

A Level/Vocational Grades - What grades can my son/daughter achieve?

Introduction

A Level exams are sat in Year 13 May/June time. Vocational exams are sat in January/February and/or May/June. In Year 12 and Year 13, alongside coursework elements throughout the 2 years. These grades are used by universities, apprenticeships and employers. Results day is held in August.

What we offer here at SWB:

A Level

A levels are 'linear qualifications'. This means all the assessment takes place at the end of the course. Linear qualifications are made up of a number of separate exams, or non-exam assessment (coursework) called components.

BTEC Nationals

BTEC Nationals are available from Level 3 (similar standard to A levels). 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.

Cambridge Technicals

Cambridge Technicals are vocational qualifications at level 2 and level 3 for students aged 16+ with a great selection to choose from. They are designed with the workplace in mind and provide a high quality alternative to A Levels, supporting progression to higher education.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

An EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) is, to put it simply, a BIG independent project for which you'll earn a qualification. It involves writing an essay of about 5000 words, about your research and how you approached your project, and a final presentation where you'll talk through this essay and paperwork. Alternatively you can make an 'artefact' - this can be a piece of artwork, or something else you've physically made – and an accompanying shorter essay.

This qualification helps students develop and demonstrate their project management skills and provides opportunities for extended writing, both of which are highly valued for progression to higher education and employment.

Students can tailor their project to fit their individual needs, choices and aspirations with the agreement of their centre.

The outcome of the project can be a design, performance, report, dissertation or artefact.

London Institute of Banking and Finance (LIBF)

Level 3 Certificate in Financial Studies (CeFS) covers the core disciplines of financial education. Students are encouraged to become responsible borrowers and sensible savers, and to appreciate of the need for financial planning throughout their life.

Some students may continue on to the:

Level 3 Diploma in Financial Studies (DipFS) The DipFS is for students who have already achieved the Certificate in Financial Studies (CeFS). The course enables you to develop and enhance the knowledge and skills that have been gained in achieving the CeFS by applying them to the wider financial environment.

AS/A Level and Vocational Qualifications UCAS tariff points table:

BTEC Extended Diploma	BTEC Diploma	BTEC / Cambridge Technicals Extended Certificate	AS Level	A Level / LIBF Diploma	EPQ / LIBF Certificate	UCAS Tariff Points
D*D*D*						168
D*D*D						160
D*DD						152
DDD						144
DDM						128
DMM	D*D*					112
	D*D					104
MMM	DD					96
MMP	DM					80
MPP	MM					64
		D*		A*		56
PPP	MP	D		A		48
				B		40
	PP	M		C		32
					A*	28
				D	A	24
			A		B	20
		P	B	E	C	16
			C		D	12
			D			10
					E	8
			E			6

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are my options after completing Year 11?

There are many options to choose from but here are some of the most common:

- Ormiston SWB 6th Form
- 6th Form at another school or College
- College
- Apprenticeship – Intermediate Level 2 and Advanced Level 3
- Training Provider
- The Armed Forces- Army, Navy and RAF

2. What qualifications will I need for each option?

Post-16 Education requires you to retake your English Language and Maths GCSE if you don't secure a 4 or above.

A Levels (graded A*-E): These are generally academic subjects such as Maths, English, Science, Languages, Art, History and Computer Science. Most 6th Forms and colleges will require you to have at least a grade 5+ in your GCSE subject with most requiring grade 6+. However, many require higher than this, in Maths for example.

Level 3 BTECs (graded Distinction*, Distinction Merit and Pass): Vocational subjects such as Engineering, Health and Social Care, Hairdressing, Sport and Media. The general requirements for this level of study are 4 grade 5s and above (including English and Maths), however they do vary depending on where you will study.

Level 2 BTECs: The general requirements for this level of study are 4 grades 3s and above, however, again they can vary depending on where you will study. Please check course requirements.

Apprenticeships: The entry requirements for these are generally set by the employers or training company so can vary, however as a general rule they are as follows:

- Intermediate apprenticeship - Qualifications not always needed but generally 2 or more GCSE's at grade 4 and above including English and Maths (usually Post-16)
- Advanced apprenticeship - 2 or more GCSEs at grade 4 and above including English and Maths and sometimes Science and IT (usually Post-16/18)
- Higher Apprenticeship - May be given in UCAS points but generally 2 or more A Levels at grade C and above. Or BTEC L3 Diploma at Merit, Merit (usually Post-18)
- Degree Apprenticeship - Varies but the same as applying to university- three A levels or BTEC L3 Extended Diploma (usually Post-18)

Training providers: Examples are NOVA Training and Juniper Training. A bit different from school and college, they offer more support if you have GCSE grades lower than a 4, are not very confident or do not know what career you would like and so cannot choose what to do after Year 11. No specific entry requirements as it's based on what you need.

The armed forces: All of the forces require you to be a British Citizen, be physically fit and meet certain medical criteria:

- Army - To join as a soldier, you do not need any qualifications. There are some roles, which may be more technical, where some qualifications are needed.
- RAF - Depends on role, some require minimal qualifications, others require specialist skills and/or a degree.
- Royal Navy - Again it depends on the role but many do not require specific qualifications.

To apply to be an Officer in any of the above you will generally need 5 GCSEs grade 4+ and 2 A Levels grade C and above or BTEC L3.

3. What is the difference between A Levels and vocational qualifications?

One of the main differences between them both is the way they are assessed. A levels mainly involve two years of study with exams at the end, whereas vocational qualifications are continually assessed via coursework and practical projects, using assignments set in real-life scenarios where students develop and apply the practical knowledge and skills employers and higher education are looking for. These also have exam elements too.

4. What are the grades for A Levels?

The pass grades for A Levels are, from highest to lowest, A*, A, B, C, D and E. Those who do not reach the minimum standard required for a grade E receive the non-grade U (unclassified). There is no A* grade at AS Level.

5. What are the grades for vocational qualifications?

They are graded using a Pass (P), Merit (M), Distinction (D) and Distinction* (D*) as per UCAS points table above explaining the Extended Diploma, Diploma and Extended Certificate.

6. Is D in a Level A pass?

An E and D is still a pass at A Level, but it will result in lower UCAS points than a higher grade. A pass is indicated by one of the five grades, A, B, C, D or E, where A (and A*) is the highest and E is the lowest. In order to meet the pass criteria, you must get an E grade or above.

7. What qualifications will I need for university?

Universities and colleges set their own entry requirements for higher education courses, and these vary widely depending on the subject, the specific course and the provider. They set the entry requirements for each course to ensure you have the right skills and knowledge to successfully complete the course. These include:

- Qualifications, subjects, and exam grades – usually A levels, Level 3 BTECs, Advanced Highers or equivalent-level qualifications. Most courses will also expect you to have some pre-16 qualifications, such as GCSE English and Maths, or their equivalents your suitability – course descriptions often mention skills, interests, or experience it's good to have, so look out for these details because applications can be quite competitive.

- An admissions test – less common, but check the course requirements to see if you'll need to sit one. Some tests are held the year before the course start date.
- An interview – if you're invited to an interview, we'll let you know via Track after you've applied, but it might be worth doing some early preparation or putting together a portfolio if required.
- Further requirements – it's possible there may be health, financial, or Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks, which check if you have a criminal record. This information will be set out in the course details.

Please visit www.ucas.com for requirements needed for each course and <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator> to calculate what is needed.

8. Do universities look at GCSE Results?

When you apply to university you will not have your A Level results, only predicted grades. However, universities are aware that there is a strong link between GCSE grades and A Level grade.

9. Can you go to university with a BTEC?

95% of universities and colleges in the UK accept BTEC students. In 2015, over a quarter of students accepted into higher education held at least one BTEC.

Nearly all universities accept BTECs in relevant subject areas, similar to how they would with equivalent A Level qualifications. BTEC students achieving good grades are just as likely to be successful with good A Level results. BTEC students often have the experience of real-life practical tasks. This sets them apart from students studying A Levels, who don't usually have this element as a part of their course.

10. What if I have more questions?

For further information you can contact Mr J Crawley, Assistant Principal; Miss J Bayley, Senior Director for Post-16; Mrs J Jones, Careers Advisor or Mrs K Jangra, Exams Officer at the academy on 01902 493797.

COVID-19 Information

EXAMS 2021

What will happen if 2021 exams don't take place?

The academy will follow government guidelines. At this current moment in time, students should prepare to sit normal exams in all subjects at the normal time.