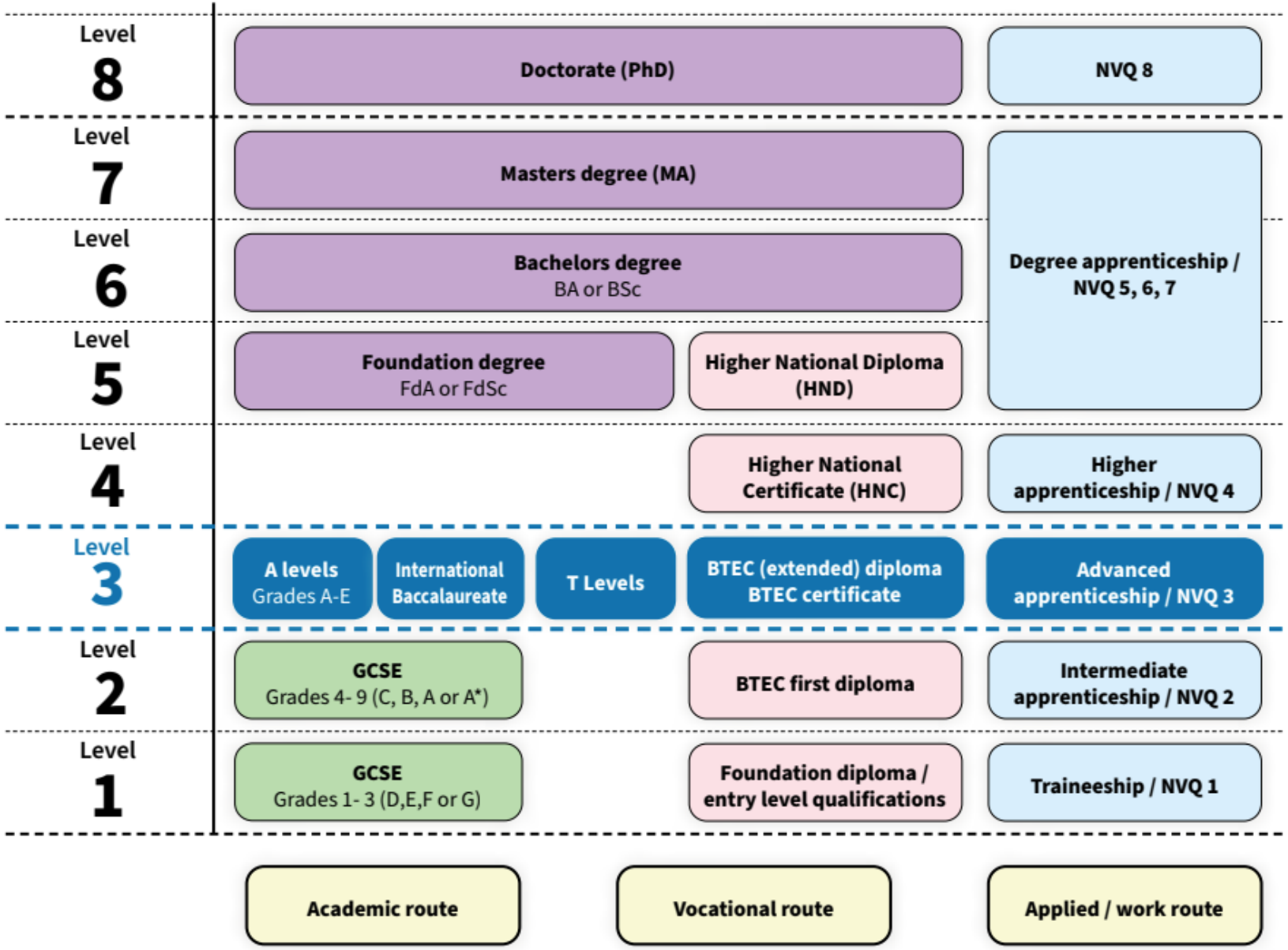
Post-16 Options

Royal Greenwich Trust School
Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow
PART OF UNIVERSITY SCHOOLS TRUST

Qualification/Educational Routes



Levels of Education

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there are 8 qualification levels (1 - 8) plus an entry level qualification for those just starting. Generally, the higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is.

With so many different qualifications, it can be hard to know what they mean and where they might lead to next. To help you understand, we've created a summary of what the levels mean highlighting academic, vocational and work-based routes to higher education.

A-Levels

An A level, or General Certificate of Advanced Level qualification, is an in-depth study of a subject over two years with an examination at the end to test knowledge. Learning mostly takes place in the classroom.

Students take three A levels, although some may take four. For students wishing to go on to university, UCAS points are awarded for up to three A levels. Points range from 16 to 56 points depending on the grade achieved. If a student takes four A levels, only their top three grades will count towards their total UCAS points.

Subject choices

There are many more subject choices at A level than GCSE, so it's possible they might choose a subject they haven't studied before. If they find they don't enjoy the subject as much as they'd hoped, most schools or colleges allow them to make changes towards the end of the first term. Students usually need at least a GCSE grade 6 in their subject choice, if it's something they have studied before, although exceptions can be made.

AS levels

If your child chooses to study a subject for Y12 only, they can take an examination and obtain an AS level which counts as 40% of an A level. AS levels count towards UCAS points, ranging from 20 points (A grade) through 6 points (E grade), although not all schools/colleges offer AS levels.

Key tip:

If your child wants to benefit from different learning styles, some schools offer the option to take a combination of A levels with BTEC.



AT A GLANCE:

Qualification type

General Certificate of Advanced Level qualification

Entry requirements

At least 5 GCSEs grades 4 - 9 and at least a grade 5/6 in the subject/s chosen for A level (requirements may vary between schools)

Subject choices

Typically 3 subjects

UCAS points:

56 points – A*
48 points – A
40 points – B
32 points – C
24 points – D
16 points – E

Type of learning:

Mostly theory, , though some include practical elements

Time:

2 years full time

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

Can lead to:

University, further study, training or work

Discover more

UCAS
The Uni Guide

Extended Project Qualification

Alongside A levels (or equivalent), many schools offer EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) which is a dissertation or project created on the basis of independent research and worth between 8 and 28 UCAS points.

Students can choose the subject matter, so this can be focused around their interests.

A different approach to learning

There's minimum supervision for EPQs, just a little light guidance. This means that research, structure and composition of the project is down to your child, as is meeting deadlines. This approach is much closer to what will be expected at university (or even in the workplace), so it's a good introduction to them finding their own way of learning. However, this style of working doesn't suit everyone, so check whether your child can cope with the added pressures an EPQ may bring.



University offers

An EPQ is the equivalent to half an A-level. Unlike a fourth A level, the EPQ points are added to the UCAS total combined with the total achieved from the first three A level passes, so it can be a useful way for your child to increase their UCAS points.

For universities that use subject grades rather than UCAS points for entry, some may even make two offers: one without the EPQ and one including the EPQ. For example, the standard offer might be BBB but the second offer (with the EPQ) could be BBC plus a pass grade in the EPQ. This might allow your child the flexibility they need to meet the entry requirements of competitive universities.

Key tip:

Students can choose the subject matter for their EPQ, so this can be focused around their interests or future degree / career plans.

What skills will your child develop

In developing their own way of working, they're likely to become better at:

- Managing their time;
- Conducting research;
- Summarising lots of information clearly;
- Motivating themselves;
- Presenting to an audience;
- Reflecting;
- Working independently;
- Responding to feedback;
- Accepting when things don't go to plan.

These can be excellent qualities to mention in personal statements (if they are applying to university) or for discussion in interviews for jobs.

IB Diploma (IBDP)

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP) - often referred to as the IBDP in UK schools and universities - is an internationally recognised qualification that combines rigorous academic study with personal development.

Students choose up to six subjects (three standard level and three at higher level) as well as undertaking some compulsory core modules. Most learning is theory, although there are some practical elements.

IB is graded by levels, with Level 7 (IBO certificate in higher level) earning 56 UCAS points. There are over 200 schools in the UK offering the IB diploma, although many are fee-paying schools.

Key tip:

The International Baccalaureate Organisation ("IBO") does not inspect schools once they have been approved to run IB, believing that results reflect standards, so it's important to check recent results.

Core components

In addition to their six subjects, each student must undertake three core modules designed to encourage them to become active, compassionate and life-long learners. These are:

- An extended essay - an in-depth study of a question relating to one of their chosen subjects, which requires independent research.
- The theory of knowledge - a course on critical thinking assessed through both an oral presentation and a 1,600 word essay.
- Creativity, action, service (CAS) - a series of activities alongside the student's academic study in creative thinking, healthy living and service to the community. The three strands of CAS are designed to grow a student's personal and interpersonal development through a journey of self discovery.

AT A GLANCE:

Qualification type

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP)

Entry requirements

Set by the school, up to 5 GCSEs (grades 4-9)

Subject choices

Up to six subjects (thre standard level and three at higher level)

UCAS points:

Each subject earns UCAS points:

- Up to 56 for Higher Level (grade 7)
- Up to 28 for Standard Level (grade 7)

Type of learning:

Mostly theory, some practical

Time:

2 years full time

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

Can lead to:

University, further study, training or work

Discover more

IBO

Good Schools Guide

IB Career Programme (IBCP)

The International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (CP) - commonly known as the IBCP in the UK - is designed for students who want to combine academic study with practical, career-focused learning. Although currently offered by a relatively small number of UK schools, the IBCP is gaining traction as interest in more flexible, career-oriented pathways continues to grow.

The IBCP is made up of three parts:

1. elements of the IB Diploma Programme
2. a unique CP core, (comprising four related components: personal and professional skills, service learning, reflective project and language development)
3. career related study through an approved provider.

Flexibility and personalisation

Students choose at least two subjects from the six diploma subject groups (IBDP) and must take the CP core and career related study. The diploma subjects can be studied at higher level (HL) or standard level (SL) – or a combination of both.

Schools can create their own distinctive version of IBCP to meet the needs and backgrounds of their students, including selecting the diploma courses they offer to students within the six subject areas.

Grading

IBCP is graded differently for each component. The diploma elements are assessed by exams and graded from 1-7; the reflective project is assessed by the school and moderated by IB with grades ranging from A-E; the remaining elements are assessed by the school.

To obtain an IBCP students must achieve a minimum grade of 3 or higher in two of the diploma elements, D or higher on the reflective project in addition to completing the other components.

AT A GLANCE:

Qualification type

The International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (CP)

Type of learning:

Balance between practical and theory

Entry requirements

Set by the school

Time:

2 years full time

Subject choices

At least two from the IB diploma range + CP core + career related study

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

UCAS points:

Students earn UCAS points for:

- Diploma subjects (same as IBDP)
- Reflective Project (up to 12 points, grade A)

Can lead to:

University, further study, training or work

Discover more

IBO

BTEC Nationals

BTECs at Level 3 are a similar standard to A levels with a focus on vocational subjects. The subsidiary diploma is equivalent to one A level, the diploma is equivalent to two and the extended diploma is equivalent to three A levels.

Study takes place over a two year period and is a combination of both practical and theory. Knowledge is tested through course work and a final examination (comprising 40% of the total grade).

For those wishing to go to university, subsidiary diplomas offer the same opportunity to earn UCAS points as A levels (15 to 56 points). UCAS points for BTEC diplomas and extended diploma are double and trebled respectively.

Key tip:

BTECs offer the chance of earning the same points for UCAS as A levels and provide a way to learn through practical application and coursework.

If your child prefers learning through practical application, they will more likely do better taking BTECs than A levels. However, some universities have a preference for A levels over BTEC, so if your child has their heart set on a specific university or course, it's worth checking entry requirements to see whether this will influence their sixth form choices.

In July 2024, the Labour government announced a pause and review of the previous plans to remove funding from many Level 3 qualifications, including BTECs. This means that, for now, BTECs are still available and funded. The review is set to conclude by the end of the year, and its outcomes will determine the future of these qualifications.



AT A GLANCE:

Qualification type

Business and Technology Education Council Diplomas

(Level 3 are similar standard to A levels, with subsidary diploma equivalent to one A level, BTEC diploma equivalent to 2 A levels and extended diploma equiiva-lent to 3 A levels

Type of learning:

Combination of practical and theory

Time:

2 years full time

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

Entry requirements

Up to 5 GCSEs

Subject choices

Up to 3 vocational subjects

Can lead to:

University, further study, training or work

UCAS points:

56 points - D* (distinction)
48 points - D (distinction
32 points - M (merit)
16 points - P (pass)

Discover more

UCAS
Pearson Education

T Levels (England only)

T Levels, or Technical Level Qualifications, are a new government backed qualification introduced as of September 2020 and 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 working life.

T Levels offer students a mixture of classroom learning with an 'on-the-job' placement equating to 315 hours (approximately 45 days or 20% of the course time). They provide the knowledge, skills and experience needed for students to get ahead in their chosen industries or go on to further study or a higher apprenticeship. T-Levels offer the chance to earn between 72 and 168 UCAS points.

The industry placement

A fantastic element of T Levels is the industry placement – a real job in a genuine business. It can result in some students being offered jobs after they've completed their T Level. For those going on to higher education, work experience will be impressive.

T Level Transition Programme

For teens that don't have the necessary skills to go straight to T Level, they can take the T Level Transition Programme – a one year course after GCSE to prepare them for the subject they would like to study.

The programme introduces knowledge and skills in the students' chosen subject area and includes work experience to provide a better understanding of the workplace. For students who have not yet passed their Level 2 in English and maths, the course includes guided study to help them achieve this level.

Key tip:

First-hand work experience is hugely beneficial to students, enabling them to get a feel for what it's like in the world of work and whether they like the industry sector they've chosen – it's not too late to make a change post-18 if they don't!

AT A GLANCE:

Qualification type

Technical Level Qualification

Type of learning:

Classroom learning (80%) with industry placement (20%)

Entry requirements

Set by the school, up to 5 GCSEs

Time:

2 years full time

Subject choices

As of September 2024 there will be over twenty subjects available including accounting, engineering, digital business services, education and childcare, finance, health, law, management, on-site construction and science.

Tuition costs

Free

Can lead to:

University, further study, training or work

UCAS points:

168 points – Distinction*
144 points – Distinction
120 points – Merit
96 points – Pass (C or above)
72 points – Pass (D or E)

Discover more

Gov UK
The Parents' Guide to

V Levels

- V Levels are broad applied and vocational qualifications. They will be studied over two years, and a significant proportion of the qualification content will be applied in nature, supporting learning by doing.
- Assessment for each of the first three subjects (for first teach from 2027) will combine timetabled (exam) assessment, worth 40% of the overall marks, and other forms of assessment, known as non-exam assessment (NEA) worth 60%. The balance of exam and NEA will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Ofqual as each set of subject content is produced. Given the vocational nature of V Levels, we expect assessment will include practical applied activities, as well as assessment of knowledge and understanding so students can demonstrate both their knowledge and their ability to apply it.
- V Levels will have a grade scale of A* to E, with an additional grade of P 'pass' grade, plus U for ungraded. UCAS has confirmed that V Levels will attract the same tariff points as A Levels at grades A* to E, supporting recognition and progression to higher education.
- The first V Levels in Digital Systems and Data, Accounting and Finance, and Education will be available to teach from 2027/28. Additional subjects will be introduced through to 2030/31.
- V Levels have been designed to sit alongside T Levels (technical) and A Levels (academic) to provide a vocational option with applied learning, providing three clear pathways for students at level 3.
- They will give providers flexibility to build broad and balanced study programmes. Students will be able to take V Levels with other V Levels to form a full V Level programme, or combine them with A Levels, and where required, English and maths qualifications.
- They strengthen the clarity and credibility of vocational study by linking nationally set content to occupational standards - this means they have been designed around the skills and knowledge employers say young people need to succeed in the workplace. This helps ensure students are learning relevant, up-to-date skills that can support progression into employment or apprenticeships.
- They are aimed at giving students, parents, employers and higher education providers confidence in the quality of provision and in students' progression to positive outcomes.
- They support an applied approach to teaching, learning and assessment to help students develop practical, real-world skills alongside strong core knowledge, supporting progression to higher education or work-based training, including apprenticeships.







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Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are real jobs which include learning elements which might take place at university, college or an education provider. Apprenticeships were developed to help address the skills shortage in UK businesses. They provide a way of combining learning with on the job training to build professional skills transferable from one organisation to another.

Sixteen year olds can start an apprenticeship at Level 2 (few qualifications required) or Level 3 (5 GCSEs required). There is no level one as enrolling on an apprenticeship requires demonstrating a certain ability. Students with no qualifications can take on a traineeship or internship to help them achieve the necessary skills to start an apprenticeship - see page 31.

Most apprenticeships work towards one or more qualifications. These qualifications correspond to the level of apprenticeship. Advanced apprenticeships (level 3) provide qualifications equivalent to 2 A levels. Level 3 qualifications may include National Certificates, National Diplomas or NVQs which will open up choices once your child is 18.

Flexibility

Apprenticeships are often flexible in that it may be possible to extend the apprenticeship period and obtain a higher qualification. For example, some apprenticeships will allow students to continue on to a higher apprenticeship (level 4 / 5) once the advanced apprenticeship is complete. Always check with their employer whether such progression is possible.

Key tip:

Unlike BTECs, which are studied at school or college, apprenticeships also include an element of study at work, so there is a real-life component to the course.



AT A GLANCE:

Qualification type

Advanced Level 3
(equivalent to 2 A levels)

Type of learning:

Work based including off-site learning

Entry requirements

Advanced Level 3 - depends on employer, some require at least 3 GCSEs. Students need to show they can complete the programme

Time:

1-2 years

Tuition costs

Free

Subject choices

Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered

Can lead to:

Further study, training, professional development programmes or work

UCAS points:

168 points – Distinction*
144 points – Distinction
120 points – Merit
96 points – Pass (C or above)
72 points – Pass (D or E)

Discover more

Apprenticeships - GOV

The Parents' Guide to

Apprenticeship Levels



LEVEL 2
Intermediate apprenticeships

Typical length
12-18 months

Entry requirements:
None or few

Qualifications obtained:
GCSE, BTEC or equivalent

Who's it for?
Mostly for 16-year-olds with limited or no academic qualifications.



LEVEL 4/5
Higher apprenticeships

Typical length
3-5 years

Entry requirements:
A levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained:
Higher national diploma / foundation degree

Who's it for?
Mostly for those who want to qualify for professional career paths without attending university or college.



LEVEL 3
Advanced apprenticeships

Typical length
12-24 months

Entry requirements:
Usually 5 GCSEs

Qualifications obtained:
A levels or equivalent

Who's it for?
Mostly for 16-year-olds with reasonable academic achievements but who don't want to study in sixth form.



LEVEL 6/7
Degree apprenticeships

Typical length
3-7 years

Entry requirements:
At least 2 A levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained:
A BA or BSc degree or higher

Who's it for?
Mostly for those with excellent sixth form results that want to study for a degree or similar whilst working.

Traineeships and Internships

Traineeships

Traineeships are short-term work placings lasting up to a maximum of six months to help young people become "job ready". The work experience element includes at least 100 hours on the job training to help provide the necessary experience to undertake apprenticeships or other employment.

Internships

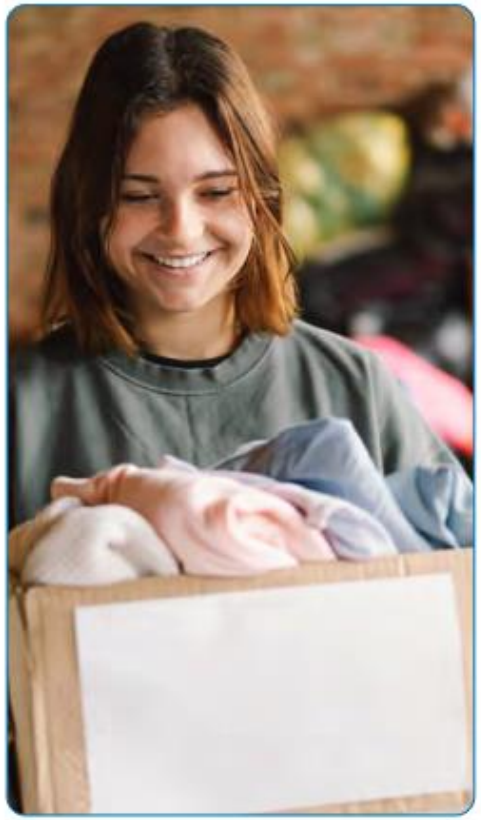
Whilst internships can be useful, they should not be confused with apprenticeships. Internships are informal arrangements with an employer, there is rarely a signed contract, they are usually short-term (less than one year) and they do not result in a formal qualification. They do offer an insight into business, networking opportunities, the possibility of job offers afterwards and the ability to learn practical, transferable skills. They may be useful in giving a student enough experience to start an apprenticeship.

Key tip:

These routes can be very helpful for non-academic students who may be better at picking up practical skills.

Supported internships

Supported internships are for students with learning difficulties or impairments who want to get a job and need extra support to do this. They're a good way to get the training and experience your child needs to get into work.



AT A GLANCE:

Qualification type

Traineeship / volunteer with training / internship – all to help your child get enough skills to take on an apprenticeship or other form of qualification if they do not already have the minimum qualification requirements.

Type of learning:

Work based

Time:

6 weeks – 6 months

Entry requirements

None

Tuition costs

None

Subject choices

Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered

Can lead to:

Further study, apprenticeships, job offers

UCAS points:

None

Discover more

GOV - Traineeships

GOV - Internships

Other Qualifications

Other qualifications available include Cambridge Technicals, City and Guilds, National Vocational Qualifications and Tech Bac (similar to the International Baccalaureate). They are vocational driven courses – i.e. centred around jobs and are well suited to students who know what type of job they want to do when they leave education or who prefer a more practical working style but still want to include classroom learning in their education.

Cambridge Technicals

With examination marks split 50%-50% between coursework and examinations, the Cambridge Technicals offer a very practical route to learning, but students must be well-organised, able to handle lots of projects at once and be able to meet deadlines in order to succeed.

Key tip:

In most cases no UCAS points are awarded but these qualifications provide an excellent route into industry.

National Vocational Qualification

National Vocational Qualification is a work-based way of learning. There are no examinations, assessment is made on a student's competence to complete the task. Whilst NVQs are vocationally focused, they can be studied at school and college as well as at work.



AT A GLANCE:

Qualification type

City and Guilds; National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) or Tech Bac (similar to International Baccalaureate)

Entry requirements

Usually 5 GCSEs grade 4 - 9, but check individually

Subject choices

Range of vocational subjects

UCAS points:

In most cases no UCAS points are awarded but there are some exceptions.

Type of learning:

Dependent on the qualification, most contain practical on the job training

Time:

2 years (level 3)

Tuition costs

Free (unless parents choose to pay privately)

Can lead to:

Further study, training, professional development programmes or work

Discover more

- Cambridge Technicals
- City and Guilds

A Summary of All Their Options – Part 1

	Qualification Type	Type of learning	Entry requirements	Subject choices	UCAS points	Can lead to
A levels	General Certificate of Advanced level qualification	Mostly theory	At least x5 GCSE grade 4 – 9. At least grade 5/6 in the subject/s chosen for A level	Typically three subjects	56 points – A* 48 points – A 40 points – B 32 points – C 24 points – D 16 points - E	University, further study, training or work apprenticeship
International Baccalaureate	Diploma Programme (IBDP)	Mostly theory, some practical	Set by the school, up to 5 GCSEs	Up to six subjects plus some compulsory modules including an extended essay	Up to 56 for Higher Level and 28 for Standard Level (grade 7). In the IBCP, students also earn up to 12 points for the Reflective Project.	University, further study, training or work
	Careers Related Programme (IBCP)	Balance between practical/theory		At least two from the IB diploma range + CP core + career related study		
BTEC Nationals	*(Level 3 are similar standard to A Levels, with subsidiary diploma equivalent to one A level, BTEC diploma equivalent to 2 A levels and extended diploma equivalent to 3 A levels).*	Combination of practical and theory	Up to 5 GCSEs	Three vocational subjects	For subsidiary diploma: 56 points – D* *(distinction)* 48 points – D *(distinction)* 32 points – M *(Merit)* 16 points – P *(Pass)* *Points are doubled for diploma and tripled for extended diploma*	University, further study, training, professional development programmes or work
T Levels (England only)	Technical Level Qualification	Classroom learning (80%) with industry placement (20%)	Up to 5 GCSEs	One industry field, such as construction or Education	168 points - D* 144 points - D 120 points - M 96 points - P (C or above) 72 points - P (D or E)	University, apprenticeships

A Summary of All Their Options – Part 2

	Qualification Type	Type of learning	Entry requirements	Subject choices	UCAS points	Can lead to
Cambridge Technicals	A Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate (equivalent to an A level) or Cambridge Technical Diploma (equivalent to x2 A levels)	Practical course with lots of coursework based on real life case studies	At least x5 GCSE passes	Range of vocational subjects	Cambs Tech level 3: 56 points – D* (distinction) 48 points – D 32 points – M (merit) 16 points – P (pass)	University, further study, training or work
Other Qualifications	City and Guilds; National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) or Tech Bac (similar to Baccalaureate)	Dependent on the qualification, most contain practical on the job training	Set by the school, up to 5 GCSEs	Range of vocational subjects	In most cases no UCAS points are awarded but there are some exceptions.	Further study, training, professional development programmes or work
BTEC Apprenticeships	Advanced Level 3 (equivalent to x2 A levels)	Work based including off-site learning	Advanced Level 3 - depends on employer, some require at least 3 GCSEs	Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered	N/A	University, further study, training or work
Other Options	Traineeship / Volunteer with training / internship – a starting point to other qualifications or work	Work based	None	Uange of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered	N/A	Further study, apprenticeships or work