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Youth Direction: Careers

Post-16 Options



Leaving School

For some this can be an exciting time and for others the idea of starting again somewhere new is a bit scary. We support to young people leaving school, providing information, advice and guidance on a wide range of opportunities and issues. You may have access to a professionally qualified Adviser to provide impartial and confidential advice and guidance on the choices you are making. Guidance delivered varies between each school: for further details please contact your school directly.

When Should You Apply For Courses?

All applications should be completed by April. Youth Direction also has copies of college prospectuses so feel free to call in and collect one. Places can fill up very quickly, so it is important to apply as soon as possible - most people apply by November. However, don't apply until you are sure about your choices. You can find out lots more about the colleges and courses by attending Open Evenings.

Open Evenings - How to make the most of them

It's your chance to look around the facilities, find out what courses are available, pick up a prospectus and check out the entry requirements.

Some questions you could ask:

- ▶ What does the course involve and how long is it?
- ▶ What are the entry requirements for the course? (Do I need specific subjects?)
- ▶ What's the interview like? (Is it a group interview, 1:1 interview etc)
- ▶ How is the course taught? (Is it practical/workshop based, classroom based etc)
- ▶ How is the course assessed? (Exams, assignments, practical assessments etc)
- ▶ What do students do after the course? (Further study, go into work/training etc)
- ▶ Transport (If you have to travel by bus/train, is there a college bus? etc)

Before you go have a look at the college's website to get an idea of their courses and which ones you'd definitely want to find out about. When you are there you could also check out the other things on offer such as student facilities, library, café, student services and sports facilities.

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How Many Courses Should You Apply For?

You will not need to make any final decisions about which course to join until you receive your GCSE results in August. You should always have a back-up plan in place by applying to more than one course and/or college. You can apply to as many colleges or training providers as you want, so if there is a course you are interested in then you should apply for it. When making decisions about what to do, it is best to gather as much information as possible. The more information you have about different courses the better chance you have of making a good decision about what will be best for you. Once you have applied for a course, an interview is usually arranged. At the interview there will be an opportunity to learn more about the college or training provider and the course that is on offer, which will help with making final decisions.

“...apply to as many colleges or training providers as you want...”

Options Available After Year 11

A Levels

A levels involve a mixture of reading, essay writing, discussion and examinations in a single subject. The structure of A levels is changing and moving towards single exams rather than allowing resits. There will be much less assessment through coursework than there is at present - so any advice about A levels from current students will not necessarily be accurate. Different subjects are being affected at different times so ask your adviser for details.

It is now even more important to select your A Level subjects carefully as the changes also remove the previous AS levels as a 'stepping stone' to full A Levels (previously known as A2). Instead an AS level will become a standalone qualification in its own right and taken alongside (usually three) A Level subjects. To take 3 subjects at A level colleges usually state that you should usually expect to achieve 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C, this is to ensure that you are able to cope with the standards required. However, those who have struggled to achieve a C grade may find A Levels too difficult and there is evidence to suggest that A Levels are more suitable for those who achieved A*, A and B grades. Some subjects such as Maths and Sciences may require you to have achieved a minimum of GCSE grade B.

Some subjects at A level are familiar options, and may have already been studied at GCSE e.g. History or Geography. However there are some new subjects at A level that may be unfamiliar such as Psychology and Sociology. You are also able to study vocational subjects such as Physical Education or Health and Social Care. The workload for A levels can be quite heavy so it is a good idea for you to choose subjects you have done well in previously as well as subjects you are motivated by and interested in so that you enjoy their studies. Most students completing A levels choose to progress onto Higher Education; however some people also apply for employment or Apprenticeships.

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Vocational Qualifications

There are a wide variety of awarding bodies and qualifications for vocational qualifications, such as BTEC, NVQ, EdExcel, CACHE, NVQ/QCF and City & Guilds. These qualifications are work related and involve a mixture of theory and practical work with continuous assessment all the way through the course. Vocational qualifications are available at a variety of levels and you will be able to find one that suits your ability. The level at which you can join will depend on your GCSE results. These work related qualifications provide practical skills and knowledge in a specific area of work e.g. Hairdressing, Administration, Bricklaying, Engineering, Childcare and many more.



Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships combine work with study so you can earn while you learn. You will work towards a Vocational Qualification (e.g. NVQ or QCF) and other qualifications. You should expect to spend 40+ hours per week working and learning. There is a national minimum wage for Apprentices, currently £2.68 per hour for those aged 16-18. There are three levels of Apprenticeship that you can apply for depending on your current skills and qualifications: Intermediate, Advanced and Higher. Most school leavers start at Intermediate Level and most people start their Apprenticeship at 18, after doing something else.

There are a number of components and qualifications to each Apprenticeship. This is called the Apprenticeship Framework. This means you achieve a range of qualifications as you progress through your training and education. Each Apprenticeship framework has three main strands:

- ▶ **A competence based element** – NVQ/QCF
- ▶ **A technical element** – Technical Certificate
- ▶ **A skills element** – Functional Skills etc

There is a high demand for places, it is advisable that you have a back up plan i.e. college place. For more information visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk



Skills Based Learning Programmes

They are a variety of training programme available to support young people into education, apprenticeship or employment. These programmes are often given various names, but all provide learning which is tailored to individual needs. Examples of these are:-

Study Programme

Young people on Study Programmes follow personalised programmes that are tailored to their particular needs, interests and aspirations – focusing on helping them to achieve their intended destination – such as GCSEs, level 2 college courses, Apprenticeships or skilled work. In some cases a young person's programme may be more about working towards supported employment or independent living. Programmes lead to a mix of

small, flexible qualifications, mainly drawn from the Qualifications and Credit Framework plus Functional Skills, to enable young people to progress in the way they wish.

Traineeships and Pre Apprenticeships

These programmes prepare young people for their future careers by helping them to become 'work ready'. They provide essential work preparation training, Maths and English and work experience needed to compete successfully for jobs, including Apprenticeships, or to progress to further learning. Traineeships are an ideal opportunity for young people who are motivated to get a job but who lack the skills and experience that employers are looking for. Young people who have been applying unsuccessfully for Apprenticeship or employment vacancies due to a lack of skills or experience could be good candidates for a Traineeship.