



Year 9

# GCSE Options



Supporting your child  
through their next steps

UNIVERSITY  
OF WARWICK

# GCSEs act as a gateway to further education, apprenticeships and employment.

## GCSEs

### What are GCSEs and what is the timeline of them?

GCSEs are the main qualifications which are studied in secondary education, usually from Year 10 – Year 11 (however some schools may start teaching the materials in Year 9).

Most subjects are assessed through exams, but some subjects may have some coursework or oral elements.

Exams are usually taken in the summer term of Year 11, with results being made available in August.

## Choosing GCSE options

### What can (or should) my child study for their GCSEs?

Your child will study a mixture of optional and compulsory subjects for their GCSEs.

Compulsory subjects include English Language, Maths and Science. GCSE English Language and Maths should be achieved at a grade 4 or above or they may have to re-sit these with the support of their school or future education provider.

There is more flexibility with optional subjects, where your child can start to think about subjects they have enjoyed learning in the curriculum so far and would like to continue. Some schools may also offer some Level 2 BTECs (which are vocational equivalents to a GCSE).

Specific subjects available vary by school, however there are usually options within Arts (such as Drama or Music), Modern Foreign Languages (such as French or Spanish) and Humanities (such as History, Geography and Religious Studies).

These decisions are usually made during Year 9.

## GCSE options

### What should my child consider when choosing options?

Encourage your child to think about:

- Subjects they **enjoy and feel motivated by**
- Subjects they are **good at**
- Future plans (such as A Levels, college courses, apprenticeships, or career ideas)
- The **balance of subjects** (academic, creative, and practical)

It's important not to choose a subject solely because friends are taking it or because it "sounds easy."

### What support is available?

Schools usually offer support through:

- Options evenings or assemblies
- Subject taster sessions
- Meetings with teachers or careers advisors
- Information booklets or online resources

Parents are encouraged to attend events and discuss choices with their child.



## Benefits

### What are the benefits of gaining GCSE qualifications?

GCSEs are valued qualifications which can act as a gateway to further education, apprenticeships, universities and employment.

They equip your child with foundational knowledge for pursuing education at a higher level or can demonstrate core transferable skills to future employers (such as problem solving and critical thinking).

Choosing GCSE options is an important step, but it does not lock your child into a single career path. With the right support and guidance, students can choose subjects that suit their interests, strengths, and future ambitions.

## Thinking ahead for university

### What can my child do now to prepare for or start thinking about university

If your child may like to attend university but does not know what they would want to study, this is completely normal and is a great opportunity for them to explore subjects they enjoy in a more focused and detailed way.

If your child knows what they would like to study at university, that's great as they can choose complimentary subjects and start to develop foundational knowledge in those areas. There also may be specific subjects they should be taking (such as a language GCSE if they want to be a foreign language teacher). This will depend on their specific goals, but this information is easily accessible online.



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