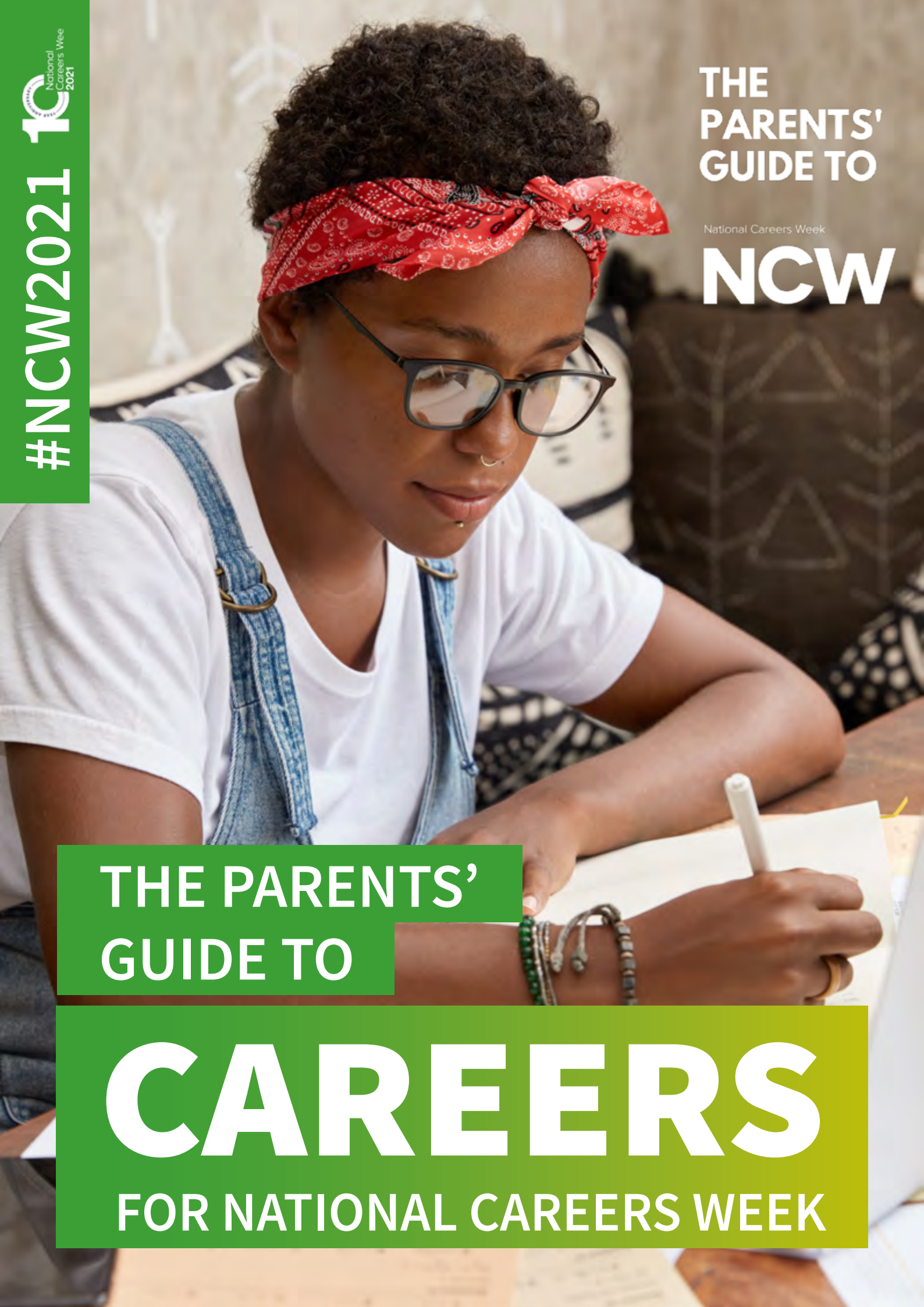
#NCW2021



THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

National Careers Week

NCW

THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

CAREERS

FOR NATIONAL CAREERS WEEK

The Parents' Guide to provides parents with the information they need to help their teenage children make the right choices to create successful futures after GCSE and sixth form.

Our online guides are designed to inform, involve and guide parental support. They include the most up to date information on topics such as apprenticeships, universities and revision techniques.

Wherever we refer to 'parents' we mean 'parents and carers.' This includes grandparents, older siblings or any other person with significant caring responsibilities for children.

This guide has been produced with NCW for National Careers Week 2021. We make recommendations of what we believe to be reliable sources to help you find further information but these organisations have not endorsed this guide. We're happy for you to use or share extracts of the guide, but don't forget to credit The Parents' Guide to

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Find out what's new

If you're interested in regular updates about how you can help your teenage children: ***www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/join-us***

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Talking to your teen about their future

It can be tricky to get teens to talk about anything, especially what they might want to do next. However, it is important they think about their future, what they might like to achieve and what they need to do now so they can get themselves on the right track.

This is even more relevant this year, with Covid-19 making us feel as if we have to wait until things get back to "normal" before looking ahead – we mustn't!

To help you, here are ten tips on how to talk to your teen about their future.

1 **Accept their idea of success may be different to yours**

Their dreams and ambitions might not align with your dreams and ambitions for them. This can be disappointing but let them walk their own path.

2 **It's OK if they're not sure on a career route yet**

They don't need to make that decision right now. They do need to develop skills that will help them progress, and that should be their focus.

3 **Try not to make the decisions for them**

They have more options than when you were their age - whether that's in taking qualifications, where to study or what job to train for. Your guidance is valuable, but the decision is theirs to make.

4 **Encourage them to turn passions into money-makers**

They're more likely to be successful (and happier) pursuing a career in something they enjoy.

5 **Help them navigate their limitations**

Not being academic should not be a barrier to success and there is usually more than one way to reach a destination.

6 **Encourage them to explore careers that are interesting to them**

Give them permission to explore careers that are interesting to them rather than interesting to you. This is especially relevant if you have a family tradition of all going into the same field of work or if you own a family business.

7 **Encourage them to explore all their options**

Help them plan out a route that focuses on their strengths. School leaver programmes, traineeships, apprenticeships and higher education options can often provide entry points into the same industry.

8 **Help them if they are struggling to look far ahead**

Setting short-term, achievable goals will help them strive towards a long-term ambition.

9 **It's OK if they change their mind!**

Reassure them that if they tell you they have their heart set on one direction, then later change their minds, you won't berate them for it.

10 **Empower them: they have control over their future**

The decisions they take and what they do matters.

Virtual Work Experience

What is virtual work experience?

Virtual work experience, also referred to as online, remote or digital, provides young people with the opportunity to gain experience in the workplace, develop their skills, boost their employability and explore new industries and job roles.

It's a broad term and can include any opportunity which provides young people with an insight into what it's like to work in an industry or job role while at home. Most virtual work experiences range from half a day to one week, but some may last longer depending on the nature of the work experience and the age of your child.

Not all virtual work experience is the same. Some are open to everyone and provide a platform for students to discover more about the job, view pre-recorded videos on what it's like to work with the organisation, go on virtual tours and possibly take part in some live Q&A sessions. Others may require your child to go through an application process and offer regular online meetings with a supervisor, individual project work, networking sessions, training opportunities and video tutorials.

What are the benefits??

Think global!

Virtual work placements are open to everyone and location does not need to be a limiting factor. This opens many possibilities for your child to explore new jobs and industries in areas that may not have been possible under face to face arrangements.

It's free

The majority of virtual work experience placements are free and working from home will also mean your child will not incur any travel related costs.

Future proof

Remote working is likely to be important to many businesses in the future and learning how to conduct business and work online will develop extremely valuable skills for the modern workplace.

Transferable skills

It's not always easy working from home and taking part in virtual work experience placements will help your child develop those soft skills that all employers are seeking, such as organisation, time-management and self-motivation.

Knowing what's right (or what isn't)

Understanding what a job or a career entails might help your child make decisions about whether or not that role is right for them in the future.

Virtual Work Experience

Which organisations offer virtual work experience?

As social distancing seems set to remain for the foreseeable future, more and more firms are beginning to provide virtual work experience opportunities to students and young people. Placements are available across several sectors including accountancy, law, marketing and the veterinary sciences. While this is by no means an exhaustive list, here are some companies and businesses currently offering virtual work experience.

Allied Healthcare Mentor (paid)

A live Virtual Work Experience Programme created and delivered by healthcare professionals for those interested in a career in healthcare. Prices start from £10 a day.

Barclays LifeSkills

An excellent website to help young people develop the skills they need for a better future.

Brighton and Sussex Medical School

Suitable for those looking to apply to medical school, this virtual work placement introduces students to the NHS before exploring the roles and skill sets of six different medical specialists.

Exploring the Veterinary profession

A two week, six hour, course that enables students to learn more about what it takes to become a vet and whether it's the right career choice for them.

InsideSherpa

An excellent website which offers virtual work experience placements from a range of companies, from banking to careers in tech. Most options last up to six hours and involve tutorials, videos and activities.

InvestIn (paid)

Aimed at students between 14 and 18 years old, InvestIn offers an impressive array of virtual work placements involving real life work and contact with professionals. This is a paid service, and placements range from one day to one week. Prices start from £90.

National Cyber Security Centre

A website dedicated to helping the UK's next generation of cyber professionals through a variety of free courses for 11-17 year olds and exciting competitions.

Speakers4Schools

Recently launched, Speakers4schools aims to provide a level playing field by connecting young people to high quality virtual work placements. Register to stay up to date with their latest developments.

The Careers and Enterprise Company

A regularly updated and comprehensive list of virtual opportunities containing links to virtual work placements and training opportunities for students in year 9-13.

Click here for a full list of virtual work placements.

The Parents' Guide to Careers for National Careers Week 2021

Things to consider

Online placements are not for everyone

Not everyone is suited to working behind a screen or remotely; some may have their heart set on a more creative or hands on career option. If virtual work experience is not right for your child, there's lots of other things they can do while at home

Opportunities are limited

Virtual work placements and internships are a new offering and places are likely to be limited and only available in certain industries, however, the list of companies offering them is growing.

May not give a full reflection of the job

There are limitations to what can be experienced through virtual placements, so make sure your child is aware that this may only provide a partial glimpse of what's involved in the job.

Safeguarding

Be sure to check the company's credentials and what information your child is giving to them. Most companies will have age guidelines for suitability, but if not, do make sure it's age appropriate.

VIRTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE PROVIDES YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE DIFFERENT CAREER OPTIONS

Vocational routes after GCSE

What your child chooses to do after Year 11 can have a big impact on their future. The choices they make now will influence how easily they will be able to get a job or enter further education when they are older. The main options at this stage are for them to go on to full time education or take an apprenticeship/ training.

Things they need to consider are the type of qualification they are going to study; what type of learning suits them best (classroom or practical); and what they enjoy. Here we're focusing on vocational choices (rather than gaining further academic qualifications by staying on at school or going to college).

	Vocational qualifications	BTEC apprenticeship	Other options
Qualification type	City and Guilds; National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) or Tech Bac (similar to Baccalaureate)	Advanced Level 3 (equivalent to x2 A levels)	Traineeship, volunteer (with training), internship
Type of learning	Dependent on the qualification, most contain practical on the job training	Work based including off-site learning	Work based
Qualifications needed to sign up	x5 GCSE passes	Depends on employer, some require at least 3 GCSEs	None
Subject choices	Range of vocational subjects	Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered	Range of vocational subjects, driven by the job offered
Commitment	2 years (level 3)	1-2 years	6 weeks – 6 months

Vocational routes after sixth form

What your child chooses to do after sixth form (or college) is exciting but can be nerve-racking. There are lots of options available and understanding the pros and cons between different choices can be confusing. If they're not academic and want to get straight to work, there are lots of options available.

Important considerations include whether they want to include some form of studying, how they will finance living expenses and course fees (and whether you can afford to help them) and whether they're happy to move away from home or stay close by.

	Traineeship	Job with training	Job without training
Qualification type	To prepare students for work or to go on to further education.	Training usually funded by employer, but check that it is a national recognised qualification, such as NVQ	Going straight into a job offers work experience but not a qualification. However, it is possible to create a personal training plan if desired.
Length of commitment	6 weeks to 6 months	n/a	n/a
Tuition Costs	£0 Training fees are paid by the government.	£0 Training funded by the employer.	£-££ Any training would be self-funded.
Living expenses *(i.e. food, book, travel, going out)*	£-££ Not paid to work, but some expenses (such as travel) may be provided.	£ Salary provided and jobs are usually within commutable distance from home, though travel can be expensive.	£ Salary provided and jobs are usually within commutable distance from home, though travel can be expensive.

	Internship	Gap Year	Start a business
Qualification type	None	Could include a year working for a charity or other employer to gain skills – not just about travelling. Can combine A level retakes in this year.	None, but it's important to have drive, commitment and an idea of what business idea to pursue.
Length of commitment	1 month to 6 months But some up to a year.	1 year	n/a
Tuition Costs	£0 Internships are about gaining practical work experience so there are rarely any formal qualifications undertaken.	£0 There are no tuition costs unless retaking examinations.	£-££ The Prince's Trust, Local Enterprise Partnership, and New Enterprise Allowance offer grants and mentoring.
Living expenses *(i.e. food, book, travel, going out)*	£-££ Legally interns should be paid although many aren't. Some companies may cover travel expenses. Depending on the location, living and travel expenses could be costly.	£-£££ Gap years need not be expensive. Flights and accommodation is usually covered for overseas volunteering. Personal travel can be funded by working for part of the year.	£ Lots of young people start their businesses online, which means minimal start up costs and they can continue living at home.

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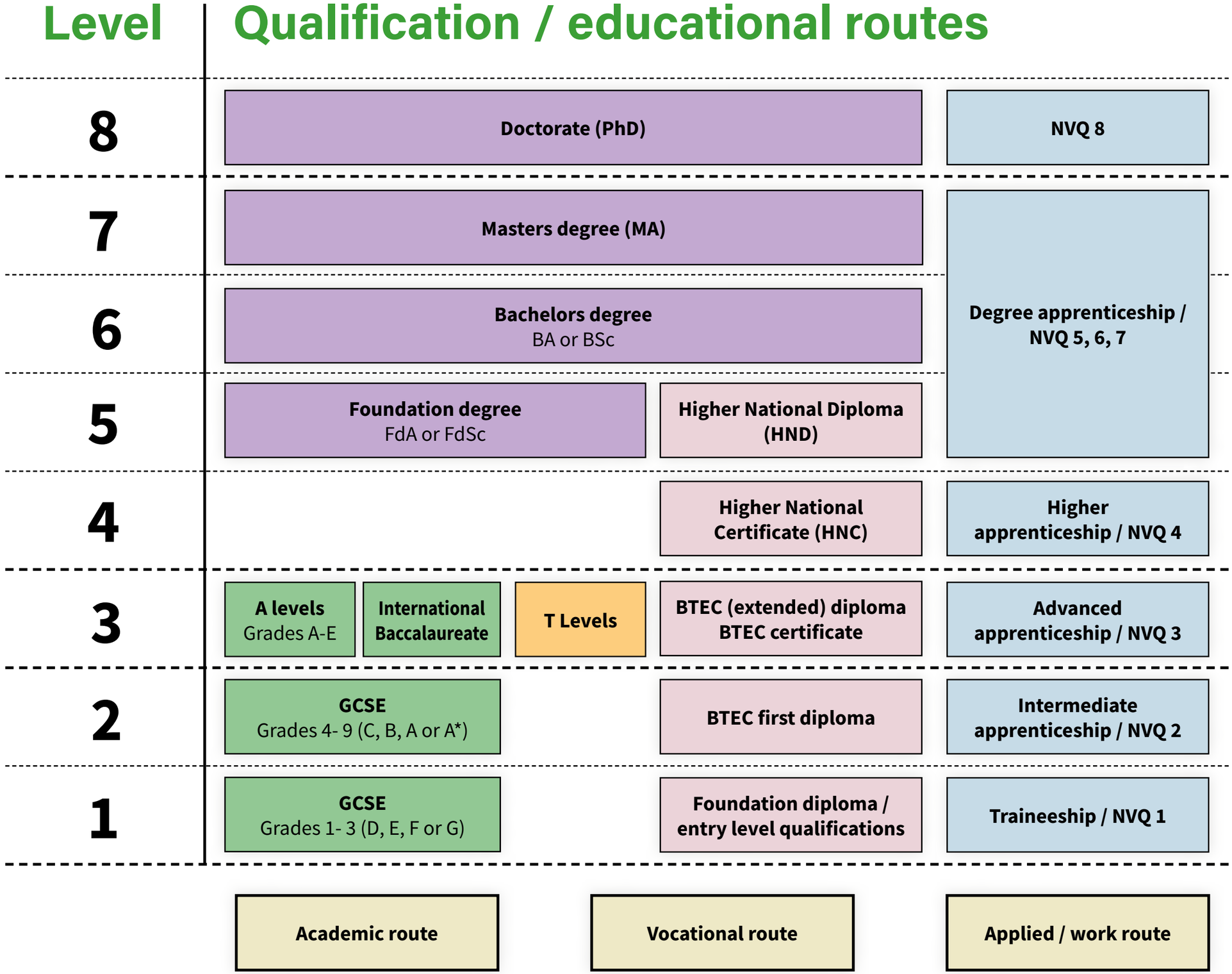

Levels of Education

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there are 8 qualification levels (1 - 8) plus an entry level qualification for those just starting. Generally, the higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is. Levels 1-3 are typically taught in schools and colleges.

With so many different qualifications, it can be hard to know what they mean and where they might lead to next. To help you understand, we've created a summary of what the levels mean highlighting academic, vocational and work-based routes to higher education.

Keep up-to-date

Sign up to our parent newsletter and receive free support, advice and resources on how you can help your teenage children straight to your inbox.

Learn more

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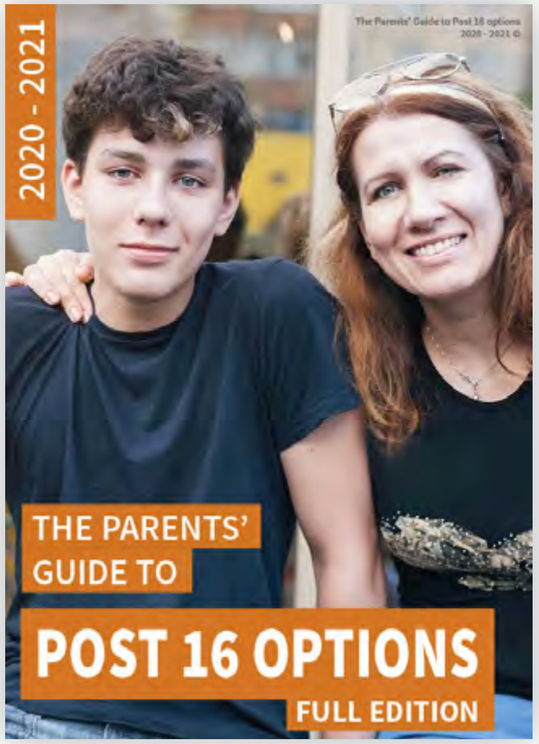

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Apprenticeships

What your child chooses to do after GCSE or sixth form is both exciting and daunting. There are lots of options available and understanding the pros and cons between different choices can be challenging. Apprenticeships should not be over-looked; they offer the opportunity to combine study with paid employment resulting in a professional qualification. There are no tuition fees (these are covered by the employer and the government) and the salary can cover living expenses.

Apprenticeships used to be associated with trade industries (such as electricians, mechanics or plumbers). Nowadays, apprenticeships can be taken in a wide range of industry sectors and provide entry to all types of careers, including accountancy, banking, IT, law, management and television.

Relatively new to the apprenticeship suite are "degree apprenticeships", offering an earn while you learn route to BSc or BA status. In other words, the end qualification is the same as if your child had attended university full time, the difference is that they will not have incurred any debt in tuition fees and will finish their degree with robust and transferable workplace skills.

Taking an apprenticeship is not an easy option and competition can be fierce. It takes organisation and dedication to balance work, where your child will be expected to contribute to the same standards as everyone else, and study. Holidays are far fewer than at college or university. However, if they have a more practical, work-related bias towards learning this will suit them well and they will obtain valuable experience which will strengthen opportunities in finding rewarding work when the apprenticeship is over.

Selecting the right apprenticeship will require your child to have reasonable confidence in the type of career they wish to follow although there is some flexibility. So how do you help them decide? We'll guide you.

Useful links

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you to their website

GOV. UK Overview

UCAS

The Parents' Guide to

Apprenticeship levels

LEVEL 2
Intermediate apprenticeships

Typical length
12-18 months

Entry requirements:
None or few

Qualifications obtained:
GCSE, BTEC or equivalent

Who's it for?
Mostly for 16-year-olds with limited or no academic qualifications.

LEVEL 3
Advanced apprenticeships

Typical length
12-24 months

Entry requirements:
Usually 5 GCSEs

Qualifications obtained:
A levels or equivalent

Who's it for?
Mostly for 16-year-olds with reasonable academic achievements but who don't want to study in sixth form.

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LEVEL 4/5
Higher apprenticeships

Typical length
3-5 years

Entry requirements:
A levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained:
Higher national diploma / foundation degree

Who's it for?
Mostly for those who want to qualify for professional career paths without attending university or college. Sometimes referred to as 'school leaver' or 'non-graduate' programmes.

LEVEL 6/7
Degree apprenticeship

Typical length
3-7 years

Entry requirements:
At least 2 A levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained:
A BA or BSc degree or higher

Who's it for?
Mostly for those with excellent sixth form results that want to study for a degree or similar whilst working. Aimed at attracting high-calibre candidates to bridge professional skills gaps.

Where to find the right apprenticeship

There's a wide range of ways to seek out apprenticeships and we recommend using a selection of options rather than relying on one.

Government website

Most apprenticeships are posted on the Government's website and can be found using the 'search' function. By creating an account, your child can set up alerts and filters to see opportunities that are of most interest to them and to be emailed when new opportunities arise.

Companies direct

Another alternative is for them to identify companies that are of interest and check those websites for apprenticeships. Not all companies offer apprenticeships, but many do. Be warned - apprenticeships offered by well known companies such as BBC, Nestle, Virgin or British Gas are likely to be incredibly competitive.

Job boards

National job agencies will also advertise apprenticeships and options can be narrowed to review within local distances from home or specific job types. This might be a particularly good way to seek out apprenticeships in level 3-5 range.

School careers advisor

If your child's school has a careers department, then getting them to speak with their careers advisor is a good move. Careers advisors are often the first to hear from companies advertising new apprenticeships.

For more information on apprenticeships and how to help your child research, apply and prepare for one, you may be interested in The Parents' Guide to Apprenticeships 2020-2021.

Useful links

GOV. UK Search	Apprenticeship Search	Not going to Uni	The Parents' Guide to

Top 10 apprenticeship employers: 2020

Click me to learn more

1. MOTUS COMMERCIALS
2. BAE SYSTEMS
3. Mitchells & Butlers
4. M&G
5. BT
6. Softcat
7. pwc
8. EY Building a better working world
9. SOLENIS
10. bam nuttall

Based on 4,000 reviews - statistics compiled by ***www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk***
For a list of the top 100 apprenticeship employers click ***here***.

APPRENTICESHIPS WITH TOP EMPLOYERS WILL BE VERY COMPETITIVE

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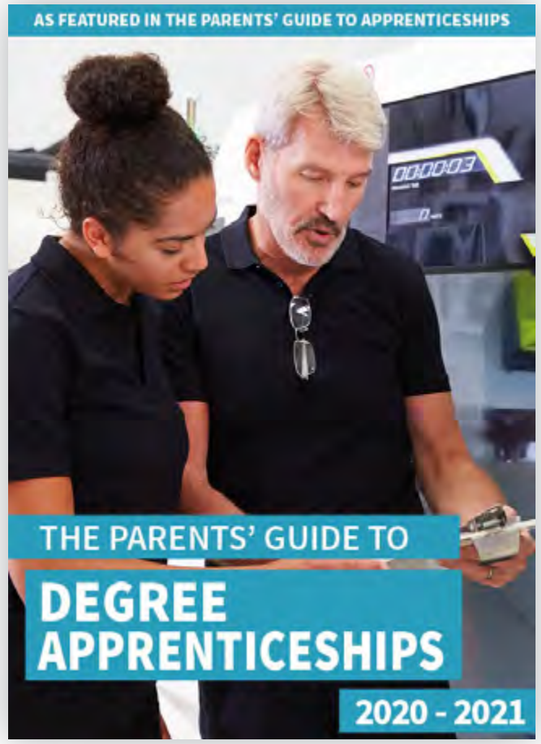

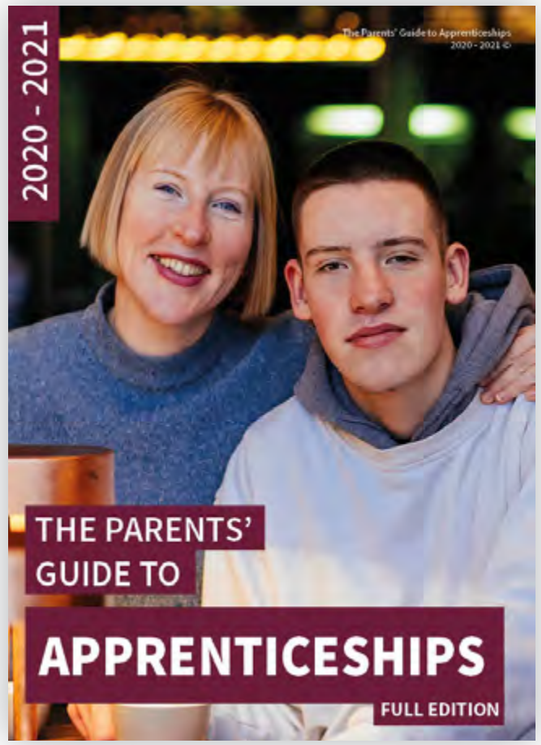

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Other options

It is important to remember that further education and academic study isn't for everyone. There are plenty of other ways to continue learning, such as apprenticeships, traineeships, paid or voluntary work or gap years.

Getting a job

The world of work can be an exciting option and doesn't necessarily need to rule out further study at a later date. If your child does plan to get a job after school or college, encourage them to think carefully about the kind of work they want to do and the reasons for doing it. Do they plan to start in an entry level position and gradually work their way up to a higher position as they begin to gain more experience? Or do they want to start earning, and use this time to reflect on what they might like to do next?

Job with training

Some jobs may provide training, which is usually funded by the employer. Encourage your child to check what qualifications are being offered and whether it is a nationally recognised qualification, such as a NVQ.

School leaver programmes

School leaver programmes offer opportunities to join the workplace straight after sixth form studies and commence skills development and career progression through experience as well as studying to obtain a nationally recognised qualification. Entry requirements vary from employer to employer.

Useful links

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Post 16 options summary

Not Going to Uni

Post 18 options summary

Traineeships and internships

Traineeships

Traineeships are short-term work placings lasting up to a maximum of six months to help young people become "job ready". The work experience element includes at least 100 hours on the job training to help provide the necessary experience to undertake apprenticeships or other employment.

Internships

Whilst internships can be useful, they should not be confused with apprenticeships. Internships are informal arrangements with an employer, there is rarely a signed contract, they are usually short-term (less than one year) and they do not result in a formal qualification. They do offer an insight into business, networking opportunities, the possibility of job offers afterwards and the ability to learn practical, transferable skills. They may be useful in giving a student enough experience to start an apprenticeship.

Supported internships

Supported internships are for students with learning difficulties or impairments who want to get a job and need extra support to do this. They're a good way to get the training and experience your child needs to get into work.

Key tip:

These routes can be very helpful for non-academic students who may be better at picking up practical skills.

Useful links

I'm interactive! Click me and I'll take you to their website

Gov.uk Traineeships

GOV.uk Internships

Starting a business

Covid 19 has had a devastating impact on job opportunities and it's harder than ever for young people to get jobs, especially students seeking part-time work to fit around their studies. However, for those teenagers with an entrepreneurial flair, there are still ways that they can gain experience and perhaps even make money in the process.

If your teen has the enthusiasm and ability, starting a small business needn't be costly and could give them an edge over others when it comes to interviews. This doesn't mean full-time commitment – it's something they could fit around studies or focus on only during school holidays. If things go really well, they may even have the beginnings of a career working for themselves.

Developing transferable skills

We often mention transferable skills, and that's because they're desirable. Whether for further education opportunities or to fill job roles, interviewers are trying to ensure they take on someone who is the right fit. There may be a minimum standard of qualifications needed, but they'll also be looking for personality and skillset.

Transferable skills are vital in every business, irrespective of the industry. Is your child a great communicator, well-organized, able to work on their own initiative, responsive and innovative? Can they prove it? Starting their own business gives your child first-hand experience that will teach them many skills that they wouldn't hone so quickly (or at all) through academic studies alone. It demonstrates they can apply their learning and character in real-life situations – and gives them a vehicle to prove their capabilities.

Useful links

I'm interactive! Click me and I'll take you to their website

Local Enterprise Network

Prince's Trust

The Parents' Guide to

The Parents' Guide to Careers for National Careers Week 2021

Key transferable skills when starting a business

Initiative - having good ideas and acting upon them

Demonstrable experience - working on real-life projects, not just theoretical scenarios

Ability to communicate – probably the most important, running their own business shows they can communicate well with clients and people they don't know, both verbally and in writing

Teamwork - collaborating with others to achieve positive outcomes

Ability to meet deadlines – to produce high quality work within limited time-frames

Listening – being responsive to others' needs

Leadership -inspiring and motivating others (by getting clients or followers)

Consistency – delivering high quality on a regular basis

Commitment and reliability – even growing a small business requires dedication over a period of time

Time management and balance – crucial in successfully maintaining a business alongside their studies

Problem solving -recognizing challenges and finding solutions

ONE IN TEN STUDENTS WILL TAKE A GAP YEAR AFTER FINISHING SCHOOL

Gap Years

Taking a year out after school can be beneficial, certainly in terms of the skills and experiences that can be developed, but your child will need to determine whether it's the right choice for them.

What does a gap year involve?

Traditionally, this is a year spent travelling overseas, but it needn't focus exclusively on that. Volunteering and work experience can also be incorporated and inform your child's likes and dislikes, as well as giving them valuable first-hand experience in a variety of areas they may not have had chance to try out. Gap years don't have to be expensive, and if finances are tight, your child can self fund their travels by getting a job first.

Is a gap year right for my child?

If your child is considering taking a year out after school, it's important to spend some time together and identify what it is your child wants to achieve. Gap years can be an excellent choice for students wanting to gain news skills and experience, earn money, spend time deciding what career path they want to take or have a break from work and study.

However, for some a gap year can be distracting and, if not well-planned, could prove somewhat directionless, which is unlikely to be beneficial. Before committing to a gap year, make sure your child has clear goals to make their time out from work or study a productive and fulfilling one.

Useful links

I'm interactive! Click me and I'll take you to their website

GOV. UK Foreign Travel Advice

Gap 360

Visit **The Parents' Guide to** website for more support and resources:

All our resources are ready for immediate download

Parent Guides

Our range of interactive guides provide you with easy to follow advice, hyperlinks to reliable sources and the most up-to-date information.

Parent newsletter

Sign up to our parent newsletter and receive free support, advice and resources on how you can help your teenage children straight to your inbox.

Support articles

Browse through our collection of online articles covering a range of topics from supporting your child with their revision to helping them apply to university through UCAS.

Parent Q&A

Almost every parent has questions about their child's education. Read through answers to commonly asked questions or ask your own.

Blog

Our blog provides reliable and timely advice and support to changes taking place across UK schools and colleges.

www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/support

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