

Post-16

Options

Guide

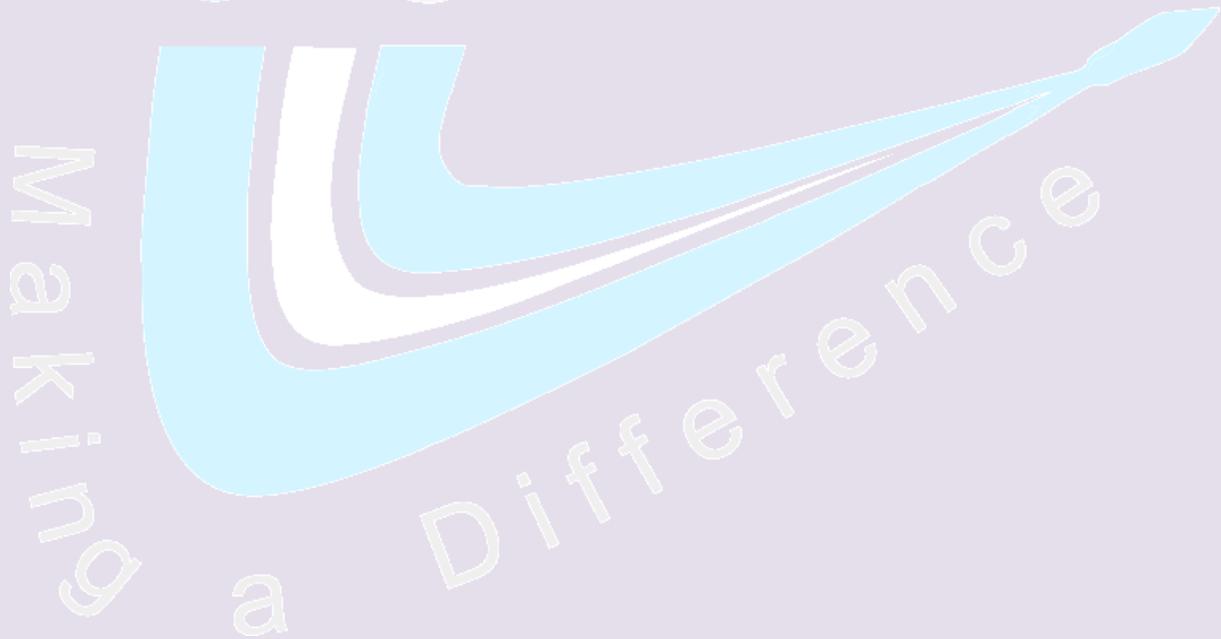
*For all students, parents/guardians/carers of students,
and staff at The Oswaldtwistle School*

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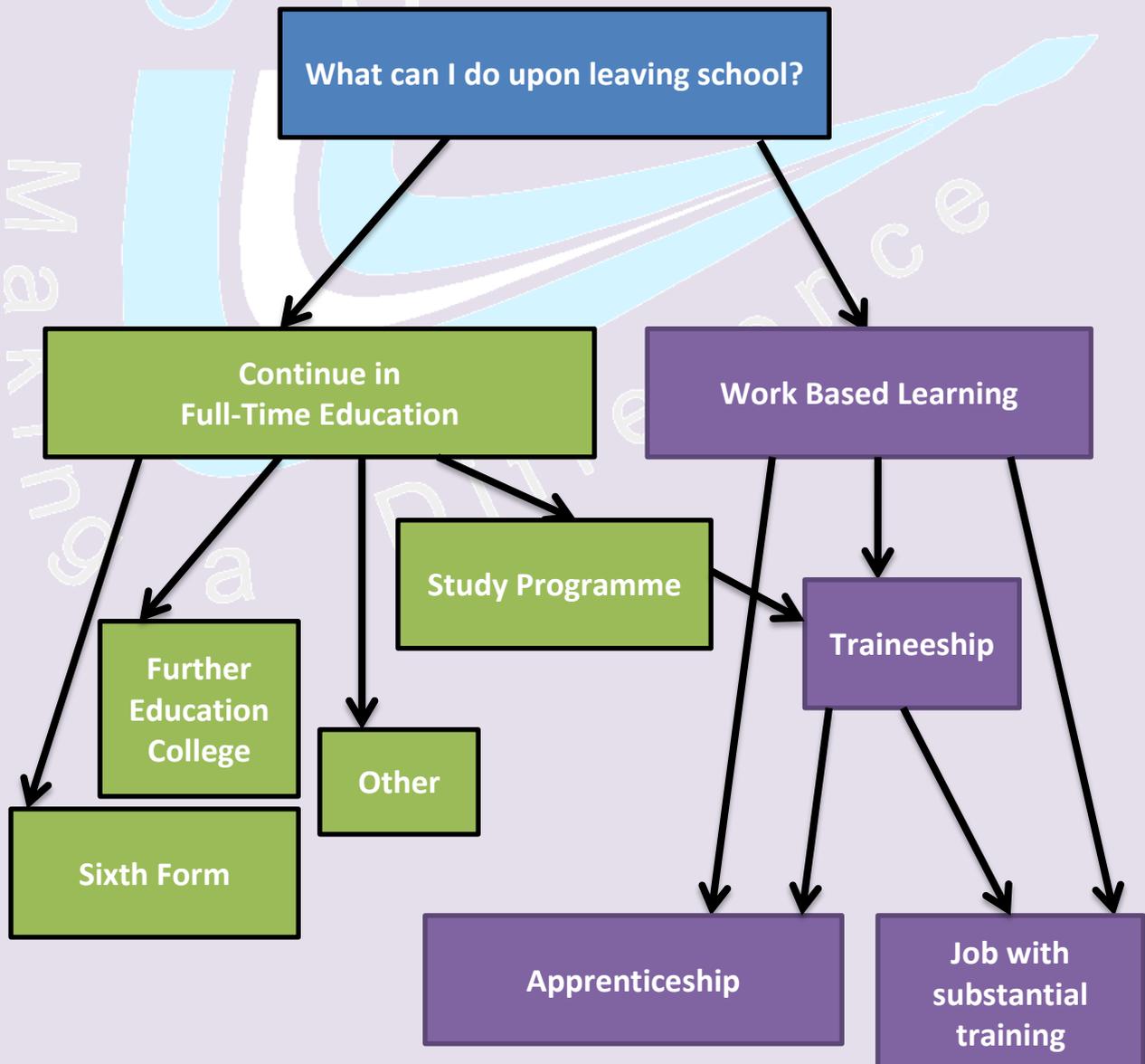
Post-16 Options Guide

In 2013, the Government ruled that all 16 year olds must engage in some form of further education or training after leaving school.

This recognised the fact that young people without work experience find it much harder to source employment from leaving school. Additionally, research shows that young people with qualifications tend to find more job security and career progression.

In this guide, we'll talk about the different options that young people have when leaving school. However, every young person's options are different depending on the subject or area they wish to study, and for this reason we would recommend that you speak to the Careers Officer about your options.

What can I do upon leaving school?



Continuing in Full-Time Education

Sixth Form – Sixth Form is literally based around the idea that it’s your “sixth” year of secondary school (though generally, as a rule, you’d aim to spend two years there). Sixth Forms generally offer **A-Level** programmes (more about them later) but some also offer **vocational** qualifications, too.

Sixth Form is the nearest option to continuing in school. At lots of Sixth Forms, you’ll be asked to wear a uniform, and with A-Levels you’d continue to undertake a timetable of different subjects (though not as many as at school).

What Sixth Forms are near me?

- Accrington Academy Sixth Form
- Alder Grange Sixth Form (Rawtenstall)
- Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School
- Haslingden High Sixth Form
- Lancaster Royal Grammar School
- Queen Elizabeth’s Grammar School (Blackburn)
- St Christopher’s Sixth Form (Accrington)
- St Wilfrid’s Church of England High School (Blackburn)
- Thomas Whitham Sixth Form (Burnley)
- Westholme Sixth Form (near Blackburn)

(There are lots of other Sixth Forms around the country, but these are the ‘local’ ones – for more information, look at the gov.uk website).

Further Education (FE) College – as the name suggests, Colleges are a site for “further education” after leaving school. Colleges commonly offer the same kind of courses as Sixth Forms do, with a mixture of A-Level programmes and vocational courses.

An FE College is very like school in some ways – though you might not be in every day like you are at school. Colleges don’t expect all students to wear uniforms, though for certain courses, such as Public Services or Childcare vocational programmes, you might be expected to wear specific clothing (just as members of the Armed Forces or emergency services, or nursery workers, have to wear).

What Colleges are near me?

- Accrington and Rossendale College
- Blackburn College
- Burnley College
- Cardinal Newman College (Preston)
- Craven College (Keighley)
- Myerscough College (Main site near Preston, also another site in Blackburn)
- Preston’s College
- St Mary’s College (Blackburn)

Study Programmes

Some local providers offer what are sometimes called Study Programmes. These are generally offered to young people who might not be ready for an Apprenticeship or other full-time learning.

Who offers programmes like this?

- North Lancs Training Group (based in Accrington)
- Training 2000 (based in Blackburn and Nelson)

Other Options

Depending on your career goals, there might be other options that don't 'fit' into College or Sixth Form contexts.

Some of these include:-

- **Armed Forces** – legally you have to be 18 to join up to the Army, Navy or Royal Air Force – so consider Sixth Form or College options in the meantime (many providers offer specific courses such as 'Military Academies' or similar for interested applicants)
- Fleetwood Nautical College – specific provider of maritime training for specialist careers in the nautical, offshore oil and gas and renewable industries
- The Aviation Academy (part of Craven College, named above) – based at Leeds Bradford International Airport, they offer some courses that more local providers offer in Travel and Tourism, and more specialised training for the aviation industry

Work Based Learning

Work Based Learning refers to any kind of programme that involves a mixture of learning and work experience. The best-known form of Work Based Learning is called an **Apprenticeship**, though other forms of work based learning exist.

Apprenticeships – these involve, as a general rule, attending College or training provider one day a week, but for the rest of your week, undertaking paid work at an employer.

For obvious reasons they are quite different to school; when you are at work you are expected to carry out tasks just like any other employee. On your learning day or session, you'd work with tutors to produce a portfolio that shows you can carry out the key duties related to the job you do. This might include being observed or assessed in the workplace.

Who offers Apprenticeships?

- Accrington and Rossendale College
- Blackburn College
- Burnley College
- Just Childcare
- Myerscough College
- Nelson and Colne College
- Preston's College
- RWP Training
- Training 2000

Traineeships – Traineeships are quite similar to Study Programmes, in that they are there for young people who might not be ready to graduate to an Apprenticeship or other post-16 option. You'd typically undertake some work-related tasks, and ideally, you'd progress from the Traineeship on to the Apprenticeship ladder. Some Traineeships (and Study Programmes) might pay you a 'training allowance' to cover costs.

Other School Leaver programme – if a company is interested on taking a young employee they typically go down the Apprenticeship route. However, some employers might offer their own school leaver programmes. Strictly speaking, you can take any job you are offered as long as it **contains some form of substantial (over 16 hours a week) AND accredited training**. Enquire with local employers if they offer such programmes.

So, we've covered the different options and given you some information on the locations and providers. What are these options? What kinds of qualifications can you take? We'll cover that in the next section.

Qualification Guide

A-Levels

Offered at: Sixth Forms, most Colleges (with some exceptions)

Entry Requirements: Typically, you need to achieve **five** GCSEs at grades A-C or at grade '5' or above (some institutions might accept GCSE grade '4' instead)

The 'A' in A-Levels stands for 'Advanced', meaning that they are seen as advancement in your education from GCSEs. Typically, you'd be asked to take **four** A-Level subjects, and this would mean your timetable would look a little bit like your school timetable.

Subjects range from English and Maths to Humanities to topics such as Art, Dance, Design and Modern Languages. As a general rule, the standard of A-Level qualifications you obtain (the grade) is more important than the combination of subjects you study, but do be aware that some careers/degrees will require particular A-Level qualifications to establish your knowledge before you study at a higher level (e.g. to study Pharmacy you would need Chemistry A-Level and at least one A-Level from Biology, Physics and/or Maths).

A-Levels are the best known route into Higher Education. While they aren't the only route, what is true to say is that they are academic qualifications – and at degree level, you would be expected to write academic documents such as essays. Therefore A-Levels present a great way to develop your academic skills and prepare yourself for some of the study challenges that Higher Education study involves.

Why A-Levels?

Why would I study A-Levels?

- You enjoy the 'structure' of school and studying more than one subject
- You enjoy academic tasks and are comfortable with the idea of undertaking harder ones
- You feel that you want to go to University and you want to develop your academic skills

Why wouldn't I want to study A-Levels?

- You prefer practical tasks or subjects like PE and Engineering
- You struggle to concentrate in a classroom or writing assignments
- You know that you don't want to study at degree level

Vocational Qualifications

Offered at: Colleges, some Sixth Forms

Entry Requirements: Vocational qualifications come in different levels and types, so see below

Vocational Qualifications are courses that involve work-related tasks and learning; they are related to a specific subject and often can be the requirement to work in a particular field. They include:-

- BTEC Diplomas are offered at Level 2 and Level 3; with Level 3 being equivalent to a programme of 3 or 4 A-Levels. A BTEC Diploma at Level 2 lasts for one academic year, while a Level 3 BTEC Diploma is a two-year, full-time course.
- BTEC qualifications also exist at Level 1 – they are usually known as ‘Certificates’ rather than ‘Diplomas’ (this is something to do with the amount of modules you take). Typically the Level 1 and Level 2 BTECs form a pathway to the Level 3 BTEC for students who might not have got the GCSE grades to get on Level 3 to start with (see below).
- There are also Diplomas in some subjects, offered by exam boards such as City and Guilds, which work in similar ways to BTEC Diplomas – with the one big difference being that Level 3 Diplomas only last for one year, not two years. This is because these Diplomas are often in subjects such as Construction or Motor Engineering where each level teaches you different skills and techniques – therefore completing these sorts of qualifications would take you three years from Levels 1 – 3, whereas BTECs would take you four years to do the same three levels.
- Entry requirements for Diplomas vary depending on the level.
 - **Level 1 Diploma** – ideally you’d need Entry Level 3 or equivalent in English and Maths – this is around a grade 2 or higher
 - **Level 2 Diploma/Level 2 BTEC Diploma** – typically you’d need around four GCSE grade 3s or higher, including English and Maths GCSEs, or you could possess a Level 1 Diploma
 - **Level 3 Diploma** – Level 2 Diploma and GCSE English and Maths at grade ‘C’/5 or equivalent
 - **Level 3 BTEC Diploma** – similar entry requirements to A-Levels – namely 5 GCSEs at grade ‘C’/5 or higher.

Why Vocational?

Why would I study a Vocational programme?

- You have a specific idea about what career you want to undertake and you need vocational training to do it
- You aren’t a big fan of exams and you’d prefer a course where you are assessed on what you can do rather than what you can remember
- You enjoy more practical tasks and learning how to ‘do’ things rather than ‘about’ things

Why wouldn’t I want to study a Vocational programme?

- You are totally unsure what kind of career you want – though some people do end up taking up very different jobs to the subject they studied vocationally

Apprenticeship – an Apprenticeship isn't a qualification on its own, as such – instead, each Apprenticeship has what's called a **framework** – these are the qualifications you'll undertake. So, for example, as an Apprentice Carer, you might do a workbased Diploma in Health and Social Care, but you could also undertake a First Aid certificate and a Moving and Handling certificate; on an Engineering Apprenticeship, you'd do a workbased Diploma in Engineering but also a CAD qualification and a Health and Safety certificate.

Typically the workbased qualifications will be very similar, if not identical, to the vocational programmes we talked about previously; however, you'll be getting 'real' work experience too, rather than in a workshop environment that many Colleges and learning providers have (and while these are very realistic environments, sometimes with actual customers, employers will value 'real' paid work experience as more valuable).

Study Programmes/Traineeships – on these programmes, typically you'll obtain a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification – and while it might be vocational it might be in a general subject such as 'Employability' or 'Workskills', based around tasks such as writing your CV or preparing for interviews rather than carrying out job-specific tasks.

Jobs with Substantial and Accredited training – these completely depend on the job role and employer but could include evening AAT Accounting qualifications (a vocational programme) and other certificates – each employer will be different if they offer them.

Post-16 Options: Choosing a Learning Provider

Your next step is a very grown-up decision – and as with decisions that adults make, you'll have to weigh up the options and work out which one you think is right for you. You could do this in a variety of ways.

We'll try and outline some possible factors in your decision here.

Some young people make decisions on what course to do or which provider to go to because it's the closest one to them, or their friends are going there. STOP!

This isn't a good idea.

Choosing a course because it is close by may make your life easier in the short-term. However, at some point, you'll have to travel – the average 'commute' (time taken by an individual to get to work) is **49** minutes in the UK. If you just choose what is close, without considering any other locations, you are reducing the choices that you have.

And, even if you choose to do a course with a friend for the next two years, it's very unlikely you'll be able to get the same job as them at the same workplace, either. Part of being an adult is meeting new people and developing friendships with them.

- **Location** – although we have asked you not to consider this too much it does need to form some part of your thinking. Consider transport links – where is your nearest bus stop, and what buses travel past it? Could you get the train instead? Apps such as Google Maps can tell you the exact route you'd need to take to get to somewhere on public transport.
 - With an Apprenticeship, it's worth considering location very closely, as it's likely any transport costs will come out of your wage. Remember that any fare on public transport will have to be multiplied – you won't take that journey once a week! However, many public transport companies offer reduced fares if you get a weekly or monthly ticket. Contact them for more details.
- **Reputation** – do you know anyone who has previously studied there? Depending on when they studied there, things may have changed – for example all three of the closest Further Education Colleges have undergone huge changes in terms of new buildings and facilities in the last 5-10 years, and many local Sixth Forms have had similar upgrades and improvements. That said, other people may be able to give you an insight that you don't already have.
- **Financial Support** – some providers have special arrangements with local companies and could offer you reduced or free transport, free breakfasts, or other forms of financial support (e.g. for kit or uniform that you'd require for your course). The provider should be able to give you more information about this during the application process.

There are lots of other things to consider but these four areas are worth thinking about. We haven't mentioned courses here for a reason – if you decide on a particular course, **apply to more than one provider**.

Although two providers offering a BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Sport are likely to have a reasonably similar offer, there may be differences in terms of the modules they offer, and there are certain to be larger differences in terms of their facilities, teaching staff, resources and the like. **You won't know anything about these differences unless you apply for their course and meet them!**

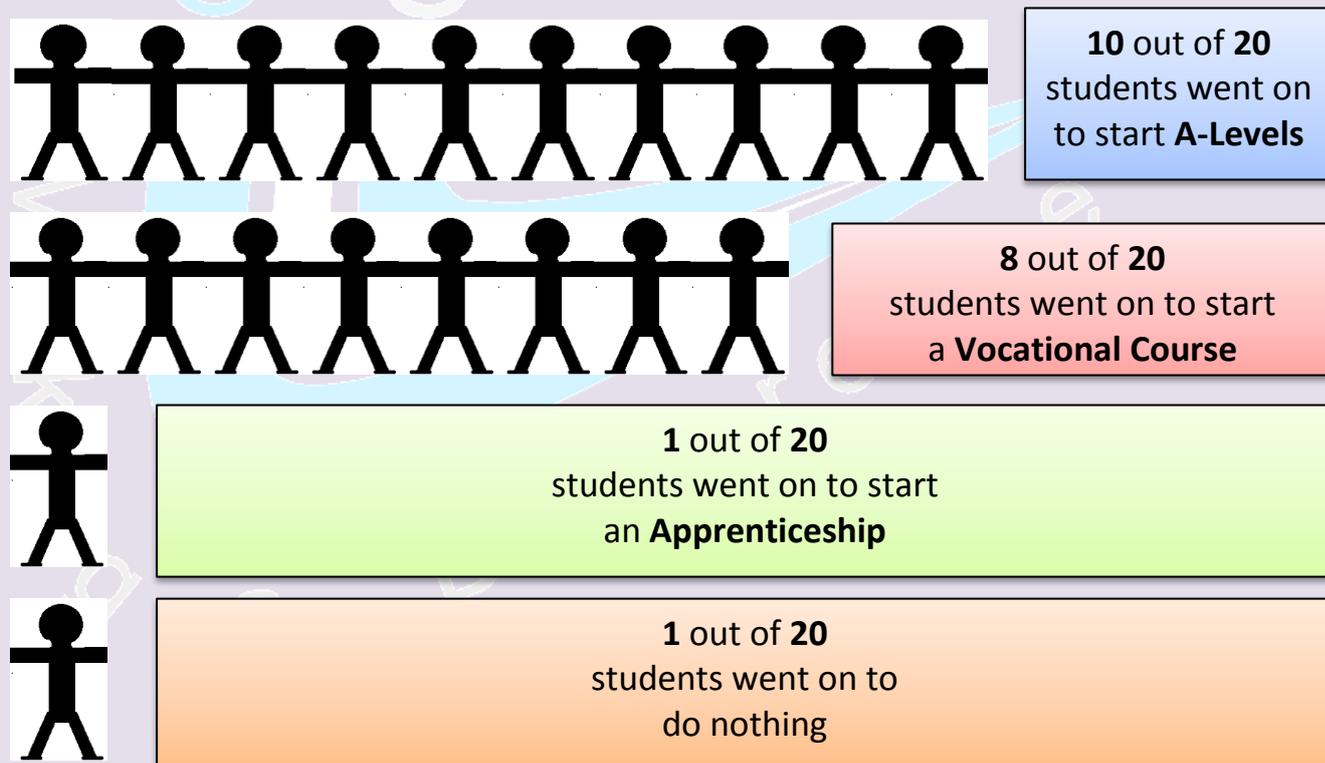
Who Does What

Of course, each school is different, each area is different, and every individual student is different. What is good for you may not be good for anyone else.

However, how popular are these options? What do other young people do across the country?

Recent statistics (2015 – 2016 school year)

Out of every 20 students



Staying on in education, whether on a set of A-Levels, a vocational programme or an Apprenticeship is a fantastic opportunity to develop skills, gain knowledge and set yourself up for a bright and active future.

Don't end up being the young person who did nothing.

Working out a career plan will ensure that you are more likely to start something you want to do, and finish it. It will open up opportunities for you for the rest of your life. Check the **'How to Plan Your Future'** guide for more.