

# A Levels

Sheffield  
Futures



2020-21

## A Levels

A Levels are largely about studying ideas and gaining knowledge. They normally take two years to complete, and involve mostly classroom study plus assessment by written exams at the end of the course. They are graded A\*-E with A\* as the top grade plus U for 'Unclassified'.

A typical workload is 3 A Level subjects (or 2 A Levels plus other qualifications). However this may depend on factors such as GCSE grades so discuss it with the college or school.

A Levels can lead to a wide range of careers and university courses so, if this type of study suits you, and if you cope well with exams, they can be a very flexible qualification.

## Entry requirements

You typically need at least 5 GCSE grades 9-4 (including English and sometimes maths) to take 3 A Levels, or 4 grades 9-4 to take 2 subjects. Bear in mind that this is the minimum requirement and that you may need at least grade 5 or 6 in the subjects you want to study. If your qualifications are equivalent to GCSE, check with the college or sixth form before making any applications.

## AS Levels

An AS Level is a separate qualification, lasting one year and broadly equivalent to the first year of an A Level. It normally has the same entry requirements and is assessed in the same way. If you continue a subject from AS to A Level, the AS result won't count towards your final grade. There are not many A Level subjects offered in Sheffield but check on:

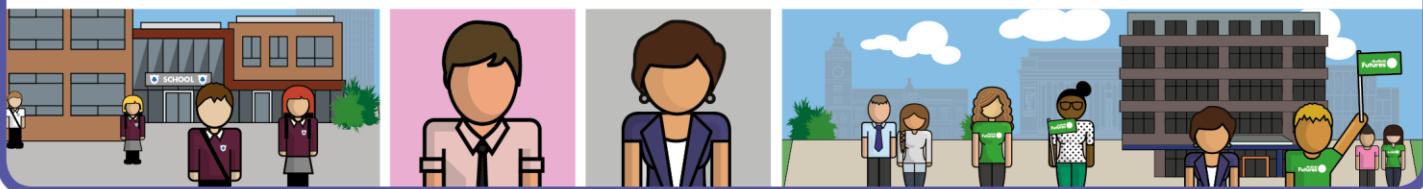
[www.sheffieldprogress.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldprogress.co.uk) and on sixth form and college websites.

## Combining A Levels with other qualifications

A Levels can sometimes be combined with qualifications such as BTEC. This is acceptable for many higher education courses but always check entry requirements if you have a specific university or course in mind.

Some students take the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) alongside A Levels. This is normally a project that you research yourself and it can earn UCAS points towards a university application.

You may be able to do additional (sometimes called 'enrichment') activities, such as work experience, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award or volunteering. These will help develop your skills and enhance your CV or UCAS Personal Statement.



## Choosing A Level subjects

There are three key things to think about:

### 1. What subjects do I enjoy?

You will be studying in more depth than at GCSE and you will be expected to do your own research and reading. It will be far more enjoyable if you're interested in the subject; and you're also more likely to do well.

Some A Level subjects don't require any previous study. Find out as much as you can about the new subject so that you know what's involved. For example, A Level psychology normally requires GCSE grade 9-4 in maths and often another science.

### 2. What are my best subjects?

It's a big leap from GCSE to A Level so choose subjects where you feel confident of doing well. Talk to your teachers before making your final choice.

### 3. What are my career ideas?

Certain university courses and careers want specific A Level subjects. These careers are often in medicine, health care and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths). You can sometimes take an additional year at university if you don't have the right subjects, but nevertheless take extra care with your choices if you hope to work in any of these sectors.

If you haven't got a definite career plan, don't worry. A Levels leave plenty of options open, and many higher education courses accept a range of subjects as long as the grades are right.

Check entry requirements for university courses on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and, if you're still not sure, contact admissions departments. The website: [www.informedchoices.ac.uk](http://www.informedchoices.ac.uk) can also help you explore where subjects might lead.

## Find out more

[www.sheffieldprogress.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldprogress.co.uk)  
[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)  
[www.informedchoices.ac.uk](http://www.informedchoices.ac.uk)  
[www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk)

[www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)  
[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)  
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