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## POST 18 CHOICES

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# Things to consider and all your options

If you are about to choose your options at 18 there are plenty of things to choose from.

The choices you make will be affected by many things like your financial situation, interests, your attitude to study, your qualifications, the job market, etc.

Another big factor is the job or career you have in mind and now is a good time to really get into the detail about which job sectors you are interested in, what sort of opportunities they offer and what qualifications they are looking for.

## Choices you could consider at 18

- Doing a [higher education level course](#) – either full-time, part-time or by distance learning, at a university or a college;
- Doing an [Intermediate, Advanced, Higher or Degree Apprenticeship](#);
- Getting a [job that offers training](#);
- Doing [a vocational course at a Further Education College](#)
- [Taking a year out \(a gap year\)](#)

As always, getting advice and support from those who know you or are career specialists is very important, as is finding out about the different employment options available to you and the [qualifications and skills you need for a particular career](#).

## Higher education

If you have Level 3 qualifications like A Levels or vocational qualifications like a BTEC Level 3 you could explore higher-level study. If you haven't, but would be interested in higher-level study later, there are lots of ways in through [Access Courses](#) and through [study alongside work](#).

## Not Going to Uni

If you are thinking that university is not for you then you could explore alternatives, such as:

- [Work \(preferably with training\)](#)
- [Apprenticeships](#)
- [Sponsored degrees](#)
- [Further Education College courses](#).

The [Not Going to Uni site](#) and [Student Ladder site](#) have lots of information about the alternatives and advertise vacancies and opportunities for the different options.

## Why skills are also important

Remember - young people with qualifications are more attractive to employers than those without. Work experience and general employability skills, such as teamwork and communication skills, are also valued.

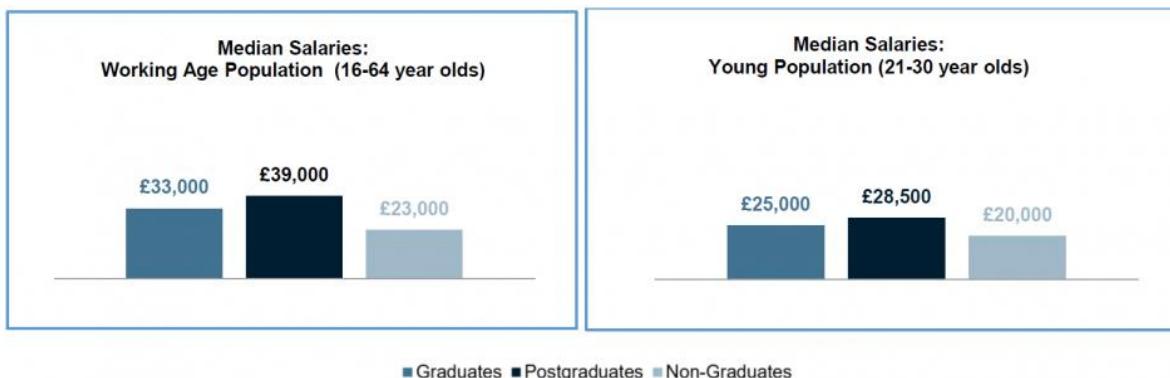
If you would like to get online or telephone advice from a careers adviser you can click this link to [access an adviser from the National Careers Service](#)

If you need to write a CV for a job [follow this link](#) to find information explaining how to do it.

[MyKindaFuture](#) has a tool to help you build an interactive CV you can send to employers.

### See how qualifications can affect pay

Often the more you learn the more you earn! That's not always true but the graph below shows that in 2017, 21-30 year-old graduates (people with a degree) earned £5,000 more than non-graduates on average, and the average working-age graduate earned £10,000 more than the average non-graduate.



# University level Course

## Choosing Higher Education at 18/19

Many 18 or 19 year-olds choose to go to university (higher education) after school or college. The proportion of young people going on to higher education has increased from one in eight in 1980 to well over one in three now.

There are lots of [different types of higher-education](#) level courses available. Higher education means any sort of [nationally recognised qualification](#) which is at Level 4 or above (A Levels, BTEC Level 3 and Advanced Apprenticeships are all Level 3 qualifications). A degree starts at Level 4 and progresses to Level 6 in the third year.

Although in the past higher-education courses were just delivered at universities, they are now offered at [universities, colleges and also some training providers](#) too.

So, if you have Level 3 qualifications you could explore [higher-level study at 18/19](#).

## Getting a degree without debt!

Students now have to apply for a government loan to pay for tuition fees (£9,250+ a year for some courses).

Read more about loans and [financial support for Higher Education here](#).

If the idea of taking out a loan for your university course is putting you off, then there are other ways to get a degree with financial support; through an [employer-sponsored degree](#); a [Higher Apprenticeship](#) or [Degree Apprenticeship](#); or with reduced fees through [The Open University](#) - where you can study part-time alongside work.

# Advanced, Higher or Degree Apprenticeship

If you have achieved 5 good GCSES (grades A\*-C or 9-4 in new grading), have good post-16 results or a current Intermediate Apprenticeship you might be interested in an Advanced, Higher or Degree Apprenticeship.

For more information follow this link to [apprenticeships](#).

## A level/BTEC Level 3 students thinking about

If you are doing A Levels or other Level 3 qualifications, like BTECs/OCR, you might be considering an apprenticeship or higher education (university) when you finish.

An apprenticeship can be a good route if you want to get training for a specific job sector and be earning at the same time. There are all sorts of opportunities for fantastic apprenticeships developing all the time.

However, there are a few things you need to consider:

- Apprenticeship vacancies for the summer after you finish your A Levels/other Level 3 qualifications are advertised throughout the year and the closing dates can vary. Therefore, if you are undecided about whether to choose an apprenticeship or higher-education path it is probably best to apply for higher education as well as look for apprenticeship vacancies. If you get an apprenticeship you can always decline your university offer.
- There are 70+ different job areas now offering [Higher Apprenticeships](#), which are higher-education-level qualifications (Level 4+). Employers are asking for A Levels and other Level 3 qualifications as entry requirements. Search for vacancies online using the [Careerpilot course search](#) or register for alerts about vacancies on [gov.uk](#). You can also look at company websites or make speculative applications.
- If you do not have the relevant job-specific experience you might have to complete an Advanced Apprenticeship, even though these are the same level qualifications (Level 3) as A Levels - although you might be able to complete it quicker than a 16-year-old.
- Not all sectors offer [Higher Apprenticeship](#) qualifications so make sure you check if they are available in your chosen sector. [Look here to find out what apprenticeships are approved](#) but remember, you still need to find a vacancy.
- For some jobs there is no apprenticeship pathway and a university degree is the only way in e.g. vet, doctor, etc.
- Higher and Degree Apprenticeship opportunities are likely to be highly competitive!

# FE College at 18

Further Education College after Y12/13

Most young people progress to a further-education college at 16, after GCSEs. However, you can also progress to a college at 17 or 18, after A Levels, BTECs or similar.

Colleges offer an extensive list of courses which could include:

- **GCSE:** The GCSE offer at each college will vary but all will offer English and maths, including re-sits.
- **A Levels:** Some colleges offer a large selection of A Levels as the schools near them are only 11-16, but some colleges do not offer any.
- **Vocational subjects** - these are related to a broad subject area such as business, health and social care, etc. - so they can lead to a large variety of employment areas or university courses.
- **Practical Vocational Courses (often now called technical or professional programmes)** that lead to specific jobs such as hairdressing, plumbing, or engineering.
- **Apprenticeships** where a student is based predominantly or completely with a paying employer and is assessed either in that workplace by a visiting assessor or by attending college for a day or week at a time.
- **Courses that prepare people for Higher Education**, such as Access Courses or the Art Foundation/Post- A level Art Course
- **Vocational Higher-Education-Level courses**, such as Foundation Degrees, Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and Certificates (HNCs).
- **Foundation Courses** to develop maths, English, study skills and employability skills. These courses can give students the chance to try out several different vocational areas

Explore [college websites](#) to find out what they offer.

Find out more about [Further Education Colleges and what they offer.](#)

Find out more about studying a [Higher Education course in a Further Education College](#) near you.

**Education free until 19**

Be aware that free education in Further Education is only available up until you are 19 unless you are doing your first Level 3 course. Check the [level of your current qualifications here.](#)

# Work with training/study

When you have finished school, sixth form or college you might want to start work, rather than stay in full-time education. Although in recent years you will have heard there are lots of young people who are struggling to find a job, the situation is improving. There are opportunities out there but the job market can be competitive.

If you are job hunting then try and find out what training the company offers and what the opportunities might be for promotion in the future.

Try to get a job you can combine with training (leading to a [nationally recognised qualification](#)) as this will enable you to continue learning as you work. This could mean that you will have more job satisfaction as you develop and use higher skills and could also mean you get more pay in the future.

Follow this link to the [work and learn](#) section to find out more about your choices.

Look at the information on [job sectors](#) in Careerpilot - there are lots of 'Useful Links' to sites which can help you find a job.

[Watch this video about using social media to find a new job.](#)

[Follow this link to see a beginner's guide to job hunting using social media.](#)

# Gap year

A gap year usually means taking a year out in between your studies, often at age 18 and after Level 3 qualifications such as A Levels, etc. There are lots of things you could do on a gap year like travelling, working or volunteering.

Some people apply and get a place at university and then ask for their place to be deferred so that they can have a gap year. [Read more about requesting a deferred place when you apply here.](#)

A gap year can offer a great opportunity to develop personal and employability skills or to get experience working in a job area of interest or to meet people from different cultures. Also, some people use their gap year to confirm what sort of job or career they are interested in before they choose their next step. And, for some, having A-Level grades in the bag before applying for university can help decide what and where to apply to, especially if it is a very competitive course or you did better than anticipated.

There are companies which will help you plan your gap year but be warned it all costs money!

If you want the experience of a gap year to help you plan your future work or want to use it to show future employers evidence of your skills or independence, then try and make sure you balance the fun elements with developing useful skills for the future.

Also sell what you have learnt through the experience of a gap year in your applications for jobs and courses.

[Find out more about gap years, costs, pros and cons.](#)

[Read this article called 'Taking a gap year: should I stay or should I go?'](#)

Here are a few links to gap-year experiences that help develop skills for future life and work:

- [The Year in Industry](#) programme
- [The Year Out group](#) has many different gap year programmes which have been approved for their quality
- [Prospects](#) has a list of gap year opportunities
- Travelling is a popular part of a gap year and there are companies such as [STA travel](#) that aim to help young people get the most out of their trip.

# **Free online courses (MOOCs) - great for CVs & personal statements**

MOOCs are a recent development which aim to use new technologies to bring **free**, short learning opportunities to large numbers of people worldwide. MOOC stands for Massive Open Online Course.

You do not need qualifications to start these courses. The courses are a chance to try something new, develop an area of interest, learn something which will help you get the job or course you want, etc. Although the courses might not offer a formal qualification, the knowledge gained from doing one could help you prepare for a higher-education-level course or help you choose a course.

By completing a MOOC you will gain skills and knowledge that can boost your CV or UCAS personal statement.

FutureLearn offer a diverse selection of free, high-quality online courses from some of the world's leading universities and other outstanding cultural institutions.

The aim is to connect learners from all over the globe with high-quality educators and with each other.

## **Taster courses for school leavers**

FutureLearn has developed a new set of 'FutureLearn Choices' courses, which last for three to eight weeks. These are taster courses to give school leavers a real sense of university-level study.

## **Courses to help students secure a place at university:**

- [How to Succeed at Interviews](#)
- [How to Succeed at Writing Applications](#)
- [Preparing for Uni](#)
- [Developing your Research Project](#)

## **Courses to help give students an experience of subjects outside the national curriculum:**

- [Computer Science](#)
- [Dentistry](#)
- [Archaeology](#)
- [Robotics](#)

Here are a few examples of other free FutureLearn courses on offer:

- [Climate Change: The Science](#)
- [Introduction to forensic science](#)
- [Shakespeare's Hamlet: text, performance, and culture](#)
- [Exploring our oceans](#)

Coursera - more course choices from 161 institutions

[Coursera](#) is another provider of free online courses that cover a wide variety of subjects. There is the option of buying a certificate on completion, although this is not a requirement. Working with over 150 institutions worldwide there are currently 2,700+ courses to choose from.

# Internships and work placements

## What is an internship?

An internship or work placement can give you the opportunity to work at a company with the intention of learning new skills and gaining experience in a particular industry.

More and more companies are offering these types of positions to school leavers, as well as to graduates.

There are three different types of internships:

- **Work Shadowing** - Work Shadow interns follow one or more members of a team throughout their day-to-day routine, allowing them to learn from top industry professionals.
- **Vacation Schemes** - These are offered by some of the larger Management, Financial, and Accountancy firms. They act as training programmes and as a way for firms to assess candidates for future roles within the company. These schemes also give candidates the opportunity to see if the company is right for them.
- **Work Placements** - Work Placements are often part of a degree programme. They tend to be available in fields like Finance, Consultancy, Marketing, and Management. Work placements are designed to give students a taste for working life in their chosen profession, and help add to a more well-rounded education whilst at university.

The length of internships can vary, usually work placements are run over a fixed length of time, typically a number of weeks or months. Smaller companies such as retail businesses or media agencies typically offer shorter internships. A work-shadow opportunity may only last one to two weeks owing to the type of role that is being shadowed.

## Examples of work shadowing schemes for Year-12 students

**PwC** have exciting opportunities for students to gain work experience on one of their business insight weeks - [Find out more](#).

**Santander** have 3 different opportunities for 15-19 year old students, 1 day, 1 week and 4 week placements - [Find out more](#).

Search for the latest internships & work-experience opportunities on [Guardian Jobs](#)

# Help with employment

Deciding on a particular job or career can be a hard choice; there can seem to be a never ending range of choices and opportunities to think about. You also need to bear in mind that jobs are changing with new technology so you need to keep an eye on where things are going.

Whether you are clear about what you want to do or are just exploring options, it is worth thinking about what is important/not so important to you in a job.

Discuss your plans with someone. This could be a parent/carer, teacher, tutor or one of our careers adviser. You can also [access an adviser through the National Careers Service for Young People](#).

If you already have an idea of the job you want to

That's great, but it is still worth gathering as much information as possible about your chosen job or career choice.

You can:

- Find out all you can about the job or career that interests you. In Careerpilot you will find information about a range of [job sectors](#) and Job Profiles to help you.
- Think about the job or career itself – what it offers, the qualifications and skills that you need and how the job market in that sector is doing.
- Do the Pre-16 Skills Map or Post 16 Skills Map [in the Career Tools](#). You will be able to see what skills you have in the Skills Bank and you can also see your skills against the skills required in a job in any job profile. Do you see any gaps? How can you fill them? What qualifications or training do you need?
- Remember it is always worth having a look at more than one job and more than one job sector, just in case your first idea doesn't work out.

If you are still exploring jobs and careers:

Many young people are not sure what job they might like to do in the future and that's fine. If that sounds like you then when you are choosing qualifications choose a broad selection of subjects, this can help keep your options open and give you lots of choices later.

You can:

- Start by doing the [Careerpilot Job Sector Quiz](#). This will help you find job sectors that could give you what you want from a job.
- Check out the job or career itself in the [Careerpilot job sectors](#). Look at the detailed job profiles to find out what a job offers, the qualifications and skills that you need and how the job market in that sector is doing, will it go up or down?
- You could [start with a subject you love](#) and get ideas of where it could take you.
- Do the Pre-16 Skills Map or Post 16 Skills Map [in the Career Tools](#). You will be able to see what skills you have in the Skills Bank and you can also see your skills against the skills

required in a job in any job profile. Do you see any gaps? How can you fill them? What qualifications or training do you need?

- Do the [icould buzz quiz](#) which is a fun way to, in under five minutes, discover:

- your strengths and what makes you tick
- get an idea of a few job areas that might suit you.

- Do the [Prospects quiz](#), which takes 12-15 minutes. Answer questions about your skills, motivations and desires, and get mapped to jobs that might be of interest. The Prospect site also has lots of job profiles.

### Questions to ask yourself

- What sort of work environment would suit me? Indoors or outdoors? In an office or more active?
- Would I rather work with other people or on my own?
- Do I want to work for myself or someone else?
- What sort of money do I want to earn?
- How do I learn best?

### Find out which job sectors are growing

- Find out about which job sectors are growing [here](#).
- Use the [Careerometer](#), you can include up to three jobs and see what you will earn and whether they are predicted to grow.
- You can also explore '[Finding a job](#)' which has links to vacancy websites so you can see what jobs seem to be available.

You can then use this information to:

- Map your skills to a job/career you are interested in.
- Identify the skills you need to develop for your chosen career.
- Recognise the skills you have when you apply for a job, course, apprenticeship or other training and promote these skills when you apply.

### Support to start your own business

If you are interested in starting your own business then find out more [here](#).

# Support from Careers Team at CTK

The Careers Team can help you with your career choices, university, apprenticeships and employment.

If you need to speak to a Careers Adviser, you can find us at the following college sites and on the days below:

<b>Mrs Lower Aquinas</b> (215): Mon-Fri	<b>Mr Peat St Mary's</b> (LRC): Mon, Tues, Wed & Fri	<b>Ms Choudhary Emmanuel</b> (Careers Building) Tues - Thurs
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## Careers Bulletin

During each term, we will email you the Careers Bulletin to keep you updated about careers information, activities and programmes taking place at college and externally. Please read through the Bulletin and take advantage of any opportunities that you feel will help you in achieving your academic and professional goals.

# Action Plan

It is important that before you leave CTK you know what you are going to progress on to. To help you we have created the following action plan:

Are there any university courses that you are interested in?

Are there any Advanced, Higher or Degree Apprenticeship that you would like to take part in?

Are there any internships or work placements that are of interest to you?

Do you want to go straight into employment and if so what type of job do you want?

Follow up meeting arranged with member of the CTK Careers Team to monitor progress for the following time and date: