



# **Joining KS4: choosing your options**

November 2025

# The Key Stage 4 options process

## Key Dates

- 17/09/25 Year 9 options assembly
- 22/09/25 Options booklet live on the website
- 26/11/25 Parent meeting about the options process
- 14/01/26 Personal Development lesson focusing on the options process
- 28/01/26 Options fair
- 04/02/26 Options taster day
- 04/02/26 Options form opens, accessible through the school website
- 25/02/26 Options form closes

# Key Stage 4 curriculum

- Ambitious
- Inclusive
- Broad
- Balanced
- 23 option subjects
- Strong progress and attainment
- Readiness for the future

# What will a timetable look like in year 10?

## Compulsory Subjects

**Four hours per week**

- English Literature
- English Language
- Maths
- Science

- PE for **one** hour per week
- Ancient History, History or Geography - **3 hours per week**
- French or Spanish - **3 hours per week**

# EBacc Subjects

- The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is part of the government's **current** strategy to ensure that students receive a broad and balanced curriculum
- Valued by universities and employers
- The EBacc is a measure of success in 5 subjects, including the core academic subjects - **English, Maths and Science.**

The group also includes:

- **French or Spanish (or another language)**
- **Ancient History, History or Geography**

**\*The following subjects  
cannot be chosen  
together:**

- **Art and Design with  
Graphic Design**
- **PE with Sport**

## **What options can students choose from?**

You can choose two subjects from the following:

|                        |                       |                  |                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Ancient History        | Art and Design*       | Business Studies | Engineering       |
| Computer Science       | Design and Technology | Economics        | Graphic Design*   |
| Food                   | French                | Geography        | Media Studies     |
| Health and Social Care | History               | ICT              | Religious Studies |
| Music                  | PE*                   | Performing Arts  | Statistics        |
| Spanish                | Sport*                | Textiles         |                   |

# GCSE courses and vocational courses

| Aspect             | GCSE courses                                                                                                                                                                  | Vocational courses                                                                                |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus              | Academic and theoretical knowledge                                                                                                                                            | Practical and skills based learning for specific industries                                       |
| Subjects available | Ancient History, Art and Design, Computer Science, DT, Economics, English, Food, French, History, Maths, Media, PE, Religious Studies, Science, Spanish, Statistics, Textiles | Business, Engineering, Graphic Design, Health and Social Care, ICT, Music, Performing Arts, Sport |
| Assessment         | Primarily exam based, with some coursework depending on the subject                                                                                                           | Coursework - heavy with practical tasks and some exams                                            |
| Grades             | Grades range from 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest)                                                                                                                                   | Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*                                                         |
| Progression        | A-Levels, further academic study or training, apprenticeships or a mix of vocational options                                                                                  |                                                                                                   |

# Myths about Vocational Courses

| Myth                                                                | Fact                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>“Vocational courses are only for low achieving students”</b>     | Vocational courses are designed for hands on learners and for those pursuing practical careers. Many high achieving students choose these pathways to specialise their careers early |
| <b>“You cannot go to university with vocational qualifications”</b> | You absolutely can go to university with a vocational qualification. Many high performing Russell Group universities accept vocational qualifications e.g. BTECs or T Levels.        |
| <b>“Vocational courses limit careers options”</b>                   | Vocational pathways provide direct routes into industry. They also prepare students for further training, apprenticeships, or university                                             |
| <b>“Employers don’t value vocational qualifications”</b>            | Employers highly value vocational qualifications often preferring them as a result of their industry knowledge                                                                       |
| <b>“Vocational qualifications are less rigorous than GCSEs”</b>     | Vocational courses have rigorous standards, including assessments, practical tasks, and real world application. They require dedication and hard work                                |

## Grading at GCSE Level

| Aspect            | GCSE courses                                                                                                                                                | Vocational courses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grading system    | Grades range from 9-1 with 9 being the highest                                                                                                              | Graded Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Equivalent Grades | 9<br>8<br>7<br>6<br>5<br>4<br>3<br>2<br>1<br><br><i>*GCSE grades 4-9 enable progression to A-Levels or other Level 3 qualifications and apprenticeships</i> | Distinction* = Grade 8-9<br><br>Level 2 Distinction = Grade 7<br>Level 2 Merit = Grade 5-6<br>Level 2 Pass = Grade 4<br>Level 1 Distinction = Grade 3<br>Level 1 Merit = Grade 2<br>Level 1 Pass = Grade 1<br><br><i>Level 2 Merit or above enables progression to A-Levels or Level 3 Vocational courses and apprenticeships</i> |

# An overview of the compulsory subjects:

| Subject                               | Assessment type                                                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| English Literature & English Language | End of course examinations                                                     |
| Maths and Science                     | End of course examinations (two levels of entry - foundation or higher papers) |

\*Triple Science  
QR codes

# An overview of the compulsory subjects:

| Subject         | Assessment type                                                                |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient History | End of course examinations                                                     |
| History         |                                                                                |
| Geography       |                                                                                |
| French          | End of course examinations (two levels of entry - foundation or higher papers) |
| Spanish         |                                                                                |

# An overview of the option subjects:

| Subject           | Assessment type                           |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Art and Design*   | End of course examination and a portfolio |
| Business Studies  | End of course examinations                |
| Computer Science  |                                           |
| Design Technology | End of course examination and a project   |
| Economics         | End of course examinations                |
| Engineering       | Varied                                    |

# An overview of the option subjects:

| Subject                | Assessment type                                     |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Food                   | End of course examination and a practical           |
| Graphic Design*        | Varied                                              |
| Health and Social Care |                                                     |
| ICT                    |                                                     |
| Media Studies          | End of course examinations                          |
| Music                  |                                                     |
| PE*                    | End of course examination, practical and coursework |
| Performing Arts        | Assessed performances and workshops                 |
| Religious Studies      | End of course examinations                          |
| Sport*                 | Varied                                              |
| Textiles               | End of course examinations                          |

\*The following subjects cannot be chosen together:

- Art and Design with Graphic Design
- PE with Sport

**GREEN** option

# Business Studies



## Why is Business Studies important for you?

Business Studies is highly relevant to everyday living and you will come across 'real life' business examples in your daily life. It is a fascinating subject, covering different aspects of business such as business start-ups, finance, marketing, production, human resources and growth.

It is a highly-respected GCSE that employers value as it helps to prepare learners for the workplace in a range of sectors and enterprises.

## What will you learn?

You will learn about a range of key business features that are found across the economy.

You will learn about what it takes to work in small, medium and large enterprises and develop an appreciation of the challenges facing entrepreneurs.

You will study marketing strategies, external environment, finance, motivation and communication.

## How will you be assessed?

There are **two** exams at the end of the course:

- Unit 1 - Introduction to small business
- Unit 2 - Building a business



**Contact: Mr Grace, Head of Business and Economics**

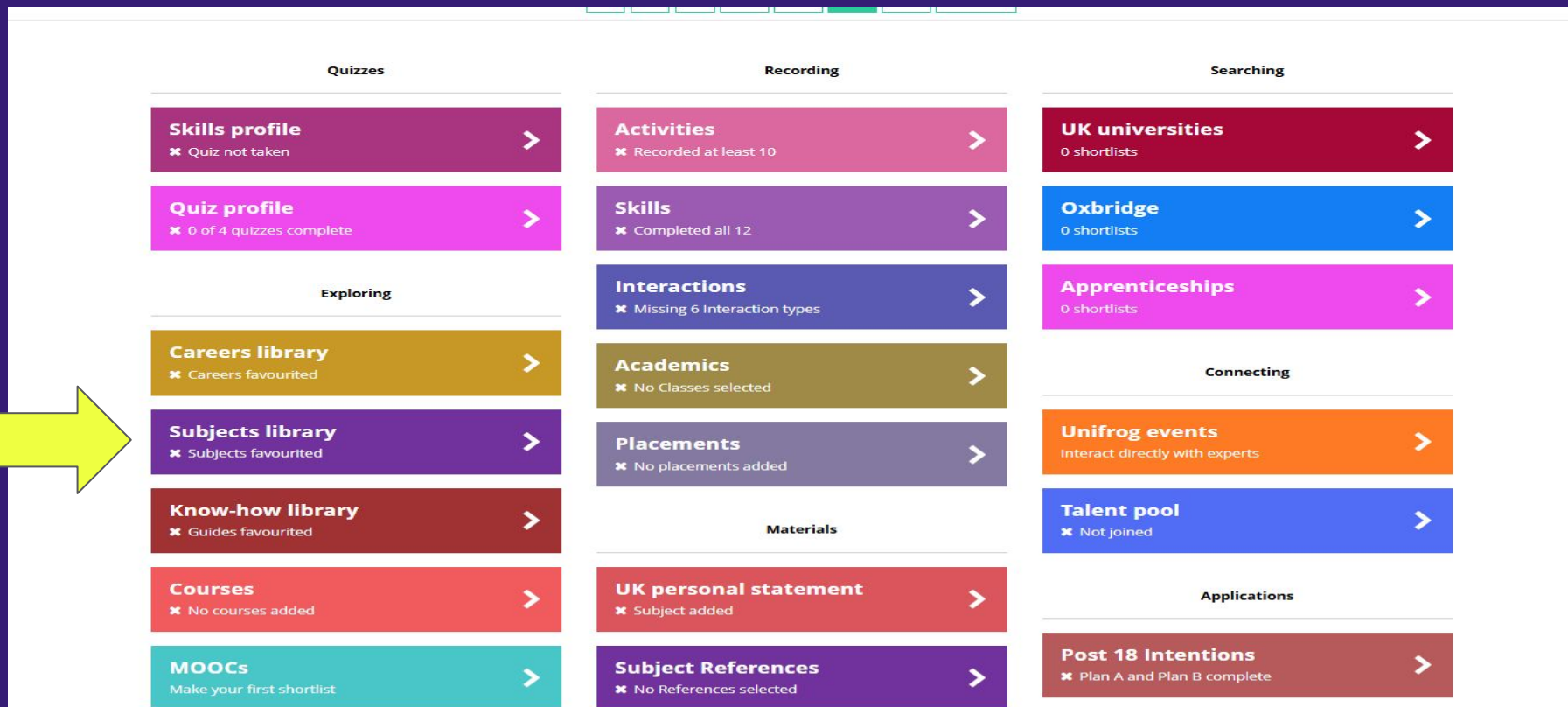
# Supporting your child to choose their GCSE Options

When considering what choices to make in the optional part of the curriculum, think about the following questions with your child:

- What is your child good at?
- What do they enjoy?
- What are their aspirations and expectations?
- What does your child want to do after GCSEs?
- What subjects will support their future plans?
- Are they making choices for the right reasons?
- Have you collectively gathered all of the advice and guidance before making decisions?
- Are you using career platforms like \***Unifrog**\* to support options decisions at home?

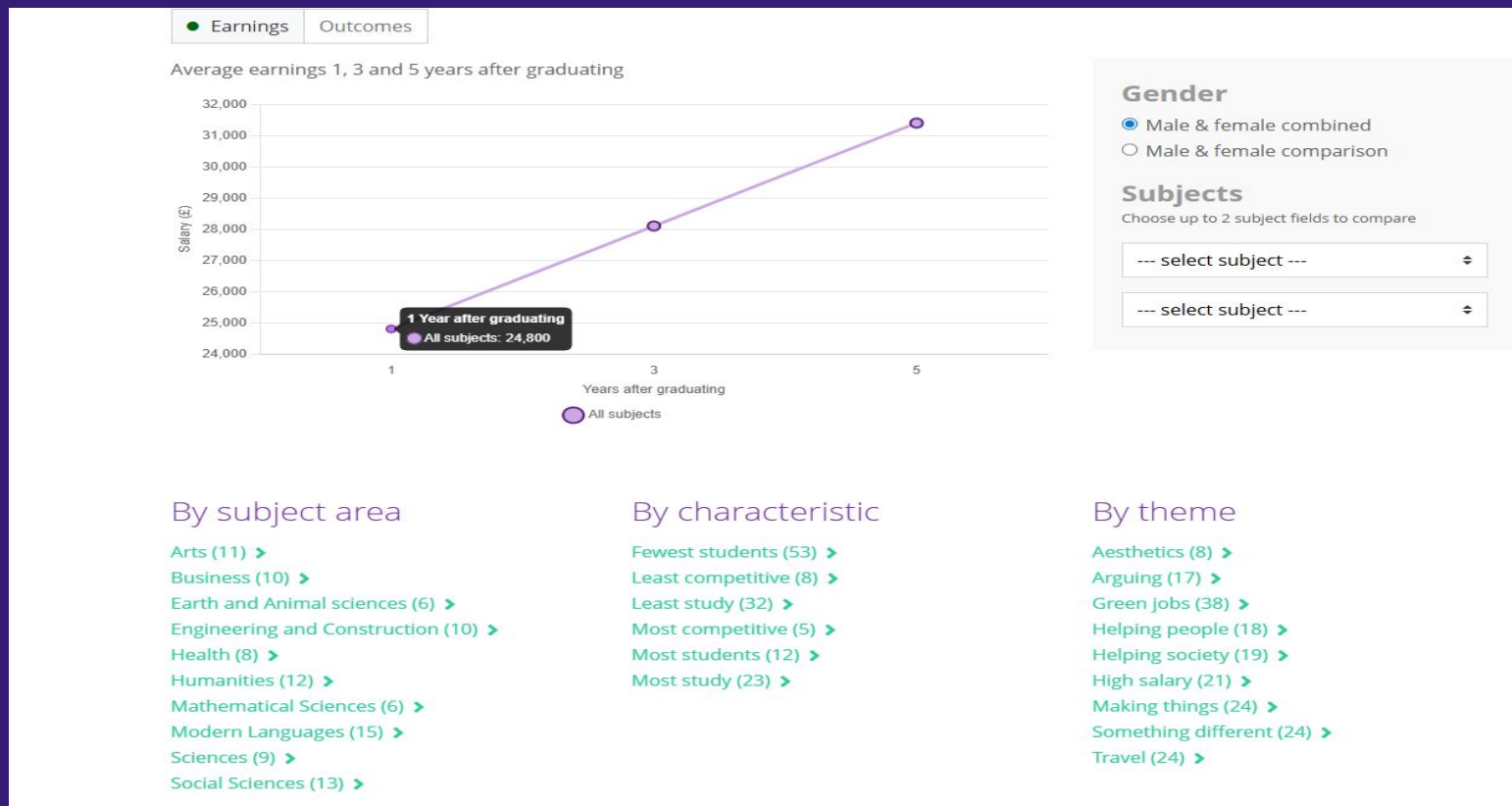
# Using unifrog at home

- Your child can access unifrog from the student intranet
- You will find the link to the subject library on the home page
- Your child has received an email from unifrog with their log in details
- They will need to use their school email address to log in



# Unifrog subjects library

- Your child can access unifrog from the student intranet
- Use [this link](#) to access a section called subject library
- They have received an email from unifrog with their log in details
- They will need to use their school email address to log in
- 



# Enrichment opportunities in KS4

At Key Stage 4, enrichment and extracurricular activities play a vital role in supporting students' academic, personal and social development.

## Key opportunities include:

ECA

### \*Work experience

Volunteering and community engagement

Leadership roles

Subject specific careers events

Careers and Further Education blog

1-1 careers support

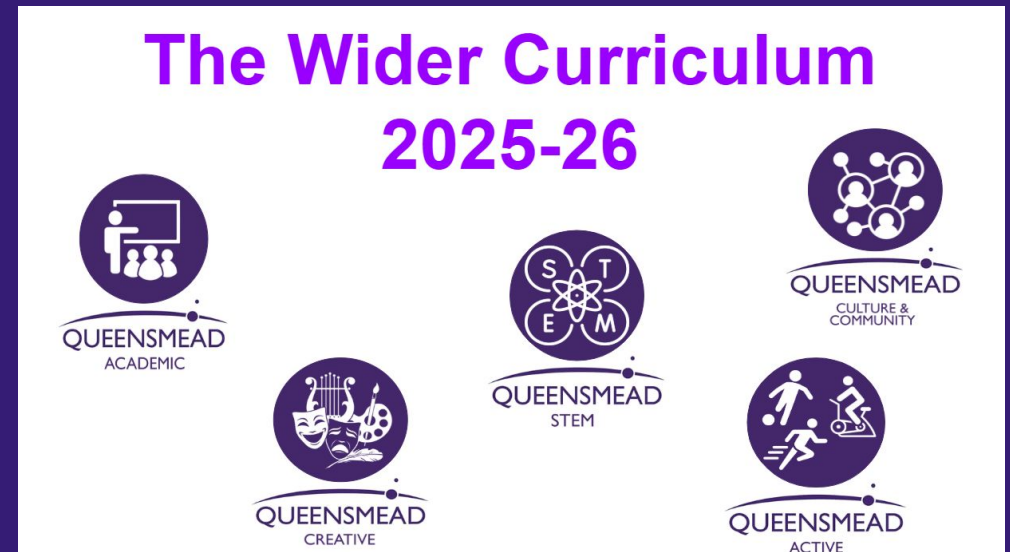
Uxbridge College carousel

Careers specific workshops

Outreach work

Charity work

Super Curriculum



# Next Steps

- 14/01/26 Personal Development session focusing on the options process
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