



## Year 9 into 10

## Key Stage 4 Choices

### INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS



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### INTRODUCTION

Dear Students,

Over the coming weeks you will be selecting the additional subjects you would like to study in KS4. These choices, along with the core provision (what everyone will study) will form your curriculum for the next two years.

Any subject that you choose will, of course, have a potential pathway beyond Year 11, so your choices are important. However, please do not think every choice you make will have a direct impact on your future. You will not necessarily want to study all GCSE choices post 16!

We offer a broad range of subjects at Crawshaw Academy, so you are indeed spoilt for choice, and we recognise that some of your decisions might be difficult as you may need to choose between two subjects you like equally well. So you will need to make mature decisions.

We are here to help you: your subject teachers will give you specific advice or your student support worker if you wish. . As this process is about your KS4 choices you will have the opportunity to speak with the **Senior Pastoral Leader (Mrs Dwight)**

Please take the time to discuss your options with your parents/carers and please do take the time to really read through all the information provided, reflect and think about your options in the run up to making your GCSE subject choices.

Best wishes,

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**Deputy Headteacher**



# The Pathways Process

## Key Stage 4 Choices

### HELPING YOU CHOOSE

Choices made now have important implications for your future employment or educational opportunities. It is extremely difficult for you to change your subject choice once the courses have started owing to constraints imposed by both timetable and maximum possible group sizes. This booklet has been produced to help you and your parents make a wise choice of subjects and courses. In addition, the following make up the full process:

1. A dedicated website page including a presentation to help explain the process to parents and student and information on each subject.
2. This Year's 9 into 10 Option choices booklet which gives information about the courses.
3. The Y9 Parents' Information Evening in January. (Details in the letter)
4. Leading up to the options submission deadline, subject teachers will also discuss with you the various courses on offer and answer questions you may have. Subject areas will be able to explain their courses in more detail to students.



## THE KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum consists of a compulsory 'core', in which every student must study the core subjects of English, Maths and Science – these are crucial subjects in which to gain GCSEs or other certificates. The core curriculum in these subjects will produce five GCSE grades (six for Separate Science students).

The 'core' also includes the **Applied Learning Specialism** subject that each student began at the start of Year 9. There are no changes to these subjects, and they do not form part of the options process.

### The compulsory subjects

Subject	Number of GCSEs
English (Language and Literature)	2
Mathematics	1
Science	2 or 3 depending on pathway
Core PE	None - subject is not examined
Curriculum for Life (PSHE/RSE)	None - subject is not examined



## The options

### subjects

In addition to the subjects listed above, students are required to study additional subjects to ensure their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Depending on the science pathway, students will have the following options:

#### Combined Science (most students) pathway

**Must choose at least one of the following subjects**

- GCSE Geography
- GCSE History

**and two further subjects from a list of GCSEs and approved qualifications**

#### Separate (Triple) Science pathway

**students may choose *two* further subjects from a list of GCSEs and approved qualifications**

### Home Languages:

Students who speak another language at home (e.g Arabic/ Urdu/ Polish) and wish to take a GCSE in this language should raise this with the Phase Leader. Any foreign language will qualify for the Ebacc. If agreed, the controlled assessments for an extra language will be taken in year 11 and the terminal exam taken at the end of year 11 with students' other GCSE subject exams.

Choosing your options is probably the most important decision you have made in your academic life so far. You should take time to decide, do your own research, and discuss your choices with your teachers, parents and friends.

When you eventually decide what you want it should be for the **right reasons**. You should never select a course because you think it will be 'easy', or because your friends are choosing it, or because you do or don't 'like' a particular teacher. Making mature, sensible choices now will set you up for success in the future.

**Have the confidence to choose what's best for you and no one else.**



## Specific questions to consider when making your choices:

- **Do you enjoy the subject?** When you are in lessons for this subject, or sitting down to do some homework, do you feel more enthused than you would do in another subject?
- **What level are you working at?** Think about your results in recent assessments: If your levels are too low at this stage then it's unlikely that you will get a good result at GCSE.
- **Does it fit with your talents and abilities?** Certain subjects (for example Music or PE) require a degree of natural talent. Have a close look at the individual subject pages in the additional subject booklet for more information.
- **What subjects do you want to study after GCSE?** If you think you may want to study a subject at A-Level then it makes sense to study it at GCSE. This would certainly be true of subjects where the A-Level syllabus builds directly on the GCSE (for example History, Geography, French, Spanish, Music, Drama or Art). Some A-Level subjects (for example Business, Economics or Politics) can be taken without having done a GCSE in them – you just need to have a broad range of good GCSE grades.
- **Are you considering a Russell Group university?** Taking either History or Geography (or both) and a modern language provides a solid foundation for progression onto A-Levels and university. **It is not essential** and more information on Ebacc is on the next page.
- **What are the demands of the course?** Different subjects have very different assessment approaches. Find out about how much coursework and controlled assessment is involved and **the amount of time you will have to put in outside of lessons**. GCSEs require a huge amount of independence and organisation – you need to know what you'll have to put in to each course to be successful.



## Key stage 4 pathways

- No one is expecting you to know right now exactly what you want to study Post 16, A-Level or, university. You might have an idea of the subjects you'll choose, but this idea doesn't have to be finalised for a long time.
- The key is to pick a broad, balanced range of courses that develop different skills, provide variety, and keep your options open for Post-16 study e.g. A-Level and university.
- Different options subjects develop different skills. History and Geography will increase your knowledge and understanding of the peoples of the world, and develop your analytical and critical thinking skills.
- Art, Music, and Drama contain analysis too, but are also practical, creative subjects which develop completely different skills set.
- You should be aware that university places depend on strong GCSE and A Level results.
- Some universities also encourage applicants to have studied a modern language at GCSE, and either History or Geography (or both). It is not strictly essential, but research shows that applicants with these qualifications do better. The section below on EBacc explains this in more detail.
- It is vital that students and parents understand that all students must now attain at least a grade 4 in both English and Maths. For those who do not achieve this at the end of Year 11; they will be expected to continue studying these subjects alongside their post-16 course/pathway.



## Ebacc

- The Ebacc – or English Baccalaureate – is not actually a qualification in itself. You can't 'get an Ebacc'. Instead it is a collection of core academic subjects - English, mathematics, science, history or geography, and a language – that is recognised by many universities and sixth forms as providing a solid foundation for future academic study.
- The Ebacc subjects have been chosen because research has shown they have advantages in terms developing cognitive skills and an understanding of the world around us. For example, having a practical understanding of French or Spanish will help you to become a global citizen, and is something which is valued by employers. History and geography develop important critical thinking and analytical skills. The Ebacc subjects have been shown to help with entrance into university.
- For students to achieve the English Baccalaureate, they should choose at least one Humanities subject and a language.
- We believe it is vital that students make choices that will allow them to achieve their personal best. A broad and balanced curriculum will provide our students with a secure base from which to progress. We offer a wide range of highly successful GCSE subjects which allow students to personalise their curriculum. The English Baccalaureate combination is appropriate for many of our students, but not all.



## **Types of qualifications and assessment (GCSE, Vocational, CNAT or other 'high value' qualifications)**

- All the courses that will be delivered in the List B box must be approved and recognised by the government. This means that they will all be either worth 1 GCSE or equivalent. However, Vocational and other non-GCSE courses have a different type of assessment to GCSEs. GCSEs will usually have a heavy examination content (many will be 100% exam based) whilst some will have NEAs (Non-Examined Assessment) as a percentage of the overall grade (see individual subject information). Vocational and other non-GCSE courses will have a much higher portfolio percentage. Although these will have externally assessed examinations, these will be of a lower percentage than GCSEs. Alongside the content of the course, you should consider how the nature of assessment within the course will best match your chances of success.
- The nature of learning styles within subjects will also differ. Some of the optional subjects fall into the Creative and Practical category – these include the Art and Design qualifications and Drama. Others are much more academic in focus – these include geography, history and languages.
- Finally, some of the specialist subjects on offer at Key Stage 4 have not been delivered as core subjects during years 7, 8 and 9. You should ensure that you talk to these department areas so that you fully understand the content and requirements of the course before you opt for it. These include – Business and ICT (although these lead on from Business and Computing in Year 9), Health and Social care and Media Studies.



## THE CHOICES OPTION FORM

**The online form is open from Friday 23rd January to Monday 2nd February (noon)**

- Every effort will be made to give you your mix of choices, but additional preferences need to be indicated for a situation where a course cannot run because of low numbers, is oversubscribed, or where the chosen combination cannot be timetabled. Your preferences will be collected via MS FORMS. The Form will take you through the relevant steps. A summary of these is below.
- You are, therefore, asked to follow these steps:

### **SUBJECT LIST A - for Combined Science pathway students only**

- Please indicate a 1st PREFERENCE and a 2nd PREFERENCE.

### **SUBJECT LIST B - for ALL students**

- From the entire list, please indicate a single 1st PREFERENCE, a single 2nd PREFERENCE, a single 3rd PREFERENCE, a single 4th PREFERENCE and a single 5th PREFERENCE. If a subject is NOT chosen as one of these preferences, then please indicate this on the form.
- You can include the SECOND preference from List A (if appropriate) as part of these choices. Remember to consider how appropriate these choices are and that for some subjects, Faculty Leaders will decide on this.
- Please ensure that the subjects you have indicated preferences for do not clash with the Applied Learning Specialism you are currently studying and will be continuing with through to Year 11 (details are indicated in the Faculty notes pages of this booklet).
- **DO NOT SELECT YOUR CURRENT APPLIED LEARNING SPECIALISM COURSE AS AN OPTION ON THE FORM**

### **OPTIONAL comments section**

- If you have a strong reason for requesting a 1st preference course, please make this clear on your application form explaining why.
- Should you wish to make any further comment then there is space also for you to do so on the form before you submit.



## ADDITIONAL NEEDS

For students with additional needs please do discuss the options process with a member of the Pastoral or SEND team before submitting the form. There may be a follow up communication with individuals later in the process.

**Remember the advice given in this booklet.**

- opt for a broad and balanced curriculum, with a choice of subjects and assessment types that will allow you to succeed.
- you already have one Applied Learning qualification that you are studying and will continue through to Year 11.

***Be assured we will do everything we can to facilitate your main preferences; however, we will move to later preferences where this is not possible.***