourlife.org.uk

Matching you to your perfect job

icould.com

An online charity providing career ideas and information for young people

Facebook: /icouldstories

Twitter: @icouldstories

youthemployment.org.uk/careers-hub

Youth Employment UK – a youth organisation dedicated to tackling youth unemployment in the UK

Twitter: @YEUK2012

prospects.ac.uk

Match your skills and personality to 400+ job profiles

Facebook: /graduateprospects

Twitter: @prospects

Apprenticeships and training

findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch

Search and apply for an apprenticeship in England
FireItUpApps

Twitter: @Apprenticeships

gov.uk/find-traineeship

Find a traineeship

careemap.co.uk

Career Map – a resource for finding local apprenticeships

Facebook: /careemap.uk

Twitter: @careemapnews

amazingapprenticeships.com

The official site to discover exciting apprenticeships, explore classroom resources, book free support and meet real apprentices.

Finance and funding

gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview

Details of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

gov.uk/student-finance

Student finance for higher education

Facebook: /SFEngland

Twitter: @SF_England

Further and higher education

ucas.com

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service – information on how to apply for higher education courses, what courses are available and links to colleges and universities

Facebook: /UCASOnline

Twitter: @UCAS_Online

National Careers Service

Discover your skills online assessment <https://beta.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Volunteering and personal development

vinspired.com

vinspired – the UK's leading volunteering charity for 14–25 year olds

Facebook: /vinspired

Twitter: @vinspired

princes-trust.org.uk

The Prince's Trust – offers a range of support, including local personal development programmes and help with starting your own business

Facebook: /PrincesTrust

Twitter: @PrincesTrust

dofe.org/do-your-dofe

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award – the world's leading youth achievement award

Facebook: /TheDofE

Twitter: @DofE

wearencs.com

National Citizen Service (NCS) – offers experiences and skills for 15–17 year olds

Facebook: /ncs

Twitter: @NCS

Personal wellbeing – Mental health support NHS, UCAS Student minds

nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/

youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/#helplines-and-services-available-