

Health and Science Learner Journeys



We want every learner to study high quality qualifications which prepare them for their next step— whether this is entering skilled employment or progression onto higher levels of technical or academic study.

Alongside T Levels and A levels, newly reformed qualifications will become available for delivery at level 3 at the start of the 2025 academic year. These are high-quality, aligned to occupational standards in technical routes, and offer learners clear routes to higher education or skilled employment.

Reformed Technical Qualifications are also available at level 2, alongside the existing level 2 offer, including the T Level Foundation year.

These qualifications are:

Alternative academic qualifications (AAQs) which are small AAQs (150–420 guided learning hours).

Reformed technical qualifications which can be Technical Occupational Entry qualifications and Technical Additional Specialist qualifications.

The new qualifications are in the following sector subject areas (SSAs):

- Building and construction
- Child development and well-being
- Engineering
- Health & social care
- ICT practitioners
- Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine
- Science
- Sport, leisure and recreation
- Transport operations and maintenance

You can review which qualifications at [level 2](#) and [level 3](#) are available in each SSA by accessing the lists of approved qualifications.

The Health and Science Learner Journeys within this document have been developed to provide possible examples of the ways these new qualifications can be combined to create study programmes for 16–19-year-olds and adults. They also highlight progression opportunities as a result of studying the qualifications but are not formal guidance.

You can find out more about study programmes by using the [16–19 study programme guidance](#).



Learner Journey: Health and Science

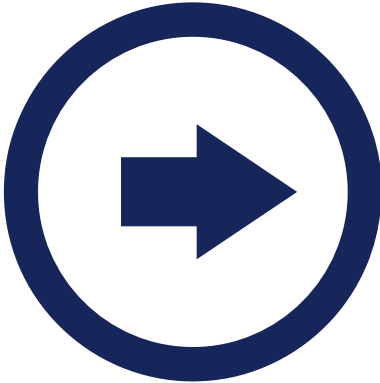


Anil is interested in a Science based career, but isn't sure yet the direction he'd like to go in.

He achieved 8 GCSEs Grades 6–9, including grade 7's in Chemistry and Biology.

Anil enrolls on a L3 study programme, which could include:
A level Biology (360 GLH)
A level Chemistry (360 GLH)
A level Psychology (360 GLH)

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) (120 GLH):
He could research a forensic science-related question (e.g., "How reliable is DNA evidence in court?").



He takes free online short courses on forensic science, criminology, and criminal psychology.

Anil enters a national science competition with a forensic-themed investigation (e.g. fingerprint analysis, fake blood testing) and undertakes some laboratory work experience (some NHS trusts, universities, or STEM Learning hubs offer work experience or virtual internships in forensic or biomedical science.)

Anil takes part in enrichment opportunities including visits to Higher Education institutions and a STEM visit which includes an interactive workshop on Forensic Science, which sparks his curiosity.

Anil joins a science and forensics enrichment STEM Club which explores topics like DNA analysis, toxicology, or crime scene investigation.

Anil joins a debating club: since forensic science often intersects with the legal system, debating or mock trials can develop analytical thinking and communication skills.

He takes part in problem solving challenges: Activities like UKMT Maths Challenges or escape rooms help develop logical reasoning—key for forensic analysis.

Anil enrolls at university in a degree in Forensic science.





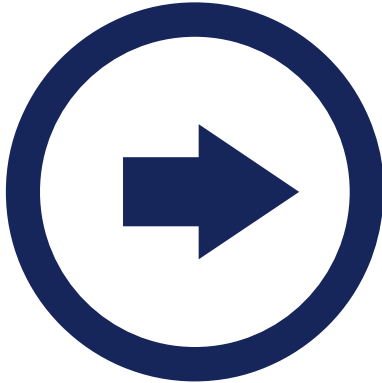
Learner Journey: Health and Science



Asmita (16 years old) is interested in forensics and would like to explore a career in this area.

She achieved grades 5/6 across her GCSEs.

Asmita enrolls on a level 3 study programme, which could include
A level Sociology (360 GLH)
A level Psychology (360 GLH)
Alternative Academic Qualification- e.g. AAQ in Applied Science (360 GLH)



She starts a True Crime Film Club to explore real world forensic cases critically.

Asmita takes part in forensic science workshops- offered by colleges, museums, or STEM outreach and enrolls on some online short courses, e.g. 'Introduction to Forensic Science or Psychology and Crime.'

Taking part in mock trials develops her confidence and understanding the legal context of criminology.

As part of enrichment activities, Asmita attends a visit tailored to young people interested in a career in the Criminal justice system.

Further visits to Courts or Police Stations to understand the criminal justice system in more depth.

She volunteers at a local youth centre as part of further enrichment which builds empathy, communication, and awareness of crime-related social issues and inspires her to explore Criminology and Forensics as a future career.

She takes part in a work placement in a legal office to build soft skills like observation, communication, and teamwork.

Study Skills Support is provided with workshops in writing, research, and presentation skills, essential for higher education.

She also takes part in a mentoring Programme- pairing her with someone studying criminology or working in criminal justice.

Asmita enrolls at university to study a degree in Criminology and Forensic Science





Learner Journey: Health and Science



Fatima (16 years old) is interested in a career as an Occupational Therapist (OT)

She achieved 6 GCSEs grade 4/5 across all subjects.

Fatima enrolls on a level 3 study programme, which could include:
Small AAQ in Medical Science (360 GLH)
Small AAQ in Health and social care (360 GLH)
A level Art and Design (360 GLH)
Work experience (140 GLH)

She completes work shadowing an OT/ Allied Health Professional (NHS or private practice) which provides insight into the OT role.

Fatima attends guest talks from healthcare professionals which provides exposure to different OT settings (mental health, paediatrics, elderly care) and completes online short courses (e.g., Introduction to Occupational Therapy) which boosts her understanding of the field.

Fatima takes part in work experience at local care home and enjoys helping people find strategies to become more independent in the home. This builds her experience in supporting people with physical, learning, or emotional needs.

She also joins a health & wellbeing club which encourages communication, empathy, and leadership.

She completes her First Aid certificate- this is a useful practical skill and adds value to her CV/university application.

She also takes part in team sports and creative arts activities- OT's often uses creative and physical activities as part of therapy so it is good for experience and self-awareness.

Fatima enrolls on a degree course in Occupational Therapy.





Learner Journey: Health and Science

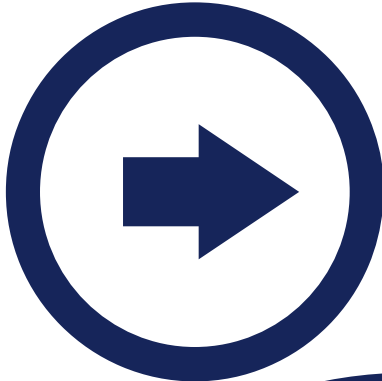


Oliver (16 years old) is interested in a career in Nursing.

He has achieved 6 grade 4s GCSE grades including 1 grade 5 in science.

Oliver enrolls on a level 3 study programme, which could include:

- A level Psychology (360 GLH)
- Small AAQ in Human Biology (360 GLH)
- Small AAQ in Early childhood development (360 GLH)
- Work experience (140 GLH)



Oliver completes first aid & emergency response training delivered by an external training provider which builds practical life-saving skills and confidence in handling emergencies.

He takes part in organising and supporting campaigns for health promotion projects including mental health awareness and healthy eating campaigns within college which develop his skills in public speaking and event organisation.

As part of enrichment, Oliver has extra study support/skills added to his timetable.

He also takes part in volunteering in Health & Care Settings which includes care homes and community health organisations where he develops skills in communication, timekeeping, and emotional resilience. He applies via NHS Volunteering schemes (e.g., "NHS Youth Volunteering") and through college-supported placements.

He attends talks arranged by college which include speakers from the health sector such as Qualified nurses (including degree apprentices) and paramedics.

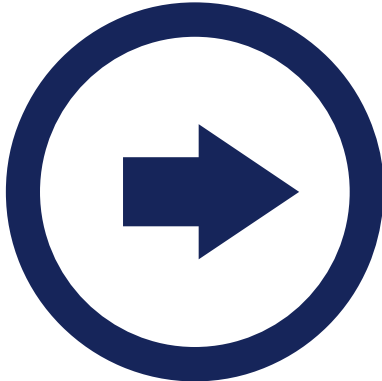
In addition to this career skills workshops are organised by the college career team which focuses on CV writing and job application guidance as well as interview practice (mock interviews with healthcare professionals). He is given extra pastoral support and a mentor to help him organise his time and develop his independent study skills.

Oliver decides to enrol on registered nursing degree apprenticeship.





Learner Journey: Health and Science



Martha (16 years old) isn't sure about her career path but knows she wants a career working with people and enjoys essay-based subjects. She decides to study level 3 academic qualifications to keep her options open. She achieved 6 Grade 4-5 grades at GCSE, and grade 7 in English Language.

Martha enrolls on a level 3 study programme, which could include:
A level Sociology (360 GLH)
A Level Law (360 GLH)
Small AAQ in Health and Social Care (360 GLH)
Work experience (140 GLH)

After CEIAG discussions in college she decides to apply to study Social Work at university.

Martha joins the college debating club to develop persuasive communication and confidence- essential for advocating on behalf of others.

She is also given the opportunity to participate in college student voice to build leadership and insight into policy, equality, and student welfare- related to advocacy in social work.

As part of enrichment, Martha volunteers at a local youth group which develops her communication skills and practical understanding of working with vulnerable people. She also takes part in college mentoring/buddying schemes.

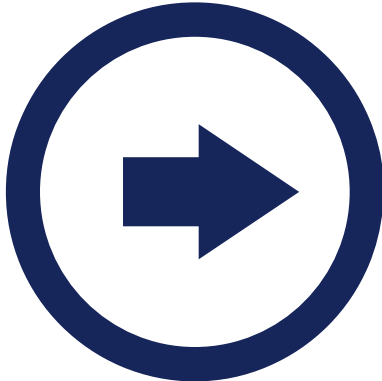
She joins in with college citizenship projects, helping to build further understanding of social justice, safeguarding, rights, and responsibilities. This involves participating in campaigns around mental health awareness or anti-bullying and creating information resources on social issues. She also takes on a part-time job in a people facing role which builds responsibility, resilience, and interpersonal skills.

Martha progresses to university to study social work.





Learner Journey: Health and Science



Simon (16 years old) would like to work as Physiotherapist.

He has 8 GCSE grades 4-6, including 6's in sciences.

Simon enrolls on a level 3 study programme, which could include
A level Biology (360 GLH)
A level Physical Education (360) GLH
Alternative Academic Qualification- e.g. AAQ in Health and Social Care (360 GLH)

He takes part in taster days at university which includes anatomy and sports science workshops, to deepen his understanding of the human body and movement.
Simon undertakes CPR training which builds essential practical skills for emergencies- valuable for physiotherapists.

Simon takes part in work experience in a health setting to gain first-hand exposure to patient care and rehabilitation settings. This includes shadowing a physiotherapist (NHS, private practice, or sports physio) and volunteering at a care home.

He could also take the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) which provides an opportunity to research an area of interest and considers topic ideas such as "The impact of physiotherapy on recovery after sports injury" and "Comparing rehabilitation approaches in NHS and private practice."

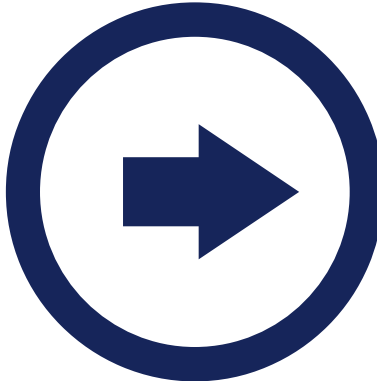
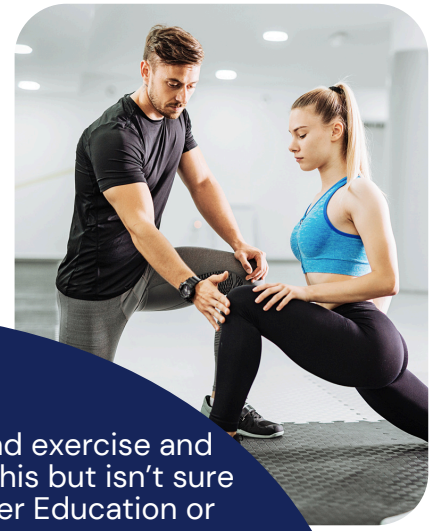
He joins the college council to develop his communication skills and also volunteers as a reading buddy at a local primary school to develop his soft skills.-

Simon enrolls at university to study for a degree in Physiotherapy.





Learner Journey: Health and Science



Josh (16 years old) loves sport and exercise and wants to explore a career around this but isn't sure whether he wants to go into Higher Education or straight into work.

He achieved 8 GCSE grades 4/5 in all subjects, including English and Maths.

Josh enrolls on a L3 study programme, which could include:
Technical Occupational Entry Qualification in Exercise and Fitness: Personal Trainer (276 GLH)
A level Physical Education (360 GLH)
Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ) in Human Biology (360 GLH)
Employability skills (34 GLH)
Work experience (140 GLH)

He undertakes first aid and CPR training. He takes on sports leadership and coaching to develop communication, motivation, and group management skills, this includes leading warm-ups, drills or activities at community sports events and joining a Sports Leaders UK programme.

He also starts a personal fitness journal to encourage reflection and goal setting, key for PTs helping clients.

Josh has CEIAG that provides him with different options for a career in sport and exercise.

He gains work experience in a fitness setting, shadowing a personal trainer and assisting in PE classes for younger students at a local secondary school, alongside teaching staff as an outreach activity.

Alongside the other enrichment, he joins the college enterprise group as many personal trainers are self-employed; this includes taking part in mini business challenges. He also participates in his local football team, demonstrating commitment and building fitness variety.

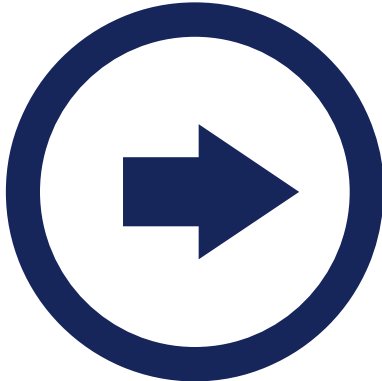
He decides to apply for work experience at and gains real-world insight into working as a personal trainer.

Josh continues into employment as a Personal Trainer at a national gym.





Learner Journey: Health and Science



Hayley is interested in a career as a Pharmacy Technician and has achieved grade 4's in GCSEs, and a grade 3 in English.

Hayley enrolls on a study programme that could include
Level 3 Technical Occupational Entry in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (Diploma) (785 GLH)
Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ) Human Biology (Extended Certificate) (360 GLH)
Resit English (120 GLH)

Her college organises guest talks with NHS careers advisers through which she attends to find out more about a career in pharmacy.

Within her tutorial programme she takes part in developing soft skills and undertakes communication skills training which builds her confidence for working in a pharmacy.

Hayley also completes a first aid & CPR certificate, which demonstrates responsibility and preparedness.

To help her understand career routes she attends an NHS Careers workshop to help her understand career routes that would be open to her.

Hayley takes part in work experience in a community pharmacy which includes shadowing pharmacy staff, learning about stock handling, dispensing, and patient interaction.

Hayley volunteers in a care home which builds empathy and gives her practical experience in a patient-facing environment. In addition to her face-to-face timetabled lessons, she also takes part in study skills & revision focused on improving English to support her with her English GCSE resit.

Hayley goes on to work as a Pharmacy Technician in her local pharmacy.





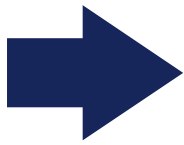
Learner Journey: Health and Science



Becky (16 years old) is interested in a career as a Midwife.

She achieved 5 GCSEs grade 5.

Becky enrolls on the Health T Level, taking the midwifery specialism.



She builds confidence in teamwork, communication, time management, and emotional resilience through her industry placement and practices note-taking, observation, and reflective writing.

She also takes part in mock interviews and careers enrichment through her college.

As part of her industry placement Becky gains experience in women's health and shadows midwives, health visitors, or maternity support workers where she is able to observe consultations, birth plans, postnatal care, and family support.

Becky keeps a reflective journal to track key learning, challenges, and observations to help with future university applications and interviews.

To prepare for applying for university Becky gets advice on drafting a strong personal statement focused on: her T Level placement experiences, communication and empathy, her passion for women's health and volunteering/work.

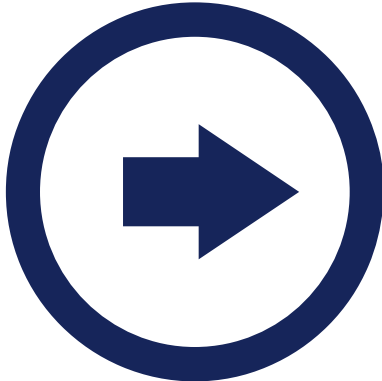
To help her understand career routes she attends an NHS Careers workshop to help her understand career routes that would be open to her.

Becky enrolls at university to continue studying to become a midwife.





Learner Journey: Health and Science



Sofia (16 years old) would like to be a nurse.

She achieved 2 grade 4 GCSEs and grades 3 in both English and maths GCSE.

Sofia enrolls on a level 2 Extended Technical Occupational Entry qualification in Healthcare Support while resitting English and maths GCSEs.

Sofia selects optional adult nursing content to further build her understanding of nursing.
Sofia follows advice by her tutor and visits the NHS Volunteering website as a young person. She begins volunteering on weekends at her local NHS hospital.

Sofia enjoys the introductory sector knowledge of professional practice included within the extended qualification, which supports the wider contextual understanding of the healthcare sector and includes transferable employability skills.

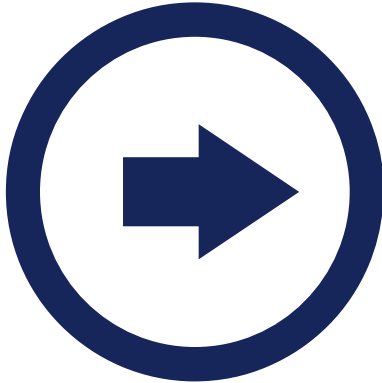
Sofia is supported with additional study support for her English and maths GCSE resits alongside her core subject of study.

Sofia is employed as a healthcare support worker.





Learner Journey: Health and Science



Kasim (27 years old) would like to retrain and work as a personal trainer.

He has 5 GCSEs grades A–C, including English and Maths. Kasim enrolls on the level 3 Technical Occupational Entry qualification in Personal Training (Diploma) and the small Technical Specialist qualification in Optimising Training for the Ageing Client (Award)

He documents his sessions and outcomes to build a portfolio of client success stories.

Kasim volunteers to shadow at local gyms, leisure centres, or community centres offering free trial sessions to friends, family, or local groups (especially older adults—linked to his specialism).

He also builds a Personal Trainer Portfolio which includes:

- Sample training plans and nutrition advice
- Testimonials from trial clients
- A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) log.

He also completes the First Aid at Work certificate.

He accesses free careers advice from National Careers Service

Kasim enters employment as a personal trainer with the elderly.





Glossary

Term	Definition
A level	Qualification available in a range of subjects at level 3. Usually studied over two years and recognised as meeting entry requirements for further and higher education courses like degrees.
AS level	An AS level is a standalone qualification, available in a range of subjects at level 3 and usually taken after GCSE level in year 12. It is usually studied over one year and is the equivalent of half an A level.
Academic qualification	A qualification with the primary purpose of supporting a student to progress to higher academic study.
Alternative academic qualification (AAQ)	A new academic qualification in strategically important subjects like STEM or those less well served by A levels.
Applied General Qualification (AGQ)	Applied learning qualification for Higher Education (HE) or work; often taken with A levels.
Core Maths qualification	A Core Maths qualification is a level 3 post-16 mathematics course designed for students who have passed GCSE Maths (usually grade 4 or above) but are not taking A Level Maths. It is the equivalent of half an A level.
Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)	An Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a level 3 qualification that allows students, typically in Year 12 or 13 (ages 16–18) to choose a topic of interest and complete an independent research project. It is the equivalent of half an A level.
Guided Learning hours (GLH)	The time a learner spends being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.
Level (of qualification)	One of nine qualification levels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The higher the level, the more difficult the qualification. Level 3 qualifications include A levels, T Levels, advanced Apprenticeships and AGQs, as well as newly reformed AAQs and Reformed Technical Qualifications.



Glossary

Term	Definition
Sector Subject Area (SSA)	A classification system for the sectors in which qualifications sit such as 'Health, Public Services and Care'.
STEM	Collective term for the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths.
Study programme	The combination of qualifications and other activities funded for 16–19-year-olds in England by the Department for Education.
T Level	A two-year qualification at level 3, equivalent in size to three A levels and supporting progression to employment or higher education. Based on the same standards as Apprenticeships and available in over 20 subjects.
T Level Foundation Year (TLFY)	This study programme provides a high-quality route onto T Levels for students who would benefit from additional preparation or study time before a T Level.
Reformed Technical qualification	A qualification with the primary purpose of supporting progression to or within employment.
Technical Additional Specialist qualification	Qualifications that allow a student to develop additional knowledge and competencies and specialise within a sector. These qualifications will build on knowledge covered by a T Level or other occupational entry qualification, e.g., low-carbon construction design, building on the Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction T Level.
Technical Occupational Entry qualification	A qualification based on an occupational standard that supports entry to employment in that occupational area.
Total qualification Time (TQT)	The GLH plus all other time taken in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training but not under the direct supervision of a lecturer, supervisor or tutor.