



## Post-16 choices – Guide for Parents/Carers

Dear Parents/Carers,

To support you and your student in making well-informed choices on their post-16 progression, we have put together the following guide outlining appropriate subject, qualification, and sixth form/college selection. Now that Year 11 students have completed their final set of APs in the lead up to their public examinations, all students will now have a clear understanding of their academic standing – this must inform their post-16 subject and qualification choices to ensure all students are progressing onto the right pathway for them.

All 16-year-olds must be in full time further education until they are 18, which includes full time education (e.g. A levels, T levels, vocational subjects) or an apprenticeship that combines work and study. Young people under the age of 18 cannot work full-time without some training involved.

### Entry requirements and post-16 progression

Post-16 qualifications will use entry requirements to ensure young people are choosing the correct course for them, because there are a range of different qualifications at post-16, that are assessed in different ways. Some qualifications will have higher entry requirements at GCSE – this is not because the qualification is “better”, instead it means that to be successful on that course, a student must have a skills set that matches how the qualification is assessed. Students’ GCSE grades will be used after GCSE results day to confirm if they have met those entry requirements and can progress onto their chosen qualification. The table on the next page, “Post-16 Options”, provides a guide to the progression routes available to students who achieve certain GCSE results.

Now that your student has received their AP results, it is important to compare their current grades to the progression routes below, and the specific entry requirements for the sixth forms/colleges they have applied for, to ensure they are on track to meet these entry requirements. If a student is not quite meeting entry requirements at this stage, students must apply for a back-up option(s). For example, if a student is not currently meeting the entry requirements for an A level qualification, then they must apply for a back-up vocational course in a subject area of interest to them.



Students can apply for as many courses/sixth forms/colleges as they would like, and they are not tied into any one application. It is better to have more options at this stage, rather than fewer – on GCSE Results Day, students can make their final decision once they receive their exam results and enroll with the sixth form/college where they meet entry requirements.

### Post-16 Options

<b>If I achieve the following GCSEs...</b>	<b>I can move onto level...</b>	<b>and consider these options...</b>	<b>and apply for...</b>
5 GCSEs, grade 5+ inc. English Language and Maths at a grade 4 and above*	3	A levels	3 or 4 subjects
5 GCSEs, grade 4+ inc. English and Maths at a grade 4 and above	3	T Levels	1 subject
5 GCSEs, grade 4+ inc. English and Maths at a grade 3*	3	Vocational courses	1 to 3 subject courses
4 GCSEs, grade 3+ inc. English at a grade 3 and Maths at a grade 2/English at a grade 2 and Maths at a grade 1	2/1	Vocational courses	1 subject
2 GCSEs, grade 4+/2 GCSEs grade 3+	3/2	Apprenticeships	Apply for apprenticeship vacancies
What if I get grades below 2?	Entry-level 1&2	Vocational courses/Functional skills courses	1 subject course

\*You will need to check the entry requirements carefully for each sixth form, college or employer you have applied for, because they will have different entry requirements for their A levels, vocational courses and apprenticeships.



## Choosing your post-16 subject(s)

It is important that students choose appropriate subjects at post-16, and that they understand what the subject(s) will teach them, both in terms of knowledge and skills. If you have not already discussed your student's post-16 subject choices with them, we advise that you go through the below questions to ensure they are confident in their selection:

1. Why have you chosen the subject(s)?
2. What do you know about the subject(s)?
3. What are the key skills you will develop while studying the subject(s)?
4. Is the subject(s) a requirement for your preferred post-18 pathway (i.e. university or apprenticeship)?
5. Do you know the career pathways that are linked to the subject(s)?
6. Have you been doing any independent research related to the subject(s) to prepare for academic/vocational study next year?

It is important to remember that no qualification is better than the other – both 3 A levels (academic) and a Level 3 Extended Diploma (vocational) will give you access to university, higher apprenticeship and employment. Outcomes are more important than qualification type, so students should always aim to achieve strong results in their post-16 qualifications. If this means that a student would get better results doing a level 3 vocational course instead of A levels, then that student should choose the level 3 vocational course.

### *Choosing Academic Subjects*

When you are choosing your A level subjects, students must consider the following points:

- Subjects should represent your **academic strength**, and they should be ones you enjoy. You are much more likely to be successful in a subject in which you scored highly at GCSE.
- Subjects should form a solid and relevant academic foundation for the course you want to study at university, or employment sector
- Selective universities often require applicants to have qualifications in certain subjects or combination of subjects



If you are considering university as your post-18 pathway, then you likely fall into one of the below two categories:

1. *I know the course I want to study at university.*
2. *I don't know what I want to study at university.*

#### **For students who know the course they want to study:**

Find the course you are interested in (you can use UCAS to search for courses) and look at their entry requirements, focusing on both subject and grade requirements. If the course requires a subject that you are not achieving highly in at GCSE, you will need to consider alternative courses that have different subject requirements. It is essential that you choose subjects in which you are currently performing well; most universities will specify minimum entry requirements and, if you do not meet these at A Level, you will not be successful in securing a place. If your strongest subjects do align with those required for your chosen course, please refer to the guidance below regarding specific degree entry criteria.

#### **For students who don't know what they want to study:**

When a student is unsure about what they want to study in the future, they often fall into the trap of choosing a range of subjects, in different academic areas, thinking this will give them more options. This will limit their application options at university, and students may not be able to access certain university courses because their academic subjects do not provide a coherent and relevant academic foundation for further study. If a student finds themselves in this position, then they should decide an area of study (humanities vs sciences) to focus on and choose subjects they perform strongly in and go well together.

#### **Specific STEM degree entry criteria for competitive universities**

If you have done very well at GCSE, you may want to apply to competitive university courses. Most humanities degrees only require the subject that you will study, but many science and maths degrees require specific A Levels.

**Economics:** Some universities treat Economics as a science, and these will require Maths. However, many don't, for example Leicester, Exeter (Business Economics), Royal Holloway, and Leeds. Cambridge and LSE require both Maths and Further Maths, and Warwick advise students to take Maths, Economics and Further Maths. Further Maths is a difficult A Level and students



are unlikely to be successful in it without an 8 or 9 in GCSE Maths; if you are not likely to achieve this, you should only consider universities for which Further Maths is not required.

**Physics and Engineering:** Almost all Physics and Engineering degrees require Maths and Physics. Imperial, Cambridge, Oxford, and Bath all label Further Maths either required or desirable although, as above, you should only consider these universities if you have done extremely well in your Maths GCSE.

**Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary Science:** Most universities require two of Maths, Biology, and Chemistry. Some medical schools do not accept Further Maths as a third subject. Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary Science are extremely competitive degrees, and you are only likely to be eligible for a place if you have scored very highly in Science and Maths GCSEs. If you do not have the required GCSE grades, you should consider alternative healthcare pathways.

**Computer Science:** Very few universities require Computer Science A Level for a Computer Science degree, but most require Maths. The following universities either require Further Maths, or it places students at an advantage: Durham, Imperial, Bath, Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, Warwick, Manchester, St Andrews.

**It is essential you choose A Level subjects in which you are likely to attain high grades. The universities listed above all have very high minimum grade requirements, and you are very unlikely to meet these in subjects you have not scored highly in at GCSE.**

### *Choosing vocational subjects*

Vocational options, such as BTECs, Cambridge Nationals, T levels and apprenticeships offer practical, industry-based training for students. These qualifications often relate to specific job roles or sectors, but they will also give students the option of continuing into university, if they should choose to do so. Vocational qualifications will allow students to choose **one subject area** to study across a 2-year course. Students should choose their vocational course based on their academic strengths at GCSE, and their interests in terms of future career aspirations.

### *Choosing your sixth form/college provider*

When you are choosing a sixth form or college provider, you should look for the following criteria:

1. Outcomes: what are the provider's overall results? What about in the subjects you want to study?



2. Subjects: do they offer the subjects you want to study?
3. Careers and university applications: what careers advice is available to students? What support is provided to support university or competitive careers applications?
4. Destinations: where do the students go to university, or what career paths do they take?
5. Pastoral support: what support is available to you day to day? What about if you are struggling academically?
6. Co-curricular and extra-curricular: what academic opportunities are available to students? Will you be stretched and challenged academically? What about extra-curricular opportunities?

When choosing your students' post-16 destination, we strongly advise that you prioritise data over 'feel'. A useful indicator of the impact a post-16 provider has on the outcomes of a young person is the L3VA (level 3 value added) - this is a measurement used by the government to capture how much, on average, each sixth form/college improves the students' outcomes who are on their roll. It calculates the improvement from GCSE results to the grades they leave with (whether A level or vocational qualifications). 0.0 is a neutral impact, therefore any L3VA score above zero indicates the sixth form/college has made a more positive impact on student outcomes, and any L3VA score below zero indicates a below average impact on student outcomes. For more information on the L3VA score and how to find this for potential sixth form/college providers, please refer to this letter written by Mr Barker, our Deputy Headteacher of KS5: [Post-16 Choices and L3VA Guidance](#)

### Why choose CFBS?

Students at the CFBS Sixth Form attain very strong outcomes in a wide variety of subjects, with an L3VA score of +0.2 placing it in the top 9% of providers nationally. Lessons are delivered by subject specialists using high-quality workbooks and homework resources, and there is an extensive programme of support for students throughout the Sixth Form and as they approach their final exams. Careers guidance is delivered through the Central Futures programme, providing personalised one on one advice, careers talks, and extensive work-experience opportunities. Students are also well supported with university and apprenticeship applications and progress to a wide range of prestigious destinations each year, including Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and other top universities. Significant pastoral support is provided by Directors of Learning, who see the students everyday and can offer guidance and targeted support whenever needed. Outside lessons, there are a vast number of co-curricular opportunities, including weekly



lectures delivered by visiting academics, careers spokespeople, and experts in different fields; university entrance exam classes to prepare students for applications to Oxford, Cambridge, and other competitive universities; a medicine society run by a medical student; weekly apprenticeship workshops delivered by recruitment specialists and employer providers; one on one mentoring from volunteers at Slaughter and May and RGA (Reinsurance Group of America) through Central Futures Mentoring; and a weekly debating club with opportunities to compete. On top of this, the Sixth Form offers a number of extra-curricular clubs, and Wednesday afternoons are dedicated solely to students participating in recreational activities.

To secure a space with CFBS Sixth Form, Year 11 students must have excellent pastoral data leading up to and including the public examination period. Outstanding attendance, behaviour, homework submissions, and punctuality are key to demonstrating a student's commitment to our values and our community.