

Exploring Post-16 Options

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What are the main options at 16 after GCSEs?

Post-16 options

- Full-time education (e.g. at a School 6th Form or College to study qualifications)
- Apprenticeship
- Work or volunteer for 20 hours or more a week while in part-time education or training
- Supported internship (for students with an Education, Health & Care Plan only)

Post-16 Options

Continue your studies

- A Levels
- V Levels (*new post-16 qualifications from September 2027*)
- Vocational & Applied General Qualifications (e.g. BTECs & CTECs)
- T Levels
- Exam Retakes (e.g. GCSEs)

Combine work and study

- Apprenticeships
- Supported Internships

New post-16 options



A Levels

Description: Subject-based qualifications usually taught in classrooms and assessed by exams at the end of 2 years. Lots of independent study required.

Level of study: Level 3 (Advanced Level).

Subjects you can take: Over 40 different subjects to choose from. Most students choose 3 subjects. Some schools/colleges offer the option to study for an Applied General Qualification, e.g. BTEC, (worth 1 or 2 A Levels) at the same time.

Entry requirements: Minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 including English Language and Maths, and grade 6 in the subjects you want to study, however check with schools/colleges of interest as many want higher than this.

After A Levels: University/Higher Education, Apprenticeship (e.g. Higher/Degree Level), Employment with further training.

A Levels

Examples of new A Level subjects on offer at some providers include:

3D Design	Law
Accounting	Media Studies
Classical Civilisations	Politics
Economics	Psychology
Film Studies	Sociology

Additional options may also include Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), AS Levels, & Enrichment Options

Examples of current Applied General Qualifications (worth 1 or 2 A Levels) that may also be taken alongside A Levels at some providers include:

Business (Applied, BTEC)	Music Technology (Applied)
Criminology (Applied, WJEC Diploma)	Performing Arts (BTEC)
Health & Social Care (CTEC)	Science (Applied, BTEC)
IT (CTEC)	Sport (Applied, BTEC)

V Levels

Description: New qualifications taught in schools and colleges and mainly assessed by non-exam and through practical tasks over the 2 years. Involve substantial work placements. Designed around real jobs and skills, they offer a vocational pathway for those who want to explore different sectors before deciding where to specialise.

Level of study: Level 3 (Advanced Level).

Subjects you can take: From September 2027 there will be 3 different subjects to choose from (Digital; Education and Early Years; Finance and Accounting). Students will be able to combine multiple V Levels with A Levels and other qualifications (as each V Level is worth 1 A Level).

Entry requirements: Minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 including English Language and Maths, however check with schools/colleges of interest as they may want higher than this (especially if combining with A Levels).

After A Levels: University/Higher Education, Apprenticeship (e.g. Higher/Degree Level), Skilled Employment.

Vocational & Applied General Qualifications

Description: Practical qualifications with different assessments, designed to give you the skills and experience you need for a certain job. They might be for you if you have a strong interest in working in a particular industry.

Level of study: Level 1+ (however aim for Level 3, Advanced Level).

Subjects you can take: Many different subjects available for Vocational & Applied General Qualifications (e.g. BTECs, CTECs), that focus on a specific job or a broad employment area.

Entry requirements: For Level 3, usually a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 including English Language and Maths, however check with schools/colleges of interest. Level 1 or 2 qualifications require lower grades.

After Vocational & Applied General Qualifications: Skilled Employment, Apprenticeship (e.g. Higher/Degree Level), Higher Education/University.

Vocational & Applied General Qualifications

Examples of subjects include:

Animal Care/Management/Nursing

Art & Design

Aviation Operations

Beauty Therapy

Brickwork

Business

Carpentry & Joinery

Catering/Chef

Childcare

Computing

Construction

Criminology

Electrical Installation

Engineering

Equine Studies

Fashion & Textiles

Forensic Science

Game Design

Graphic Design

Hairdressing

Health & Social Care

IT

Journalism

Media

Media Make-Up

Motor Vehicle

Music

Painting & Decorating

Performing Arts

Photography

Plumbing

Science

Sport

Technical Theatre Production

Travel & Transport

Uniformed Protective Services

T Levels

Description: A mix of learning in the classroom and a minimum 9 week placement (45 days) with an employer with different assessments, lasting 2 years. This means you will learn what a real career is like while you study.

Level of study: Level 3 (Advanced Level).

Subjects you can take: 20 subjects to choose from. You can only choose one subject (worth 3 A Levels).

Entry requirements: Minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 including English Language and Maths, however check with schools/colleges of interest.

After T Levels: University/Higher Education, Apprenticeship (e.g. Higher/Degree Level), Skilled Employment.

T Levels

The 20 different T Levels on offer:

Agriculture, Land Management and Production

Animal Care and Management

Management and Administration

Building Services Engineering for Construction

Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction

Craft and Design

Media, Broadcast and Production

Digital Data Analytics

Digital Software Development

Digital Support & Security

Education and Early Years

Design & Development for Engineering & Manufacturing

Maintenance, Installation & Repair for Engineering & Manufacturing

Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control

Health

Science

Accounting

Finance

Legal Services

Marketing

Apprenticeships

Description: There are over 600 types of apprenticeships in different areas of work. Nearly 70% of occupations can now be entered via an apprenticeship. You will gain job specific skills, study industry qualifications, and earn a wage.

Level of study: Level 2+ (however aim for Level 3, Advanced Level).

Apprenticeships you can take: You can only choose one.

Entry requirements: Minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 including English Language and Maths, however check with employers of interest. Level 2 apprenticeships require lower grades.

After Apprenticeships: Skilled Employment (with the same or a different employer), Apprenticeship (e.g. Higher/Degree Level), University/Higher Education.

Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships take 1-6 years to complete, depending on which one you choose, what level it's at, and your previous experience.
- The national minimum wage for apprentices aged under 19 rose from £7.55 to £8.00 per hour in April 2026, however many employers pay much more than this. (The Apprenticeship Pay Survey in 2018/19 estimated that Level 2 & 3 apprentices in the UK received £6.96 per hour when £3.90 was the minimum).
- If an apprentice is aged 19 or over and has completed the first year of their apprenticeship, they are entitled to the National Minimum Wage, which is currently £10.85 per hour.
- Explore the Skills England website to look at examples of Apprenticeship standards (explore options for 'Standards approved for delivery' at 'Level 2 & 3', or higher levels for options after Level 3):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/skills-England>

Supported Internships

Description: An unpaid work-based study programme that helps students with an EHCP take the first step from education into the workplace while gaining the skills you need to get a paid job. The aim of a supported internship is to prepare you for working in a paid job.

Level of study: Supported internships mostly focus on teaching you the general skills you need for work. However, your study programme might include the chance to study a relevant qualification at a level that is suitable for you.

What you will do: Spending most of your time as a supported intern in the workplace to develop skills needed for work, you will have an unpaid work placement of at least 6 months, have support from a qualified work coach, and complete a personalised study programme including English and Maths skills.

Entry requirements: None specified.

After Supported Internships: Employment (with the same or a different employer), Apprenticeship/Training.

Post-16 Qualifications

The following pathways lead to all Post-18 Options (University, Apprenticeships, Employment) however they are most suited to:-

A Levels: Those that enjoy academic study and prefer exams and written work. May want to go to university.

V Levels & Vocational: Those that prefer practical learning alongside theory. Prefer learning by doing. Mainly at school/college along with work placements.

T Levels: Those that enjoy academic study but are aiming at apprenticeships. Are considering technical careers.

Apprenticeships: Those that prefer practical learning alongside theory. Prefer learning by doing and getting paid. Mainly in the workplace along with classroom study.

Questions to Consider!

- **Are you interested in A Levels/V Levels/Vocational & Applied General Qualifications/T Levels/Apprenticeships post-16?**
- **If A Levels are of interest, how many would you like to take?** (4-5 hours of independent study each week per subject, outside lessons, is expected as a minimum to do well)
- **If A Levels are of interest, are you interested in combining A Levels with other qualifications (V Levels or Applied General Qualifications) if an option?**
- **What A Levels/V Levels/Vocational & Applied General Qualifications/T Levels/Apprenticeships might you be interested in taking?**
- **Which 6th Forms & Colleges/Apprenticeship Providers do you know that offer these?** (Are you prepared to do some research to explore the full range of A Level options available at all local 6th Forms & Colleges to make the best choices?)
- **What might you want to do post-18?** (E.g. if university, are you prepared to do some research to explore entry requirements for potential degrees of interest to make the best choices?)

University & UGS

If you want to go to university, do you have to take A Levels?

No, you can progress from other Level 3 qualifications including V Levels, Vocational & Applied General Qualifications (e.g. BTECs, CTECs), T Levels, Apprenticeships etc.

What are the entry requirements to study A Levels at UGS and Level 3 courses at 6th Forms and Colleges?

Entry requirements for UGS are 2x7 & 4x6 (including 2x5 in English & Maths) at GCSE and certain A level subjects may require a 6 or above at GCSE, whereas Level 3 courses at 6th Forms and Colleges may ask for lower or higher grades than UGS but all will require a minimum of 5x4 (including English and Maths) at GCSE

UGS, 6th Forms/Colleges & Apprenticeships

What should you do if you want to apply to UGS but are predicted just above, on, or below the entry requirements?

Don't just apply to UGS, apply to a 6th Form/College too as a back-up plan

What are the best ways to find out about courses at UGS, 6th Forms and Colleges and Apprenticeships?

Look at information online including prospectus guides, attend open days, speak to people and get advice from others

UGS, 6th Forms/Colleges & Apprenticeships

When do open evenings take place at UGS, 6th Forms and Colleges?

Usually open evenings at 6th Forms/Colleges start from September of Year 11 onwards until January, and UGS usually hold their open evening in November (Amy will provide you and your parents/carers with all local 6th Form/College open day dates in early September)

When do you need to apply to UGS, 6th Forms, Colleges and Apprenticeships?

Usually, applications take place from October of Year 11 onwards, and competitive options may be completed earlier in October or November, but most applications will be completed by early December, and apprenticeship applications will be ongoing throughout the year as opportunities arise

A Levels/Qualifications & University Degrees

- If interested in the Russell Group Universities (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, Leeds, etc.), the Informed Choices website details the usual essential and recommended A Levels for a variety of specific degrees*: <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/degrees>
- *However, please note that different universities may also ask for slightly different A Levels/other qualification combinations, so ensure that you check university websites of interest for their specific entry requirements
- Find out which universities offer which degrees of interest on the UCAS website: <https://www.ucas.com/> (explore 'Courses')
- If unsure what university degree is of interest, start here to explore subject guides: <https://www.ucas.com/explore/search/subject-guides?query=>

Example of Exploring University Degree Requirements

If interested in Biomedical Sciences:

- Log onto the UCAS website: <https://wwwucas.com/> ('Courses')
- Type 'Biomedical Science/Biomedical Sciences' into the search box, then 'Enter' to view all the degree courses
- Choose a minimum of 3 universities at random, asking for a range of grades (e.g. UCAS Tariff Points may show 144 - equivalent to AAA at A Level, or 120 - equivalent to BBB, or 96 - equivalent to CCC)
- Go onto the university websites and check the entry requirements from A Levels or other qualifications at Level 3, e.g. Birmingham City, Leeds, and Oxford universities

Example of Exploring University Degree Requirements

If interested in Biomedical Sciences:

- **Birmingham City:**

A Levels - 112 UCAS points (e.g. BBC grades in 3 A Levels) including Biology or Chemistry

BTEC - 112 UCAS points (e.g. DMM - Distinction, Distinction, Merit) in a BTEC in Applied Science worth 3 A Levels, or worth 1-2 A Levels and combined with Biology or Chemistry A Level

T Level - Merit in a T Level in Science

- **Leeds:**

A Levels - AAB in 3 A Levels including Biology or Chemistry, and one from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths, PE, Computer Science, Geography, Psychology

BTEC - DDM in a BTEC in Applied Science worth 1-3 A Levels, however must also have one A Level from Biology or Chemistry at Grade A/B

T Level – No information provided

- **Oxford: (*Highly competitive/academic, therefore realistically more likely to accept A Level qualifications)**

A Levels - A*AA in 3 A Levels including 2 from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths

BTEC – Tutors require evidence that the course covers the same content as A Level to the appropriate standard

T Level – No information provided

Think: If you wanted to keep all these university options open, what would be a sensible choice for you?

Next Steps

- Do research into your post-16 options before Year 11 starts to be better prepared for making your future choices
- Look at the highly detailed 'Year 10 Post-16 Options June 2026' handout (word doc) from Amy in your own time
- Contact Amy (Careers Adviser) if you have any questions:
amarshall@urmstongrammar.org.uk
- **Please now complete the 'Student Aspiration Survey', which will help Amy prioritise how she works with you all during the Autumn Term of Year 11 (particularly in relation to the one to one Careers Guidance Meetings) – Thank you 😊**