



# Y9 Options

Class of 2019

## Welcome

The Y9 options process is a major milestone in a student's academic life. It is the first time that they can directly influence the subjects that they will study.

There is, necessarily, much information for both students and parents to read, interpret and understand, but taking the time to do this will result in appropriate choices being made, which in turn will encourage success.

This document, along with subject information on our web site and the opportunity to talk to staff at Options Evening and Parents Evening, should ensure students and their parents feel supported throughout the process.

We have tried hard to make the information easy to access, easy to read and easy to understand; we hope you agree.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document.

Andy Fox  
Head Teacher

## Key dates

- Options assemblies take place between November and January.
- Course overviews sheets available on web site from mid January.
- Options Evening Wednesday 15th February 2017.
- Y9 Parents Evening Thursday 8th March.
- Deadline for options forms to be returned Thursday 16th March.
- Confirmation of course allocation issued to students and parents in mid June.

# Ks4 curriculum overview

## Key stage 4 Subjects

At Key stage 4 all students on the Isle of Man are required to study a set of **core** subjects; they are also expected to take part in **games** lessons. To complete their timetable students request four other subjects from a list of **options**.

## Core subjects

- English Language (4 x 50-minute lessons)
- Mathematics (4 x 50-minute lessons)
- Science (6 x 50-minute lessons)
- Religious Studies (2 x 50-minute lessons)

## Games

- Games (2 x 50-minutes lessons)

## Optional subjects

- Option 1 (3 x 50-minute lessons)
- Option 2 (3 x 50-minute lessons)
- Option 3 (3 x 50-minute lessons)
- Option 4 (3 x 50-minute lessons)

For each option students will request a subject from a list of available options.

# Ks4 optional subjects

## Subject courses:

- Art and Design (fine art)
- Art and Design (ceramics)
- Art (entry level) #
- ASDAN Awards #
- Business Studies
- Computer Science
- Construction \*
- Child Development
- Digital Applications
- Digital Applications (level 1) #
- Drama
- Engineering \*
- Food and Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- Global Perspectives
- History
- Health and Social Care
- ICT
- Music
- Motor Vehicle \*
- PC passport #
- PE
- Product Design
- Resistant Materials
- Spanish
- Systems and Control
- Textiles

Please note subjects will only run if there are enough students requesting to take the subject.

\*Students will be required to attend the IOM College to study these subjects and this may significantly impact upon their other timetabled subjects.

# Level 1 or pre GCSE course.

# Advice and guidance

Making options choices can be daunting. It is the first time a student can influence the diet of subjects they experience at School. Until now most students in the year group have had the same curriculum experience as their friends.

Students who make the best choices are the students who:

- **Know themselves well.** They know what “inspires them” and what “turns them off”. They know how they like to study, and what motivates them to work hard. They know what they do and don’t enjoy. They have a good understanding of their current performance in the subjects they have studied so far.
- **Have made the effort to research and understand the options available to them.** They have listened carefully during options assemblies. They have read the information on the web site. They have spoken to subject teachers about the details of the courses on offer. They know the skills and attributes that are required to successfully achieve each qualification.
- **Understand they are already on a career journey.** They have begun to think about their longer-term education/career goals. They either have a clear idea of what they want to do and how they are going to get there, or they have no clear long-term objectives and so are looking to keep their “options open”.

## Choosing Ks4 subjects with a career in mind

Students who already have a clear idea about their career path will need to choose the subjects that are the most appropriate to help them to achieve their career destination.

It is not just the destination that is important, but also your intended route to get there.

There are normally many ways to arrive at your intended destination. Sometimes the pathway is harder than you expected, in which case you might need to take a detour, or take a little longer. If things go well you might be able to take a shortcut and get there quicker.

We highly recommend having at least one backup plan, just to be on the safe side, so you are prepared if things do not go as expected. Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.

Students considering employment need to consider their employability skills alongside their academic performance and qualifications. Approximately 10% of students will consider going into employment at 16, for most this will require an apprenticeship. Students are required to secure a work placement themselves and achieve the required academic qualifications before they can apply for an apprenticeship.

Vocational and pre-vocational subjects are ideal for students who are interested in a career path in a specific sector or have an interest in a specific area of study.

## Choosing Ks4 subjects to keep your options open

Many students may not have a clear long-term goal and will need to keep their “options open” for the future.

In two years time students will be required to make their “Post 16 choices” when they decide to stay on in the Sixth Form, go to the Isle of Man College or go into employment.

It is worth knowing now that after completing GCSEs over 85% of students continue with their studies at either Sixth Form or attend the Isle of Man College. The subjects chosen and the grades achieved at GCSE will determine the range of courses available at either Sixth Form or the Isle of Man College.

Therefore these students should choose a broad range of subjects based on:

- What a student is likely to excel at.
- What a student is motivated by.
- What a student enjoys.

Students who demonstrate a passion, ability or interest in a particular subject should strongly consider studying it. All subjects develop a set of desirable and transferable skills that sit alongside the specific skills and knowledge that are directly associated with the specific subject.

Employers and further/higher education establishments recognise and value all subjects because they develop desirable transferable skills at the same time developing the subject specific skills and knowledge.

## Choosing Ks4 subjects with university in mind

Students considering going on to University need to be aware that they will require good grades in their Level 3 qualifications (A- levels or equivalent).

A strong set of Level 2 qualifications (A\*-Cs at GCSE) is required to get onto a Level 3 course and be successful. English and Mathematics grade C or better are also essential.

Each Level 3 course has a specific set of requirements that students are required to meet before being accepted onto the course; some require a level 2 qualification in that subject, others can be accessed without having been studied at level 2.

If you already intend to study specific subjects at Level 3 make sure you have researched the entry requirements.

If you already have a university, or a specific degree course in mind, again, ensure you have researched the entry requirements as some degree courses do specify a set of GCSE qualifications.

# Ks4 pathways

Everyone is unique. All subjects are valuable. We will all be successful if we work hard and follow our own path.

It is with these thoughts in mind that we have designed our option choices.

We believe that all option choices should be open to all students and that all students should be encouraged, guided and helped to select the curriculum that is most likely to bring about success for them. Success for us is preparing students for life beyond School, for their next steps, for their journey.

Below are three broad routes that a student may be considering. We have decided to highlight these three routes based on the majority of questions we have received from students and their families in previous years.

## Route A – keeping your options open

If you are not sure about your future yet and are looking to “keep your options open” we would recommend that you choose a broad range of subjects. Choose the subjects you are most likely to excel at.

## Route B – When you know what you want to do

If you already have good idea of the sort of career path you wish to follow then you need to ensure you choose the subjects that will best prepare you for this journey. You need to focus on developing the specific skills, and experience required for your chosen route (don't forget to have a backup plan).

## Route C – The honours route

If you are focused on achieving the highest levels of academic achievement, perhaps you are considering medicine, or are thinking of Oxford or Cambridge then it is important you achieve the very best grades at GCSE in the most relevant subjects. We would recommend that you study:

- At least one language (French or Spanish)
- At least one subject from: English Literature; Geography; History
- Separate sciences and/or Computer Science