



What's next after Year 11?

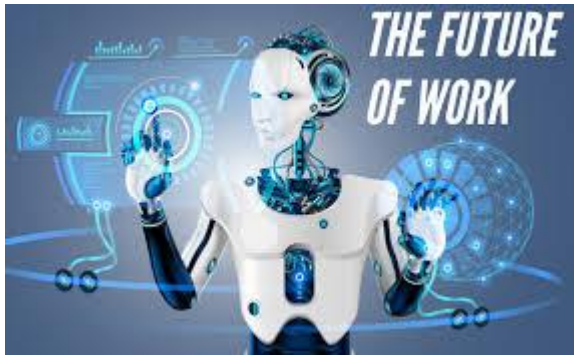
You are now in the final year of compulsory full time education and have big decisions to make about your future learning route. Year 11 is an important time for you and we will ensure that you have the guidance and support that you need.

The Government has changed the law and young people now have to continue in education or training until they are at least 18. This is called Raising the Participation Age (RPA). More information can be found on www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school

This does not necessarily mean that you need to stay on at a school sixth form, although many will. Young people will have a choice about how they continue in education or training post 16 which could be through:

- Full time study in a school or college
- An Apprenticeship
- Part time work or volunteering combined with part time education or training

This booklet aims to give details about these options so that you and your parents can make informed decisions about your future. Please make sure that you share this booklet with them.



Where will the future jobs be?

Whatever choices you make at 16, it is important that you start thinking about the future career area that you would like to get into and how your education and training choices fit in to that future career plan.

When you are making your choices, it is important to make sure that you have information about the jobs market and what this is likely to look like in the future. Predicting the future job market is difficult because it is constantly changing. Jobs that weren't even thought of fifteen years ago are now mainstream, such as social media marketing or cyber security. Oxfordshire has a particularly strong job market for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and this is likely to increase with the establishment of the corridor of STEM companies planned for the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire. Other growth areas are logistics and health and social care. There is lots of information about the local job market on <https://oxfordshire.yourfutures.uk/>

Skills for Work

The Government predicts that over the next few years there will be further drops in the number of jobs available to people with few or no qualifications and an increase in the number of jobs requiring the core qualifications of Maths and English. This is why you have to retake these exams at college if you don't get at least a grade 4 in Year 11.

Although qualifications are important in getting a job, employers are also looking for young people who have 'employability skills' such as communication, problem solving, creativity, honesty and integrity, being punctual, taking responsibility, team working, self-motivation and having a good work attitude.

You can evidence this through lots of activities such as work experience, volunteering, being part of a sports team, being a Brownie pack leader and by a part time job (however humble the job might be it still shows that you have a good work ethic).

Taking part in activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Scouts, Guides and Cadets and having responsibilities at school such as prefect duties also show an employer that you have learnt how to be responsible and resourceful.

What are my options at 16?

There are two main learning routes: Further Education (which includes sixth form and college) or Work with Training (most likely as part of an apprenticeship).

Further Education

School sixth form

Developing your knowledge and skills in academic subjects with an aim of either university or a higher/degree level apprenticeship. Entry will depend on academic achievement in GCSE exams.

College

Several local colleges offer A level courses which lead to the same qualifications as sixth form but in a different environment. All colleges also offer vocational courses (linked to a particular job area) at different levels. The level you start at depends on your GCSE results.

Work with Training

The main options are:

Apprenticeships – apprentices are employed by a company, sometimes with day release to college, sometimes assessed in the workplace. They get nationally recognised qualifications whilst also earning a salary and getting practical experience.

Jobs with training – training in a job with an employer but not a government recognised apprenticeship. This is not necessarily a second best - some big companies have their own training schemes. However, you should be very sure that the company are offering qualifications that will help you to progress.

What do I need to do?

Autumn term 2025

- Research courses available at sixth form and local colleges
- Find out when the open evenings are – go to at least one.
- Most colleges accept applications from October onwards and some popular courses fill up quickly. You can apply to more than one place and for more than one course especially if you are unsure about how you will do in GCSE exams.
- All Year 11 students will have a guidance interview with me during the year. **If you would like to be seen at the beginning of the year, please let me know, especially if you are thinking about apprenticeships.**
- If you are interested in finding out more about joining the armed forces, contact the local careers office for Army, Navy or RAF.

Spring Term 2026

- If sixth form interests you then sign up for a taster day which will take place in January. You will be able to apply afterwards.
- Colleges will offer another round of open evenings if you missed the earlier ones.
- Colleges will start interviewing and offering places.
- **Most companies will start advertising their apprenticeships now and this will continue through to the spring/summer. Some large companies start recruiting before Christmas so you MUST register on www.apprenticeships.gov.uk to find out what is available in our area and how and when to apply for apprenticeships.**
- Following your mock GCSE results, make sure that your plans are realistic. Will you get the grades you will need for your course? Do you need to have a back up plan? Come and see me to discuss your options.

Summer Term 2026

- If you still don't have a confirmed plan for after Year 11 come and see me
- Official school leaving date is the last Friday of June. You can work full time after that.
- You should have received your National Insurance card by now. If not, you can contact the relevant government office here <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>
- Colleges and sixth form will hold induction events before your official start in September. Make sure that you come in and collect your results on GCSE Results Day in August. It is not advisable to be away on holiday on this day - just in case you need to change your plans.



Checklist of things to find out about at sixth form and college open events

- **If the course is appropriate for your future plans.** Are the subjects that you have chosen accepted by the university that you hope to go to and for the degree course you plan to study? See www.ucas.com to find out what qualifications are required for each degree level course. If you are hoping to be an apprentice after sixth form or college, will the course be thought of positively by a future employer? Is work experience part of the course? See www.apprenticeships.gov.uk to get an idea of employer expectations.
- **Find out the entry requirements for the course that you are interested in.** Compare them with your predicted or mock grades for GCSE. Are they realistic? Do you need a backup plan?
- **How big are the classes and what is the balance between independent study and classes?** Vocational college courses are sometimes only around three days a week, but you will be expected to carry out research and project work on top of this.
- **What happens if there are not enough young people enrolled on the course or if you don't get the grades needed?** What alternative courses are there at different levels?
- **How is the course assessed – how much is course work and how much exam based?** Which style suits you best – do you thrive on exam pressure or are you more suited to continual assessment?
- **Pass rates and destinations.** Where do the students progress on to? What were the exam results for last year? How many students got into their first-choice university? How many students successfully applied for apprenticeships?



Useful Websites

Local Further Education providers:

FCC Sixth Form
www.fccoxon.co.uk

Cirencester College
www.cirencester.ac.uk

New College Swindon
www.newcollege.ac.uk

City of Oxford College
<https://oxford.activatelearning.ac.uk/>

Abingdon and Witney College
<https://abingdon-witney.ac.uk/>

Swindon UTC*
www.utcswindon.co.uk

Oxfordshire UTC* (Based in Harwell)
www.utcoxfordshire.org.uk

**University Technical College- more details on <https://www.utcolleges.org/>*

Websites for research

www.ucas.com	lots of information about universities including entry requirements
www.notgoingtouni.co.uk	lots of information for sixth form and college students about the alternatives to uni
www.apprenticeships.gov.uk	Official Government website for apprenticeship vacancies
www.eclips-online.co.uk	Detailed research about different careers. The password is SN77LB

No idea what to do? Try www.icould.com for videos, blogs and lots of career ideas.

I am here to answer any questions that you or your parents/carers may have. Email me on tibelcher@fcc.cambrianlt.org

Tina Belcher

Careers Adviser

