



# Further education qualifications

## Types of courses

- Courses and qualifications exist in practically every subject and at many different levels. Most will be new to you – even if the title seems familiar, the way a particular course is put together can be very different from what you are used to.
- The availability of courses varies. To get an idea of the variety on offer throughout London, take a look at [www.mychoicelondon.co.uk](http://www.mychoicelondon.co.uk). Prospectuses (from Schools/Colleges) can provide information on what the courses involve.
- If you are hoping to take a mix of courses – for instance, combining a work-related qualification with an A level – you need to think about timetable clashes and how realistic your ideas are.

## New Diplomas

- The new Diploma qualification combines academic study and practical elements, including work experience.
- It is available at 3 levels – Foundation, Higher and Advanced. More information on each of the Diplomas and the various levels is on <http://yp.direct.gov.uk/diplomas>.
- You can choose from one of a wide range of broad subject areas – Business, Administration and Finance; Construction and the Built Environment, Creative and Media; Engineering; Environmental and Land-based; Hair and Beauty Studies; Hospitality; Information Technology; Manufacturing and Product Design; Public Services; Retail Business; Society, Health and Development; Sport and Active Leisure; Travel and Tourism.
- At present, not every Diploma or level is available in each London borough so you need to check the latest position with your school or Personal Adviser, or by looking at [www.mychoicelondon.co.uk](http://www.mychoicelondon.co.uk).

## Vocational (work-related) courses

- Some vocational courses, such as NVQs, are designed to give you the specialist skills needed to do a particular job, such as motor mechanic. If you want to take an NVQ, you may need to be in a relevant job/training position.
- Other vocational courses are broader. A BTEC National in business studies, for instance, could be useful for many occupations which require business skills and knowledge.
- Compared with GCSEs and GCE A-levels, vocational courses often have more projects and coursework which will count towards the final mark.

## Course levels and entry requirements

- Most courses are allocated a level. The availability of levels depends on the course and the school or college.
- The typical minimum GCSE entry requirements for the various course levels are noted in the chart below. Equivalent entry qualifications may be acceptable.
- Some places, especially if they are popular, will ask for more than the minimum. You will often need specific subjects as well as grades.

Entry level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 & above
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry level certificates e.g. in traditional subjects (English, Maths, ICT) and work related subjects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTEC Introductory Diploma</li> <li>• NVQ level 1</li> <li>• Foundation Diploma</li> <li>• GCSEs (D or below)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTEC First Diploma</li> <li>• NVQ level 2</li> <li>• Higher Diploma</li> <li>• GCSEs (A to C grades)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTEC National Diploma</li> <li>• NVQ level 3</li> <li>• Advanced Diploma</li> <li>• GCE AS and A-levels</li> <li>• International Baccalaureate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundation Degree</li> <li>• HND (Higher National Diploma)</li> <li>• Degree</li> </ul>
No minimum entry requirements	Usually GCSE study required for entry	Usually a minimum of 2 GCSEs at D	4 to 6 GCSEs A-Cs at GCSE	

## Does it matter what you study?

- You might need to take particular courses or subjects because of future plans. For instance, science-related higher education courses such as medicine often have strict entry requirements. Many other courses (such as psychology, law, media) do not.
- For work, employers are often more interested in your personal and social skills, IT ability and general aptitude rather than the exact courses you studied (although this does depend on the job).
- You can find out which qualifications may be necessary or useful for the work areas you have in mind at [www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u](http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u).

### Our equal opportunities policy: Successful Young People, Successful Communities

Central London Connexions will help young people from all backgrounds in London to succeed. Central London Connexions will make a real and lasting contribution to ensuring that the capital's diverse communities are successful in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. Central London Connexions will actively celebrate the cultures and diversity of young people through services and programmes that are attractive, relevant and reflect community interests, offering full and equal access to all young people and staff.

This information is available in alternative formats, call 020 7938 8080.