

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Many of you will have questions about starting College, and below are some of the more frequently asked questions.

Don't forget to check the BTC website for updates and if you have any further questions, please email us at [info@btc.ac.uk](mailto:info@btc.ac.uk)

## **Is there someone who can help me choose what to study?**

Yes, we have an Information, Advice & Guidance team who offer careers advice. Open events are also an excellent way to research different colleges and start to look at your options. Please also chat to our School Liaison Officers when they visit your school and don't forget your Careers Advisor.

## **What is the deadline for applications?**

We recommend everyone applies as soon as possible so that you're interviewed before GCSE revision really kicks in. Applications open in October of your final year, so you can apply as soon as you've done your research.

## **Can I apply to more than one college?**

Yes, and you can apply for more than one course, though we recommend you try not to apply for more than three. If you have applied for very different subjects, you may be interviewed more than once.

## **If I apply early, can I change my mind?**

After your interview, you'll be sent a conditional offer which you can accept or decline. This can be done at any stage before September, but it's better to secure your place as soon as possible.

## **What sorts of questions will they ask me in the interview?**

Your interview is an informal chat with a tutor about your successes at school, your aspirations and future plans. If you've applied for a creative arts course or subject, you will be asked to perform a piece or bring some art work.

Don't worry, the tutors are really friendly and just want to get to know you better. It's also your chance to find out more about the course you've chosen and ask questions. At the end of the interview, you'll be given a conditional offer based on your GCSE grades or the other criteria you've talked about.



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### **The telephone number/email address I gave on my application form is wrong, what should I do?**

If the details you supplied have changed, please email your updated information to [admissions@btc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@btc.ac.uk) and we will update your records accordingly. It's best if you use a personal email address when you apply rather than your school's email so we can reach you during the holidays.

### **How do I accept my offer?**

To accept your offer and secure a place at BTC, there will be a 'accept your offer' link in the email you receive after you interview. Alternatively, you can contact our Admissions team at [admissions@btc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@btc.ac.uk) or call 01278 441368.

### **What happens if I'm not sure whether to accept my offer or not?**

We would encourage you to accept your offer unless you are 100% sure you don't want to study at BTC. By accepting your offer, it allows us to plan class sizes and secures you a place for the start of term. If you don't accept your offer until later in the year you may find the course you want to study is full or been cancelled.

### **What happens if I don't get an employer for an apprenticeship before September?**

The final year at school is really busy, so you may struggle to secure a job with an employer looking for an Apprentice. We suggest you choose a full-time Study Programme as your second choice so you're guaranteed a College place. You can change to an Apprenticeship at any time after you start your Study Programme if you find employment.

### **Can I change from a full-time course to apprenticeship once I start?**

Yes, you can change to an Apprenticeship at any time after you start your Study Programme if you find employment.

### **What happens when I get my GCSE results?**

Hopefully you'll be celebrating and could start on a higher level course than you planned. If things haven't gone as well as you hoped, it's important to remember is not to panic. We have a team of supportive staff who are happy to talk you through your options.

Once you have your results, pop into the College to meet a member of the Information, Advice & Guidance team or call our GCSE helpline on 01278 441234. There will be an alternative they can explore with you.

### **What happens if I don't achieve a grade 4 in English and Maths?**

We recognise the importance of every student having basic skills in English and Maths. If you enter your vocational qualification or Apprenticeship with a GCSE grade 4 or above in these areas, you'll have the opportunity to deepen your knowledge and understanding. If you have a grade 3, you'll be given tuition to help you attain a grade 4 or higher. And if you come in with less than a grade 3, you'll follow a special programme that enables you to progress to a GCSE retake in due course.

### **Who can I speak to if I have an additional learning need?**

Student Support is essential to a successful learning experience and we pride ourselves on the level and quality of learning support on offer to ensure everyone gets all they need to bring out their best.

Our well-qualified and award-winning learning support staff provide one-to-one or small-group tuition for students with:

- Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia
- Conditions on the Autistic spectrum
- Difficulties with core skills, such as Maths or English

Our dedicated team also provides in-class or break-time support for students at every level, this is available to any student who has learning, mental or physical difficulties.





We pride ourselves on the fact that every student, regardless of their precise needs, has full access to our curriculum, and is given every opportunity to realise their potential.

To access our first-rate support, you need to make us aware of your needs at the point of applying to College. That way, we can set up the right structures from the start of your time with us.

Please visit the Supporting your Learning page on the website for more detailed information about our Tutorial Support, Additional Learning Support, Health and Wellbeing, the Local Offer and how the BTC Advantage supports your learning whilst at College.

### **Will I have a personal tutor and extra support if I need it?**

We match every student to a personal tutor, who takes responsibility for their learning and development. There is a mix of 1:1 professional review and themed group tutorials.

Personal tutors meet students either individually or in small groups to review progress, signpost further learning opportunities and identify areas that require more work. The regular professional reviews and themed group tutorials are a valuable part of College life, and help steer you through this crucial phase of education and professional development.



### **What will my timetable be like?**

You'll be given your timetable before you start College and it will depend on the course you've chosen. When you don't have a lesson, you're free to work in the library or study areas, take part in enrichment activities or spend time with friends in the common rooms.

Apprenticeships work differently. You could be at work all week and only come into the College one day a week, or you could spend a few weeks at College then work full-time, or never come in to College and learn everything on the job (including being assessed at work by a College Assessor).

### **Do you have uniforms, or can I wear anything I want?**

There are no uniforms, but some departments such as sport and automotive have branded clothing and Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) is expected to be worn in most workshops.

You will be issued with a lanyard which you must wear on campus for security reasons. It also gives your access to certain areas and you can use it to pay at food outlets.

### **If I study a full-time course, how many hours will I have to be in College each week?**

It varies per course and your timetable will be issued and discussed before you start College. The timetable will be set, so if you have other commitments, you should be able to arrange things around the time you need to be at College.

### **What catering facilities do you have?**

We have a range of catering outlets on each campus, so whether you want a nourishing home-cooked meal, a quick snack or slurp of coffee, there are plenty of cafes and restaurants to satisfy your needs and dietary requirements.

If you meet the criteria, you could receive a free daily hot meal with a drink. All students have a College account that allows them to use their student ID to pay for meals in the restaurants. If you receive free meals, your ID will be pre-loaded in the same way as your peers.

### **Where can I meet friends in my free time?**

Each campus has a common room, where you can catch up with friends over a cup of something warm, shoot some pool or simply relax on comfy sofas until your next class. It's these communal spaces that make our campuses such special places to study. They help build strong networks between students, ensuring you'll always find someone to hang out with, or a place to take five during a busy day.

Alternatively, you could spend your free time in the Learning Resources Centre. Each campus gives you access to thousands of books, journals, DVDs, CDs, magazines and newspapers, our LRCs are a wonderful asset to our campuses. You'll be encouraged to use them as study spaces, where you can access all manner of resources that fire your imagination, stretch your intellect, and inform your growth. A bank of computers and free WiFi make the centres perfect working environments.

### **How much is accommodation?**

The cost varies depending on if you're in your first or second year and the type of accommodation you choose. In 2020/21, prices ranged from £6,003 for a first-year student in an en-suite room with a five-day meal card, to £7,018 for a larger room in Dartmoor Hall with a seven-day meal card.

### How far is the train station from the College?

Bridgwater is on the main train line from Bristol to Exeter and the campus is only a ten-minute walk from the station. For timetables and costs please contact Trainline or National Rail. If you're studying at the Cannington campus, you could take a bus from the Bridgwater campus.

Taunton's busy rail station connects directly to Tiverton, Exeter, Bristol, Weston-super-Mare, Bath and Bridgwater – as well as many other small stations in between. You can walk from the station to College in about 20 minutes. If you're in a hurry, you can always catch the bus.

### If I travel by bus, do I have to stay at College all day?

No, if there is a bus home, you're free to leave the campus once your lessons are finished for the day. However, the library, study areas, workshops and other facilities remain open so you can complete assignments, research, study and work on projects without the distractions of home.

### Is there any financial help with transport costs and other expenses?

Getting to and from College can be a costly affair for some students, and we don't want money issues to put anyone off attending.

For train travel, you could purchase the 16-17 Saver ticket that offers half-price fares for 16 and 17 year olds. The saver ticket costs £30\* and applies to standard Season, Anytime, Off-Peak and Advance tickets on the National Rail network.

During term time, the College Bus pass allows one inward and one outward journey to and from the Bridgwater campus each day (with links to Cannington included), on services not on County routes. The cost of this bus pass can be paid in full on application or by eight monthly direct debits.

You may be eligible for financial help towards the cost of travel through the 16-19 Bursary. For prices, application forms, the bursary and further information about the County Bus pass, please contact the College Information, Advice & Guidance team on 01278 441234.

*\*Correct at time of print*

### Can I take part in sports alongside my studies?

Team BTC is our sports academy programme and is open to all students, regardless of their course or campus. We offer provision across men's and women's football and rugby, golf, basketball, netball, trampolining and mixed hockey, and students are selected to be part of a Team BTC through a series of trials at the start of each academic year.

Don't worry if you play a sport outside of these at a competitive level. Whilst we don't complete weekly training in all sports, we will still ensure all students have the opportunity to represent the College at regional and national competitions such as badminton, cricket, tennis, squash, athletics, table-tennis, swimming and many more.



### Are there any sports scholarships?

We offer four levels of sport scholarships ranging from £125 to £1,000. They're based on your previous achievements, and you can apply whether you're studying sport or not. For more information, please visit the Scholarships & Bursaries section on our website or email [sport@btc.ac.uk](mailto:sport@btc.ac.uk).

### I don't enjoy sport. Are there any other clubs I can join?

Our Academies and BTC Active give you a chance to pursue your aspirations, make new friends, relax and enjoy time away from your studies. Academies range from dance to fashion and Esports to technology while BTC Active offer a range of active sessions throughout the week at every campus.

### Do you have a Students' Union?

Yes, our Union is affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS) and run by students for students. Their focus is on the wellbeing of their peers, and the overall experience of studying at BTC. They ensure we do our jobs properly, and give you the best possible chance of achieving success.

You automatically become a part of the Student's Union when you join the College. To take full advantage of the opportunity, you can buy a TOTUM card, which gives you a range of discounts at shops, restaurants and online retailers.

The Students' Union also organises social events and occasions such as RAG Day and themed parties. When it isn't doing all of that, it makes suggestions for improving College facilities, and helps create an environment in which everyone feels at home.

