

Broadly speaking there are **three pathways** to choose from in Year 11:

1. Academic pathway

This usually means studying A Levels. You typically take 3 (sometimes 2, sometimes 4) subjects – often ones you’ve studied at GCSE although there are new ones too. You are assessed mainly by exams. A Levels are based mainly in school sixth forms, colleges and sixth form colleges.

‘What grades would I need?’

You normally need at least some GCSE grades 4/5 and, for some subjects, grades 6 or higher.

2. Apprenticeship and work based learning pathway

Apprenticeships are paid jobs with part time training. They are at different levels. You would be in a real workplace with about one day a week (20% of overall time) in training.

‘What grades do I need?’

Entry requirements are set by employers and depend partly on the apprenticeship level.

For an intermediate (Level 2) apprenticeship you might need some GCSE grades 3 or higher. For an advanced (Level 3) apprenticeship you probably need some grades 9-4.

Some employers use their own selection tests.

Employers will expect you to fit into their company (sometimes called being ‘work ready’). There are also work-based learning programmes that can help prepare you for an apprenticeship.



3. Vocational (technical) pathway

This is a middle way where you study a broad area of work ('work sector'). Subjects include business, health and social care, engineering, IT, art and design, catering and hospitality, hair and beauty, motor trades and more.

They lead to a range of qualifications, such as BTEC and T Level.

You might be in a college, school sixth form or with a training provider (an organisation that runs work-based learning).

Some courses include time in a workplace, the amount of time varies depending on the type of qualification you choose.

'What grades do I need?'

Entry requirements vary because you can start many of these courses at different levels, depending on your grades.

Sometimes you can combine pathways, e.g. by taking A Levels plus a vocational qualification.



Which pathway is right for you?

1. How do you learn best, e.g. in a classroom or from practical tasks?
2. Would you rather be based in a sixth form or college or in a workplace?
3. Are you interested in a specific job or work sector or would you rather keep options open?
4. What are your predicted grades?

