

Further Education Booklet



A C A D E M Y
L A N G L E Y

Options after Year 11

Once you leave Q3 Academy Langley, there are a number of different options that are available for you to continue your academic studies. By law, children under the age of 18 need to be in some form of education, employment or training.

As stated above, there are a number of options that are available to you, with the main three being:

- Attending a Sixth form – e.g. Q3 Great Barr;
- Attending a College – e.g. Sandwell College;
- Apprenticeships – paid work with training.

It is important to note that you can apply and explore several different options at the same time and then decide which one you prefer. For example, you can apply for a place at Q3 Great Barr Sixth Form, a place at a college and explore the Apprenticeship route all at the same time. Final decisions can be made when you get your GCSE results in August. You will need to confirm a place at your final decision, then withdraw from the others. Currently, the date for GCSE results will be Friday 27th August 2021 – it is advised that you are available on that day so that you can confirm your places in Sixth Form or College, or, if necessary, sort out any problems.

Qualifications

There are a number of different qualifications and courses that you can take for post-16 education. These include:

- **A-Levels;**
- **T-Levels;**
- **Vocational Courses;**
- **Professional/ Higher Apprenticeships.**

These four options all differ from one another, with some of them being more alike than the others. The following pages of this booklet will have an overview for each of these qualifications and courses.

Understanding Levels

Courses and qualifications are divided into levels. The level of course you can access for post-16 education may depend on the number of GCSEs you leave Q3 Academy Langley with. The different levels of courses are:

- Entry level – no GCSEs, or only GCSEs with grades 1-2. These would be Foundation courses;
- Level 1 – if you leave with GCSEs with grades 2-3. These would be NVQ Level 1 courses;
- Level 2 – studying a Level 2 course at a college is an option if you leave with 4-5 GCSEs with grades 4 – 9, however this isn't ideal. You will be able to take qualifications such as BTEC First Diplomas/Certificates, or Intermediate Level Apprenticeships;
- Level 3 – these courses are generally available to students leaving with 5, or more, GCSEs with grades 4-9. These courses include A-levels, BTEC National Diplomas/Certificates and Advanced Level Apprenticeships;
- Levels 4–6 – typically, these are not available to you straight out of Secondary School, as you will need experience in a Level 3 course before moving on to one of these. They are Higher Level courses, up to Degree Level and Higher Level Apprenticeships;
- Levels 7–8 – similar to Level 4-6 qualifications, these are only available once you have a Level 4-6 qualification. These would be Post Graduate and Professional Qualifications.

Usually, the different levels lead onto each other, apart from some Apprenticeships where you may start on Level 2, even if you have a Level 3 qualification. This is so you can cover all aspects of the work. You have to have a Level 3 qualification to go to University.

A-Levels

What are they?

A-Levels are the most similar qualifications to the GCSEs that you take whilst in Key Stage 4. Similar to GCSEs, A-Levels are usually assessed by students undertaking exams after two years of studying, with some A-Level courses also requiring some coursework that will count towards a final grade. Studying subjects in A-Level allows students to gain a deep understanding of the subjects they choose, due to the nature of the qualification. This also means that A-Levels can be much harder than their GCSE subject counterparts, so it is important to consider when choosing the subjects you wish to study. At the end of the course, A-Levels are graded from **A* - U**.

Students wanting to study A-Levels will typically select 3-4 subjects to study. Some of these subjects will include subjects that are usually not available at GCSE such as: Sociology; Psychology; Media Studies; Politics.

Some Colleges and Sixth Forms will require you to have certain grades if you wish to study a subject at A-Level. For example, if you wanted to study Psychology, you may need at least a grade 6 in GCSE English, due to the nature of the course.

What can I do with them?

A-Levels are an excellent choice for students wanting to go on to University and Higher Education. Usually, to get on to University courses, Universities will ask for a minimum of three A-Levels, usually including one in the subject you want to study at University.

What career paths are available to me with them?

One of the benefits of studying A-Levels is the amount of options that are available to you to choose from. You may choose a number of subjects that would potentially compliment each other (such as Psychology, English Language/Literature and Sociology), or you may have a subject that is different to the others you have chosen. Some careers will require specific A-Levels (for example jobs in Medicine typically require Biology and another Science), however if you are uncertain about your choice in career you can choose a combination of subjects that will keep your options open.

T-Levels

What are they?

T-Levels are a new type of qualification that have been introduced to Further Education establishments in 2020. They are a two-year course, equivalent to 3 A-Levels. However, as opposed to being across a number of different subjects, T-Levels focus on one specific subject, or industry. They have been designed for those who have an idea of the type of industry or sector they would like to go in to and have been designed by colleges, employers and universities to ensure that the skills that are taught on the course are relevant. When studying a T-Level, students will do a mix of classroom learning, as well as going on an industry placement, which will need to be at least 315 hours (45 days). At the end of the two years, students will have an overall grade of **Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction***.

In 2020, there are only a few T-Levels that are available for students to study: Early Years Education; Health/Healthcare Sciences; Digital Design; Construction Planning and Surveying. However, over the next few years, the government and colleges have committed to offering T-Levels in a range of different subjects and sectors. By 2021, the T-Levels expected to be available to students are: Engineering for construction; Digital Business Services; Digital Support Services; Health; Healthcare Science; Onsite Construction; Science. With these wide-ranging array of options available, T-Levels will become an excellent option for those who know which industry they would like to go in to, offering knowledge, skills and experience.

What can I do with them?

Students taking T-Levels will still have the option to go to University at the end of their two-year course, but due to the nature of the course the degrees available at university may be more limited. However, this does not mean that they are not worth taking. The industry experience, coupled with the skills gained throughout the duration of the course, will be invaluable when it comes to looking for a job.

What career paths are available to me with them?

As the majority of T-Levels are industry specific, the expectation would be that you would enter a job within the industry of the T-Level that you take. For example, if you take one of the T-Levels associate with construction, you would be more likely to enter this field as a chosen career path. However, the skills you gain in experience could make you a more employable person across a range of different industries.

Vocational Courses

What are they?

Vocational courses are similar to T-Levels in the sense that they focus on specific industries and careers. The level of course you can take may be decided by the amount of GCSEs you leave school with. For example, if you were to leave with fewer than 4 GCSEs, you may only be permitted to take a Level 1 NVQ, but if you leave with 5 or more GCSEs, then you will be able to do a Level 2, or 3 qualification. With a Vocational Course, there are a range of different subjects you can choose from that are closely linked to possible careers. Examples of subjects you can take as a Vocational Course include: Music Performance; Catering; Early Years Education; Hairdressing; Public Services.

Most colleges offer students the ability to take a Vocational Course alongside the A-Level courses that they select. For example, you may choose to do 2 separate A-Level subjects and then a BTEC National Diploma (which is the equivalent of an A-Level). This will give you some flexibility when it comes to choosing your options.

The way that Vocational Courses are assessed may suit some students more so than others, with a continuous portfolio of coursework, observations or performances, as opposed to a final exam like you would have with an A-Level. They are graded in the same way as T-Levels, with grades ranging from **Pass – Distinction***.

What can I do with them?

In a similar fashion to T-Levels, when you take a vocational course, it is more than likely that you would continue your studies in that particular subject, or field. Universities also accept Vocational Courses (in particular the BTEC Level 3 National Diplomas), as they count towards your UCAS points. You can also stay on at some Further Education establishments and complete higher levels of vocational qualifications.

What career paths are available to me with them?

Again, in a similar way to a T-Level, the career paths that are available at the end of a Vocational Course would typically be whichever course you have studied. For example, if you were to study a Level 1 or 2 Vocational Course in Hair and Beauty, it would make sense that you would go into that industry. However, as the courses often focus on the development of workplace skills, this will make you more employable in the future.

Professional / Higher Apprenticeships

What are they?

A Professional/ Higher Apprenticeship gives you the opportunity to gain real life experience, as well as earning an income as you learn. The level of apprenticeship will range, based on which course you choose – most Apprenticeships start at a Level 2, with the opportunity to progress to higher levels. Some even go to a Level 7 qualification (the equivalent of a post-graduate degree). The duration of the apprenticeship will depend on a number of different factors, including the subject that you choose to study, the level of the qualification and also any previous experience you may have. Local colleges offer apprenticeships in subjects/ sectors such as: Accounting; Marketing; Business; Healthcare; Education. As you can see, there are quite a large number of options available to you if you choose to do an Apprenticeship.

When doing an Apprenticeship, you go into a form of employment, learning the skills required for the profession, whilst also doing a number of days a week in college, or a training centre. This might be one day a week, or it could be more, depending on the Apprenticeship you are on. At the end of the course you will have a nationally recognised qualification, with the opportunity to progress to higher levels of courses.

One of the benefits of doing an Apprenticeship is that you also earn whilst on the course, as you are technically under employment. The rate of pay for apprenticeships will depend on your age; however, as a 16 year-old, in your first year of an apprenticeship you will be entitled to the **minimum** apprentice wage of **£3.90 per hour**. Some employers may pay more, as this figure is the minimum.

What can I do with them?

Once you have completed your first level of an Apprenticeship, you have the opportunity to continue your studies and progress to higher levels of qualification. This may be at a college, or University, depending on the level of qualification you are doing. If you do choose to study to a higher level of an Apprenticeship qualification, it may enable you to access higher wages in future employment and also open different career progression paths for you.

What career paths are available to me with them?

Typically, the career you go in to will be related to the Apprenticeship you study. As you are employed when on an Apprenticeship, you are already on the first steps of a career. As stated above, higher levels of qualifications could give you access to different career progression and development.

Local Colleges and Sixth Forms

College	Contact Details
Birmingham Metropolitan College	0845 155 0101 www.bmetc.ac.uk
City of Wolverhampton College (Check which campus you need to attend for the course(s) you want)	01902 836 000 www.wolvcoll.ac.uk
Dudley College	01384 363363 www.dudleycol.ac.uk
Halesowen College	0121 602 7777 www.halesowen.ac.uk
King Edward VI 6 th Form College, Stourbridge	01384 398 100 www.kedst.ac.uk
Sandwell College (Central Sixth, New Square for A-Level & Young Professionals Academy Courses - Note new name is Central Saint Michael's)	0800 622 006 (Course Enquiries) 0121 667 5000 (Switchboard) 0121 667 5100 (Central Sixth) www.sandwell.ac.uk
South and City College Birmingham (including Bournville College)	0800 111 6311 www.sccb.ac.uk
South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston campus)	0300 456 2424 www.southstaffs.ac.uk
University College Birmingham	0121 604 1000 www.ucb.ac.uk
Walsall College	01922 657000 www.walsallcollege.ac.uk

Local Colleges and Sixth Forms

Sixth Form	Contact Details
George Salter Academy	0121 553 4665 www.georgesalter.com
Health Futures UTC	0121 794 2888 www.healthfuturesutc.co.uk
Holly Lodge High School	0121 558 0691 www.holly-lodge.org
Ormiston Forge Academy	01384 566 598 www.ormistonforgeacademy.co.uk
Phoenix Collegiate Academy	0121 558 8384 www.phoenixcollegiate.net
Q3 Academy (Great Barr)	0121 358 6186 www.q3academy.org.uk
Q3 Academy Tipton	0121 521 1540 www.q3tipton.org.uk
RSA Academy	0121 556 1351 www.rsaacademy.org
Sandwell Academy	0121 525 1700 www.sandwellacademy.com
Shireland Collegiate Academy	0121 558 8086 www.collegiateacademy.co.uk
Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School	0121 556 1488 www.stuart-bathurst.org.uk
Wood Green Academy	0121 556 4131 www.woodgreenacademy.co.uk
King Edwards VI Five Ways	0121 475 3535 https://www.kefw.org/sixth-form-admissions
Queen Mary's Grammar School	01922 720696 https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/6th-form-admissions/

Further Information

Volunteering

Next summer (after you have finished your exams) it will be a good time to do some voluntary work – especially if you want to go to University, as you can put this on your personal statement. It can also lead to employment, as you build up useful contacts and get some valuable experience.

A good place to look for local volunteering opportunities is <https://do-it.org/> There is also information on www.princes-trust.org/uk for setting up your own business, if this is something you are interested in.

Below are a list of websites that may be useful to you in the future:

- Higher Education: If you want to find out more about going to university check out www.ucas.com – this is the main site for Universities – and where you will apply when you are in year 13.
- www.ukcoursefinder.co.uk – can help you find a suitable degree course.
- www.applytouni.com - useful website to search for University open days, to compare universities using league tables and advice about writing your personal statement. There are some subject sample statements and regular subject and careers articles.
- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk - information about studying at university in the UK and abroad. Links to independent UK University League Tables to help guide you to which university is best for you, overall and by subject.
- www.thestudentroom.co.uk - lots of information about studying in the UK including forums where you can ask a variety of questions.
- www.degreesahead.co.uk - studying abroad help and advice to help students wishing to study outside of the UK. Information about universities in Asia, America, Australia, New Zealand and Europe.
- www.fulbright.org.uk - information about studying in the USA, the application process, how to choose a university and information about scholarships.
- www.notgoingtouni.co.uk - information and advice about jobs, courses, gap year and apprenticeships if you are not considering going to University.
- www.realgap.co.uk – one of several sites for those wishing to travel before going to university or employment.

Useful Websites

These are general Careers websites – which can lead to other websites focusing on more specific areas – follow any links. Some websites can be a bit wordy – but there is a lot of information you need to know. The more you can find out the better your decisions will be – and you will feel happier that you are making the right choices.

- www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk - Job profiles on this site provide information about specific jobs/sectors, entry requirements, skills required, salary information etc.
- www.careerpilot.org.uk – Explains your choices at age 14, 16 and 18. Explores different job sectors and option choices, even to university level. There is also an app you can download from www.careerpilotapp.org.uk
- <https://www.connexionssandwell.co.uk/> – Information about the world of work in Sandwell. It has some good information on careers, including future trends, so you can see what the job prospects could be like for that career.
- www.icould.com – This is a careers-based website with video links and articles. If you're still unsure as to what you want to do, try the Buzz Quiz.
- www.plotr.co.uk – This also has videos and articles about careers, how to cope with GCSEs, interviews and other aspects of employment.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels> - More information on T-Levels from the government.