



Unit 2 Welcome to vocational school

Task 04

Announcer: Listen to Sue talking about her training in England.

Sue: At the end of comprehensive school I wasn't really too sure about what to do next. ... One day I was just looking for jobs and I stumbled across my further education college's course in fashion business and retail. It was everything I had been looking for. This course provides an opportunity for those with an interest in fashion and creativity within a qualification structure. The course seemed well structured. I spoke to my parents about it. They thought it was a good idea. I had a C grade GCSE in maths and an A grade in English, which I needed for the course, so I applied. 'A' is the best grade that you can get, so like a '1' in Austria.

In my course I'm studying the principles of fashion business and retail, fashion production and supply chain, fashion buying and merchandising, fashion management and marketing and visual merchandising. In addition, students have to complete a fashion retail project. I'm really enjoying it.

It's a full time course at my further education college and I've already completed my first year. What is different to Austria, is that once you are 19 you have to pay for education. Most of my friends have got a student loan which they'll have to pay back once they earn over £21,000 a year. There are various qualifications that you can get, however – the BTEC Level 2 Diploma which is the one I'm aiming for is equivalent to the Austrian *Lehrabschlussprüfung*. A BTEC 3 is equivalent to *Lehre mit Matura* and enables you to go to University. One of the good things about further education college is that there is no dress code.

I interrupted my studies to do an exchange in Austria because I wanted to improve my German, which I'd been learning at comprehensive school. My career advisor said that a gap year would help my chances of finding an interesting job afterwards. This definitely was the best decision I've ever made! I'll go back to England in July and continue with the course. I'm hoping to pass my BTEC National Diploma next year. And after that, I hope to find a job in a fashion store, maybe in London, where there are lots of tourists, so I can use my German. I've worked in a local fashion store in my holidays. There is a lot to learn, something different every day. It's great ... exciting, and I never get bored!