

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEXT STEPS

## PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE

Leaving school can be daunting at the best of times; it's a time of great change and lots of decision making.

In previous years, colleges would have been coming to school to answer some of your questions and to guide you towards which college and courses suit you.

As local colleges have been unable to do that this year, we have compiled this leaflet to put your mind at ease and to answer some of the most common questions we normally get asked in schools.

FIRSTLY, SOME

## TOP TIPS

ON DECISION MAKING:

### IDENTIFY THE DECISION AND WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

Perhaps work backwards e.g. do you want to go on to university or do you have a job in mind? If you have an end goal, research what is needed to reach that goal.

### DO YOUR RESEARCH AND WEIGH UP YOUR OPTIONS

Look into colleges in your area - what are their facilities like? What extra-curricular activities do they offer? How far is the campus from your house? Confirm that the job or university course you have in mind accepts the college course you're looking at. If you don't have a job or university course in mind, don't panic, choose college courses which interest you or that you're good at.

### KEEP YOUR OPTIONS OPEN

You CAN apply to more than one college and most colleges will ask for a final confirmation of where you will be enrolling once GCSE results are achieved.

### ASK THE OPINION OF OTHERS

This could be from parents, teachers or friends. Be sure to make your own decision though as it's YOU that will be required to produce the coursework or sit the exams. Don't make your decision purely based on where your friends are going - you'll make plenty of new friends at college.

### MAKE YOUR DECISION AN INFORMED ONE

Keep an eye on your local college's social media accounts to see what is going on around campus, check out their websites and by all means, call or email the college directly for any questions you can't find the answer to.





WITH SO MANY COURSE OPTIONS,

**WHICH ONE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?**

### VOCATIONAL

**Hands-on learner with a specific industry in mind.**

*Preferred Assessment Method:*  
Coursework, with some potential exams

### T LEVELS

**Wants to learn work related skills and knowledge in a specific job area.**

*Preferred assessment method:* A mix of coursework, exams and work-based projects

### APPRENTICESHIPS

**Work-ready learner with an interest in a certain job role/area.**

*Preferred assessment method:* Coursework, portfolio work and potential exams

### A LEVELS

**Analytical researcher who's good at independent study and exams.**

*Preferred Assessment Method:* Exams

At Level 3, ALL of these course types could lead you on to university, an apprenticeship or straight into the world of full-time employment.

At HSDC, our top priority is to ensure all Year 11s can make informed decisions about their post-16 options and have the same opportunities as all previous years.

That's why it's even more important to connect with your chosen colleges virtually to be kept in the loop and to see what each facility has to offer.



We hope to have answered some of your questions.  
Find out more about HSDC at [hsdc.ac.uk](https://www.hsdac.ac.uk).

## WHAT YOU SHOULD BE DOING AND WHEN

### YOUR TIMELINE

#### OCTOBER - DECEMBER

- Attend virtual open events
- Follow your chosen colleges on social media to be kept up to date
- Decide which courses you want to apply for
- Fill out a quick and easy online application form (REMEMBER - you can apply to more than one college!)

#### JANUARY - MARCH

- Receive a date for your interview - don't worry, this is just a chat about your options and a chance for the college to get to know you. These will be conducted over the phone or in person.
- Accept your college offer - once you have completed your college interview, you will hopefully receive an offer and be asked to accept your college place.
- If you haven't applied to college yet, you can gain more information from a college open event usually held in the Spring term. It might also be a good idea to arrange a careers interview with your school if you would like some further guidance.

#### JANUARY - JUNE

- Once you've applied for college, this isn't your time to relax. It's really important that you work hard on your GCSEs so that you get the grades required for your college course. Be sure to pay particular attention to your English and Maths, as you will be expected to retake these subjects at college, if you do not achieve a grade 4 or above - this is a government requirement so will be required at any college.

#### MAY- JUNE

- Sit your GCSEs - Good Luck!

#### JULY

- Attend a welcome event at your chosen college - a great opportunity to meet your classmates and lecturers.

#### SEPTEMBER

- Enrol at college and begin your next chapter!

## YOUR FUTURE