



WHAT TO DO AFTER YEAR ELEVEN



A GUIDE TO LEVELS, QUALIFICATIONS AND ROUTES WITHIN POST 16 EDUCATION FOR 14 - 18 YEAR OLD STUDENTS (YEARS 9 TO 13) AND THEIR PARENTS/CARERS



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Calendar for Year 11 Students

AUTUMN AND SPRING TERMS

- Start thinking of what you would like to do next year
- Think of how you learn best: by listening, by observing others, or by doing practical tasks
- Get as much information as you can on the options available to you (teachers, advisors, Internet, Connexions, school brochure...)
- Discuss with your teachers or advisor, parents/carers, Connexions advisors.
- Attend the Towers Sixth Form Evening. Visit your areas of interest and talk to the teachers.
- Draw up a list of courses/subjects that are of interest to you and priorities your choices
- Don't forget to think of the various case scenarios; you may get your predicted grades but you may also achieve better or lower grades – you must have alternative options and discuss them with an advisor
- Apply using the Connexions online application process (www.kentchoices4u.com). If you find this difficult, ask your teacher or Connexions advisor for help. You can apply for more than one course at the Towers Sixth Form (see page 15 for useful website addresses). If you face difficulty, you may also be able to apply on paper. Towers Sixth Form Centre will still accept applications on paper.
- Please call **01233 634171 ext. 209**
- and ask for a form.
- Concentrate on your coursework and exam preparation
- Prepare for your applications and interviews

SUMMER TERM

- Check that your applications have been acknowledged by the schools
- Confirm the offers of courses, training or work. You can still apply if you haven't yet done so
- GCSE results will be published the last Thursday in August (available online the day before)
- As soon as you get your results, confirm the place of your choice
- If your results are different than what you expected, meet with your school/college or Connexions advisor to discuss your options

***Do not
panic – whatever
your results, you will
have a guaranteed place
in September.***

This means that 16 - 17 year olds leaving compulsory education are guaranteed to receive an offer of a place in education or training meeting their needs by the end of September.



Introduction

WHY STAY IN EDUCATION?

The world is ever changing, with new jobs, new technologies and more competition; this is why it is very important to stay on in education or training to gain the necessary skills.

CHOOSING

When a young person reaches Key Stage 4 (Year 10 and 11) at secondary school, it is usually time to decide the educational path that will eventually lead to the job market and adult life.

Yet, for both parents/carers and teenagers, it can be very difficult to understand and make the right choice from all the different educational offers, routes and qualifications available.

UNDERSTANDING

After Year 11, in order to make your choice, you have to think of what you like, what skills you have and how you prefer to learn; there are many ways – called progression routes – to go where you want to and achieve your goal, whether it's a trade, a career, or university.

Towers Sixth Form Centre wants all young people to understand the wide choice available and reach their full potential in terms of qualifications and training, which can result in a wider career choice, more job satisfaction, better career advancement possibilities and higher salary levels.

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Decide your own route through Further Education to Higher Education

A full explanation of the qualifications can be found in the glossary (see page 12)



See pages 6 – 7 for an explanation of the term: Level.

KEY STAGE 4

(Years 10 and 11) Age 14 – 16

Qualifications offered include:

GCSEs, Applied GCSEs, BTECs, NVQs,
Foundation/Higher Diplomas

Levels * attained: Levels E → 2 depending on
grades and number of certificates

TOWERS SIXTH-FORM

Qualifications offered include:

A-levels (AS/A2): BTEC's, OCR Nationals,
NVQ's, and Certificates
Applied A-Levels
IBCC

Levels 1, 2, or 3 Available

FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) COLLEGES

Qualifications offered include:

Skills for Working Life, Certifications, NVQs,
Apprenticeships, BTEC Introductory, BTEC Firsts,
BTEC Nationals and also: A-levels, Applied
A-Levels, Foundation/Advanced/Higher
Diplomas, Higher Education Progression Diploma

Levels attained: Levels E → 3

UNIVERSITY

Qualifications offered include:

- Diplomas (Higher Education)
- Foundation Degrees
- Higher National Certificates (HNC)
- Higher National Diplomas (HND)
- BA, BSc
- Masters Degree
- PhD

Levels attained:

Levels 4 → 8 graduate and post-graduate)

HIGHER EDUCATION (HE COLLEGES)

Qualifications offered include:

- NVQs 4/5
- Foundation Degrees
- Higher National Certificates (HNC)
- Higher National Diplomas (HND)
- BA, BSc
- Chartered qualifications

Levels attained:

Level 4 → 7 (graduate and post-graduate)

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A guide to Levels & Qualifications

All qualifications are given a level*. The higher the level, the more advanced the qualification. The use of levels enables comparison of qualifications on different progression routes. Those on the same level are equivalent.

The staircase (below) will help you establish the level you have now attained and explore the possible progression routes to your goal. Above each step, you will see what the requirements are to apply for this level. Under the step are examples of typical qualifications you can gain at this level.

Although this information is by no means an exhaustive list of recognized qualifications, it is a good table to discuss with a guidance advisor. For more information, visit the National Qualifications Framework – www.qca.org.uk

Level E (Entry Level):

To apply for Entry Level courses: No formal qualifications are required.

(Entry level courses give literacy, numeracy, communication and study skills to progress towards a Level 1. They may also give an introduction to an industry or business sector)

Skills for Working Life
Skills for Life

LEVEL 4

To apply for Level 4 courses:
You need a Level 3 qualification.

LEVEL 3

To apply for Level 3 courses:
You need a Level 2 qualification

LEVEL 2

To apply for Level 2 courses:
You need a Level 1 qualification

LEVEL 1

To apply for Level 1 courses:
You may need an interview but often no formal qualifications are required.

NVQ 1

C & G Progression Award 1

BTEC Introductory

4 GCSEs at grade D – G

Young Apprenticeship

Foundation Diploma

NVQ 2

C & G Progression Award 2

BTEC First

4 – 5 GCSEs at grade A* - C

Apprenticeship

Higher Diploma

NVQ 3

C & G Progression Award 3

BTEC National

A-Levels

International Baccalaureate

Advanced Apprenticeship

IBCC

Higher Education

Progression Diploma

NVQ 4

Certificate of Higher Education

Higher National Certificate

LEVEL 5

To apply for Level 5 courses:

You need a Level 3 – 4 qualification

Diploma of Higher Education
Foundation Degree
Higher National Diploma
NVQ 5

LEVEL 6

To apply for Level 6 courses:

You need a Level 3 - 5 qualification

BA (Hons) – Bachelors Degree in Arts
BSc (Hons) – Bachelors Degree in Science
Graduate Certificates and Diplomas

LEVEL 7

To apply for Level 7 courses:

You need a Level 5 - 6 qualification

MA (Masters Degree in Arts)
MSc (Masters Degree in Science)
Post-graduate Certificate
Post-graduate Diploma

LEVEL 8

To apply for Level 8 courses:

You need a Level 6 – 7 qualification

PhD (Doctorate)

Frequently Asked Questions



WHAT LEVEL/QUALIFICATION DO YOU NEED TO ENTER POST 16 STUDY?

The GCSE grades you get at school are important as they determine at which level you will start studying your chosen subject at post 16 study. Do not worry if you have to start at a level below the one you wanted because you can always progress through the levels once you're at Sixth Form. Our Sixth Form has many examples of students who reach or exceed their original goal even though they might have been relatively unsuccessful in year 11. However, an English GCSE C Grade is usually necessary for most Level 3 Courses.

Post 16 Study enables young people to develop their academic and/or vocational skills to progress towards Higher Education or to gain a relevant qualification to find a job.

WHAT IS POST 16 STUDY?

Post 16 study is/was the post-compulsory education most young people will progress to after reaching 16 (A-levels, BTECs, NVQs, etc) mostly in school Sixth-Forms. When you carry on with your studies you have a wide choice of qualifications that are often classified as:

- **ACADEMIC** (involved theory, research, essays..) e.g. A-Levels in English Literature, Chemistry..
- **VOCATIONAL** (involves practical learning for a specific skill, job or career) e.g. NVQs in Hairdressing, Accountancy...
- **OR A MIXTURE OF BOTH**, e.g. BTECs , A - levels/ GCSE's and IBCCs.

WHAT KIND OF POST 16 STUDY WOULD SUIT YOU?

To make your choice, consider your specific skills and abilities, whether you prefer academic or vocational studies or a mixture of both and what kind of job you would eventually like to have. Whatever your choice, there is always a route to progress from post 16 to Higher Education.



Frequently Asked Questions

IS THERE ANY FINANCIAL HELP TO CARRY ON STUDYING AFTER YEAR 11?

There are several schemes of financial help available to young people.

The government has now created a new Post 16 Bursary Fund for students with the greatest need.

Please contact the 6th Form Office for further details.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A COURSE AFTER YEAR 11?

Young people who in Year 11 (and sometimes in Year 10) and live in the Ashford area (or other Kent areas) need to apply online through www.kentchoices4u.co.uk

WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION?

Higher Education (HE) is the name given to qualifications obtained at Level 4 and above. These qualifications can either be studied at university, college or at a specialist

college, or even by distance or online course. HE usually starts soon after 18, but mature students (ie. adults) can start any time in life, providing they have the relevant entry level or work experience. You can opt for academic or vocational courses as well as work-based qualifications.

WHAT LEVEL OR QUALIFICATION DO YOU NEED TO ENTER HIGHER EDUCATION?

You usually need a Level 3 qualification (see page 6) to be accepted into Higher Education. There are many ways to reach this level, not just the academic route, depending on each person's tastes and specific skills: BTEC Nationals, A-Levels, Advanced Diplomas, Higher Education Progression Diploma, Advanced Apprenticeships, Access to Higher Education courses and more.



WHAT BENEFIT DO YOU GET FROM HIGHER EDUCATION?

Apart from the obvious skills and knowledge students gain on their course, people with an HE qualification have also proven that they are able to work hard to gain a qualification. This is one reason why they have access to a wider choice of jobs. Some studies suggest that during their career they will earn 50% more than people without similar qualifications.

HOW MUCH DOES HIGHER EDUCATION COST?

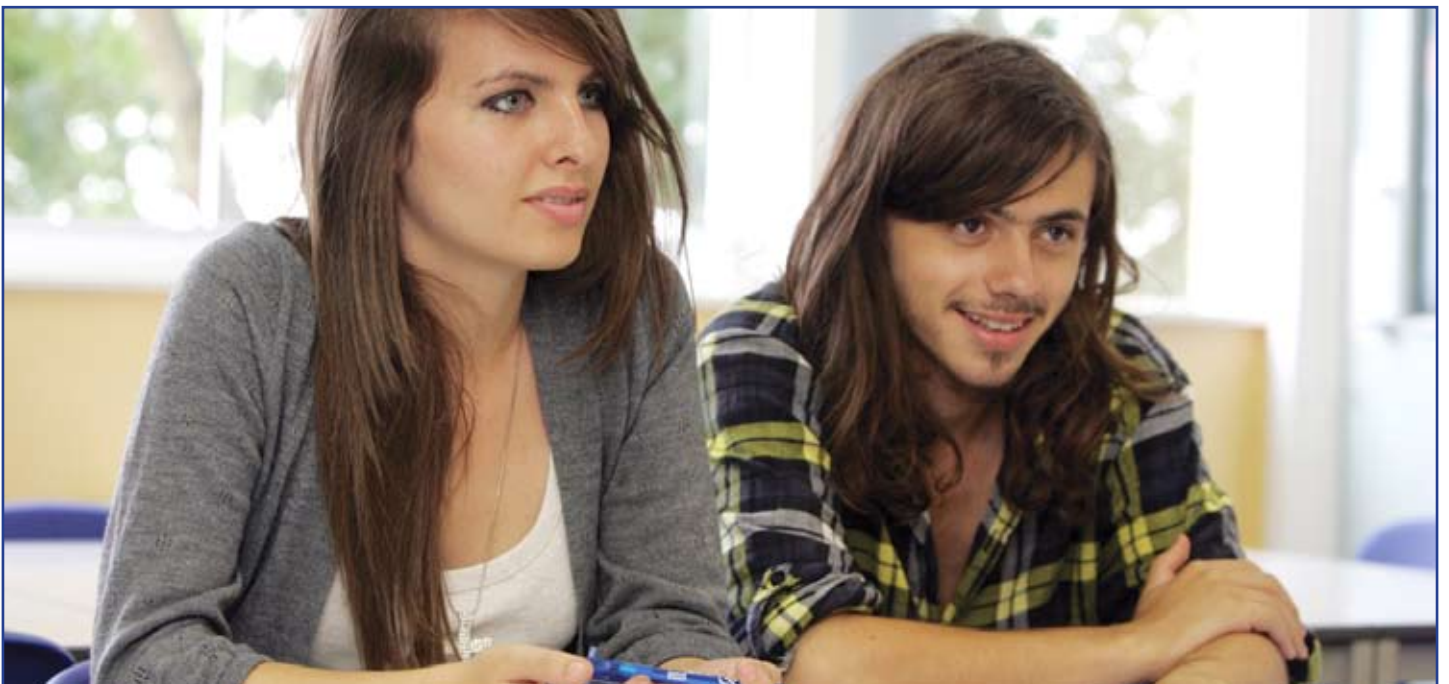
For 2012 entry, universities and colleges in England charged new students up to £9,000 a year for their courses. Amounts charged may vary between courses, as well as between different universities and colleges. Leaving home to gain an HE qualification obviously leads to more expenses, as the costs of accommodation, food, travel and educational expenses (books, trips, materials) must be taken into account. There are a lot of schemes available offering access to financial support to help students and around 60% get some kind of help with tuition fees.

CAN YOU STUDY FOR A HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATION WHILE WORKING?

Yes. Young people with suitable entry qualifications and employment can commence an Apprenticeship. In addition, primarily for adult students, there is a large choice of attendance offered at colleges (part-time, evenings, online) enabling students to study for a Higher Education qualification whilst working or carrying on with family responsibilities.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Everyone involved in Further and higher Education wants young people to make an informed choice. To help you make the right choice. Towers Sixth Form provides a free professional and impartial guidance service, through our aim-higher co-ordinator Mr A Davis.





What does it mean? A glossary of terms

Academic

Academic qualifications entail theoretical knowledge, analytical and critical skills. They show students have achieved a certain educational standard, with the in-depth study of a subject. Academic courses might better suit people who do not have a specific career in mind.

Academy

Academies are all-ability state schools established and managed by public and private sponsors, that have replaced some secondary schools to raise educational standards and offer more opportunities.

Access Courses

Access courses are designed for adults (19+) who wish to enter higher Education but do not have the necessary qualifications. They are a Level 3 qualification.

A-Levels

A-Levels are the 'classic' academic route to Higher Education, chosen after GCSEs by students who usually wish to carry on to university. They last 2 years and you normally need at least 5 GCSEs (A*-C) including English and maths to start.

AS (Advanced Supplementary) Levels are studied in the first year (Year 12), whilst A2 Levels are the second year of study (Year 13). The completion of both AS and A2 Levels provides a full A-Level.

Applied A-Levels are designed to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding in broad vocational areas (e.g. engineering, ICT, business etc.) and are an excellent preparation for further study or training. A-Levels are Level 3 qualifications.

Apprenticeship

An Apprenticeship is a popular choice for young people (16+) and adults who want to gain work experience and a qualification. Apprentices get paid while learning a trade and there are Apprenticeships available in 80 different industries.

Depending on your entry level, you will apply for an Apprenticeship (Level 2) or an Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3).

Awarding bodies

Awarding bodies are institutions accredited by Ofqual (Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator) which are offering qualifications to students at different levels. They include Edexcel, AQA, OCR, City & Guilds, etc.

BA/BSc

Bachelor of Arts – A BA is a university degree in humanities (eg English, geography...). It can be ordinary (intermediate level) or with honours ie... BA (Hons).

BSc Bachelor of Science – A BSc is a university degree in science-related subjects (e.g. maths, computing...). Like the BA, it can be ordinary (intermediate level) or with honours ie... BSc(Hons).

BTEC (Business and Technician Education Council – part of Edexcel)

BTECs are vocational qualifications offered at different levels and depths (ie... the number of units studied can vary) and are assessed by coursework, case studies and projects.

- **BTEC Introductory**
(Certificate/Diploma) is a Level 1 qualification and equivalent to GCSEs at grade D – G; it is studied over 1 year
- **BTEC First**
(Certificate/Diploma) is a Level 2 qualification and equivalent to GCSEs at grade A – C; it is studied over 1 year
- **BTEC National**
(Award/Certificate/Diploma) is a Level 3 qualification equivalent to 1 to 3 A-Levels. It is studied over 2 years.

BTEC qualifications are graded Pass/Merit/Distinction; students need at least a Merit grade to progress onto the next level.

Degree

There are quite a few types of degrees (Bachelors Degree, Foundation Degree, Masters Degree etc.), that are all recognized Higher Education qualifications regarding a subject studied in depth (see BA/BSc).

Double Award

A double award is a qualification equal to 2 other qualifications, for example: 2 GCSEs (or 2 AS or A2 Levels).

Double GCSE

Some GCSEs are equivalent to 2 normal GCSEs. It means that the content of the course is twice that of most GCSEs.

Extended Project

An Extended Project is a new qualification introducing young people to independent research methods which will be required at higher education level.

Further Education (FE)

FE refers to the post-compulsory education carried on after 16. It includes a very broad choice of vocational or academic qualifications offered at different levels from Entry Level to Level 3.

Foundation Degree

The Foundation Degree is an innovative Higher Education qualification. It mixes academic study and practical experience, which makes this Degree very attractive to employers. Students are often able to combine employment with part-time study or this qualification. The Foundation Degree is considered to be a Level 5 qualification.

GCSE

General Certificate of Secondary Education – Students sit their GCSEs usually at the end of Year 11. GCSEs can be chosen from about 45 different subjects. Depending on the number passed and the grades achieved by the student, GCSEs may be equivalent to Level E (Entry) to Level 2. Applied GCSEs are GCSEs in vocational subjects (eg... business, health and care...) that involve the study of a particular area of employment. They are often double award GCSEs (see Double GCSE).

Higher Education (HE)

HE refers to qualifications from Level 4 and above, usually studied at university or Higher Education colleges.

HNC Higher National Certificate

An HNC is a technical qualification that lasts about 2 years. They are Level 4 qualifications, usually delivered part-time.

HND Higher National Diploma

HND courses usually last 2 years, with a vocational approach to a wide range of subjects. They are Level 5 qualifications.

IB International Baccalaureate

The IB is an international academic qualification offered as an alternative to A-Levels, which is becoming more and more popular. Students study a minimum of 6 subjects including a foreign language, the theory of knowledge, have to choose extra-curricular activities and write an extended essay.

Key Skills

Key skills are qualifications designed to help people at work, in their studies and in life in general. They include numeracy, communication and information and technology. They can be required as part of a specific qualification (ie. NVQ).

Mock Exams

Young people will often sit mock examinations in several subjects. Mocks are marked by teachers, and although the grade does not actually count towards the final mark, the mocks still need to be taken seriously because;

- Mock exams are an important rehearsal for the real exam; it helps familiarize students with an exam situation
- They enable students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to create an adequate revision plan.

The results of mock exams are used to help form the 'predicted' grades the student may finally achieve. Predicted grades will be used for the conditional acceptance* or refusal of the student's application for other courses.

*Students will be conditionally offered a place for a course, but this offer will only be secure if students achieve the grades required at the real exam – ie confirm the predicted grade.

NVQ National Vocational Qualifications

NVQs are qualifications related to the work place and can be prepared in an Apprenticeship framework. The NVQs offered range from Level 1 to Level 5. An NVQ 3 is recognized as an equivalent to A-Levels (Level 3) and may be a springboard to higher Education.

What does it mean? A glossary of terms

UCAS (University and Colleges Admissions Service)

Young people who want to go on to higher education at university or college will need to apply online through UCAS. UCAS is the UK central organization through which higher education applications are processed and provides information and services regarding subjects and choices to students.

Universities have entry requirements for each course they offer, featuring the number of UCAS points requested as well as which type of qualification they prefer applying students to have. UCAS publishes a UCAS points tariff table (see below) showing how many points are gained with each qualification and grade.

Vocational

Vocational qualifications are best for young people who have a clear idea of the job they want (eg plumber, chef, accountant, mechanic, hairdresser) or those who prefer a hands-on approach to learning and getting practical skills.

UCAS TARIFF POINTS*

GCE qualifications (including Vocational subjects)			BTEC Nationals			UCAS Points	Extended Project
AS	Full A-Level	Double Award	Award	Certificate	Diploma		(compulsory with Advanced Diploma or stand-alone)
					DDD	360	
					DDM	320	
						300	
		A*A*			DMM	280	
		A*A				260	
						250	
		AA		DD	MMM	240	
		AB				220	
		BB		DM	MMP	200	
		BC				180	
		CC		MM	MPP	160	
						150	
	A*	CD				140	
	A	DD	D	MP	PPP	120	
	B	DE				100	
						90	
	C	EE	M	PP		80	
						70	A*
A	D		P			60	A
B						50	B
C	E					40	C
D						30	D
E						20	

NB: An Advanced Diploma can be studied alongside 'Additional and Specialist' Learning like an A-Level for instance.

*This table is a guide only. Please go to www.ucas.ac.uk for more information.

Find more information



QUALIFICATIONS

www.ucas.ac.uk

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

www.qca.org.uk

The Qualification and Curriculum Authority website

www.edge.co.uk

Educational foundation promoting practical and vocational learning

www.keyroutes.org.uk

For ideas about qualifications and routes

FUNDING

YPLA website:

www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport/16-19-bursary



ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

www.connexions-direct.com

The dedicated website for 13 – 19 year olds (*education, work etc*)

www.aimhigher.ac.uk

The guide to Further and Higher Education

www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/OptionsAt16/index.htm

The government website for Year 10 and Year 11 advice



APPLICATION

www.kentchoices4u.com

The online prospectus for Kent's 14 – 19 year olds

www.towers6th.com

For further information about life at the Towers Sixth form

