



Responses to Frequently Asked Questions at our curriculum information evening on 27th January

These notes summarise the questions asked at the recent Year 9 curriculum information evening in relation to the Year 10/11 curriculum programme and the GCSE options process.

1. What will happen if too many students opt for same optional subjects? How will places be allocated?

Normally the vast majority of students are able to do the subjects that they choose. Where this is not possible we would plan the timetable so that the maximum number of students are able to take their preferred choices. Where there is more than one way of achieving this, places will be allocated at random.

2. Do you put students into sets and in which subjects?

Currently students are only set in Science and Maths in years 10 and 11. We normally allocate the sets at the end of year 9 after looking carefully at students' attainment in these subject areas.

3. How do you determine which children take triple science and which children take combined science?

All students begin year 9 studying biology, chemistry and physics as separate GCSE subjects and continue to do so until January in year 11. At that point we review students' progress and give a number of students the opportunity to be entered for combined science GCSE (which leads to 2 GCSE qualifications) instead of the three separate science subjects (which is what we call 'Triple Science').

4. If French has been allocated in Year 9, can the student take German for GCSE?

We **strongly advise** students to choose the language for GCSE they are currently studying in year 9. Only in exceptional circumstances would we allow a student currently studying French to take German for GCSE and vice versa. Any student wishing to do so would be assessed in the alternative language to ensure that they have a good foundation in order to take it for GCSE and be successful. This also applies to students who wish to take a French or German language as one of their three additional options.

5. Business Studies hasn't been taught in Year 9. How will students know if they will enjoy studying it for GCSE?

Students will receive a presentation on the Business Studies GCSE course from Mr Pascall (the Subject Leader) during the options process and are welcome to contact him directly via the main school email address should they have further questions. Our experience is that students in year 9 are able to make an informed decision as to whether to study GCSE Business Studies from year 10 without having studied it in year 9.

6. *How are students selected for the alternative pathway?*

We recommend students opt for the alternative pathway where:

- they have been identified by either the maths or English subject leaders as a student who would benefit from additional specialist teaching in one or both of these core subjects as they work towards their GCSE courses and;
- they are currently 'approaching expectations' in a significant number of subject areas.

We also take into account students' CAT scores and whether they have a particular personal, health or educational need which would suggest they would benefit from the alternative pathway.

7. *Will the alternative pathway be an hindrance to their university admission?*

No. Students on the alternative pathway will still be studying 9 subjects at GCSE and are may well secure higher overall grades than they would have done taking an additional subject.

8. *Will work experience be linked to the optional GCSE subjects taken?*

We encourage students to arrange their own work experience opportunities during the long holidays. We do promote and publicise a range of opportunities to students and provide support and guidance as part of our careers provision.

9. *Will the options selection be completed via the sims app or will we being emailed a pdf document at some stage prior to mentoring week?*

Students will be emailed an options form prior to mentoring week. We ask students to submit the form to indicate their choices by the 8th March and parents to use the ParentApp to enter option choices. We will then cross check the submissions for accuracy.

10. *If we have any other questions regarding GCSE outside this meeting who do we contact?*

Please direct subject specific enquires to the relevant subject leader using the school@lgs.slough.sch.uk email address and general enquiries to Mr Harding using the same email address.