

Year 9 Options Process Q & A

January 2025



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 & our curriculum.

Can we get more information about the subjects?

The options booklet is available online using this link bishopschester.co.uk/subject-options. Students received their own paper copy on Monday 20th January. Additional information about courses will be presented to students in school, including an assembly on Friday 24th January. Slides from this presentation will also be shared online. Time in lessons will provide students with further information about subjects and there is an opportunity to ask questions at the Options Parents' Evening on Thursday 6th February.

Will they have a careers meeting to discuss what they may like to do, and which options would suit best?

Careers meetings were held in groups on Friday 17th January and there was a further focus on this on Monday 20th January as part of the Options Launch Day. For further advice, individual careers meetings can be arranged by contacting Dr Toczyski through our normal channels.

Can our child access the options selection portal at home or is it only accessible whilst they are 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 4th choice 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 4 options they have selected, I will speak to them personally, to ask them to make alternative choices.

If they really don'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.

Student Selection:

Does my child have to study a subject at GCSE in order to do so at A-level?

We strongly advise that if a child is already considering an A level in a subject that they undertake it at KS4, but it may not be a barrier to the course if they have not.

Will recent assessment results be taken into account when you allocate places on courses?

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 3 options how many subjects will the children study in total?

Core subjects are English (2 GCSEs) Maths (1) Science (2) RS (1) plus 3 options. They will also continue to have Lessons for Life and PE as part of their curriculum in KS4.

Separate Science:

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

What's the difference between combined science and separate science?

All three sciences are covered & examined in combined science, but the curriculum time & examination length is worth 2 GCSEs; all students will cover this same content.

Students that study separate science will have additional lessons and cover a wider breath of depth of all three sciences. This will be worth 3 GCSEs overall.

Facilitating Subjects:

Why are there so few facilitating subjects?

English, maths and science are also considered to be facilitating subjects that all students will study and so the list of these subjects is already reduced. The more selected, the more opportunities this may potentially provide for students to access courses and destinations in the future.

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 Polish available as an option?

If there is a suitable course, students for whom English is not their first language will be contacted individually to be offered the opportunity to complete an additional GCSE in year 10. Not all languages can be offered, dependent on exam boards and tutoring availability.

Would a student be able to do History, Geography and Spanish? Can students choose all the facilitating subjects?

Students can select more than one facilitating subject.