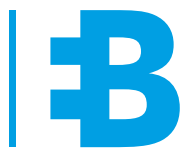


# YOUR FUTURE

## Choices for 16-19 Year Olds



SOMERSET  
**EDUCATION  
BUSINESS**  
PARTNERSHIP

SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION



**Options for education, work and training**

Revised September 2023



**Somerset**  
Council

## This is your guide to the study and work choices for school leavers in Somerset.

It explains the different ways that you can gain further qualifications through study or employment and where this could take you next.

Use this guide to think about what you would like to do and to discuss your options with your school's careers advisor and your parents or carers.

## What can I do after year 11?

Once you have completed your GCSEs you can choose to:

- Study full or part-time
- Start an apprenticeship
- Find other employment with accredited training

If you have not gained Grade 4 GCSEs in English and Maths it is a good idea to take these again.

You can do this alongside other study or work, supported by a college or training provider.



## Understanding Qualifications

The table below will help you understand the different qualification types and how these link to further study or employment.

Age	Level	Qualification Pathway	Description
Usually from age 18 onwards	8	Doctorate (PhD)	Postgraduate study can take place full time or alongside employment, depending on what suits each person's circumstances.
	7	Masters Degree (MA, MSc, MPhil)	
	6	Bachelor Degree or Higher Apprenticeship	Students can opt to go to university from 18 to take an undergraduate degree OR can follow an apprenticeship route to the same point.
	5	OR Foundation Degree / HND / HNC	
4	within Higher Apprenticeship Foundation Diploma		
Usually from age 16 onwards	3	A Level T Level, Foundation Diploma, International Baccalaureate,	T-Levels and Level 3 Extended Diplomas are equivalent to 3 A Levels
		Extended & other Diplomas at Level 3,  Advanced Apprenticeships	Diplomas are sometimes combined with A Levels  An Advanced Apprenticeship is equivalent to 2 A Levels
14 to 16 but can be beyond	2	GCSE (Grade 4-9) Diplomas, NVQs, ASDAN, Functional Skills at Level 2, VCerts	Some students choose a mixture of GCSE and Diploma courses in Year 10 and 11. A BTEC Level 2 Diploma is at the same level as a GCSE
		Intermediate Apprenticeship	
Usually age 11 to 16, but can be beyond	1	GCSE (Grade 1-3)	Level 1 qualifications provide the practical skills needed to begin work.

## How can I continue my learning or begin work?

There are many places where you can continue to study, begin a career or combine both. Here are the options:

### School Sixth Forms

Some schools have a 6th form for years 12 and 13. Most school 6th forms offer A-Levels and some offer vocational (work-related) courses. Most will also offer English and Maths GCSEs.

### Further Education Colleges

Colleges are usually larger than schools and offer a wide range of courses. In year 12 at college you might:

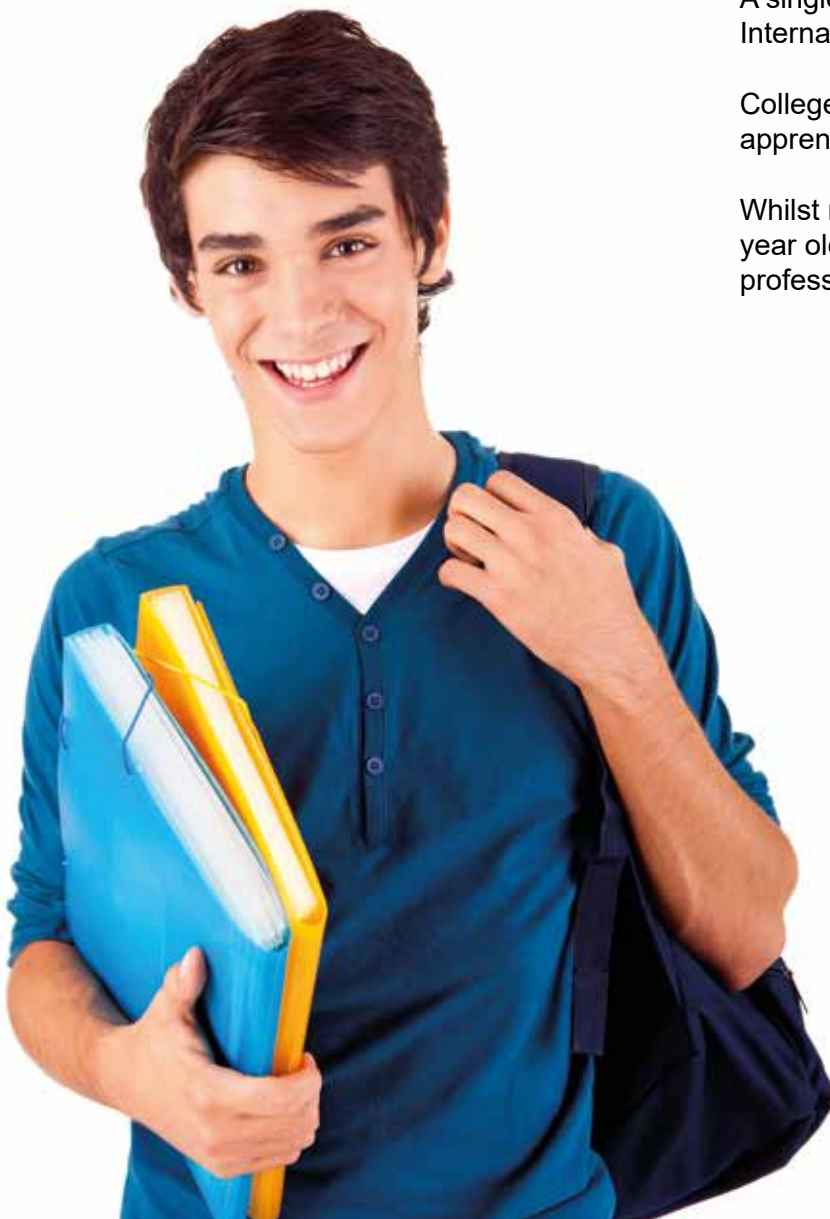
- Re-take GCSEs
- Take a foundation course to build core skills and confidence
- Take a level 2 vocational course
- Take a Level 3 course such as A-Levels, T-Levels, a vocational certificate or diploma or the International Baccalaureate

Some vocational courses are full study programmes whilst others may be combined with A-Levels.

A single T-Level is a full study programme as is the International Baccalaureate.

Colleges also work closely with employers to deliver apprenticeships.

Whilst most full-time courses are attended by 16-19 year olds, many adults take part-time courses and professional qualifications at colleges.



-  **LEVEL 1**
-  **LEVEL 2**
-  **LEVEL 3**
-  **LEVEL 4  
OR HIGHER**

## Training Providers

Training providers offer courses and qualifications to help you prepare for and develop at work.

Many specialise in specific industries and work with employers to deliver apprenticeships. You can also retake GCSE maths and English with most training providers.

For a full list of training providers in Somerset visit [www.dstpn.co.uk](http://www.dstpn.co.uk)

-  LEVEL 1
-  LEVEL 2
-  LEVEL 3
-  LEVEL 4 OR HIGHER

Training Providers offer a wide range of courses including:

- Vocational courses
- Apprenticeships
- English and maths
- Employability skills



## Starting a career... Apprenticeships

You can start an apprenticeship from the age of 16. You need to apply for an apprenticeship as you would for any other job. You will be in work and will be paid as you learn on the job. Your learning will be supported by a specialist training provider or a college.

Apprenticeships are available at levels 2-6 so you can start one after school or following further or higher education.

A degree apprenticeship enables you to gain a full degree whilst working without university fees.

Apprentice employers must pay the relevant minimum wage (but you may be paid more than this) and offer career progression opportunities.

For current minimum wage rates see:  
[www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates](http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates)

For more information on apprenticeships in Somerset visit [www.skillupsomerset.org.uk](http://www.skillupsomerset.org.uk)

### Apprenticeship Levels:

- Intermediate Apprenticeship (Level 2)
- Advanced apprenticeship (Level 3)
- Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4 & 5)
- Degree Apprenticeship (Level 6 & 7)



- ▲ LEVEL 1
- ▲ LEVEL 2
- ▲ LEVEL 3
- ▲ LEVEL 4 OR HIGHER

There are lots of different types of higher education courses available.

-  LEVEL 1
-  LEVEL 2
-  LEVEL 3
-  LEVEL 4 OR HIGHER

## Higher Education

Higher education means any nationally recognised qualification at level 4 or above, including:

- Foundation degrees, Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas - these are all linked to specific industries
- Bachelors & Masters Degrees – these may focus purely on an academic area of interest or link to specific industries
- Professional qualifications at level 4 and above – these allow progression in specific job roles

All universities offer higher education, but so do many colleges, professional bodies and training providers.

To learn more about higher education visit:  
[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)



**Most young people  
are over 18 when they  
start Higher Education.**

## Are you entitled to further support?

If you are aged 16-25 and are a care-leaver or have:

- special educational needs or a disability, or
- a learning difficulty assessment, or
- an education, health and care plan

Please visit [www.choices.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.choices.somerset.gov.uk) to see the support available to help you progress to further education and work. This includes supported internships which provide job coaching to help prepare for the workplace.

### Financial Support

If you are starting a course but are concerned about the cost of studying, speak to your college or training provider. They will be able to assess if you are eligible for financial support for books, equipment and meals.

### Accommodation

If you are studying a specialist course that is only available beyond reasonable travel distance you may be eligible for a residential bursary. You should check this with the institution.

### Childcare

Parents under 20 should check with their learning provider whether they are eligible for support with childcare costs.





## What do I do next?

Keep this booklet as a reference, then think about what interests you and what you are good at.

You can find advice on further study and careers choices at [www.careerpilot.org.uk](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk) – this site helps you to explore your skills and link these to courses and careers options that might interest you.

Speak to your school's careers advisor who can help you consider next steps. If you are not sure who this is, ask a teacher.

Attend open days at colleges, training providers and with employers. Discuss your ideas with your parents or carers too.

If you need further advice visit [www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk) – anyone over 13 can have a 1-1 web-chat with a careers adviser or speak to an adviser by telephone on **0800 100 900**.

Now begin applying for the things that interest you. You can apply to more than one college or training provider. You can also apply for apprenticeships at the same time.

Most people who want to go to college apply before they leave school, but you can still apply in September for a place starting in September. You must apply for apprenticeships by the deadline in the job advertisement.



## Career Opportunities in Somerset

If you would like to live and work in Somerset, there are some great career opportunities. Read on to learn about some of the key industries in the county.

You can start a career in most industries at apprentice or graduate level. Some companies do not offer apprenticeships or have graduate schemes, but if you have the skills outlined in their job advertisements you can still apply.

Salary levels depend on many things including location, organisation type and industry sector. Whilst there are minimum salary requirements for apprentices some businesses pay more.

Whether you join a company as an apprentice or on a graduate training scheme your salary may increase upon successful completion.

### Energy and Utilities

The energy and utility sector serves every household and business in the UK. To meet demand the industry needs to recruit 221,000 people by 2030. This includes 50,000 engineers to secure power supplies.

Industries in this sector include water and waste management and energy production and supply across gas, nuclear and renewables.

Jobs may be in offices, at laboratories, production or processing sites. For some there is travel between sites or even offshore.

Some of Somerset's key employers are EDF, Magnox, SSE & Wessex Water

For more information visit  
[www.energyutilitiesjobs.co.uk](http://www.energyutilitiesjobs.co.uk)

### Digital Technology

Nine out of ten employers in the South West require digital technology skills – and these skills are needed in all types of industries. The digital technology sector itself is growing rapidly in the South West too. So, there are many opportunities. In the technology industry these include:

- Software development and testing
- Data analysis and data science
- Artificial intelligence and robotics

Among Somerset's key digital employers are the Claims Consortium Group, Shearwell Data and the UK Hydrographic Office.

Many companies now rely on digital marketing and so there are opportunities both in specialist digital marketing agencies and as a digital marketing specialist in other businesses. Opportunities include:

- Web Developer and Web Designer
- Search Engine Optimisation
- Digital Content Creator

Visit Teapot Creative and Evosite to see just two of Somerset's growing number of digital marketing agencies.

**Nine out of ten employers in the South West require digital technology skills**



## Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing

Somerset's advanced engineering and manufacturing sector contributes more than twice the national average to our local economy. This is because the county is home to key employers in the aerospace, photonics and robotics industries.

Job roles in this sector include:

- Aerospace Engineer
- Computer Aided Design Technician
- Control and Instrumentation Engineer
- Production Operator and Production Manager

Many roles are based at the manufacturer's premises whilst some might include visiting clients to test or install products and solutions.

Some of Somerset's key employers are Gooch & Housego, Leonardo Helicopters, Numatic and Singer Instruments.

## Food and Drink

There are currently over 9,000 full-time jobs in food and drink production in Somerset and the opportunities continue to grow. This is no surprise with Somerset also having a strong agriculture sector and with a growing trend for locally sourced food.

Jobs in this sector are diverse and include:

- Creating the finished product – butchery, bakery, brewing
- Developing and testing new products – buyers, food scientists
- Product management – buyers, category managers

Key Somerset employers in this sector include: Muller, Somerset Larder, Yeo Valley Family Farm

Somerset's advanced engineering and manufacturing sector contributes more than twice the national average to our local economy.



## Construction

Construction and development is a diverse sector – requiring the skills to take a project from an initial idea through to its final delivery. As Somerset continues to develop more housing, employment sites and transport links these skills will remain in demand.

Just a few of the roles at each stage of a large project are listed below.

Land surveyors, planners and architects will identify suitable sites and propose designs. Engineers, project planners and quantity surveyors will create a deliverable project plan. Skilled construction workers will deliver the final development supported by engineers and surveyors.

Construction companies often work together on larger projects or individually for smaller projects such as individual home improvements.

For a good overview of construction roles visit [www.goconstruct.org](http://www.goconstruct.org)

You can enter this industry as an apprentice or graduate. There are many construction firms of different sizes and specialisms across Somerset.

## Agriculture and Environmental

Somerset has traditionally had a strong agricultural sector and this is set to continue, supplying both large scale food manufacturers and the increasing locally sourced food market.

As well as practical skills and technical knowledge, the agricultural sector requires business skills and adaptability to changing practices and regulations.

The growing agritech sector explores innovative ways to develop farming processes. Opportunities include:

- agronomists – working to improve soil productivity and quality
- biochemists – checking biochemical interactions on crops and food products
- robotics and artificial intelligence – developing and implementing AI solutions to improve efficiency and quality

The environmental sector requires diverse skills from engineering to flood management to ecology. Roles involve a mixture of site and office-based work and require people with technical specialisms and the ability to interpret and present results and information clearly to others.

[www.tastycareers.org.uk](http://www.tastycareers.org.uk) gives an excellent insight into careers across the food, drink and agriculture sectors.



**The growing agritech sector explores innovative ways to develop farming processes.**

## Tourism and Hospitality

This is a key employment sector in Somerset, accounting for 9% of all jobs in the county. Employers in this sector include hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions.

Many roles are seasonal, offering a great opportunity to gain work experience. There are also long-term career opportunities with strong demand for well-skilled chefs in Somerset.

There are many apprenticeship opportunities in this sector as well as graduate opportunities within larger organisations. Several new hotels have recently opened in Somerset with job opportunities at many levels.

Key Somerset employers include Butlins, Somerset County Cricket Club and the South West Heritage Trust along with many successful privately-owned businesses such as the Castle Hotel in Taunton and Lanes Hotel in West Coker.



## Health and Social Care

This is a key employment sector in Somerset – helping people to stay well, get better and maintain independent lives.

Whilst some roles, such as doctors, nurses and paramedics are visible and well-known, there are many other opportunities in this sector. Community roles include occupational therapists, care workers and social workers. Hospital-based roles include radiographers and theatre technicians. Other allied roles include biomedical scientists, speech therapists, nutritionists – and the list goes on.

The NHS is the largest employer in this sector, whilst Somerset County Council also has many roles available.

There are many opportunities to enter the health and social care sector as an apprentice or a graduate.



## Learner Case Studies



**Adam Green** studied A-levels at Kings of Wessex Academy.

After completing his A Levels at the Kings of Wessex, Adam studied Medicine at University College London.

On qualification, he worked as a junior doctor in medicine and surgery for two years in Poole, Dorset. Subsequently, he took up a position as a Resident Medical Officer in Perth, Western Australia.

Adam returned to the UK two years later to pursue his specialty in anaesthesia.

### Where is Adam now?

Adam's work as an anaesthetist is varied and includes provision of anaesthesia for surgical procedures in the operating theatres, emergency and trauma care.



**Omie Phillips** is studying Business, Marketing and Management at Richard Huish College

Omie enrolled on level 2 Business whilst re-sitting her GCSE Maths and English. Omie was 'terrified of the prospect of starting college. The staff at Huish reassured and helped me through this process.'

Omie has since received high praise whilst on her business placement and went on to achieve double distinction grades in business whilst also passing her maths and English.

### Where is Omie now?

Omie is now studying a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Business, Marketing and Management at Huish.

## Learner Case Studies



**Korben Rudge** is completing T Level Building Services, Electrotechnical Engineering at Yeovil College

Korben tells us 'I didn't know what a T Level was exactly before I came to Yeovil College. Since starting the qualification and experiencing the practical, hands-on sessions, I have realised that it is a great qualification to have.'

### Where is Korben now?

Korben is hoping to become an electrician after college.

**Fahima Shah** studied A-Levels at Strode College.

Fahima chose to study at a college to have more independence whilst still having support from teachers.

'The amount of support I received from my teachers helped me to achieve the grades I wanted. I enjoyed the weekly practical sessions. I liked the structure of the Chemistry course as we were given clear guidance on what we needed to know for each topic with support always available.

I quickly settled in at Strode because of the friendly environment. The facilities have been great as there are many places to spend free periods and lunch.'

### Where is Fahima now?

Fahima is studying Pharmacy at King's College London.



## Learner Case Studies

**Samantha Caddick and Lauren Lewis** are apprentice Commis Chefs at Somerset Larder.

Sam tells us: 'I have been working in a food premises since I finished school and am now looking to develop a more varied skill set. I look forward to working with fresh, local ingredients.'

For Lauren 'I love the idea of learning whilst working. I hope to learn many new ways of cooking and am excited to be using ingredients I have never used before.'

**Where are Sam and Lauren now?**

Sam and Lauren are part of the team supplying meals to the Hinkley Point C construction site.





## Learner Case Studies



**Leo Govier** studied level 3 Sport and Exercise science at Yeovil College

Leo tells us “I chose to study this course because I have loved all aspects of sport for as long as I can remember. After a knee injury, I became fascinated by my physiotherapist’s work and decided that I wanted to become a physiotherapist myself. The practical sessions have been really helpful in consolidating my knowledge.”

**Where is Leo now?**

“I am excited to move on to study Sports Science at the University of Exeter.”



**Lily-Mae Raybould** successfully completed a Pre-apprenticeship Programme with Somerset Skills and Learning

“The course helped me build up so much confidence and helped me achieve the maths and English qualifications I needed to progress onto an apprenticeship. I really enjoyed the experience at SS&L, which has made me want to continue to learn with them.”

**Where is Lily-Mae now?**

Lily-Mae is now starting a Level 2 apprenticeship in Childcare with Somerset Skills and Learning.

# Contact details

## for Somerset Post 16 Institutions & Providers:

### Sixth Form Schools

<b>Frome College</b>	<a href="http://www.fromecollege.org">www.fromecollege.org</a>
<b>Heathfield Community School</b>	<a href="http://www.heathfieldschool.clf.uk">www.heathfieldschool.clf.uk</a>
<b>Huish Episcopi Academy</b>	<a href="http://www.huishepiscopi.net">www.huishepiscopi.net</a>
<b>Holyrood Academy</b>	<a href="http://www.holyrood.uat.ac">www.holyrood.uat.ac</a>
<b>Sexeys</b>	<a href="http://www.sexseys.somerset.sch.uk">www.sexseys.somerset.sch.uk</a>
<b>The King Alfred School</b>	<a href="http://www.tkasa.org.uk">www.tkasa.org.uk</a>
<b>The Kings of Wessex Academy</b>	<a href="http://www.kowessex.co.uk">www.kowessex.co.uk</a>
<b>The Blue School</b>	<a href="http://www.theblueschoolwells.co.uk">www.theblueschoolwells.co.uk</a>
<b>Wadham School</b>	<a href="http://www.wadhamschool.co.uk">www.wadhamschool.co.uk</a>
<b>West Somerset College</b>	<a href="http://www.westsomersetcollege.org">www.westsomersetcollege.org</a>

### Colleges

<b>Bridgwater &amp; Taunton College</b>	<a href="http://www.btc.ac.uk">www.btc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Richard Huish College</b>	<a href="http://www.huish.ac.uk">www.huish.ac.uk</a>
<b>Strode College</b>	<a href="http://www.strode-college.ac.uk">www.strode-college.ac.uk</a>
<b>Yeovil College</b>	<a href="http://www.yeovil.ac.uk">www.yeovil.ac.uk</a>

### Training Providers

The current list of Training Providers delivering in Somerset and Dorset can be found at the Dorset and Somerset Training Providers Network website [www.dstpn.co.uk](http://www.dstpn.co.uk)

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We hope you enjoy taking your next steps after leaving school.

We wish you all the best as you plan your route towards a fulfilling career.

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For any feedback on this publication please email:  
**[support@somerset-ebp.co.uk](mailto:support@somerset-ebp.co.uk)**

This document is available at [www.somerset-ebp.co.uk](http://www.somerset-ebp.co.uk)

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