



A Guide to Making Post-16 Subject Choices

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A Guide to Making Post-16 Option Choices

Routes followed by our students following Post 16 education study include:

- University
- Gap Year
- Art foundation courses
- Employment
- RAF, Army, Navy, Police
- Apprenticeships

Whichever pathway you will take you need to spend time on researching it to ensure you are fully aware of the entry requirements and the progression available.

Careers advice and how to research

This is very important, as some students reach the end of their A Levels only to discover they haven't done the correct subjects for what they want to study at university. Ensure that when you are choosing your options you have also thought about what you want to do Post 18. If you are not sure then speak to Miss Tyler or the Sixth Form Team who will be able to advise you on courses that will enable entry into most sectors.

- The website www.ucas.co.uk will give details of all university courses and the subjects that are necessary or desirable.
- Look out for The Times' University Guide, The Guardian University Guide and Virgin's Alternative University Guide.
- Look on the websites of individual universities to find out which courses they offer that spark your interest. The websites will also give the subject specific requirements for the course and the grades required for entry to the course.
- <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/> for information on subject choices – Russell Group Universities.

Other useful websites include:

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

Who to ask for advice?

- All students will have one to one Careers guidance during Year 11.
- Do not hesitate to approach the Careers Lead, Miss Tyler for further support and guidance. She will be able to advise on relevant work experience, apprenticeships and future carer pathways.
- Students should discuss ideas with their tutor.
- Students should approach their subject teachers if they are considering selecting a subject they are already studying. They should ask for further specific details about the course and their suitability for a particular career route.
- Talk to current Sixth Form students to find out about the subjects you are considering studying.
- All students will be given advice regularly through careers tutor activities.

Factors you SHOULD consider when choosing your Post-16 subjects

When making choices you should consider the following:

- Natural ability
- Subjects that you enjoy
- Subjects that might be a specific requirement for a particular course at university or career/employment
- Subjects that suit your own learning styles
- The amount of coursework involved
- Balance of workload
- Level of difficulty of a subject
- Subjects which complement each other

Natural Ability / Personal Strengths and Skills

If you have a particular talent or natural ability in a subject you are more likely to be successful and feel confident both in class and during independent study. It makes sense to select subjects in which you are making good progress and feel confident. Talk to your subject teachers about your strengths and weaknesses to assess your potential, allowing you to make more informed decisions about which A Levels you choose.

Remember one of the key aims of Post 16 study is to achieve the best grades possible and so ensure a place in Higher Education or employment.

Enjoyment

It's important to choose subjects you enjoy doing. Even if you are good at a certain subject, you might not actually enjoy it all that much. There's no point going through Post 16 education and never looking forward to lessons because you don't like them. This in turn may make you feel you can't cope with the work and make you feel stressed in the long-term.

If you look forward to lessons, chances are you will approach them confidently and do well in them.

Genuine interest in a subject

One of the greatest causes of lack of knowledge is lack of interest. You are more likely to be successful if you select the subjects you genuinely enjoy studying. If a subject is a chore to you now it is possible it will continue to be so in Post 16 education.

Subjects that suit your learning style

- Find out about Post 16 education courses by talking to alumni students and teachers. Ask about the style of lessons.
- Will you be involved in group activities, independent learning, lectures, writing notes, discussion, presentations, use of ICT?
- If you know that writing essays and meeting deadlines is not your strength, then think carefully before choosing a course that has lots of essays.
- Find out how much coursework is involved. If coursework is one of your strengths, you should try to include subjects that involve coursework.

Workload

- A good reason to read through the specifications of each subject you are considering is to check how they are assessed.
- You can find the specifications on the examination board websites.
- How much coursework is there? How many tests/exams are there? Are there any practical assessments? It's probably not wise to take all subjects where most of the assessment is coursework.
- If possible, try to balance your subject combinations so your work will be spread over equal amounts of coursework, exams and practical tests.

Are you considering a new subject you have not studied before? If so, do your research carefully

- Try to talk to students who are already on the course, and the teacher(s) that run it.
- Some students find that they take these courses without looking into them properly first, and are then disappointed when they find it's not what they were expecting.
- Find out what exam board the department uses for these subjects, and download the specification from their website to read more about what it involves.

Here are some factors which should NOT influence your decisions when choosing Post-16 subjects

Friends – Although you may not want to be on your own in a classroom with a group of students you don't know, it's important to realise that choosing subjects just because your friends are doing them is not a way of deciding what to do. You will either end up bored because you have no interest in the subject, or lessons will be just another time to socialise with your friends, and you will fall behind with the work.

Favourite Teachers – Do not choose a subject just because your favourite teacher teaches it. Chances are they might not teach it to your particular class in the Sixth Form.

Teacher Expectations – Furthermore, don't pick a subject because your subject teacher expects you to take it and you feel you should please them. They may be disappointed when you tell them you're not doing their subject, but it's more important you pick the right combination of subjects than trying to avoid hurting the feelings of your teachers.

New Subjects – Do not choose a subject just because it is new, sounds interesting but in fact you know nothing about it. Fully research and take the time to find out if it is a suitable subject for you.

Subjects you might need for specific university courses

If you think you probably want to go to university but don't know what you want to study yet? You can keep your options wide open when choosing your A Levels by selecting a mix of the most commonly asked-for subjects in university entry requirements.

Taking certain A Levels, will open up more university course options.

Take your pick from:

- English Literature
- History
- Modern languages – French, German, Spanish
- Geography
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Mathematics and Further Mathematics
- Physics

If you have a talent for Art, Design, Technology or Music and think it could be an avenue you might pursue, taking the relevant A Levels will help that to happen.

Some university courses have very specific subject requirements.

This is particularly relevant to Science related degrees. Other university courses are less specific. You should research using the websites www.ucas.com

Below are a few examples of specific subject requirements for some degree courses.

- Architecture – Many courses prefer an Art or Design or Technology course. All require a portfolio. Some require or prefer Mathematics and / or Physics.
- English - if you are considering applying to do an English degree at a high ranking university you should ideally take English Literature, but you should check before making your choice.
- Modern Languages – At least one language, but two are sometimes preferred.
- Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine - Chemistry A level is a requirement for all Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine courses. So if you wish to study these courses at university you will have to study Chemistry to A level. Biology is a requirement, and very useful, for a number of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine courses.

- Physiotherapy - Biology is a requirement for all Physiotherapy courses.
- Physics - Mathematics is a requirement for the majority of Physics courses at university.
- Chemistry or Pharmacy - Chemistry is required plus one from Biology, Physics or Mathematics.
- Sports Science - Useful subjects to complement Sports Science are Business Studies, Human Biology or Psychology.
- Engineering - If you are considering Engineering at university you could include Mathematics and / or Physics or Engineering Design A level. If you are a talented mathematician, you could also consider Further Mathematics.
- Economics - If you are considering studying Economics at university you should take Mathematics. Business or Economics is useful but not essential. You could also broaden your career options by choosing to study a Modern Foreign Language.
- Primary Education - At least one from Art, Biology, Chemistry, Design and Technology, English, French, Geography, German, History, ICT, Mathematics, Music, Physics, Physical Education, Philosophy and Ethics, Spanish.

What happens next?

Make a provisional selection of subjects and submit an application by to either Skegness Academy Sixth Form, A local College or an Apprenticeship

- Details of all Skegness Academy Sixth Form courses will be on the website so that students and parents can access this information at any time.
- Individual student interviews with members of the Sixth Form Pastoral team to help decide the most appropriate subjects for their ability and future career needs.
- Each interview is approximately 15 minutes.
- All students are interviewed by their choice of destination, and full details recorded and kept in files.
- After GCSE results are known, students can make a confirmed choice at their chosen Post 16 education institution.