

Choosing your post-16 options

Your big decision

The Future is about YOU! This maybe the first time that you will decide what you will do. It is good that you can choose, but making decisions brings responsibility and you want to make the right choice.



Post 16 options available

1. Full-time education at a college or sixth form:
 - a [A levels](#)
 - b [Vocational courses](#)
 - c [T levels](#)
2. [Apprenticeships](#)
3. [Traineeships and supported internships](#)
4. [Employment, self-employment or volunteering](#)

A levels

- A levels allow you to continue studying your GCSE subjects in greater depth or you can choose to study a new subject such as law, economics or psychology.
- A levels are good preparation if you are thinking of going onto higher education (as they are academic in style) or if you are not sure of your career plans (as you can keep your options open by studying more than one subject).
- To study A levels, you will need to have achieved at minimum of grades 4-9 in your GCSEs with a minimum of grade 4 in English language and maths.
 - Specific requirements can vary from four passes to six passes, so you should check with the college or sixth form you are interested in.
 - For some subjects, including (but not limited to) maths and science, you will need a higher grade in the subject at GCSE if you want to go on to study it at A level.
- A levels suit people who perform well in exams.

If you want to think further ahead, then you can use the A level matching tool at sacu-student.com/?page_id=5203 to find out what previous students with your combination of A levels progressed to.

Vocational course options: subjects related to different industries

- Vocational subjects are qualifications that develop your practical skills and knowledge.
- These tend to be more hands on than A levels and can include work experience.
- Unlike A levels, with a vocational course you usually study **one** subject e.g. hairdressing, mechanics, business or travel & tourism (there are many different subject areas available – contact your local college or sixth form to find out more).
- Assessment is usually by completing coursework, practical examinations and sometimes doing written examinations.

There are different levels of vocational subjects and the level you could start on depends on your GCSE grades. As a rough guide:

- Level 3 a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades 4 and above including English language and maths (and science for some subjects) is required.
- Level 2 requires mainly grade 3 across all GCSEs.
- Level 1 requires mainly grades 2 to 1 across all GCSEs.

Check college websites for their exact entry criteria Your careers adviser or the college or sixth form can discuss the level that is right for you.

T levels

T levels are a relatively new qualification option which allow you to mix the academic study associated with A levels, with the practical experience associated with vocational qualifications.

- You'll spend about 80% of your time in classroom learning, and a minimum of 315 hours (or 45 days, which is about 20% of your course) doing an industry placement.
- T levels were introduced in September 2020 and each year, until September 2023, new subjects are being introduced. See the [T levels website](#) for a list of the subjects available.

Apprenticeships

- An apprenticeship means you have a real job, get paid and are entitled to other benefits such as annual leave.
- In most cases you will be required to source your own employer. This means that you search for an apprenticeship in exactly the same way that you search for any other kind of job.
- Most of the skills and knowledge you need you will learn while doing the job – so you don't need lots of previous experience.
- With an apprenticeship you will also gain recognised qualifications relevant to your role. To do this, you will go usually to college or a training provider, usually 1 day a week but sometimes you will do a block of training. Your employer usually decides how, where and when you will complete this qualification.
- You can find out more at www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/ & amazingapprenticeships.com/

Traineeships and supported internships

- A traineeship is designed to give you the skills and knowledge to prepare you for an apprenticeship or employment.
- A traineeship will provide you with work experience and support with your English & Maths should you need it.
- A supported internship is an option very similar to traineeships, except that they are specifically for individuals who have learning difficulties or disabilities.
- Unlike apprenticeships, which can be taken at any age, traineeships and supported internships are specifically for young people.

Find out more at www.gov.uk/guidance/traineeship-information-for-trainees or www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-learning-difficulties

Employment, self-employment or volunteering

You could choose employment, self-employment or volunteering, as long as:

- You are employed, self-employed or volunteering for at least 20 hours per week
AND
- You are also in part-time education or training

If you think this is the best option for you, we'd recommend having a chat with a careers adviser, just to ensure that your plans meet the requirements of the 'Raising the Participation Age' agenda (www.gov.uk/government/collections/raising-the-participation-age).

Making a start



Each pathway will offer different ways of learning. For example, some education courses will be theory and classroom-based while others will involve placements with employers or practical project work.

1. Thinking about me - How do you like to learn? 🤔

If you would like to attend a college or sixth form, enjoy theory and classroom-based learning and perform well in exams, you may want to consider and research **A-levels**.

If you would like to attend a college or sixth form but prefer more practical project work with hands-on work experience you may want to consider and research **vocational courses**.

If you would rather go straight into employment whilst gaining qualifications, you may want to consider and research **apprenticeships** or **traineeships**.

We would recommend you consider & research all your options to enable you to make an informed choice.

2. Researching your options – Where can you find out more?

- Research options using the resources available on the [Hampshire Futures website](#)
- Find out more regarding your local colleges & sixth forms by looking on their websites, college prospectus and attending open events
- Visit www.apprenticeships.gov.uk & amazingapprenticeships.com for more information regarding apprenticeships
- Visit www.gov.uk/guidance/traineeship-information-for-trainees for more information regarding traineeships

- Visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-learning-difficulties for more information regarding supported internships
- Discuss your options with a careers adviser by emailing careers.service@hants.gov.uk

3. Making plans – Which option is best for you?

Once you've explored your options, it is time to choose which you think is best for you.

- Think also about what you're looking for from your next step (knowledge? experience? money? etc.) and compare this with each option.
- Listen to your heart and your gut: what do they say about each option?
- Weigh up the pros and cons of each option – do this on paper/on screen if you can, so you can physically see them in front of you.
- Speak to friends and family, to get their perspective (but remember that it is ultimately your decision).

If you need help with this, a careers adviser by emailing careers.service@hants.gov.uk

4. Taking action – What do you need to do?

Now it is time to take action – if you know:

A - where you are now **and**

B - what you want to do next

what do you need to do to get from A to B?

Set out the steps you need to take (again, do this on paper or on screen, if you can, so that you can see exactly what it is you need to do). Remember to set yourself deadlines for each step. If you need help with this, a careers adviser by emailing careers.service@hants.gov.uk

Remember: this is a cycle, so it never ends! Once you get to step 4, it is time to start again at step 1 to review your decision and/or think about the next stage of your career.

For further guidance or to speak to a Careers Adviser, please email
careers.service@hants.gov.uk