

## **Introduction**

What your son / daughter chooses to study after Year 11 can have a huge impact on what they can study at University or their future employment. Even if they have an idea or not about the course or subject/s they may wish to study at Sixth Form, College or on an Apprenticeship, having the right information now will provide them with more options when the time comes to making their mind up.

We have written this guide aims to help you and your son / daughter make an unbiased and informed decision about choosing their most appropriate course for post-16 education and we hope this will be of benefit to you as to parents and guardians.

Getting post-16 education choices correct is an important first step towards university and employment but it can't guarantee their chosen choice will be easily achievable. Entry to universities and employment can be very competitive and although your academic background is important a number of other factors are also considered.

## **Changes to A-Levels 2015**

**From September 2015, A-Levels are changing.**

**All A-Level examinations will be taken at the end of year 13.** (If a student chooses not continue with a subject at the end of year 12, they can still sit the AS examination at the end of year 12, but this is no longer part of the A-Level qualification.

A-Levels are being reformed in stages. Subjects that changed in September 2015 are English Literature, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Psychology, Art and Design and Sociology.

Subjects in the second stage will be available for first teaching in September 2016. These are Languages, Geography, Drama and Religious Studies. Other subjects such as Design & Technology, Maths and Further Maths will be reformed in 2017.

## **For subjects that have not yet been reformed**

There are two units in each subject at AS-level and a normally a further two, more difficult, units at A2. If you son / daughter wants to apply to university, what do they need to think about when choosing their AS and A-Level choices? Your choice of subjects will be very important in deciding the university courses that you can apply for.

Most universities will expect you to have studied three A-Levels. UCAS guidance [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) – course search in subject requirements will assist you in making an informed choice about your A-Level subjects for any particular course you may wish to study at university.

## **Vocational Options: BTEC**

BTEC qualifications are particular types of work-related qualifications, available in a wide range of subjects. They are available at ALL levels and in nearly all education provider institutions.

*“My son / daughter is thinking about taking a BTEC course, what are the problems when it comes to university applications?”* It is, very important to know, that although some universities do not accept these vocational qualifications most of them do. It is important to use UCAS to look at entry requirements for any particular course you wish to study at university. Research and thinking about the future is very important.

BTECs are a very good option for many students. BTEC qualifications can be studied alongside A-Levels or a student may choose to do a mix of different BTEC courses.

## **The 5 point plan for supporting your son / daughter with their your post-16 choices**

### **1. Know what your child wants to study? - Check out the entry requirements**

If they have a Sixth Form or College course which they wish to study, have you checked the provider's prospectus or website to find out what their requirements are i.e. C in English?

### **2. Not sure yet? - Keep your options open**

If your child is not sure what course they wish to study at Sixth Form or College have they thought about what subjects they enjoy or what interests they have i.e. cars could lead to Vehicle Maintenance?

If he / she is considering studying A-Levels think about subjects which can be used across the board such as English, Maths, Science, Geography, History. By choosing these types of subjects, they will offer greater options at University, if they are not sure of a career plan.

### **3. Year 11 grades matter...**

Make sure they understand the GCSE and BTEC requirements to enter your chosen Sixth Form or College. Are they on track to achieve the grades needed to progress on to the subject/s or course that he / she wants to study?

### **4. Think balance**

Has he / she picked the subject/s or course which best reflect your ability, strengths and interests?

### **5. Make sure you know WHY**

If they want to take a subject/s or course that they have not studied before, can he / she talk for a minute about what subject is about? Try and unpick why they wish to study this subject. It is not enough to say 'it's interesting', 'I think I'll like it' or 'It will be fun'.

## Informed Choices

### First Steps

Before you select which A-Levels and BTEC Level 3 courses you wish to study, it is really important that you think about how you will make this decision. You will need to spend time researching career aspirations or University courses to ensure that you are making the correct choices. You will also need to consider your ability – which subjects do you perform best in and why?

There is no point in taking a subject in which you will be unsuccessful. 'A-Levels' are much harder than GCSE; they require you to learn in a very different way. Many students say that they find the jump between year 11 and 12 really hard, especially in the Sciences. You therefore need to consider where your strengths lie, for example, are you a student who is better at the Arts based subjects, rather than the Sciences? If so it is wise to pick these to study at A-Level. After all, it is better to get 3 A grades than 3 U's!

Remember everyone is different, and each person will have their own personal route to success. With this in mind read through the information in this booklet to make sure that you are making an informed choice!



## Guiding Steps

### **Step 1: Meet with your Form Tutor**

Your form tutor will meet with you and discuss with you your strengths and interests. They will have gathered lots of information about how well you are doing in your current subjects and what your potential might be in different A-Level and BTEC courses. They will advise you which subjects might be best for you and which 'Pathway' will allow you to achieve the best grades.

### **Step 2: Find out all you can about potential career ideas/University courses/Apprenticeships**

Before you start considering which subjects you should choose it is important that you look at any potential career ideas that you may have. Some Universities and careers require you to have studied certain subjects. (There is further information on how to do this later in the booklet.) For example, if you wished to be an Architect, you would need to study Art and Mathematics in order to go on to study this at University.

Some subjects at University also require certain GCSE grades – again it is important that you know this now.

You will have some form time to look at university websites:

<b>University</b>	<b>Website</b>
Birmingham	<a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk">www.birmingham.ac.uk</a>
Bristol	<a href="http://www.bris.ac.uk">www.bris.ac.uk</a>
Cambridge	<a href="http://www.cam.ac.uk">www.cam.ac.uk</a>
Keele	<a href="http://www.keele.ac.uk">www.keele.ac.uk</a>
Leeds	<a href="http://www.leeds.ac.uk">www.leeds.ac.uk</a>
Lincoln	<a href="http://www.lincoln.ac.uk">www.lincoln.ac.uk</a>
Liverpool	<a href="http://www.liv.ac.uk">www.liv.ac.uk</a>
Manchester	<a href="http://www.manchester.ac.uk">www.manchester.ac.uk</a>
Nottingham	<a href="http://www.nottingham.ac.uk">www.nottingham.ac.uk</a>
Southampton	<a href="http://www.southampton.ac.uk">www.southampton.ac.uk</a>
Worcester	<a href="http://www.worcester.ac.uk">www.worcester.ac.uk</a>

Also visit the UCAS website. [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

UCAS is the University and Colleges and Admissions Service. They process all university applications. Their website is a very useful source of information about Higher Education. The course search function is very useful.

### **Step 3: Find out all you can about the subjects on offer!**

Oldbury Wells School Sixth Form offers a good range of A-Levels and BTEC courses. We offer courses which combine well together and lead to good opportunities after Sixth Form. You will find out more about these in the coming weeks.

Read through the descriptions, in the prospectus, of the subjects that are available at Oldbury Wells School which you can pick up before our Sixth Form Information evening. Jot down any questions that you might wish to ask later. Talk to your subject teachers about your suitability for the subject. When you have done this, check that you know the answer to the following questions:

- 1) What is the content of the course? What topics will I be studying? Does this interest me?
- 2) What do I know about this subject already?
- 3) How is the subject taught? What will I be doing in lessons?
- 4) Is there any coursework?
- 5) What examinations does this course lead to?
- 6) What independent work will I be expected to do outside lesson time? Will I have a lot of essays? Reading? Writing? Does this suit me?
- 7) How will I be assessed?
- 8) Is this a course I will do well in?

### **Step 4: Think about yourself and your plans for the future!**

Now you know about the content of the course and how it is assessed, think carefully about your strengths and weaknesses. Also consider what you may wish to do in the future. For example, if you know you want to be a nurse, then you will need to do some science based courses. However, if your Mathematical ability is not great then you should avoid Chemistry and Physics. You could do Health and Social Care, Science BTEC, Biology and Psychology and you would have the qualifications necessary to do nursing.

As you consider your options, think about the following:

- 1) What really interests me?
- 2) What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- 3) How do I work best?
- 4) What skills will I need to be successful in certain subjects?
- 5) What subjects do my teachers think are the best for me?
- 6) What do I want to do in the future? Will this course help me towards the careers that interest me?

### **Step 5: Attend the Sixth Form Information Evening**

This evening held in November is your opportunity to meet the teachers and talk to them in greater and more informed detail about your subject choices. You will also speak to current Sixth Form students and see examples of work.

### **Step 6: Complete the options form and attend your Sixth Form Interview**

When you have you have completed all the above you will then fill in your Options form. You will then hand this in and you will be allocated an individual Sixth Form interview with the Head of Sixth Form or a member of the Senior Management team.

We do our interview process very carefully and look at several factors before deciding with you which courses will give you the most successful outcomes.

## Pathways

To help you with your decisions for your Key Stage 5 A-Level we have suggested that you start to consider your main decisions as 'Pathways'.

### The A-Level Pathway

This pathway comprises some of the most challenging A-Levels and includes all of the subjects classed as the facilitating subjects by the Russell Group Universities. It includes subjects like: Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, English Literature and French.

Many leading universities like you to have taken at least two of the subjects from this list, some institutions may prefer to see three of these subjects. It is therefore important that you look at university department admissions policies, which are published on their department websites.

<b>Prior Attainment</b>	<b>Learning style</b>	<b>Expected Courses</b>	<b>Enrichment</b>
7 GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths and with an average GCSE point score of 44 or better	Strong writing and listening skills. You will need to be able to work independently. You will need to be capable of completing research and you need to enjoy reading. There will be an expectation for you to broaden your own knowledge by reading around your subjects.	3 facilitating A-Level subjects  Plus General Studies and the Extended Project Qualification.  You could do Core Maths at AS level, this may be advisable if you are doing any science or science related course such as Geography	Sport, DoE. Involvement in lower school, creative arts projects etc.

As an A-Level pathway student you will look to go onto a Higher Education Degree course. You should have the confidence to apply to a leading or Russell Group university. You will need to conduct some thorough research to ensure you make the right subject choices for your chosen university.

The Russell Group represents 20 of the leading Universities which are committed to maintain the very best research and outstanding teaching and learning for students. There are also several other universities that also have a research intensive ethos, including universities such as Leicester, Lancaster and Loughborough.

A good placed to start some research is to read a booklet published by the Russell Group called informed choices. [www.russellgroup.org/informedchoices-latest.pdf](http://www.russellgroup.org/informedchoices-latest.pdf) or Cambridge Universities Subject Matters.

**You may find some of the following information useful if you wish to pursue the A-Level Pathway.**

This is a list of A-Levels that complement each other. This is not exhaustive but offers some guidance. These combinations may be favoured by admissions officers for some degree courses.

Examples that mix well are:

- Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology. (In any combination). But if you choose Physics, it does help to do this alongside Mathematics. Only consider these if you achieve a grade A or B at GCSE.
- Geography.....mixes with almost all A-Levels because it encompasses so many different styles of learning.
- History.....mixes well with most A-Levels, but English Literature or Modern Languages.
- Business Studies.....mixes with English, Modern Languages, History.
- Drama.....Mixes with English, Modern Languages, History, Art.
- Art...Mixes well with Product Design, Drama, English, History, it can go with most subjects.
- English...Mixes well with other writing/language subjects.
- Religious Studies...Mixes with English, History, Psychology
- BTEC Sport.....Biology and Psychology

Remember – all of the subjects that we offer at Oldbury Wells School have academic credibility when you apply to university or employment. So, ultimately, do what you want to do and what you are going to enjoy. If your head and your heart are in conflict it is probably best to go with your heart – because you will be happier. Happy people tend to do better! Most people will end up going along a traditional route, and that's fine. But, if you want to do a more unusual combination of subjects, that is fine too. Indeed, breadth can be a good thing. Universities will look favourably on candidates who include a contrasting subject in their four AS choices/

The choice is yours! If you are doing an unusual combination of subjects we will check that you are sure, and that you have not jeopardised any future plans that you may have, but in the end we will not stop you.

Students do well if:

- **They are doing A-Levels they are confident in and have chosen for the right reasons**
- **They are happy in themselves and they enjoy their chosen subjects**
- **They are prepared to work hard – Sixth Form is no place for half-hearted efforts.**

### The Mixed Level 3 Pathway

The mixed pathway involves a combination of A-Levels and BTEC qualifications. The A-Levels such as Product Design and Communication Studies, for example are found to be more accessible for students who have achieved mainly C and B grades at GCSE. The BTECs in this pathway are Single or Double Award. By following subjects predominantly in this pathway you may also be able to re-sit your English and/or Mathematics.

This pathway is suitable for students who wish to go to university, a higher level Apprenticeship or employment.

<b>Prior Attainment</b>	<b>Learning style</b>	<b>Expected Courses</b>	<b>Enrichment</b>
5 GCSEs or equivalent at A*-C including English and/ or Maths with an average point score of 37 or above.	Good concentration, numeracy, writing and listening skills. Works well in a classroom setting, but likes to have experience outside the classroom too. Motivated to be able to work independently, but can also work well as part of a team. Capable of completing research and enjoys reading around their subjects.	3 A-Levels or a mixture of A-Level and BTEC courses.  You could possibly do Core Maths at AS level.	Sport, DoE. Involvement in lower school, creative arts projects etc.

It is important to consider your strengths when you are selecting your subjects. BTEC qualifications are accepted by many universities. If you perform better in coursework, than in examinations, a BTEC course may be more suited to your style of learning and will allow you to achieve higher outcomes. A D\*D\* at BTEC is worth more than a D grade at A-Level in terms of UCAS points.

Talk to your teachers, they know you best and can advise you.

## The BTEC Pathway

This pathway would be most suitable for students who achieve mainly C grade passes at GCSE. It involves predominantly BTEC courses and we would encourage students to take one BTEC course as a Double Award, a 90 credit Diploma, or a Diploma which would be their main area of study.

Prior Attainment	Learning style	Expected Courses	Enrichment
5 GCSE passes in at least 4 different subjects.	Good concentration and willingness to learn. Numeracy, writing and listening skills. You will enjoy working in a classroom setting, but also like experiences outside the classroom too. You will need to be organised and be able to hit deadlines. Enjoys learning about the 'real world' and subjects that have an element of practical work in them. Likes using ICT.	1 BTEC courses, combined with other subjects. Which could include GCSE re-sits, plus work experience  or  2 BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas which may lead to a 90 Credit Diploma  or  A Diploma in one subject	Sport, DoE. Involvement in lower school, creative arts projects etc.

A work experience placement, linked to their area of study would be a requirement of this course.

## **Key things to bear in mind when choosing A-Level subjects**

Here are the three principles which should guide your choice:

### **Choose subjects you will enjoy;**

If you do not enjoy studying a subject (most of the time at least), it is demoralising and difficult to do well. If you enjoy the work you will probably get a good grade in the exam, though the opposite isn't always true, and in the sixth-form you want to be stimulated, not bored.

In thinking about whether you will enjoy a subject you should consider two things about it: the **content** of the subject and the **skills** it requires. You should have a real interest in the content, the things that you learn about but you should also be confident that you have or can develop the skills that the subject requires. Each subject involves a different mixture of activities. Does this subject require a lot of learning detail, a lot of independent reading, a lot of essay writing, a lot of creativity? Each of these activities requires skills you may or may not enjoy. The way a subject is assessed might be important to you, particularly if assessment involves a lot of project work.

Beware of taking a subject just because 'it sounds interesting'. Check it out carefully. Finding out more about a subject is essential if you haven't studied it before, but it is also important to review subjects you are familiar with - they are likely to change significantly as you move from GCSE to A-Level

### **Choose subjects which will fit in with your career plans**

If you have clear ideas about what you want to study at university, you should check whether your plans require specific subjects. The third section of this guide shows A-Level requirements for some popular degree courses and you can find lots of detail on the UCAS website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

Keeping options open is a good idea but check that your A-Level choices don't rule out degrees you're interested in. You will find that there are many degree subjects which you can apply to with any A-Level combination.

Don't take a subject you find really tough just because it is needed for a particular career. Unless you have good reason to believe that subject will be easier for you at the higher sixth-form level (and your teachers confirm this) it's better to rethink your choice of career.

### **Take time to find out all you need to know**

You will need the time to think carefully about your interests and skills and about possible directions after A-Levels. You then need to match these ideas up to the A-Level subjects on offer, which will involve finding out more about them. Time to do the thinking and time to talk to people and time to change your mind if necessary, are all important

While other people might have good advice and opinions worth considering carefully, this is your choice: you are the person who will be doing the work, and it's your future that A-Levels help decide. Take advice seriously but don't just take a subject because someone else tells you that's what you must do (or because that's what your friends are taking).

## **Where to find out more about A-Level subjects**

### **A-Level subject guides**

The Oldbury Wells School Sixth Form prospectus and individual subject information sheets are a good place to start. The '[Student Room](#)' website provides a lot of online material on A-Level subjects. Also look at [www.icould.com](http://www.icould.com) this contains a number of good videos on career choices.

### **Your current teachers**

Your current teachers will know your intellectual strengths and weaknesses. It is certainly worth asking their opinion on the subjects you are thinking about.

### **Subject syllabuses**

The exam board syllabuses (now often called 'specifications') describe the topics to be covered, often in considerable detail. You can find exam board syllabuses for all A-Level subjects online. [AQA](#), [EDEXCEL](#) and [OCR](#) are the 'big three' exam boards. Many A-Level subjects are offered by all three boards so you will need to find out which board is studied for each of your chosen subjects.

### **Other students**

Talk to sixth-formers who are currently studying the subjects you are considering. Ask them what they like best about their subjects (and what they don't like).

### **A- Level Textbooks**

Skimming through a book in the subject area can give a good idea of the type of work you would be doing. This is particularly useful when you are contemplating something you have not studied before.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Which A-Level subjects are blacklisted by the more prestigious universities?**

“An A-Level blacklist does not exist, but certain universities do require particular subjects for particular courses. If you apply without these subjects then your application will not be considered. In some cases it’s obvious: you need to take science subjects to apply for Medicine and Dentistry, but in others it may not be so clear. For example – applying for a drama course at university might require you to have at least one A-Level course that is essay based. It is important that you start research early and look carefully at the individual entry requirements for each degree course that you might be interested in.”

### **What are the Russell group “facilitating subjects” and what does the term mean?**

The Russell Group is an organisation to which some of the best universities belong. This includes 24 of the top universities in the country. They publish a guide called ‘informed choices’. It tells you the most common subject requirements for different degree courses for those universities. It also includes a list of facilitating subjects and advises pupils wanting to be considered for a Russell Group university to pick two of them as part of their A-Level mix. The facilitating subjects are: Mathematics and Further Mathematics, English Literature, Physics, Biology, Geography, History and Languages.

### **Will universities really consider a BTEC as equivalent to an A-Level?**

Most universities in the country will and it depends on the type of course that you wish to do. BTECs are fine if they are combined with other sorts of qualifications such as A-Levels. Most of our students do BTECs alongside A-Levels – so this poses no problems when applying to University. Also for some students BTEC qualifications are the right type of course for them as they are much more successful in coursework. If you are considering a BTEC you need to research University courses carefully.

### **Why do we suggest pathways to you?**

We encourage pupils to play to their strengths. Pupils do occasionally have to be guided away from particular courses; there are some A-Level courses, such as Further Maths or the sciences, where you would have to get very good GCSE results to be accepted at A-Level. This is because you would be unlikely to cope with the demands in these subjects without a strong aptitude in maths. We look at your GCSE performance and suggest the courses that will allow you to get the best grades.

### **Should your GCSE grades dictate which subjects you pick at A-Level?**

For some subjects, you should take your GCSE grades very seriously, take Maths; it is the sort of subject that if you do not get an A\* at GCSE, it becomes a really big leap at AS A2 Level. However, it does not apply for all subjects.

### **Do Universities look at GCSE results?**

**YES! GCSE's and A-Levels are the first filters that universities will use, simply because of the numbers that they are dealing with. Most universities don't use interviews anymore, so they are a valuable way to make a judgement, and in turn must rely more on the pupils past performance.**

GCSEs do have a big bearing on university acceptances in some subjects, for example many universities will look for A\* grades at GCSE for the study of medicine. Also Oxford and Cambridge see GCSEs as great predictors of performance.

You also need to know that you need C grades in both English and Maths at GCSE to study any degree at university and some universities, such as the Russell Group, may ask for B grades in these subjects.

### **How can you keep your options open?**

Reality check: growing up is about making choices, and you can't keep every option open. But it may be useful to ask yourself if you really need to. If you're pretty sure you want to do medicine and engineering you can stop agonising: you need to narrow, not widen your subject choice – to the Sciences and Mathematics. If you are not set on a particular area, 'play to your strengths, but do not specialise too much.

By choosing facilitating subjects, pupils are not restricted to applying for degree courses that require those subjects. Even if a student studies three facilitating subjects they could still apply for Law for example, for which most universities do not require any specific subjects.

The most important thing is to pick the subjects that you think will give you the best overall grades. There is no point in trying to be a doctor if you are no good at Science and Maths. You should play to your strengths – if your best grades are in Art and you really enjoy then do it!

### **Should you always do Maths A-Level if you're capable of getting a decent grade, even if your interests lie elsewhere?**

NO!!! Unless you want to do a Maths or Science based degree course. Would you enjoy an A-Level in maths? Would you get a good grade? Do you need it for your chosen career? If the answer is yes to these questions then do A-Level maths, but if it is no, do not take the subject.

Although the entry requirement is a B grade at present – the most successful A-Level Maths students are those with an A\* at GCSE. Anything less and you will find it hard.

**Should you try to do a science A-Level if you can, even if you prefer arts and humanities?**

It depends on the course that you are interested in. Psychology may prefer to see a Science subject in amongst you're a-Level choices, but an English course wouldn't see the benefit of this. If a Science subject is preferred it will be clearly stated in the entry requirements for the course. If nothing is specified then the students should prioritise those subjects that they enjoy and will do well in.

**Where can I get help and guidance other than from school?**

Ring up the universities from year 10 onwards to discuss A-Level choices. All the details for all courses are available on the university websites. Also try the UCAS website. This is the on-line application centre. There is lots of information to help on this site.

**University costs £9000 a year, can I afford to go?**

YES!! You don't have to pay upfront In fact; you don't have to pay a penny until you're earning over £21,000 a year. You get a tuition fee loan that does straight to the university. If you stop earning, you stop paying. It's as simple as that. The monthly instalments are even less than you would have paid under the pre-2012 system; it often works out less than a mobile phone contract. It's the best investment you'll ever make It's an experience you benefit from for the rest of your life.

### **What are AS / A2 and how do they relate to A-Level?**

### **How many subjects should I take?**

Most students will take 3 A-Level subjects in year 12, however some students who have mainly A and A\* grades will need to consider a fourth subject that they will do in year 12 which will give them an AS qualification or the equivalent.

You may however wish to pick up something like the Extended Project in Year 13. The Government is encouraging more students to study Maths at Sixth Form. We offer 'Core Maths' and will advise students studying any Science, Geography or Psychology for example to also study 'Core Maths' as part of their programme.

### **What if I find I've chosen the wrong subjects?**

If one of your subjects turns out to be not quite right, you can change this as long as you do this in the first two weeks after joining Oldbury Wells School Sixth Form. Talk to your teachers /form tutor sooner rather than later if you think you've chosen a wrong subject.

### **Will my GCSE results affect my subject choice?**

Yes. They might affect whether you can join sixth-form at all. They provide an important guide to how well you are likely to cope with particular subjects, and they may influence the number of A-Levels it is sensible to take on.

You are likely to find Maths and French A-Levels very challenging if you have not been achieving at A or B grade standard in year 11. See the entry requirements for each subject on the subject information included in this booklet.

Your GCSE performance can also affect the general pattern of your course. If you haven't passed Maths or English GCSE you will have to do retakes in these essential subjects.

### **My chosen degree has no specific A-Level requirement. Can I choose whatever I want?**

Yes, though you might find some A-Level subjects provide you with relevant skills or complementary background. For example, if you want to do a Business degree you could take Business Studies A-Level (even though it's not required it will show you what the subject is like), or you might go for A-Levels such as Maths and History. However, avoid narrow programmes. A large number of degree courses offer places based on total UCAS points awarded for each grade achieved on each course rather than specific grades in one subject. See the UCAS Tariff Table 2017 for more information.

### **What can I do if I just study BTEC courses?**

Anything! Many students go on to University with BTEC courses. Often these courses allow students to gain an excellent number of UCAS points because they perform better in coursework rather than an examination. Similarly many choose to go into work or Apprenticeships and these courses provide the skills necessary for students to do so successfully.

### **What could I do if I do not want to go to University?**

Many students do Level 3 courses and choose not to go to University. Several Oldbury Wells students have secured excellent Apprenticeship opportunities with Jaguar Land Rover, Ricoh, the BBC and Engineering at Grainger & Worrall.

Again research into these opportunities is very important. Look at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk) , [www.icloud.com](http://www.icloud.com) or contact County Training at Shropshire County Council who can provide further information about Apprenticeships and how to apply for them.

Students studying Art & Design may also wish to consider an Art Foundation prior to going to University. It is often a requirement of these types of course. It gives students the opportunity to explore a wider Art & Design experience before deciding on their chosen specialism. For more information about Art & Design Foundations courses you can contact Stourbridge College, Wolverhampton College or Shrewsbury College for more information.

## **Professional careers or different degree required courses**

You will see below the A-Level subjects which are most commonly essential requirements for different degree courses. If you know your son / daughter wants to study a certain degree or career pathway, you must take these essential subjects listed. To maximise your chances of gaining a place at a university or in employment, you would be wise to choose one or more of the other useful subjects.

Please be aware different university and employment **entry requirements can change**. Your son / daughter are therefore advised to use this guide alongside more detailed information.

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) is the key website for you to familiarise yourself with and look at what the different Universities are offering.

### **Accountancy (also Banking / Finance / Insurance)**

Essential Qualifications - Usually none although some universities require Mathematics

Useful Qualifications - Mathematics, Business Studies and Economics

### **Actuarial Science / Studies**

Essential Qualifications - Mathematics

Useful Qualifications- Further Mathematics, Economics, and Business Studies

### **Aeronautical Engineering**

Essential Qualifications – Mathematics and or Physics

Useful Qualifications - Further Mathematics and Design Technology

### **Anthropology**

Essential Qualifications - None

Useful Qualifications - Some science courses like AS-level Biology. Sociology is also relevant

### **Archaeology**

Essential Qualifications - None

Useful Qualifications - Geography, History or Science subjects can all be useful

### **Architecture**

Essential Qualifications - Some courses say they want an Arts/Science mix. Some may require Art

Useful Qualifications- Art, Mathematics, Design Technology and Physics

### **Art and Design**

Essential Qualifications - Art or Design Technology

Useful Qualifications - Design Technology and Art and Design. Please note, most entrant onto Art and Design courses will have done a one-year foundation course after completing Year 13.

## **Biochemistry**

Essential Qualifications - Always Chemistry and some will say Biology or Chemistry plus one from Mathematics / Physics / Biology. By studying Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics or Physics will keep all Biochemistry courses open to you.

Useful Qualifications - Biology, Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Physics

## **Biology**

Essential Qualifications - Biology and Chemistry

Useful Qualifications- Mathematics or Physics, Biomedical Sciences (including Medical Science)

## **Business Studies**

Essential Qualifications- None

Useful Qualifications - Mathematics, Business Studies and Economics

## **Chemical Engineering**

Essential Qualifications- Chemistry and Mathematics and sometimes Physics as well

Useful Qualifications- Physics, Biology and Further Mathematics

## **English**

Essential Qualifications- English Literature and some courses may accept English Language. Others may not.

Useful Qualifications- History, Philosophy and Ethics and French or German

## **Environmental Science / Studies**

Essential Qualifications- Many courses will ask for two from Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and Geography

Useful Qualifications- English, Maths, Science, Geography, History and Languages French

## **French**

Essential qualifications - French

Useful qualifications- Another Language, English Literature, History and Government and Politics

## **Geography**

Essential Qualifications- Most degrees require Geography

Useful Qualifications- Some prefer one from Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics or Physics

## **Geology / Earth Science**

Essential Qualifications- Usually two from Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology

Useful Qualifications- Geography

## **German**

Essential Qualifications- German

Useful Qualifications- Another Language, English Literature, History and Government and Politics

## **History**

Essential Qualifications- Most degrees require History

Useful Qualifications- English Literature, Philosophy and Ethics, Government and Politics, Sociology, French and German

## **History of Art**

Essential Qualifications- None

Useful Qualifications- Art, English Literature, History, Philosophy and Ethics, French and German

## **Law**

Essential Qualifications- Usually none, although some require English

Useful Qualifications- English, Maths, Science, Geography, History and Languages

## **Management Studies**

Essential Qualifications- Sometimes Mathematics

Useful Qualifications- Mathematics and Business Studies

## **Materials Science (including Biomedical Materials Science)**

Essential Qualifications- Normally two from Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Biology and some Design Technology

Useful Qualifications- Chemistry, Design and Technology and Further Mathematics

## **Mathematics**

Essential Qualifications- Mathematics and sometimes Further Mathematics

Useful Qualifications- Further Mathematics and Physics, Mechanical Engineering, Mathematics and Physics, Further Mathematics and Design and Technology

## **Media Studies (including Communication Studies)**

Essential Qualifications- Some require English or Media Studies

Useful Qualifications- English, Media Studies, Sociology and Psychology

## **Medicine**

Essential Qualifications- If you do Chemistry, Biology and one from Mathematics and Physics you will keep all Medicine courses open to you. Different options will limit your chances.

Useful Qualifications- Further Mathematics

## **Music**

Essential Qualifications- For most courses Music and Grade VII/VIII

Useful Qualifications- Some have a preference for at least one essay based subject such as History

## **Nursing and Midwifery**

Essential Qualifications- Usually Biology or another Science

Useful Qualifications- Biology, CACHE, Sociology, Psychology and Chemistry, Occupational Therapy

## **Occupational Therapy**

Essential Qualifications- Some courses ask for Biology

Useful Qualifications- Psychology, Physical Education, Sociology or another science

## **Optometry (Ophthalmic Optics)**

Essential Qualifications- Two from Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics or Physics (some courses prefer Biology as one of the choices)

Useful Qualifications- Further Mathematics

## **Orthodontics**

Essential Qualifications- Biology

Useful Qualifications- Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics

## **Pharmacy**

Essential Qualifications - Chemistry and one from Biology, Mathematics and Physics keeps the a number of courses open to you. Some like to see Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics. Doing Chemistry and Biology keeps most courses open.

Useful Qualifications- Mathematics and Physics

## **Philosophy**

Essential Qualifications- None

Useful Qualifications- Mathematics, Philosophy and Ethics

## **Physics**

Essential Qualifications- Mathematics and Physics

Useful Qualifications- Further Mathematics and Chemistry

## **Physiotherapy**

Essential Qualifications- Most courses will consider you just with Biology, however, some require a second science from Chemistry, Mathematics or Physics

Useful Qualifications- Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and Psychology

## **Politics**

Essential Qualifications - None

Useful Qualifications- Government and Politics, History, Philosophy and Ethics and Sociology

## **Psychology**

Essential Qualifications- A few courses ask for one from Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics

Useful Qualifications- Biology, Mathematics, Psychology and Sociology

## **Sociology**

Essential Qualifications - None

Useful Qualifications- Sociology, Psychology and Geography

### **Speech Therapy**

Essential Qualifications- Some want a science such as Biology, Chemistry or Physics. Some specify Biology, but some will consider those with none of these

Useful Qualifications- French, German, English Language, English Literature and Psychology

### **Sport Science / Physical Education**

Essential Qualifications- Many courses want to see one from Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and some will accept Physical Education as a science equivalent

Useful Qualifications- Physical Education and Psychology

### **Surveying**

Essential Qualifications - None

Useful Qualifications- For some types of Surveying i.e. Building Surveying, Mathematics and Physics could be helpful. For Estate Management (General Practice Surveying) most A-Level combinations will be considered.

### **Teacher Training**

Essential Qualifications - None

Useful Qualifications- Any of the listed qualifications - At least one from Art, Biology, CACHE, Chemistry, Design and Technology, Drama, English, French, Geography, German, History, ICT, Mathematics, Music, Physics, Philosophy and Ethics, Physical Education. CACHE meets the entry requirements for early years Primary Teaching and a large number of Primary Teacher Training Degrees.

### **Veterinary Science**

Essential Qualifications – You should do Chemistry and Biology and one from Physics or mathematics to keep the number of course options open to you.

Useful Qualifications – Further Mathematics.

### Planning your future

1. Find out what your predicted GCSE point score is from your form tutor. Write it here.

2. What pathway would most suit you?

3. What have you found out from the UCAS website?

4. What are the UCAS Tariff Tables?

5. If you have a career in mind – Research the qualifications needed. Write them here

6. If you do not know what you wish to do in the future, you will need to start researching some different careers. Choose some of the careers that sound interesting, or that you know nothing about and conduct some research into what these entail.