



**Understanding puzzling post-16 options:**  
A parents', carers' and guardians' guide





## About this guide

Welcome to this guide for parents, carers and guardians.

Local Year 10 and 11 secondary school students believe that parents, carers, guardians and family members are the most important source of information to inform them of their options after they turn 16.\*

That's why the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (or 'the MET' as we call ourselves) has produced this guide—to help families across Brighton, Shoreham and Worthing to understand the range of choices available at colleges and sixth forms across the county.

Your child may already know what they want to do after school and where they want to go. They may be unsure and undecided—and perhaps feel a bit overwhelmed by the choice of colleges, sixth forms, qualifications and apprenticeships on offer.

In our experience, it's not just young people who can feel overwhelmed by the application process; parents can find it confusing too. Faced with different types of colleges and qualifications, offering different routes into employment and higher education, it can be confusing to decide which path will best suit your child.

We hope this guide will help!

Descriptions of full-time courses and qualifications on offer at local colleges and sixth forms across the region are included in this guide, alongside information on the GCSE grades your child will generally be expected to have in order to enrol for a specific level or type of qualification.

For those students considering earning and learning on the job as an alternative to continuing full-time education, a guide to today's range of apprenticeships is also included.

The tables at the back of this guide show how different types of qualifications and apprenticeships are rated on the UK's national education scale, ranging from Level 1 (equivalent to less than five GCSEs), to Level 3 qualifications (A-Levels, BTECs, NVQs, advanced apprenticeships) and university-level courses (Levels 4-6). The table also shows how completion of a qualification at one level can lead on to studying higher levels at college or university and also to full-time employment.

Every student has something they can excel at, and study and training options are available to suit all interests and levels. I hope this guide will help you support your child as they turn their passions and talents into future qualifications and employment after leaving school.

**Nick Juba**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Greater Brighton Metropolitan College

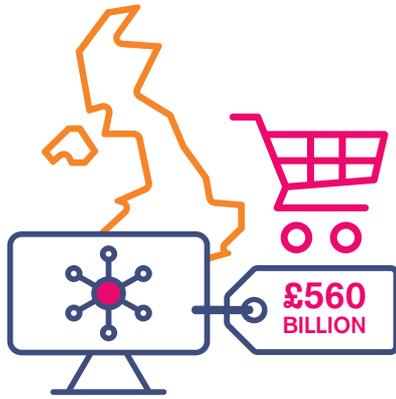
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\*Brighton & Hove City Council  
SAWSS 2016 survey

# Did you know?

Education and training for 16-19 year-olds has changed a lot. And the worlds of employment and higher education are changing too...



In 2017, e-commerce sales (business only) across the UK were worth £560 billion.

Office for National Statistics, 2017



UK residents made 4.1 million visits abroad in February 2019.

Office for National Statistics, 2019



The food service industry is worth £57 billion to the UK economy and is the 4th largest employer.

Federation of Wholesale Distributors, 2019



Tech is expanding 2.6 times faster than the rest of the UK economy. The digital tech sector is worth nearly £184 billion to the UK economy, up from £170 billion in 2016.

Information Age, 2018



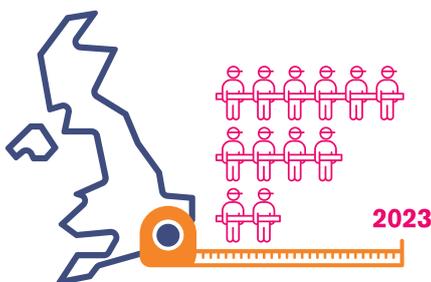
The arts and culture industry has grown £390 million in a year and now contributes £10.8 billion a year to the UK economy.

Arts Council England, 2019



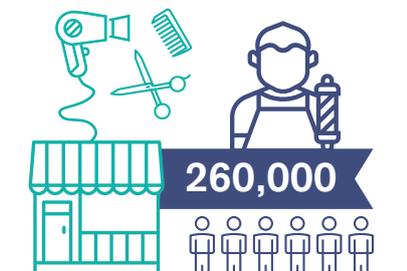
The UK's gaming industry is estimated to be worth £3.86 billion – more than video and music combined.

Prospects, 2019



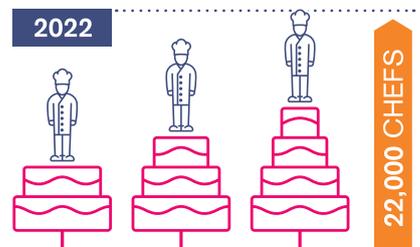
Skilled construction workers are in demand. The construction industry in the South East is expected to grow 1.1% per year between 2019-23, with 13,200 new workers needed.

Health & Safety Executive, Construction Statistics in Great Britain, 2018



There are over 42,000 hairdressing, barbering and beauty businesses in the UK. They are in the top ten most popular independent business start-ups.

National Hairdressers Federation, 2018



The UK hospitality industry requires an additional 22,000 chefs by 2022.

BBC Good Food, 2019

# Full-time courses and qualifications

If your child chooses one of the following qualification types, they will usually be in education between three to five days a week. The alternative is an apprenticeship - see page 7.



## National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

Offered  
at the  
**MET**

NVQs are examples of professional, technical or work-based qualifications that teach students the skills and knowledge they need for a chosen occupation.

Awarding bodies include City & Guilds (C&G), the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) and the Vocational Training and Charitable Trust (VTCT).

Level 1, 2 and 3 options may be available, as well as opportunities to progress to university-level qualifications.

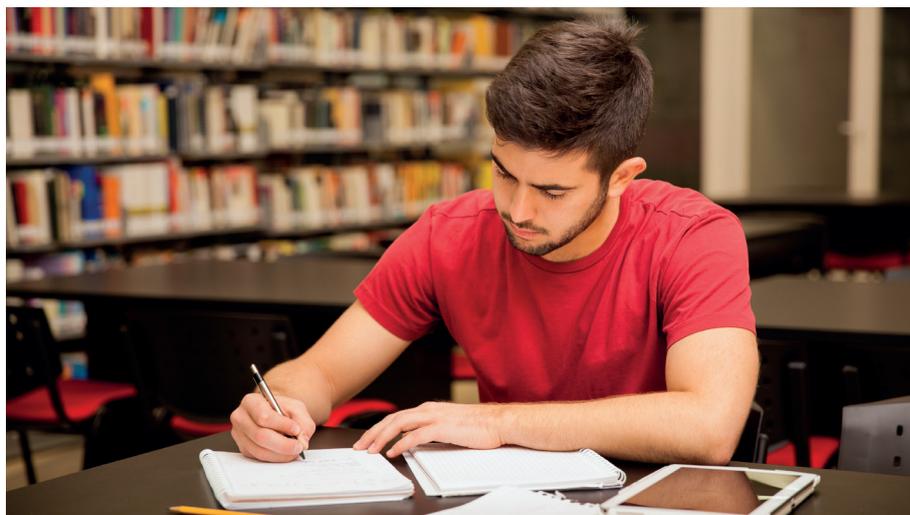
Assessment takes place throughout the course on both practical skills and theoretical knowledge.

### The MET's entry requirements

These are provided as an indication only. Please check individual course listings on our website for specific requirements: [gbmc.ac.uk](http://gbmc.ac.uk)

### Course subjects offered at the MET

- Aircraft engineering
- Barbering
- Beauty therapy
- Bricklaying
- Cabin crew
- Carpentry & joinery
- Catering & hospitality
- Childcare
- Complementary therapy
- Construction
- Electrical installation
- Engineering
- Estate agency
- Hairdressing
- Health & social care
- Media hair & makeup
- Motor vehicle maintenance
- Motorsport vehicle maintenance
- Painting & decorating
- Plumbing
- Travel & tourism
- Sport
- Uniformed services



#### Level 1

A minimum of two GCSEs grade 9-2 (A\*-F) or achievement of an Entry Level qualification (to include English and maths, or be able to demonstrate the ability to work at the appropriate level).

Appropriate level of aptitude and skills may be assessed as part of the application review.

#### Level 2

A minimum of three GCSEs grade 9-3 (A\*-D/E) to include, or be able to demonstrate the ability to achieve, GCSE English and maths or Functional Skills at Level 1/ Level 2.

Some courses require specific subjects and grades at GCSE.

#### Level 3

A minimum of four GCSEs grade 4 (C) or above including English and maths, or to be able to demonstrate the ability to achieve grade 9-4 (A\*-C).

In some cases specific subjects and grades at GCSE will be required. Some courses require completion of a relevant Level 2.



## University of the Arts London (UAL) and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) diplomas

Offered at the **MET**

UAL/BTEC diplomas are an alternative to A-Levels.

They are practical courses that relate to a particular profession, area of work or technical skills.

Many higher education providers will offer places on university-level courses to students with Level 3 qualifications. Check with individual establishments for specific entry requirements.

### Equivalent qualifications

**Levels 1 & 2:** GCSEs

#### Level 3:

A-Levels: 6-unit National Award  
\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

Subsidiary Diploma = 1 A-Level  
12-unit National Certificate  
\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

Diploma = 2 A-Levels  
18-unit National Diploma  
\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

Extended Diploma = 3 A-Levels

**Levels 4-6:** University degrees

### Course subjects offered at the MET:

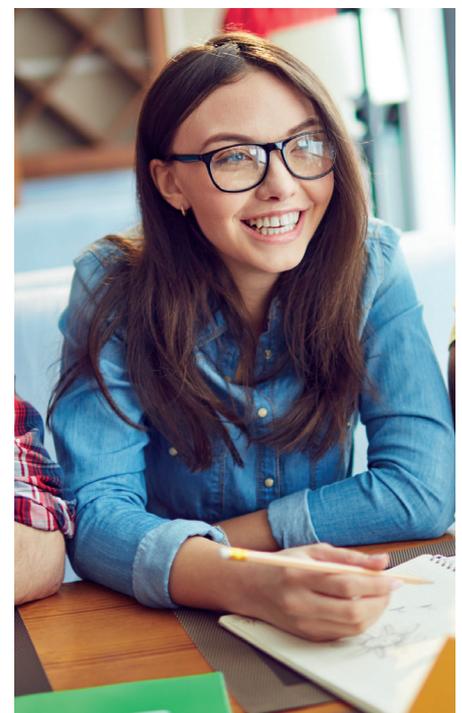
#### BTECs

- Business
- Computing & IT
- Health & social care
- Travel & tourism

#### UALs

- Acting
- Art & design
- Creative media & digital arts
- Dance
- Fashion & textiles
- Festival, event & artist management
- Filmmaking
- Games development
- Graphic design & illustration
- Music performance
- Music production & technology
- Musical theatre
- Photography
- Theatre & film design
- Theatre technology & production

One of the main differences between BTEC/UAL diplomas and A-Levels is the way students learn and are tested. A-Levels mainly involve two years of study with exams at the end. BTEC/UAL diplomas are assessed throughout using a combination of tests, coursework and practical projects.



## A-Levels

Short for Advanced Level, A-Levels usually focus on subjects such as history, maths, English, psychology, foreign languages and science. Some creative subjects are also available including art and dance.

Applicants generally need at least five GCSE passes (grade 9-4 or A\*-C) including English to study A-Level subjects at a sixth form school/college, but this varies.

Some colleges may also ask for a particular grade in a relevant GCSE subject. For example, a grade 5 or above in science and maths in order to study chemistry A-Level.

A-Level courses run for two years and are tested by exam at the end of the second year.

Traditionally students have studied three or more A-Levels in order to

qualify for degree-level courses at college or university. However, the number of young people choosing to study a combination of A-Levels and vocational courses such as BTECs is growing. Entry requirements vary by provider and by course so it is worth checking with them if your child has a particular path in mind.

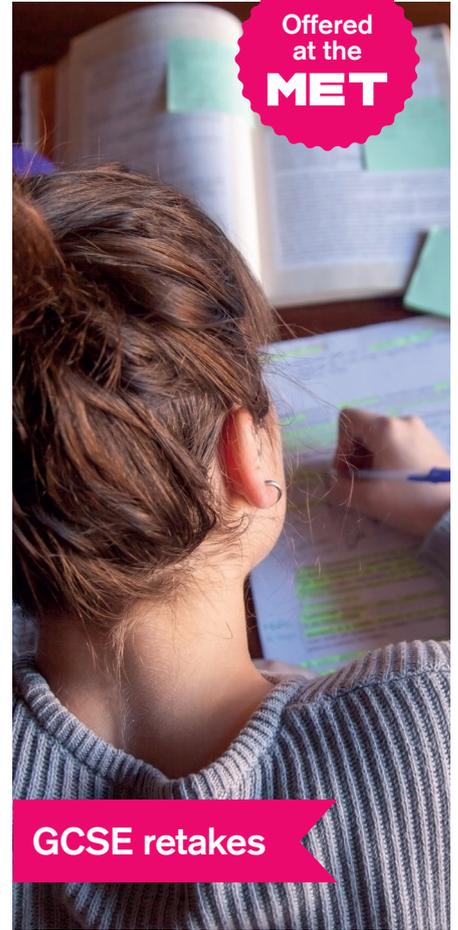


**Baccalaureate**



Offered at the **MET**

**Pathfinders, Supported Internships and Foundation Gateway Learning**



Offered at the **MET**

**GCSE retakes**

The International Baccalaureate, or IB Diploma, is an increasingly popular academic alternative to A-Levels and is an internationally recognised course—so potentially useful if your child is interested in working or studying abroad in the future.

There are three compulsory core 'elements' to the IB: theory of knowledge; creativity, activity and service; and an extended essay. In addition, your child will take six subjects from a range of options including languages, science, maths, the arts, history, psychology and politics.

The diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points out of a total of 45. 24 points is worth a grade B and two C grades at A-Level, rising to the equivalent of six A-Levels at grade A for the maximum 45 points.

We offer a provision of courses to help those students who may need some additional support with their learning. These courses will help to develop study skills and build confidence.

Our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) courses cater for 16-25 year olds with mild/moderate learning difficulties, behavioural or social needs.

These courses are also suitable for people with emotional health concerns. Students gain skills and confidence through activities such as external day trips, community volunteering and work experience. Courses include literacy, numeracy and IT, as well as jobs search and employability skills.

Students who don't achieve a grade 4 or C in GCSE English and/or maths will continue studying these subjects at the sixth form or college they attend after leaving school. This will be incorporated into their study programme to help them improve their knowledge and, for many, their GCSE grades through retaking the exams.



# Apprenticeships

If your child chooses to start an apprenticeship, they'll be working and earning straight after leaving school.

Apprentices need to be in active employment with training taking place either 'on or off the job' and one-to-one visits from a college assessor provided.

20% of an apprentice's time is allocated to training, allowing time to complete assignments and modules. An apprenticeship may be work-based with training set aside each week in the work environment or an apprenticeship can be 'day-release', with apprentices attending college once a week to meet the 20% requirement.

Apprentices are required to have a minimum of 30 hours in the workplace each week.

An apprenticeship can take between one and four years to complete depending on the level, the apprentice's ability and the industry sector. As a guide, an Intermediate Level 2 Apprenticeship usually takes around 12 to 18 months and an Advanced Level 3 Apprenticeship around 18 to 24 months.

Wages will vary depending on the type of apprenticeship but there is an apprenticeship national minimum wage in the UK which applies to all 16 to 18-year-olds and to those aged 19 and over in the first year of an apprenticeship. From April 2019, this is £3.90 per hour.

**An apprenticeship is a valued and recognised qualification for many industries and there are lots of employment sectors to choose from:**

- Accountancy
- Business administration
- Construction & building trades
- Child care
- Digital
- Customer service
- Hairdressing & barbering
- Adult health & social care
- Hospitality & catering
- HR services
- IT
- Management
- Motor vehicle
- Social media & digital marketing
- Supporting teaching and learning
- Team leading

**There are three different levels of apprenticeship:**

**Intermediate - Level 2** (equivalent to five GCSE passes)

A work-based learning qualification, such as an NVQ/Diploma Level 2, functional skills and in some areas a relevant technical certificate diploma. This provides the skills needed for a chosen career and allows entry to Advanced Apprenticeships. Entry requirements vary depending on the industry sector. Some employers don't specify any formal qualifications, but generally applicants should have either five GCSEs at grade 4 (A\*-C) or an equivalent Level 2 qualification in the same vocational subject.

**Advanced Apprenticeships - Level 3** (equivalent to 2 A-Level passes)

A work-based learning qualification such as an NVQ/Diploma Level 3, functional skills and technical diploma. Some industries want apprentices who have three or more GCSEs, but other employers don't specify any formal qualifications. To start this programme you should ideally have five GCSEs at grade 4 (A\*-C) or have completed an Apprenticeship at Level 2 and have been assessed to be ready to progress to Level 3.

**Higher Apprenticeships - Level 4, 5 and 6** (equivalent to a degree)

For those who have completed a Level 3 qualification, Higher Apprenticeships are a nationally accredited work-based programme designed to meet employers' needs at a higher skill level and include qualifications at levels equivalent to a degree.

## How to apply for an apprenticeship

All available apprenticeships in England are listed on GOV.UK.

**The MET's apprenticeship team can be contacted on:**

Brighton and Hove: 01273 667770 | apprenticeship-brighton@gbmc.ac.uk

Outside of Brighton & Hove, including Shoreham and Worthing:  
01903 273126 | apprenticeship.team@gbmc.ac.uk



# How to apply for full-time 16-19 courses

Applying to a full-time course at the MET is easy. Your child can apply to the MET at any point during the year and apply to as many colleges as they like. It makes sense for them to have a variety of options when they get their exam results, especially if they are unsure of their next steps after leaving school.

1



## Apply using our online application form

Visit [gbmc.ac.uk](http://gbmc.ac.uk) to browse our full time 16-19 courses. When your child finds the course they want to study, they should click on 'apply now' to complete a simple online application form. We will receive the application straight away.

During the application process an online account is created, which means that they can log in at any time to track the progress of the application.

2



## What happens next?

They will receive a letter inviting them to attend an interview. This is an opportunity for them to find out more about the MET and the course they are applying for, see our facilities and ask any questions they may have. The course tutor will review the application and ensure that the course is the best option for them. You are welcome to attend this meeting.

3



## Accepting your place

Following the interview, your child will be sent an offer of a place on the course they have applied for or be referred back to admissions for further advice on alternative next steps. Your child can go online and accept their offer.

4



## Enrolling

We'll keep in touch over the summer with tips for starting college and details of how to enrol when your child has their exam results.



### Still unsure?

You or your child can contact our course advice team to talk through their options at any time. We have a friendly and experienced team of people whose job it is to help and guide them through their choices. Our admissions team can provide support and answer any questions you have about the application process.

### Admissions

01273 667704 or email [admissions-brighton@gbmc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions-brighton@gbmc.ac.uk) | [admissions-worthing@gbmc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions-worthing@gbmc.ac.uk)

# Common questions

## How college place offers are made

Most colleges ask that a student attends a meeting at the college before a formal offer of a place is given. Your child may be asked to bring along their most recent report with predicted GCSE grades and details of their school attendance. These meetings tend to be informal and will give your child the opportunity to talk about why they would like to do the course they have applied for and for the college to ensure it is the right one for them. At some colleges these meetings can also provide a chance for applicants to meet tutors and see the college facilities.

## What if my child doesn't get the GCSE grades required after an offer has been made?

If this happens, contact the college or school your child has accepted a place at as soon as possible after GCSE results day in August. For most students at state-funded colleges and schools, an offer of a place is not conditional on their GCSE results and they may still be able to attend—but they may not be able to study the subject or level of qualification they had originally planned. If lower than expected grades mean they haven't met the standard entry requirements for a course, they may be asked to discuss changing their 16+ study programme.



## What if my child doesn't get a grade 4 (C) or above in maths or English Language GCSE after an offer has been made?

They will be asked to retake these qualifications in their first year of college/sixth form.

## What if my child gets higher GCSE grades than predicted and wants to be considered for a different college or course after already accepting an offer?

Contact the admissions team at the college or school at which your child accepted a place as soon as possible after GCSE results day to check whether the level of course is still suitable. Some colleges accept new applications all year round so if your child wants to be considered for a course at a different college, it may be possible to submit an application in August/September—contact the college's admissions team as soon as possible after GCSE results day.

## What if English is not our first language?

There are minimum English language entry requirements for enrolment onto college courses. Your English language level (reading, writing, speaking and listening) will need to be one level lower than the course you are applying for. You may be required to attend an assessment prior to enrolment to ensure that your level of English is suitable for the course you wish to enrol on. If you require support to reach the required level, you may be referred to ESOL classes.



# UK Education Levels and Qualifications

16-18

Education and training options for 16-18 year-olds

LEVEL	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	QUALIFICATIONS	PROGRESSION TO
Pre-Entry and Foundation Learning	Appropriate level of skills and 'college readiness' assessed at interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life Skills Course</li> <li>Level 1 Diploma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry Level course</li> <li>Level 1 or 2 course</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least two GCSEs at grade 9-2 (A*-F) or achievement of an Entry level qualification (to include English and maths or be able to demonstrate the ability to work at the appropriate level)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NVQ Level 1</li> <li>BTEC/UAL Level 1 (certificate)</li> <li>Pre-apprenticeship programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 2 course</li> <li>Intermediate Apprenticeship</li> <li>Employment</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least three GCSEs grade 9-3 (A*-D/E) or successful completion of a Level 1 course</li> <li>Most require English and maths. Some require a basic knowledge of science or a specific subject and grade at GCSE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NVQ Level 2</li> <li>BTEC/UAL Level 2 (diploma)</li> <li>Intermediate Apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 3 course</li> <li>Advanced Apprenticeship</li> <li>Full-time employment</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least four GCSEs grade 4 (C) including English and maths or be able to demonstrate the ability to achieve grade 9-4 (A*-C).</li> <li>Some courses require completion of a relevant Level 2 qualification</li> <li>In some cases, specific subjects and grades at GCSE will be required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NVQ/BTEC Subsidiary Diploma/UAL Diploma</li> <li>BTEC/UAL Extended Diploma</li> <li>AS Levels</li> <li>A-Levels</li> <li>International Baccalaureate</li> <li>Advanced Apprenticeship</li> <li>Access to HE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 3 (year 2)</li> <li>Level 4 or 5</li> <li>Foundation/ Bachelor Degree</li> <li>Higher Apprenticeship</li> <li>Full-time employment</li> </ul>



18+

## Further and Higher Education qualifications and apprenticeships

LEVEL	QUALIFICATIONS
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ First year Foundation Degree course</li> <li>■ Higher National Certificate (HNC)</li> <li>■ NVQ Level 4</li> <li>■ BTEC Higher National Certificate</li> <li>■ Higher Apprenticeship or start of Degree Apprenticeship course</li> <li>■ First year Honours Degree course</li> <li>■ Certificate of Higher Education</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NVQ Level 5</li> <li>■ Diploma of Higher Education</li> <li>■ Higher National Diploma (HND)</li> <li>■ BTEC Higher National Diploma</li> <li>■ Higher Apprenticeship or intermediate level of Degree Apprenticeship course</li> <li>■ Second year Honours Degree course</li> <li>■ Foundation Degree</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NVQ Level 6</li> <li>■ BTEC professional qualification</li> <li>■ Higher Apprenticeship or Degree Apprenticeship</li> <li>■ Degree with or without Honours</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NVQ Level 7</li> <li>■ BTEC professional qualification</li> <li>■ Masters Degree</li> <li>■ Integrated Masters Degree e.g. Master of Engineering (MEng)</li> <li>■ Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma</li> <li>■ PGCE teaching qualification</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ BTEC professional qualification</li> <li>■ City &amp; Guilds Fellowship</li> <li>■ Doctorate (pHD)</li> </ul>

Please note that the entry requirements listed here are a general guide only. They will vary depending on the school or college. Always check with an individual institution (through their website or admissions office) for information on what is required to enrol on a specific course.



**For information on MET courses and apprenticeship opportunities visit [gbmc.ac.uk](http://gbmc.ac.uk) or call 01273 667704.**

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### **Stay connected**

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