

OPTIONS AFTER YEAR 11 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should I apply for college / 6th Form?

You can apply online at the start of October. In order to give yourself the best chance of getting the place you want, you need to have applied by the end of December.

Some colleges set their own deadlines for applications so please check their websites to be sure!

How do I apply for college/ 6th Form?

All applications will be made online through www.ucas.com. You will be given a unique username and password to access this site, However you can still use the website to research courses, without a your login details. Select 'Courses' and '16 – 18 Choices' in the Search Options.

Your Form Tutors will guide you through making your application in school. Help and support is also available from your Careers Adviser Jo Sergeant.

Why do I have to write a Personal Statement?

Your personal statement helps the person who receives your application find out more about you and is also used along with other information on your application to match you to the correct course or apprenticeship pathway.

This is where you can tell a college or training provider about your choice of course or area of work and also 'sell yourself' by talking about your strengths.

In the future when applying for a job or a place at university, a good personal statement can make a difference in getting an interview or securing a place!

Can I apply through UCAS for an apprenticeship?

When starting an apprenticeship you need both an employer (the company you work for who take you on as an apprentice), and a training provider (who will support you in getting your apprenticeship qualifications and may set up 'off site' learning at a local college).

You can apply to training providers and colleges with apprenticeship programmes through UCAS. You can then approach potential employers directly to find someone to take you on as an apprentice.

See also: [I would like an apprenticeship but am not sure how to get one. What do I do next?](#)

Can I apply for more than one option?

Yes!

It is a good idea to apply for more than one course and / or college at this stage. Ideally if you don't get into your first choice you then have a back up plan!

If you are looking at studying a single vocational course e.g. Hairdressing or Mechanics, ensure that you select more than one subject to have at least one back up choice.

If you are considering a combination of subjects e.g. A Levels, Level 3 BTEC Courses, it is also a good idea to apply to more than one college or 6th Form. If you have more than one offer you can then choose which place to take up once you have your GCSE results.

If you have applied for A Level / Level 3 BTEC courses are less confident about getting the minimum grades required, consider also applying for a Level 2 BTEC course.

***At the 'Application' stage on UCAS you will be prompted to put your choices in preference order. You will usually then be interviewed for your first choice.*

How many subjects can I choose if I am looking at A Level and BTEC Level 3 courses?

It is expected that you will initially choose three subjects, or a combination that is equivalent.

For example:

A Level = 1

BTEC Extended Certificate = 1

BTEC Diploma = 2

BTEC Extended Diploma = 3

***Some colleges and 6th Forms allow you to 'mix and match' A Level and BTEC subjects, though you may be advised to stick to either an A Level or BTEC pathway.*

How many days a week would I be at college / 6th Form?

Full time courses must be a minimum of 15 hours a week, however the number of days you are in college can vary greatly.

As a general guideline, Level 1 courses could be 2-3 days a week and at Level 3 usually 5 days. You may however have free periods for study, or days that you start early / finish later.

What happens after I send my application?

You should receive a letter confirming that your application has been received. You should also be able to check the progress of your applications on UCAS.

You will then be invited for an interview. This is often quite informal – chance for the tutor to talk through the course with you and for you to ask questions. It is however VERY IMPORTANT that you attend your interview or contact the college / 6th if you need to arrange an alternative date.

In some cases you may also complete an online basic skills assessment for Maths and English. This helps the college to identify if you need extra support and is nothing to worry about. You will be told in advance if you are expected to do this.

Am I guaranteed a place at college or 6th Form?

No.

Though college can accommodate many of the students that apply places are limited on each course. If you are offered a place on a college course or 6th Form this is likely to be a conditional offer based on achieving the grades needed for the course. They may also contact your school for a reference. This will include comments on your attendance and behaviour so ensure that you give your teachers lots to be positive about!

Some colleges and 6th Forms have a deadline for applications. After this date, they may take no further applications or add you to a waiting list (In this case you may be offered a place only if the course is not full).

What grades do I need to get into college / 6th Form?

It is important that you check the entry requirements for the course you are applying for on UCAS. Here are some GENERAL guidelines:

Level 3 Courses (e.g. A Level, BTEC Extended Diploma) : Five GCSE's Grade 4 or above inc. Maths and English

**Most A Level's have specific GCSE grade entry requirements for each subject.*

Level 2 Courses (e.g. BTEC Level 2 Diploma) : Four or five GCSE's at Grade 3 minimum inc. Maths and English

Level 1 Courses (e.g. BTEC Foundation Diploma) : Three GCSE's grade 1 or above inc. Maths and English

Can I get any money to help with costs at 6th form or college?

Yes, if you are eligible

You can apply for the 16-18 Bursary, which is money to help pay for cost such as bus fares, kit / uniform and residential trips.

You may be eligible if your family household income is below a certain level. Check with the college / 6th Form you are applying to, as the household income rules vary.

If you have been entitled to free school meals at school, this continues when you go to college.

If you are in care, receiving income support or are a lone parent speak to your college or 6th form as there is a separate bursary payment for this.

I am not interested in going to college, I just want to get a job. Can I do this?

Raising the Participation introduced by the government in 2013 means that school leavers are required to stay in education or training until age 18. This means that alongside a job you should be working towards further qualifications. You will be able to do this if you are in an apprenticeship or studying part time alongside another job.

I don't want to be in a classroom, I would rather just do something practical. What are my options?

Many courses at college are very different from school and are much more practical and 'hands on'. There are other options open to you as well, through local training providers such as

- Elite Training: courses in Mechanics and Construction, basic car maintenance and introduction to construction trades.
- Learning Curve: military preparation courses, fitness and team building for the Armed Forces.
- Aspire2B – qualifications in Health and Social Care & Public Services.

See your Careers Adviser for more information these courses.

I would like an apprenticeship but am not sure how to get one. What do I do next?

Apprenticeships are a great way to get into work and learn on the job. New Higher and Degree apprenticeships mean that it is possible at age 18, to gain university level qualifications through a combination of studying and working. You may not get the first apprenticeship that you apply for so you need to be prepared to make several applications for different opportunities and attend interviews and selection days.

Apprenticeships are advertised all year round, but companies wishing to take on school leavers often start to advertise their positions early spring time. Some larger companies start even earlier e.g. December - January.

To find out more about apprenticeships take a look at the National Apprenticeship Site www.getingofar.gov.uk . Here you can see current 'live' vacancies under 'Find an Apprenticeship'.

Some companies advertise their apprenticeships on other job websites e.g. Indeed www.indeed.co.uk

Many businesses also advertise through their own websites. Take a look at the Jobs, Careers or Recruitment areas. They may have social media pages which you can follow to get updates on jobs coming up.

To increase your chances of finding an apprenticeship, contact some businesses direct to find out if they may take on an apprentice. You may be asked to send a copy of your CV to the manager or person in charge of recruitment.

Also tell your friends and family that you are looking for an apprenticeship. They may have some contacts who can help you!

IMPORTANT: Even if doing an apprenticeship is your first choice it is a good idea to have a back-up option and apply to a college or 6th form as well.

What grades do I need to do an apprenticeship?

Minimum GCSE grade requirements vary depending on the level of apprenticeship, type of job and requirements of the employer.

Increasingly employers require minimum grade 4 for Maths and English though some may accept lower grades.

Students starting an apprenticeship after Year 11 can apply for Intermediate (Level 2) or Advanced (Level 3) apprenticeships.

How much could I earn on an apprenticeship?

The minimum wage for an apprentice from April 2018 is £3.70 per hour. Many employers pay more than the minimum and the national average is around £170 per week.

What is a traineeship?

Traineeships are a fairly new pathway which has been designed as a route into apprenticeships. A traineeship can last 8 weeks – 6 months and includes work experience, functional skills (Maths & English), employability skills and other qualifications to help you prepare for the world of work (e.g. Health and Safety).

Traineeships are unpaid but you may be able to get some help to cover expenses such as bus fares etc.

See your school Careers adviser for details of local training providers offering traineeship schemes.

I have heard that I have to carry on with Maths and English if I don't have GCSE grade 4. Is this true?

Yes

In line with government guidelines you will study further Maths and / or English if you haven't achieved a grade 4 at school. You may do this at college as part of your timetable or included in your apprenticeship training. You would be doing a Functional Skills Maths or English qualification at the right level for you.

What if I change my mind once I have applied for college / 6th Form?

If you have applied for a college you no longer plan to go to, you can withdraw your application, through UCAS.

HOWEVER if you just want to change courses, or switch your 1st and 2nd choices this can be done through the Messaging tool on UCAS. Sign in to UCAS and you will see this under 'Applications'.

See your school careers adviser for advice on your choices if you need further help.

I would like to know where I can find out more about jobs I am interested in.

See the other Useful Websites under Careers on the school website e.g. National Careers Service, Career Pilot and iCould.