

Vocational and work-related qualifications

These include BTEC, OCR Nationals and Diplomas, where learners are assessed on the work they produce throughout the course. These qualifications offer a practical, hands-on approach to learning. They are available at different levels and are alternatives to GCSEs and A Levels for those who prefer a different approach to learning and assessment.

These vocational qualifications are becoming increasingly popular with schools and colleges, and suit a range of learning styles.

NVQs

NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) are designed to recognise your child's knowledge and skills in relation to a specific job. They cover different occupational areas, each one reflecting the abilities your child will need to get started in a specific career.

These are more likely to be offered by colleges than schools because they need to be assessed in the workplace by teachers or trainers who themselves have work experience in the right occupational area.

Nationals

OCR Nationals are exam-free alternatives to GCSEs and A Levels that have an engaging and practical approach to learning and assessment. Students will be interested and engaged by OCR Nationals, particularly by the 'real work' style and the optional units available to study which will help them to develop skills used in the workplace.

Offered at Levels 1 to 3, they cover a wide range of industries and sectors:

- Business
- Information Technology (IT)
- Sport
- Art and Design
- Media
- Travel and Tourism
- Health and Social Care
- Public Services
- Science

● **Level 1 Nationals** are aimed mainly at 14–16-year-olds in Key Stage 4 – particularly those with a specific career in mind, or a keen interest in a certain type of work.

● **Level 2 Nationals** are suitable for your child if they are considering leaving school at 16, haven't yet decided on a career, but have an interest in a particular area of work.

● **Level 3 Nationals** are ideal if your 16–19-year-old son or daughter is staying in education, and has identified a specific job or career path.

Your son or daughter may choose to progress from Level 1 all the way through to Level 3, or simply use one or two levels as part of a planned career or education 'pathway'. And if they're looking for a place at college or university, OCR Nationals are recognised as broadly equivalent to GCSEs and A Levels. At Level 3, OCR Nationals can gain your child UCAS points.



Here's how OCR Nationals at Levels 1 and 2 compare with GCSE grades in terms of size and level:

Level 1	First Award = 1 GCSE (grades D–G) Award = 3 GCSEs (grades D–G) Certificate = 4 GCSEs (grades D–G) or a Foundation GNVQ
Level 2	Award = 2 GCSEs (grades C and above) Certificate = 4 GCSEs (grades C and above)

At Level 3, OCR Nationals can be compared with A Levels:

Level 3	Certificate = 1 A Level Diploma = 2 A Levels Extended Diploma = 3 A Levels
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BTEC

BTEC (Business & Technician Education Council) is a work-related qualification, available in a wide range of subjects. The qualification offers a mix of theory and practical work, and can also include an element of work experience.

BTEC Introductory – This qualification is available at Level 1 and offers an entry into the industry sector and encourages the development of personal and work-related skills. The BTEC Introductory qualifications are suitable for any student aged 14 plus.

BTEC Firsts – Available at Level 2, there are currently over 60 BTEC First qualifications available, linked to industry sectors. The BTEC First is suitable for students aged pre-16, and can be taken alongside core GCSE subjects such as English, Maths and Science.

BTEC Nationals – There are more than 250 qualifications for students to choose from. These qualifications are suitable for students aged 16 plus.

BTEC Nationals are available at various levels:

- **BTEC National Award** provides your child with specialist and practical knowledge on a particular industry they have chosen as their career path.
- **BTEC National Certificate** provides your child with expertise and knowledge within a specific industry they have chosen.
- **BTEC National Diploma** will aid your child to progress to university.

Here's how BTEC at Levels 1 and 2 compares with GCSE grades:

Level 1	BTEC Introductory Certificate = 2 GCSEs at D–E grades BTEC Introductory Diploma = 4 GCSEs at D–E grades or a Foundation GNVQ
Level 2	BTEC First Certificate = 2 GCSEs at A*–C grades BTEC First Diploma = 4 GCSEs at A*–C grades

At Level 3, BTEC Nationals compare with A Levels.

Level 3	BTEC National Award = 1 A Level. BTEC National Certificate = 2 A Levels. BTEC National Diploma = 3 A Levels
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At Level 3, OCR Nationals and BTEC National Diplomas can also gain your child UCAS points for getting into university.

If you would like to find out more about UCAS points, please visit www.ucas.com

You may also be interested to read our information sheet on 'Applying to universities'.

