

Post-16 Further Education Guidance

What Is Further Education?

Further Education (FE) refers to educational choices made after your 16th birthday. It covers all qualifications lower than a degree. By law, everyone has to study FE until they are 18.

If staying on at school does not appeal to you, then there are plenty of alternatives such as a sixth form college or an independent FE provider or institution. You could also consider an apprenticeship.

If your child is staying on in education after GCSE-level study, sixth form is often the natural choice. But it isn't the only choice and it might not be the right choice for your daughter.

It is important to note that different institutions offer different qualifications or subjects, require different entry requirements and provide different facilities.

FE College

College is an adult environment where you take more responsibility for yourself and your learning – there's support and guidance available, but it's also a chance for you to prepare for work and life post-education.

There's usually a range of sport and leisure opportunities – employers and universities look for evidence of your wider interests and achievements, so check out college clubs and activities!

Apprenticeships

Are an excellent training for a young person who does not want to continue in formal education, but would like a recognised and valued qualification. Many businesses run outstanding programmes and like to be able to offer employment at the end of the training programme to their students. It's a real job, with a contract and paid holiday. You will usually spend four days working and one day working towards professional qualifications. Certain types of apprenticeships can also lead to university qualifications.

You can find more at:

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

So is FE college or an apprenticeship right for your daughter?

If your child answers 'yes' to one or more of the following questions, then it might be worth finding out more about FE.

- Are you ready for a change from the school setting?
- Can you manage your own time effectively (or could you learn to do so)?
- Do you prefer to be treated as an adult?
- Are you interested in vocational, rather than purely academic, options?
- Are you ready to focus on one subject or job area?
- Are you looking for a specialist subject or the use of specialist facilities?

If FE college isn't right for your daughter, which other educational options could they consider?

- Sixth form or Sixth Form College
- Private training providers
- University technical colleges
- Studio schools

School Sixth Form

These are connected to a secondary school and vary in size, course offering, and subjects, as well as extra activities and opportunities you might like.

Check whether they offer the courses you want – wherever you choose to go, make sure you'll be studying subjects that interest you.

Sixth Form College

Sixth form colleges can be more informal than school sixth forms.

They're usually bigger, and they can often offer you more study options.

You'll get to make new friends from different schools.

Training Providers, UTC's and Studio Schools

There are lots of training providers offering a wide range of work-related training and qualifications, including NVQs and apprenticeships.

Some are specialists focusing on particular sectors and job roles – such as construction, business administration, childcare, or hair and beauty.

Training providers work closely with employers who offer work-based training as part of placements or employment.



TOP TIPS

- Search for schools, colleges, and training providers in your [area](#) that offer the course(s) or subjects you want to study.
- Go to open days – these are great opportunities to explore schools or colleges, and to find out more about the courses on offer. At present most of these are virtual and can be found on their website.
- Find out as much as you can – college life and work-based training can be quite different from secondary school and the education you've known so far.

When to apply?

Institutions have different requirements. Applications deadlines can vary from November – February, some may be a later date. It is advised, that you contact the required institution for further details. Apprenticeships will usually have a later deadline.

Please follow these instructions to find a document containing FE institutions in Central London and further details.

[Teams > Year 11 > Careers > Files > 6th Form & College Open Events](#)

Thinking Ahead

Although it may feel a long way off, if you're thinking of going to university, we strongly advise researching what A levels different degree courses require.

Science, medicine, music, and art are obvious examples of degrees that have pre-requisite A levels. But there are plenty of less obvious examples too. For instance, to read Economics all Russell group (and some other) universities, you'll need A level maths. Budding architects should consider taking maths, physics, DTI or art at A level.

The Russell group of universities have their own list of essential or 'facilitating' A levels and generally applicants are required to have at least two of these courses among their A levels. The facilitating A levels subjects are mathematics, further mathematics, English literature, physics, biology, chemistry, geography, history and classical or a modern language.

Also consider the combination of A levels. Some universities will discount certain A levels, so it's no good choosing three only to find out half-way through the course that your university of choice will only count one or two of them.

While reading university websites you may see that some universities allocate their places via a points system. Each A level grade, A* – E, is assigned a number of points and entry will be dependent on the total sum, known as tariff points, of a student's achieved grades.

Individual university websites and prospectuses clearly outline what A levels or equivalent qualifications are required or accepted for each degree course, along with the grade offers that have been set for the following year's entry.

UCAS: www.ucas.co.uk and What Uni: www.whatuni.com are useful and reliable sources of information.

Subjects And Qualifications

While A levels and some vocational qualifications are offered at both sixth forms and FE colleges, certain subjects are only available in colleges. This is particularly the case where specialist equipment or facilities are required - bakery or engineering courses, for example. Some colleges offer a huge variety of subjects, while others specialise in a particular subject area, like land-based studies.

Vocational courses are offered at different levels, with the level at which students start determined by the grades achieved at GCSE. Most school-leavers start at level one, two or three. If your daughter needs to start with a qualification at a lower level, look out for foundation or entry-level courses. Some FE colleges also offer higher education (university-level) courses at levels four, five and six.

Your daughter need not rule out university if they're studying a vocational qualification. Certain vocational courses at level three will still provide a route to university; college staff will be able to advise further.

The accepted forms of Further Education for 16+ are:

A Levels

By far the most common form of FE, this is what you're most likely to study if you stay in school for sixth form.

Students generally sit three or four A levels. There's no shortage of A level subjects to pick from, but not every school will offer all options. Schools choose the A level subjects that they will teach and that they feel are most appropriate for their students based on historical data such as popularity in the past, student aptitude, timetabling and most importantly the availability of teaching staff. If a school does not offer certain subjects, it is always worth discussing your choice with them or looking at other institutions which may provide different courses and options.

Purely academic?

Most A levels are purely based on academic capabilities and examinations. There are exceptions such as design & technology, music and art where you will be required to prove your practical skills alongside academic theory. Languages, understandably, also need a high level of both oral and written aptitude in the chosen language.

Art Foundation Diploma Course

This is a BTEC vocational course that is for school leavers wishing to either test the water and see if they like studying art or is for students who are certain that they want to do a BA in fine art.

BTEC Nationals

BTEC Nationals, otherwise known as The Business and Technology Education Council qualification, are overseen by Pearson. For students who want to hone practical skills and theory simultaneously while being tested, largely, by continuous assessment, they are an ideal choice.

For students who want to hone practical skills, backed up by relevant theory, they are an ideal choice. Tested, in the main, by continuous assessment, BTEC Nationals are qualifications that have been recognised since 1984 throughout the UK and can follow on from either BTEC Firsts or GCSEs. A levels and BTEC Nationals are both level 3 qualifications.

Do employers recognise them?

All BTEC Nationals are work-related, and students will learn valuable workplace and practical skills alongside academic theory, making students very desirable to employers.

Do universities recognise them?

A BTEC comprises of a set number of units. An 18-unit BTEC equates to three A levels, and many universities will accept it. But students applying to university who have a 12-unit BTEC may well be expected to have an AS or an A level too. It's worth noting that 95 per cent of the UK's universities accept BTEC Nationals as qualifications for over 70 per cent of their degree courses.

How are they assessed?

There are a number of assessment methods:

- Continuous (also called ongoing) assessment, which is marked by the teachers at the student's school.
- A practical test.
- Finally, an exam. This exam can either be an online multiple choice exam or a traditional, written paper.

Whichever assessment method the course uses, students are given many opportunities to prepare and present themselves and their work in the best possible light.

HNCs & HNDs

Many people will know BTEC Highers by the acronym HNC, Higher National Certificate and HND, Higher National Diploma. They are equivalent to completing



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years one or two at university. You are required to have at least one A-Level, or an equivalent, which may be an NVQ level 3 qualification to apply.

NVQs

National Vocational Qualifications in the past have received bad press, but they do what they say on the tin and are excellent vocational qualifications for certain fields. Completion of a Level 3 NVQ opens the door to further study, a full apprenticeship or the BTEC Specialist award. While NVQs have no time limit, levels 1, 2 and 3 each take about a year to complete.

Technical Baccalaureate (TechBac)

Newly introduced in 2014, the TechBac are practical, vocational, courses run by the City and Guilds aimed at 16-19-year-olds wanting technical qualifications and soft skills. Designed by educators in collaboration with businesses to ensure that they suit the needs of today's labour force and provide students with high level of competency and training. An Advanced Technical Extended Diploma distinction* grade is equivalent to 3 A*s at A Level.

University Technical College (UTC)

They provide courses which are taught at local colleges. These may suit students looking for traditional academic learning combined with practical skills. A certain number of previous qualifications such as a GCSE or BTEC are required to be eligible for enrolment.

Entry Requirements

If your daughter wants to study A levels in an FE college, they will generally require, grades 4 or above at GCSE, with 5s, 6s or higher often specified.

For vocational qualifications, students achieving grades 4 or above at GCSE might choose a level three course, often studied over two years. Students who've just missed out on 4s at GCSE start with a year of study at level two, while students who get lower than 3s/Ds at GCSE could start on level one courses.

On certain courses which build practical skills, everyone starts at level one, regardless of the grades they get at GCSE.

Personal Statement

Most FE application forms include a section where you write something about yourself. It could just be a few lines or, more scarily, a large empty space with no word limit.

Things to think about when writing it:



- Why are you applying for your chosen course(s)?
- Why does this course interest you?
- Why do you think you are suitable for the course(s)?
- Do your current studies (e.g., GCSEs) relate to the course(s) you have chosen? If so, how?
- Skills and achievements
- Hobbies and interests
- Work history
- Career plans

IMPORTANT: Do exactly what the form asks. Read the wording carefully. What exactly does it ask you to do? Is there guidance on what information to include? Is there a word limit? Make sure everything is written exactly as requested.

Reference

To support your application you will need a reference from a teacher at the school.

Important things to note:

- Ask the teacher to be your reference, before you place their name down on your application.
- It is important that you give them enough time to write the reference so it can be sent in time.
- Do not ask multiple people for references, writing these takes time and it is unfair to request this time and not use it.

Interview

Some institutions may require an interview, to further see if you are suitable for entry. It is important that you are prepared. We will provide you with some advice on this at a later date.

Day-to-Day Routine

Freedom

Generally, college students tend to get more freedom than their counterparts at sixth form, with more relaxed rules and dress code. Calling a tutor by his or her first name is commonplace. Students are treated like adults and asked to take more responsibility for their own learning. Needless to say, this suits some young people more than others. Your daughter would need to adjust to the differences at college fairly quickly to allow them to make good progress with their studies.

Timetable

Post-16, the timetable is a bit different too. Students will have free periods and won't necessarily be expected to attend every day. The college day might be longer with lessons or tutorials taking place as late as 5 or 6pm. Free time can be used for coursework or further research. Students might spend the time volunteering or



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working part-time to build their experience. There will also be activities to get involved with, from fitness classes to student politics.

Facilities

Public restaurants, theatres, salons and workshops are common in FE colleges, allowing your daughter to use the kit and technology that might be common in industry. Many of the staff have a background in their sector too, giving an insight into the realities and the challenges of the workplace.

Experiencing the World of Work

Vocational study in college should bring the opportunity to gain workplace experience or develop the employability skills employers are asking for. Many courses include placements, giving your daughter experience and the chance to test out their career ideas. There are also realistic working environments, like college health spas, travel agencies or farms, where students can practise their skills or work with customers.

At All-Saints we look forward to supporting you as make the steps that will contribute to your future. Please visit the Careers page on Teams for up-to-date information

For further enquiries, please contact:

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