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developing people, improving young lives

Your students and 14–19 choices

Careers related information, advice and guidance

A guide for teachers to use with students in explaining
their progression routes

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Introduction

Your students are more likely to do well if they are able to make informed choices about their future learning and career pathways. This guide will help you discuss 14–19 options with your students and talk about the choices they'll make at critical transition points. It can be used in conjunction with the 'Teachers' Guide to 14–19 Pathways' and the information at:

www.tda.gov.uk/iag

From year 10 onwards your students will follow one of four main progression pathways: GCSEs and A-levels, a diploma route, an apprenticeship or foundation learning.

Each pathway allows for some personalisation and the inclusion of a range of qualifications. From year nine onwards your students will make significant choices about qualifications and pathways which will affect their future careers. In some schools, students will start to make significant choices from year eight.

Whatever progression pathways students choose, they will still follow the core curriculum but will have the opportunity for some personalisation based on their skills and preferences. The main pathways available are summarised overleaf.

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Introduction (continued)

Choices at 14	Choices at 16	Choices at 18+
Foundation learning	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship
Foundation or higher diploma	Employment with training (available from 2013)	Employment
GCSEs	Foundation, higher or advanced diploma	Employment with training (available from 2013)
Young apprenticeship	Foundation learning	Further education
	GCSEs/A-levels	Higher education (including foundation degree)

Functional skills feature within each of the four qualification routes for 14–19 year olds. However, the way these skills are developed, and whether learners are required to sit a separate functional skills qualification, depends on which route they follow.

There are also six personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

- team working
- independent enquiry
- self-management
- reflective learning
- effective participation
- creative thinking.

These are integrated into the school curriculum and all 14–19 pathways, and are not separately assessed.

“Each pathway has some unique features which are important for students to consider when making their choices”

Helping students to consider an appropriate pathway

Each pathway has some unique features which are important for students to consider when making their choices.

Apprenticeships:

allow young people to gain qualifications while they work. Most apprentices have employed status. There are also limited opportunities for students from age 14 to do a young apprenticeship which combines work-related learning with the core curriculum.

The diploma:

is a wide ranging qualification that combines theoretical study with practical experience. It is appropriate for students of all abilities who want to learn about a particular work sector but also keep their options open. It is accepted for university entrance.

Foundation learning:

is a framework that offers personalised learning programmes for students at entry level and level one. It focuses on supporting progression at entry level and level one, to enable students to progress towards level two.

GCSEs and A-levels:

offer a general qualifications learning route.

You can find more information on these pathways in the 'Teachers' Guide to 14–19 Pathways' available to download from the TDA website at:

www.tda.gov.uk/iag

If you are involved in discussions with students about the available pathways, you may wish to discuss the questions overleaf.

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Helping students to consider an appropriate pathway (continued)

Apprenticeship	<p>Do you want to get hands-on experience of a particular job and spend some time in college?</p> <p>Are you confident about going to work as part of your education?</p>
The diploma	<p>Do you want a broad-based qualification that includes a project, work experience and coursework?</p> <p>Can you work independently on things that interest you?</p> <p>Do you want to keep your options open and learn about a work sector but still have the chance to change your mind?</p> <p>Do you want to include GCSEs or A-levels in your timetable?</p> <p>Are you happy to undertake some learning in a different institution that may involve travelling quite a distance?</p>
Foundation learning	<p>Do you feel you would benefit from combining a range of different units of learning to prepare you for future learning and work?</p> <p>Would you like to study a more personalised learning programme?</p>
GCSEs/A-levels	<p>Are you happy to remain in the school environment and follow a general route?</p> <p>What subjects have you done well in?</p> <p>Do you enjoy written exams and coursework-based assessment?</p>

Discussing progression pathways with your students

Students also need to understand how to progress within each pathway or how to change track if they want to. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) qualifications map explains the different routes your students can take through learning and work (see appendix A). You may suggest that they create a progression map, using the DCSF map as a guide.

It is helpful to identify if your student already has any career plans.

If 'yes':

encourage them to consider what qualifications they may need for this career and whether it relates to subjects they enjoy.

If 'no':

encourage them to choose courses that keep their options open. What subjects do they enjoy? Do particular subject areas interest them?

Whatever pathway they choose in year nine, your students will be working towards acquiring transferable qualifications and skills. They can move between general, diploma and apprenticeship routes at age 16, 18 or beyond. If they decide a particular subject isn't right for them, encourage them to persevere and complete it – as they will be building up credits which may help later on.

The questions overleaf may support you in discussions with students (and may form part of conversations with their parents/carers).



Discussing progression pathways with your students (continued)

Year 9

What do you feel confident about?

What subjects are you good at?

What do you like doing?

Have you any thoughts about a future career and what qualifications you might need?

Can you get advice from your teachers, family, friends or careers service which will help you?

Year 11

In addition to the above questions, students in year 11 may find these questions useful:

What have you achieved to date; what motivated you the most?

Did this depend on a particular style of learning?

Do you need to follow particular options now to go on to higher education or get a job at a particular level?

Year 13

Do you intend to stay on the pathway you started in year nine or 11, or change; what are the implications?

How are you going to further develop the skills and knowledge you need to achieve your goals?

How can you build on your experience to date?

Have your experiences since year nine changed your attitudes or expectations of learning and work?

What opportunities are open to you and what entry requirements or experience do you need?

Will you need financial support?

Do you have credit accumulated to go onto the course of your choice?

Reflecting on personal skills

Your students will be better prepared to choose from the options available if they have had the opportunity to reflect on their personal skills and understand the concept of transferable skills which can be applied in a range of settings. This includes skills such as functional (eg English, mathematics and information and communication technology) and personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) – like effective participation or team working.

All the main 14–19 pathways include some practical and some theoretical study and they are all rigorously assessed.

Your school may be helping students understand PLTS, functional skills or key skills – but they can also consider what skills they have developed through

part-time or voluntary work, family responsibilities, hobbies and interests. It's likely that they've developed a range of useful skills like teamwork, communication, time management or dealing with customers.

Students who understand who they are, what they are good at and what they like will be able to make more informed choices. This is an important part of the option choice process. You can help students prepare by discussing the following questions or encouraging them to think about them in their own time.

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Reflecting on personal skills (continued)

Questions for your students

How do you describe yourself... are you?

- Practical
- Confident
- Honest
- Reliable
- Adaptable
- Self-reliant

Do you enjoy?

- Reading
- Building or designing things
- Sports and outdoor activities
- Computer games
- Cooking
- Dancing

What other words describe you?

What do these say about you?

What words do your friends and family use to describe you?

What goals do you want to set for the next two years and what steps do you need to take to get there?

Have you thought about how you learn best? Do you like exams, coursework or a mixture of both?

Consider your options – how do your personal skills fit with the options available?

You may wish to suggest that your students:

- Think about the lessons they enjoy the most
- Recognise how they learn in these lessons
- Consider the different teaching styles they receive and whether this affects their performance
- Check their option choice ideas to make sure they suit their learning style
- Discuss their options and aspirations with their parents/carers

“Consider your options – how do your personal skills fit with the options available?”

Funding for students aged 16–19

To help more young people to stay on in education, the Government provides education maintenance allowances (EMA) of up to £30 a week depending on family circumstances.

The Directgov website provides information on:

- EMA: <http://ema.direct.gov.uk>
- Student finance: www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/index.htm

The Student Loans Company website provides key information on student loans:

www.slc.co.uk

The Jobcentre Plus website offers advice on job seeking and benefits:

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/index.html

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Directing your students to further information

All your students should have access to careers services. This will usually be through the Connexions Service which they can access up to age 19.

There is a lot of information available to students if they know where to look and how to use it. To help them make choices, your students can access information from a range of sources:

General careers advice

Connexions Direct is an interactive website covering a range of issues aimed at 13–19 year olds: www.connexions-direct.com

The Connexions Direct helpline is a free and confidential service for 14–19 year olds: 080 800 13219

'Which Way Now?' is a year nine interactive website, designed to help students make choices: www.connexions-direct.com/whichwaynow

'Its Your Choice' is an interactive resource to help year 11 students choose options: www.connexions-direct.com/itsyourchoice

Apprenticeship

The apprenticeships website gives essential information and lists vacancies: www.apprenticeships.org.uk

The diploma

The 'Directgov' website gives general information about the diploma, including functional skills, as well as a wide range of issues relating to young people and employment: <http://yp.direct.gov.uk/diplomas/>

Directing your students to further information (continued)

Employment

The 'jobs4u' database lists information on a wide range of careers: www.connexions-direct.com/JOBS4U

The Alliance of Sector Skills Councils website provides careers information relating to specific work sectors: www.sscalliance.org/

Foundation learning

If you have students working below level two they may benefit from a personalised programme under foundation learning. The offer will be individual to each school.

GCSEs and A-levels

Encourage students to look at school option booklets and visit the careers library.

The area-wide prospectus lists all 14–19 courses offered in your local area, at every institution: www.futures4me.co.uk

Higher education

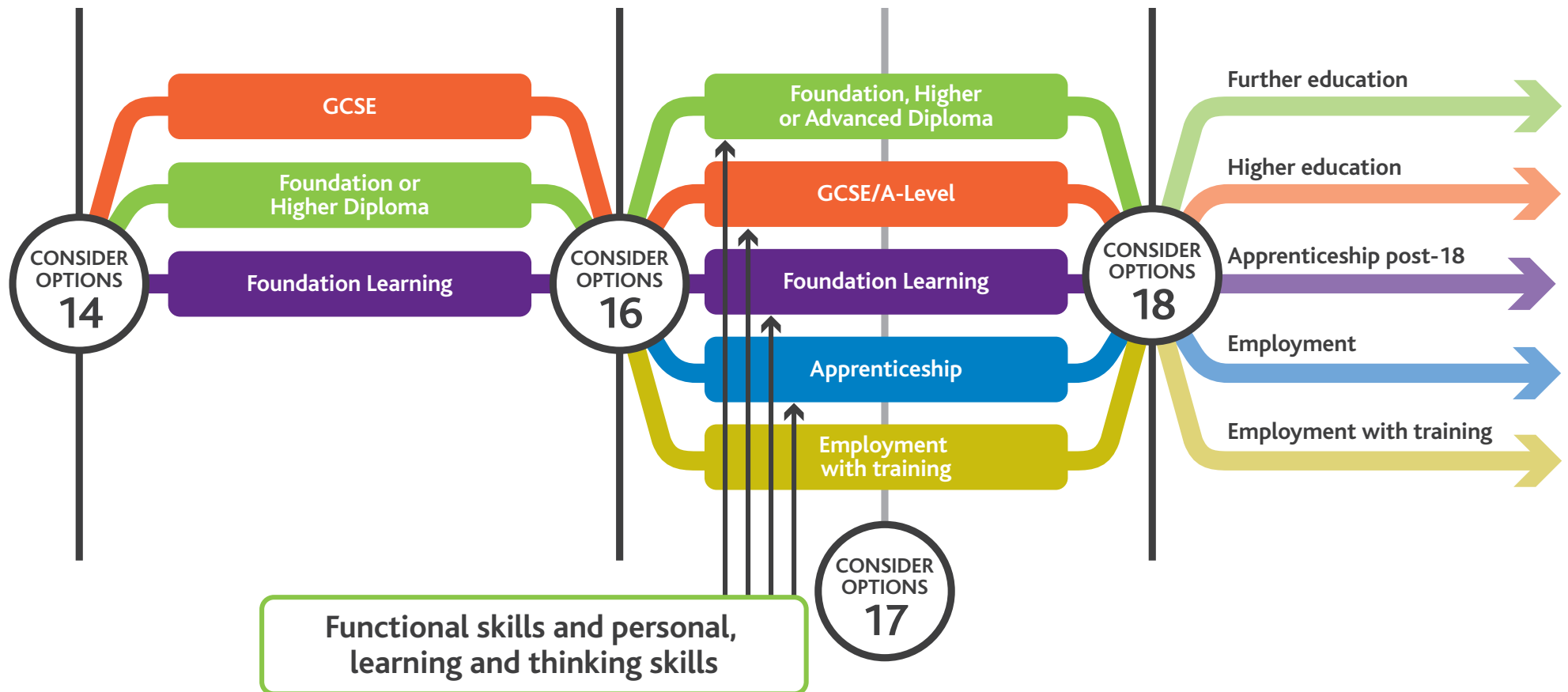
Information on applying for higher education is available from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website: www.ucas.ac.uk

Rights and responsibilities

Information relating to the rights and responsibilities of young people at work can be found on the 'Directgov' website: www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers/Yourrightsandresponsibilitiesatwork/index.htm and the 'Worksmart' website: www.worksmart.org.uk

Appendix A: the DCSF qualifications map

This can be accessed at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/14-19_qualifications_map.ppt





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