

Post 16 Qualifications Explained

Old vs new grades:

Old Grades	New Grades
A*	9
A	8
B	7
C	6
D	5
E	4
F	3
G	2
U	1
U	U

4 = a standard pass (equivalent to C)

3 or below - you'll need to resit English and/or maths or take an alternative qualification e.g. Functional Skills

A Levels

- Academic route – mainly exam based assessment
- Choose 3 subjects you enjoy and are good at.
- Great for students who like reading, writing and theory. There are also some more practical A Levels such as art, textiles, photography...
- Needed for **some** university courses and some universities (e.g medicine, law, sciences)
- Level 3 qualifications
- Collect UCAS points [UCAS Tariff Points - what are they and how do they work?](#)

Level 3 qualification

Pros: Lots of choice, keeps doors open

Cons: Less practical, assessment mainly exams

A-Levels and Highers: Ucas Points				
	A-levels	AS levels	Scottish Highers	Advanced Highers
A*	56			
A	48	20	33	56
B	40	16	27	48
C	32	12	21	40
D	24	10	15	32
E	16	6		

T Levels

- New technical qualifications (2 year duration – same as A Levels)
- Focus on one career area – e.g. health, business, childcare
- Industry placement of at least 315 hours – approximately 45 days and the rest in the classroom
- Great for people who like hands-on learning and want to get real experience

Pros: Real world experience. Leads to jobs or uni

Cons: Less flexibility if you're unsure of your career yet

UCAS tariff points	T Level overall grade	A level
168	Distinction*	A*A*A*
144	Distinction	AAA
120	Merit	BBB
96	Pass (C or above on core component)	CCC
72	Pass (D or E on core component)	DDD

V Levels – AAQ's/BTEC's

These are all vocational qualifications offering a mix of coursework, projects and practical tasks

Currently, BTEC's are the standard qualifications offered:

Vocational qualifications are offered at Level 1, 2 and 3

Level 2 = GCSE equivalent


Level 3 = A Level equivalent.

Level 3 BTECS earn UCAS points – so university is still an option.

- ☐ *Pros:* Continuous assessment, practical learning
- ☐ *Cons:* Less emphasis on exams; some unis prefer A Levels

BTEC Nationals:
(first taught September 2016)

Ucas Points



National Extended Certificate		National Diploma		National Extended Diploma	
D*	56	D*D*	112	D*D*D*	168
D	48	D*D	104	D*D*D	160
M	32	DD	96	D*DD	152
P	16	DM	80	DDD	144
		MM	64	DDM	128
		MP	48	DMM	112
		PP	32	MMM	96
				MMP	80
				MPP	64
				PPP	48

(D) distinction (M) merit (P) pass

From 2027, new V levels will be introduced to replace many existing qualifications, simplifying the current system and opening up more high-quality routes for young people.

V levels will be new Level 3 qualifications that offer a vocational pathway for students who want to explore different sectors before deciding where to specialise.

This new pathway will replace the wide range of qualifications that are not A or T levels and streamline the currently confusing landscape of approximately 900 qualifications at this level.

For students not yet ready for Level 3 study at 16 there will be two new pathways to better support students at Level 2 — the level broadly equivalent to GCSEs. These pathways will support those aged 16-18, providing clear route that matches their aspirations, whether that is work or moving into further study:

The Occupational Pathway – for those who want to develop the skills and experience needed to move straight into a skilled job or apprenticeship after Level 2. This two-year, employment-focused programme will give students training designed around real jobs and industries, helping them become work-ready and confident about starting in work.

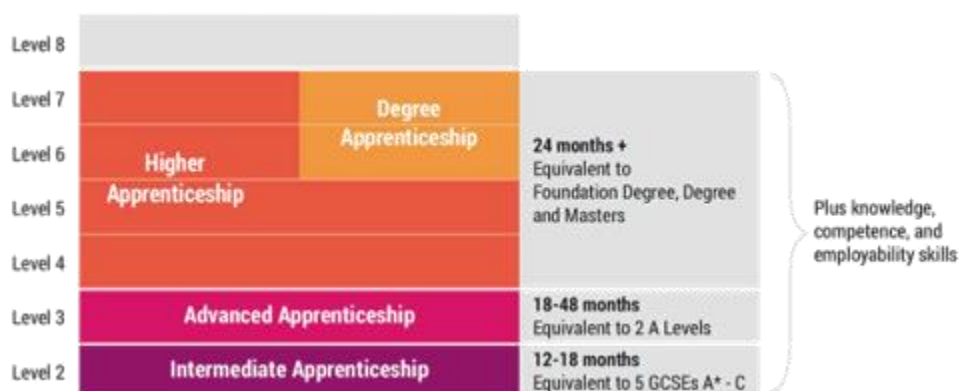
The Further Study Pathway – for students who plan to continue in education and progress onto Level 3 courses like A levels, T Levels, or V levels, but who may need more time to

prepare, building confidence and strengthening their skills first. This pathway will bridge the gap to higher-level study, helping students prepare for their next step in education.

Apprenticeships

- Combine work with study – you earn while you learn and are an employee rather than a student.
- You're employed, paid a wage and train towards a qualification
- Available at Level 2 (GCSE) through to Level 7 (Degree)
- Can lead straight to full-time work or higher apprenticeships

- *Pros:* Real job, experience, and pay
- *Cons:* Fast-paced and less classroom learning



Route	Type	Equivalent	Best for...
A Levels	Academic	Level 3	Students who enjoy exams, theory & want university option
T Levels	Technical	Level 3 (3 A Levels)	Learning with work experience in a chosen career area
BTEC/AAQs	Vocational	Level 1-3	Coursework-based learners who prefer practical projects
Apprenticeships	Work + study	Levels 2 - 7	Earning while learning on the job