

# Changes to Education and Qualifications Parents' Guide

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## Raising the Participation Age (RPA)

Introduced in the Summer 2014, the law requires all young people in England to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday, although in practice the vast majority of young people continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18.

RPA does not mean staying in school, young people have a choice about how they continue in education or training post-16. The three primary ways for a young person to participate are:

- **Full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider**
- **Full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more) combined with part-time education or training leading to relevant regulated qualifications**
- **An apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship**

The collaborative work of colleges, schools, local authorities and agencies has seen the proportion of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) fall, reaching a record low in 2015.





## Accountability in Post-16 Education

### The Introduction of Performance Measures

College and school accountability systems have been reformed to set higher expectations, and to make the system fairer, more ambitious, and more transparent. From Summer 2016, colleges and schools will now publish data on the below five performance measures:

- Progress
- Attainment
- Retention
- Destinations
- Progress in English and maths (for students without a GCSE pass at A\*-C in these subjects)

These are designed to place a greater emphasis on progress and progression alongside attainment, ensuring students make progress from their starting points and that every young person leaves education capable of getting a place at university, an apprenticeship or a good job.

More information can be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/537547/16-19\\_accountability\\_headline\\_measures\\_briefing\\_note.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/537547/16-19_accountability_headline_measures_briefing_note.pdf)

## English and Maths at College or Sixth Form

From August 2014, students who have not achieved a Grade A\*-C/9-4 pass in English and/or maths GCSE by age 16 have had to continue to work towards achieving these qualifications or an approved interim qualification as a 'stepping stone' (e.g. Functional Skills) towards GCSE as a condition of student places being funded.

It is important to employers and universities that their employees/students have a good basic understanding of English and maths. The Government's objective is that all students by the age of 19 hold a GCSE qualification in the two subjects graded at A\*-C/9-4 (see page 6 for changes to GCSEs).

At Bath College, we have set out the following guidelines for learners who start their programme of study without these grades in either English and/or maths.

- If you have a Grade D/2 or 3 in these subjects, you will work towards retaking your GCSE.
- If your grade in either subject is lower than a Grade D/2, you will sit an assessment to determine whether you study Functional Skills or a GCSE qualification. Following successful progress through the Functional Skills levels, you will be entered to re-sit your GCSE.



# Changes to GCSEs

## Why is the Government implementing these changes?

The Government's aim is to make GCSEs more challenging for students by creating a linear programme with more testing content, where a large majority of subjects are 100% examination assessed, which will take place at the end of Year 11. This will ensure standards are set fairly and consistently.

## The Department for Education says:

The content of GCSEs is being reformed to make them more challenging so pupils are better prepared for further academic or vocational study, or for work.

Employers, universities and colleges are often dissatisfied with school leavers' literacy and numeracy even though the proportion of young people achieving good grades has gone up in recent years.

## Why has the Government changed the grading criteria for GCSEs?

Glenys Stacey, from Ofqual said: 'The move away from traditional grades may be hard to understand, but it is important to recognise that the new qualifications will be significantly different. The new system will be fairer to all students and allow better discrimination between the higher performing students.'

## GCSE Grade Translations

New GCSE grading structure									
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	
Current GCSE grading structure									

- Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above.
- Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve a grade A and above.

## GCSE timeline of changes

- The Government is implementing these changes in three stages, with certain GCSE subjects being transferred over at certain points.
- June 2017 – First exams for new GCSEs in English Language, Literature and Maths (phase one)
- June 2018 - First exams for phase two of the new GCSEs (inc. Art and Design, Geography, History, Music)
- June 2019 – Exams in all subjects will fall under new GCSE reforms (phase three)

## Changes to A-Levels

A-Levels are being redeveloped to ensure students are better prepared to attend university and deal with the academic nature and demands of a degree programme.

Just like GCSEs, A-Levels are transitioning into a linear mode of study. Exams will now take place at the end of the two-year programme and for a number of the subjects the amount of coursework has been reduced. Within subjects, the weighting placed on exams has increased, so that more of the students' grade rests on the exam performance.

This change has resulted in AS-Levels becoming a standalone qualification, though bear in mind that a number of colleges and sixth forms have decided to completely remove AS qualifications from their provision. In place of the AS-Levels, colleges and sixth forms will hold rigorous internal assessments at the end of the first year.

### A-Level timeline of changes

- June 2017 – First end of two-year exams for phase one A-Level reform subjects (inc. English Language, Literature, Mathematics, Sciences, Business, Art and more)
- June 2018 – First end of two-year exams for phase two A-Level reform subjects (inc. Geography, Languages, Drama, P.E and more)
- June 2019 – All exams for A-Level subjects will now fall under new reforms

More information can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/timeline-of-changes-to-gcse-as-and-a-levels/changes-to-gcse-as-and-a-levels-that-will-affect-each-current-school-year-group>



## Changes to Vocational Courses

In September 2014, the Government implemented changes to vocational education to ensure it is valued as highly as A-Level qualifications and ensures all students leave college or sixth form 'work ready' and able to progress on to further learning. They changed qualifications to become more rigorous and placed an emphasis on students undertaking programmes of study rather than just qualifications. These programmes of study would ensure students study an individualised programme that combines a qualification with personal, social development, employability development and English and maths (if required, see page 5).

One vocational qualification found in most colleges and schools is a BTEC. As part of the reform, BTEC introduced a 25% external assessment to each qualification, as well as implementing a 'one retake' stance on coursework.



# Changes to Work-based Learning

The provision of work-based learning for 16-24 has changed and is also likely to go through further changes. In June 2015, the Government announced that it was going to give apprenticeships equal legal treatment as degrees, with the aim of improving their reputation, and also announced a commitment to create 3 million apprenticeships by 2020.

## Traineeships

Introduced in summer 2013, they are a programme lasting up to 6 months for learners who need to improve their English, mathematics and employability skills before embarking on an apprenticeship or taking up employment. The focus is on work experience and English and maths, but the learner may take some sector-specific qualifications too. Delivery is currently restricted to providers with the highest Ofsted ratings.

## Apprenticeships

In spring 2017, the way the Government funds apprenticeships in England is changing. Some employers will be required to contribute to a new apprenticeship levy, and there will be changes to the funding for apprenticeship training for all employers.

The Government is introducing the apprenticeship levy in April 2017. The levy requires all employers operating in the UK, with a pay bill over £3 million each year, to invest 0.5% of their total pay bill in apprenticeships.

Employers are leading the formation of 'trailblazer' development consortia, initially across 37 different occupations, expanding to all by 2017. Reformed apprenticeships will be of a minimum 12 months duration with a greater focus on English and maths achievement, and more emphasis on assessment towards the end of the programme, with grading. This approach to apprenticeships, ensures that as a pathway they are relevant and aligned with the needs of employers.

## As of August 2016, there were:

- 195 standards "ready for delivery" from 103 Trailblazer groups
- 58 Trailblazer groups developing a further 127 standards
- 1000+ employers now involved



# Into the Future: A New Education System?

In July 2016, the Government published the report led by Lord Sainsbury which reviewed the route into employment for those aged 16 and above. Under the current system, school-leavers can choose between a staggering 20,000 courses; it is recommended that two pathways should be established, an 'academic' pathway leading to higher study, and a 'technical' pathway leading to employment.

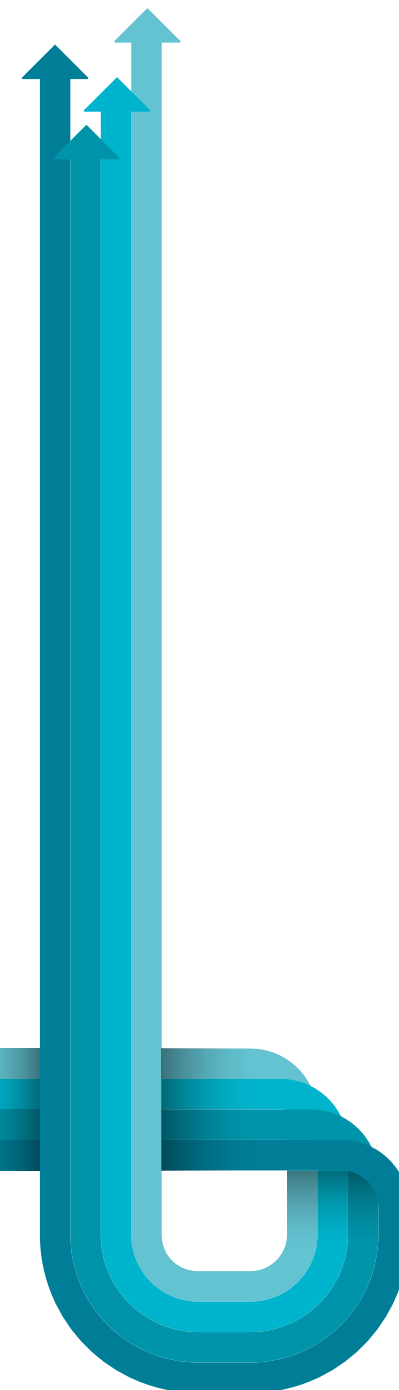
Under the new proposals, for the technical pathway there will be 15 "routes" covering the main skills that the economy needs. Each of these routes would encompass a number of related occupations and within each route there would be just one qualification for each of the occupations or cluster of occupations – typically 10-15 per route. Each qualification would contain core elements such as English, mathematics and digital learning to upskill young people to meet the demands of a dynamic employment market.

If the whole plan goes ahead and meets its targets, the first of these new qualifications will be ready for teaching in September 2019.

## The 15 routes are:

- Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care
- Business and Administrative
- Catering and Hospitality
- Childcare and Education
- Construction
- Creative and Design
- Digital
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Hair and Beauty
- Health and Science
- Legal, Finance and Accounting
- Protective Services\*
- Sales, Marketing and Procurement\*
- Social Care\*
- Transport and Logistics\*

\*Routes primarily delivered through apprenticeships



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Can my son/daughter withdraw from college without my consent?

If your son/daughter is aged 18 and under and they wish to withdraw from Bath College, then we will work with them to try and find an alternative programme at the College. If this is not achievable, then your son/daughter will be referred to Youth Connect, who will work with your son/daughter to explore other opportunities at other institutions. Remember, a young person must remain in education or training until their 18th birthday.

## What if my son/daughter refuses to do English and maths?

If required (having not achieved C/4 at GCSE), it is a condition of funding for that student. Therefore, attendance at English and maths classes are monitored in the same manner as the whole programme of study. Students will therefore face the same disciplinary procedures, and non-attendance at English and maths could jeopardise their place at Bath College. This will be the same at all other FE Colleges.

## What is a study programme?

This term outlines all elements that make up your timetable at College. Study programmes are designed to meet your individual needs and provide you with the knowledge and skills required for employment or further study. Each programme is made up of the following:

- Academic, vocational or technical qualification
- Maths and/or English development
- Work experience and/or employability skill development
- Personal and social development

## What does 'linear' mean?

Linear means that the course is taught over a set period with the assessment being at the end of that period of time, rather than a modular style of assessment throughout the course.







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