

Education

What happens after GCSEs?

If you are at the edge of a precipice, your every step is vital," said Turkish writer Mehmet Murat Ildan.

For 4,015 days, everything in your world and your experience of education to date, has led you to this point. The moment of GCSEs... but what comes afterwards?

Reality hits. And maybe after a summer holiday or a part-time job, you ask yourself the big question "What am I going to do with my life?!"

There is good news. There is bad news.

The good news is this. You have more options available to you than you may currently believe. More good news: The knowledge and skills you acquire now will stand you in excellent stead for later. Skills are transferable and valuable - you can pivot and change direction in future if you change your mind.

Even more good news: You don't have to commit to your forever job, or career right now. You can take small steps, one at a time, to find out what you want to do. Nothing is set in stone.

Now for the bad news.

Deciding what to do next, after your GCSEs might feel like the biggest decision of your life. It might even be the biggest decision of your life (so far). And sometimes change can feel scary. That's the nature of change - it's a break away from what you know. But progress doesn't come from sitting in your comfort zone forever and never finding out what could happen next.

No decision is insurmountable. Many decisions are reversible. Although worrying what to do next in your life after GCSEs might feel daunting, you have options. You have support. Working out what to do when your exams are over doesn't have to feel burdensome or weigh you down.

You are entitled to free careers advice and support. At Chelmsford College (whether you choose to join us or not) you can sit down with trained careers advisers and explore your options.

You can take courses in a broad subject now and specialise later on. You can sign up for a job and training. You can take a short course, distance learning or online course.

You can apply for work experience, aim for Uni, volunteer or become self-employed whilst you work out what you want to do next. You can do this, provided you combine your work, volunteering or self-employment (more than 20 hours per week) with part-time learning or learning which leads to accreditation.

The key realisation to have, is that whilst GCSEs are important, they are just the beginning of something.

They open doors for you to access a different world. A world where different courses - vocational and academic - are on offer.

This is your time to choose what happens next.

Level 3 Catering student, Steven Bashford says "I wanted to focus on one subject rather than do different subjects at A Level, because I knew I wanted to be a Chef, in particular a Pastry Chef. I've enjoyed the course and it was the correct decision for me."

Deciding what to do next is not about pleasing teachers, parents or carers. It's about working out what's most important to you. What you really want to learn next and what kind of job and lifestyle you'd like to pursue. Then it's about jumping wholeheartedly into the next adventure of your life.

Andy Sparks, Principal of Chelmsford College says "Learning never stops. The more skills and qualifications you gain the more opportunities open up for you. At Chelmsford College we will give you as much support as possible for you to plan and action your career aspirations. We have a dedicated Careers Advice Zone Team to help you explore all your options."

"At College, we have Insights into Industry days so you can hear from employers first-hand what they are looking for, what they expect and the wealth of opportunities available to you. We also have a Progression Fair every year, which is your chance to meet Employers, Recruiters and Universities and ask questions to inform your choice of what to do next."

Last year, across the UK, 20.5% of people taking their GCSEs received the top grades (7 or above) and 66.9% received a grade 4 or above. The most popular GCSE was Science: Double Award, followed by Maths



Hair and Beauty students in the new Princes Salons at Chelmsford College

and then English. Even if you don't hit your targets of getting a grade 4 or above in English and Maths you may be able to retake those GCSEs or be provided with an alternative option such as studying Functional Skills.

Legally, following your GCSEs you need to be in a recognised form of work or training until your 18th birthday. In addition to free advice from Chelmsford College, there are online resources to help you navigate what to do next. The National Careers Service can help and you might also like to consider signing up to become a Young Professional to boost your life skills for free.

If social action is calling your name, you might consider taking part in the National Citizenship Service programme. The NCS experience is designed to make you feel "challenged and changed, engaged and empowered." It's also lots of fun, where you can meet new people and gain new skills. Chelmsford College



Chelmsford College Principal Andy Sparks

has been awarded Champion status previously for taking part in the NCS programme.

If you fancy a job, but want to keep on learning then an apprenticeship might be for you. To find out more, you can talk with Hugo or Fay on 01245 293031.

Lilika Diamandakis says "I chose an apprenticeship instead of University because I was looking for something which would give me real life work experience to improve my prospects. I wanted to be part of a proper work environment and know that current and future employers value that."

Apprentice Fay White says "I chose to do an apprenticeship because as well as learning I can earn and I felt that I was ready for the world of work."

If you'd like to get a feel for College life, the next Chelmsford College Open Evening is on Monday 29 April from 6pm until 8.30pm. You can book to avoid queues and you can meet tutors, discuss courses and

Chelmsford College
SHOWCASE

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ARRIVE BEFORE
8PM
SO YOU GET THE ATTENTION YOU DESERVE



OPEN EVENING
29th April 2019
6.00-8.30pm

Moulsham Street and Princes Road Campuses

Education

Vicky Ford MP with Travel and Tourism students visiting TUI to learn more about career opportunities

Childcare Level 3 first year students undertaking emergency first aid training with Danny Hyde
Emergency First Aid Ltd

Scott Macey of Fight 364 training students in the boxing club at lunchtime

explore careers options and even apply on the evening to start in September.

Chelmsford College has a pass rate of 95+% and has been ranked top of the league tables for 16-18 progression by FE Week.

If you're searching for a bit of inspiration - try our fun quiz to find out what you could do with your life here: www.mycour.se/quiz

You can also claim your free, independent careers advice session with trained professionals at the

College. You can call 01245 293031 or email information@chelmsford.ac.uk to book a slot or drop-in throughout the Summer, Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm (excluding Bank Holidays).

Whatever you decide to do after your GCSEs, this is an exciting time and everyone at Chelmsford College wishes you the best success!

Resources
Chelmsford College Open Evening:
www.chelmsford.ac.uk

National Careers Service: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>
Young Professional: <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/young-professional-training/>
National Citizenship Programme: <https://www.ncsyas.co.uk>
Fun quiz: www.mycour.se/quiz

The Education supplement front cover was designed by Chelmsford College Graphic Design student Ben Cobbing.

A Mechanical Engineering student taking part in the build of an eco-electric racing car for the Greenpower Competition



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