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9th February 2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

Choosing Options: How to submit Options, support available and FAQs

The Google Form for selecting options is now live and can be accessed at the following address: <https://forms.gle/3MWz5nYTbLuW8scd8>. For convenience, this letter has also been emailed to students so they can click the link from their GMail; students will need to be logged in to complete their choices.

All forms should be submitted by Wednesday 22nd February.

For students still unsure of their options, there are videos explaining the course content and assessment methods for unfamiliar subjects. These can be accessed through the 'Options Information' shared Google Drive.

The choices made at this stage are still provisional, and it may be that some changes need to be made to ensure that the school can accommodate students' needs. To this end, there is also space for students to express their thoughts about the options process this year, and to provide some additional detail about their options choices. This is the ideal place to communicate any difficulties with options blocks, or unusual combinations of subjects.

Please find attached my responses to some of the questions most frequently asked by parents/carers and students this year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K Newstead".

Mr K Newstead
Assistant Headteacher

FAQS

Is Double Science just two sciences? Do I get to pick?

No. 'Double' refers to the number of GCSE grades that are awarded for completing the course. You get two GCSE grades for completing the Double Award in Science, which is made up of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

I need to take Triple Science, but it clashes with something else, what do I do?

Firstly, do you really *need* Triple Science, or do you *want* it? Triple Science will give you that deeper exploration of the Sciences, but for further study post-16, the Double Award is perfectly adequate (in some other schools, only Double Science is offered.)

You should consider whether taking the Triple is more or less important to you than the other subject that you would like to take in that block.

I want to take the Ebacc route, do I need to take Triple Science and Computer Science?

Neither. Double Science counts towards the Ebacc. If you wish to take the Ebacc pathway, you need to pick a humanities subject (History or Geography) and a language (French or Spanish). Everything else is included in your core offer at Holbrook. If you take computer science, whichever grade is higher between your CS grade and your Science grade will be taken to calculate your Ebacc score. This is not something that students will see or benefit from directly.

The blocks are awful. I cannot take the combination of subjects that I want.

The blocks are constructed around the staff that are available to teach, and the *expected* needs of students. It's not easy to anticipate the combinations of subjects that students will desire, so we don't always get this right. Please use the space on the options form to explain your difficulty. It may be that there is nothing that we can do, but this will at least inform our actions and the content of your meetings with the Senior Leadership Team and Careers Team to discuss your choices.

What if I change my mind?

This happens, and it's okay - up to a point!

The first two weeks of Year 10 are typically designated 'settling in' for options, and beyond that point we do not allow students to change unless there are very serious circumstances surrounding that request.

Who can I ask for help over the half-term holiday?

If it cannot wait until after half-term, email me: kerrick.newstead@holbrookacademy.org and I'll do my best to reply in a timely fashion.