

Option Choices in Year 10 Commencing June 2018



**How have KS4 qualifications
changed?**

The reforms to the GCSEs (and vocational subjects) mean that there is more **rigour**

- Content - more to learn, more to understand
- Assessment - more exams, fewer controlled assessments
- Pace - in order to handle the content and assessment, students (and teachers) are expected to work at a fast pace

Time allocated to subjects:

English Language and Literature - 5 hours

Maths - 4 hours

Science - 6 hours

PE - 2 hours

PSHE - 0.5 hours

3 x options - 2.5 hours

Quality over quantity...
How many GCSEs do you
actually need...?

- Going back 10 years, schools were offering KS4 curricula where students were picking up 11 (or often more) qualifications
- Given the level of rigour, students need 8 or 9 good quality qualifications - universities and apprenticeship providers are looking back to the quality of GCSEs (and not quantity of GCSEs) more and more

**Progression opportunities in
the Sixth Form - how do the
GCSEs feed into KS5 choice?**

Progression to A Level / KS5

- In most cases, the option choices at KS4 will not hamper potential career plans - these are supported by the skills, learning and understanding developed through the core subjects (both English courses, maths, sciences)
- It is, therefore, hard to make the wrong decision - when considering the option choices focus on the mantra “what are you good at / what do you enjoy?”
- Think about art, technology, history, geography and languages - if a subject is not taken at KS4 it could rule it out for sixth form. HOWEVER, there are other KS5 subjects /courses which can appeal e.g. “I didn’t take history GCSE but I could do A Level sociology or philosophy - these appeal to my enjoyment of writing and class discussion / dealing with a range of issues”

Making the right choices - the progression process

Timeline

Date	Event
21 December 2017	Presentation to Year 9 students to explain the process
11 January 2018	Options evening (parents only) at 7.30pm
26 January 2018	Year 9 reports published
26 February 2018 onwards	Individual interviews for each student & their parents
4 June 2018	Start of Year 10 and new timetable

The curriculum in Years 10 & 11

Compulsory subjects leading to a qualification

English
Language

English
Literature

Maths

2 or 3
Science GCSEs

Compulsory subjects which do not lead to a qualification

Physical Education
(can also be taken
as a GCSE)

Personal, Social,
Health & Economic
Education

A choice of options, each of which leads to a qualification

Option 1
(an E-Bacc
subject)

Option 2

Option 3

Option choices

E-Bacc Options: you must choose at least one of these	Other option subjects: you can choose a maximum of 2 of these subjects	
Computer Science	Art: Fine Art	Health & Social Care
French	Art: Graphic Communication	IT
Geography		Music
German	Art: Textiles	Performing Arts
History	Business Studies	PE (GCSE)
Latin	Dance	Religious Studies
Spanish	Technology	Sport
	Drama	

What should students think about when making their choices?

- Their strengths and interests
 - See the January report - look at the 'attitude to learning' scores
 - Think about how the course is assessed (exams/coursework)
- Future plans
- Progression into the 6th form
 - Entry onto many 6th form courses will depend on the average grade achieved across your 8 or 9 subjects so students should choose the subjects they will enjoy and do best at

BACK TO THE MANTRA!

Some common misconceptions / myths

- You need to do the full EBACC
- BTECs are not equal to GCSEs
- You need to study a GCSE language in order to go to university

Oxford University - candidates do not need to take the English Baccalaureate to be able to apply to Oxford. We recommend that candidates take those GCSE subjects that they enjoy the most and are confident in achieving good grades in

Option Blocks

There are 5 blocks and you must choose one subject in each block

Choices	Option A	✓	Option B	✓	Option C	✓	Option D	✓	Option E	✓
Choose 1	English				English					
Choose 1	PE (Core)		PE (Core)		PE (Core)		PE (GCSE Practical)			
Choose at least one (you can choose more than one if you like)	History		Computing		History		French		Computing	
			French				Geography		Geography	
			Geography				History		German	
			History				Spanish		History	
			Latin						Spanish	
Choose to complete remaining option blocks	Dance		Business		Fine Art		Business		Design & Technology	
	Fine Art		Design & Technology		PE (GCSE Theory)		Design & Technology		Graphic Communication	
	Music		Drama				Drama		Health & Social Care	
	PE (GCSE Theory)		Graphic Communication				Fine Art		IT	
			IT				Music		PE (GCSE Theory)	
			Performing Arts				Religious Studies		Religious Studies	
									Sport	
									Textiles	

Making appropriate choices: Questions I have asked the students

- Do you know the differences between the three art subjects?
- GCSE PE or OCR Sport - what is the difference? Can you take both? Does your 'outside of school' sport count in the qualification?
- Performing Arts, Music, Dance, Drama or more than one?
- Have you read enough about the new subjects on offer (Business Studies, Health and Social Care)?
- Which language? French, German, Spanish or Latin
- Which Humanity - Geography, History, Religious Studies or more than one?

I have asked the students to:

- Read the brochure carefully
- Talk with their parents
- Look at their Year 9 report
- Read the assessment section on the options pages carefully and think about whether they want:
 - Breadth - 3 different subjects
 - Specialisation - 2 or 3 similar subjects, playing to their strengths
 - Coursework and practical work in their option subjects
- They *must* look at the option form prior to their interview and make some provisional choices

Support at home

- Discuss subjects with your sons and daughters - what they enjoy (and why)
- Discuss the homework that they do
- Discuss what they perceive to be their strengths
- Discuss their perceptions and attitudes to exams and coursework
- Discuss their ambitions / plans / dreams
- Use the Year 9 non-core parents' evening strategically

A final word on our GCSE and vocational results

- We were delighted in August 2017 by the best results we have ever had
- We are most proud about two things
 - the students have the currency to open up lots of exciting future opportunities
 - the students made over half a grade of progress more here at QE than their peers in other schools across the country - progress not just attainment