

Key Stage 4 Pathways



ACADEMY
LANGLEY

Further Education Booklet

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Qualifications

Once you leave Q3 Academy Langley, there are a number of different options that are available for you to continue your academic studies.

Every qualification you take has a **level** assigned to it. For example, **a grade 1, 2 or 3 at GCSE is a Level 1 qualification**, whereas **anything grade 4 and above is a Level 2 qualification**.

When it comes to choosing your post-16 options, the majority of you will be applying to study **Level 3** qualifications. If you decide to go to university, you will have to have a minimum of a **Level 3** qualification. Level 3 qualifications are the following:

- Any A-Levels;
- T-Levels;
- Level 3 BTEC Diplomas;
- Level 3 NVQ courses;
- Advanced Apprenticeships;
- Applied General Courses;

However, depending on results, it may be necessary for you to take a Level 2 course and then progress onto a Level 3 course.

You can find a full list of the different qualifications and their corresponding levels here: <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>

This shows the different qualifications you can take and their levels:



A-Levels

A Levels

Taking you higher

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 assessed by 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 counter-parts, so it is important to consider this when choosing the subjects you wish to study. At the end of the course, A-Levels are graded from an **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 and quite a few more.

Some Colleges and Sixth Forms will require you to have certain requirements 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 academic 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.

More information: <https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/qualifications-you-can-take/levels>

What are they?

T-Levels are a new type of qualification that were introduced 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 needing to go 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 2022, there are still only 16 T-Level subjects that are available for students to study, including: Early Years Education; Health/ Healthcare Sciences; Digital Design; Construction Planning and Surveying; Digital Business Services. With the 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. T-Levels have been created by the government with the help of industry professionals to give students the knowledge they need within the area of industry the T-Level is in, meaning they can be perfect for people who know exactly the career they want to go into.

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. It is also important to note that not all universities will accept T-Levels, but the majority do.

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.

More information: <https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/>

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.

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, 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 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.

More information: <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/your-choices-at-16/vocational-qualifications>

What are they?

Apprenticeships are qualifications that allow you to get paid whilst also attaining a qualification as well. An Apprenticeship is a full-time job, meaning that you will be employed and working at least 30 hours a week. You will be paid for your work (an Apprentice wage is currently £4.81 an hour for 16-18 year-olds) and entitled to holiday pay as well. As well as working, you will have 20% of your time dedicated to “off the job training”, which you are also paid for. As well as working for an employer, you may be required to go to a college to further hone your skills in the industry you Apprenticeship is in.

There are a number of local colleges that offer apprenticeships in a number of different industries such as Business Accounting, Motor Vehicle Repair, Childcare and Early Years and Engineering just to name a few.

What can I do with them?

With Apprenticeships the majority of students will go on to be employed in the particular industry that the Apprenticeship is in. You can then go on to study higher level Apprenticeships. In some subjects, you can study up to degree level with an Apprenticeship.

What career paths are available to me with them?

Typically, you would go on to pursue a career in the field that your Apprenticeship is in. Whilst in some cases you can go onto University from studying an Apprenticeship, due to the nature of Apprenticeship courses, the transition to University-style work might be a bit more difficult in comparison to other Level 3 qualifications you can take. However, the skills that you will acquire when studying an Apprenticeship may make you more employable in other industries as well.

More information: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/#>

Application Process

Most colleges and sixth forms will have an online portal for applications. They may vary in what they ask for, but the majority of them will have the same core components. Over the next few pages, there is information that should help you with the different parts of the application process. However, a brief summary of the different steps of applying are:

Personal Statement

This is a short piece of writing where you have to “sell yourself” to the college or sixth form you are applying to. You will outline any achievements you have, any GCSEs you have, what subjects you’re choosing and potentially what you would like to go on to do next. You don’t want to make this too long – in fact, some places will have a word limit on personal statements, so it’s vital that you’re as concise as possible! Some useful websites when writing your personal statements are:

- www.thestudentroom.co.uk/content.php?r=15927--sixth--form--college--entrance--personal--statements
- <https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/post-16-options/how-write-personal-statement-further-education>

Predicted Grades

Most colleges will ask you to provide predicted grades for each subject that you study. Some places will require this from the school directly, whereas other places will require you to input your own predicted grades. If this is the case, it’s important that you are as honest as possible. You don’t want to put in predicted grades that are not truly reflective of the level that you are working at. Especially in cases where there are entry requirements for a specific course, as if you don’t get the required grades, you may not be allowed on the course.

References

Some colleges and sixth forms will ask for a reference from your school. In general, this will be from a member of staff who teaches you, or is involved in your life in school in some capacity (your form tutor or PLD/ PLC). References will ask for information about you as a student, what your strengths and areas for development might be, how well suited you are to the course you’ve chosen, information on your attendance and behaviour, as well as including any other information that might be important for the college/ sixth form to know. If you do need a reference from a member of staff, be sure to ask them if they are okay with it first.

Personal Statement Draft

Introduction – What to include: Your name; where you currently study; the GCSEs or other qualifications that you are currently taking; the GCSEs that you may already have; the subjects you wish to study; why you are applying for College/ Sixth Form.

Paragraph One - What to include: Any achievements you have gained at school (representing the school/ Excellence Leader/ Time4Tea); attendance record for your time in school; punctuality for your time in school; behaviour information for your time at school.

Paragraph Two – What to include: Achievements outside of school; interests and hobbies; how these interests and hobbies have developed you as a person; any responsibilities you may have outside of school.

Concluding Paragraph – What to include: What you feel you can bring to the College/ Sixth Form; why you are applying for the courses; what you would like to do after leaving college; why you feel that specific Sixth Form/ College will help you achieve your goals.

Useful Sentence Starters for your Personal Statement

I am a Year 11 student at School studying GCSEs in.....	My favourite subjects are....	I am currently.....
My strengths are.....	I am proud of.....	I enjoy.....
My greatest achievement(s) is/are....	I plan to.....	I hope to.....
I intend to.....	This year.....	While at school.....
Outside of school.....	Alongside my school work I.....	Last term I.....
Recently.....	During the summer.....	I work hard to.....
To develop my skills in.....	To achieve.....	To improve.....
I find / have foundchallenging/difficult	In addition.....	Furthermore.....

Skills you can include within your Personal Statement

A skill is something that can be developed or improved upon through training or practice. This could be in a work place or education setting. Here are some you can include within your personal statement.

Team work	Verbal / oral communication	Good listener
organisation	Time management	ICT skills
Planning	Reading	Written communication
Analysing	Presenting	Researching
Problem solving	Leadership	Decision making

Qualities you can include within your Personal Statement

A quality is part of your personality. It often describes the way you interact with others or behave.

Adaptability	Flexibility	Proactive approach
Reliability	Caring / friendly	Inquisitive
Patient	Polite	Punctual
Responsible	Dedicated	Confident
Positive	Ambitious	Conscientious
Honest	Hard working / diligent	Helpful
Thoughtful	Proactive	Adventurous

Interviews

Not all colleges and sixth forms will have interviews as part of their application process. However, it is important that you know what to expect and how to present yourself to the colleges and sixth forms that do. Remember, you can only make a first impression once!

Here are a few tips for attending an interview:

- Turn up **early** – don't aim to get there "on time";
- Do your research on the place you're applying for – they may ask you questions on why you have chosen that particular college/ sixth form;
- Try to remember to make eye contact when answering questions;
- Anticipate what the questions might be – for example, make sure you've researched the courses you are applying for;
- The interview starts when you arrive – ensure that you present the best version of yourself at all times. Not just when you are in the room interviewing;
- Remain positive about yourself;
- Try to think of life-experiences that might be relevant to the questions being asked that support your answers;
- Take your time to think when the interviewer asks questions;
- Make your answers relevant to the questions you are being asked;
- Don't lie – this should be obvious, but sometimes students can get themselves in trouble by telling half-truths or fabricating lies;
- Don't show disinterest – an answer like "this is my backup choice", or "I'm applying because my parents made me" is an easy way to make a poor impression;
- Place your mobile phone on silent mode. You don't want it going off during your interview.

Local Colleges

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 of Technology	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
Cadbury College	0121 458 3898 https://www.cadcol.ac.uk/

Local Sixth Forms

Sixth Form	Contact Details
George Salter Academy	0121 553 4665 www.georgesalter.com
Holly Lodge High School	0121 558 0691 www.holly-lodge.org
Q3 Academy (Great Barr)	0121 358 6186 www.q3academy.org.uk
Q3 Academy Tipton	0121 521 1540 www.q3tipton.org.uk
Sandwell Academy	0121 525 1700 www.sandwellacademy.com
Shireland Collegiate Academy	0121 558 8086 www.collegiateacademy.co.uk
Wood Green Academy	0121 556 4131 www.woodgreenacademy.co.uk
King Edwards Lordswood Girls Sixth Form	0121 429 2838 https://lsg.kevibham.org/
Windsor Sixth Form	0121 550 1452 https://www.windsorsixthform.org.uk
King Edwards Handsworth School for Girls	0121 554 2342 https://kingedwardvi.bham.sch.uk
King Edwards Handsworth Grammar School for Boys	0121 554 2794 https://www.handsworth.bham.sch.uk
King Edwards VI Five Ways (Selective)	0121 475 3535 https://www.kefw.org/sixth-form-admissions
King Edwards Camp Hill Boys (Selective)	0121 444 3188 https://www.camphillboys.bham.sch.uk/
King Edwards Camp Hill Girls (Selective)	0121 444 2150 https://www.kechg.org.uk/
Queen Mary's Grammar School (Selective)	01922 720696 https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/6th-form-admissions/

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.

For any parents/ carers who have any enquiries about their child's next steps in education, or their Connexions meeting in the Academy, please don't hesitate to contact Mr. Seaton at t.seaton@q3langleys.org.uk.