



Year 9 Options Evening 2026



Ursuline High School





QUESTIONS

- ▶ If you have any questions, please make a note and I will answer them at the end of the presentation.
- ▶ We have also gone through this presentation
- ▶ with students and answered their questions.
- ▶ I am available any time via email to answer queries.



Difficulties ahead...

- Correct course for me?
- Career routes
- New skills-A02/A03
- New content
- Cumulative style assessments
- How to revise
- 2 languages?



GCSEs

► Main points

- No Controlled Assessment in most subjects.
- Linear qualifications: all exams will take place at the end of Y11 except in practical subjects: Computing (20%); PE (40%); Food & Nutrition (50%); Art, Drama, Music & Health and Social Care (60%).
- No tiered papers (Foundation/Higher) except in Mathematics, Science and Languages.
- SPaG marking in Geography, History, RE [specific mark scheme] and integrated into the mark scheme for English and Science.
- Both the content and types of questions in the assessment will change.
- Grading for all subjects is 9-1



Details on key terms



► Ebacc

The Department for Education recommends these core subjects, which make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), and help keep options for young people open:

- **English language and English literature**
- **Maths**
- **Science**
Combined science or 3 single sciences from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Computer science
- **History or Geography**
- **A language**
Ancient or modern

WHAT IS THE EBACC?

The EBacc is not a qualification in its own right – it's a combination of GCSE subjects, including a language, that offer an important range of knowledge and skills to young people.

EBACC FUTURE PROOFS YOUR CHILD'S PROSPECTS

While your child may not have decided on their future career path yet, choosing the EBacc at GCSE gives them access to a full range of employment options when they leave secondary school and the broad knowledge that employers are looking for.

If they are thinking of going to university, the EBacc is also recommended by Britain's most prestigious universities.



Details on Key terms



Level 1

Level 1 qualifications are:

- first certificate
- GCSE - grades 3, 2, 1 or grades D, E, F, G
- level 1 award
- level 1 certificate
- level 1 diploma
- level 1 ESOL
- level 1 essential skills
- level 1 functional skills
- level 1 national vocational qualification (NVQ)
- music grades 1, 2 and 3

Level 2

Level 2 qualifications are:

- CSE - grade 1
- GCSE - grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A*, A, B, C
- intermediate apprenticeship
- level 2 award
- level 2 certificate
- level 2 diploma
- level 2 ESOL
- level 2 essential skills
- level 2 functional skills
- level 2 national certificate
- level 2 national diploma
- level 2 NVQ
- music grades 4 and 5
- O level - grade A, B or C

Level 3

Level 3 qualifications are:

- A level
- access to higher education diploma
- advanced apprenticeship
- applied general
- AS level
- international Baccalaureate diploma
- level 3 award
- level 3 certificate
- level 3 diploma
- level 3 ESOL
- level 3 national certificate
- level 3 national diploma
- level 3 NVQ
- music grades 6, 7 and 8
- tech level



Year 9 TIMELINE

Date	Event
16 th January	Learning Conference with Year 9 students to go over the different pathways and options.
16 th January	Options information Evening for parents with Q&A session.
26 th January	Students to submit their requests for the Taster Day sessions.
7 th February	Taster Day for Options pathways.
7 th March	Deadline for Option Choices
19 th May	End of Key Stage exams.





Please note that there are often movements between populations for Science, English, PE and RE in Ks4 to make sure that all students are in the correct groups for the subjects. This is normal as students spend more time outside of their populations for option subjects anyway.



If your daughter is on an EHCP, this will be part of the annual review. If she is on the SEND register, please contact Mrs. Jefferies.





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Pathways and options process at Key Stage 4



Core Subjects for all students

1. GCSE English Language
2. GCSE English Literature
3. GCSE Maths
4. GCSE Science (two possible routes)
5. GCSE RE
6. Core PE (2 lessons)
7. PSHE & Citizenship (1 lesson a week)
8. Computer science: delivered through all subjects and special curriculum days.

KS4 CURRICULUM TIME - 29 LESSONS PER WEEK



Science courses

► Triple Science : Biology, Chemistry and Physics

The most able scientists will prepare to take three GCSEs at the end of Year 11. Students will take exams lasting in total 3.5 hours per GCSE (10.5 hours in total). Students will receive a separate grade for each Science.

► Science (double award):

► The majority of students will study Combined Science. They will take their exams in Year 11 in order to gain 2 GCSEs in Science. Students will take exams lasting in total 3.75 hours per GCSE award i.e. 7.5 hours in total. These exams will be different to the Triple Science ones.

► *Both sciences involve a twilight session in year 10.*



Students studying combined science will sit the AQA Trilogy Exams. Some students MAY move to the Synergy approach if that is appropriate.



OPTION SUBJECTS

Details of courses in Options Booklet



GCSE Courses:

- ▶ Art & Design
- ▶ Art Textiles
- ▶ Drama & Theatre Studies
- ▶ Music

- ▶ Food Preparation & Nutrition
- ▶ Design Technology
- ▶ Computer Science
- ▶ Sociology

- ▶ PE
- ▶ Business Studies

Humanities Subjects

- ▶ Geography
- ▶ History

Modern Foreign Languages

- ▶ French
- ▶ German
- ▶ Spanish

Vocational Courses:

- ▶ Health & Social Care
- ▶ Child Development Cambridge National

Please note: For a course to run at KS4, there must be at least 15 students signed up on it.





3 Pathways

Meeting student's needs is the key to success.

Platinum Pathway (9/10 GCSEs)

Gold Pathway (9 GCSEs)

Orange Pathway (8 or 9 GCSEs)



PLATINUM PATHWAY

E-Bacc Subjects

GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature (4 Lessons)

GCSE Maths (5 Lessons)

Science(6 Lessons)- TRIPLE SCIENCE

GCSE Humanities subject [History or Geography] (3 Lessons)

GCSE Language [French, Spanish or German] (3 Lessons)

Core Subjects

GCSE RE (3 Lessons)

PE (2 Lessons); **PSHEC** (1 lesson)

Choice of 1 option subject (GCSE)

► Art, Art Textiles, Drama, Music, Business Studies, Computer Science, PE, Food & Nutrition, Design Technology, French, German, Spanish, Sociology, History and Geography (3 lessons)



PLATINUM PATHWAY



Students study Triple Science in addition to:

- ▶ Choice 1 1 Humanity
- ▶ Choice 2 1 Language
- ▶ Choice 3

Option Choice Form is at the back of the Options Booklet



GOLD PATHWAY

E-Bacc Subjects

GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature (4 Lessons)

GCSE Maths (5 Lessons)

Science(6 Lessons)- COMBINED SCIENCE

GCSE Humanities subject [History or Geography] (3 Lessons)

GCSE Language [French, Spanish or German] (3 Lessons)

Core Subjects

GCSE RE (3 Lessons)

PE (2 Lessons); **PSHEC** (1 lesson)

Choice of 1 option subject (GCSE)

► Art, Art Textiles, Drama, Music, Business Studies, Computer Science, PE, Food & Nutrition, Design Technology, French, German, Spanish, Sociology, History and Geography (3 lessons)



GOLD PATHWAY



Students study Triple Science in addition to:

- ▶ Choice 1 1 Humanity
- ▶ Choice 2 1 Language
- ▶ Choice 3

Option Choice Form is at the back of the Options Booklet



OPEN PATHWAY

Compulsory Subjects

GCSE English Language and GCSE Literature (4 Lessons)

GCSE Maths (5 Lessons)

GCSE Science (6 Lessons) – COMBINED SCIENCE

GCSE Humanities OR GCSE Languages (3 lessons)

Core Subjects

GCSE RE (3 Lessons)

PE (2 Lessons); PSHEC (1 lesson)

Choice of 2 option subjects

► Art, Drama, Music, Business Studies, Computer Science, PE, Health & Social Care, Health and Fitness, Food & Nutrition, Art Textiles, Design and Technology, French, German, Spanish, Sociology, History, Geography, Child Development & Option Support (3 lessons)



OPEN PATHWAY

- ▶ Choice 1 _____ (Humanities or Language)
- ▶ Choice 2 _____
- ▶ Choice 3 _____

Option Choice Form is at the back of the Options Booklet



PATHWAYS



English, Maths and Science will not group subjects based on their Pathway (outside of Triple Science) but on their progress and attainment to date.

To get onto the Platinum pathway, students should be achieving Gold Secure in English, Maths AND Science.



Types of qualifications

- ▶ Level 1 GCSE (grades 1-3) and equivalent (P1/M1/D1)
- ▶ Level 2 GCSE (grades 9-4) and equivalent (P2/M2/D2)
- ▶ Level 3 A Levels & T levels

It is important that students choose subjects that enable them to achieve and follow a progression route.

Points for consideration

► Key questions:

1. Do I like the subject? Am I good at it?
2. Will I be able to study this subject post 16 if I haven't completed a GCSE in it?
3. Do I need this subject to pursue my career choice?
4. Are my parents supportive of my subject choice?



Post-16: Thinking ahead

- ▶ Choose options thinking about the long term.
- ▶ Ebacc focus continues in the 6th form under the term of 'facilitating subjects', which can sometimes be preferred by top universities.
- ▶ Some subjects can be studied in the 6th form even if you haven't completed a GCSE in it.



Pathways

Pathway 1: At least five GCSEs grades 9-5 (including grade 4 in English and Maths)	Students have the option to study one T Level
Pathway 2: At least eight GCSEs grades 9-5 (minimum of six grade 7 or above)	Students can opt to do 4 A Levels or 3 A Levels and EPQ
Pathway 3: At least eight GCSEs grades 9-4 (minimum of four grade 5 or above)	Students study 3 A Levels
Pathway 4: Fewer than five GCSEs grades 9-4 (below grade 4 in Maths and English Language)	Students follow the Level 2 Courses and retake both GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics.

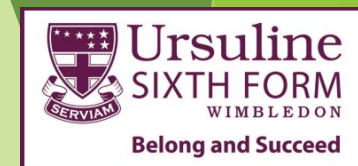


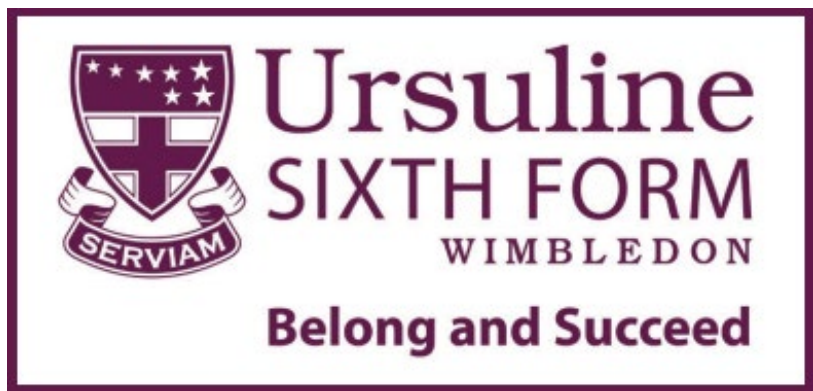


A Level Courses		
Art and Design	Film Studies	Psychology
Biology	Geography	Religious Studies
Business Studies	History	Sociology
Chemistry	Mathematics	Spanish
Computing	Further Mathematics	
Drama and Theatre Studies	Music	
Economics	Photography	
English Language	PE (Sports Studies)	
English Literature	Physics	
French	Politics	

T Level Courses
T Level in Digital Production
T Level in Health
T Level in Business
T Level in Science

Level 2 Course				
Arts Award	Creative <u>iMedia</u>	GCSE Biology	GCSE English Language	GCSE Mathematics





Thinking ahead to degree choices

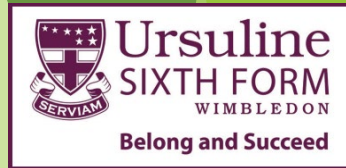
- Over the last three years 39% of state school applications were for five of the most over-subscribed subjects at Oxford (Economics and Management, Law, PPE, Medicine and Maths).
- By contrast, 18% of private school applications were for the least oversubscribed subjects (Classics, Music, Modern languages, Chemistry and English).
- The trend of state school students applying disproportionately for the most over-subscribed courses at Oxford and Cambridge also applies to other high-ranking universities.

- ▶ At Oxford 42% of applicants for Modern Languages, and 22% for Chemistry (good odds for a science), are successful.
- ▶ By contrast only 12% of those who apply for Law, and 8% of those who apply for Medicine, are successful.
- ▶ At Cambridge there are 3 applications per place for History and 2 for Theology.
- ▶ By contrast, there are 10 applicants per place for Economics and 11 for Psychological and Behavioural Sciences (PBS).



What does this mean for me now?

- ▶ Keeping a language can be very useful in order to have more options later on.
- ▶ If you are thinking of doing a degree in any science subject (including Psychology) then it would be sensible to study three separate sciences for GCSE.



When making post-16 choices

- ▶ Remember that in the UK (unlike in many other countries) a law degree is not required to become a lawyer. Any degree plus one extra year at law school will put you on a par with a law graduate.
- ▶ Think outside the box and consider less competitive subjects.
- ▶ For example, for humanities think of Theology, Modern Languages, Asian and Middle Eastern studies or History of Art.
- ▶ If you are wanting to apply for a Maths-based degree subject which is very competitive (e.g. Economics or Engineering), then Further Maths is strongly recommended.
- ▶ Note that Maths and Science A Level subjects (especially Biology) are looked on well for applications for Psychology.



Scholarly Support

- ▶ **Dedicated member of staff:** Mrs Harrison
- ▶ ***Outstanding Attainers Programme*** in Year 10. Its aims are:
 - to give students a breadth of learning which will place them well for applications for high-ranking universities
 - to provide greater depth or “hinterland” for future Oxbridge applicants, placing them well for interviews
 - to give them an opportunity to develop their critical thinking
 - to learn to debate ideas beyond the curriculum
 - to give a deeper understanding of the interconnection between their subjects
- ▶ ***Oxbridge Programme*** starts in January of Year 12.
 - Help with **course selection and research.**
 - Focus on super-curricular activities that take the subjects further.
 - Trips to Oxford and/or Cambridge
 - **Support with entrance exams & preparation for interviews**

