

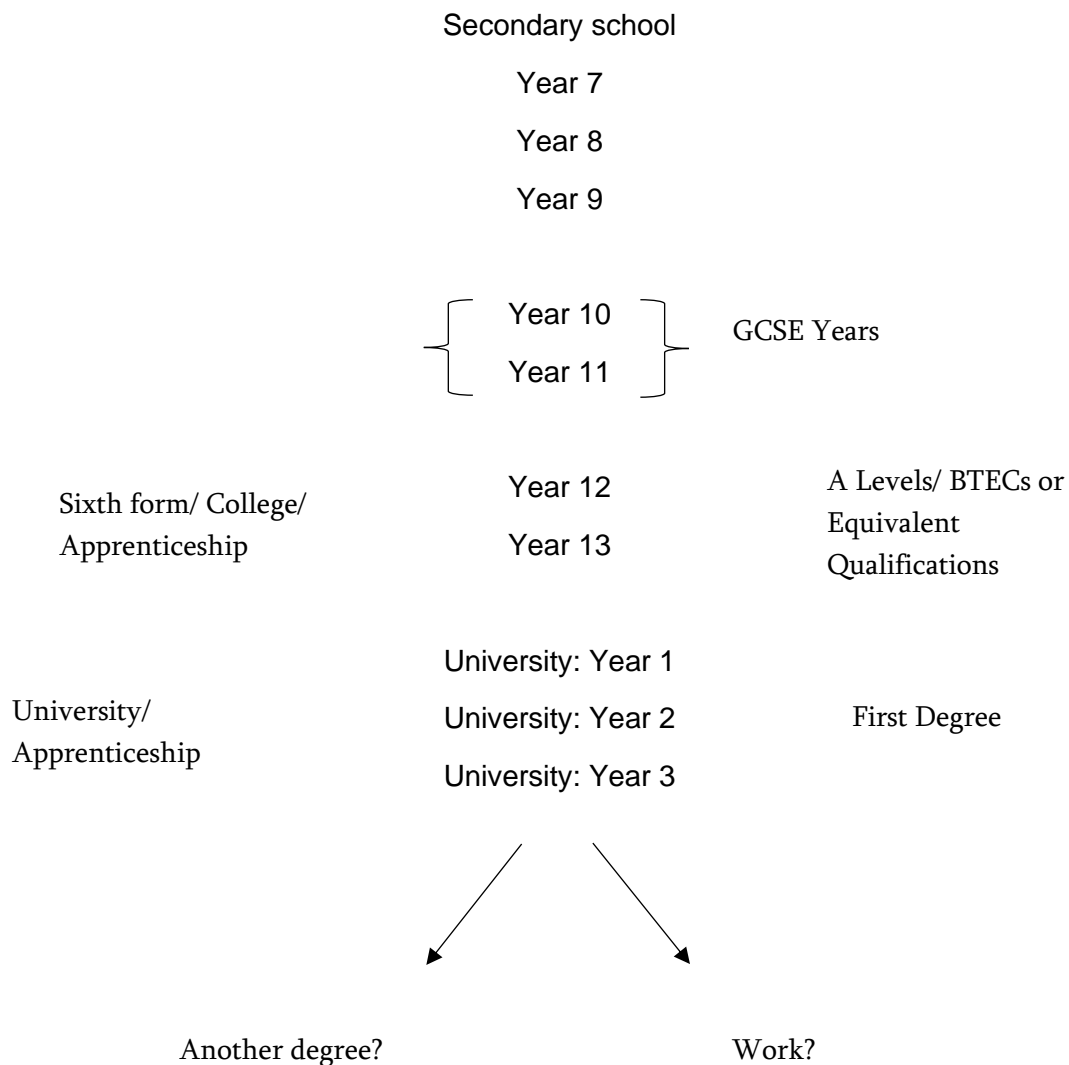
Exploring your educational options

Your educational journey

The diagram below shows where you are on the education system.

Right now, as you know, you are either in year 10 or 11 and have to remain in education until you are 18.

Start thinking about what you would like to do after your GCSEs. The best way to do this is by considering all your options and what works best for you on the next page.



Your options after year 11

As previously mentioned you have to remain in education until you are 18, but what happens after your GCSEs is entirely up to you.

Ask yourself these questions:

- a) Do you go to college? (where you can do vocational courses?)
- b) Do you go to a sixth form (where you can study A-Levels?)
- c) Do you go to a sixth form college (a section of a college that offers A-Levels?)
- d) Do you do an apprenticeship?
- e) Do you do A-Levels?
- f) Do you do a BTEC?

A-Levels:

A-Levels are a Level 3 qualification that will take you two years to complete.

They can be done at a sixth form attached to a school, or at a sixth form college (by that we mean a college that offers A-Levels as well as other courses)

To get onto an a level course, you need to have achieved five GCSEs grade 9-4 (in the old grading system this would be A* – C) including Maths and English – some courses may need you to achieve a certain grade in another subject (i.e. an A-Level in Chemistry may want a specific grade), you would need to check the course entry requirements, which you should be able to find online or by giving them a call. In most cases the standard entry requirement is 5 GCSEs at 9-4.

There's a wide range of A-Levels that you can do, it depends on where you want to study as to what they will offer. You get the traditional English Language, English Literature, Maths and individual A-Levels for all three sciences, but some places will offer many other courses for example, Film, Media, Business, Languages, Fashion – it really depends on where you want to go as to what will be open to you.

In terms of how many you can study, it is typically four in your first year, dropping to three in your second – again, you would have to check with the course provider as to how many you can study. You can also take a vocational qualification alongside A-Levels if you wish to.

Vocational Qualifications

(For example, BTECs, NVQs)

You can do them at Level 2 and 3, so if you miss your grades for the Level 3 course the option is there to do a lower level course and work your way up (make sure to check with the course provider).

BTECs can be done at some schools, but the majority of colleges offer vocational qualifications. You can also do them at University Technical Colleges which offer courses related to Engineering and Technology.

To get onto a vocational qualification you generally need 4 or 5 GCSEs at grade 9-4, you would need to research what it is that your chosen course would want you to achieve

There's an incredible amount of variety as to what you can study, including Beauty, Engineering, Computing and much more. Each institution may offer something different so

remember to do your research.

You may also have the opportunity to do BTECs alongside A-Levels, you would need to check with your college if that is something they offer, it could be the case some allow and some don't.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a great way to combine work that is paid with education, as you are earning while you are learning. However, it isn't an easy route as you have to combine work with study, and it can be a longer path to a qualification.

You can study a wide range of qualifications from level 2 up to degree level (typically you start on Level 2 and progress your way up).

As apprenticeships are offered by the employers themselves, you can find many online, indeed is a great place to look as well as the apprenticeship search tool on www.apprenticeships.gov.uk. Apprenticeships are like job adverts and are advertised throughout the year.

Regarding entry requirements, these vary depending on what the employer wants. The best thing to do would be to search for an apprenticeship and it will tell you there what they want. As it will be employment, you will need to have an interview as well.

There are numerous apprenticeships out there, and not including the ones listed, you could do one in hairdressing, Optical Assistant (the person who helps you pick glasses at the opticians and does all of the initial bit – not the actual optician who uses all of the machines to check what your prescription is), Sales Assistants, there is so much variety of what you can do

It's important to note that the minimum wage for an apprentice as of April 2020 is £4.55 per hour – pay rates vary employer to employer but you will be paid at least £4.55 an hour.

T Levels

T Levels are new courses coming in September 2020, which will follow GCSEs and will be equivalent to 3 A levels. These 2-year courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work.

T Levels offer a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience which can help you to develop the knowledge and experience needed to open the door into skilled employment, further study or a higher apprenticeship.

Here are a few examples of T-Level subjects you can study:

- accounting
- animal care and management
- building services engineering
- catering
- craft and design
- digital production, design and development
- education and childcare

- healthcare science
- media, broadcast and production
- science

the list goes on!

When they will start

The first 3 T Levels will be available at selected colleges, schools and other providers across England in September 2020.

A further 7 T Levels will be available in September 2021 with the remaining courses starting in either 2022 or 2023.

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels>

to find out more.

Finding your interests

Sometimes, you may not have a clue as to what it is that you want to do, and this is where our career tree comes in handy.

The career tree focuses on four key elements. The roots are essentially who you are as a person; influenced by your experiences and interests and in turn influences what inspires you.

The trunk represents your strengths which are also influenced by your experiences.

The branches are the various pathways you take, the various experiences and knowledge you have gained and will gain not only of your interests but also yourself as an individual.

Finally, the leaves are your goals in life and what you have achieved. Goals are not limited to one and our achievements are not limited to one. We are in charge of our growth and in charge of achieving our goals.

Task:

- Your task is to complete the career tree activity below
- Think about what truly inspires and influences you, what your strengths are, what you want to do and how you might get there
- Try to list at least two points for each box

- Don't worry if you don't have all of the answers as this activity will help you investigate where you want to be in the future

Leaves: Your goals and achievements, i.e. what job do you want when you're older

Branches: Your pathway – Education and experience, i.e. do you want to go to university, or need to go to achieve your goals?



Trunk: Your strengths, i.e. what are you good at?

Roots: What is it that inspires you? What drives you? Do you like to help people, do you want to earn lots of money?

Do universities look at your GCSE grades?

Absolutely universities look at your GCSE grades when deciding whether to offer you a place there.

Why?

They do this because when the majority of young people apply to university they don't have their final A-level or BTEC grades yet, so the universities use them as an indicator as to how well you may do.

Also, some universities need you to have specific GCSE grades to get onto their courses.

How will my Level 3 course affect my university options?

Some university courses require specific Level 3 qualifications and some don't accept others.

Take medicine for example. The University of Aberdeen want you to achieve A grades in 3 A-Levels with Chemistry being required, as well as one in Biology, Physics or Maths and won't accept BTECs. This changes with each university, for example Birmingham University will want you to have Chemistry and Biology and won't accept general studies.

Sports Therapy at London Metropolitan University is another example. They ask for A Levels which includes one A Level from Biology, Physical Education, Human Biology, Sports Science or Sports Studies.

To do Biomedical Science here at UEL you need passes at A2 in at least 2 subjects. Must include Grade B in A Level Biology or Chemistry.

If you know what you want to do in the future already, you know the field you want to go into or you know what degree you would like to do, have a look at the UCAS website and research some of the courses available – you'll be able to see if there are any courses you would need to take, but you'll be able to see if there is anything you couldn't take.

Time to research:

Using the websites below, I want you to have a look at what options may be best for you.

If you have no clue what it is that you want to do, the national careers website may be a good place to start. It has information about a lot of different jobs, for example salaries, if you need any specific grades/qualifications.

www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

Find an apprenticeship

With this website, you can see what job areas have apprenticeships available, and you can see if there are any close to you

www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch

Career Planner

Career Planner matches your skills, motivations and desires to a career that's perfect for you. Try the Job Match tool.

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/planner>

Self-discovery and reflection

Take the Buzz Quiz to develop self-awareness and start thinking about careers. This fun, quick quiz can help you explore your strengths and preferences and explore links between your personality, working styles and job types.

<https://icould.com/buzz-quiz/>

Career ideas

Explore videos to get an insight into careers and work, and draw links between subjects and jobs. There are over 1000 videos of real people talking about their careers – explaining their job role, career path and how different factors have shaped their choices. Videos can be filtered by job type or subject and cover a range of sectors and levels.

<https://icould.com/explore/>

Career guides

Visit career paths for guides and articles exploring issues at different career stages and decision points. These include GCSE options or university choices; exams and revision; and finding/ applying for jobs.

<https://icould.com/explore/#careerpaths>