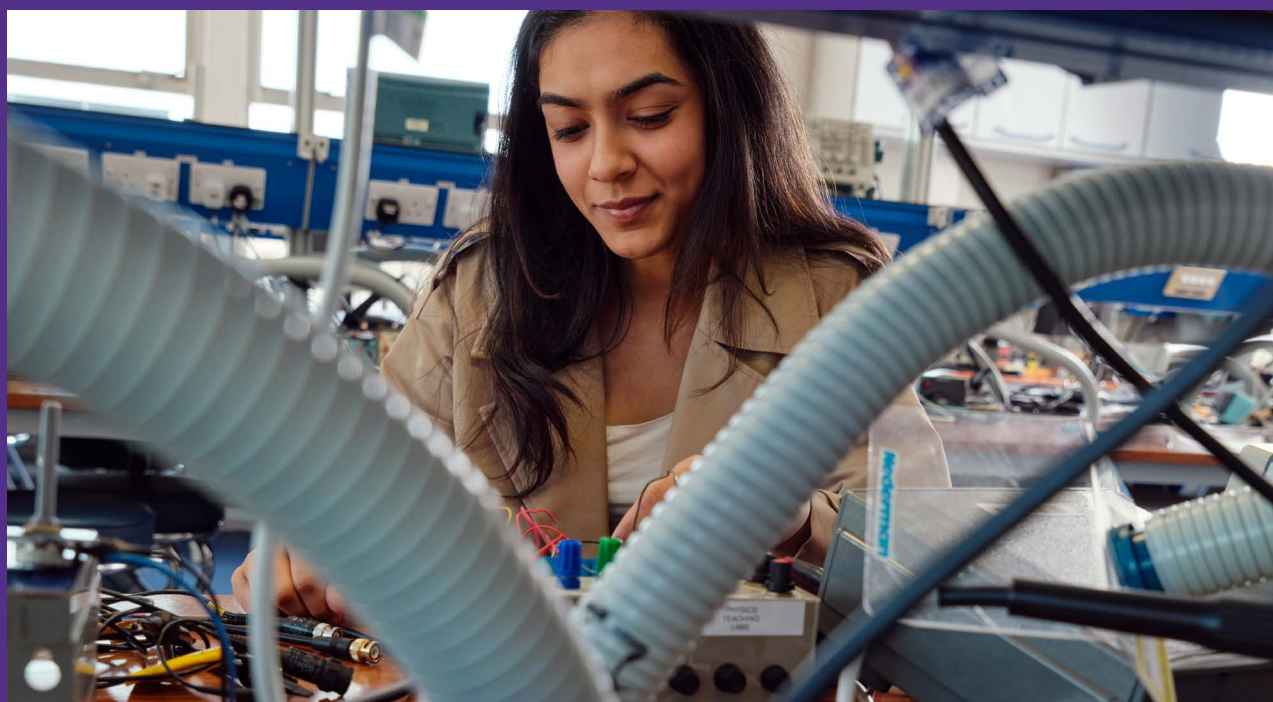




Years 10 – 11

# Further Education



Supporting your child  
through their next steps

**UNIVERSITY  
OF WARWICK**

# What is further education?

Further education refers to post-16 education or training (not including university). There are many different types which can be more exam or practical based. Young people in the UK should be in some form of education or training (which can include part-time study alongside work) until they are 18.

## A-levels

A-levels (or advanced levels) are the most common qualification for students applying to university. This usually involves 3-4 subjects learnt over two years. These are mainly assessed through exams, but some subjects may have some coursework elements. They are valuable for those considering university or a vocational pathway (such as a higher apprenticeship).

## BTECs

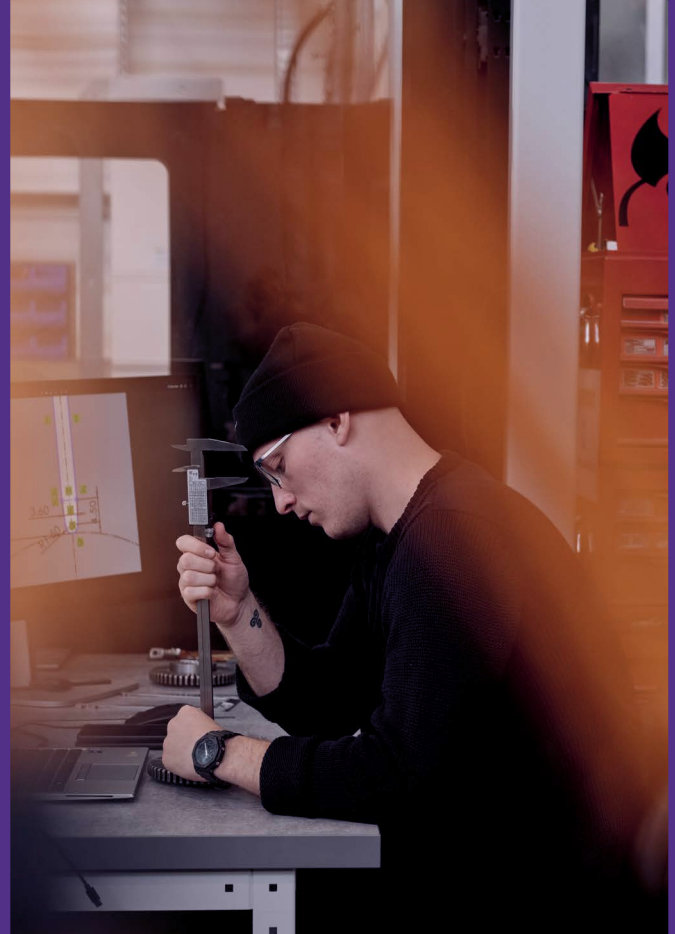
BTECs are vocational qualifications which focus on practical skills and knowledge in a particular subject/practical area. These are usually assessed through coursework/practical assignments rather than exams. BTECs can be taken on their own or with other A-levels and will be worth some UCAS points, which can be valuable in applying to university (subject and level dependent).

## T-levels

T-levels are technical qualifications and are designed alongside employers, with the intention of being pathways to skilled careers or apprenticeships. These are worth the equivalent of 3 A-Levels and also take 2 years to complete. These are newer qualifications but can be recognised by most universities with the same weight as A-level qualifications. It is worth your child checking specific entry requirements for universities they are interested in.

## NVQs

NVQs (or National Vocational Qualifications) are work-based qualifications which demonstrate industry-standard competency in certain jobs, such as construction or engineering. These are usually studied during work or apprenticeships.



# What different types of institutions are there?

There are a number of different institutions where your child can complete their further education – where they would like to go can depend on many factors such as the availability of subjects they want to study, familiarity with the education provider or the level of independence they want with their studies.

## Sixth Form

Sixth form colleges are independent institutions focused on academic qualifications (including A-levels and sometimes BTECs). Sixth forms can also be offered at secondary schools.

## College

Colleges generally offer a wide range of further education options, including vocational qualifications (such as BTECs and NVQs).

## Specialist Colleges

Some colleges focus on specific industries or areas of interest. Examples include colleges specialising in Art, Performing Arts, or Sport.

# Financial support options

## What financial aid is available to my child?

Primary financial aid comes from the 16 to 19 Bursary fund. This money is to help students with the costs of education (such as transport, books, stationary, lunch etc.) and does not need to be repaid.

Other financial support includes residential support (if their course is not available locally and is far away) or universal credit/PIP benefits.

Some institutions may offer additional bursaries or financial support, but this will vary by institution.

To access any of these financial aids or see what your child is eligible for, please contact your child's education provider for advice (usually their current or future school or college).

Most 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time education are not charged tuition fees (exceptions exist where people want to study more subjects, at an older age or resit exams). This is automatic and does not need to be applied for.

# SEN support

## Special Support Colleges

For students with special educational needs and disabilities, there are specialist colleges which focus on skills learning for independence, employability and life skills. They generally have a higher staff-to-student ratio than other colleges, and offer more support services (including following statutory guidance for further education to support young people with SEN).



# Apprenticeships and work

## What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are available in many different sectors and allow vocational and knowledge-based learning, targeted at a certain skill or industry.

There is also the option to progress to a degree apprenticeship after gaining further education qualifications.

In depth information about apprenticeship advice and options are included in the 'Apprenticeship' factsheet.

## What are my child's options for starting work?

Once your child has reached the minimum school leaving age (the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16), they can start paid work. At this stage, they may work up to 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week and are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age.

However, young people in England must remain in some form of education or training until they are 18. This does not mean they must stay at school full-time – options include college, apprenticeships, traineeships, or a combination of part-time education or training alongside work.

## National Careers Service

The National Careers Service is a government service providing guidance and advice on careers/industry. This service is free and aimed to support people aged 13 and over in England.

# Care leavers

## Pathway plan

By age 16, your local council must create a pathway plan to help your child prepare for leaving care.

This includes plans for Education, Employment and Training (EET), Housing, Finances and Personal and Social Support.

This support will be given until age 21 (but can be requested until 25 depending on if they are still in education or have special support needs).



National  
careers service

