

POST-16 PATHWAYS: WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

After GCSEs, there are different routes you can take.

A Levels, V Levels, T Levels and Apprenticeships are all ways to build the knowledge, skills and experience you need for your future career or further study.



Wigan Council

Aspiring
Futures



A LEVELS

A Levels are **academic** qualifications where you study subjects in depth.



WHAT THEY ARE

Traditional qualifications that focus on theory and subject knowledge.



HOW THEY WORK

Usually 3 subjects studied over 2 years.



NEXT STEPS

Great for university, degree apprenticeships or a range of careers.



BEST FOR YOU IF...

You enjoy academic study and want to keep your options open.

EXAMPLES

Biology, Business, Chemistry, History, Maths, Psychology



V LEVELS

V Levels are **vocational** qualifications that focus on practical skills and knowledge.



WHAT THEY ARE

Work-related qualifications with a strong focus on practical learning.



HOW THEY WORK

Usually 1–2 year courses with classroom learning and practical activities.



NEXT STEPS

Prepare you for skilled employment, further training or higher-level study.



BEST FOR YOU IF...

You prefer practical learning and want to gain skills for the workplace.

EXAMPLES

Health & Social Care, IT, Business, Engineering, Creative Media



T LEVELS

T Levels are **technical** qualifications equivalent to 3 A Levels, with industry placement built in.



WHAT THEY ARE

Technical, career-focused qualifications designed with employers.



HOW THEY WORK

2-year courses including classroom learning (80%) and an industry placement (20% – 45 days minimum).



NEXT STEPS

Go straight into skilled work, higher study or degree apprenticeships.



BEST FOR YOU IF...

You want a mix of classroom learning and real work experience.

EXAMPLES

Digital Production, Education & Childcare, Engineering & Manufacturing, Health



APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships combine **paid** work with training to help you build skills and earn a qualification.



WHAT THEY ARE

Paid jobs with structured training and a recognised qualification.



HOW THEY WORK

You work for an employer and spend part of your time learning (on the job and with training providers).



NEXT STEPS

Progress in your career, upskill, or move into higher or specialist roles.



BEST FOR YOU IF...

You want to learn, earn and gain valuable work experience.

EXAMPLES

Accounting, Construction, Digital Marketer, Engineering, Nursing



REMEMBER: There's no right or wrong path—just the one that's right for you. Think about your interests, strengths and career goals and explore your options.



NEED HELP? Talk to your teachers or careers adviser, or contact Aspiring Futures at aspiring.futures@wigan.gov.uk for more information.