

The Virtual School

Post-16 Education in the United Kingdom

Introduction

Welcome to the United Kingdom!

The goal of this booklet is to give you information about how you will access education and learning and to give you an idea of the different pathways you can take.

The education system here can seem a bit complicated sometimes and we hope that this guide will make it easier to understand of how it all works.



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1. Overview of Education System

Welcome!

Upon arriving in this country, you will be supported to register at a college local to your home. College courses generally start in September and end in July. The first course that you will study is English for Speakers of Other Languages or ESOL for short. These ESOL courses are more flexible so you can sometimes start after September, for example in January.



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When you register at your local college you will be assessed in your English and Maths skills. Dependent on what level you are in English and Maths you will be placed on 1 of 4 levels of ESOL. On an ESOL course you will study English (Listening and Speaking, Reading, and Writing), Maths and ICT (Information Computer Technology). You will also sometimes do work experience or other activities as well.

A key part of the ESOL course is the fact that it is flexible as a student can move from Entry 1 -> Entry 2 within one academic year (September – July). On mainstream courses this would not be an option. For an ESOL student to move up levels within the year depends on the student's engagement and level of work completed.

After ESOL Entry Level 3 you may then be able to start doing a vocational or mainstream course, for example Electrical Installation, Plumbing, Media Studies, Construction and much, much more.

The courses on offer vary from College to College and you will be able to choose the course that you want!

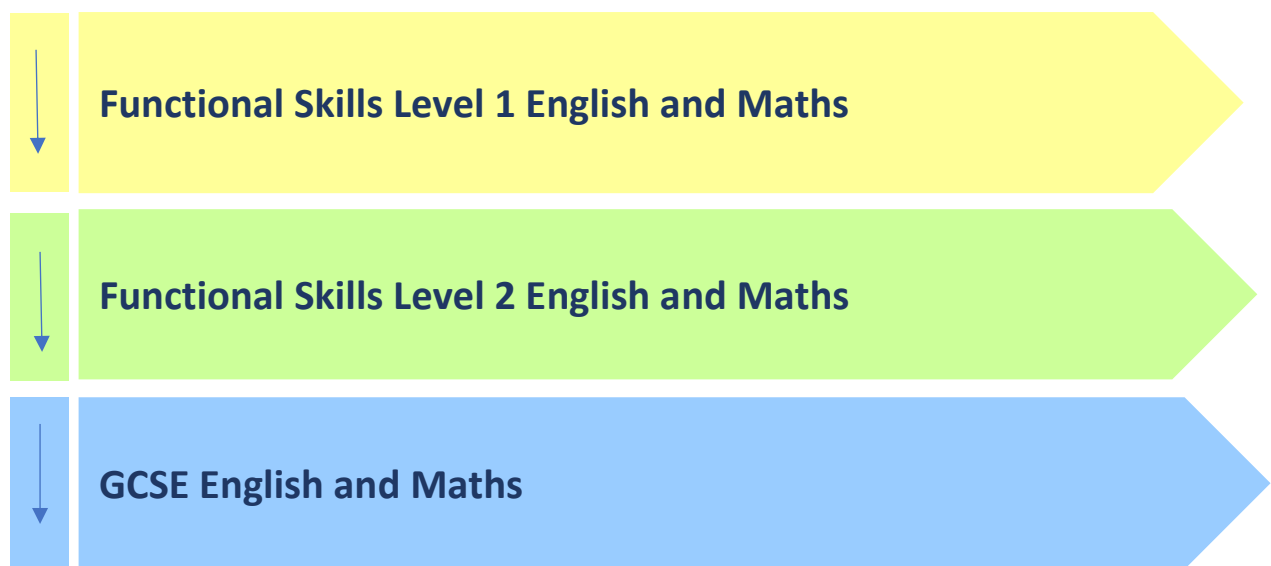
You can also do ESOL Level 1 which is the highest level of ESOL which will prepare you even more to be ready to study a vocational course.

At ESOL Entry 3 your college tutor/teacher will advise you on your next steps and help you choose what course you want.

After ESOL

After ESOL when studying vocational/mainstream courses you will continue to study Maths and English.

This will progress in the following way:



To get to studying GCSE Maths and English takes on average around 5-6 years of work.

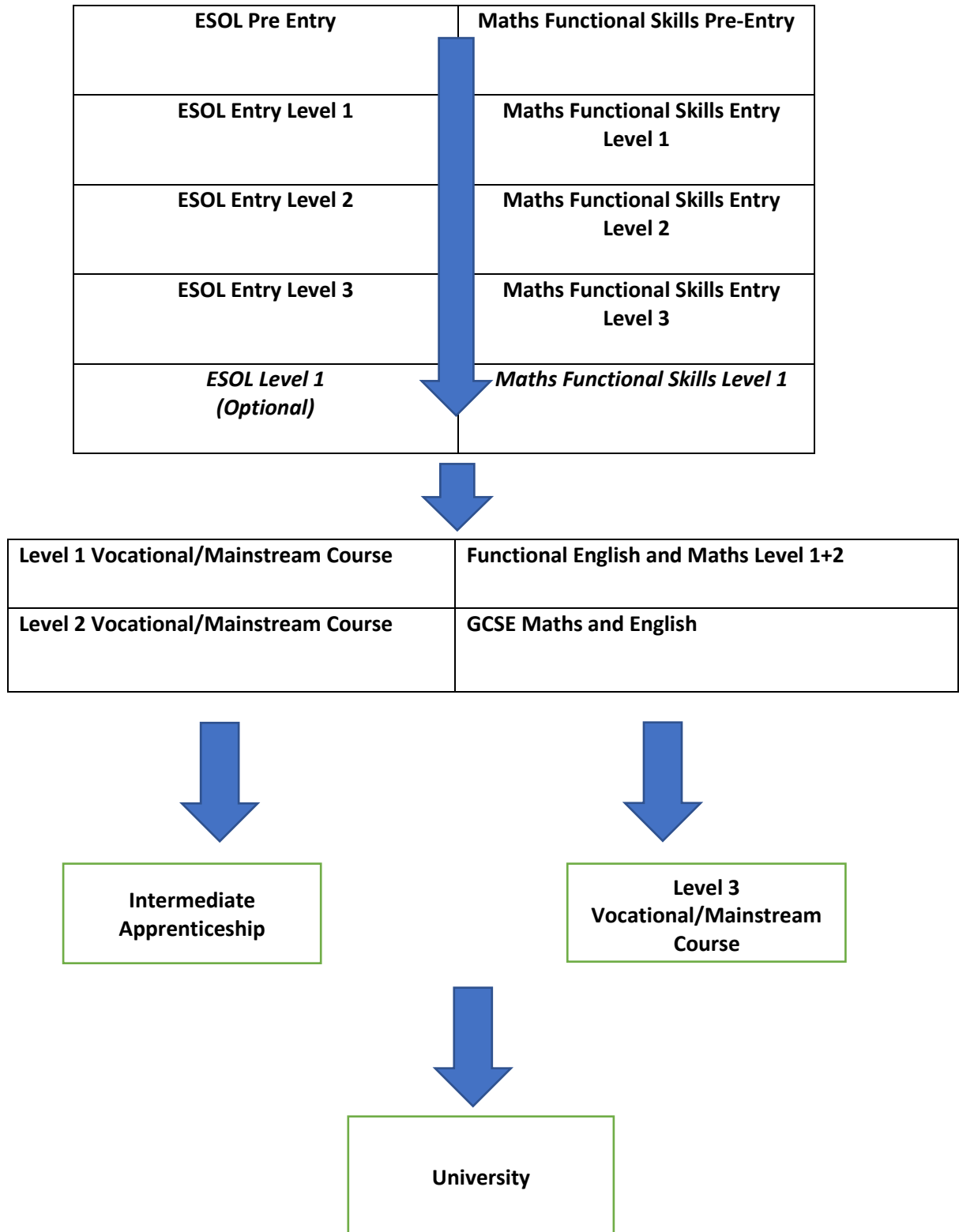
After getting your Level 1 and 2 Functional Skills qualification in English and Maths you can also consider studying an apprenticeship. This is a qualification in which you would work and study at the same time.

PEP Meetings

When you come into care a PEP (Personal Education Plan) meeting will be held to support you with your education pathway. These PEP meetings are held 3 times every in an academic year and are to make sure you are doing well at college and give you an opportunity to ask questions, think about if you need any more support and give your thoughts on how college is going.

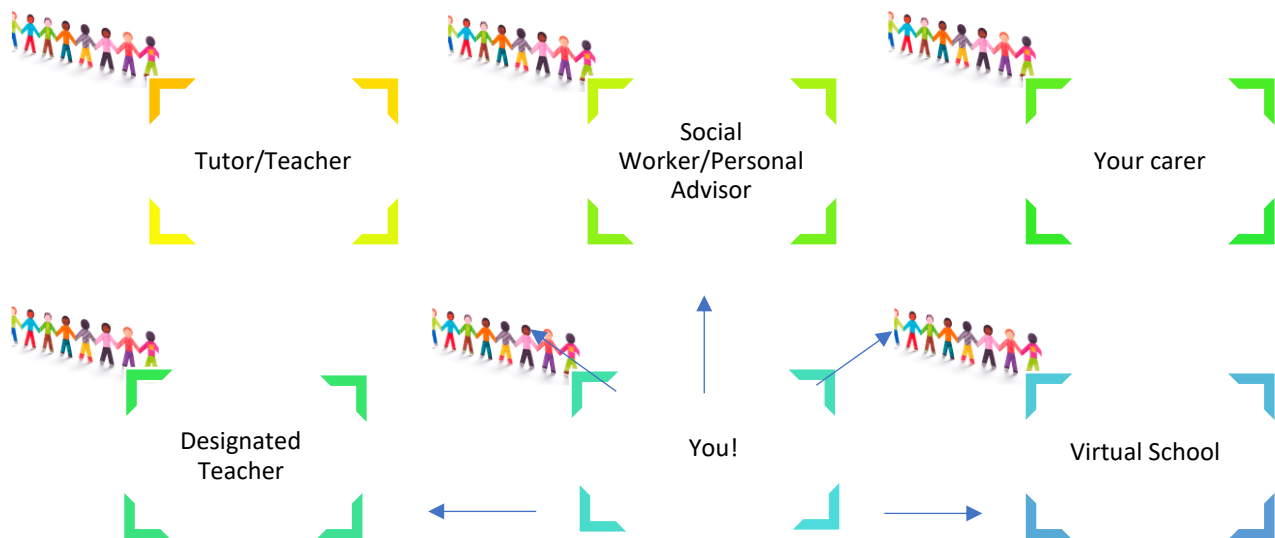
2. Example Education Pathway for Post-16

See below an example of the educational pathway that you might go on:



3. Key Adults Involved in your Education

There are numerous adults who are involved in supporting you with your education:



The role of the Social Worker/Personal Advisor

A social worker is a person who works for a local authority/council department called Social Services. Their role is to make sure children (anyone who is under 18 in the UK) are well taken care of when they have nowhere to live, and their parents are not present or cannot take care of them. Your social worker will arrange PEP (Pupil Educational Plan Meetings) 3 times during an academic year with the college/school to make sure that your education is going well, and you have the opportunity to raise any concerns or issues. A personal advisor also works for social services and supports you after the age of 18.

Your Carer

Your carer is the person you live with on a day-to-day basis. They will support you with your everyday care alongside your social worker e.g., take you to appointments with lawyers, doctors, school/college etc. If you have any immediate questions about education, you can ask your carer who can then help you or get information from other professionals.

The role of Tutor/Teacher

The tutor/teacher is the person who will be giving you ESOL lessons daily at college. The tutor/teacher will be the key adult you see most at college and will help you pass your exams and progress through the levels of ESOL.

The role of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher's role is to promote the educational achievement of all Looked After Children (yourself) who are in their school/college. They are responsible for making sure your educational needs are met, that you are supported to do your best and that your voice is heard in school or college. The Designated Teacher should:

Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for Looked After Children

Make sure that you have a voice at college

Ensure high quality provision and support is in place for all Looked After Children in their college/school

Make sure the needs of Looked After Children are prioritised

Act as a source of advice and guidance for young people and staff

Hold PEP (Pupil Education Plan) meetings to keep track of how you are doing at college/school

The role of the Virtual School

You will have the support of a Virtual School caseworker. Along with attending PEP meetings and advocating for you in terms of education this caseworker will:

Make sure your college/school understands how to help you make progress and achieve your goals in education

Sometimes organise extra help to support you e.g. additional English classes

Provide advice and guidance about your studies and plans for the future

Provide a laptop to support you with online learning at home

4. Opportunities at College

There are lots of opportunities at college for you to access. Here are some of them:



Sports – At College there are usually sports teams you can join and a gym to use!

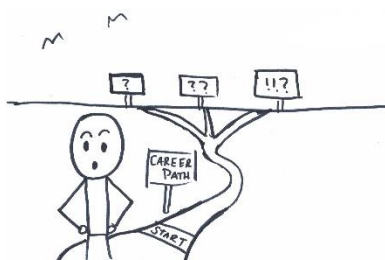


Library – There are almost always libraries at colleges where you can borrow books to read for fun or to help with study!



Bursary – Almost every college offers students a bursary (around £30 per week) to students. The students need to have high attendance to receive it!

This usually requires a bank account so at the start there may be problems receiving it, but they will usually be resolved.



Careers Advice – If you are unsure about what to do in the future every college have careers guidance workers to help you plan.

5. Example College Timetable

In the picture below is an example college timetable which shows how your days of learning will be set out. Most colleges will require you to study four days per week:

Timetable for 3A1002 (21G11) - Weeks 1-52

	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00
Monday									
Tuesday		English	English		English		English		
Wednesday		Maths			Maths	Maths			
Thursday		English	English			ICT			
Friday		Personal Development			English	English	English		
Saturday									
Sunday									

6. Useful Links

Useful Contacts

Wokingham Virtual School
[Wokingham Virtual School - Home](#)
Virtualschool.admin@wokingham.gov.uk

New Citizens' Gateway (Barnet Refugee Service)
[New Citizens' Gateway – New Citizens' Gateway \(ncgateway.org.uk\)](#)
info@ncgateway.org.uk
07983 437 425

Refugee Council
<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>
info@refugeecouncil.org.uk
02073466700

Useful Links for Learning and Information

<https://elt.oup.com/student/headway/?cc=gb&sellLanguage=en>
Headway English Online - Beginner to advanced resources including grammar, vocabulary, everyday English and tests.

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/find>
Online course with a free English test to help find levels. Listening and reading materials and grammar and vocabulary sections. Particularly good for UMC's for who have EAL.

<https://www.perfect-english-grammar.com>
Perfect English Grammar English grammar courses covering all aspects.

<https://www.gamestolearnenglish.com>
This is a free site for students to learn English online. There is a selection of games that students can use to practice learning English in a fun way.

[Free English Classes for Refugees | Conversation Over Borders](#)
Conversation Over Borders connects asylum seekers & refugees with volunteer tutors for free one-to-one online English conversation classes. This bridges borders through human connection while helping to build confidence in English speaking.

[Right to Remain - Asylum Journey \(youngasylumguide.org.uk\)](#)
A useful guide to the Asylum Journey