

Walsall Virtual School

Year 9 to Year 11 Careers Booklet



Walsall Council





Contents

Introduction	4
Why Is This Booklet Relevant For Me?	5
Interests, Skills And Abilities	6
Work Experience	7
Why Are Qualifications Important?	8
Understanding Qualifications	9
Important Things To Do If You Are In Year 9	10-11
Options At 16 Explained	12-13
Useful Websites	14
Year 11 Careers Check List	15

Introduction

From year 9, you will start making some important decisions about your future. This booklet will provide you with advice and information about the choices you will face and where you can go to access any help and guidance you might need.

As a care experienced young person, you can access support from Walsall Virtual School. You may have heard of the Virtual School before as we often attend your PEP meetings and sometimes arrange mentoring or tuition for you. The main role of the Virtual School is to check that you have everything you need so that you can progress as well as possible with your education. We have a Careers Advisor within the Virtual School, who can help support you with careers guidance when you are in years 9, 10, and 11.

Our Careers Advisor is called Hannah Yates. You can contact her by emailing or calling:

Hannah.yates@walsall.gov.uk

07825 218033

You can also contact our Secondary Education Advisor Debbie Woolfe

Debbie.woolfe2@walsall.gov.uk

07341 092859



Why Is This Booklet Relevant For Me?

It is important to begin thinking about your career choice early on, as the courses you choose can affect the range of careers you will be qualified to enter later. If you already have a career area in mind, you need to check what qualifications may be essential, or helpful, for **your chosen pathway**.

What we can offer you:

One To One Careers Interviews & Guidance Sessions

Careers interviews, with Hannah our Careers Advisor, will be offered to all students from year 9 upwards. These will take place in person or virtually and can take place either in school or at home. A careers interview will help you gain the knowledge, information, skills and experience necessary to identify career options; and narrow your choices down to make your career decisions.

Support Securing Work Placements

If you need help to find a work placement, or you want an additional work placement over holiday periods the Virtual School Careers Team can support you with this.

Support Securing Post 16 Education Including Apprenticeships

The Virtual School Careers Advisor will help you if you are struggling to decide what to do after year 11. They can help you complete applications, arrange interviews with you, or support you to apply for apprenticeships. The Virtual School tries to make sure that every young person in year 11 has a suitable and positive destination for their progression into year 12.

Support With Choosing Your Options In Year 9

Choosing the right options is important when it comes to your post 16 plans. If you need more support to help you choose the best options for you, or if you are a little confused about the options that you need to choose to get to your chosen career path, we can help you decide the right ones. This can be done 1:1 or in a group session.

Career Action Planning For Years 9, 10 & 11

The Virtual School Careers Advisor will see all students in years 9, 10 and 11 where an individual careers action plan will be completed with you. This will help you have a focused plan of the steps you need to take to reach your career goals. The plan will cover choosing your options, looking at careers, looking at post 16 plans and forward planning to think about careers and jobs.

Employability Skill Sessions (Help With CV's, Interview Techniques & Job Applications)

Employability skills are vital to helping you get a job, and are sometimes not covered in the school curriculum. Our experienced Careers Advisor can run group sessions or support you one to one, to help you prepare for an interview. Skills that you can develop include: practicing a successful interview, putting a CV & cover letter together and helping you with job applications.

Advice On University Plans

The Virtual School can help you look at the best routes and courses available for you if you need or want to go to university for your chosen career. They will support you with applying to university, looking at university options, writing your personal statement and to make applications for student finance and bursaries.

Skills Tests To Match You To Your Perfect Job

If you are a little unsure on what you want to do when it comes to choosing your course after school, or what career you want to go onto, our careers Advisor can use our skills test to help you narrow your options down. The 'test' isn't really a test and doesn't take long but it will really help. It will give you ideas about careers that will match your interests, skills and abilities.

Corporate Mentoring Scheme

Walsall Council's Corporate Mentoring Scheme is aimed at getting you linked up with a mentor from various sectors within the Council. Once linked they will guide you and talk you through their experiences, with the hope of giving you an insight into their role and various roles within the council.

Interests, Skills and Abilities

Whether you know exactly what you want to do or are still unsure, it is important to start thinking about your skills, interests and abilities as early as possible. This will help guide your decisions when it comes to leaving school. The Careers Advisor can help you explore this in a one to one session. Here are some questions to get you thinking:

- What sort of interests do you have?
- Are there any that could be used in a job?
- What are you good at?
- As well as thinking about school or college subjects, think about things you do in your life generally. For example, are you particularly good at organising things, listening to people, managing your money or practical tasks?
- Do you like the things you are good at? (It doesn't automatically follow!)
- What things are you not so good at?
- Are there certain skills that you need to develop?
- What jobs involve activities that you might enjoy?
- What skills would you like to learn?
- Do you like working closely with others in a team, or do you prefer to work independently?
- Are you an indoors person, or do you like being out and about?



Work Experience

While still in full-time education, all students are given the opportunity to discover what the world of work is really like by spending some time with a local employer. This gives you the chance to experience a job, or range of jobs, before making any commitment.

Some employers offer a work experience programme that allows you to explore different departments and different work roles. Others enable you to learn about a particular job. You will be encouraged to keep a log of your work experience. You can use this afterwards to help you reflect on what you have learned about work and about yourself.

You may be given the opportunity to do some work shadowing– this may be in areas where it would be difficult to do any aspects of the work yourself, such as in the case of a qualified professional worker, like a teacher or nurse. You can get a real insight into a job through observing someone whilst they go about their daily activities over a period of time. You can also ask them questions about their work, how they got into it, what their training involved etc.

School should support you with looking at potential work placements, however, if they haven't supported you in gaining a work placement please get in touch with the Virtual School and they will help you. Also if you want to gain extra work placements over the summer holidays or other holiday periods please get in touch with the Virtual School and we can help you.



Why Are Qualifications Important?

Qualifications are your passport to more opportunities in education, training and work. Here are five good reasons why you should take qualifications seriously

1. To give you the best choice of jobs – the number of jobs you can get without any qualifications is shrinking quickly. If you want a good choice of jobs, you need good qualifications.
2. To improve your earning power – there is a big pay gap between people with qualifications and those without them. If you want a well-paid job, you need good qualifications.
3. To show other people what you can do– qualifications show employers, colleges and universities that you have the attitude, skills and knowledge they need. They tell them what you already know and what you can already do. They also give them an idea of how well you might do in the future.
4. To prove to other people that you can learn – qualifications show people that you want to learn and that you can learn. Employers, colleges and universities look for people like this.
5. To show yourself what you can do– gaining qualifications boosts your self-confidence and self-awareness



Understanding Qualifications

Qualifications help you to move forwards in your chosen career and give you a better choice of jobs. The number of jobs for people with no qualifications is shrinking quickly. They also help to improve your earning power and people with qualifications earn more during their lifetime than those without. Below is a table that explains the different levels of qualifications. People start at a level that suits their ability and once they have gained a qualification at that level they can then progress onto the next level.

Most jobs will require you to be at Level 2 and many employers ask for qualifications at Level 3. If you would like to move onto university most courses will require a Level 3 qualification and a GCSE grade 4 or above in English and Maths.

Qualification level	Achievement level	Some qualifications at this level
Entry 1,2 and 3	Building a basic level of knowledge, understanding and skills	Entry level awards Functional Skills (Eng. Maths and ICT)
Level 1	Basic knowledge, understanding and skills and the ability to apply learning to everyday situations	GCSE grades 3-1 Functional Skills Level 1
Level 2	Building knowledge/skills in subject areas and their application. Important level for employers and further education applications.	GCSE grades 9-4 Functional Skills Level 2 Intermediate Apprenticeship
Level 3	In depth knowledge. Understanding and skills and a higher level of application. Appropriate for entry into higher education, further training or skilled employment.	A Levels Advanced Apprenticeship Level 3 Vocational Qualifications
Level 4-8	Specialist learning that involves a high level of knowledge in a specific occupational role of study.	Bachelor's Degrees Postgraduate qualifications Professional Qualifications Higher Degree Apprenticeships Doctoral Degrees

Important Things To Do

Important Things To Do If You Are In Year 9

- Make sure you choose options that will enable you to pursue your chosen career path. You can get support with choosing the right options from school and/or the Virtual School Careers Advisor
- Start your action plan with the Virtual School Careers Advisor so you can finalise option choices and talk through any concerns
- Attend the National Skills Show to look at potential careers paths. You will be told about this by the Virtual School, and it usually takes place in October
- Complete an Icould Quiz (careers/personality quiz) to give you some idea of the areas of work you may be suited to.



Important Things To Do If You Are In Year 10

- Complete a work experience placement in a sector of your choice. If school cannot help with this, the Virtual School will support you to arrange it. Work experience is important to help students gain insight into the world of work
- Attend an apprenticeship talk, either in a group or one to one, to learn all about apprenticeships
- Check that your predicted grades will enable you to progress onto the career path/course you would like to do when you leave school
- Gain improved understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses and have opportunities to plan, address and develop these. This would be achieved in your Year 10 action planning meeting with the Careers Advisor

Important Things To Do If You Are In Year 11

- Read and familiarise yourself with the checklists at the back of this booklet. Make sure you are working your way through them, and asking school and Virtual School for support if you need it.
- Check that your predicted grades will still enable you to progress onto the career path/course you would like to do when you leave school
- Have at least one careers interview and put an action plan together, making sure your Post 16 plans are clear
- Have an employability session with the Virtual School's Careers Advisor to hone your CV writing and interview skills
- Visit at least 3 different post 16 education/training providers or apprenticeships in person or virtually, so you have a clear idea of where you would like to go, or not go!
- Apply to your post 16 education provider (eg college, sixth form, or training provider) and make sure you have a place and a back up plan and place.



Options At 16 Explained

The next section will give you a brief overview of the main post 16 options. You will be given a post 16 booklet in year 11 with more information on this.

Raising Participation Age (RPA)

The law says that you must continue in some form of education or training until you are 18. This is so that you have the best possible chance to gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications that you need to get a job you enjoy in the future. There are a number of ways in which you can continue with your education.

- A Level Study
- Vocational Course (BTEC) or Vocational Qualifications
- T Levels
- Apprenticeship or Traineeship

A Levels (Sixth Form or College):

A-levels are academic qualifications that are subject based. If you want to look at some of your GCSE subjects in more detail alongside new subjects then this route might suit you. A-levels involve lots of reading and in-depth research about your subjects. You should enjoy this approach to studying and feel confident about taking exams. You will usually select 4 subjects. You can study subjects you have previously studied at GCSE, start new subjects, or select a mixture of both. When you choose your subjects try to pick ones you think you will enjoy, be good at; and if you are interested in a particular career, check out the entry requirements to see if any particular A levels are essential or desirable.

BTECs or Vocational Qualifications (Sixth form, College, or Training Providers):

BTEC's are specialist work-related qualifications. They combine practical learning with subject and theory content. Vocational qualifications train you towards a particular career area. If you have an idea about the area of work you would like to progress into, then this route might suit you. If you want to go to university in the future then you need to make sure that the university you are thinking of going to accepts BTECs, as some universities don't.



T Levels (College)

T Levels are the new technical alternative to A Levels. T Levels will combine classroom theory, practical learning and an industry placement of at least 45 days with an employer, to make sure students have real experience of the workplace.

Apprenticeships (Colleges or Training Providers)

Apprenticeships are work based and combine hands on training in the workplace with off the job training within a college or training provider. This option suits those who have a clear idea about what they would like to do. Apprenticeships can be within a wide range of sectors and the training can be within a college or a training provider. The breakdown of how often the training is completed differs depending on the provider i.e. once a week, once a month or block release.

Traineeships (Training Providers)

Traineeships are designed to help young people who want to get an apprenticeship or job but don't yet have the appropriate skills or experience. A traineeship is a course with work experience that gets you ready for work or an apprenticeship, whilst still working to achieve qualifications in English and Maths. It can last up to 6 months.

Functional Skills/Re-sit GCSEs (Sixth Form, Colleges, and Training Providers)

If you don't achieve grade 4 in your GCSE English and Maths, you will need to re-sit these or gain a Functional Skills Level 1 or 2 in these subjects if you want to progress onto any higher level courses. It is a legal requirement that you keep studying towards English and maths until you are 18 if you don't achieve a grade 4. Re-sitting GCSEs and taking Functional Skills Courses, is done alongside other programmes or qualifications, so that you are doing more than just Maths and English, and you have the opportunity to study something you are really interested in.



Useful Websites

National Careers Service

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service has lots of useful information for you to look at and research your career ideas further. There is a dedicated section for schools. The job profiles provide information on every known career available to date.

Apprenticeships

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

This site advertises all current apprenticeships; pupils can register and apply for actual apprenticeship vacancies in their area.

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/apprenticeships>

We also have apprenticeships through Walsall Council. If you are interested in apprenticeships we have a wide variety on offer throughout the Council. Please speak to the Virtual School careers Advisor further about these.

Higher Education

UCAS

www.ucas.com

This site provides useful information on options post 16 and post 18. You can research degree courses here and entry requirements.

www.prospects.ac.uk

Provides information on where your degree might take you and the career opportunities.

<http://university.which.co.uk>

Further information about university including options and finance along with lots more information.

Year 11 Careers Check List

Autumn Term:

	Tick
Pick up a prospectus from the colleges, sixth forms and training providers you're interested in and read through your course options	
Attend all the open evenings at the colleges that interest you	
Attend the school careers fair	
Attend your careers guidance interview at school or with the Virtual School to look at your options for post 16	
If you're thinking about university after college then research the courses and check the entry requirements www.ucas.com	
If you are considering an apprenticeship then visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk and register to apply for vacancies. Also speak to the Virtual School to see what opportunities the Council have available	
Check application deadlines – there may be some this term especially sixth forms!	
If you still don't have a firm career idea then think about how you can keep your future options open	
Begin work on your CV and Personal Statement	
If you are ready, start to complete your college applications and pass to your school careers advisor to double check them or the virtual school advisor	

Spring Term:

Make a backup plan - it's okay to apply for more than one college! If you are considering an apprenticeship – always apply for full time college as a backup as well	
Prepare for any interviews that you might have arranged – If you need any support contact the virtual school	
If you are still unsure about you want to do– don't panic! Speak to your Careers Advisor in school or the Virtual School Careers Advisor	
If you are considering an apprenticeship – Get your CV ready and start looking at vacancies	
Attend your college interviews	

Summer Term:

	Tick
Make sure you confirm your acceptance of any places that are offered to you	
If you are having doubts about any of the choices you have made speak to the careers advisor or the virtual school	
Go to the bank and set up an account if you don't already have one. You will need this for your bursary	
Make sure you have had your national insurance number come through the post. If you haven't, speak to your carer and social worker to chase this up	
Make sure you have had your interviews for your post 16 provider. If you haven't, call them to check what is happening with your application, or ask for help from the Virtual School	
Think about gaining work experience over the summer holiday to gain experience. If you need help setting this up, contact the virtual school.	
Consider doing NCS over the summer holiday. It is a great experience! NCS No We Can National Citizen Service (wearencs.com)	
Pick up, complete and submit your bursary forms for college/ sixth form or training providers, so that you are able to have your bursary in September.	

