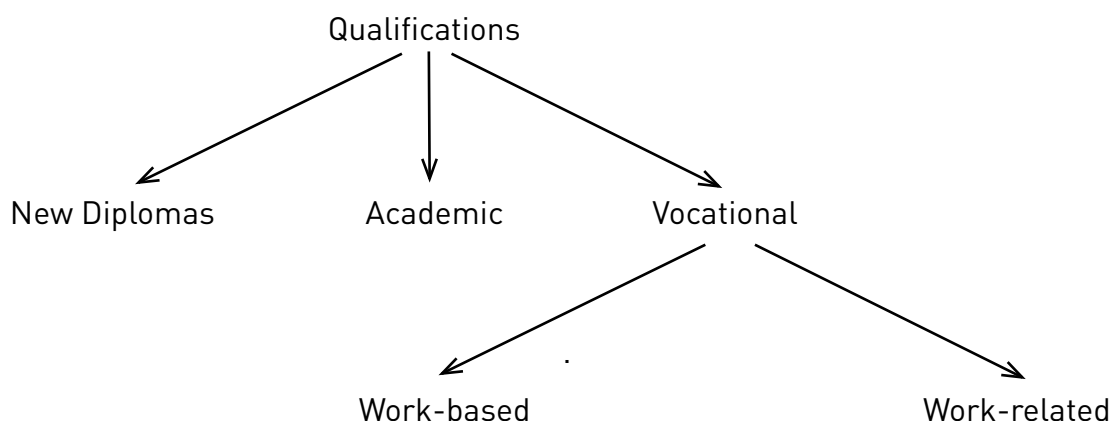


Title: **Brief Overview of Current Qualifications 1/2**

Theme: **Routes to Higher Education**

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CURRENT QUALIFICATIONS

UK qualifications can be broadly divided into three categories: academic, vocational and the new Diplomas, which are a combination of the two



Academic qualifications are theoretical, not expected to produce a practical result, like run an office, cut hair or run leisure activities, for example. Subjects like Maths, English and Science give you a theoretical knowledge that you can apply across a wide range of subjects and throughout life.

Vocational qualifications can lead to a specific occupation or employment. You should end up with a practical skill. Engineering, nursing, carpentry, for example. That's not to say that you won't need any academic qualifications to go on to vocational qualifications.

Vocational qualifications can also be further divided into:

- Work-based qualifications
- Work-related qualifications

Work-based qualifications

As the name suggests, you need to be in work or on a training programme to take this type of qualification. Learners on these types of courses are usually called trainees, apprentices or employees.

NVQs

The NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) is the main work-based qualification available. It is based on a series of units that match the type and level of work the candidate is engaged in.

Apprenticeships

Strictly speaking, an Apprenticeship is not a qualification, but a framework of achievement that could include the following:

- NVQ qualification at the appropriate level.
- Technical Certificates examinations agreed by the relevant sector skills council to be appropriate for the particular career area.
- Key Skills qualifications might include Application of Number, Communication and ICT if the learner does not have equivalent qualifications like GCSEs at the appropriate level. Or perhaps Working with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance and Problem Solving.
- Other qualifications deemed essential by the sector skill council involved in the Apprenticeship.

Title: **Brief Overview of Current Qualifications 2/2**

Theme: **Routes to Higher Education**

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CURRENT QUALIFICATIONS (continued)

Please note: Learners DO have to take exams to achieve the whole Apprenticeship framework, but DON'T take exams for an NVQ

Work-related qualifications

These qualifications are offered mainly in FE colleges (some Sixth Forms too) can be full-time or part time and lead to a qualification within a specific occupation. The following are the most common, but this is *not* an exhaustive list:

BTEC Suite:

Level 1 Introductory Certificate / Diploma

Level 2 First Certificate / Diploma

Level 3 National Award/Certificate / Diploma

Level 5 Higher National Certificate / Diploma

Levels 4-8 Professional Qualifications

OCN Step-Up Qualifications

Level 1 Award/Certificate/Diploma

Level 2 Award/Certificate/Diploma

Level 3 Award/Certificate/Diploma

OCR Nationals

Level 1 First Award / Award / Certificate

Level 2 Award / Certificate

Level 3 Certificate / Diploma / Extended Diploma

Diplomas

These are a new type of qualification, rolling out into schools from 2008. They are designed to combine theoretical study with practical experience and are offered at Foundation (Level 1), Higher (Level 2) and Advanced (Level 3) levels.

International Baccalaureate

Offered by the majority of local authorities, the International Baccalaureate is offered at pre-16 and post-16 level. It is based on an offer of six subject groupings, with a core made up of three separate parts, an Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge' and 'Creativity, Action, Service.'

For more information about the International Baccalaureate click on www.ibo.org