

Frequently Asked Questions - The Options Process

Below are some of the most frequently asked questions about the options process. If you have a question which you cannot find an answer for please contact us via email: options@marlborough.herts.sch.uk and we will be happy to help.

As always, we will do our best to support your son/daughter through this exciting process.

Do all students study English, Maths and Science?

Yes, all students study the core subjects of English Literature and Language, Maths and Science along with PE, PSHCEE/RSE/Careers and Philosophy and Ethics.

What is the EBacc and what is its purpose?

EBacc stands for English Baccalaureate. It is not an additional qualification but is a suite of courses that are studied to GCSE and must include English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, History or Geography and a language. Some universities view the English Baccalaureate as favourable and it may therefore help students when applying to the Russell group of universities in particular.

Will some students study triple science?

Yes, we will make the decision towards the end of Year 9. Students will be tracked and progress monitored to ensure that the students are on the correct pathway to maximise their potential.

How many GCSEs will my son or daughter study?

The vast majority of students will study between 9 or 10 GCSEs (or equivalent qualifications). They will be awarded GCSEs in the core subjects - English Language, English Literature, Maths, Science (2 or 3 GCSEs) – in addition to which will be the qualifications they will be awarded in their option subjects.

Does my son/daughter have to take a language?

The majority of students will be expected to study either French or Spanish (if studied at Key Stage 3) unless there is a good reason why they should not. Language qualifications are increasingly important in today's global community and they are valued by universities and employers. Please talk to your son/daughter's language teacher if you would like more information about them studying a language course.



What if my child speaks a second language?

If your child has a home language other than English or has lived in another country and become proficient in another language, it may be possible to enter them for a GCSE in this. Students are usually entered in Year 10. The majority of these examinations are assessed in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, so it is essential that your child can read and write the language. If you would like any more information please contact [Mr Henshall](#), Head of the Modern Foreign Languages Faculty.

What is a Cambridge National qualification?

These are broad and engaging level 1 and level 2 qualifications that equip students with applied knowledge and associated practical skills. Similar to a BTEC qualification, they will have a coursework element to them.

Are BTECs and Cambridge Nationals worth the same as GCSE subjects?

All subjects are worth the same: one GCSE.

If I do BTEC subjects, or a Cambridge National qualification, can I still get into Marlborough Sixth Form?

Yes, as long as you meet the post 16 entrance requirements. These need to include English and Mathematics.

Can I do a mixture of BTEC, Cambridge National and GCSE subjects?

Yes, that is absolutely fine.

What are Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications?

All qualifications are approved and fit into the National Qualifications Framework. Each qualification is allocated a level:

- Level 1 courses offer a qualification equivalent to GCSE grades 4-1 (old D – G).
- Level 2 courses offer a qualification equivalent to GCSE grades 9-5 (old A* – C).

What happens if my son/daughter's preferred combination of Option Subjects does not fit into the timetable?

We will try and build our timetable around students' options choices. Where it isn't possible to allocate a student to all of their preferred choices, we will speak to the student and contact home to ask about using their reserve choice or, if this does not fit, a different option subject.



Frequently Asked Questions from Students:

Which subjects should I choose?

The subjects that are best for you depend on who you are and where you want to go. Think about your strengths and interests. Which subjects are you doing best in? Which subjects do you find most interesting? Think about which career might be right for you and which subject you might like to study at university. You are more likely to do well in a subject that you are achieving well in or that you enjoy.

Much will change between now and age 18 so it's a good idea to follow a range of qualifications.

Should I choose a subject because I like the teacher?

It's a tricky one, because a great teacher can inspire you to do your best in a subject. However, how much you like your teacher should not be one of the key factors when choosing your options. That inspirational teacher might not teach you in Year 9.

Should I choose a subject because my friends are doing it?

No, doing different options shouldn't have any effect on your friendships – it will just mean you have lots to talk about when you're together at other times. Plus, there's a chance you'll make additional new friends in the subject you choose, too.

Whose advice should I listen to when choosing options?

Teachers at school are really well-placed to offer you advice and support; do talk to your teachers if you have any questions about your options and how it all works.

Once I have submitted my options form, am I guaranteed to study those subjects?

No. Sometimes it is not possible to timetable particular combinations of subjects. Sometimes subjects may be undersubscribed and it will not be viable to run as many teaching groups as we would like. We obviously try to limit the impact of such changes. In such cases, we will make use of reserve choices if necessary (we will speak to you first before we do this), where this isn't possible, we will speak to you and your parents/carers about what options are available.

If you have any further questions please speak to your form tutor or subject teachers who will be happy to help. Alternatively email options@marlborough.herts.sch.uk and a member of staff will get back to you to help with your query.

