Netherthorpe School Year 11 Careers Advice/Guidance for Students and Parents 2025-26

This pack contains careers information and support for students in year 11. It gives students and their parents an overview of the Post 16 options available, an understanding of how students can decide on the best route for them and how students can receive specific one to one current careers guidance/support.

What Is Available After Year 11?

There are 7 most common routes available to students after they leave school in year 11:

- **Sixth Form (2 years) –** most commonly leads to university or higher-level apprenticeships after studying A-levels or equivalent qualifications.
- **College (1-3 years) –** most commonly leads to employment or university after completing level 3 qualifications.
- **Apprenticeships (1-3 years) –** some businesses offer their own apprenticeships which most commonly lead to employment in that business.
- **T-Levels (2 years)** – these are designed by employers. 20% of time is spent on placement with the other 80% spent studying at college. Designed to give students more specific industry experience, whilst also giving them a continued learning/classroom experience.
- **Study Programmes (up to 1 year) -** These are suitable for young people who want to gain confidence, employability skills, vocational qualifications and work experience.
- **Traineeships (up to 1 year)-** These are training programmes which include a large amount of work experience to help prepare young people to enter full time apprenticeships.
- **Careers with their own training programme (1-3 years) –** often leads to working in the public sector such as the ARMY, NAVY or RAF.

Post 16 Destinations - How Do I Decide?

Ask yourself the question below and see if that helps you narrow down your options.

What would you prefer to be doing next year? Studying or working? Does that influence your Post 16 destination?

- Think about your impression of work. Can you imagine starting work and training in a professional workplace next year?
- Would you prefer to continue studying for two years and develop your knowledge around specific subjects you love?

Do you have a career goal in mind? Does that influence your Post 16 destination?

- Does the career/job you want to pursue require a degree? Do you therefore need to go to sixth form/college?
- Do you want to become specialised in a specific trade or sector and work your way up in that industry? If so, would an apprenticeship or vocational college be better for you? Be aware that some Apprenticeships may also require high GCSE grades at 4 or above.

- Are you unsure about your future career path and are you achieving good grades at school? If so, do you want to keep your options open and study at a college/sixth form for a few years?

How do you like to learn? Does that influence your Post 16 destination?

- Think about how you like to learn. Do you enjoy learning in groups and with a teacher where you can share/discuss ideas? Do you prefer practical hands-on sessions where you work on a project and develop skills that can be used in a real-life workplace?

What is your desired Post 16 destination right now? Why is this the best destination for you?

- Although it is important to get advice and support from school staff, careers advisors and parents – remember it is YOUR future. Be sure to choose a route which you know you actually want and are passionate about. Statistics prove that those who enjoy their destination or career, stick at it for longer and have better career prospects as a result.

Thinking of University When You Are 18?

What Are The Benefits?

- You become independent – living away from home for at least 3 years gives you freedom and forces you to develop life skills.
- You'll never be bored – Constant social life, always societies to get involved in and events to attend.
- You get to work with professionals in your desired career routes – networking is much easier.
- You will be taught by leading researchers and authors in your field of study. You are actually in the presence of the people in charge of the future of your subject.
- You will rarely get the chance to be around a group of people who love the subject as much as you do.
- Employment prospects are high – as there are more opportunities available. On average, students who gain a degree earn more than those who don't.

Common University FAQs

1. Is University usually for 3 years? Yes, although some courses can last longer.
2. At University are you taught by leading practitioners and researchers? Yes, many lecturers teach a couple of days a week and then run businesses or are working towards advancements in their field on other days.
3. On average do people with a degree earn more? This is true, as a degree gives you more job prospects and allows you to progress quicker. This is not always the case, but on average graduates do earn a lot more.
4. How many courses are there in the UK? Currently there are around 50,000. The best place to start looking is on the UCAS website or on Unifrog.

5. Do you get money from the government for both your course fees and living costs when you are at university? True – all course fees are paid and some money is provided for living costs.
6. As soon as you start earning money do you start paying back your student loan? False – You only pay back 9% of everything you earn over the threshold. The threshold for students starting university in England this year will be £25,000.
7. Do you have to pay back a student loan as long as you are earning money? False – the debt is wiped after 40 years.
8. Do you need to go to a sixth form or college when you are 16 to have best chance of getting into university? Yes, this is definitely your best option.

How Do I Get There?

- The most common way to enter university when you are 18 is to go to a Sixth Form or College when you are 16 to study level 3 qualifications (A-Levels or equivalent).
- Netherthorpe Sixth Form is one example but, there are many other colleges and sixth forms locally to choose from. You will need to select the one that is best for you – this is often based on location, the subjects offered and the entry requirements.
- You will need to revise and work hard to gain the grades needed at the end of year 11 – to go to university you need mostly level 5's in your GCSEs – many desire a level 6 in your specialised subject.

What Grades Do I Need For College/Sixth Form?

- The entry requirements for each college or sixth form differ but the current entry requirements for Netherthorpe Sixth Form are: 5 higher grade passes (4-9) in traditional GCSE subjects including either English Language or Maths. These are the minimum requirements if a student is to have a reasonable chance of gaining pass grades at Sixth Form study. We strongly recommend that students have at least a Grade 5 in the subjects they wish to study.

Applying to Netherthorpe

To apply visit: https://netherthorpe.academy/sixth-form/admissions/

Here you will find an Apply link, along with subject breakdowns and the prospectus.

How To Choose Courses/Qualifications That Are Suited To You?

Here is how you can narrow down what course/qualification you could study at Post 16:

- Research the career/job you are interested in pursuing – does that career/job require you to have specific subject knowledge or a specific qualification?
- If you are unsure, don't pick subjects/courses that could narrow your options – taking 3 science related courses for example and then realising you wish you had taken a broader balance of subjects.

- If you are totally unsure, just pick subjects that you are passionate about, enjoy and are good at – often if you enjoy the course/subject, you will enjoy a career which relates to it.

Did You Know That Certain Uni Courses Will Be Looking For Specific Qualifications/Subjects?

The most obvious examples are below. If you want to study any of the following degree courses at university, then you will need to take 3 A Levels (or equivalent) in the subjects listed next to them.

- Medicine/Pharmacy must have: Chemistry, plus at least one from Biology, Maths and Physics.
- English must have: usually English Literature, maybe English Literature and Language or just English Language.
- Geology/Earth Sciences must have: at least two from Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.
- Economics sometimes need: Maths, very rarely do you need Economics.
- Engineering - usually prefer a Maths or Science related subject.

Apprenticeship Training Providers – Alternatives To Sixth Form/College

Apprenticeship Training Providers offer vocational courses and training to young people and adults. There are many of these in the local area and Netherthorpe has contact details for them all. You should be considering applying to an independent training provider if you have had enough of education, are struggling to get the grades needed for sixth form, want an apprenticeship in a specific field/industry and are not necessarily considering applying to university when you are aged 18.

Examples of training providers that offer apprenticeships in the local area include: Learning Unlimited, Juniper Training, DART, Babington Business College etc.

Speak to the school's career advisor if you want to learn more about independent training providers in the local area – students can make a careers appointment at main reception.

Thinking of an Apprenticeship When You leave School or Sixth Form?

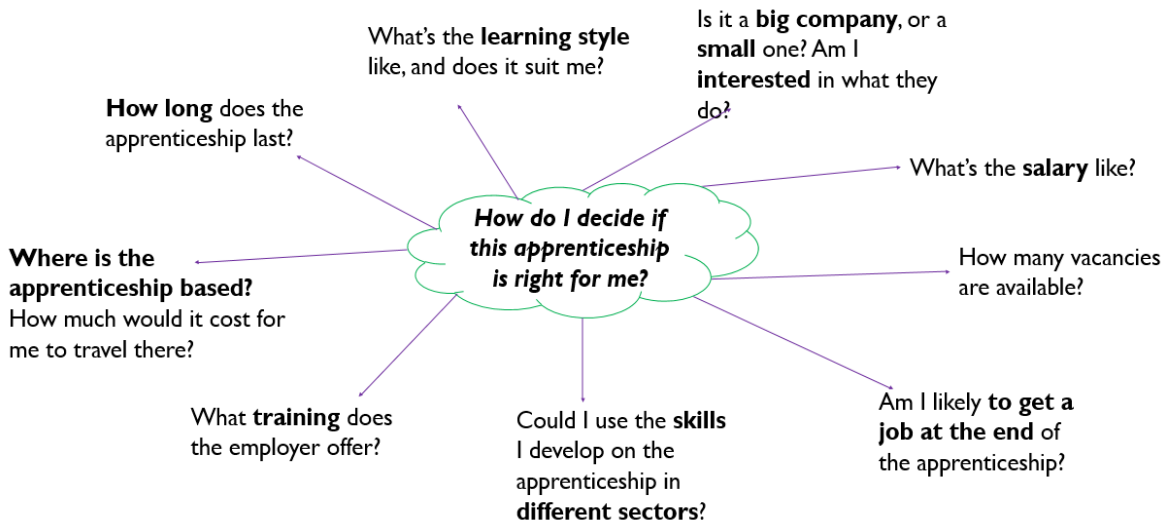
Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study. Apprenticeships take 1-5 years, depending on their level. As an apprentice you'll work alongside experienced staff, learning on the job. Apprenticeships allow you to combine working and studying. It's the best of both worlds; you go to work for a company who pays you and provides industry training, and you also attend a college to work towards a qualification, paid for by your employer! You'll also get paid for working and get holiday pay.

There are many apprenticeship options available to young people in Chesterfield after they leave school or college and choosing which is best is a big decision.

Apprenticeships are an excellent way of gaining qualifications whilst getting real life work experience and being paid for it. Available in 170 different industries from hair and beauty to aerospace engineering, apprenticeships have been making an impact on local businesses for hundreds of years.

The main benefits of an apprenticeship can be found in this YouTube clip:

Top 5 reasons to undertake an Apprenticeship - YouTube



Common Apprenticeship FAQs

1. How old do I have to be to start an apprenticeship? - Individuals over the age of 16, spending at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of their apprenticeship and not in full-time education can apply for an apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit.
2. What is the National Minimum Wage for Apprentices? – as of April 2024 this currently stands at £7.55 per hour.
3. Does my wage increase over the course of the apprenticeship? Apprentices are entitled to move from the apprentice wage to the minimum wage for their age, if they are over 19 and have completed the first year of their apprenticeship.
4. As an apprentice how many days holiday do I receive? You are entitled to 20 days paid holiday.
5. Should apprentices be paid, even when they are on training which is part of their apprenticeship? Yes – training is part of the apprenticeship so should be paid.
6. As an Apprentice, do I not need to pay taxes on my wage? Anyone who earns more than the taxable threshold per year must pay tax – so if this applies to the apprentice, then yes, they will have to pay tax like any other employee.
7. How many hours a week will I work as an apprentice? If you are under 18, you are not allowed to work more than 40 hours. But, you will have to work a minimum of 30 hours a week to meet the requirements of your apprenticeship.
8. How long do apprenticeships last? Apprenticeships must last for at least 12 months.
9. Do I have to sign an agreement? Both employee and employer must sign an Apprenticeship agreement, which states the skill, trade or occupation the apprentice is being trained for. This is supplementary to a standard employment contract.

How Do I Find and Apply For Apprenticeships?

The majority of apprenticeships become active and open their application windows between January-April. The length of the apprenticeship, the level of the qualification that accompanies the apprenticeship and the start date of the apprentice can all vary – every apprenticeship is different.

Below are the most useful websites to help you begin searching and applying for apprenticeships that interest you. Remember that apprenticeship vacancies change daily, so it is important that students keep checking these websites regularly for opportunities.

National Apprenticeship Service - https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

- You can set up an account to get email alerts, so that you can apply to anything that interests you. Click 'create an account' and follow the instructions.

Start D2N2 - https://d2n2.startprofile.com/page/apprenticeships-apply

- On this website you can search for apprenticeships near to your location and by different sectors/industries.

The Apprenticeship Guide - http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/vacancies

- You can head to the link and begin filtering the vacancies by region. Start with the East Midlands and see what is available. Once you have done this you can use the service to search opportunities that link to various interests in a specific area.

Chesterfield Website - https://www.chesterfield.co.uk/apprenticeships/become-an-apprentice-in-chesterfield/

- On this webpage you will see lots of different apprenticeships which are offered in the local area. Just click on a marker you are interested in on the map or click on 'apply' next to any in the list that interest you.

Unifrog - https://www.unifrog.org/sign-in

Unifrog is a service that the school pays for – which allows all Year 11 students to access the service at home and in school for free. It is a one-stop-shop where students can easily explore their interests, then find and successfully apply for their next best step after school.

Unifrog will help you to explore your key interests and what career paths you can take to reach your goals!

Careers Library Tool – This tool can help when choosing Post 16 options, it can help to understand some of the different job roles and careers that subject combinations can lead to. This can help you recognise if the subjects are the right fit for you.

Subject Library Tool - You can search for information about specific subjects you could study further at university by clicking on the subject library tool.

College/Sixth Form Tool – Here you can search for qualifications and courses you are interested in – you are then provided with a list of educational providers who offer that subject/qualification in your area.

Apprenticeships Tool – Use this tool to search for apprenticeships that interest you in your local area. Once searches are generated you can filter options by various preferences. Once final shortlists are created you can click on links that take you directly to the provider's website, so you can apply.

University Tool - Use this tool to search for university courses that interest you. Once searches are generated you can filter options by various preferences. Once final shortlists are created you can click on links that take you directly to the provider's website, so you can find even more.

CV Tool – This tool allows you to create a digital copy of our CV. It provides students with helpful pointers and examples of how to impress potential employers by what they include in each section of their CV. Students can return to and adapt their CV on this tool as many times as they like.

Interviews

It is common for a college or apprenticeship provider to ask you to attend an interview. This is just so that the provider can introduce themselves and see if you would fit in well at their institution. Interviews aren't everyone's favourite thing, but with a bit of preparation you can do well. Providers/employers will be looking for enthusiastic students with lots to offer – someone who is passionate about the apprenticeship/qualification/subjects they are applying for. Ideally you will come across as confident, as someone who can be independent and will thrive in their learning environment.

Below are some interview tips if the interview is face to face:

1. Plan ahead

- **Check where and when** – sort out any travel and accommodation you need – check their website for maps and directions.
- **Be ready for questions** – some about your application, as well as your chance to ask about the course and the college/apprenticeship.
- **Know your stuff** – show you know the latest in your subject/apprenticeship area, and keep up to date with the news – they might ask to hear your views.
- **Practice** – have mock interviews with a teacher or adviser – practice answering the following questions: Tell me a little about yourself. Why have you chosen to apply to here? What courses/subjects/qualifications do you want to study/complete and why? Where do you hope to be in 5 years' time?
- **Sleep well**!

2. The interview

- **Dress smartly** – you might not need a suit, but smart trousers/skirt and a shirt/blouse will show you're taking it seriously.
- **Get there early** – have their phone number handy so you can let them know just in case you're delayed.
- **Good body language** – don't slouch, yawn or fold your arms – stay calm and alert, sit up straight and make eye contact.
- **Don't worry if you don't understand** – ask them to repeat or rephrase the question, make a good guess, or relate it to something you know better.
- **Expect the unexpected** – they might do a surprise test to see how you react under pressure – just do your best.
- **Ask them questions too** – this shows enthusiasm and gives you chance to get answers you haven't found yet.

3. Afterwards

- **Make notes** – if you have more interviews coming up, it might be handy preparation to write down the questions and answers you've already had.
- **Reflect on how you did** – decide what worked well and think of new answers for areas you want to improve in.

Tips for Virtual Interviews

Use your desktop or laptop but not your phone. Phone connections can more easily drop the call and not have good reception when you want it most. You will not look good holding your phone, which will shake or move around as you hold it and be annoying to the viewer. Your desktop computer (first choice) and laptop are the better options.

Don't start by apologizing for you being unfamiliar with online technology. That is not what the provider wants to hear. It'll make you come across as technically incompetent. Go to YouTube and watch some how-to videos on using the meeting software, whether it's Skype or others. Practice several times using this technology, so you know how to connect, reconnect, adjust the volume, and can ensure you look good on camera.

Pay attention to the background and lighting. Keep your background uncluttered and move all distractions, so they don't interfere with the camera focusing on you and not the light pole growing out of your head**.** Be sure to be in a quiet location. A plain background is ideal. Do not be sitting on your bed as it gives a poor impression. Check the lighting to see how your face looks at the time of day you will do the interview. You want perfect lighting, so we view your face without shadows. You may need to add a lamp to one side or in front of your face but out of camera view to get your whole self well lit.

Dress for the camera. Dress up like you would for a face-to-face interview. A solid shirt or blouse work best. Avoid prints or plaids as these don't look good when viewed via a monitor.

Practice beforehand. This is a real interview, and you can land a spot on the course or lose it. You can use Skype with a friend to role-play the session. Your movements and nervous actions are exaggerated on video. Watch for your non-verbal clues and facial expressions. Get used to the camera. Focus totally on the interviewer and try to forget the camera. You do need to stare into the camera, so the viewer sees your eyes and not you looking down. Movements need to be slow. Best not to move around too much. Your poise and self-confidence are being assessed here. Be sure to exude these traits and smile often. Show interest and enthusiasm for the course/subject.

Write out your answers. Review the questions you are likely to be asked. Many will require an example to answer. Write out answers. You can craft the best response when you aren't on the spot. Think through work examples and pick the better ones that make you shine in the listener's eyes.

Further External Careers Support

Netherthorpe works in partnership with lots of other careers organisations and businesses. These companies offer some incredible careers advice and resources for students deciding upon their post 16 destination and future career plans. We would strongly advise you check out the amazing services and informative resources below:

Start D2N2 - This site gives students the chance to view vacancies and post 16 options available in the local area. It also gives students a better understanding of which jobs are in demand nationally and locally. The site also allows students to see which subjects and qualifications will help to prepare them for the future? Students can discover and explore jobs, industries and employers. Students can identify what is needed to stand out from the crowd, both on their CV and in an interview.

https://d2n2.startprofile.com/page/home-page

Amazing Apprenticeships – Amazing Apprenticeships create incredible resources for parents which are full of useful Post 16 Destination information and guidance. All of this tremendous support can be found in the Parent Zone on their website.

https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/zones/parent/

UCAS Apprenticeships - The UCAS website provides students with everything they need to know about UK Apprenticeships all on one site.

Apprenticeships | Learn About Apprenticeships And Find The Right One For You (ucas.com)

Still Need Careers Support?

If you, or your son/daughter, still needs further careers support and guidance then students can book a careers appointment with the school's careers advisor at any point. This is a one to one careers interview in which the careers advisor will provide bespoke careers guidance and support that is tailored directly to the student. To request a careers appointment, all students need to do is email the school: info@netherthorpe-mlt.co.uk