SUPPORT RESOURCE

MAKING POST 16 COURSE CHOICES

Making a decision about which courses to study as a sixth form student is critical to success. We do believe student success does come from students being on the right courses from the start. Students should consider carefully and ensure the courses reflect their interests, passions and that they will enjoy the content and the way of working. Students will study a minimum of 3 courses in Year 12. A small minority of students decide on 4 courses in year 12 and then drop to 3 in year 13 (with Head of Sixth Form discussion). They should also think about whether they are better suited to courses that have a coursework/practical element or if they prefer exam-based courses. Finally, they should find out if these courses help them to gain entry to the university course/career they are considering.

It is important for students to do research prior to making their final course choice on GCSE results day. Students should try to consult with a number of people prior to making their final choices including speaking to their parents, tutor and subject teachers throughout their decision-making process. They should o speak to a member of the Sixth Form Team during the interview process who will provide information, advice and guidance to help inform. The Sixth Form team will offer advice and point them in the right direction to get further information alongside the career's advisor. We can also arrange telephone appointments with students and their parents to discuss options and consider the range of pathways available to students at this critical transition point in their lives if this is felt necessary. However, we encourage students themselves to decide on their option choices. We do not routinely inform parents/carers directly on the final course choices as we expect the student to liaise with the parents/carers about this.

How do I choose what to do next?

It's important to think about what is right for you when making decisions about your future. There are a number of things you should look at when choosing what to do. Below are some things to think about.

Subjects you like

1. Do you enjoy, or are you good at certain subjects? Have you considered taking these further?
2. Do you have hobbies or interests you could study?
3. Do you need any particular grades to get on to courses you're interested in? Look at the entry criteria for the courses you are interested in.

New subjects

1. Are there new subjects you might be interested in studying? We offer courses in subjects you haven't studied before- take a look at our course materials available online and during the open evening.
2. Find out what's involved in new subjects – ask teachers and other staff at the open evening/morning and look at the summer projects to get an idea.
3. How do you learn – in the classroom or by practical experience/projects/coursework/exams?

Job or career plans

1. What do you want to do in the future? Find out about any career, job, or higher education options and check whether you need specific qualifications for them.
2. Find out more about any jobs you'd like to work in and if you need specific qualifications.
3. If you're aiming for a university course, find out if you need particular subjects or grades to do the one you want.

Compare courses

- Compare courses by looking at the specifications. Find out which exam board the subject uses for the qualification you're looking at, take a look at the materials available to see if of interest. Find out about the workload of courses. Look at things like how much essay writing, independent reading, or project work you will be expected to do.

What else can help you decide?

- Come along to our open evening and/or morning – they're a great opportunity to visit, find out about the courses on offer, and speak to staff and students.
- Discuss your ideas – talk to parents or carers, family and friends to get other viewpoints on your choices but ultimately it is down to you.
- Take a look in your school careers library to find out more about career and course ideas- see Mr Hughes. We also have support packages like Unifrog to help you.

How many subjects should I take?

You should choose 3 subjects. You can pick 4 on your application form if you are not sure but and look to discuss in the interview stage. We can offer 4 subjects for the first year, followed by dropping down to 3 in Year 13 but this is in discussion with the Head of Sixth Form. This can be useful for some students, and we will support this.

What subjects should I take?

Advanced levels are difficult and require lots of study in addition to your lessons. Therefore, you need to really enjoy the subjects. Completing the 'preparation summer work' will help you to decide what A levels to study.

What if I have not studied the subjects before at GCSE level?

For some subjects, for example, Sociology, Psychology, Business Studies, Criminology and Politics, you will not have had to study them at GCSE level to take them at A level. See our entry criteria document to understand what grades you will need to have achieved at GCSE level for successful entry onto all courses.

Where can I get more information from? From our Sixth Form website 'Course information' page and tabs on our website, from teachers who have taught A level in that subject and from students who are currently studying A levels. Please also see other resources available to you online.

Support signposts:

- Understand what A-levels are & what you can do with them (https://www.ucas.com/post-16-qualifications/qualifications-you-can-take/levels)
- Search - UCAS (https://digital.ucas.com/coursedisplay/results/courses?studyYear=2025&destination=Undergraduate&postcodeDistanceSystem=imperial&pageNumber=1&sort=MostRelevant&clearingPreference=None)
- Informed Choices | Informed Choices (Further information about which A level courses are appropriate for particular degree courses, Russell group Universities can be found via this link) https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/
- https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/
- https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels (Studying at Sixth Form means you will be going on to complete level 3 qualifications)
- https://www.ucas.com/explore/career-list#js=on Browse careers.

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