

Qualification Guidance

As an electively home educated family, you are not required by law to enter your child into any exams or qualifications. However, if you decide you would like your child to sit exams, you may wish to consider the following:

- What exams would you like your child to sit?
- What qualifications (e.g. GCSEs, International GCSEs or Functional Skills) are the right fit for your child?
- Where would your child sit their exams?
- What exam board are you going to select (each subject can be a different board)?
- What are the entry requirements for post 16 options?
- How are you going to finance exams and qualifications (parents are financially responsible for this)?
- Could your child complete GCSEs/Functional Skills during their chosen Post 16 option?
- When would you like your child to complete their qualifications (they do not have to complete them in year 11)?

Post 16 Team Details

A friendly team that can offer help and support to young people choosing post 16 options.

- Email: shropshireyouth.iag@shropshire.gov.uk
- Call: 01743 258850
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/shropshireyouth/>
- <https://shropshire.gov.uk/early-help/young-people/post-16-options/>

Exam Preparation

You can find previous exam papers free online for both GCSEs and Functional Skills. Use a search engine and for example type: 'AQA English Literature past papers.' This will provide a selection of websites from where exam papers can be downloaded. Marking schemes can also be downloaded.

GCSEs/ International GCSEs

- If your child has already started a GCSE programme of study, it is important you know which exam board this is to ensure you find an exam centre that offers this exam/exam board.
- If your child has not yet started a GCSE programme of study, we suggest families locate an exam centre first and follow the exam/exam board they offer.
- Most importantly, it is imperative for families to make arrangements as soon as possible.

The following link lets you enter your postcode, qualification and exam board and then populates a list of potential exam centres for private candidates: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/private-candidates/>.

We recommend families contacting their local schools/colleges to see if they will accept their child as a private candidate. All schools and colleges have the option to accept private candidates (but this is not mandatory), but you will need to contact them individually to see if they are able to facilitate the year/exam your child needs to take.

Home Ed Exams Wiki – a useful site created by home educators to support with all things relating to exams https://he-exams.fandom.com/wiki/HE_Exams_Wiki.

HEQA (Home Educators' Qualifications Association) YouTube channel with webinars about taking exams - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeb0gsIUqCX0htZDTn7jcFA>.



Functional Skills

Functional Skills are available in Maths, English and IT. Functional Skills are the fundamental skills that young people need for work and their personal lives. You can study for the qualifications in practical ways and apply core skills to real-life situations.

Functional skills have a variety of different levels. You do not have to start at the beginning. Function Skills are offered at: Entry level 1, 2, and 3 are followed by level 1 and level 2. A Level 2 functional skill is equivalent to a GCSE grade 4 (a C in the previous grading system).

Functional Skills can be sat at accredited exam centres, and some organisations allow children to take their exam in the comfort of their own home.

The following link lets you enter your postcode and Functional Skills level and then populates a list of potential exam centres for private candidates: <https://www.icq.org.uk/private-candidates/>.

Unlike GCSEs, you can sit functional skills exams at a variety of times through the year.

Many organisations offer Functional skills, some include:

<https://passfunctionalskills.co.uk/>

<https://www.learndirect.com/category/functional-skills>

<https://www.intechcentre.com/courses/functional-skills-maths-level-2-exam/>

<https://edclass.com/functional-skills-from-home>

(Please note we do not endorse any organisations and these are simply examples to make you aware of options available).

For further information about Functional Skills please visit: <https://qips.ucas.com/qip/functional-skills>.

Free Courses

The National Careers Service has a range of free courses from maths, English, IT to well-being.

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course/the-skills-toolkit>

The Open University has hundreds of free courses in a wide variety of subjects.

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>

Youth Employment has a range of free courses aimed at preparing young people for their future.

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-advice-help/choices/online-skills-and-careers-courses/preparing-for-your-future-online-course/>

Alison courses a wide range of free courses (please note payment can be requested for certification but the completion of the course is free). <https://alison.com/>

If you are aware of any other free courses children and young people can access, please let us know – eas@shropshire.gov.uk.

If you have any questions or queries please contact us at eas@shropshire.gov.uk.

