



Year 9 Early Options: Frequently asked questions

What is the process for confirming options?

All student will be expected to return their options form by Monday 7th March. After this point we will create options blocks that will accommodate as many student choices as possible. When this has been completed we will send a letter home that will confirm your child's options. We will then speak to each student individually to ensure they are happy with their choice. This will happen shortly after we return from the Easter break.

How is the timetable organised?

All students will have the opportunity to select five subjects in order of preference, three of which will become their agreed option choices. These choices (three subjects) will be added to their compulsory subjects (subjects they must take) and will generate a timetable for every student.

What happens to students currently in Small Group Provision?

Students in Small Group Provision will continue to be taught in a smaller group for the majority of their lessons, although there may be slight changes within some of these subjects. We still try to accommodate the option subjects with a small group, but it does depend on the choices made by the student.

Subject specific questions

Why are there two options for PE and Sport? Which is more popular?

We currently offer both GCSE PE and a Sports BTEC course. This enables us to meet the needs of a variety of students as they offer different approaches to assessment. The GCSE course will have a greater emphasis on traditional examinations, while the Sports BTEC course is more coursework based with small online assessments. These will be in the same option column therefore; students will not be able to choose both courses.

Is History, Geography and a language an acceptable combination? Or does there need to be a creative option too?

We suggest that students look for a balance of subjects within their options, but do not make this compulsory. If a student has a specific preference such as History, Geography and a Language, then this is a valid combination. This is why we hold individual meetings so we can ensure the courses selected meet the needs of the student.

Will there be an opportunity for trips?

Yes there will be lots of opportunities for trips. Field trips for subjects such as Geography have still gone ahead during Covid, and we hope that more curriculum enrichment opportunities will take place over the coming year to ensure all our students receive wider opportunities in learning.

What is the ECDL course?

This course is the European Computer Driving License, a computer competency course which students who are doing a single GCSE Science course also do to add to their qualifications.

What is the best way to approach "new subjects"

The best way to approach a "new" subject such as Sociology, Business Studies, Public Service or Health and Social Care would be to investigate the subjects further with your child. The best starting place will be the Learning Pathways Booklet which outlines the structure of the curriculum at KS4 and has subject summaries

of all the courses on offer. This booklet will be issued to students on the 10th February as part of their Student Development Session. During this session students will also be able to look at video presentations introducing these new courses. These have been created by Subject Leaders and can be found in the Year 9 Google Classroom in the Assignment labelled “Year 9 Options” after the 10th February. It’s important your child then speaks to the subject teacher and even students who have also taken these courses, the Year 12 and 13 students are a fantastic resource.

Is there a subject that is particularly popular or commonly oversubscribed?

We do have subjects which are popular, such as Product Design or Art. However, the way we do the options process enables us to look at the demand for a subject and if necessary increase the numbers of classes on offer. In some cases this isn’t possible, for example we only have a certain number of ovens in the Food classrooms! However, we do try to meet the demands of each cohort, every year.

If students do not achieve a high enough level at KS3 will this have an impact on the options, e.g. low-level English wanting to do History?

We will look at each student individually and guide them to select options that will give them the best chance to be successful. We do recommend that students speak to the subject teacher and ask them about the course and the expectations or writing etc. However, we also recognise not every student will get an A grade, so it is important that they enjoy the subject and are able to succeed at a level in line with their ability.

Is it better to do separate sciences at GCSE, if you want to do physics/chemistry at A level?

Science is part of our core offer rather than an option, and all students can go on to A Level Science subjects whether they have completed Double or Separate Sciences.

Is a student able to study a future A Level in a certain subject if they don't take it for GCSE?

Yes, in some cases a student can study a further A Level in a subject without taking it for GCSE, but not in others. For example History will take students at A Level who haven’t done GCSE as long as they have a B grade in English. In a subject like Music this isn’t the case. If you have a question relating to a specific subject please contact AHT K Corken.

IVET (Initial Vocational Education and Training) and GCSEs

Is there an advantage/disadvantage in taking IVET (e.g Btec) than GCSE?

No, there is no advantage or disadvantage in terms of the qualifications and their outcomes for students moving forward. What they do is assess students differently. IVETs will assess students mainly through coursework while GCSEs will assess mainly through examinations. It is important to think about how your child would best achieve success with the subjects you choose.

Can you opt for one IVET and 2 GCSE options?

Mixing GCSEs and IVET is a valid combination and may allow students to have more of a variety of different types of qualifications and assessments.

How to get in touch with any further questions?

You can contact us through the school email info@khs.schoolsedu.org.uk and mark your email FAO: AHT K Corken. The option form is also being monitored, so if you have a question you can also write it on there.