

**PROGRESSION TO FURTHER EDUCATION,  
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

**Careers Advice & Guidance Briefing**

The careers, education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) support offered to our students is based around their ambitions for the future and how they can use their qualifications to support this.

Students beginning Level 1 and Level 2 study in September 2017 will be able to study a range of specialist vocational qualifications. These vocational qualifications provide an excellent pathway to further study and are equal in value to a GCSE unless stated otherwise.

Please note: At the time of writing this document, ongoing changes to GCSEs and BTECs mean that we are still awaiting confirmation of the subject curriculum. This particularly affects Health & Social Care, Construction, Dance, Performing Arts and ICT

Due to the changes in GCSEs, the following progression advice is based on information available to us at the time of writing this document.

**Changes to GCSEs & BTECs:**

OLD LETTER GRADES	NEW NUMBER GRADES
A*	9
A	8
B	7
C	6
D	5
E	4
F	3
G	2
U	1
U	U

You will have heard that GCSEs are changing. Education reforms are affecting the grading for GCSEs and your child’s subjects will all be assessed using the new grading.

**The main features of the new GCSEs are:**

- A new grading scale of 9 to 1 will be used, with 9 being the top grade.
- Assessment will be mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where they are needed to test essential skills.
- There will be new content which has been developed by government and the exam boards.
- Exams can only be split into ‘foundation tier’ and ‘higher tier’ if one exam paper does not give all students the opportunity to show their knowledge and abilities.
- Resit opportunities will only be available each November in English language and maths.

As the changes take effect, employers and educators will adjust the entry requirements for courses accordingly. We do not anticipate that this will cause undue problems for our students although it is important to note the importance of achieving ‘pass’ grades in English and mathematics.

If these passes are not achieved by the end of year 11, there will be a requirement for students to continue to study these subjects until an appropriate grade which proves competency is achieved.

BTECs, vocational subjects, are also being changed and the range of courses are still being approved. We understand that final details will be published in May 2017 and, at that time, our teachers will decide which Level 2 qualification (which is equal to a GCSE) better suits your child.

## **PROGRESSION TO FURTHER EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **Progression to ‘A’ Levels & considering university**

Admission requirements for college and Sixth Form study are clear and if appropriate grades are not achieved a student may not be able to study their chosen subject at a higher level. For this reason, we encourage all students to have a second choice or ‘Plan B’.

All students should be aware that the entry requirements are *minimum* requirements and they may not be offered a place on a course if there is competition from students with higher qualifications for a place.

*The following information is correct at the time of writing and is intended as a guide for parents of students currently in Year 8. The changes to grades and course structures make it impossible to offer exact guidance at this time but we anticipate the following should apply:*

- To study ‘A’ levels at sixth form college, students are required to have a minimum of five GCSE passes (grade 5 or higher) to enable them to study three ‘AS’ levels; six GCSE passes will enable them to study four ‘AS’ levels.
  - Bilborough College insist that English and Maths passes must be two of the five GCSE subjects.
  - The Bulwell Academy require five passes at GCSE including English and maths. If either of these is not passed, it can be retaken but must be achieved in the first year of sixth form.
- Students need a minimum of a ‘5’ grade in Maths to study ‘A’ level maths or science subjects.
- Students need a minimum of a ‘5’ grade in English to study ‘A’ level English.
- A vocational qualification is a GCSE-equivalent pass (unless stated otherwise) if the qualification is achieved at either Merit or Distinction (a Pass mark is not enough).
- A student can only use one vocational qualification (Merit or Distinction) in their application; hence, they will need a further four GCSEs to meet the minimum entry requirements.
- Many colleges now require English, Maths and Science at GCSE as a minimum for ‘A’ level study.
- The quality of the application form and the student’s interests/volunteering are very important.

#### **Medical Sciences:**

- Students wishing to study medical sciences at university will need a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or higher.
- The level 2 Award in Health & Social Care (BTEC) will not enable students to study an ‘A’ level in physics, chemistry or biology (dentistry & medical sciences require a range of science based GCSEs)

Please note: entry requirements for colleges and universities change each year and this information is currently correct but we would recommend that students ensure that their subjects enable progression to Higher Education when making ‘A’ Level/Level 3 choices. We also advise you that the minimum entry requirements to college are subject to change with significant increases in recent years.

Students wishing to progress to university should carefully consider taking French or, where English is a second language, applying to take a GCSE qualification in their first language.

### **Progression to Apprenticeships and vocational courses**

Requirements for apprenticeships vary depending upon the employer. To be clear, many nationally recognised and employer led programmes require a pass at GCSE English, Maths and Science (or BTEC equivalent). An apprenticeship for an employer such as Rolls Royce may also require ‘A’ level or equivalent qualifications. Apprenticeships should not be viewed as a low-skill alternative.

**PROGRESSION TO FURTHER EDUCATION,  
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**



Many colleges are prepared to recruit students to apprenticeships without the key qualifications but then require that these exams are passed during the apprenticeship programme.

It is possible for a low-achieving student to obtain an apprenticeship but, all apprentices need to complete a Level 2 in Literacy and Numeracy.

Apprenticeships are a tremendous alternative to university for students leaving year 13 with A levels or high grades in Level 3 qualifications. The higher skills entry level often attracts higher salaries and more rapid career progression.

**Alison Bingham**  
**Director of Business & Enterprise**

Revised: March 2017