

Understanding your “PATHWAYS” at school

Key Stage 4 (Year 9/10 & 11)

GCSEs

These are general qualifications that are completed by the end of year 11 and take place over 2/3 years (depending on the school). GCSEs are studies at schools or college.

All students in the country must complete GCSE Maths and English in order to progress to the next stage of their education. By the time students are 18 all students must have achieved at least a grade 4 (pass) in these subjects.

GCSEs will be good general preparation for further learning (Sixth Form and Higher Education) and work so it is not crucial to choose specific subjects to fit in with a specific career at this stage.

However, to study certain A Levels you may need to have chosen specific GCSE subjects. For example, at Yavneh College you need to have studied Geography GCSE to study Geography A Level. At Yavneh College *all* A Level subjects require at least a 6 in English or Maths.

The vast majority of university courses will not require specific GCSE subjects. The more competitive universities will often require a minimum of grade 6 in English and/or Maths.

At Yavneh College all students **must** complete English, Maths, Religious Studies and Science (Double or Triple). Yavneh College offers a range of additional optional subjects (such as History, Ivrit, Computer Science, PE) which students will need to choose before the end of Key Stage 3 (year 8).

Btecs (Level 2)

A Btec, or 'Business and Technology Education Council' (the name of the body which originally oversaw it) is a practical-based, vocational qualification. It can be studied at a college or school. Level 2 Btecs have the **same value** and are the equivalent to a GCSE qualification.

Btecs provide the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a field or subject, and are a viable alternative to the more theory-focused, classroom-based ways of learning which you might be put off by. Btecs are ideal for students who might struggle with the academic rigour of GCSE subjects, especially the focus and amount of Year 11 examinations. For each Btec, you complete a series of units – some core, others optional – which are assessed. For each unit, you receive either a Pass, a Merit or a Distinction (Distinction being the highest).

The assessments you complete can be written assignments, such as essays, or more engaging projects. Depending on your subject, this could be anything from building an amplifier to performing a dramatic piece, and even making a film.

At Yavneh College we offer Level 2 Btec courses in Sports and Business which are studied *alongside* traditional GCSE subjects. Both courses are very popular and allow students to study a greater range of subjects and skills.

There are over 2,000 different Btec qualifications across 16 different sectors which are studied in the UK. Students who wish to (only) study Btec subjects will often attend colleges which offer a wide(r) range of Btec courses.

UTCs

There are 48 University Technical Colleges (UTCs) are open across England, educating approximately 16,000 students. These are a very different to traditional Secondary Schools. Through their association with employers and universities, through project-based learning, and through a focus on technical subjects, UTCs bridge the gap between the world of education and the world of work.

UTCs will offer specialised option choices to support routes into many vocational fields such as health, media, fashion through level 1/2 Btecs and other types of Technical

qualifications/certificates/awards. Most people who attend UTCs will leave school at 16 and go straight into apprenticeships, training and employment.

Key Stage 5 (Year 12 & 13)

A Levels

A Levels are Level 3 qualifications that you can choose to take after your GCSEs. You can take A Levels in schools, sixth form centres or at some Further Education Colleges. They are very well regarded by universities and employers.

A Levels will give you a chance to find out about your GCSE subjects in greater depth or you can choose to study one of the subjects that many schools and colleges only offer at A Level such as Politics, Economics or Psychology. They are good preparation if you are thinking of going onto higher education or if you are not sure of your career plans, as they can keep your options open.

To study A Levels you will need to have done well in your GCSEs. Most schools and colleges will expect you to have gained grades 9-4 (A*-C in old grades) in your GCSEs with a minimum of grade 4 in English Language and Maths in order to attend their Sixth Form. Often you will need a GCSE at grade 6 or above in a specific subject if you want to go on to study it at A Level. Therefore in order to study three A Levels you will (most likely) need to **achieve a minimum of grades 6 and 7 in most of your subjects**.

University courses will all require A Level qualifications as part of their entry criteria. The more competitive the university/course the higher the A Level entry criteria will be.

A Levels is certainly the most traditional route for the majority of students at Yavneh College.

Btecs (Level 3)

Btec (Nationals) are the **equivalent** and have exactly the same value as A Level studies. Many of these are well regarded by universities, further education colleges, and employers.

A BTEC National qualification can lead to employment, continuing study, or professional development programmes.

Like with Level 2 Btecs, the Level 3 qualification provide the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a field or subject, and are a viable alternative to the more theory-focused A Level courses which a student might be put off by and/or have not achieved the necessary GCSE grades. The entry criteria for Btecs is significantly lower than for A Levels. At Yavneh College, in order to study the Business Btec, students need to achieve a minimum of five passes (grade 4) including English and Maths.

Btecs are becoming a more popular path to both university and particular jobs in place of, or in addition to, A-levels. In 2017, over 25% of students starting university held at least one Btec.

Like with Level 2, Btecs are divided into units, which cover specific areas of knowledge, skills, and understanding required by the particular sector or industry. Students are awarded three grades on the same scale as the Level 2 Btecs at the end of the course.

Many University courses will accept Btec qualifications as part of their entry criteria instead of A Level qualifications.

Those students who wish to study a non-Business related Btec will often choose to attend a Sixth Form College where a greater range of Level 3 Btec subjects are offered.

T-Levels

These ("Technical Levels") are **new** types of qualifications which are being launched in September 2022. One T-Level is equal to three A Levels and is marked in the same way as a Level 3 Btec and has (roughly) the same entry requirements.

The course is delivered with 21 hours of "on the job" experience. This amounts to 20% of the course, while 80% will be traditional lessons.

These qualifications have been designed with over 250 leading business and employers to give students the knowledge and skills needed to progress into a career.

T-Levels gives students a chance to learn what a real career is like while studying.

Most colleges will be offering (some) T-Levels in 2022 but there will be a greater of range T-Levels in the coming years and these may eventually replace Btecs altogether.

Apprenticeships:

These are **very** different from the traditional qualifications and educational pathways. Apprenticeships are for anyone **above the age of 16 who isn't in full-time education**. On an apprenticeship, you are employed to do a real job while studying for a formal qualification - usually for one day a week either at a college or training centre. By the end of your apprenticeship, you will hopefully have gained the skills and knowledge needed to either succeed in your chosen career or progress onto the next apprenticeship level. What you'll learn depends on the role that you're training for. However, apprentices in every role follow an approved study programme, which means you'll gain a nationally-recognised qualification at the end of your apprenticeship

There are a number of different levels of apprenticeships:

The Intermediate Level 2 Apprenticeship is the equivalent to a GCSE qualification. These take the form of functional skills (GCSE level qualifications in IT, Maths and English) or Level 2 National Vocational Qualifications (equivalent of five GCSEs). The type of subjects most students at this age will pursue include hospitality, hair and beauty, sports and fitness, administrative and clerical and IT. For a Level 2 Intermediate Apprenticeship you may need to have gained GCSE qualifications depending on the employer and the job. If you haven't achieved a grade 4 (or above) in English and Maths then you will need to continue with these subjects until you gain a GCSE or finish the apprenticeship.

The Advanced Level 3 Apprenticeship is the equivalent to two A Level passes. The entry requirements for many Advanced apprenticeships are often A Levels or another Level 3 qualification such as BTEC. This is so you can develop your professional work experience and transferable skills. Some professional areas such as training to be an accounting technician require everyone to start at Level 2 regardless of whether a student has A Levels or not.

Students who leave school with low(er) grades/qualifications will often pursue a Level 3 Apprenticeship as an alternative to University.

The Higher and Degree Apprenticeship (Level 4-7) are the levels above advanced (level 3) and intermediate (level 2) apprenticeships. Higher apprentices work for a company, receiving on-the-job training while the study towards a qualification on the side. At the very highest level, these qualifications can include a Bachelors/Masters Degree. These apprenticeships are often very competitive and will often run for at least five years. The vast majority of Level 4 and above apprenticeships will require A Levels/Btec qualifications. The vast majority of these types of apprenticeships are therefore only viable after leaving school at 18 with good qualifications.

An increasing number of students are choosing these types of courses as an alternative to studying at University.

