

Advice and Guidance for your Sixth Form Option Choices

We look forward to you coming into Sixth Form and want you to enjoy the subjects you choose. Sixth Form is a time to concentrate on what you want to do – to research, learn and become expert in a few subjects.

You might just be choosing subjects because they are your favourites. This is often a good thing to do. But you may also have other goals in mind – a subject to study at university, a long term career, an apprenticeship at 18. On the otherhand you might not be sure of any of this, but you might be wondering what could keep your options open.

There are certain points you might want to consider, and there are others you might want to go away and research more. Remember that there are lots of teachers to talk to, and you can talk to Phil Nelson, the careers adviser too.

We will spend time with each of you individually, in the Guidance Discussions in February and March, Have a look at the different sections below.

I have a fairly clear idea of what subject I want to do after Sixth Form (at Degree Level or for a career)

Requirements?: It is possible that Universities or Careers may *require certain A Levels*: Search for the course on the UCAS website. Use their 'Course Search Facility'. When you find a course you like, click on 'Entry Requirements', then click on 'A Levels' or BTECs as appropriate. This will show you if the course needs you to have particular A Levels. (Click on this link: <http://searchucas.com/>)

Preferred Subjects: Some universities say that although they do not require particular A Levels, they might prefer it if students have some subjects rather than others. You can have a look at this through the *Russell Group* guidance called: 'Informed Choices' (you can quickly find this by Googling for it, or click on the following link. Russell Group universities tend to be the most competitive to get into. (However do read the health warning about 'Facilitating Subjects below').
<http://russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5457/informed-choices-2016.pdf>

Clusters of subjects: Also have a look at the advice on clusters of subjects below.

I don't know what I want to do after Sixth Form: I want to study what I enjoy and/or I want to keep my options open

Clusters of Subjects: It might be that having certain clusters of subjects is sensible. Here are some limited examples (there are more!):

- studying English Literature, History, Philosophy and Sociology might help your essay writing
- studying Film Studies, Theatre Studies and English Literature or English Language might help your observation and analysis of texts, plays and films
- studying the sciences and maths support each other (remember to include Geology as a Science, which can benefit from Chemistry and Physics) and they can play lead to Engineering, amongst many other degrees and careers

- Engineering, Product Design, and Art can help those interested in broader design careers in the future.
- Geography and Geology complement each other, as do Biology and Geography
- French, German, Spanish and English Language can give insights into each other on the language side, and they can also complement History, Literature, Film Studies and Sociology on the cultural side
- The attention to detail and concentration required for Music can flexibly help many subjects (like Maths, Languages and so on).

Sometimes students say 'If I studied these three (for example History, English Literature and Philosophy) then I would have too many essay based subjects' so I have gone for variety. But in fact as you become better at essay writing in each subject your fluency might well improve in all of them.

Studying subjects which do not tend to connect much, might actually become less helpful – for example studying English Literature, Physics and Biology. For university level, Physics tends to require Maths, Biology often requires Chemistry and English Literature, whilst not having other essentials, might well benefit from something like History or Theatre Studies.

Of course if you really want to study courses that are less 'linked together' then we are not here to stop you! You may well be someone who will thrive on the difference. We just want you to have thought it through first.

Facilitating Subjects at Russell Group Universities

The link mentioned above <http://russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5457/informed-choices-2016.pdf> sets out what the Russell Group universities call Facilitating Subjects. These particular universities recommend that certain subjects can act as doorways into quite a wide variety of degree subjects, and so they say that if you are unsure, it is good to be studying two of these subjects.

However our experience is that most of the time Russell Group universities are keen for you to have three good A Levels that you are successful in, rather than needing certain subjects which you are less keen on. Speakers from those universities have often backed this up when talking to us.

In addition there are many good universities which are not part of the Russell Group, and who have great courses, often with links to industry. These courses will often simply be keen for you to have three A Levels or a BTEC and two A Levels, and not mind what they are.

Oxbridge

If you are interested in applying to Oxbridge then you should talk to us about the subjects you are thinking about, and you will find some guidance on the university websites. Some subjects will have particular requirements, for example if you are keen on Geology and want to study Earth Sciences you will also need Chemistry. There will be a variety of other recommendations and requirements, and you should check the specific course. The following Oxford table, gives some 'Required and Recommended' subjects for particular courses:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/entrance-requirements/table-entrance-requirements?wssl=1>

I have a few ideas for possible degrees or careers in the future and I want to know if some A Levels might be more useful for them

The following link, which sets out courses and what A levels might link to them, could help you here:

This is an example of what the pages look like is:

Architecture

ESSENTIAL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Some courses say they want an arts/science mix. Some may require Art.

USEFUL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Art, Mathematics, Design Technology and Physics. AGCE or National Art and Design may also be useful at some universities. Do note that a portfolio of drawings and ideas may be asked for.

Art and Design

ESSENTIAL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Art or Design Technology including AGCE/National (to give you the portfolio to get onto an Art Foundation Course, though sometimes AGCE/National Art and Design applicants go straight onto a degree).

USEFUL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Design Technology, Art & Design. Do note that most entrants onto Art and Design degrees will have done a one-year Art Foundation Course after completing Year 13.

Biochemistry

ESSENTIAL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Always Chemistry and some universities will say you must have Biology as well, while some will say Chemistry plus one from Mathematics/ Physics/ Biology. Doing Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics or Physics will keep all Biochemistry courses open to you.

USEFUL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Biology, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Physics, Computing/ Computer Science.

Biology

ESSENTIAL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Biology, usually Chemistry. A few universities specify two sciences.

USEFUL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Mathematics or Physics, Computing/Computer Science.

Biomedical Sciences (including Medical Science)

ESSENTIAL ADVANCED LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS