Castle View School
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The Qualifications Framework

The Qualifications Framework was developed for qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, it was originally introduced to help employers compare the many different types of qualifications available in the UK.

The framework groups qualifications into 'levels' to describe how they increase in difficulty. The higher the level, the higher level of knowledge, understanding and skills that students need to develop in order to gain the qualification. Qualifications available in the UK fall into three categories:

1. Academic Qualifications - this category includes GCSE, A level and many university degree courses. Academic qualifications develop knowledge in particular subject areas such as History, English, maths and Science etc. In general students take examinations to gain this type of qualification. Academic qualifications can keep a student's career options open longer, as well as giving them a greater choice of Higher Education courses. For some university degree courses academic qualifications are the main or only entry route, e.g. medicine.

2. Vocational Qualifications - examples of vocational qualifications taught at Castle View are Level 2 (L2) are Digital Technology, Business & Enterprise, Hair & Beauty. This kind of course helps students to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of a particular area of work and can include practical work experience. AT- Level 2 vocational courses can be taken alongside or instead of GCSEs.

AT- Level 3 (Post 16) there are a range of courses offered leading to qualifications such as BTEC Diplomas. Some Level 3 vocational courses include "Licence to Practice", e.g. in Childcare. Students are assessed though a mix of coursework and examination and can progress to employment and/or higher education.

T-Levels - A new level 3 qualification called a T-Level was launched in 2020. T- Levels are 2-year courses roughly equivalent to 3 A level subjects. Developed in collaboration with employers and education providers, T-Levels offer students practical and knowledge-based learning in a school or college environment together with on-the -job experience through a work experience placement.

3. Skill based or Job Specific Qualifications - this type of qualification helps students to develop the skills needed for a specific occupation, e.g. Vehicle Mechanics, Construction, Hairdressing, Hospitality & Catering etc. Qualifications can be gained by going on to further education or through an apprenticeship. Students gain qualifications by demonstrating the skills required, assessment can be by practical assessments and/or a portfolio of evidence.

The chart on the next page illustrates the qualification framework and the pathways. It is worth noting that a student can start out on an academic pathway after year 11 but can later switch to a vocational/or job specific pathway. For example, a student considering becoming an accountant could choose to take A Level courses after which they could go on to a university degree course or an apprenticeship in order to become a qualified accountant.

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<table>
<tr><th>Level</th><th colspan="2">Academic</th><th colspan="2">Vocational</th><th>Work/Skill based</th></tr>
<tr><td>Level 8</td><td colspan="2">Doctorate
PhD</td><td colspan="2"></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 7</td><td colspan="2">Master's Degree
MA, MSc, M.Phil.</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Level 7 NVQ
Post Graduate Certificates and Diplomas</td><td rowspan="2">Degree Apprenticeship</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 6</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Bachelor Degree
(BA or BSc)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 5</td><td rowspan="2">Foundation Degree</td><td>HND</td><td rowspan="2">Higher Apprenticeship</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 4</td><td>HNC</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Level 3</td><td rowspan="2">A Level</td><td>A2</td><td rowspan="2">Level 3 Diploma (National)</td><td>T- Level s</td><td rowspan="2">Advanced Apprenticeship</td></tr>
<tr><td>A1
(AS Level)</td><td>Level 3 Certificate (National)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 2</td><td colspan="2">GCSE
Grade 4 to 9</td><td colspan="2">Level 2
Award/Certificate/Diploma</td><td>Intermediate Apprenticeship</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 1</td><td colspan="2">GCSE
1 to 3</td><td colspan="2">Level 1
Award/certificate/Diploma</td><td>Traineeship</td></tr>
<tr><td>Entry Level 1,2,3</td><td colspan="3">Entry Level Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
Essential & Functional Skills
Skills for Life</td><td>Traineeship</td></tr>
</table>