



University
Schools Trust
A transformational education



St Paul's Way
Aspiration • Integrity • Community
PART OF UNIVERSITY SCHOOLS TRUST



POST-16 CAREERS

PERSONAL HANDBOOK 2026-27

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WHAT NEXT?

Use this handbook wisely and take the opportunity to explore your options and ask any questions you may have before it is too late.

Wishing you all the best on your upcoming year!

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INITIAL REFLECTION

MAKE NOTE OF 2-3 QUESTIONS THAT YOU HAVE RELATING TO YOUR
TIME IN YEAR 10.

YOU CAN LOOK BACK AT THESE QUESTIONS IN YEAR 11 AND SEE
WHETHER THEY HAVE BEEN ANSWERED.



POST-16 OPTIONS

In the UK, it is a legal requirement for you to stay in education or training until you are 18-years-old.

The most common routes for students leaving Year 11 are:

- College/Sixth Form (BTEC, Cambridge Technicals, A-Levels, T-Level)
- Apprenticeship
- Traineeships

You are encouraged to explore all the several different options available before deciding which you would like to apply to. You can apply to different colleges at the same time, and you are also encouraged to do so as this gives you more choice to make a final decision on results day. You can also apply for the college/sixth form route and at the same time explore the apprenticeship route. When you receive your GCSE results, you can make your final decision and confirm the place you would like to take while withdraw from the others.

QUALIFICATIONS EXPLAINED



Qualification	Level	Description
GCSEs (Retake)	2	If you do not have a grade C/4 or above in GCSE English and Maths and are studying at school or college, you may need to retake these subjects to get grades A* to C/9 to 4 (or equivalent).
A-Levels at College/Sixth Form	3	Subject-based qualifications taken at college/sixth form where you will study three or more A-Levels over a duration of two years. This can lead to university, further study, training or employment.
Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)	3	An independent research project which you can take alongside your A-Levels (but not alone). The EPQ can teach you some key skills and boost your future higher education and/or employment applications.
BTEC/ CTEC Diplomas at College/Sixth Form	1, 2 or 3	BTEC/CTEC Diplomas give you greater insight into a particular sector or industry. They are a range of options available and they can be equivalent to either one, two, or three A levels. They can also be chosen in combination with other qualifications e.g. BTEC and A-Level.
National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)	1, 2 or 3	NVQs provide you with skills to do a specific job ranging from hairdressing to plumbing. They are usually taken if you have a full-time job, or are on a course with a work placement that requires you to develop appropriate skills.
T-Levels		T-Levels are new courses which are equivalent to 3 A levels. They are 2-year courses which launched in September 2020 and have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work, further training or study. T Levels offer a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement.
Intermediate Apprenticeship (GCSE Equivalent)	2	An apprentice earns while they learn. You would be employed by an organisation that will train you with the necessary skills while also gain a recognised qualification.
Advanced Apprenticeship (A-Level Equivalent)	3	

COLLEGE

- Environment: Different to school. Large. Prepares you for life on university campuses.
- Timetable: Timetable is varied with less expectations during free periods. Students are given the independence to make decisions about how to utilise free time.
- Dress Code: No specific dress code but must be sensible
- Courses: Offer a combination of qualifications e.g. A-Levels, BTECs, T-Levels and some even Apprenticeships

VS

- Environment: Similar to school as it is usually attached to a Secondary school
- Timetable: Full timetable with independent study expected during free periods
- Dress Code: Smart (some have uniform)
- Courses: Mostly A-Level driven

SIXTH FORM

ACTIVITY:

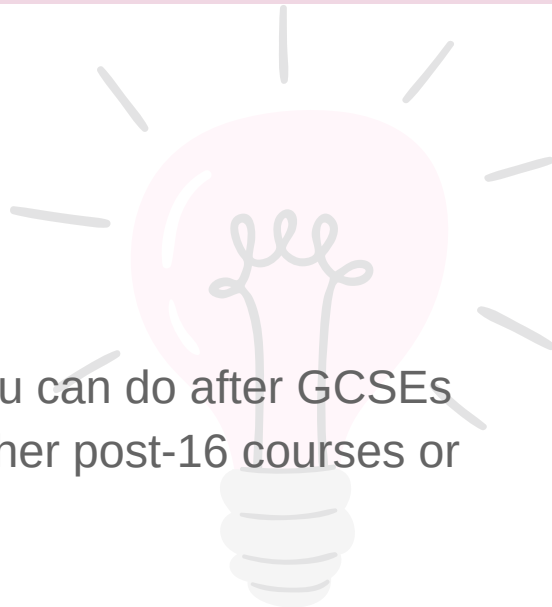
COMPARING PROVIDERS

ST PAUL'S WAY
SIXTH FORM

NEWVIC
COLLEGE

NEW CITY
COLLEGE

T-LEVELS



T Levels are a 2-year qualification that you can do after GCSEs at college as an alternative to A levels, other post-16 courses or an apprenticeship.

They have been designed with leading businesses and employers to give you the knowledge and skills you need.

You'll spend 80% of your time in the classroom and 20% on a 45-day placement with an employer to give you the skills and knowledge companies look for.

Your industry placement gives you the chance to learn what a real career is like while you continue your studies. When and how you complete it depends on the T Level, school or college, and employer.

Your T Level will be worth UCAS points (a T Level Distinction* is worth the same as 3 A levels at A*) and will be recognised by universities and other education providers so you can choose to continue studying if you wish.

26 of the top 50 universities in The Guardian's Best UK Universities 2022 Rankings have agreed to accept T Level students (as of August 2022).

APPRENTICESHIPS



- Apprenticeships give you the opportunity to work, learn and earn all at the same time.
- Apprentices work for a real employer alongside other experienced staff.
- Apprentices earn a salary and gain valuable work experience and a qualification.
- Apprenticeships are available in over 1500 job roles covering more than 170 industries, from advertising, to youth work, environmental engineering or nuclear decommissioning.

Entry requirements

- **Level 2 (Intermediate), equivalent to GCSEs:**

The requirement is the applicant's age, a minimum of 16. Employers may ask for a demonstrable interest in the area covered by the apprenticeship, as well as the ability to complete it. Some may ask for some GCSEs.

- **Level 3 (Advanced), considered equivalent to A-levels:**

At this level, employers will typically seek five GCSEs, particularly A-C/4-9 grades in English and Maths. Relevant experience will also be useful.

PERSONAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES

When you write your CV/personal statement or attend an interview you will have to demonstrate your personal qualities and skills. The grid below lists some common personal qualities and skills that can be used in personal statements and CVs.

Highlight or shade in the ones that apply to you.

Teamwork	Communication	Good Listener	Organisation	Time Management
Leadership	Planning	Analysing	Problem Solving	Decision Making
Creative	Evaluating	Co-operative	Negotiating	Designing
Punctual	Confident	Supportive	Dedication	Honest
Responsible	Proactive	Ambitious	Flexible	Caring
ICT Skills	Researching	Hardworking	Reliable	Positive Thinking
Presenting	Thinking	Practical	Adaptable	Aiming High

PERSONAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES

My personal qualities and skills are... <i>(Make sure you give examples to demonstrate how you have the skills and qualities you have chosen)</i>	
My proudest achievement is... <i>(Mention why it is your proudest achievement)</i>	
My interests include... <i>(Mention what your interests are and why)</i>	
Extra-curricular activities I take part in at school and outside of school include...	

PERSONAL STATEMENT



Your personal statement is a way of conveying your reasons for wanting to study at a particular college, do a particular course, and to demonstrate your ability to complete the course.

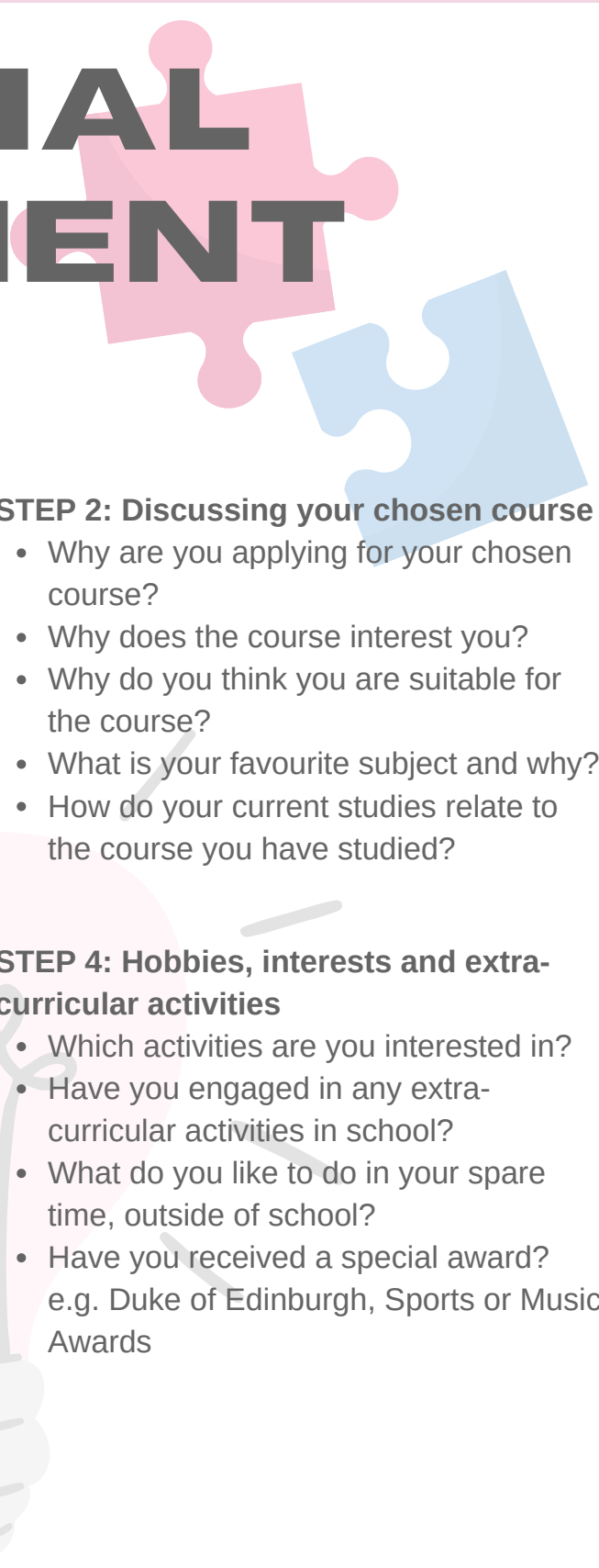
The college application process can be very competitive and a strong personal statement is crucial to ensure your chances of success. There is no single, right way of writing a personal statement, however, below is a suggested template with how to structure your personal statement and what you could include.

Colleges/Sixth Forms look for:

1. Enthusiasm and seriousness from you for the subjects you have chosen
2. Good subject-knowledge and an understanding of the course you have applied to
3. A personalised statement to their college/sixth form and course

NOTE: Not all colleges and sixth forms will ask for a personal statement, however, it is good practice to have one.

PERSONAL STATEMENT



STEP 1: Briefly introduce yourself and why you are applying

- Who are you and where do you currently study? (No need to write your name)
- e.g. A dedicated Year 11 student at St Paul's Way Trust School...
- What subject(s)/qualification are you applying for?
- e.g. A-Level Maths, Physics and Spanish / BTEC Level 3 Health & Social Care
- Why have you chosen to study at this particular college/sixth form?
- What are the subjects you are currently studying?

STEP 3: Work experience and volunteering opportunities

- Mention your work experience in Year 10
- If you have a part-time job, volunteer or support a family business, mention this
- Have you ever volunteered to support your teachers during parents' evening, been a student leader or even a student receptionist?

STEP 2: Discussing your chosen course

- Why are you applying for your chosen course?
- Why does the course interest you?
- Why do you think you are suitable for the course?
- What is your favourite subject and why?
- How do your current studies relate to the course you have studied?

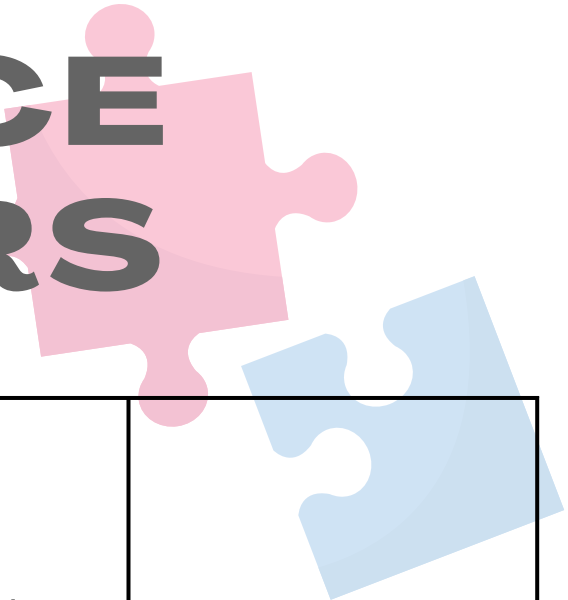
STEP 4: Hobbies, interests and extra-curricular activities

- Which activities are you interested in?
- Have you engaged in any extra-curricular activities in school?
- What do you like to do in your spare time, outside of school?
- Have you received a special award? e.g. Duke of Edinburgh, Sports or Music Awards

STEP 5: Your future career plans

- What is your goal and plan for the future? Why?
- How can your chosen subject and college help you to achieve this future career goal?

SENTENCE STARTERS



I am a Year 11 students at St Paul's Way Trust School studying GCSE ...	My favourite subjects are ...	Currently ...
I have demonstrated ...	My greatest achievement(s) is / are ...	To develop my skills ...
During my time at school ...	Furthermore ...	I believe ...
Outside of school ...	Last summer ...	In addition ...
As well as this ...	Alongside my studies ...	I plan to ...

CV WRITING

What is a CV?

- The first thing an employer sees during the recruitment process
- A record of your qualifications, grades, employment and work experience.
- An opportunity to provide a snapshot of yourself

CV Rules and Tips

- Clear sections with headings
- Chronological order with the most recent school/job first
- Write short and powerful sentences that lay out the basics of why you want the job
- Use objective language
- Be honest
- Proof read your CV before you send it in to anywhere
- Edit and change your CV regularly
- Tailor your CV to each job application

CV TEMPLATE

079 xxxx xxxx

FULL NAME

Postcode

name@gmail.com

Personal Statement

A highly motivated, form representative, who is currently working towards their GCSEs and predicted to achieve excellent grades in English, Maths and Science. Seeking an apprenticeship in the engineering industry to build upon a keen scientific interest and start a career as a mechanical engineer.

Key Skills

- Problem solving and numeracy skills.
- Full proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel & PowerPoint).
- Communication skills, both written and verbal, developed through numerous essays and presentations given during my time at school.
- Ability to take the initiative and work well under pressure, ensuring strict deadlines are met, as successfully demonstrated during work experience placement project.

Education

St Paul's Way Trust School

September 2019 - July 2024

Predicted 8 GCSEs, grade 9-6

English Language (8), English Literature (7), Maths (9), Double Science (8), Geography (6), RE (7), Spanish (8), Photography (9)

Work Experience

Shop Assistant

12th June 2023 - 16th June 2023

Name Supermarket

Duties and responsibilities:

- Served customers at the till.
- Assisted with stock renewal.
- Spent a morning working within customer service centre, listening to client complaints and understanding company best practice when responding.
- Gained knowledge of key health and safety standards.

Hobbies & Interests

During my time at school, I took advantage of the opportunity to become a form representative. This opportunity actively involved attending Year Council Meetings once every half term to discuss issues concerning our year group.

Over the last two summers, I have helped a family friend restore a classic sports car. This has triggered an interest in mechanics and automotive restoration and, now that the project is finished, I have continued to build my knowledge by attending various classic car events.

References

Mr Davies

Head of Year

email@spwt.net

02079871883

INTERVIEWS

Common Interview Questions

- Why have you chosen our college/sixth form?
- Tell me about yourself?
- What is your favourite subject at school and why?
- Why have you chosen to study this course?
- What kind of activities do you enjoy and take part in?
- Tell me about a challenge you faced and how you overcome it?
- Who is your role model and why?
- How will you contribute to our college/sixth form?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

INTERVIEWS

DO	DON'T
Arrive at least 10 minutes early to avoid transport disruptions and have enough time to find the interview location	Forget your documents – The college/sixth form would usually let you know what documents you are required to take with you
Dress smart – business/casual. If the interview is during school time, your school uniform is fine. First impressions count!	Use slang - you must be formal and clear
Do your research - it is important that you are informed and aware about the subject of study you have applied for and the college/sixth form	Be unprepared – research common asked questions at college interviews and prepare some answers but do not memorise them as this will look very unnatural
Prepare questions that you would like to ask the interviewer	Leave your phone on – make sure it is turned off or silent to avoid any disruptions
Be yourself!	Be shy – you have chosen the course and college/sixth form for a reason and the purpose of the interview is just to determine these reasons and get to know you. So, as in the other column, be yourself.

ACTION PLAN



MY GOAL IS...

(WHAT) The actions I will take to achieve my goal are...	(WHAT) The resources that I will need are...	(WHO) Who can help me achieve this?	(WHEN) Deadline: I will complete this by...

USEFUL WEBSITES

These useful websites range from specialist websites to careers platforms for you to explore. These websites are here for you to find out more about the choices available to you in order to help you make better decisions regarding your post-16 destination.

Unifrog – Explore the world of work and education
<https://www.unifrog.org/>

Career Pilot - Explore careers information
<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

National Careers Service
www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Apprenticeships
<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/real-stories/apprentice>

Prospects – General career information
<http://prospects.co.uk/>

UCAS - Course Finder
<https://www.ucas.com/explore/courses>

NOTES





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