



Frequently asked questions: Option Pathways 2025-26

- i. Will the pathway my daughter chooses affect what class she is in for Maths, English and Science?
 - a. Your daughter will be placed into the correct set in Ks4 based on her progress through Ks3 NOT the pathway she chooses. The only class that will be affected is whether she is in the Triple Science or Combined Science Cohort.
- ii. What is an Ebacc?
 - a. The Ebacc is not a qualification but a combination of GCSE subjects that offer an important range of knowledge and skills to young people. Students will study English, Maths, Science a Humanity (Geography or History) and a Language.
- iii. The Ebacc is a school measure, so why should I worry about my daughter taking it?
 - a. This suite of qualifications ensures that your daughter has the best possible opportunities for study at Sixth Form and Higher Education.
- iv. My daughter is fluent in another language and wishes to take that at the end of Year 10. Does this mean that she has to choose a language at Ks4?
 - a. No it does not. She will need to register her intent on the Options Form so that we are aware. In Year 10, the Head of MFL will contact all parents to have this intent formally registered with the exams team. Your daughter will be expected to have a tutor for the chosen language.
- v. My daughter has no interest in languages, so why should she take it?
 - a. Studying a language means that your daughter doesn't close off any options moving forward. It also ensures that she has the best possible chance to get into the High Education or apprenticeships areas of her choice. Unless she is very clear on what she wants to do and knows the pathway well, narrowing her options at this age is not advised. There is a balance between not being interested in a subject but being able to do well in that subject regardless and struggling to learn a language. Speaking with your daughter's Languages teacher will help understand where your daughter is at on her journey.
- vi. Do all students have to do a Science GCSE Twilight in Year 10?
 - a. Yes. In order to give your daughter the broadest curriculum at Ursuline and the greatest chance to succeed in science, your daughter will have 6 lessons of Science – Combined or Triple. She will have 2 lessons each with a Biology, Chemistry and Physics specialist.
- vii. What is the difference between Triple and Combined Science?
 - a. Triple Science is worth 3 GCSEs and your daughter will gain a separate GCSE in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The pace and depth of work in Triple Science is much more. Triple Science students will have 6 exams at 1 hour 45 minutes each.



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Combined Science is worth 2 GCSEs and the Biology, Chemistry and Physics subjects will be combined into 2 grades. Combined Science Students will have 6 exams at 1 hour 15 minutes each.

- viii. Does my daughter have to do the Platinum Pathway to do Triple Science?
 - a. Yes. The only exception would be for students taking a language privately at the end of Year 10. There is opportunity to write this on the Form.
- ix. Can my daughter change her mind after she has submitted her options?
 - a. Of course! If there is a need to change, please don't hesitate to contact me.
- x. What if my daughter realises in year 10 that she has picked the wrong subject?
 - a. We won't keep a student in a subject if she is struggling and it's clear that staying on that course will not help. Students do change subjects and this is carefully managed through myself and the Heads of Department to support your daughter through any changes.
- xi. If my daughter wants to take a subject for A-Level that she didn't take at GCSE, will that be a problem?
 - a. For some subjects yes, for others no. Please check the back of the Options Booklet for guidance on the requirements for each subject in the Sixth Form.
- xii. Are the Arts subjects that important anymore?
 - a. The Arts are vital and a key component of any broad and balanced education, giving students key essential skills that are recognised at every level. We are very proud of our Arts provision at Ursuline and strongly encourage students to study Arts at Ks4.
- xiii. Will there be an opportunity for my daughter to speak with teachers about the subjects?
 - a. We have a taster day on the 2nd February where students will be able to speak with teachers. All teachers will be available throughout the week for students to visit and ask questions.
- xiv. What is an NEA?
 - a. This is essentially coursework and will comprise a certain percentage of the course. Few subjects have an NEA component but Music, Drama, Art, Design & Technology, Food Technology and... still have a coursework element.
- xv. What do Higher and Foundation tiers mean?
 - a. A student sitting the Higher Tier paper in Maths, Science and MFL will be able to achieve up to a grade 9, but will get a U if she gets less than a 4. A student sitting the Foundation Tier will get a maximum of a Grade 5, but less likely to get a U. The Foundation papers are easier to access for students.
- xvi. Why might my daughter move populations for some subjects in year 10?
 - a. In KS4, students study all Option subjects in mixed populations. Maths are already mixed. English, RE and Science students are timetabled in their Populations but many students move between Populations to ensure that students are in the right



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class for their studies. We place much less emphasis on Populations in Ks4, seeing the value in students learning valuable life skills.

xvii. My daughter is on the SEND register. How can Ursuline High School help?

- The SEND faculty, led by Mrs Jefferies will work with you directly to ensure the best provision for your daughter in Ks4. I meet regularly with Mrs Jefferies during the Option Choices period to make sure that any student on the SEND register is supported in making their choices.

xviii. What advice and support is available to me to help my daughter make the right choices?

- Please see me for any support you need. I am contactable on owen.nichols@uruslinehigh.merton.sch.uk and will meet face to face, on Teams or on the phone for advice and help. If I cannot help, then I will set up a meeting with those best placed to do so.

xix. I want my daughter to do an extra subject outside of school.

- This may potentially mean that your daughter will be studying up to 11 GCSEs and sitting them all at the same time at the end of year 11. This can put extra pressure on the student and is not advised. However, we will support any student as best we can.