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**A quick guide to post 16 qualifications**

**T Levels**

T Levels are an alternative to A levels, apprenticeships and other 16 to 19 courses. Equivalent to 3 A levels, a T Level focuses on vocational skills and can help students into skilled employment, higher study or apprenticeships.

Each T Level includes an in-depth industry placement that lasts at least 45 days. Students get valuable experience in the workplace; employers get early sight of the new talent in their industry.

T Level students spend 80% of the course in the classroom, learning the skills that employers need. The other 20% is a meaningful industry placement, where they put these skills into action.

Not all colleges are offering every T level subject - so check out your local colleges for more information.

The T levels that are currently available are:

* Education and Childcare
* Construction: design, surveying and planning
* Construction: on site - carpentry, plastering, painting and decorating, bricklaying
* Digital Production
* Digital Business Services
* Digital Support Services
* Health - Health Care
* Health Science
* Science

These T levels are being introduced in 2022:

* Legal, Finance and Accounting
* Business and Administration
* Engineering and Manufacturing

**BTEC**

BTECs, City & Guilds and OCR Nationals are vocational qualifications, available in a wide range of subjects. Vocational qualifications offer practical learning programmes that relate to specific job roles or employment sectors.

There are many different types of vocational qualifications in a wide range of subjects at all levels, from Entry Level right up to Level 8.

Vocational courses are designed to help students learn in a practical way about a specific job area. They can help students get the skills they need to start a job, progress in a career or go on to higher levels of education.

They have been designed in collaboration with industry, so they can equip students with the skills and knowledge that employers are looking for. The qualifications offer a mix of theory and practice, and can also include an element of work experience.

**A Levels**

Approximately half of all sixteen years olds go on to take A (Advanced) levels. These are academic qualifications valued by both universities and employers.

A level qualifications in England (not in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) have changed and now all A levels are  two year linear qualifications with grades [A\* - E] based on final exams taken at the end of the course. As well as being exams focused, they have less emphasis on coursework. Most students take 3 A level subjects.

Over 20% of colleges are only offering the A level qualifications without the opportunity to take an AS level qualification in year 12. This is because if students carry on studying this subject into year 13 the AS level grade does not go towards their final A level grade.

Some colleges are continuing to offer students the opportunity to take 4 AS level qualifications in year 12. This can enable students to gain an AS grade if they decide to drop it after year 12 exams. AS exams can also help students to see how they are doing in their subjects. However, many colleges are dropping these as they say the revision and exams take up too much teaching time.

AS and A level grades both carry UCAS tariff points. Although AS levels only carry 40% of the points of an A level.

What A and AS levels students can choose will be determined by what is available in their school or college. If students want to do a specific higher education course in the future it is a good idea to check which A levels may be needed for that course.

**Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships give students the chance to gain nationally recognised qualifications while getting a weekly wage. There are different levels available, including new Degree Apprenticeships.

The apprenticeship levels are:

* Intermediate Apprenticeships (equivalent to five good GCSE passes)
* Advanced Apprenticeships (equivalent to two A level passes)
* Higher Apprenticeships - which will lead to qualifications at level 4 - 7.
* Degree Apprenticeships will be at Level 4 to 6.

Apprenticeships are available in more than 200 roles across a wide variety of industry sectors, ranging from accountancy and business administration to construction, engineering, manufacturing and many more. All apprenticeships include the following elements:

* An appropriate work-based qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ);
* Key Skills qualifications, e.g. working in teams, problem-solving, communication and using new technology;
* A technical qualification such as an NVQ, BTEC or City & Guilds; HNC, HND and,
* Other qualifications as specified by the occupation.

Apprenticeships are open to all age groups above 16 years-old, whether students are just leaving school, have been working for years or are seeking to start a new career.

Mrs. S. Roberts