

Year 9 Options Process Q & A

January 2024



Options Process:

If the subject is full, how are the students selected?

The SIM-options program is used to allocate student places based on maximum class size & the priority that a student has placed a subject in. A best fit approach is used to allocate places to all students based on all choices & out curriculum.

When can we get all the information about the subjects, we would like to receive information prior to the Feb evening event. List of all option subjects plus supporting curriculum details, will there be appointments for the face-to-face meetings in Feb.

The options booklet will be available online on Friday 12th January. Students will receive their own paper copy on Monday 15th January. A school comms will be sent out about the options parents evening together with booking information. The appointments will be face-to-face in February for the Options Parents Evening.

How do I access Unifrog?

Reminder training & password re-set will be given during the year 9 Next Steps Day on Monday 15th January.

What is happening on the 6th Feb? are we able to make as many appointments with subject leaders as we want?

As with all parents' evenings, you can make up to 8 appointments.

If the child really doesn't like the option they chose, can it be switched.

There is a small window of opportunity in the first 3 weeks in year 10 for a small number of options to be requested to change. After that, no further changes will be allowed.

Can our child access the options selection portal at home or is it only accessible whilst he is at school?

The options portal can be accessed both in school and at home.

When do pupils find out their choices?

In the summer term. The exact date depends on the ease of allocation & the timetable.

What happens if a child does not get the options they select?

Whilst we endeavour to allocate every student's first choices, this is not always possible. In this instance the reserve will be used to replace a subject that is oversubscribed or where a clash occurs. If it is still not possible to accommodate a

student's options choices after trying to use the reserve, I will speak to them personally, to ask them to make alternative choices.

Student Selection:

Does my child have to do D&T food at GCSE to in order to do at A-level? Is it necessary to take Business Studies at GCSE in order to take it at 'A' Level?

We strongly advise that if a child is considering an A level in a subject that they undertake it a KS4.

Is the health and social care BTEC level 2 equivalent to a GCSE and how do universities consider or rate a BTEC? Does a BTEC 3 have points like an A-Level?

Yes, BTEC tech awards are equivalent to GCSEs and yes, level 3 BTECs are awarded UCAS points. If a student has a particular course/ university in mind, it's worth checking the university's prospectus to see what the entry requirements are.

How many BTECs can the children opt for?

Due to the coursework demands for a BTEC, a maximum of 2 BTEC courses will be allocated.

Will recent assessment results be taken into account when you allocate places on courses? my child does not necessarily perform well in exams and is worried about missing out on chosen subjects because of this.

We are proud of the fact that we know and nurture our students. All relevant staff may provide context for student allocation, not necessarily 1 assessment result. However, if a student has performed badly in assessments, it may be worth looking at whether that is a wise choice. Ultimately, student choice forms a large part of the decision.

Is the 4 options a maximum or can more be chosen if a student wants to take more?

No, a student will be allocated 3 from their 4 choices.

What are the compulsory subjects and with 4 options how many subjects will the children study in total?

Core subjects are English (2 GCSEs) Maths (1) Science Trilogy (2) RS (1) plus 3 options.

Can you do Music and Drama?

Providing that these subjects do not occur at the same time in the timetable, yes.

Separate Sciences:

Which two of the 3 sciences (Physics/ Chemistry/ Biology) does the "double science" give you qualifications in?

All sciences are covered & examined in core science, but the curriculum time & examination length is worth 2 GCSEs.

How many GCSE's will be awarded for core Science? Is it still dual award?

2 GCSEs

Does Separate Science take up an option this year or not? Why is separate science an option this year? This only gives students the possibility of 9 GCSE's where it was 10 previously. How many options can a student choose? How does separate science affect this? Can a student take separate science, then a following 3 options if they are achieving high and doing well? Does separate science mean selecting 3 GCSE subjects Chemistry, Biology and Physics? Is that 3 choices or one? Is there a required level / standard the pupil needs to be at before being able to choose 'Separate' Science as an option?

Separate science is offered as 1 option choice but will give a student a total of 3 GCSEs. Choosing this option will give a student 2 other KS4 qualifications, plus the core subjects English (2), Maths (1), RS (1). In previous years, we have accelerated 1 set of students to do separate science as an extra GCSE, but this is now no longer possible. Students who do not choose separate science will also have the opportunity to achieve 9 KS4 qualifications.

Facilitating Subjects

Will Computer Science be considered as a facilitating subject?

Yes, for a small number of students we will consider computer science as a facilitating subject. We still require these students to rank the other facilitating subjects in order of preference.

Is German available as an option?

No, Spanish & French are the MFL options.

Why are students being restricted in the number of subjects they may choose for GCSE this year compared to previous year groups and other schools in the local area?

The number of subjects is not being restricted compared to last year. We are providing students with the best possible chance of future success by asking students to choose a facilitating subject. The number of KS4 qualifications is comparable with other centres.

Would a student be able to do History, Geography and Spanish? Or is it just one language and one humanities subject? Can students choose all the facilitating subjects?

Yes, it is a challenging combination of subjects but is allowed.

Are we going to hear from the other 'facilitating subject' teachers? Will we get information on all the core subjects at GCSE.

Yes, during lessons 15th – 26th January.