

FAQs / frequently asked questions /



There are so many options it's no surprise you're left scratching your head! Here's a few of the basics to help you on your way...

/ Apprenticeships /

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

Apprenticeships are a great opportunity to gain qualifications and workplace experience at the same time! Apprenticeships involve working for an employer while studying for a qualification part time with a training provider or college (usually on day release).

There are over 200 types of Apprenticeships, in a huge

range of industry sectors, such as engineering, childcare, veterinary nursing or even ceramic manufacturing.

WILL AN APPRENTICESHIP HELP ME INTO A CAREER?

Career progression is excellent for apprentices, and over the course of their careers, those with an Apprenticeship earn, on average, £100,000 more than those without.

/ Foundation Learning /

WHAT IS FOUNDATION LEARNING?

Foundation Learning is a programme which aims to help you if you don't have the necessary experience, skills or qualifications to start an Apprenticeship, college course or a job. In Foundation Learning you will work with those guiding you to agree a personalised programme which covers a range of skills.

CAN I STUDY FOR A QUALIFICATION ON FOUNDATION LEARNING?

Yes, there are qualifications available including Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Safety and First Aid. Most people progress to Level 2 qualifications (GCSE's, Diplomas, Apprenticeships) or supported employment.

/ A-Levels /

WHAT SUBJECTS SHOULD I CHOOSE?

There is a lot to consider when deciding which subjects to do at A Level, but choosing what you enjoy and what you're good at is usually a good place to start. Make sure you ask your subject teachers if you can't decide, they're there to help.

Another way to approach your choices is to look at what university course or job role you want to go into after A Levels and see which subjects they prefer you to study.

HOW WILL UNIVERSITIES AND EMPLOYERS VIEW MY QUALIFICATIONS AND SUBJECT CHOICES?

Universities will make it clear which A Level subjects are desired for certain courses (this is why choosing the right subjects is important). Having studied relevant subjects gives you a huge advantage when applying.

/ Colleges /

SHOULD I STUDY AT MY SCHOOL 6TH FORM OR A COLLEGE?

This can be a difficult decision and the best advice is to make sure you attend open days at both! The main difference many students find is that colleges are a lot bigger and you have more independence. Though some people relish this you have to be self motivated as you won't be pushed to do work, or even turn up, in the same way as at school. Of course at 6th form you will already know most of your teachers and friends but the key is choosing what is right for you, whether that's staying in your comfort zone or trying somewhere new.

HOW TO FIND OUT ABOUT COLLEGES IN MY AREA?

www.careersworld.co.uk of course! Our site has links to all of the colleges in your area which is a good place to start browsing their sites and the courses they offer.

/ Employers & Training Providers /

CAN I GET A JOB WITH AN EMPLOYER STRAIGHT AFTER SCHOOL?

Yes, lots of national and local companies recruit school leavers. Some companies, like British Gas, have opportunities for students straight after GCSE's and some, like Deloitte, offer opportunities once you have completed A Levels.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A WORK BASED LEARNING PROVIDER AND A COLLEGE?

You may have seen the phrase 'work based learning provider' mentioned in careers material before. Work based learning providers essentially provide vocational (on the job) courses.

/ University & Degrees /

WHICH COURSE AND UNI SHOULD I CHOOSE?

To help you decide which course you want to do or where you want to do it, you have to decide what's most important to you? Is it all about the social life or library facilities? List your priorities and think about what you want to get out of your time at university. Your careers advisors will be able to help you think about which course leads to which career, think about what you've studied at A Levels and find out what those subjects would be like at degree level.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR THE COURSE I WANT?

Applying for a course couldn't be easier - the Universities and Colleges Application System (UCAS) is the system for higher education course applications. The system is not just for undergraduate degrees; foundation degrees, postgraduate degrees and most higher education courses are on this site. You use UCAS to apply, see your offers from different universities and even find a course if you don't get the A Level results you need.

School Leaver Check List

/ Speak to your school careers advisor /

This seems an obvious thing to do, but even if you know exactly what you're doing it can't hurt to get an expert opinion. Your careers advisors are there to help you, and going along for a chat may raise issues you hadn't even thought of.

/ Consider all the available options /

You may have already explored a few different avenues, or applied for your dream course, but a back-up plan is always useful. For example, if you don't get the grades you need to get onto your course, is there a different type of qualification you can do to get into the industry of your choice? There may be other colleges or providers who offer the same course too and it's fine to go to open days at different places even if you've already applied elsewhere.

/ Think about money /

'Money makes the world go round' is a cheesy catchphrase - but it's true. Money is a big issue no matter what route you take; if you're doing an Apprenticeship, you get paid, but need to consider possible travelling expenses; if you're doing a further education course the old EMA funding system no longer exists; if you're going to university you will be in control of your own household budget! Many students get part-time or summer jobs to help fund their studies, could this be an option for you?