

# What Are My Options for Post-16 Education in England?



# How is this guidance useful?

This guidance is designed to help you if you have come from another country and are studying at a UK school or waiting to go to a UK college. It might help you if:

- You are aged 15+, studying at school in the UK and considering what to do when you finish Year 11.
- You have recently arrived in the UK, you are aged 15–18, you are currently not in school, and you are considering what to do next.

It may also be useful for the parents and carers of these learners.

# How is this guidance organised?

The guidance is set out in the following sections:

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Here you will find a list of the key terms used in the guidance and what they mean.

## **I am about to finish secondary school; what are my options?** **7**

This section will be helpful if you are 15+ and about to finish school. You should also read this section if you have not been in school in the UK (perhaps because you have recently arrived here) and you want to start college.

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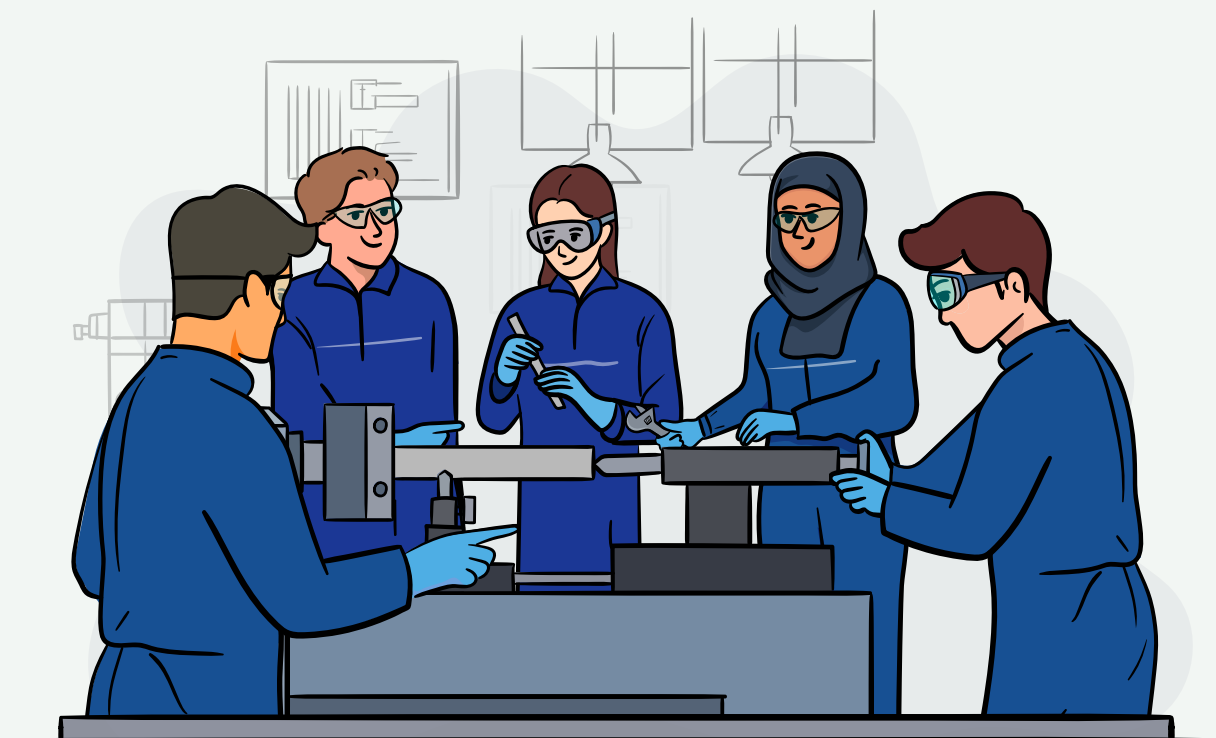
This section provides a useful chart to illustrate your choices.

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# Glossary

Academic	An academic course is one that teaches a subject rather than preparing learners directly for a particular job (see <b>vocational</b> ). Examples of academic courses are A-levels and International Baccalaureate courses in subjects such as physics, English literature or geography.
A-levels	This is short for “advanced level”. A-levels are offered by both <b>sixth forms</b> and colleges, in subjects such as maths, history, art, or music. Students take exams at the end of the course, although some subjects also include assessed coursework.
Alternative provision	This refers to other ways that students can receive education, instead of attending mainstream school. Examples include online lessons, or charitable institutions that provide on-site education.
Apprenticeship	Apprentices train to do a skilled job – such as hairdressing, plumbing, electrical engineering, or many others – through a combination of work experience and studying. The studying component often takes place at a college but is sometimes carried out online.
BTEC	These are vocational courses leading to a diploma. BTEC stands for Business and Technology Education Council. You can take BTEC at levels 1 and 2 (equivalent to a GCSE) and level 3 (equivalent to an A-level).
College	This is an institution that provides <b>further education</b> . Colleges also often offer adult education in the evenings.
CEFR	This stands for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The CEFR levels represent the different stages of learning a new language, starting as a beginner at level A1 and ending with proficiency at level C2.
ESOL	This stands for English for Speakers of Other Languages. It usually refers to English language classes offered to adults and 16–19 year olds.

Foster care	This refers to a situation where someone under the age of 18 cannot be cared for by their parents. Instead they live with foster parents, who are specially trained and paid to do this by the government.
Functional Skills qualifications	These are exams available in English, mathematics and <b>ICT</b> . They are designed to teach the practical skills you need to live, learn, and work successfully in the UK in a range of real-life situations. Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications are equivalent to GCSEs.
Further education	This refers to the years spent between finishing school at 16 and going to university or work at 18/19. It is sometimes shortened to FE.
GCSE	This stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education. School students in England and Wales take GCSE exams at the end of secondary school, usually at the age of 16. You can take GCSEs in a wide range of subjects including English, maths, history, science, art, physical education (PE), and many more.
GCSE grades	These are the marks you get in your GCSE exams. Grade U is a fail. Grades 1–9 are all pass grades; 1 is the lowest and 9 is the highest. Grades 4–9 are often referred to as a “good pass”.
GCSE retakes (also called “resits”)	This is when you take one or more GCSE exams again, to get a better grade. If you have not taken any GCSEs at school because you arrived in the UK too late, or were not ready, you might be advised to join retake/resit classes at college or sixth form.
Higher education	This refers to the education undertaken after college, often at the age of 18. It usually involves studying at university.
ICT	This stands for information and communications technology. It includes the study of all technologies related to the storage, retrieval, and processing of information, such as computer hardware and software, and those related to communication – such as the internet, smartphones, and social media.
International Baccalaureate	This refers to two different programmes: the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the International Baccalaureate Certificate. Students follow six academic courses in both programmes, which are assessed by final exams at the end of the course. The diploma also involves writing an extended essay and completing a selection of non-academic activity.

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NVQ	This stands for National Vocational Qualifications. These are practical, work-based awards. They can be studied at levels 1 and 2, which are equivalent to GCSE grades 3–1 and 9–4 respectively, and at level 3, which is equivalent to one or more A-level.
Reference	This refers to a letter written by your teacher at school (or alternative provision) and sent to the college you want to attend. It gives the college information about you and your strengths and abilities, and recommends you for a particular course.
Sixth form	Years 12 and 13 of secondary school are referred to as the sixth form. Some schools do not have a sixth form, and instead finish at the end of Year 11.
T-levels	The “T” is for technical. These are high-level vocational courses designed to give you both skills and experience in a specific area, such as business management or media broadcasting and production.
Vocational	A vocational course prepares learners for a specific area of work, or provides training for a particular job. <b>NVQs</b> , <b>BTECs</b> , and <b>T-levels</b> (all defined above) are all examples of vocational courses, and offer training in areas such as animal management, construction, nursing, and many others.

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# I am about to finish secondary school; what are my options?

In England, you can leave school on the last Friday in June, if you will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

However, all young people are required to continue in some form of education or training until they turn 18. Your options at age 16 are:

1. Continue in full-time education (at a school sixth form or college);
2. Begin an apprenticeship (training to do a skilled job, with a combination of work experience and study);
3. Continue in education part-time and do some paid or voluntary work.

The rest of this section looks at these options in more detail.

## 1 Continuing in full-time education

If you choose to continue in full-time education, you can study:

- A- and AS-levels;
- T-levels;
- The International Baccalaureate;
- A vocational diploma.

Sometimes a combination of these is also possible.

Here is some more information about these options:

### A- and AS-levels

A-levels (advanced-level qualifications) are academic, subject-based qualifications. Many universities and higher education institutions require students to have achieved A-levels for entry onto a degree course.

A-level courses usually take two years to complete, with exams at the end of both years. AS-levels (advanced-subsidary level) take one year to complete and are the equivalent of half an A-level. Not all schools and colleges offer this option, though, so make sure you check.

#### A-levels can be a good choice if you:

- ✓ Plan to go to university, or to take a higher-level apprenticeship;
- ✓ Know which school subjects you would like to continue studying;
- ✓ Have (or are predicted to get) enough GCSEs (typically five) at grades 9–4.

## Technical (T-) levels

T-levels are designed to give you the knowledge and skills you need to find a job in a specific area, or to progress to university (see BBC Bitesize <https://bbc.in/46HedbY>).



The courses take two years to complete, and each T-level is equivalent to three A-levels. However, instead of continuing with school subjects like physics or history, T-levels teach you the practical skills and relevant knowledge needed for specific industries or areas of work – such as nursing, ICT, agriculture, and more. They are assessed by a mixture of coursework and exams, and include an industry placement to gain work experience.

After completing a T-level you might find a job using your knowledge and skills. Alternatively, you might want to continue studying in your chosen area. If you do, you can progress to a higher-level apprenticeship, or in some cases to a university course. Many universities accept T-levels for entry onto relevant courses.



### T-levels can be a good choice if you:

- ✓ Know which area of work you want to concentrate on;
- ✓ Plan to go to university or to take a higher-level apprenticeship in a specific vocational area, such as business or ICT (***note that you will normally only be able to progress to a university course in a subject that is directly relevant to your T-level***);
- ✓ Have (or are predicted to get) enough GCSEs (typically five) at levels 9–4.

If you know which T-level you want to do, but don't yet have all the skills at the right levels to be accepted, some colleges run T-prep courses that can help you get to the level you need (see City College Plymouth [https://bit.ly/City\\_College\\_Plymouth\\_TLevel](https://bit.ly/City_College_Plymouth_TLevel)).



## The International Baccalaureate (IB)

This academically demanding qualification is available globally. Universities all over the world recognise it for entry onto degree courses.

You will study six subjects – three at higher level and three at standard level – of which English and maths are compulsory and the other four can be chosen from a range of options. You also write an extended essay.

### The IB can be a good choice if you:

- ✓ Plan to go to university in the UK or abroad, or to take a higher-level apprenticeship;
- ✓ Would like to study a broad range of subjects;
- ✓ Have (or are predicted to get) enough GCSEs at levels 9–4.



## Vocational diplomas/extended diplomas

These are available in a range of areas, including health and social care, animal care, business, and computing, and through a number of different qualifications (for example, NVQs, BTECs, and functional skills diplomas). Vocational and extended diplomas can be taken at different levels:

**Level 1 diploma** – this is equivalent in level to one GCSE at grades 3–1.

**Level 2 diploma** – this is equivalent in level to one GCSE at grades 9–4.

**Level 3 diploma/extended diploma** – this is equivalent to one or more A-levels.

This table shows the different vocational qualifications you can take at each level and their equivalence to academic qualifications:

Level	Qualification	Equivalent
Entry levels 1,2,3	ESOL, Skills for Life	Pre-GCSE
Level 1	ESOL BTEC NVQ Functional Skills maths/ English/ICT	GCSE grades 1–3
Level 2	ESOL BTEC NVQ Functional Skills maths/ English/ICT	GCSE grades 9–4
Level 3 (BTEC)	Certificate	1 AS-level
	Subsidiary diploma	1 A-level
	Diploma	2 A-level
	Extended diploma	3 A-level
Level 3 (NVQ)		2 or more A-levels

### Vocational diplomas can be a good choice if you:

- ✓ Know the area you want to work in;
- ✓ Are sufficiently proficient in English – the level of English you need is usually stated in the entry requirements for the course you want to attend. Some colleges might want to assess your level of English before admitting you to make sure you are on the right course.

## A combination

You can combine A-levels and T-levels; level 3 vocational diplomas with an A- or T-level; and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses with [GCSE retakes](#) or level 1 or 2 studies. The exact combinations that are possible will depend on the timetables at your college – so be sure to ask about it at your interview, if this is what you wish to do.

## 2 Beginning an apprenticeship

This is the second option you can take when you leave school at 16. Here are the answers to some questions you may have about apprenticeships:

**What?** An apprenticeship is a period of training to do a skilled job, through a combination of work experience and college-based lessons.

Apprenticeships are available in a huge and diverse range of jobs – from hairdressing to train driving, and plumbing to printing.

You can take an apprenticeship at either level 1, 2, or 3, depending on the difficulty of the course you choose. There are also higher-level apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5, which take longer and are equivalent to some degrees.

**How much?** Most apprenticeships will pay you for the work you carry out in your placement, although you will not earn the full rate for that job until you are qualified.

**Where?** You will spend most of your time in the workplace, and a smaller amount of time (at least 20% of your working hours) studying. This usually takes place in a local college, but sometimes you can study online from home.

**How?** First, you need to find an employer who is offering an apprenticeship in the job you want to learn. You will then need to set up an account with GOV.UK One Login (<https://signin.account.gov.uk/sign-in-or-create>), and then you can apply directly to the employer for the specific apprenticeship.

Your careers advisor should be able to help you. There is a national [searchable database](#) of apprenticeships, and your local college should also have its own list for your area (see “Find an apprenticeship”: [https://bit.ly/Search\\_for\\_an\\_apprenticeship](https://bit.ly/Search_for_an_apprenticeship)).



**How long?** Most apprenticeships take between two and five years, depending on the level.

**IMPORTANT:** You must be 16 or over to begin an apprenticeship, and normally you must have been living in the UK or EU for three years.

Most apprenticeships require GCSE English and maths at grade 4 or above, or their equivalent (for example, school-leaving qualifications from another country).

Useful links

Gov.uk [Become an apprentice](https://bit.ly/Search_for_an_apprenticeship) ([https://bit.ly/Search\\_for\\_an\\_apprenticeship](https://bit.ly/Search_for_an_apprenticeship))

BBC Bitesize [Apprenticeships and work](https://bbc.in/3YAPkNk) (<https://bbc.in/3YAPkNk>)



3 Studying part-time and doing paid or voluntary work

After you leave school, you can find a paid job, volunteer, or even start your own business – but you must be in education for at least 280 guided learning hours in a year, studying for a recognised qualification. Guided learning means studying with a teacher or tutor (either in person, such as in a college, or online), and 280 hours in a year is equivalent to about one day a week. You can make your study hours flexible to fit around your work.

What if I need to improve my English first?

ESOL and ESOL+ courses

Many colleges offer courses for 16–18-year-olds who need to develop their English-language skills. These are known as ESOL courses (ESOL stands for English for Speakers of Other Languages).

ESOL courses are offered at different levels. The college will assess your level of English and place you on the course that is right for you.

This table shows the different ESOL course levels and how they compare to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels for language learning (these are explained just after the table).

ESOL qualification level	Equivalent CEFR level
Pre-entry	Pre-A1 (beginner)
Entry 1	A1 (basic learner)
Entry 2	A2
Entry 3	B1 (independent learner)
Level 1	B2
Level 2	B2–C1 (proficient learner)

Source: [Pathways to Proficiency](#), Department for Education and Skills



**Pre-entry level/introductory level:** This is the course for you if you have no (or very little) previous knowledge of English. Classes will focus on listening and reading simple texts and forms, speaking, pronunciation, and writing practice.

**Entry level 1:** This course is for you if you have some English-language skills, but need to develop them in order to access education or work in the UK.

**Entry level 2:** Once you have completed this course successfully, you may be able to progress to employment. Alternatively, you could continue your ESOL studies to entry level 3 and beyond, which will make working and/or studying in English easier for you.

**Entry level 3:** If you successfully complete this course, along with an equivalent in maths, most colleges will accept you onto a level 1 vocational course, such as a BTEC diploma. Some colleges offer vocational courses alongside further ESOL qualifications, such as this certificate in construction combined with ESOL: [www.capitalccg.ac.uk/conel/course/construction-with-esol--level-1-certificate/40969/](http://www.capitalccg.ac.uk/conel/course/construction-with-esol--level-1-certificate/40969/).



**Level 1:** This is equivalent in level to one GCSE at grades 3–1. If you successfully complete this course you can progress to a level 2 diploma, begin an apprenticeship, or enrol on an intensive GCSE course (where the content is covered in a shorter length of time) alongside level 2 ESOL.

**Level 2:** This is equivalent in level to one GCSE at grades 9–4. If you successfully complete this course you can progress to a level 3 diploma, begin an apprenticeship, or enrol on an intensive GCSE course (where the content is covered in a shorter length of time) with a view to progressing to A-levels, T-level, or the IB diploma.

**ESOL+ courses** combine an ESOL qualification at a suitable level for each student with some other qualifications in maths and/or vocational subjects.

Examples of other qualifications offered include maths at Functional Skills levels 1 and 2; maths GCSE; ICT skills; and employability skills. The combinations vary from one college to another, so ask your college exactly what the course will entail.

After this course you can progress to other courses in the college, including construction qualifications – for example in plumbing and heating or carpentry and joinery – or diplomas, such as ICT or health and social care. The courses you can take may depend on which ESOL level you have obtained.

**TIP:** Let your ESOL teachers know which course you are hoping to progress to, so that they can make sure you study the modules you need and take the right exams.

## How do I choose the best route?

1. **Consider what jobs you would most like to do.** Write down your first, second, and maybe third choice of job. Then research which qualifications you need to get those jobs. You might find these links useful:

BBC Bitesize quiz – [Which career could be perfect for you?](https://bbc.in/3yyQu00) (<https://bbc.in/3yyQu00>)

BBC Bitesize Careers job profiles (see [https://bit.ly/BBC\\_Bitesize\\_Careers](https://bit.ly/BBC_Bitesize_Careers))

2. Research the courses and apprenticeship options on offer at schools and colleges in your area. If you are at school, ask your form tutor or careers advisor. Other places you can go to for information are listed in the next section.



## Where can I find more information?

**You can:**

- Use the National Careers Service website to search for a course near you (see [https://bit.ly/National\\_Career\\_Service](https://bit.ly/National_Career_Service));
- Talk to the person in charge of careers education at your school;
- Look at the websites of local colleges and schools with sixth forms.



## Will I need to pay to continue with my education?

Education is free for students who are 16, 17, or 18 as of 31 August at the beginning of the academic year.

### Is there any financial support if I need it?

There might be. Individual colleges have different types and levels of financial support available. For example, if you are going to be 19 at the start of your final year – perhaps because you have repeated exams, or taken extra time to develop your English – your college may be able to provide financial assistance.

This is something you can ask about when you visit the college, or at interview.

You could also try a charity that offers grants, such as Turn2Us ([https://bit.ly/Turn2us\\_Grants\\_Search](https://bit.ly/Turn2us_Grants_Search)) or the Ruth Hayman Trust ([https://bit.ly/Ruth\\_Hayman\\_Trust](https://bit.ly/Ruth_Hayman_Trust)).



## What do I need to find out before applying to colleges?

- Which is my nearest further education provider?
- When is their next open event, when I can have a look around and ask questions?
- What are my options with the qualifications I have (or am likely to gain)?

### Will I need a reference? Who can write it for me?

When you apply to college, you will normally need a reference from your school. Your form tutor or head of year will write it for you.

You might feel that your predicted GCSE grades do not show your true ability and academic potential, because you have not had enough time to study subject content and improve your English since arriving in the UK. If this is the case, consider asking your reference writer to mention your circumstances in the reference, and to comment on the efforts and progress you have made.

### Who should I speak to for help and advice?

If you are at school, ask your careers advisor about your options. Speak to your form tutor if you are not sure who that is or how to find them.

If you are not at school and are in foster care, you can ask your foster carer or social worker to help you find out about local college courses and open days.

If you are not at school and you are attending an alternative provision, ask the teachers or staff there to guide you.

## Can I visit different colleges to see what they are like?

Yes, you can, and it is important to do so. Colleges have open days and open evenings. These are events where you can visit the college, talk to tutors, and find out about the different courses. You can then decide whether you think the college and course will suit you. Find out about open events from the colleges' websites or from your careers advisor in school.

### Who should I bring with me to open days and interviews?

It might be useful to take a friend or family member who can translate for you, if you can. Some colleges might be able to provide interpreters – your careers advisor at school can find this out for you.

It can also be useful to bring someone who will listen to any presentations and explanations alongside you. Afterwards, you can compare notes and talk through your options.

## What questions should I ask at open days and interviews?

Questions to ask the course tutors:

- **What qualifications do I need to do this course?** (for example, do you need a minimum number of GCSEs or a certain level of English?)

If you haven't got the required qualifications but still want to do the course, ask:

- **How can I get the necessary qualifications for this course, and how long will it take?**
- **What qualifications will this course give me?**
- **What are my options for work or further study after finishing this course?** (for example, will you be able to apply to university, for an apprenticeship, or for jobs in your chosen area of work?)

Questions to ask the support staff:

- **What help can I get if I am finding the lessons hard to understand?**
- **What help can I get if I am feeling overwhelmed?**

**TIP:** It can sometimes be difficult to remember information after a busy open day, so make notes of the answers to your questions.

## Will my status as a refugee/asylum seeker affect my choices?

If you are aged 16–18, your choices should not be affected. You have the right to – and indeed must – attend some form of education or training until the end of the academic year in which you turn 18.

If you are 19+, your choices may be affected. Many courses are still free, but some are not. There may also be restrictions on who can take courses, based on how long they have lived in the UK. There is more information about this on the REUK website (see [https://bit.ly/REUK\\_Asylum\\_Seeker\\_Further\\_Education](https://bit.ly/REUK_Asylum_Seeker_Further_Education)).



## What if I can't access a place on a college course, due to my asylum status and/or age?

There are other educational options, such as free ESOL courses run by charities and local volunteer groups. What is available will depend on where you live.

Some courses might be available online as well as face to face – like this course from The Refugee Council (see [https://bit.ly/Refugee\\_Council](https://bit.ly/Refugee_Council)).

Some courses are available while you wait for a school or college course, such as this option for refugee/asylum seeker girls from the Baytree Centre in London (see [https://bit.ly/Youth\\_Service](https://bit.ly/Youth_Service)).

More information and a list of groups providing various other options are available from the REUK website ([https://bit.ly/REUK\\_Asylum\\_Seeker\\_Further\\_Education](https://bit.ly/REUK_Asylum_Seeker_Further_Education)).



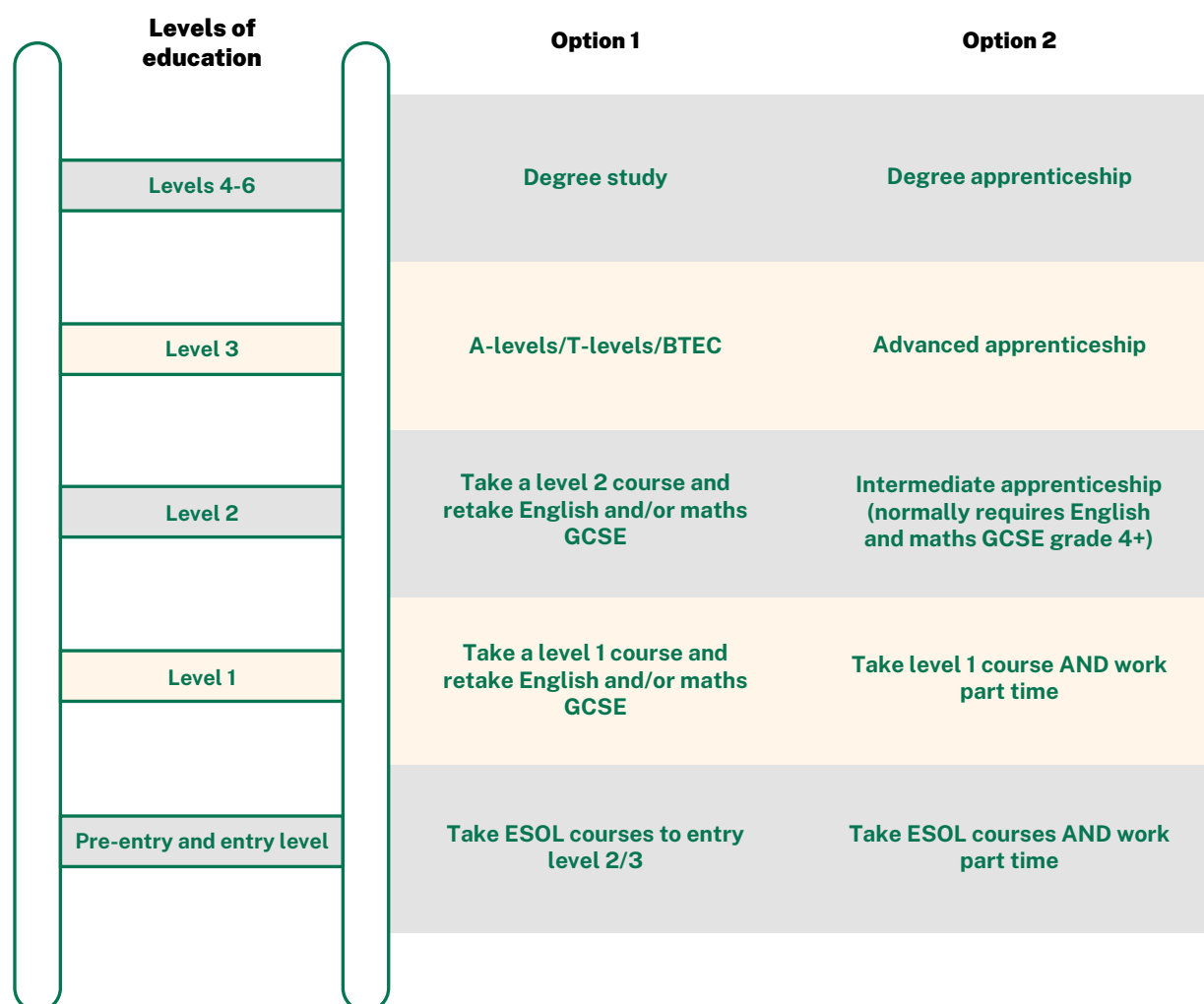


## So, what exactly are my options?

Your options will depend on what qualifications you have (or you expect to have) and what level of education you want to aim for.

Take a look at the ladder below. You can step onto the ladder at the point most appropriate point for you. For example, if you arrived late to the UK and have only one or two GCSEs at grades 3–1, you may want to start at level 1. Once you have completed this level, you can choose to move on to level 2.

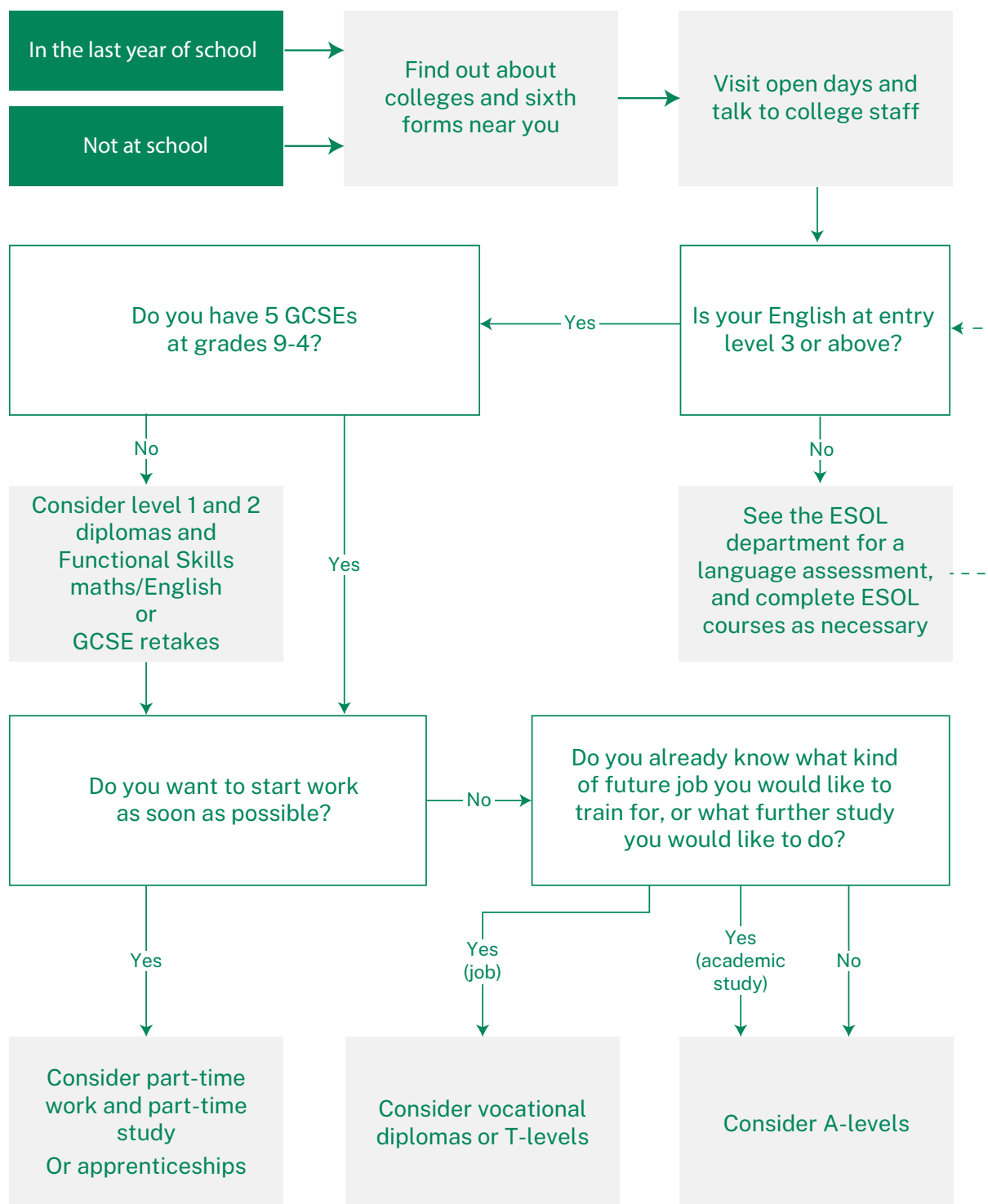
Remember that education is compulsory up to the age of 18. Until then, you can continue to climb the ladder. Once you are 18, you can choose to leave education.



Source: adapted from [GROWS](https://bit.ly/Student_zone), Gloucestershire University. ([https://bit.ly/Student\\_zone](https://bit.ly/Student_zone))



## What do your options look like?



# I'm thinking about university – what do I need to know?

*I don't really understand what universities are about, but I'm curious...*

Students who want to continue studying after sixth form or further education college go to university. This is also referred to as higher education.

## You don't have to go to university – education is optional at this stage!

The most well-known university qualification is a degree, which normally takes three years to complete, but there are also shorter qualifications such as higher national diplomas.

You can study academic subjects, such as chemistry or history, or you can choose a vocational degree that will train you for a particular job, such as nursing or engineering.

If you want to find out more about university qualifications, there is a lot of useful information on the Prospects website ([https://bit.ly/Guide\\_to\\_Qualifications](https://bit.ly/Guide_to_Qualifications)).



## I'd like to go to university, but I've heard it's really expensive

Tuition fees (the money you pay to attend a university) are expensive, yes – but students who have lived in the UK for five years can apply for a loan to pay for them.

If you take a student loan, you will only have to start repaying it when you earn more than a certain amount of money. At the time of writing this guidance, students starting undergraduate courses now will start repaying their loans when they are earning £25,000 per year. From then, 9% of the amount they earn over the threshold each year will be used to repay the loan.

So, for example, if you earn £30,000 a year, you are earning £5,000 more than the threshold of £25,000. So you will repay 9% of £5,000 in a year – which is £450, or £37.50 a month.

For more information see the government's webpage "Student finance for undergraduates" ([https://bit.ly/Student\\_finance\\_for\\_undergraduates](https://bit.ly/Student_finance_for_undergraduates)).



## I'm thinking about university but I'm not sure if it's right for me

Many universities have outreach programmes that will help you decide whether higher education is a good option for you. You can attend free sample lectures and seminars, look around the buildings, chat to current students and, when it is time, get some help with your application. Some good examples are:

- [GROWS](https://bit.ly/Student_zone), run by Gloucestershire University ([https://bit.ly/Student\\_zone](https://bit.ly/Student_zone));
- The [outreach and access](https://bit.ly/University_EastLondon_resources) resources from the University of East London ([https://bit.ly/University\\_EastLondon\\_resources](https://bit.ly/University_EastLondon_resources));
- The [Manchester access programme](https://bit.ly/Manchester_University) from Manchester University ([https://bit.ly/Manchester\\_University](https://bit.ly/Manchester_University));
- [Pathways to Birmingham](https://bit.ly/Birmingham_University_Post16), offered by Birmingham University. ([https://bit.ly/Birmingham\\_University\\_Post16](https://bit.ly/Birmingham_University_Post16)).



Your school or college should be able to signpost you to further examples of these programmes.



## Real-life stories

The following case studies are based on real-life examples to illustrate some different pathways available to school leavers.

### Case study 1:

#### School → college → university

Eleni arrived with her family from Greece and joined school in Year 9, aged 13. She had previously studied English in Greece for five years. Her favourite lessons in Greece were sports and science.

In Years 10 and 11, Eleni studied hard for her GCSEs as well as studying English language. She received dedicated extra English lessons in one of her GCSE options at school, which focused on the language she needed to pass her GCSE exams in maths, science and PE, and developed her overall English. She also took GCSE Greek.

Eleni achieved five GCSEs at grades 9–4 in maths, science (double award), PE, and Greek. She achieved a grade 3 in English and was accepted on a BTEC course in applied science at college. In the first year of college, she also retook her GCSE in English and obtained a grade 4.

As she studied at college, Eleni's confidence grew alongside her English-language level. She achieved grades DDM in her BTEC course and gained a place at Gloucestershire University to study physiotherapy. She hopes to pass her degree and work in the National Health Service (NHS).



## Case study 2:

### School → ESOL lessons → apprenticeship → work

Amir arrived as a refugee from Afghanistan, at the age of 14. He began school part way through Year 10 as a beginner in English. Amir received dedicated English-language lessons as part of his school timetable. He also attended English lessons run by a local charity in the evenings.

Amir attained four GCSEs at grades 3–1 and then progressed to college, where he enrolled on an ESOL programme for two years. He passed ESOL courses at entry levels 1, 2, and 3, and Functional Skills level 2 in maths.

During his four years at school and college, Amir's spoken English and levels of understanding improved quickly. Reading and writing were more difficult for Amir, as he had not studied the script before, but he persevered and passed his ESOL entry level 3 exams.

With the help of the college careers service, he then applied for apprenticeships in plumbing in his local area. He now works as a plumber for a company in his town, and hopes one day to set up his own plumbing business.



## Case study 3:

### School → sixth form → part-time work → university → work

Maksym arrived from Ukraine aged 14 and joined Year 10. He had studied English to an intermediate level in Ukraine and had also studied German and Russian. He was interested in languages.

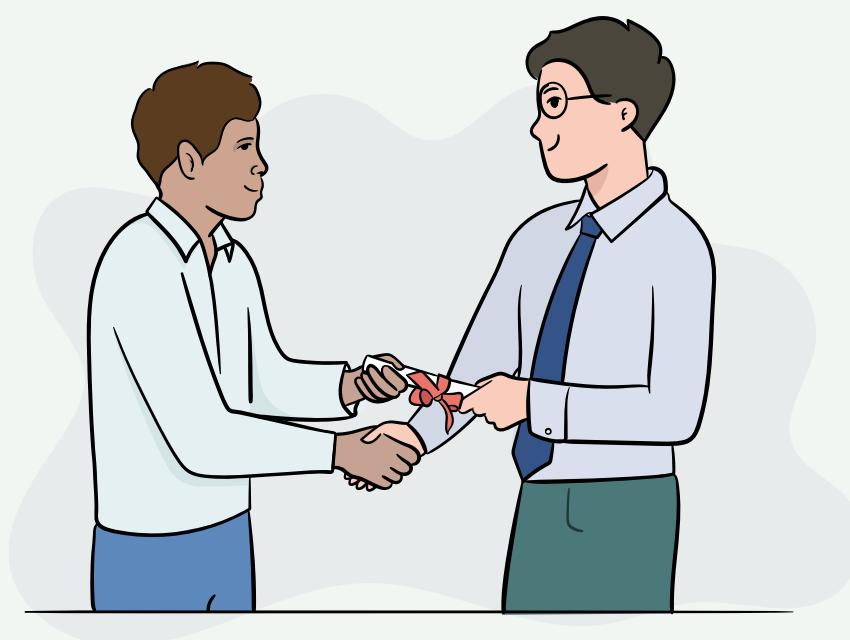
Maksym took six GCSEs including Russian, German, and Spanish. He had started Spanish from beginner level along with his classmates. He also received dedicated English language lessons twice weekly after school, to help him with the language he needed for his GCSEs.

He gained grades 4 and above in maths, science (double award), Russian, German, and Spanish, and a grade 3 in English.

Maksym enrolled in the school sixth form to retake his English GCSE and study for A-levels in Spanish and German. After gaining his grade 4 in GCSE English in Year 12, he took an AS-level in business studies alongside his two language A-levels in Year 13.

As Maksym had not been in the UK for five years, he then got a retail job and worked full-time for 12 months. This gave him valuable work experience and time for his English skills to develop further. When he had been in the UK for five years, Maksym became eligible for a loan to pay his tuition fees for a degree course – however he also wanted to carry on working.

Maksym is currently working part-time and studying part-time for a degree in business management and languages with the Open University. He hopes one day to set up an import-export business in Ukraine or the UK.



## Case study 4:

### School → college → work experience → degree apprenticeship → degree

Paula arrived from Poland in April. She started at an academy in the west of England, aged 15, and was placed in Year 10. She had studied English in Poland but had found it difficult and did not feel confident. Some of her time at school was dedicated to English-language lessons and extra help with core subjects (maths and science).

Paula told her teachers that she wanted to be a nurse, and the school helped her find work experience in the local hospital. She progressed to the academy's sixth form and took NVQs in health and social care at level 2 and then level 3. She also retook her English GCSE in Year 12 and obtained a grade 4.

With the help of the school careers teacher, Paula was accepted onto a foundation degree apprenticeship in nursing, where she gained experience on hospital wards and in surgical theatres. She decided that she wanted to have a career in nursing. Her foundation degree qualified her to join the second year of a full-time adult nursing degree, which she will start in September. Her ambition is to become a surgical nurse.





## Explore more: Sources and useful links

- Examples of ESOL courses at colleges in Peterborough, Bristol, and Westminster, London:

→ Peterborough College ([https://bit.ly/Peterborough\\_College\\_ESOL](https://bit.ly/Peterborough_College_ESOL))



→ City of Westminster College, London ([https://bit.ly/ESOL\\_courses](https://bit.ly/ESOL_courses))



→ Cabot Learning Federation in Bristol ([https://bit.ly/ESOL\\_CLF\\_Post16](https://bit.ly/ESOL_CLF_Post16))



- A charity providing ESOL lessons and support to young people in London:

→ Springboard Youth Academy (<https://bit.ly/SpringboardYouthAcademy>)



- A useful chart comparing the levels of different English-language qualifications. This one is from Scotland. The Scottish exams are different from the English ones, but you can see how the ESOL assessments compare to the CEFR levels:

→ [www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/SQA\\_ESOL\\_CEFR\\_Levels.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/SQA_ESOL_CEFR_Levels.pdf)



- A tool to search for grants for academic study:

→ Turn2us ([https://bit.ly/Turn2us\\_Grants\\_Search](https://bit.ly/Turn2us_Grants_Search)) A website to help you understand your choices at 16 (and at 18/19):



→ Find your Future (<https://bit.ly/StudyOptionsatAge16>)



