



Isle of Wight
Education Federation

Year 9 Careers Information Booklet



Your Options Your Future

A guide to selecting Key Stage 4 courses
for students and their parents/carers



Carisbrooke College
ASPIRE AND ACHIEVE



Medina College
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Introduction

As a Federation, we are passionate about making a difference and equipping you for your life ahead.

In selecting your Key Stage 4 pathway and the subjects you will study in Years 10 and 11, you are making the first important decision in your future career journey. This decision could potentially have an impact on your future possibilities as well as your long-term achievements and aspirations. For this reason, you need to make informed decisions in selecting your subjects and be aware of how these could affect your future in terms of continued learning, training and employment opportunities.

Whilst your future career or career pathway may seem far away, by considering your career possibilities and areas of potential career interest in line with your skills, abilities and interests, you are more likely to make the best subject choices for your future needs.

The next two years are crucial in terms of demonstrating a good attitude to study, good attendance and maintaining a positive level of behaviour. Whatever pathway you select after Year 11, you will be expected to demonstrate to colleges, employers or training providers that you have a good record of engagement during your time at school.

You should also take opportunities to develop important transferable and employability skills such as teamwork, communication, resilience, problem solving and leadership. These skills will be required by future employers and can be developed through a range of extra-curricular activities such as sport, music or volunteering, as well as through your work in school.

The information in this booklet is designed to support you in the process of choosing subjects. It highlights the importance of considering many factors in making your decisions, not only your academic ability and preference but also the development of your life skills and personal attributes which will support your future success.

Read through this booklet carefully and don't be afraid to ask questions – there are plenty of people including your Tutor, Subject Teachers, Year Head and Careers Staff who will be happy to help you. Good luck!





Unifrog (www.unifrog.org)

Unifrog is an award-winning one-stop-shop Careers platform which enables students to explore their interests and skills, finding future career possibilities and options for further study.

Using Unifrog can help you understand more about yourself - your interests, skills and abilities. It can also help you to gain an awareness of the opportunities and possibilities that lie ahead. Using your awareness of yourself and your opportunities, you can make good decisions about your future, preparing you for the changes as you move through your education and training.



unifrog

You have been using Unifrog with your tutor to:

- Identify your strengths and interests (using Holland's theory of personality and job choices) and how these relate to potential career areas.
- Explore careers and subjects of interest using the online Careers Library and Subject Library.
- Log activities that you are engaged in and the skills you have developed through these activities.
- Track your continued development of key transferable skills, providing examples and evidence.





Through Unifrog, you have access to extensive careers information which you can filter to suit your potential interests. You are also building a profile which you can later use to create your CV and support future applications.

In Year 10, further Unifrog tools will be added to your account to support your ongoing career planning, and if you go on to study at the Island VI Form, you will have access to further tools.

We encourage you to make as much use of Unifrog as you can to support your career decision making and track your skills development - remember you can use it at home as well as in school.

Interests Profile and Careers Library

Whilst no-one expects you to know exactly what you want to do in your future, having an idea of the sort of careers that interest you (eg practical, caring, creative) or the industry sector in which you would like to work (eg Engineering, Business, Healthcare) can help you in making your GCSE and other future choices.

You might wish to research the careers suggested by your Unifrog Interests profile, or you could search the Careers Library using your favourite subjects, a keyword, career area (eg Transport and Logistics), skill (eg Digital Literacy), subject group (eg Animals) or theme (eg Helping Society).

Skills

Through the Unifrog Skills tool, you can track your development of the following transferable skills:

- Reading
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Planning
- Listening
- Speaking
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Problem Solving
- Creativity
- Independence
- Resilience





In the past, many people had a 'job for life' which meant that they stayed in the same profession, often with the same employer, for the duration of their working life. In modern society, with rapid technological advancements and economic changes, this is increasingly rare. This means that you are likely to have a number of job changes within your future career. The transferable skills mentioned above, along with a willingness to learn, will stand you in good stead whatever directions your future career may take.

When you apply for your first job, you are likely to have to provide evidence of how you demonstrate these skills, both in an application and at an interview. Keeping your Unifrog records up to date will really help you prepare for this.

Choosing your Subjects

In terms of future career pathways, the Core subjects that you will take combined with a balanced range of chosen Foundation subjects should leave most future options available to you. However, the skills and knowledge you will develop through specific Foundation courses at Key Stage 4 (chosen courses eg Art, French, Geography, Music) will be useful to particular career and study options in the future. This is why it is important to consider your choices carefully and to think about your potential career possibilities.



Your studies

To help you decide what to study in Years 10 and 11, it is a good idea to start by thinking about your current subjects. Consider:

- What subjects do you enjoy studying or find most interesting?
- What subjects do you perform best in?

Have a look at the subject options that are available to you at Key Stage 4. Consider:

- Are there any new subjects that you are interested in studying and would like to find out more about?





Your interests and abilities

Next, think about your interests, strengths, skills and abilities and what sort of person you are. For example:

- What sort of interests do you have both inside and outside of school? These might include sport, music, drama, painting, building things, cooking, volunteering or babysitting. Do these relate to any Key Stage 4 courses offered in school?
- How do you learn best? Do you enjoy practical work, writing essays, problem solving, being creative, performing or using languages? Do you usually do well in exams or would you prefer to take subjects with coursework involved? What Key Stage 4 courses suit your learning preferences?

You may wish to draw up a shortlist of possible Key Stage 4 courses based on your answers to these questions.

| Potential Key Stage 4 Subject Choices: | |
|--|---|
| • | • |
| • | • |
| • | • |
| • | • |

Your Career ideas

Finally, consider any career ideas you have, employment sectors you are interested in, or any subjects you are hoping to study in the future. You may wish to check your 'favourites' list on Unifrog.

Then think about how these relate to the subjects you are considering.





For example, students considering Engineering or Carpentry in the future might wish to select Design and Technology; a student considering Animation or Architecture as a career area might select Fine Art; a student hoping to become a member of Air Cabin Crew might benefit from choosing to study a language and students who wish to work with younger children in the future might find Child Development to be a helpful subject.

Fill out the table below to summarise your potential career areas and subject links. You can check the Unifrog Subject Library for advice on the subjects that are useful for any particular career area.

| Potential Career Area | Useful Subjects |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Remember that you should never select a subject for career reasons alone: you should also ensure that you have appropriate skills in the subject and would enjoy studying it for the next two years. Your career ideas may well change and you would not want to be stuck studying a subject that is not right for you.

Other considerations

Pathway 1 or Pathway 2?

The Pathway 1 option at IWEF (the English Baccalaureate) should be considered by students who have high academic aspirations and are thinking about progressing to A levels and a more competitive university. This subject combination provides a strong educational foundation from which it is possible to specialise in future years.





This is not to say that students who choose to pursue Pathway 2 will not be able to progress to A levels/other Level 3 qualifications, and university. There are 130 universities across the UK offering over 35,000 courses; these inevitably have a range of academic subject requirements. Whilst students taking Pathway 2 may opt for a slightly more 'specialised' approach which may narrow down future subject choices, it will still leave lots of opportunities open.

Many students will choose to take a vocational route at either Post-16 or Post-18. This means that they will study a course related to a particular occupation or employment sector, take on an apprenticeship or other training, or go into employment. Even though it might be quite early to be making decisions about your pathway after Year 11, if you have an idea of what you think you might like to do, you can select subjects that will be of greatest benefit.

Whichever pathway you choose, remember that one of the most important factors in selecting Key Stage 4 courses is considering what you will enjoy and do well in, rather than selecting what you think you **should** pick.

Strike a Balance

We would advise that all students select a balanced curriculum. This is especially important if you do not know what you want to do in the future as you should try to select subjects which allow you flexibility and that you would enjoy studying in greater depth. This will help you keep as many options open as possible.

The Pathway 1 and Pathway 2 guidelines, along with restrictions on particular subject combinations, are in place to help ensure a balanced curriculum. However, you should also think carefully if you are intending to combine a number of practical subjects or a number of vocational subjects. This may mean that you are less likely to develop a balanced range of skills.

If you intend to follow an academic pathway at Post-16 and Post-18, do not think that you must follow a Key Stage 4 curriculum that is made up entirely of more 'traditional' or 'academic' subjects. Take the opportunity to select a subject that develops your creative or practical skills through Drama, Food Technology, Music or Sport for example.





Decision Making

The purpose of the Year 9 Pathways Evening, Pathways Presentation, the Pathways Booklet and this Careers Information Booklet is to help you make an **informed** decision about your Key Stage 4 choices. This means that you make the best choices, for the best reasons, based on facts and research.

There are a number of actions you could take to make an informed decision about your subjects. These include:

| | |
|--|---|
| Consider the pros and cons of each possible subject. | Talk to someone who is already doing the subject. |
| Talk to your parents. | Decide how good you are at the subject (eg look at previous school reports). |
| Ask the subject teacher if they think the subject will be suitable for you. | Think about how well this subject suits your preferred learning style (eg practical work, coursework, exams). |
| Talk to your tutor. | Consider what would happen if you did not select a particular subject. |
| Think about the career and study possibilities that could follow on from a particular subject. | Consider your future career possibilities. |
| Talk to Careers staff (available at the Pathways Evening). | Check Unifrog to see what subjects are useful for your chosen career area(s). |
| Read the Pathways Booklet carefully. | Read the Careers Information Booklet carefully. |

You might also have your own ideas about actions you could take in order to make an informed decision.

Now think about the five most important actions that you feel would be helpful in making your subject choices. Write them down in order of importance in the table on the next page. You may have more than five actions that you wish to take, in which case, just write down your top five.



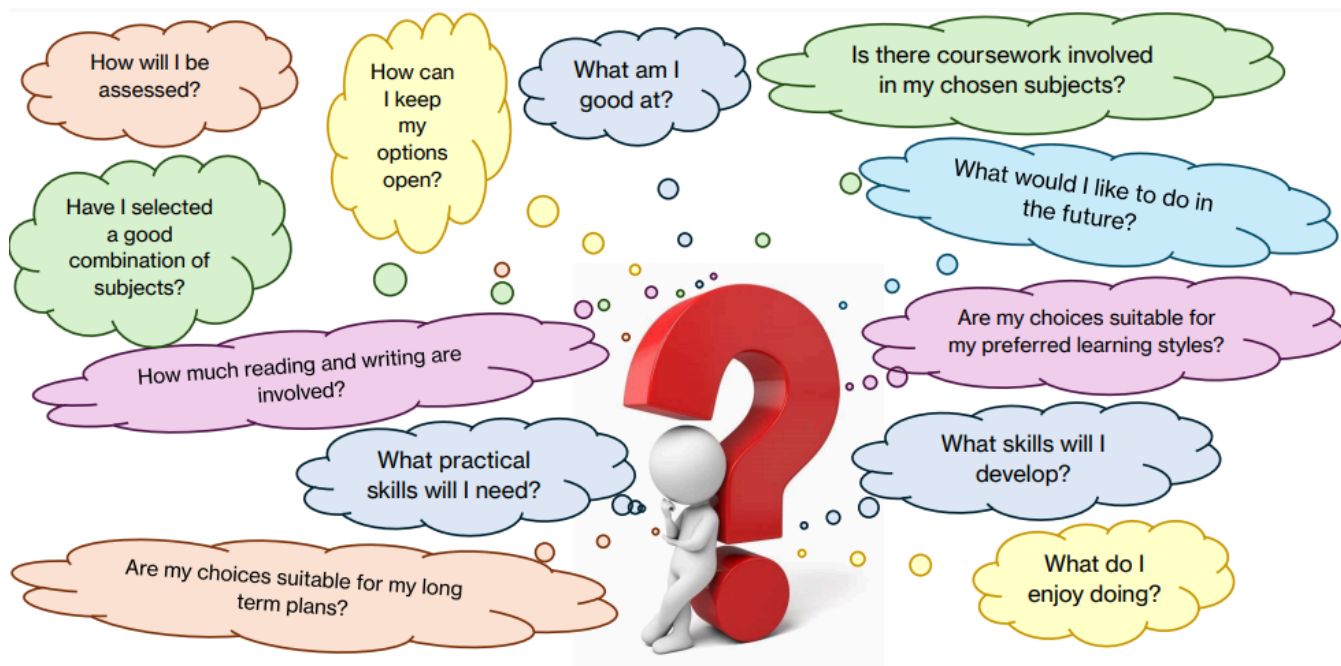


| Priority Number | Action |
|-----------------|--------|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |



Questions to consider

You may wish to consider the following when deciding on your subjects:





There is a lot to think about!



Reasons to Choose a Subject

Be honest with yourself about your reasons for choosing a particular subject. Are these sensible reasons? Consider the points below.

| | Good reasons to choose a subject  | Bad reasons to choose a subject  |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | You like it or you find it interesting. | Your friends are doing it. |
| 2 | You are good at it. | You think you should do it – even if you don't want to. |
| 3 | You need it or it is useful for a future career. | Your parents think it is a good idea – but you don't. |
| 4 | You can develop new skills by doing it. | You can't think of anything else to choose. |
| 5 | You think you will do well in it. | You think it will be easy. |
| 6 | Your teachers think it is a suitable choice for you. | It sounds good but you haven't investigated it properly. |
| 7 | It will combine well with other subjects and help your general education. | You really like the teacher you have got now. |
| 8 | You like the method of assessment and teaching. | You think it will impress people now or later on. |

Also read the advice on Page 7 of the Pathways Booklet.

Achievement in Core Subjects

It is vitally important that you work hard to achieve good grades in English Language and Mathematics at GCSE. A pass in both of these subjects is a standard entrance requirement for many Post-16 study and training programmes including VI Form and apprenticeships. It may also be necessary to attain a GCSE pass in Science for many courses.

It is also common for **some** university courses to specify a minimum GCSE requirement in English Language, Maths or Science, for example a minimum grade 7 or 6. Occasionally, a university course may require a minimum grade in English Literature at GCSE as an entrance requirement.





Skills Development and Extra-Curricular Activities

As well as thinking about your subject options next year, this is a good time to consider how you are progressing in developing your transferable skills. In Mentoring periods you have been logging your skills and activities on Unifrog. If you find it challenging to think of examples of activities you have been involved in and skills you have developed, you might need to think about additional activities to participate in, both inside and outside of school.

Extra-curricular activities are important as they offer opportunities to develop your transferable skills. When you apply for a job in future, employers will want to hear examples of how you have developed these skills. A list of examples of transferable skills is provided earlier in this booklet.

Extra-curricular activities can involve sport, music, drama, volunteering, Duke of Edinburgh awards, Scouts or Guides, Cadets, St John Ambulance, dance, horse-riding, cooking or baking, babysitting, conservation work or creative projects. There are lots of activities that you can get involved in that will develop your transferable skills and prepare you for a future career. Furthermore, involvement in extra-curricular activities can help your mental health and wellbeing, develop your confidence and improve your performance in school. These are all good reasons to get involved!

Options after Year 11 (Post-16)

Under the Raising Participation Age Legislation, students must follow one of these pathways after Key Stage 4.

**Stay in full-time
Education**

(VI Form College, School or
Further Education College)

**Apprenticeship or
Traineeship**

(with an Employer and
Training Provider)

**Employment or
Volunteering**

(with part-time Education
or Training)

It is helpful to have an idea of your possible Post-16 pathways when you are selecting and working towards your Key Stage 4 qualifications. The table on the next page outlines key information about some of the main choices.





| Options | Full time Education | | | | Apprenticeships and Traineeships | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| | A levels | T levels | Level 3 BTEC or equivalent | Level 1 or 2 Vocational or BTEC qualification | Apprenticeship | Traineeship |
| Duration | 2 years | 2 years | 2 years | 1 year | 18 months - 2 years | Up to 6 months |
| Learning method | 100% classroom-based | 80% classroom-based and 20% placement | Classroom based, however some subjects may require a placement | Classroom based, however some courses may offer a placement | 80% on-the-job training and 20% off-the-job training | Usually on-the-job training with some classroom-based learning |
| Type of programme | Academic - unpaid | Unpaid | Unpaid | Unpaid | Paid | Unpaid although some expenses may be available |
| How they are assessed | Linear - assessed through external exams at the end of Year 13 | Mixture of assessments | Coursework and exams | Coursework and exams | Coursework and exams | Coursework and potentially exams |
| Progression | Usually Higher Education or Higher Apprenticeship although sometimes Employment | Higher Education, Higher Apprenticeship or Employment | Higher Education, Higher/ Advanced Apprenticeship or Employment | Level 2 qualifications (if starting at Level 1) Level 3 BTEC, T level or an Apprenticeship | Advanced/ Higher Apprenticeship or Employment | Intermediate Apprenticeship or Employment |
| Where they are available | Island VI Form or other school VI Form | IW College | IW College, HTP (although some BTEC qualifications are offered at Island VI Form) | IW College and HTP | IW College, HTP and other training providers | HTP |



| Options | Full time Education | | | | Apprenticeships and Traineeships | |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| | A levels | T levels | Level 3 BTEC or equivalent | Level 1 or 2 Vocational or BTEC qualification | Apprenticeship | Traineeship |
| Key Stage 4 requirements | 5 GCSE passes (or equivalent) including English and Maths with other subject specific requirements | 5 GCSE passes (or equivalent) including English and Maths, potentially with other subject requirements | 5 GCSE passes (or equivalent) including English and Maths | 4 GCSEs (or equivalent) at minimum grade 3 including English and Maths for Level 2 3 GCSEs at minimum grade 2 for Level 1 | Usually 5 GCSE passes (or equivalent) including English and Maths | No specific requirements |
| Who they are for | Students who would like to follow an academic pathway or combine academic/ vocational learning as well as keep their options open | Students who are fairly certain about their career path | Students who are interested in a particular vocational area | Students who are interested in a vocational programme and do not have the GCSE qualifications to progress to Level 3 | Students that are ready to enter work | Students that need to develop further skills and/or gain further qualifications before progressing to the workplace |

Which pathways are you most interested in after Year 11?

Write down your thoughts below:





Further Information and Resources



GCSE/Key Stage 4 Choices

BBC Bitesize

GCSE options: Everything you
need to know about choosing your
GCSE subjects

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zrjh92p#zp3hsk7>

Career Pilot

Choosing your GCSEs

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/gcses/choosing-your-gcses>

Youth Employment UK

Choosing GCSE Options: 19 questions to ask yourself

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/choosing-gcse-options-19-questions-ask/>

Department for Education EBacc Leaflet

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c0502b740f0b67052a55bb8/DfE_EBacc_Leaflet.pdf

Future Pathways

Career Pilot

Your choices at 16

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/your-choices-at-16/help-with-choosing-your-post-16-options>

UCAS

Choose Your Future
(Higher Education, Apprenticeships and other information)

<https://www.ucas.com/>

Informed Choices

Choosing the right subjects at Post-16 (produced by the
Russell Group of Universities -
24 of the top research-intensive universities in the UK)

<https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

General

Unifrog

Student accounts

Island Futures

Careers Advice for Young People

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/schools-and-education/island-futures/>

