

# TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



## What are technical and vocational qualifications?

Technical and vocational courses are designed to help you learn in a practical way about a specific job area. They can help you get the skills you need to start a job, progress in a career or go on to higher education.

If you know what job or job sector you want to go into you may want to study a technical or vocational qualification.

There are many different types of vocational qualifications in a wide range of subjects at all levels, from Entry Level right up to Level 8.

## What are the different course options?

### 1) Job Related Subjects

Vocational subjects are general qualifications that develop practical skills and knowledge related to a broad job area such as Business, Engineering, IT and Health and Social Care. They are offered in both schools and colleges. They include a significant number of classroom-based activities. Assessment is usually by both written and practical examinations. These qualifications are known as [Applied General Qualifications](#) and can be taken on their own or alongside other qualifications such as A level. Examples of these qualifications include BTEC and Cambridge Technicals.

### 2) Vocational Qualifications for a Specific Job

These vocational courses provide specific job-related training and qualifications such as in plumbing, hairdressing or catering. They are offered at Further Education Colleges. They are usually very practical and involve learning in real situations, with real customers, such as cutting hair in the college salon which will be open to the public, cooking for paying customers in the college restaurant or installing bathrooms in the plumbing workshops.

T Levels and Apprenticeships are covered separately.

### 1) Job Related Subjects

#### What are Applied General qualifications?

Applied General Qualifications are on a par with A levels. They are for students 16 - 19 who want to continue their education through learning applied to a general job area e.g., Law, Creative and Media, and Business.

Applied General Qualifications allow entry to a range of higher education courses, either by meeting the entry requirements in their own right or being accepted alongside other qualifications at Level 3 such as A levels.

Many Applied General Qualifications are endorsed by employers and professional or trade bodies.

## Applied General Qualifications

- These qualifications are known as Applied General Qualifications or known by the exam board they take e.g., BTEC or Cambridge Technicals.
- These qualifications offer the underpinning knowledge of a subject, practical skills and relevant work experience. So, these courses will suit you if you have an interest in a specific job area e.g., Health and Social Care.
- These subjects can be taken alongside two A Levels at school or as one course equivalent to two or three A Levels at college.
- Generally, there are less exams, and a range of different assessment methods are likely to be used - such as assignments, observations of learner performance etc. These courses tend to suit people who prefer coursework to exams.

## What Applied General qualifications are available?

Applied General Qualifications are available in a variety of vocational areas:

- Agriculture, Horticulture, Environmental Conservation & Animal Care
- Performing Arts, Arts, Crafts, Media & Publishing
- Finance, Enterprise, Business & Law
- Health & Social Care and Child Development & Wellbeing
- Construction, Planning & the Built Environment
- Engineering, Manufacturing Technologies & Transport Operations
- Information & Communication Technology
- Leisure, Sport, Travel & Tourism
- Retail, Hospitality & Commercial Enterprise
- Science & Mathematics
- Sociology & Social Policy



## 2)Vocational Qualifications for a Specific Job

### What are they?

If you want to train for a specific job such as plumbing hairdressing, carpentry and childcare then you will need to gain relevant vocational qualifications. Vocational qualifications demonstrate that you have the skills, knowledge and behaviour to do a job.

There are many different types of vocational qualification depending on what you are training for with different awarding bodies.

### Classroom based vocational qualifications

These will introduce you to the skills and knowledge required for the job. These are offered by FE Colleges. They are available at different levels and sizes - they may be called technical qualifications and you may be studying an Awards, Certificates or Diplomas. You may have the opportunity to do simulated work experience as part of your vocational learning for example in the college

restaurant or hair salon or a work placement. These are assessed in a number of ways: including practical tests, written exams, course work or even online multiple-choice tests. They can progress on to further study, work or apprenticeships.

### **Work based vocational qualifications**

These are qualifications that are designed to meet specific occupational standards. They enable you to undertake training and develop your skills and competence 'on the job'. You need to be working or on a work placement to gain these qualifications.

They have a range of assessment methods depending on the job. One example of a popular vocational qualification is [City and Guilds NVQs](#) and you can take these in lots of different job areas. Other awarding bodies just accredit one vocational area for example the British Horse Society.

Some college courses with significant work-based learning may enable students to gain practical work-related qualifications alongside the technical qualifications.

### **What is the progression from technical and vocational courses?**

These qualifications have been designed in partnership with employers, universities and professional or trade organisations - this means that you can develop the skills that employers want. You can also acquire the knowledge needed to progress to a higher level - such as a degree level courses or apprenticeships.

These qualifications have been validated by employers and universities as good qualifications that will lead to jobs, apprenticeships and higher education opportunities.

### **What are the benefits of technical and vocational qualifications?**

- Vocational qualifications and apprenticeships are being developed across most professions for example; science, law, finance, media and IT.
- Vocational qualifications are designed to meet the specific needs of employers and job sectors. This means that you will develop the skills and knowledge employers value, enabling you to become an effective employee and helping the organisation to succeed.
- Studying for a vocational qualification can help you decide whether a particular job or job sector is right for you.

