

Post-16 pathways: Levels 1–3

LEVEL 3
5 or more GCSEs
at grade 5 or
above *

LEVEL 2
Fewer than five
GCSEs at grade 4
or above *

LEVEL 1

Choose the route that best matches how you learn and where you want to go

A LEVELS

Academic
subjects
for higher study

V LEVEL & AAQ

Applied learning;
each = 1 A Level

T LEVELS

Technical study +
industry
placement

L3 APPRENTICESHIP

Paid employment
with training

**LEAD TO HE, HIGHER OR DEGREE
APPRENTICESHIP OR EMPLOYMENT**

Level 2 pathways — new certificates phase in from September 2027

FOUNDATION

1-year certificate
Route to Level 3

OCCUPATIONAL

2-year certificate
Skilled work route

APPRENTICESHIP

Paid job + training
Work or Level 3

L2 VOCATIONAL

Practical course
Work or Level 3

LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT, FURTHER TRAINING OR L3 STUDY

BUILD CORE SKILLS

Level 1 courses,
English & maths



GAIN CONFIDENCE

Supported learning
and preparation



PROGRESS

Move to Level 2
when ready

*** NB. It is important to check with each college or provider the specific details of what they are offering and entry requirements.**

This document has been collated by EBP South from information available in the public domain - September 2026. Should you require this document in a larger font or format, please contact your Career Practitioner or enquires@ebpsouth.co.uk