

Frequently Asked Questions about GCSE Options

1. How many GCSEs will my son or daughter study?

The vast majority of students will study 9 GCSEs. They will be awarded five GCSEs in the core subjects - English Language, English Literature, Maths, Science (2 GCSEs)- and they will then supplement that with the 4 GCSEs they will be awarded in their 4 option subjects.

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. Also, most universities currently consider AS results to be a more accurate predictor of ability to study a University course.

3. Does one of my option choices have to be a Modern Foreign Language, Geography or History?

Yes, all students must choose at least one Ebacc option from the following list: a Modern Foreign Language, Geography or History.

4. Do I have to study both a Modern Foreign Language and Geography or History?

We encourage students to study both a Modern Foreign Language and Geography or History to meet the criteria for the English Baccalaureate, but it is not compulsory. The government has announced its intention that all pupils who start year 7 in September 2015 should meet the criteria for the English Baccalaureate when they reach their GCSEs in 2020.

5. 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 four of their preferred choices, we will make use of their reserve choices. Where this isn't possible, we will contact home and re-interview the student.

6. 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 home and re-interview the student.

7. Do I have to use one of my options 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 INA to study GCSE Separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) to study those subjects at A-level, but Separate Sciences provides a deeper foundation for A-level study.

8. 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 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. Choosing a language, a humanities subject and two other subjects gives you a range of types of GCSE subjects and keeps your options open for A-level and/ or further study.

9. Why don't you offer GCSE Media Studies or GCSE Business Studies?

We have chosen to focus on a range of rigorous, academic GCSEs that will prepare students for a wide range of A-level courses and further study pathways.

Media Studies and Business Studies can be picked up at A-level with no need to have studied the subject at GCSE. You don't need to study Media Studies at GCSE or A-level to pursue a media-related degree course such as journalism, media studies, PR or communications. You don't need to study Business at GCSE or A-level to pursue a business-related degree course.

10. What is the deadline for return of Options Forms?

Options Forms must be handed in at your Options Interview. All Options Interviews should be completed by Thursday 11th February 2016.

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

June 2015, after the school timetable has been completed and our offer has been finalised.