

Gloucestershire Virtual School

Frequently Asked Questions by Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children

Starting life in a new country can bring lots of questions about education, college, training, work and your future. The answers below will help you understand some of the education, training and employment opportunities available to you.

I am new to England. Will I go to school or college?

Yes. In England, young people are usually expected to stay in education, training or employment until they are 18 years old.

If you are aged 16 or over, you will often attend a college or training provider.

What is ESOL?

ESOL means **English for Speakers of Other Languages**.

ESOL courses help you improve your:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Reading
- Writing

Many young people start with ESOL when they first arrive in the UK.

What level of ESOL will I study?

Your college will assess your English skills (Reading and Writing) and place you on the most suitable level.

You may start at:

- Pre-Entry
- Entry 1
- Entry 2
- Entry 3
- Level 1

Everyone learns at a different pace.

How long will I study ESOL?

This is different for everyone.

Some young people make rapid progress and move through the levels quickly. Others may need more time.

Your teachers will support you and help you progress when you are ready.

What happens after ESOL?

As your English improves, you will usually work towards:

- Functional Skills English
- Functional Skills Maths
- GCSE English
- GCSE Maths

These qualifications are important because many colleges, apprenticeships and employers ask for English and Maths qualifications.

You may then be able to progress to:

- Vocational courses
- Apprenticeships
- Further education
- Employment with training
- University in the future

What is a vocational course?

A vocational course helps you develop practical skills for a particular job or career.

Examples include:

- Construction
- Plumbing
- Engineering
- Electrical Installation
- Hair and Beauty
- Business
- Health and Social Care
- Hospitality and Catering

Different colleges offer different courses and qualification levels. During your Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, your interests, strengths and future goals will be discussed. Your support team will help you find the college and course that is right for you and support you to progress towards your future ambitions.

What is a PEP meeting?

PEP stands for **Personal Education Plan**.

You will have a PEP meeting once each term with you Social Worker, Support Worker or Carer, Designated Teacher, Education Adviser and Leaving Care PA (if you turning 18 in the next 6 months).

This meeting helps everyone work together to support your education and future plans.

At your PEP meeting you can:

- Share your views
- Ask questions
- Discuss your progress
- Talk about future plans
- Set goals

Can I apply for an apprenticeship?

This depends on several things, including:

- Your English and Maths qualifications
- Any course entry requirements
- Your immigration status, for example, if you have Leave to Remain
- Your right to work in the UK

Some apprenticeships require specific qualifications before you can apply.

Speak to your tutor, Careers Adviser, Education Adviser or solicitor if you are unsure.

Can I work?

Whether you can work will depend on your immigration status and whether you have the right to work in the UK.

If you are unsure, speak to:

- Your Social Worker
- Personal Adviser
- Solicitor
- Education Adviser

They can help you understand what opportunities are available to you.

But your school or college can support you with writing a CV and help prepare you for interviews.

No question is too small.

If you are unsure about education, training, apprenticeships, employment or your future options, speak to a trusted adult who supports you.

Remember: Everyone's education journey is different. Many young people start with ESOL and go on to college courses, apprenticeships, employment and university. Focus on your next step and ask for help whenever you need it.