



Very soon year 11 students will need to start making some important decisions about the next step in their education. There are many choices available to them and they should carefully consider what their next step should be. It could be staying on in the Sixth Form, making the move to college or starting an apprenticeship.

One of the most common questions year 11 students ask is, 'what are the differences between A-levels and a BTEC qualification?' UCAS have some excellent information on the differences between the two.



A levels

A-Levels are subject-based qualifications that can lead to university, further study, training, or work. You can normally study three or more A levels over two years. They're usually assessed by a series of examinations.

What grades do I need to take A levels?

You normally need

- at least a grade 6 in the specific subject(s) you want to study
- a 4/5 in Maths and English

However, the specific requirements needed to study A levels will vary across schools and colleges. It's important to check what you will need with the school or college you are looking to study at.

Who are they for?

If you're thinking about going to university, most higher education courses require specific A levels or combinations of A levels (or alternative level 3 qualifications). If you're not sure what career or job you want to do, studying a selection of A levels can be a good way of keeping your options open.

Choosing A level subjects

The most important criteria for choosing A levels subjects are:

1. Looking at what you are likely to enjoy and be good at. If you enjoy a subject or have an ability in it already, you are more likely to do well.
2. If you have a particular career, job, or further study in mind, you may need to choose specific A levels in order to meet entry requirements.
3. How open you want to keep your future study and career choices?

A-Levels	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to study different topics, giving you the choice of career to pursue • Suited towards people who do well under pressure and in exams • Some specific Uni courses require A-Levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work can be overwhelming • You could lose interest in one or more subjects, meaning you'll either have to drop it or begrudgingly carry on • Most likely to be assessed through exams

Which? University

Have an excellent tool to explore what different combinations of A levels can lead to.

Use the A-level Explorer to see what degree subjects will be open to you, based on your combination of A-level subjects (or the ones you're thinking of taking). Simply pop in your A-level subjects and see what you could study at university. It will also give you a list of popular careers based on the subjects you have chosen to study.

While many degrees will be open to you whatever subjects you choose, some courses will require or prefer you to have specific subjects in your A-level line-up.

<https://university.which.co.uk/a-level-explorer>



BTEC

BTEC stands for the Business and Technology Education Council. BTECs are specialist work-related qualifications.

They combine practical learning with subject and theory content. There are over 1,000 BTEC qualifications across 16 sectors – they are available from entry level through to professional qualifications at level 7 (equivalent to postgraduate study).





BTECs are designed for young people interested in a particular sector or industry but who are not yet sure what job they'd like to do.

BTEC	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated course focussing on one subject in depth • Graded through coursework, portfolio and presentation, which is similar to Uni • Focus on employability and practical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you lose interest in your course you will have to start all over again with something else • You can only apply to Uni courses in a relevant field • You will have a constant flow of assignments and coursework

You could study a BTEC at Level 2 or 3, either alongside academic qualifications or as part of a wider programme (such as an apprenticeship). You can also study a BTEC as a standalone course.

There are over 1,000 BTEC qualifications across 16 sectors, including:

- applied science
- art and design
- business
- childcare
- construction
- engineering
- media
- health and social care
- hospitality
- ICT
- land-based
- performing arts
- public services
- sport
- travel and tourism

BUSINESS
STUDIES
BTEC

CONSTRUCTION
BTEC



How do they work?

BTEC qualifications are flexible – you can take one alongside A levels in schools and colleges. They're also usually studied full-time, either in college or jointly between a school and a college.

BTECs are divided into units, which cover specific areas of knowledge, skills, and understanding required by the particular sector or industry.

1. Every BTEC student takes the core units, which provide a broad foundation and understanding about the sector.
2. There is a range of optional units to choose from which enable students to focus on particular interests and plans they have for next steps into further study, an apprenticeship, or employment.
3. The course involves a series of assignments which can be written or activity-based, for example creating a film clip, planning and putting on a performance, or creating a business plan. Students complete some assignments individually and some as part of a team. For some BTEC courses, students can also

apply their knowledge and skills through work experience.

What are the entry requirements for a BTEC?

Entry requirements vary depending on the school or college and the particular BTEC course you are interested in. You may need up to five GCSEs at grade 4 to 9 for a level 3 diploma. For a level 2 BTEC you need 4 GCSEs at grade 3 or above, ideally one of which is English. It is best to check the specific course you are interested in to find out the entry requirements.



Upcoming events at The Royal Veterinary College

With the 15th January deadline fast approaching; we wanted to let you know the last opportunities that RVC have for visits in 2019.

BSc/MSci Biological Sciences Pathways Open Day 26.10.2019

This Open Day is open to anyone who is interested in learning about any of their **Royal Society of Biology accredited** Biological Sciences programmes:

- ☐ BSc Biological Sciences / MSci Biological Sciences
- ☐ BSc Bioveterinary Sciences / MSci Bioveterinary Sciences
- ☐ BSc Animal Biology, Behaviour, Welfare and Ethics
- ☐ BSc Biological Sciences or BSc Bioveterinary Sciences with a Certificate in Work-Based Learning and Research
- ☐ MSci Applied Biological Research / MSci Applied Bioveterinary Research
- ☐ MSci Wild Animal Biology



At this event, members of staff will be available to discuss all aspects of their BSc/MSci Biological Sciences pathways. In addition, current students of the RVC will take you on a tour of the Camden Campus and provide a first-hand account of student life at the RVC.



Do you aspire to help create the Fourth Industrial Revolution?

The Young Computer Scientist and Young Engineer Programmes offer students immersive experiences in some of the most cutting-edge areas of innovation, including: artificial intelligence, electric vehicle design, interplanetary space travel and cybersecurity.

Students can join **InvestIN** for interactive experiences with experts from Rolls Royce, Samsung, BT, Atkins Global, Reaction Engines, British Airways and many more.

Programme Highlights

- Design and build an Artificial Intelligence app with Samsung software engineers
- Navigate a mission to Mars
- Design the ultimate electric car
- Prevent a dangerous cybersecurity attack
- Personal Q&A time with leading professionals from the likes of Rolls Royce and Samsung
- Coaching on how to achieve your career dreams, starting now

<https://investin.org/products/the-young-engineer-programme>

Following hundreds of requests from teachers, parents and students around the UK, **InvestIN** are delighted to launch a set of career experience programmes dedicated to **ages 12-14**.

The 'Step Into Your Future' Weekend offers younger students immersive half-day sessions in Law, Investment Banking, Medicine and Engineering. Students can register for the sessions that interest them.

Meet top doctors, engineers, lawyers and investment bankers who will guide you through interactive simulations of your dream career:

Medicine: Understand how to read an ECG

Engineering: Design an aeroplane

Law: Participate in a live courtroom battle

Investment Banking: Build your own stock portfolio

Career coaching sessions to show you step-by-step how to break into these fantastic careers, from now

<https://investin.org/products/the-step-into-your-future-weekend>



Sign up to KPMG'S Talent Community, and you could be one of the first to hear when their 2020 apprenticeship programmes open for applications. Registering your details only takes a few minutes, and it could be the first step to building a successful, long-term career at KPMG.

<https://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/apprentice>



The Aspiring Medics recommend students interested in pursuing a career in medicine watch the new BBC Documentaries on Junior Doctor Life

Junior Doctors - On The Front Line

It really does help to illustrate the realities of medicine, managing your own emotions as well as those of patients

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p07mwb5k/junior-doctors-on-the-front-line-episode-1>



Grove Cottage Volunteer Recruitment Afternoon

19 October at the Charis Centre, Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford from 1.30pm.



Find out how Grove Cottage supports local people with learning disabilities, their families and carers; explore volunteer opportunities and what volunteers do. They have a wide range of opportunities available to those aged 16 and over.

Further information about the services they provide at Grove Cottage can be found on our website: <https://www.mencapgrovecottage.org/>

For more information, please email volunteer@mencapgrovecottage.org or call 01279 656085.



Open Events

Harlow College:

Tuesday 15 October 2019

Apprenticeships, Vocational courses, A Levels, HNC/HNDs, Degrees, Access courses, English & Maths

Talk to students and staff, check out our fantastic facilities and ask lots of questions!

You'll get to meet:

- The Principal
- Teaching staff
- Student Services
- Careers and Advisers
- Learning support staff
- The Apprenticeships team



And most importantly... current

students You'll find out about:

- Course options – subjects, levels and qualifications
- Entry requirements
- Course content - what you study, and how
- The support available e.g. financial, learning support
- What qualifications can lead to - e.g. work, further study, university
- The excellent facilities at the College



Stansted Airport College:

Saturday 19 October 2019

<https://www.harlow-college.ac.uk/apply/open-evening>

HRC College:

Wednesday 6th November 2019

If you have any questions or queries relating to careers please contact the careers leader Kate Ward on wardk@haileyburyturnford.com