

Frequently Asked Post 16 Questions

What are the rules for 16-year-olds living in England and Wales?

All children in the UK must remain in education or training until at least their 18th birthday. This can include:

- A full-time place at a school sixth form or college
- An apprenticeship
- A recognised training scheme, such as the Armed Forces
- A part-time job or volunteering, combined with a recognised National qualification.

Their options are to take academic qualifications, such as A levels, BTECs, IB or T Levels or take vocational qualifications, such as an apprenticeship or job with training.

More information: [What the law says about young people and education at the age of 16](#)

Can my child apply to another school's sixth form?

Sixth form is a continuation of your education at secondary school. Depending on GCSE results, moving schools can provide the opportunity to study A-Levels. Applications can be made to both schools and colleges to keep their options open.

Can my child apply for more than one college?

Yes, students can apply for as many different colleges as they wish. Colleges have a huge range of academic and vocational courses to study, so there will be plenty of choice. Also, all their focus is on the 16-19 age-range, so all facilities and additional offerings are aimed at the same age group.

Is there a list of Hampshire Colleges & Sixth Forms?

<https://www.sunoutreach.org/flying-start/progression-support-hampshire/>

What should they consider when choosing a course?

Things to think about are the subjects they would like to study and enjoy, the type of qualification they'd like to obtain, where to study and whether they'd prefer to learn while working or without working.

What is the closing date for college applications?

Different colleges have different dates so it is worth checking on their website, however we would encourage all students to apply for college as soon as possible if they know what they want to study as some courses are extremely popular and by Christmas of year 11 at the latest.

Do parents attend college interviews?

This is personal choice; colleges encourage parents to attend but there is no judgement made either way. A high number of HSDC interviews are conducted in-house at Crookhorn College and in this case only the student attends.

How many courses do the students choose?

It is normal for a student to apply for either three A Levels or one vocational course such as a BTEC Extended Diploma, or one T-Level. If a student is achieving grades 8/9 in all subjects, then some colleges/schools will allow four A Levels.

Some schools offer the EPQ. Should my child consider doing this?

EPQs are often available at sixth forms alongside A-Levels. An EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) is, to put it simply, a BIG independent project for which you will earn a qualification. Universities recognise that EPQs are good practice for future study, and not only does it look great on their personal statement, but some courses offer lower grade requirements if you get a certain grade in your EPQ.

What is the difference between A Levels and BTECs?

A Levels are exam based, and the student will study for two years and sit the exams at the end whereas BTEC's are unit based and normally have coursework for each unit and assessments rather than a final exam.

What are T Levels?

A T-level is a vocational qualification that focuses on technical skills and helps to prepare students for work or further education and training. Each course includes a 45-day industry placement that supports students to gain experience in the workplace. The idea is that students spend 80% of their time in classroom learning and 20% in a meaningful industry placement.

Further information on T-Level qualifications for both students and employers can be found on the [T-Levels website](#). There is also [additional guidance for parents and carers](#).

Can you study both A Levels and BTECs?

Normally no, as an Extended BTEC is equivalent to three A Levels, however there are some Subsidiary BTECs that are only equivalent to one and can be studied alongside. It is always best to check with the college that the student is applying to.

Will students need to re-sit English and Maths?

If a student does not achieve a grade 4 in English and maths, they will need to re-sit this at college. This will be built into their college timetable. This rule is set by the Government and not by the college.

Do universities accept qualifications such as BTECs and T-Levels?

It is a misconception that universities will not accept these qualifications, most will as they are equivalent to A Levels. However, all universities have different entry criteria, so it is best to research first to double check the requirements.

What colleges do students move onto post-16?

For post-16 students in Portsmouth, the majority of provision is provided by further education (FE) colleges including City of Portsmouth College, (a merger between Highbury and Portsmouth Colleges) and Havant and South Downs College (HSDC). There are also a mix of private training providers offering a range of vocational qualifications and apprenticeships. UTC and CEMAST, offer further opportunities for young people aged 16-18 interested in pursuing a STEM-based curriculum. Other colleges include Sparsholt and Fareham.

What happens if a student starts college and realises, they have chosen the wrong course?

It is vital that they speak to the college as soon as possible as the students can sometimes change course (if space is available) within the first few weeks. All colleges have a careers department, and students are encouraged to talk to their personal tutor.

When do students apply for apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are jobs and are only advertised when a company is ready to take on the apprentice. Bigger companies can advertise in advance (e.g. BAE, QinetiQ) but most companies start advertising around March/April of year 11.

Why do you suggest my child has a back-up plan if they want an apprenticeship?

Taking an apprenticeship is not an easy option and competition can be fierce which means some students are unable to find an apprenticeship.

If they an apprenticeship, the learning location will be chosen by their employer, who will have an arrangement with a local school, college or other education provider. They will not be able to influence this.

How can I help my child decide what to do next?

Understanding the options available to your 15/16-year-old can help you to feel confident in the support you give, as well as hopefully avoiding stereotypes and bias. In terms of education, there are lots of options to choose from, and supporting your child to understand their learning style and the best type of course for them is key. Some questions to prompt your discussions might include:

- Would you prefer more traditional classroom-based learning (academic), or using practical skills with perhaps some learning in the workplace (vocational)?
- Would you prefer to focus your efforts on one subject or to take several subjects?
- What's your assessment preference? Mostly exams (A-Levels), some coursework or a variety of assessments throughout the course (vocational)?
- How closely would you like your education to relate to an actual job or industry?

What is non-advanced education or training?

This means studying for a qualification up to NVQ or SVQ level 3, GCSEs, A-levels or similar, BTEC National Diplomas, National Certificates or a 1st Diploma. It also includes Traineeships in England. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have [more information](#).

Find out more.

If you'd like to know more about your child's options at 16 and things you should help them consider when making decisions about their next steps, you may find the following websites useful:

<https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-finance-and-support/parents-and-carers>

Information about Finances /Benefits: Further Education (Source [When your child turns 16 or leaves education – Gingerbread](#))