

Post 16 Options and Careers Information

For Parents and Students

2021



Index

Post 16 Options

A Levels / Sixth Form	3
Vocational Courses / College	6
Apprenticeships	10
Traineeships	13
Employment	15
Volunteering	18

General Careers information, advice and resources

How your careers adviser can support you	21
Online activities and resources	23
Job Information	24
How to write a CV	26
How to contact us	27

A Levels / Sixth Form



A Level is the natural progression from GCSE. Compared to GCSE (Level 2), A Level (Level 3) represents a continuation of the same learning style, but studies focus on a smaller range of subjects at a significantly higher level of detail and difficulty. They are an academic qualification, taught largely through classroom based learning and assessed mainly by exams.

A Levels take two years to complete. In the first year students work towards AS Level, continuing on to A2 (full A Level) in the second year. For many students they will be used as a gateway qualification for university study, although there are a wide variety of alternative options available afterwards. As A Levels focus on developing a broader academic base than a specific set of work related skills, they are perhaps better suited for those looking at continuing in education or training afterwards, rather than those who are looking to progress directly into employment.

Students studying for A Levels will find their timetables noticeably lighter than at GCSE, with many free periods intended for independent work and study. As a result, an increased level of proactivity, time management and personal responsibility towards study is required for success.

Where to study

The vast majority of students opting for A Levels will continue on to Year 12 at their existing school. If they prefer, students can instead apply to study A Levels at college. It is also sometimes possible to arrange a transfer to a different Sixth Form in the area.

Entry requirements

The general requirement is to achieve 5 C grades or above at GCSE, including in both Maths and English. Some schools are more flexible and will allow students to return if they only achieved a D grade in either of these key subjects.

Some subjects have higher entry requirements, due to either the significant jump in difficulty at A Level, or the increased level of competition for places on the course. It is common for students to need to achieve a B grade in subjects such as Maths and the sciences to be able to continue, for example.

Choosing Subjects

Students typically choose two or three option subjects in addition to the Welsh Baccalaureate. With the exception of Welsh Bacc, there are no compulsory subjects at A Level, so subjects such as English, Maths and the sciences are now optional.

Many students choosing to study A Levels will be doing so with a view of applying to university in the future. If this is the case, it's a good idea to plan ahead and check the entry requirements of degree courses they may be interested in – some degrees require you to have studied specific subjects at A Level in order to apply. You can use UCAS to search for information about courses and entry requirements. If you are not sure where to start with this, your Careers Adviser will be able to support you.

If you aren't sure what you would like to do in the future, then playing to your strengths and interests is a good idea. In most cases, the grade achieved in a subject is of more significance than what the subject actually is. A Levels are significantly tougher than GCSEs, so it is generally inadvisable for a student to continue with a subject if they have struggled with it previously.

Facilitating subjects (English, Maths, Sciences, Modern Languages, Geography and History) are the most versatile in terms of future options.

What you should be doing now

If you would like to study for A Levels, your main focus currently should be on achieving the grades necessary to be able to continue. As grades will not be rewarded based on one-off examinations this year, the consistency of work and

performance throughout the year has more significance than ever on final results. It is also important to make school aware of your intention to return for Year 12.

If you would like to study for A Levels at college, it's important to apply sooner rather than later before courses fill up. Attending an open day (virtual or otherwise) is always a good idea if you are planning on studying somewhere new. Applications to study A Levels at college are open now.

What you can do next

Many students apply to study at university after completing their A Levels. Other options in education include further or higher education college courses.

A Levels also open the door to higher level apprenticeships (Levels 4-6), many of which are equivalent to a university degree. Students can also choose to look for a job.

Some students take a gap year after completing their A Levels, either to take more time to consider their options, build up savings before going to university, gain work experience, volunteer or travel.

The impact of COVID-19

Coronavirus has had a significant impact on the learning style of current A Level students with the majority of learning taking place digitally from home. This has further enhanced the importance of students' proactivity and discipline in their studies. Moving forward, students should be prepared to face the challenges of further periods of blended learning.

Useful links

[A Levels \(Full Time\) - Coleg Gwent](#)

[Subjects \(gov.wales\)](#)

[UCAS | At the heart of connecting people to higher education](#)

[Degree Apprenticeships | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

Vocational Courses / College



Vocational courses at college represent a more practical way of learning for students who have not found the academic, classroom-based studies of school to be their favoured environment.

College courses teach real world work skills in specific career focussed areas. The qualifications gained can be equally useful in both finding employment or continuing on to further study. While the majority of students progress into work when they complete their studies, college courses can also act as a gateway qualification to the vast majority of university courses.

As students study in one subject area at college, having a good understanding of what they would like to do in the future is useful when choosing a course. The transferable skills developed through college courses are highly valued in wide range of careers.

Life at college is different to that at school. Students are allowed more freedom in what they wear and how they study, but this freedom comes with an increased responsibility and students will need a mature and committed approach to their work if they are to succeed. Much like A Level, proactivity and discipline are required.

Levels of study

Unlike Sixth Form, colleges offers a variety of different starting points to cater for students of varying levels of ability. Students who have achieved well at GCSE can often progress directly to the highest level of study at college, whereas those who are unable to do this can start at a lower level and gradually work their way up.

Level 3 - the highest level of study available to students progressing from Year 11 – is equivalent to studying three A Levels at Sixth Form. Level 2 is equivalent to five strong passes at GCSE.

Entry requirements

Typically, entry requirements for various levels are:

Level 3 – 5 GCSEs at C grade or above, including English and Maths

Level 2 – 4 GCSEs at D grade or above, including English **or** Maths

Level 1 – 4 GCSEs at G grade or above, including English and Maths

Some more practically focussed courses (those in construction trades, for example) require all students to begin at Level 1, regardless of their achievements at GCSE. This is because students have not had the opportunity to develop these skills in their studies at school.

Specific entry requirements for each course can be found on the college website.

Where to study

The vast majority of college students in Newport study at Coleg Gwent.

Coleg Gwent has 5 campuses in the area: City of Newport, Crosskeys, Torfaen Learning Zone, Blaenau Gwent and Usk. Each of these campuses hosts a range of courses based on the facilities available. As a result, students may not be able to study their subject of choice at the campus closest to them. Animal Care courses, for example, are only available at Usk campus.

If travel allows, students may find a wider selection of courses available at other colleges, including Cardiff and Vale College and Coleg y Cymoedd in Caerphilly.

Choosing a course

Choosing a course at college takes a lot of thought and the sheer number of courses advertised online can seem overwhelming. You'll need to consider the subject you'd like to study, the level that you'd like to enter at and the campus that you'd like to study at.

A good way to start is to think about the course category that you are interested in (construction, engineering, etc.) and the level that you can realistically aim for (see *Entry Requirements* above). Once you've done this, narrowing down the choices available becomes a lot easier. You can learn a bit more about each course by checking it's listing online, and a lot more by attending an open day.

As college courses have such close links to jobs, it's important to think about your future career at the same time as considering the course you'd like to do. Most course pages suggest careers that students can expect to go in to after graduating, so cross-referencing these with the job information pages on the Careers Wales website is a good idea.

Due to the importance of Maths and English in the workplace, students who do not achieve C grades in these subjects at high school will have to continue their studies at college, with a view to resitting the exams. Attendance of these extra classes is a condition of both their place on the course and their ability to progress through course levels.

What you should be doing now

Colleges are hosting a selection of virtual open events over the next several months, and attending at least one of these is a great idea if you're thinking of going to college. You'll be able to get an insight into the courses you're interested in from the tutors, see the facilities and learn about college life.

Applications for college are open now, and they should go in sooner rather than later to increase the chances of securing a place. While applications are open until September, Students should aim to have applied for college by no later than the start of the summer holidays. Applications are made through the college website. Look for the 'Apply Now' button on the relevant course page.

If you can realistically get C grades in Maths and English while still at high school, working hard to achieve these now will save you from having to resit these options at college in the future.

What you can do next

Most college courses are designed to prepare you for specific jobs, and many students will be ready to apply for related work after completing their courses. Some courses have strong links with employers, giving students access to a range of apprenticeship opportunities.

Level 3 college courses allow students to apply to continue their studies into higher education (including university), with BTEC Extended Diplomas accepted as alternatives to A Levels in the majority of cases.

The impact of COVID-19

The main impact of coronavirus currently is that open events are digital only until further notice. It is too early to say how the delivery of courses starting in September will be affected. Moving forward, students should be prepared to face the challenges of further periods of blended learning.

Useful links

[Vocational Courses - Coleg Gwent \(Newport and surrounding areas\)](#)

[Open Events - Coleg Gwent](#)

[Vocational Courses - Cardiff and Vale College \(Cardiff and surrounding areas\)](#)

[Entry requirements and alternatives to A levels | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)

Apprenticeships



Apprenticeships are jobs that include formal training towards a recognised qualification. Apprenticeships are a great way to transition from education to work, as students can earn a wage and develop vital work experience at the same time as completing qualifications equivalent to college or Sixth Form.

Many apprentices are kept on in permanent roles by the businesses that trained them after they complete their qualifications.

Apprenticeships are open to anyone over the age of 16. Entry requirements vary widely, but it's worth noting that as apprenticeships are real jobs, all will be looking for a good level of professionalism, maturity, enthusiasm and commitment.

Apprentices split their time in an 80:20 split between work and formal learning, usually at a local college. The National Minimum Wage rate for apprentices is currently £4.15.

Apprenticeships, like jobs, can be difficult to find. Many opportunities attract strong competition, so it's essential that you have a back-up plan in place.

Levels of Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are available at most levels, ranging from basic Level 2 Foundation Apprenticeships, all the way up to university equivalent Degree Apprenticeships (Level 6). Those looking for opportunities at 16 will be eligible to apply for apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3.

Entry Requirements

Entry requirements vary significantly depending on the role and the level of the qualification in question. While many apprenticeships have no formal entry criteria, it is common to see employers looking for C grades at GCSE, with Maths and English being especially important.

As apprenticeships are applied for in the same way as jobs, students will be competing against others for opportunities. Good GCSE results, professionalism, enthusiasm, a strong CV or application and some relevant work experience will all go a long way to increasing chances of success.

Where to look for Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in Wales are advertised on the Careers Wales website. Some larger companies run annual apprenticeship schemes, recruiting larger numbers of students on a national scale. Details of these schemes can be found on company websites, with a list of known employers available on the Careers Wales website.

Only around 50% of apprenticeships are formally advertised online. Many apprentices source their opportunities through family and friends or by contacting local businesses. Social media is a useful tool in this.

In all cases, your school's linked Careers Adviser will be able to support you in searching and applying for an apprenticeship.

What should I be doing now?

Apprenticeships are advertised all year round. Many apprenticeship vacancies are targeted specifically for school leavers, with a September start date often the tell-tale sign. While most smaller businesses will advertise in late spring or summer, larger schemes often open much earlier in the year, with many already underway. It is therefore vital that you start your search as soon as possible.

If you have not already done so, it's a great idea to speak to your Careers Adviser about your interest in an apprenticeship. As well as being able to keep you informed of relevant opportunities, they can work with you to develop a better understanding of the work you are applying for, the qualities that you already possess and the skills that you might need to work on to be successful.

Reaching out to family, friends and local businesses for work experience opportunities is also a great idea. Work experience is a big bonus when applying for any apprenticeship opportunity, as it demonstrates to employers a level of proactivity, enthusiasm and understanding of the work that other candidates may lack.

Apply for your back-up plan early, as if it were your first choice. If you wait until you hear the result of your apprenticeship applications, it may already be too late to apply for an equivalent course. If you secure a place at college or Sixth Form and then find that you've been successful in applying for an apprenticeship, you just need to let the school or college know that you no longer require the place.

What can I do next?

Most apprentices will progress directly into work, with many being kept on by the companies who trained them. Apprentices do have the option of re-entering education, however – a Level 2 apprenticeship will allow you to progress into a Level 3 college course, while a Level 3 apprenticeship will qualify you to apply for university

The impact of COVID-19

While it's too early to tell, it's widely expected that the economic impact of COVID-19 will impact the numbers of apprenticeship opportunities available this year. Back-up plans will be more important than ever.

Useful links

[Apprenticeships | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

[Careers Wales Apprenticeship Search \(gov.wales\)](#)

[Employers who offer Apprenticeships | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

[Apprenticeships, School Leaver Jobs & Reviews | RateMyApprenticeship](#)

[Apprenticeships | Prospects.ac.uk](#)

Traineeships



If you want to get a job but need to learn more about work, you may be able to do a Traineeship. Traineeships are for students who want to leave education but are not yet work ready, or for those who would like an apprenticeship but do not have the required grades. Traineeships are available in a variety of vocational areas, including hair dressing, construction and business administration.

Traineeships generally consist of two phases. Students start in an engagement programme, where they can work towards entry level qualifications and develop basic work skills. When ready, the training provider will then course a work placement for the student, where they will work towards achieving a Level 1 qualification.

Trainees are paid £30 per week (based on attendance) for the engagement phase and £50 per week once they go out on placement.

Traineeships are only available through referral from Careers Wales, so it's very important to speak to your Careers Adviser if you think this might be the right option for you.

Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for a traineeship.

Where to look for Traineeships

Traineeships are provided by a range of organisations in Newport and Cardiff. Your Careers Adviser can provide you with more details on the range of courses and support available through each provider.

What should I be doing now?

It's important to let your Careers Adviser know as soon as possible if you are interested in a traineeship.

What you can do next

Upon completion, trainees can look to apply for a job or apprenticeship, or re-enter education with a college course at Level 1 or 2.

The impact of COVID-19

While it's too early to tell, it is possible that the availability of work placements may be restricted by future guidelines. Some course content and support may be delivered digitally.

Employment



Young people over the age of 16 can work up to 40 hours a week once they have completed Year 11 (after the last Friday in June). The National Minimum Wage for those under 18 is currently £4.55 per hour (rising to £8.72 for those 25 and older). Common entry level roles for 16 year olds, include retail, hospitality and customer service.

Entry Requirements

Employers will be looking for relevant skills and experience, maturity, professionalism, enthusiasm and a good understanding of what the role entails. Formal educational requirements will vary considerably depending on the role in question, but C grades (or higher) in GCSE Maths and English are very commonly asked for.

Young people looking for jobs will need a National Insurance number and a bank account.

Where to look for jobs

Jobs are commonly advertised online, using websites such as:

- Recruitment websites (including Reed, Monster and Indeed)
- Recruitment agencies (Acorn, Brook Street, Absolute Recruitment, Meridian)
- Job Centre
- Careers Wales

Many larger companies, including supermarkets, fast food outlets and retail chains have their own recruitment websites, so it is important to visit these separately. Social media can be a useful platform for keeping posted on the latest opportunities.

What should I be doing now?

It's important to let your Careers Adviser know as soon as possible if you are interested in looking for a job. They will be able to support you in creating a CV, searching for a role and preparing for an interview.

Getting a job at 16 can be tough, so it's important to have a back-up plan in place. Your careers adviser will be able to talk you through the options and figure out what is best for you.

The impact of COVID-19

Coronavirus has had a significant impact on the Welsh job market. Many businesses have had to place recruitment plans on hold, while others have been forced to make staff redundant. The result is that students will likely find themselves with a reduced range of opportunities to apply for. It is also likely that competition will be significantly higher, with young people up against candidates who are older, more qualified and more experienced.

Useful links

[Getting a Job | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/careers-wales/getting-a-job)

[Jobs in Newport | reed.co.uk](#)

[Jobs in Newport | Monster](#)

[Jobs in Newport | Indeed.com](#)

[Jobs in Newport | Acorn](#)

[Jobs in Newport | Brook Street](#)

[Jobs in Newport | Meridian](#)

Volunteering



Volunteering can be a way to help students gain necessary skills and experience, especially if they can't find other work or training straight away. It can help many students develop their confidence, communication skills, and to progress into work or further training.

Students can also volunteer part-time, alongside other studies or employment.

Entry Requirements

Some opportunities may require DBS checks, especially those working with children or vulnerable adults.

Where to look for volunteering opportunities

Many charities and community groups constantly require volunteers to help them improve other people's lives. Examples include:

- Volunteering Wales
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Opportunities (GAVO)
- RSPCA
- Community farms
- Charity shops

What should I be doing now?

Students can contact their careers adviser for support with securing a voluntary opportunity.

Useful Links

[GAVO](#)

General Careers Information, Advice and Resources

How your Careers Adviser can support you



Careers advisers are available at all schools to give career information, advice and guidance and delivery group workshops. Extra help and support is available for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Careers advisers have access to the latest labour market information, including information about job trends, growth sectors and skills shortages.

Your careers adviser can support by:

- Improving knowledge and awareness of learning opportunities and the labour market
- Improving self-awareness, raise individual aspirations and support people to make effective decisions about their careers
- Increasing access to, and completion of, learning and training
- Motivating people to manage their careers and be resilient in adapting their plans when circumstances change

Careers Advice and Guidance

Careers advice might be a quick question about a job or course, such as:

- What qualifications do I need?
- What are the possible pathways into this career?
- What would be the best course for this job?
- What can I do now to improve my chances of getting this job in the future?

Careers guidance is a much more thorough exploration of your career related skills and decisions. These longer interactions might look at:

- Developing a fuller understanding of your strengths and skills
- Tracing back your influences to see where career ideas have come from
- Learning from your past decisions and experiences
- Highlighting any barriers to progression or success and putting ideas or support in place to help overcome them.

If you would like to speak to someone about your future career ideas while we're all at home, Careers Wales are able to offer careers advice and guidance over phone, email, text and webchat.

Online activities and resources

Job Matching Quiz

One of the easiest ways to get started is by taking the Job Matching Quiz. The Job Matching Quiz asks questions about what you enjoy and what you're good at, before matching your answers to suitable jobs. It's a great way of coming up with new ideas, as well as testing how well thought through your existing ideas are.

You can take the Job Matching Quiz by clicking [HERE](#).

You can watch a video tutorial on how to get the most out of the quiz [HERE](#).

Buzz Quiz

If you want something a bit quicker than the full Job Matching Quiz, you can try the 5 minute Buzz Quiz. This is more of a personality test and links the type of person you are to suitable career types.

You can take the Buzz Quiz by clicking [HERE](#).

My Future and the Who Am I? Quiz

My Future is a selection of resources for students currently working towards Level 1 qualifications and those with additional learning needs. You can explore My Future and take the Who Am I? Quiz by clicking [HERE](#).

Skills to Succeed

Skills to Succeed is a free online learning platform that helps people to get ready for work – from writing a CV, filling in an application and attending an interview, all the way through to how to impress on your first day. There are loads of activities here to help you develop and increase your chances of success in the future.

If you'd like to sign up, you can do so with the access code **CW1se1**.

You can access Skills to Succeed [HERE](#).

Job information

Careers Wales

The Careers Wales website is full of useful information about almost any job that you can think of. You can search for specific jobs or simply browse an A-Z list.

Get started [HERE](#).

You can find information about any job on the Careers Wales website, but if you're interested in going into certain fields, the resources below will be of additional help:

Construction Careers

Most people considering a career in construction think of trades such as Plumber, Electrician or Brick Layer, but did you know that there are almost 200 different jobs available in this industry? Learn more about them at **Go Construct**.

The Careers A-Z section provides full job information, while the Interactive Careers Map is a great way to introduce yourself to the full range of jobs that are available.

See more [HERE](#)

Health Careers

Interested in working for the NHS in the future? Health Careers is the website for you. Most people thinking of working for the health service consider jobs such as Doctor or Nurse, but there are nearly 300 different jobs available. Learn more about them at **Health Careers**.

The Explore Roles section

See more [HERE](#)

Law Careers

Law is one of the most popular career choices for young people but can be difficult to get into. **Law Careers' 'Beginner's Guide'** is a great resource to learn more about the range of pathways available. The Reality Check and FAQ sections are particularly good.

See more [HERE](#)

Engineering Careers

Engineering is one of the biggest sectors locally and is always a popular choice with students in South Wales, but few really understand the range of opportunities available in the sector. 'From Idea to Career' by **Tomorrow's Engineers** is a great way to develop your knowledge of the different areas of engineering that you could work in in the future.

See more [HERE](#)

Media Careers

Interested in working in the Film, TV or Gaming industries? Wales is a bit of a hotspot in these areas and it might be more realistic than you think! To explore the range of roles available and ways into these careers, check out **Screen Skills**.

See more [HERE](#)

How to write a CV



Whether you're planning on applying for a job soon or not, writing a CV can be a valuable experience as it will highlight your strengths and help you identify any areas for improvement over the next few years.

Writing a CV isn't hard, but it's also easy to make basic mistakes that can really hold you back. You can use the resources below to get started, but if you'd like someone to take a look and suggest improvements, feel free to get in touch with us.

[CV writing guide](#)

[Build a CV](#)

[How to write your first CV](#)

How to get in touch with us

Telephone

You can call me on **07827 991532** between the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Text

You can text me on **07827 991532**.

Email

You can email me at david.jones@careerswales.gov.wales

Webchat

You can speak to an adviser on the Careers Wales website between the hours of 9 and 5, Monday to Friday. Webchat is a good alternative for more complex enquiries if you don't want to speak on the phone – it's a bit like Whats App or Facebook Messenger.

When using webchat, you will be speaking to one of several advisers from all across Wales. If you would like to speak to me specifically on webchat, you can text me to arrange this beforehand.

To start a webchat, visit the [Careers Wales website](#) and click 'Chat Now' in the bottom right hand corner.