

Guide to Pathways & Options for School Leavers

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Beyond Year 11: What can students progress into?

1. Further Education Pathways at a 6th form, college or 6th form college – academic courses, general vocational courses, diplomas and vocational qualifications
2. Employment, Apprenticeships & Work Based Learning

*N.B. The school leaving age increases to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. This **DOES NOT** mean they have to stay on at school, but they do have to do some type of education or training. They can choose to stay in full time education, take an apprenticeship or undertake part-time training if they are working or volunteering for more than 20 hours per week.*

1. Further Education Pathways

Academic Courses

A Levels: These are the most common academic qualification in this country, with most students studying 4 subjects in the first year and continuing with 3 in the second year. Entry requirements vary from institution to institution. Minimum: 5 A-C, often requiring B grades in certain subjects. Cranford is now asking for 40-45 APS depending on which subject, which equates approximately to all C or B grades.

International Baccalaureate (IB): The IB is an academically challenging programme where pupils choose six subjects, 3 on higher level and 3 on standard level and combine this with a 'Core.' This consists of study and life skills and is taken by every IB student. The IB is assessed with written and verbal examinations by the IB teacher and external examiners. It is recognised in over 100 countries and more than 2,000 universities.

N.B. Locally, none of the Hounslow schools currently offer the IB, however schools and colleges in our neighbouring boroughs do.

General Vocational Courses

These courses cover broad vocational areas, such as health and social care, travel and tourism, engineering and performing arts. They combine academic study with practical learning. These courses are coursework assessed and available at levels 1-3. Entry requirements will vary between institutions, with some colleges requiring no set qualifications to enter a level 1 course, whereas another may request 4 E grades.

N.B. Schools and colleges offer these types of qualifications (depending on the subject), however normally only at level 2 and 3. The 'size' of the course may also vary; often schools will offer the level 3 course worth 2 A levels, whilst colleges will offer the course worth 3.

Diplomas

Diplomas are the newest qualification available and like general vocational qualifications, they offer a combination of academic and practical learning based around a broad vocational area. They also include functional skills and have a compulsory work experience element. Diplomas are available at levels 1-3.

*N.B. The new government **HAVE NOT** scrapped this qualification, however they are not expanding into the more academic subjects originally planned and there have been changes to young people's entitlement to be offered this qualification in their local area.*

Vocational Courses

Vocational courses train you for specific jobs, such as catering, hairdressing, carpentry, motor mechanics, etc. Types of vocational courses available include NVQs and City & Guilds Qualifications. During a vocational course you will be assessed on your practical skills. These courses are best suited to people who know exactly what career they want to do and who are practical learners. These qualifications are available at levels 1-3 and can be taken full time in further education colleges or as part of an apprenticeship.

All of these types of qualifications can lead onto higher education course in related fields.

Many colleges and 6th forms have application deadlines. It is recommended that applications are sent off before Christmas for competitive colleges.

2. Employment, Apprenticeships & Work Based Learning

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are available in hundreds of different types of jobs across different sectors of industry. This is where you work and get paid, but at the same time you learn on the job, develop skills and knowledge and gain nationally recognised qualifications. The main apprenticeship areas locally are engineering, motor vehicle maintenance, construction, business and IT, childcare and hairdressing, but for details on what else is available see www.apprenticeships.org.uk. The pay varies between employers, the minimum wage for an apprenticeship is £95 per week, but some apprenticeships, such as BAA pay recruits earn approximately £11,000 from year 1. Entry requirements vary but for the more competitive industries and job roles, students are required to have C grades in Maths and English (plus other relevant subjects). If a student does not have the required grades, they may consider a pre-apprenticeship training option or full time education in a related vocational course.

N.B. Recruitment for apprenticeships usually begins February/March time each academic year.

Work Based Learning

These are pre-apprenticeship training courses (level 1) or programme-led apprenticeships. Many training providers offer foundation courses (formally e2e) for students who are not yet ready for an apprenticeship or who do not have the entry requirements demanded. These courses cover literacy, numeracy, ICT skills, vocational learning, and often job-readiness and social skills. Programme-led apprenticeships provide the young person with the apprenticeship training in a setting similar to a work environment, prior to them gaining employment. Locally this is available for ICT and students can receive up to £100 training allowance whilst on this course.

Employment

This would cover any type of job opportunity that is not an apprenticeship. In the current climate, it is very difficult for school leavers to find employment without significant work experience.

Connexions can help young people to find employment, training and apprenticeships.

Local vacancy bulletins are on Fronter and www.mychoicelondon.co.uk and www.apprenticeships.org.uk also contain information on local jobs that Connexions are promoting to young people.

Try to encourage any students thinking about these options to speak to their Adviser to ensure they get help with applications, etc and get notified regularly about suitable vacancies.

Any young person considering work or apprenticeships, needs to think about a back up plan, in case they are not successful looking for work.

Beyond Year 13: What can students progress into?

1. Higher Education Options – degrees, HND courses, foundation degrees, year zero courses, art foundation courses and diplomas in HE
2. Employment, Training & Apprenticeships
3. Gap Years

1. Higher Education Options

Degree Courses

This is the most common HE option chosen by young people. This covers all your 3-4 year courses in vocational or non-vocational subjects where the students achieves a BSc, BA, etc.

Higher National Diploma (HND)

2 year course in a vocational area such as ICT, engineering, science, art & design and business. Equal level to first two years of a degree course and students can apply to top up their course to a degree. These courses are often taught at partner further education colleges, rather than the university itself.

Foundation Degrees

Similar to the HND courses, these qualifications are employment related and have been developed with employers. As with HND qualifications, a student can top up their course afterwards to full BSc/BA.

Foundation Year/Year Zero Courses

This is an extra year of university, prior to the main degree, for students to prepare for the studying at degree level. This is normally offered in science and engineering disciplines and is aimed at students who have not met the usual entry requirements. This can be taught at partner further education colleges in some cases.

Art Foundation Courses

This is a 1 year diagnostic course that gives students a broad introduction to art, before they specialise at university. This type of course can be found at further education colleges and higher education institutions.

N.B. You are not eligible for HE funding on this course, however it may be free at a FE college if the student is under 19. Students should also be made aware that if a student studies a BTEC Extended Diploma in Art they are normally not required to do this course.

Diploma in Higher Education (Dip HE)

This qualification is equivalent to studying the first two years of a degree and is accepted towards professional qualification in areas such a nursing and midwifery.

The key higher education options that students in Cranford need to be aware of are the HND courses, Foundation Degrees and Year Zero courses. They are particularly relevant as they are pathways from the vocational level 3 courses.

2. Employment, Training & Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships & Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 2/3)

These are available in hundreds of different types of jobs across different sectors of industry. This is where you work and get paid, but at the same time you learn on the job, develop skills and knowledge and gain nationally recognised qualifications. The main apprenticeship areas locally are engineering, motor vehicle maintenance, construction, business and IT, childcare and hairdressing, but for details on what else is available see www.apprenticeships.org.uk. The pay varies between employers, the minimum wage for an apprenticeship is £95 per week, but some apprenticeships, such as BAA pay recruits earn approximately £11,000 from year 1.

Entry requirements vary but for the more competitive industries and job roles, students are required to have C grades in Maths and English (plus other relevant subjects) for a level 2 apprenticeship and level 3 (advanced apprenticeships) will ask for A Levels.

Trainee Schemes

Some companies recruit A Level students to join as trainees to become managers or gain professional qualifications. Two of the big names who have recruited in recent years are Tesco and Bank of England. These schemes are highly competitive and would ask for 180 points plus, some will ask for academic subjects, but salaries are competitive/much higher than most apprenticeships.

Employment (no training)

This would cover any type of job opportunity that is not an apprenticeship. In the current climate, it is very difficult for school leavers to find employment without significant work experience.

Connexions can help young people to find employment, training and apprenticeships.

Local vacancy bulletins are on Fronter and www.mychoicelondon.co.uk and www.apprenticeships.org.uk also contain information on local jobs that Connexions are promoting to young people.

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3. Gap Years

Students can strengthen their applications for HE and employment by taking a gap year after 6th form, however students would need to structure this year.

- Travel – Camp America, teaching abroad, working in other countries, gaining independence, language skills, etc.
- Volunteer – in UK or abroad, lots of voluntary schemes keen to take young people.
- Work – save money for university, gain experience, year in industry/gap year vacancies for students.

N.B. In 2012, tuition fees will be increasing. Students who defer entry will have to pay the new fees!!!! Any students considering gap years need to consider this very carefully this year.