

YEAR 11

WHAT NEXT?

IN THE MARCHES

**Training &
Qualifications Guide
for young people,
careers professionals
teachers and parents/
carers.**

The Marches
CAREERS HUB

#CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

Welcome

Welcome to the Marches Careers Hub 'What Next Guide'

This guide will provide young people, parents/carers and teachers across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin with key information to support with post 16 transition into education, employment and training.



Andriane Usherwood-Brown
Careers Hub Lead

This can be a daunting time for all involved with so much information to navigate, this guide provides you with all the information you need to understand the range of pathways available all in one place.

As a young person, identifying your 'next best step' can be a daunting task. This guide will support you to think about what the right path might be for you as well as signposting you to the local offer across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

Parents/carers and teachers are two key influencers of young people; therefore, it is crucial that you understand the range of pathways available to support you in providing impartial, accurate information to our young people. This guide can be used to expand your knowledge and understanding of the range of pathways on offer. You can use it to refer to when supporting young people to identify what the right pathway for them might look like.

CONTENTS

- 3 Preparation Timeline**
- 4 Do you know your levels?**
- 5 Your best next step**
- 6 Choosing the right options for you**
- 7 A Levels**
- 8 T Levels**
- 9 Vocational Courses**
- 10 Foundation Courses**
- 11 Apprenticeships**
- 12 Inclusive Apprenticeships**
- 13 Supported Internships**
- 14 Entry Requirements**
- 15 Your Apprenticeship Action Plan**
- 16 Local Sixth Forms and Colleges**
- 18 What's available near you?**
- 19 Still unsure?**
- 20 Open Evenings: What you need to know**
- 21 LMI - The Marches**
- 23 Useful Websites**

PREPARATION TIMELINE

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It might seem like ages away but if you take the time to research and plan now you can make more confident choices - and complete your applications earlier. So, you've got more time to focus on your GCSEs.

SUMMER TERM YEAR 10



- Think about your future strengths and favourite subjects.
- Find out more about careers that interest you.
- Think about how your strengths might fit with your career ideas.
- Discuss your ideas with people whose opinions you value.
- Do some online research into the local college and training options.

AUTUMN TERM YEAR 11



- Build confidence in strengths and favourite subjects.
- Go to information events and learn about all the different options.
- Book some taster sessions.
- Check college application deadlines. Some colleges might require an application this term.
- Make contact with employers if seeking an Apprenticeship.

SPRING TERM YEAR 11



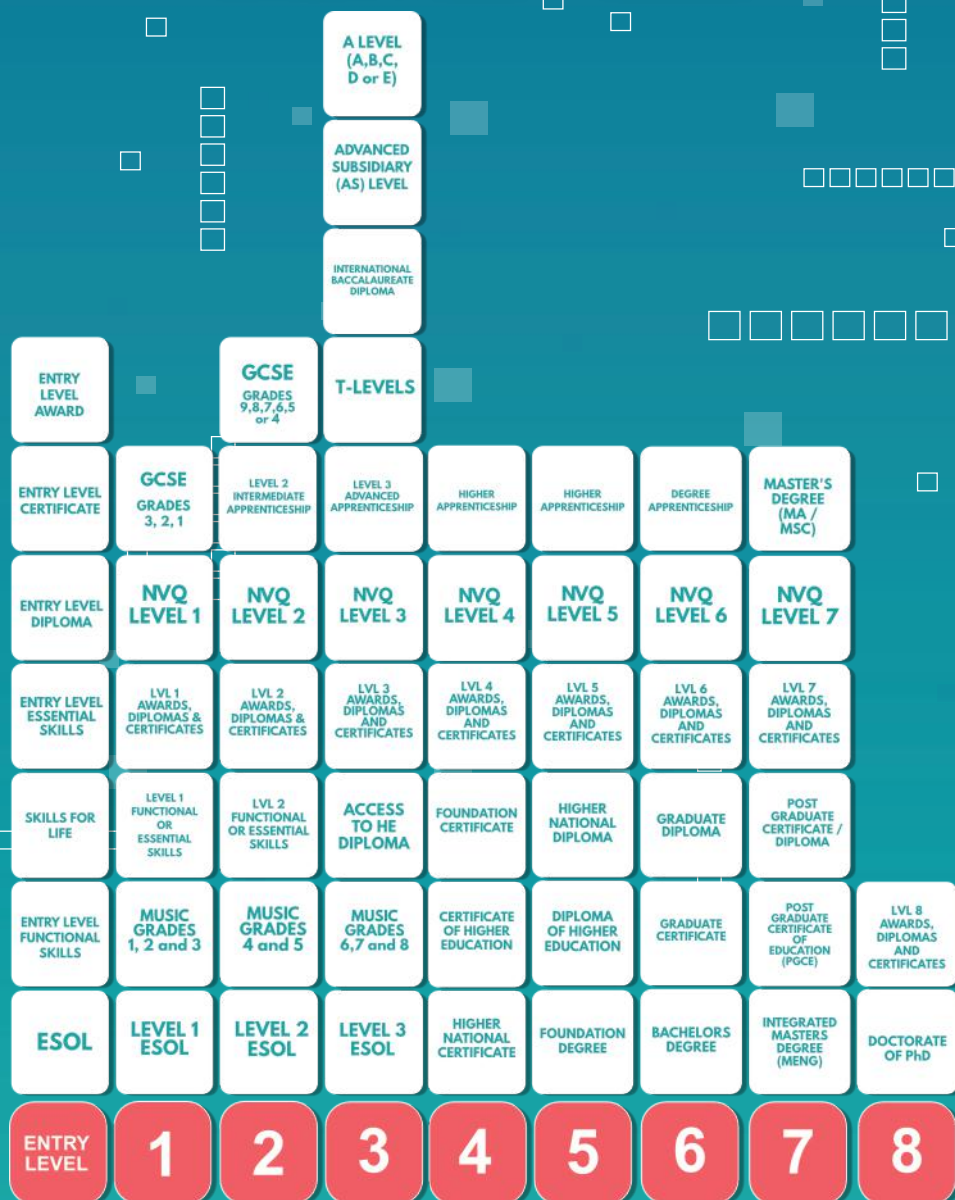
- Complete applications (key dates will be given out in Y11) but most applications are completed by the end of January.
- Attend interviews.
- Attend additional taster events.
- Work hard to secure an apprenticeship placement.
- Make sure you have a back-up plan.

SUMMER TERM YEAR 11



- Concentrate on exam prep.
- Finalise your placement if intending on an Apprenticeship.
- Attend any summer transitions days after exams. Many colleges run welcome events.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR LEVELS?



YOUR BEST NEXT STEP

There are numerous career progression routes available, each tailored to suit different individuals. The key is selecting the most suitable path to reach your goals.

For instance, you may opt for BTEC's, T-Levels or A-Levels to pursue a university degree, or alternatively, consider apprenticeships, which offer the opportunity to combine work and study.



WHAT NEXT?

Choosing the right options for YOU

For all school leavers, it is important not to close your options down by the choices you make.

ASK YOURSELF:

WHERE AM I NOW?

What qualifications, skills and interests do I have?

WHERE DO I WANT TO GET TO?

What would I like to be doing in 5 years time?

HOW WILL I GET THERE?

What course, training or future job is likely to get me where I want to go?

The main options for schools leavers

ACADEMIC PATHWAYS CLASSROOM BASED

A-LEVELS

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS PRACTICAL & CLASSROOM BASED

T-LEVELS

VOCATIONAL COURSES

FOUNDATION COURSES

WORKPLACE PATHWAYS EMPLOYER BASED

APPRENTICESHIPS

INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS

SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS

POST 16 OPTIONS...

A-LEVELS



Scan the QR
code to find
out more.

A levels are short for 'Advanced' Level and come after GCSEs. They are academic subject-based qualifications which are usually assessed by exams.



Study

3-4

Subjects



Mainly exam based



Earn UCAS Points



Go to University



POST 16 OPTIONS...

T-LEVELS



Scan the QR
code to find
out more

A T Level gives you a mix of learning in the classroom and on the job. Businesses and employers helped design T Levels to teach you the skills you'll need.



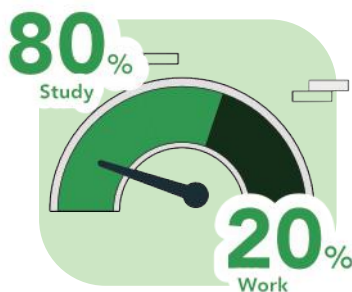
Alternative
to A-Levels



Get work
ready



Level 3
Qualifications



45 day work
placement



Progress
into a Higher
or Degree
Apprenticeship



Progress to
University

POST 16 OPTIONS...

VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS (VTQs)



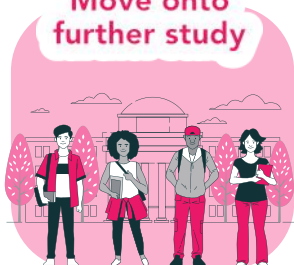
Scan the QR
code to find
out more

VTQs are practical qualifications designed to give you the skills and experience you need for a certain job. They might be for you if you have a strong interest in a particular industry.

Focus on
industry
specific
skills



Move onto
further study



Get work
ready



Develop
transferrable
skills



Gain Level 1,
Level 2, or Level 3
Qualifications



Mainly practical
with some
classroom activity



Progress
into a Higher
or Degree
Apprenticeship



Some L3 courses
attract UCAS Points



Go to University



POST 16 OPTIONS...

FOUNDATION COURSES



Scan the QR
code to find
out more

Engaging in a foundation course is a way to boost your confidence, enhance your knowledge, and develop essential skills. You can pursue these studies at a college or with an independent training provider.



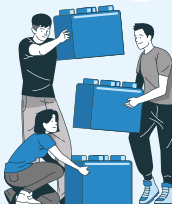
Wide range
of courses

Boost your
confidence



CV Writing

Supported
Learning



Interview
Techniques



Entry
Level 3
to
Level 1



Move onto
further study



English

&

Maths



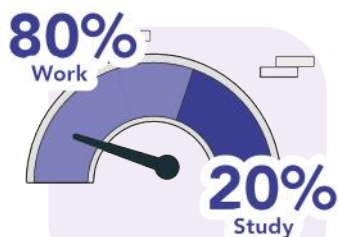
Develop Life
Skills

POST 16 OPTIONS...

APPRENTICESHIPS

An apprenticeship is a paid job with training where you work alongside experienced staff, gaining job-specific skills and earning a wage. You follow an apprenticeship standard outlining the knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed for success.

Scan the QR
code to find
out more



A real
contract



1500+
Apprenticeship
job roles
available

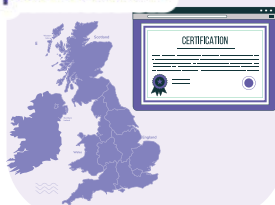


Earn a
salary

2.2m
people have started
an apprenticeship



Gain a nationally
recognised
qualification



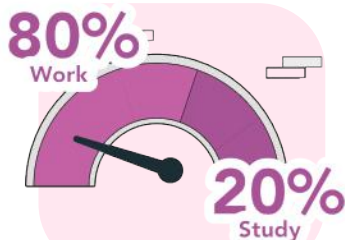
POST 16 OPTIONS...

INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS



Scan the QR
code to find
out more

Designed for individuals with acknowledged learning difficulties or disabilities. If you have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), Learning Disability Assessment (LDA), or Statement of Educational Need (SEN), adjustments in inclusive apprenticeships ensure accessibility.



Supportive
Job
Coach



Gain a nationally
recognised
qualification



A real
contract



1500+
Apprenticeship
job roles
available

1-4

YRS

to
complete



Earn a
salary



2.2m

people have started
an apprenticeship



600+

Apprenticeship
routes



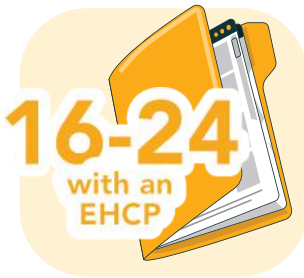
POST 16 OPTIONS...

SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS



Scan the QR code to find out more

For young individuals aged 16 to 24 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who possess an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This structured, work-based study program aims to provide a valuable work experience facilitated by a dedicated job coach.



Supportive
Job
Coach



Move into paid
employment



Study during your
working week



Develop
key skills



Work with
experienced staff



Entry Requirements

Don't worry if you don't meet every entry requirement – colleges and sixth forms are here to support you. They'll look at your personal circumstances and help you find a course that suits your goals and interests.

Why English and Maths matter

Aiming for Grade 4 or above in English and Maths is really important, as it opens more doors for your future study and career. If you don't quite get there, you won't be left behind — you'll continue working towards these alongside your main course.

Course-specific requirements

Some subjects, like science, engineering or health, may ask for certain GCSEs at Grade 4 or above. Tutors will explain what's needed and guide you through your options.

Different pathways, different entry points

Entry requirements can vary depending on the course and the level. Some courses are open to everyone, while others ask for passes in a few subjects. Higher-level courses may expect more.

The image below gives you a general idea of what's usually expected — and remember, if one route isn't right for you, there will always be another way forward.

Level

What you'll need...

Level 3

You typically need to have **five GCSEs or equivalent grade 9-4**, inc English & Maths grade 5/4.

Level 2

You typically need to have three to **four GCSEs grade 9-3**.

Level 1

You typically need to have **three to four GCSEs at grades 1-2**.

Entry

No GCSEs.

YOUR APPRENTICESHIP ACTION PLAN

Step-by-step guide to help you secure an apprenticeship – whether through a college, a training provider, or direct with an employer.

STEP 1: START YOUR SEARCH

Look on these sites:

- Find an Apprenticeship (gov.uk)
- Get My First Job
- Not Going to Uni
- Rate My Apprenticeship
- Careermap



TOP TIPS

Set up alerts for your area and your chosen industry so you never miss a new opportunity.

Colleges and training providers often **help match students** with local employers – **don't be afraid to ask!**



STEP 2: HELPFUL EXTRAS TO BOOST YOUR PLAN

1

Apply Direct to Employers

- Make a list of companies in your chosen industry.
- Visit their websites/social media channels and check their careers pages.
- Email with your CV, course details, and enthusiasm.
- Follow up if you don't hear back in a week or two.

2

Apply via a College or Training Provider

- Apply for an apprenticeship subject you're interested in.
- Ask if they help match students with employers.
- Apply for the full-time course too (as backup).
- Attend open days or taster sessions.

3

Start a Full-Time Course First

- Choose a course linked to your future apprenticeship goals.
- Build confidence and skills in a classroom or workshop.
- Improve English, maths, and employability skills.
- Look and apply for apprenticeships during the course.



What If You Don't Find an Employer Right Away?

- Join the course anyway — colleges & training providers often help you find an employer.
- Keep applying for apprenticeship vacancies.
- You can switch over once you find an employer.

YOUR SAFETY NET CHECKLIST

Have you:

- **Applied for more than one route?**
- **Got a backup full-time course offer?**
- **Asked about employer help?**
- **Used Find an Apprenticeship?**
- **Spoken to a careers adviser?**

Local Sixth Forms and Colleges

There are a number of colleges and 6th form centres that school leavers in our area regularly consider. Some of the colleges and 6th forms that our students move on to most frequently include:

grove school 

part of the **Marches Academy Trust**

marches school 

part of the **Marches Academy Trust**



The Thomas Adams School

Sir John Talbot's school 

part of the **Marches Academy Trust**



**Herefordshire,
Ludlow & North
Shropshire College**



**Thomas Telford
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**



**William Brookes
School & Sixth Form**



**Hereford
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**



**Haberdashers'
ADAMS**
a grammar school with state boarding



**TELFORD
COLLEGE**



National Star

Realising the aspirations
of people with disabilities



**SHREWSBURY
COLLEGES GROUP**



access sport



**Haberdashers'
ABRAHAM DARBY**
Confident - Calm - Caring



**Newport Girls'
High School
SIXTH FORM**



BRIDGNORTH SIXTH FORM

Local Apprenticeship Providers

There are lots of training providers who deliver apprenticeship training. Some will be part of local colleges. Some will be independent organisations, or employers. They might cover lots of different types of work or can specialise in a particular industry. Here are some local examples.

Visit the national apprenticeship service webpages for more information: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk for general information <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship> to search and apply for vacancies.

SHREWSBURY
COLLEGES GROUP



Juniper
TRAINING



ProVQTM



WHAT'S AVAILABLE NEAR YOU?

Scan the QR codes to explore the different courses and qualifications available at all the different colleges and training providers across the Marches area.

ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

A-LEVELS



VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

T-LEVELS



VOCATIONAL COURSES



WORK BASED PATHWAYS

APPRENTICESHIPS



STILL UNSURE?

POST-16 TOP TIPS

1

Attend careers and skills fairs

These are ideal for meeting colleges, training providers, apprenticeship providers, employers, and careers advisers.

2

Discuss your ideas

Talk to parents or carers, family and friends to get other viewpoints on your choices.

3

Get advice

Talk to teachers and career advisers – they have lots of knowledge and wisdom to share!

4

Open events and taster sessions

They're a great opportunity to visit schools and colleges, find out about the courses on offer, and speak to staff and students.

5

It is your life and your choice

Don't be influenced by where your friends are going. Ask yourself: what do I enjoy? What would I like to do and what do I want to get out of my life?

Personal Statements

Most sixth forms and colleges will ask for a personal statement as part of your application. This is your chance to explain:

- Why you're applying to that particular place.
- Why you want to study the subjects or courses you've chosen.
- What your goals are for the future.



Not everyone asks for one!

Some providers just want:

- Your predicted grades
- A reference from school
- Or a short interview

What YOU need to do:

Check each place you're interested in and ask:

- Do they need a personal statement?
- What else do they ask for?
- When is the deadline?

Open Evenings

What You Need to Know

Why Are They Important?

Open evenings and taster days are a great way to explore your next steps. Whether it's sixth form, college, or a specialist course, you can:

- Get a feel for the place.
- Meet staff and students.
- Ask questions about subjects, support, and student life.
- Get a feel for what suits you best.

What can you expect?

Open Evenings are usually after school or at the weekend and give you a chance to:

- Tour the building.
- Listen to talks about courses.
- Chat to staff and students.
- Collect prospectuses and useful info.



What If Dates Aren't Available Yet?

Don't worry! Most schools and colleges release their open event dates in the autumn term (usually from September onwards). While you're waiting:

- Make a list of the places you're interested in.
- Follow them on social media for announcements.
- Bookmark their websites.
- Open day dates will be added to the school website in Sept.



Be Ready to Make the Most of It

Here are some quick tips for when the time comes:

- 1. Write down your questions.** Think about subjects, transport, clubs, support, and future pathways.
- 2. Take notes or photos** (if allowed) to help you remember what you liked.
- 3. Go with an open mind** — you might be surprised by places you hadn't considered!
- 4. Chat to students** — they'll give you an honest view of what it's really like.

THE

POPULATION OF



698,000

TOTAL NUMBER
OF BUSINESSES

32,125

NUMBER OF
PEOPLE EMPLOYED

345,200

KEY SECTORS IN OUR REGION



**ADVANCED
MANUFACTURING**



**VISITOR
ECONOMY**



RETAIL



CONSTRUCTION



FOOD & DRINK



**HEALTH &
SOCIAL CARE**



LOGISTICS



EDUCATION



**VOLUNTARY,
COMMUNITY &
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**



**BUSINESS &
PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES**

TOTAL PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN OUR KEY SECTORS...

RETAIL
33,700

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE
41,000

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING
26,800

VISITOR ECONOMY
4,250

FOOD & DRINK
9,000

CONSTRUCTION
18,500

EDUCATION
24,500

LOGISTICS
8,000

VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY &
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
6,760

BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES
47,000

EMPLOYERS ACROSS OUR REGION

The following
websites can help
you to explore more
Labour Market
Information.

StartProfile

Careers information and tools
for 11-19 year olds

<https://themarches.startprofile.com/page/home-page>

Pathways - StartProfile

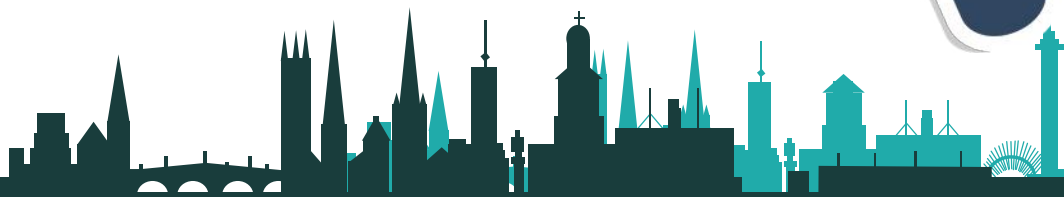
Vocational Profiling and careers information tools
for 11-19 year olds with SEND

<https://pathways.startprofile.com/page/home-page>

Careers Live UK

The UK's biggest graduate careers website with information and
advice about post 16 options.

<https://careersliveuk.com/partner/the-marches-careers-hub/>



USEFUL WEBSITES

Use the following websites for information and support to help inform your decision.

General Careers Information

Careers Pilot - Careers information and tools for 11-19 year olds. <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

Youth Employment UK – a website from an independent organisation that provides wide-ranging information about careers and employment. Try the 'Career Guides'.
<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-advice-help/>

Prospects – a great source of information mainly aimed at young people who might consider university graduate level careers in the future or for those who are already at university.
www.prospects.ac.uk

Icould - Find inspiration and explore your ideas using real-life career videos. <https://icould.com/>

BBC bitesize careers - a really good range of articles and information from the BBC with career stories, videos, quizzes to help young people with their careers ideas.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers>

National Careers Service - Providing information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work. www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

Skills for Careers - use this site for a clear overview of the different options that are available to young people.
[Young People | Skills for Careers \(education.gov.uk\)](http://www.skillsforcareers.org.uk)

T Levels - use this site to learn more about what T Levels are and how they work. <https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/>

UCAS - Universities and colleges admissions service, offering support and advice so you can make an informed decisions about your future. www.ucas.com/further-education

Informed Choices - iThe tool created by the Russell Group of universities to help you link University ideas to your A level choices. <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships - Use this site for general information about the Apprenticeship pathway.

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk>

Find an Apprenticeship - Use this site to find vacancies in your area. <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

Apprenticeship Guide - Use this site as a tool to discover your perfect Apprenticeship role.

<https://apprenticeshipguide.co.uk>

Amazing Apprenticeships - Use this site to explore a wide range of resources and activities linked to Apprenticeships.

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/student-zone/>

Careers Information & Support for Parents

Talking Futures - A set of prompt cards to help parents and careers talk to their teens about career ideas.

<https://www.talkingfutures.org.uk/conversation-cards/>

The Parents Perspective - an exciting podcast series for parents and carers, helping them to support their children with careers advice and guidance

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/the-parent-perspective-podcast/>

Careermap - If you're a school leaver, graduate or job seeker, we have lots of options! Search & apply for apprenticeships, graduate schemes & jobs.

<https://careermap.co.uk/career-advice/careermag/for-parents-guardians>