

CHOICES

2023

ACADEMIC, VOCATIONAL TRAINING OR APPRENTICESHIP?

Helpful information to help you
choose the right path

**COLLEGE & SIXTH
FORM:** Find out about
your options

MONEY: Find out about
funding options

APPRENTICESHIPS:
Gosia's story

 **EMPLOYABILITY
AND CAREERS**

Contents

- 03** Your choices
- 04** Work and skills in a changing world
- 06** Routes through learning
- 08** Academic and Vocational
- 11** Celebrating neurodiversity
- 12** Apprenticeships



- 14** Entering the world of work
- 16** How to make an application
- 17** Tips for interviews
- 18** Financial support
- 19** Advice for parents and carers
- 20** Planner

Welcome

This magazine contains information on options available to you when you leave school or college.

It has been written for Year 11 students, although this may also 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).

Your careers adviser at school can give you information, advice and guidance on:

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

To help you to prepare for your appointment with your school careers adviser, complete the career planning notes on page 3.

For free impartial 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 a daunting time. To help, we have included links to many useful sites. These can be found throughout the publication. Our advice to you remains the same as ever, speak to a careers adviser, do your research and always have a back-up plan.

Written and produced by
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Choices has been carefully compiled and we believe the content to be accurate at the time of going to press.

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Your choices

This magazine is a guide but there are many other places to get further support. Please check out the "Useful information" boxes in each section

In Year 11 (or Year 12, if you are doing a one-year course), you will have to make some big decisions about your future. Your main options are following either an academic, vocational or apprenticeship pathway.

DID YOU KNOW?

All young people in Year 11 must continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday (although, in practice, the vast majority of young people continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18). You will have many options including: continuing at school; going to college; getting an apprenticeship or traineeship; or even starting your own business. The information in this booklet outlines your options and tells you where you can get help to plan your next steps.

WHO CAN HELP?

Your careers adviser can provide up-to-date information on different options. Advisers are impartial, which means they will not try to push you in a particular direction. They simply help you decide what is right for you. Fill in the career-planning notes below to prepare for your appointment with your careers adviser. You can also discuss your

choices with your teachers, family and others who know you well.

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 call them as application procedures may have changed due to COVID-19.

If you are unsure about what you want to do, you might have access through your school or college to online career programmes that help you to examine your interests and suggest appropriate careers or courses. Examples include **Kudos** and **Discover your Skills and Careers** on nationalcareers.service.gov.uk. It is best to use one of these programmes with help from an adviser. You can also take the **Buzz Quiz** to find out what sort of person you are and what careers might suit you: icould.com/buzz-quiz.



ACADEMIC



VOCATIONAL



APPRENTICESHIPS

Career-planning notes

Complete these notes before you meet with your school careers adviser. This will help you start thinking about your plans.

What are your favourite subjects?

What are your expected grades?

Do you have any futures career ideas?

Are there any barriers that might stop you achieving your career goals?

WORK AND SKILLS IN A CHANGING WORLD



When you are thinking about what job you would like to do, it can be useful to consider the changes that are affecting the world of work as this will influence future job opportunities. This is called labour market information.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE WORLD OF WORK

The past couple of years has affected the labour market significantly. These changes have required many employers to implement more flexible working practices, changed the way businesses operate and increased demands on some businesses and services. For example, food retailers have had to respond by introducing more mobile operations and home delivery services. It has also meant that more people have been working at home rather than in an office. For many workers there may be more of a blended approach between home and the office. There are however many jobs that still require a worker to be in

the workplace, such as in health and social care, hospitality, education, retail and transport & logistics.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that employers and employees need to be flexible and adapt to change.

People are 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.



Pharmacology

COVID-19 and advances in medicine and healthcare mean pharmacology could be a viable career option for many

Developing new technologies

Technology is constantly changing. New jobs are being created because of it, but advances in technology also make other jobs redundant.

Technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics and the introduction of smartphones have created new lines of work. Some of the new jobs that have emerged are:

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

Businesses going global

There are constant changes in the location of businesses, as companies move around the world to find the best place to operate. 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 attend virtual 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 means new skills and new jobs are needed, for example:

- wind turbine engineers
- solar panel installers
- smart meter installers.

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.

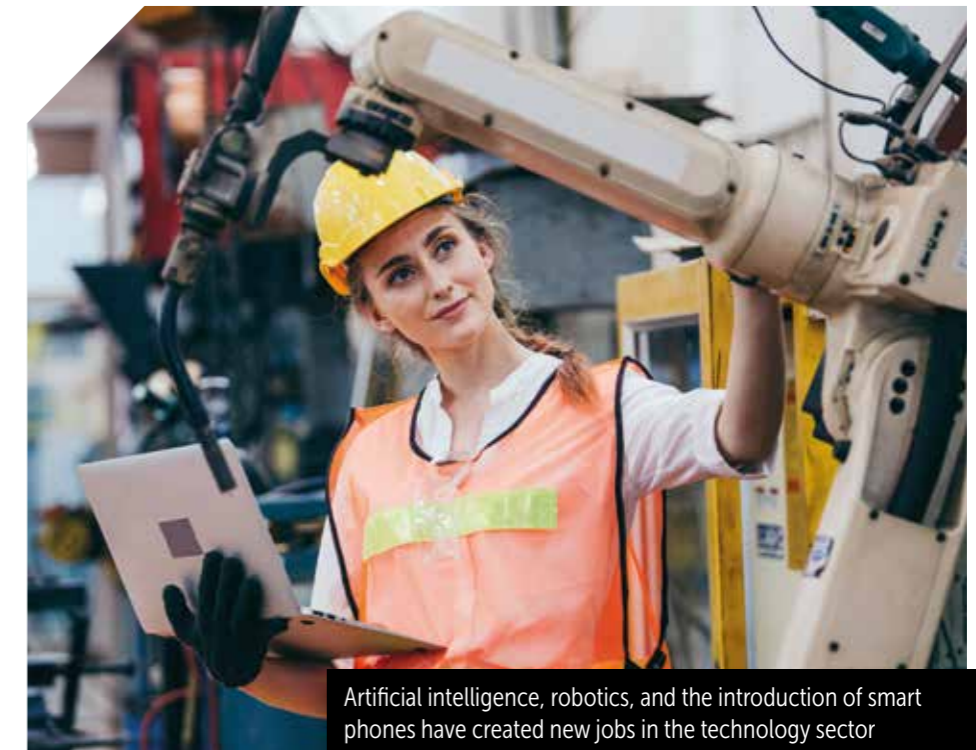
HOW TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR SKILLS

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.



Artificial intelligence, robotics, and the introduction of smart phones have created new jobs in the technology sector

ROUTES THROUGH LEARNING

Here are examples of the qualifications and training available from Entry to Level 8. It is possible to move across qualification types and from one level to another, for example A-level study to a degree apprenticeship.

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

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



ACADEMIC

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 an apprenticeship after your A-levels.



VOCATIONAL

Vocational qualifications such as BTECs can be studied at further education colleges as well as some schools and sixth forms. 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](https://www.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

An apprenticeship allows you to 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 when you don't already have the skills or experience required.

ACTION POINTS

Use this space to record the pros and cons for each route

Pros

Cons

ACADEMIC & VOCATIONAL

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 jobs and university courses require you to have qualifications in particular subjects. Speak to an adviser or check the individual courses or job profile.

If you are not sure what you would like to do, it is usually best to go with subjects you are likely to do well at and that you enjoy.

Entry level courses

Entry level courses help students to improve their reading, writing and IT skills and 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.

These qualifications will prepare you to take your next step whether that is a traineeship, apprenticeship, a college course, supported employment or independent living.

Levels 1, 2 and 3

Vocational or work-related 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 schools and sixth forms. They are best suited to people who know exactly what career they want to do and those 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 and 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 Politics.

At some schools and colleges, you can study a mix of A-levels and BTEC Level 3 qualifications.

T-levels

T-levels 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 www.tlevels.gov.uk/students

Core Maths

Core Maths is a Level 3 qualification in maths which is graded A-E. It isn't offered by every 6th Form or college.

Core Maths is aimed at students who want to continue with maths and who have a grade 4 or above at GCSE but are not taking A-level maths. The qualification supports A-level study and is valuable preparation for many degree courses,

Continued on page 10



WHAT TO FIND OUT BEFORE APPLYING

Before making your choice of a college course or applying for sixth form, 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, look on the school/college website or look at a prospectus.

You will usually apply for a course online although application forms are often inside the prospectus should you prefer to do a written one.

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 is 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. jobs or further study)?
- What support is available to students?

APPLYING FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

If you are applying for entry in September 2023, 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.

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 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 will need to do some research before making your final choice.

Higher education applications are made 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 25 January 2023. For applications to the University of Oxford and Cambridge, and for courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/science and dentistry, the deadline is 15 October 2022.

To search courses and to find out about entry requirements, see the UCAS website 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

The Russell Group of universities has produced a helpful website. It offers reliable advice on the A Levels universities want for different degrees.

See informedchoices.ac.uk

USEFUL INFORMATION

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

GCSE grading scale – Information about the GCSE grades for parents, employers and further and higher education providers

ucas.com

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

Facebook: /UCASOnline
Twitter: @UCAS_Online

ACTION POINTS

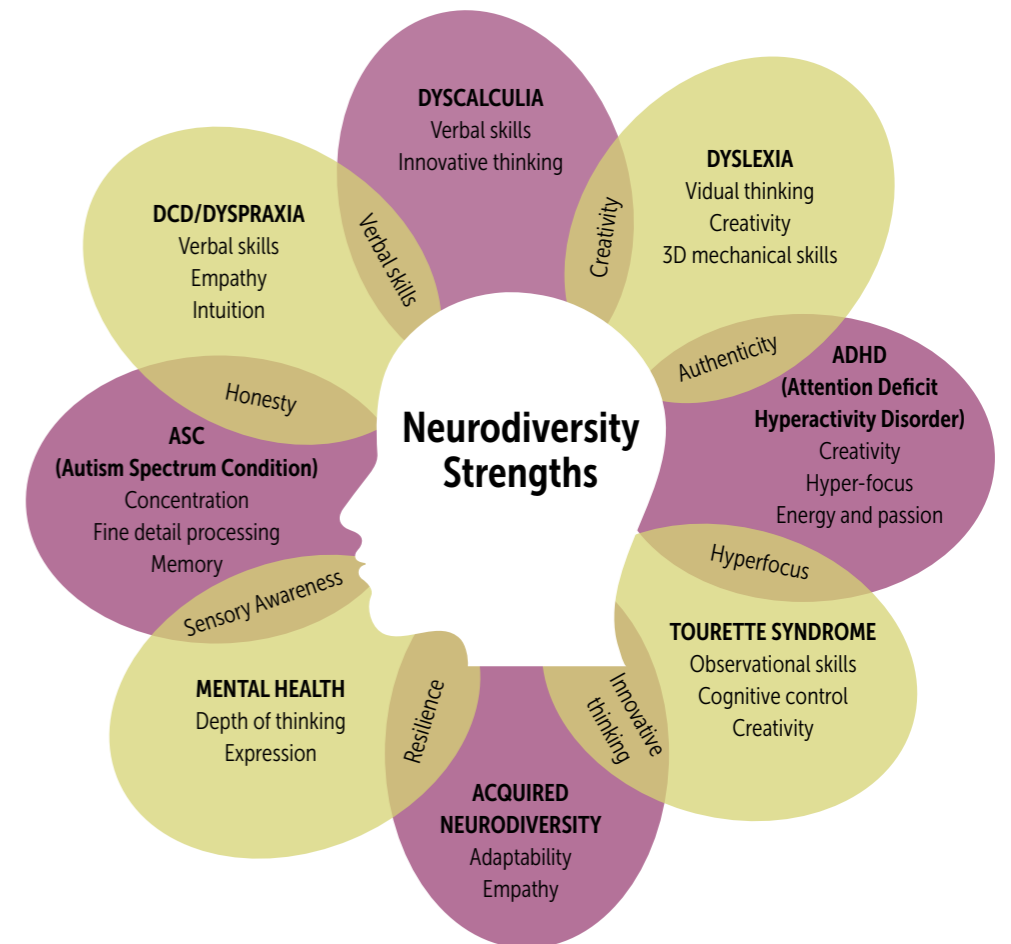
Use this space to record your progress with applying for full time study and qualifications

What further study or courses am I interested in?

How do I apply (online, application form)?

Application deadline

CELEBRATING NEURODIVERSITY



Neurodiversity is the term used to describe natural variations in the human brain. It relates to differences in the way we think, process, learn and behave. Most people are neurotypical meaning that the brain functions and processes in the way that society expects. 1 in 7 people are neurodivergent: ADHD, Autism, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, and Tourette's syndrome are all examples of neurodiverse conditions all of which come with several key strengths.

From wording job adverts well to taking the stress out of candidate interviews and assessment, employers are doing much more to make their recruitment and workplaces more comfortable for neurodiverse people, focusing on Individual strengths.

Employers are becoming more aware that embracing neurodiversity is important because it improves employee morale, increases customer loyalty, brings different viewpoints to the table, and positively impacts corporate culture.

Organisations that are embracing neurodiversity often enjoy significant competitive advantages, such as higher retention, greater productivity, improved problem-solving, and increased innovation.

APPRENTICESHIPS

APPRENTICESHIPS

GOSIA'S EXPERIENCE



Hi, I'm Gosia and I'm on a Level 3 apprenticeship programme: Junior Content Producer with Education Development Trust.

The top 3 tips I would give to young people considering apprenticeships:

1. Think about what learning style suits you

- Do you benefit from practical experiences, or do you prefer more theory-based learning?

2. Think about the industry and position that interests you

- Are you interested in a particular position or industry? Explore your options and see what's out there to choose the apprenticeship that will suit your interests.

3. Research the company and the training provider

- Think about the values of the company and if they align with yours
- Do the programme structure and the topics meet your expectations?

“
Are you interested in a particular position or industry? Explore your options and see what's out there.”

As an apprentice, you can learn on the job. Apprenticeships are offered across hundreds of job roles and are available up to degree level and higher.

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 – there are no set requirements, but some GCSEs at grade 3 or above are expected. You will be employed, earn a wage and 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, e.g. A-levels or BTEC. You will be employed, will earn a wage and may gain a qualification.

Degree apprenticeships – require a Level 3 qualification, e.g. 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.

WAGES

There is a National Minimum Wage (NMW) for apprentices. From 1 April 2022, all apprentices are paid a minimum of £4.81 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.

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

USEFUL INFORMATION

[gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)

Search and apply for an apprenticeship in England

[amazingapprenticeships.com](https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com)

Resources to help you understand more about apprenticeships

[ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk](https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk)

A job resource for young people looking for apprenticeships

[getmyfirstjob.co.uk](https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk)

Search for thousands of apprenticeships, work experience roles, and traineeships

[notgoingtouni.co.uk](https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)

Find out more about the alternatives to the standard university route

[futurefinder.yourlife.org.uk](https://www.futurefinder.yourlife.org.uk)

Matching you to your perfect job

[icould.com](https://www.icould.com)

An online charity providing career ideas and information for young people

Facebook: /icouldstories

Twitter: @icouldstories

[youthemployment.org.uk/careers-hub](https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-hub)

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

Twitter: @YEUK2012

[prospects.ac.uk](https://www.prospects.ac.uk)

Match your skills and personality to 400+ job profiles

Facebook: /graduateprospects

Twitter: @prospects

[careermap.co.uk](https://www.careermap.co.uk)

Career Map – a resource for finding local apprenticeships

ACTION POINTS

Use this space to record your progress for becoming an apprentice

Company/apprenticeship

Contact details

Application deadline



ENTERING THE WORLD OF WORK

WHY IS WORK EXPERIENCE IMPORTANT?

- You will experience industry at first hand.
- It is a chance to gain experience that you can record on your CV.
- You will discover more about your own skills, talents, interests and knowledge.
- It will show you the skills you need in working life.
- It will help you identify the skills and talents you already have and those you will need to develop for the future.
- It will help you understand why services, industry and commerce are so important in society.
- You will develop confidence and self-esteem and learn how to interact with different people.
- It will provide an understanding of the structure and reality of working life.
- You may have the opportunity to take on responsibility.
- It will prepare you for the transition from school to work.

HOW TO CHOOSE A WORK-EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT

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

HOW TO FIND YOUR OWN PLACEMENT

- Speak to your family, friends and school.
- Contact employers and send them your CV and a cover letter, clearly outlining why you wish to complete your work experience with them.
- Many others may apply 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 work experience
- make a big difference to your community
- develop skills which employers look for.

There are many 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. **Doit.life** 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 are aged

“Working part-time gives me a sense of independence as I am able to buy things for myself, it also helps me talk to new people and build my confidence”

“Volunteering at a local animal shelter, I have made new friends, human and furry. I have also learned how to actively listen, develop time management skills and looked after their social media accounts.”

16 or 17, you can take part in the National Citizen Service (NCS). See ncsy.es.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 are not 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 old or over and to have a National Insurance number.

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 **0800 1412 075** for help. Lines are open 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. **gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number**

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 cover letter
- Contact employers directly – visit them or phone to find out if they have any opportunities.

It is important that any part-time employment does not interfere with your school studies. There are guidelines about

the hours you can work and restrictions on the type of work you can do. See gov.uk/child-employment.

USEFUL INFORMATION

vinspired.com

Vinspired – a 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

ACTION POINTS

Use this space to record your progress in securing a work placement

Name of the company/organisation

Contact details

Date application sent

HOW TO MAKE AN APPLICATION

ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

Most applications are now online, either written answers to set questions or visual/spoken video recorded answers to set questions.

- Before starting an application, take a copy of the questions you will be asked so you can prepare and practice your answers.
- Visit the company's website & social media profile to learn as much as possible.
- All employers advertise what you will be doing in the job (the 'duties') and the type of person or skills they are looking for (the 'person specification').
- Look carefully at these! Which of your qualifications, skills and experiences 'fit' the duties and specification wanted?
- Check, and check again, your spelling, punctuation, capitalisation and grammar, as well as dates in written applications.
- In video applications, record your practice answers so you learn to cut out the 'umms', 'aahs' and 'you knows'.
- Remember to include your interests and activities that are relevant to the job/company, it's not just about qualifications.
- Be honest, resist the temptation to over-exaggerate – you will be asked at interview about what is in your application.
- Keep a record of the application so that before an interview you can remind yourself of what you said.
- Double-check your answers and any extra information that is requested before pressing the 'submit' button.

YOUR ONLINE PROFILE

Have you ever tried typing your name into Google? The results that come back say a lot about you. Making sure the online 'you' is positive and professional is important when looking for work. Make sure that you use the correct security settings for social media and think carefully before posting anything that you would not like a future employer to see.

CV

Not all employers use Online Applications when recruiting, so you will still need a CV. A CV can also be used to promote yourself to a business in the hope that they might have a vacancy.

Preparing a CV:

- There are plenty of writing guides and formats online. Be careful to use one that is designed for school leavers and the UK.
- Be prepared to re-draft it several times. It is your marketing document so make sure it's superb.
- Check, and re-check, your spelling, punctuation, Capitalisation, grammar and dates.
- Get someone else to check your CV for errors or to suggest improvements.
- Keep it simple and to the point – employers will have many CVs to read.
- Use positive language about your abilities and qualities.
- Include information on any work experience and part-time jobs.
- Include interests – particularly any that are relevant to the job.

COVER EMAILS

You will always need a Cover Email when sending a CV. It should tell the employer why you are contacting them and very briefly highlight the qualification, experience or skills that are most relevant to the employer and/or its vacancy. Keep it short and simple.

Writing your cover email:

- Keep the Cover focused, to either the vacancy or the type of job you're looking for. Include a sentence or two about the company so they know you've done some research.
- If you don't have the name of a person, start the Cover with 'Dear Team'. Always finish the Cover with: 'I look forward to hearing from you.'

To apply for placements, apprenticeships and jobs, you will be asked to complete either an online application form, record an application video or submit a CV and cover email. Employers use these to decide whether to offer you an interview, so getting them right is important.

- Highlight your skills and qualities and how they will help you in the job you are applying for.
- Get someone else (such as a careers adviser) to check your Cover for errors and suggest improvements.

SEARCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES

Many companies post vacancies on their website and social media feeds first, so it can be helpful to 'follow' those that you'd most like to work for. Registering with specialist websites aimed at school-leavers like 'Get My First Job', 'Not Going to Uni' and 'Rate My Apprenticeship' can also be really helpful.

SHOWCASE YOUR EXPERIENCES

If you have completed a work placement or internship, joining LinkedIn to share that experience and the skills gained with the people you met is a great way to stay in touch and also showcase that to other employers. Keep your profile up to date with work experience, training and qualifications undertaken.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

You can also join groups and networks relating to careers that you may be interested in. It can also be a good way to make connections with employers and hear about vacancies. BUT be careful, LinkedIn is used by serious, professional business people - so you need to be ultra professional as well.



INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- If you have been invited to a face-to-face interview, find out where the interview is being held and plan how to get there – a practice run is useful and allow time for travelling. If you are doing an online interview, have a trial run with the software in advance.
- Find out about the organisation – a Google search can help.
- Read all 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 and neat – it is better to be too smart than too casual. This applies to online interviews too.

ON THE DAY

Face-to-face interview

- 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.

- 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.

Virtual interview

- Ensure you are in a quiet space at home where you will not be disturbed.
- Place your device so you have a neutral background behind you.

DURING YOUR INTERVIEW

- 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.
- Always be polite.
- 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.

Telephone interviews

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

Assessment centre

Some employers or courses use assessment centres as part of the application process. 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. 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.

INTERVIEWS

TIPS FOR

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

THE 16-19 BURSARY

If you are aged 16-19 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 receiving Universal Credit
- those who get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- those who receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their name and either ESA or Universal Credit.

Other students facing 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. Except for 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.

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. Find out more at 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 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. Information about financial support for this can be found on gov.uk/residential-support-scheme or contact the college you are interested in, as they may be able to offer some help.

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, speak to your tutor, or student support/welfare department.

CHILD BENEFITS AND CHILD TAX CREDITS

If you are continuing your studies or on an

approved traineeship, your parents or carers will still be able to receive child benefit (if they are eligible). There is more information at gov.uk/child-benefit or call the helpline on **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 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 speak to 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 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 will have information on the services, discounts and concessions available in your area for travel to school sixth form or college.

For more information on funding for higher education, see GOV.UK/STUDENT-FINANCE

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



For more information on careers and on advice aimed at parents, go to PARENTALGUIDANCE.ORG.UK

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR YOUNG PERSON

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 young person 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.
- Research apprenticeships, as these can provide an alternative career route. Look at 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.
- Help them to see that their choices now will influence their immediate and 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, in addition to doing relevant work experience.
- They can find out about specific career requirements, by talking to their adviser or by looking online at nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers.
- 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.

PLANNER

Tick the boxes as you plan ahead for your next move after Year 11

AUTUMN Sep-Dec

- Research what you want to do.
- Consider your interests, best subjects and potential 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 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 many courses fill up fast, so it is 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 contacting 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 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 Apr-Jul

- Find out about bursaries if you haven't already.
- If you are looking for an apprenticeship or a job with training, check on the apprenticeship website gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship.
- Keep in regular contact 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 will be released in August 2023. If your results are not what you expected and you have to reconsider your options, talk to your adviser or teacher. 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.

