

Frequently Asked Questions about GCSE Options

1. How many GCSEs will I study?

The vast majority of students will study 9 GCSEs. They will be awarded seven GCSEs in English Language, English Literature, maths, science (2 GCSEs), and two of history or geography, a modern foreign language and for students with an aptitude for it, triple science (an extra GCSE in addition to the two science GCSEs). They will then supplement this with the 2 GCSEs they will be awarded in their option subjects. Due to the tailored options for each student some may study for 8 GCSEs.

2. Will my son or daughter have a better chance of applying to the 'top' universities if they study additional GCSE subjects out of school?

No, universities are far more interested in the quality of qualifications achieved than the quantity. Most of our students will study the English Baccalaureate suite of qualifications, though, which keeps The EBacc is made up of the subjects, which are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors.

3. Do two of my GCSEs have to be a modern foreign language and geography or history?

An increasing number of students nationally are now taking the subjects, which make up the full English Baccalaureate. Students who are at a suitable ability level will be required to take options, which will lead to them gaining this. The subjects required are English, maths, two science subjects, history or geography and a modern foreign language. All subjects must be achieved at grade 5 or above.

Students with an aptitude for science may be able to choose triple science in place of history, geography or a language.

4. What do I do if my preferred combination of option subjects does not fit into the option blocks?

We will try and build the option blocks, and our timetable, around students' options choices. Where it isn't possible to allocate a student to all of their preferred choices, we will make use of their reserve choices. Where this isn't possible, we will contact the student.

5. 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. Where this isn't possible, we will contact the student.

6. Do I have to study separate sciences if I want to be able to study science A-levels in the Sixth Form?

No, but it is strongly encouraged. It is not a requirement at TSWA to study GCSE triple science (separate biology, chemistry and physics) to take those subjects at A-level, but triple sciences provides a deeper foundation for A-level study.

7. 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 or college. You don't have to have your future mapped out, but start thinking about the future. 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 GCSE courses.

8. What is the deadline for filling in the Options' Form?

Options' forms must be completed by Monday 19th February.

9. When will I find out what subjects I've been allocated?

May 2024, after the school timetable has been completed and our offer has been finalised

10. Why can't I study two of art, graphic communication and textiles?

These courses are all the same GCSE with a different specialism; either fine art, graphics or textiles so you may only study one of them at TSWA. These courses may be able to be picked up at A-level without studying the GCSE. This is at the discretion of the Subject Leader for DT & Art.

11. Do all students have the opportunity to study triple science?

The separate or triple science course is aimed at students who are academically able and have a passion for science. Students will have the opportunity to select triple science as one of their options if we feel they have shown the ability, attitude and attainment during year 9.