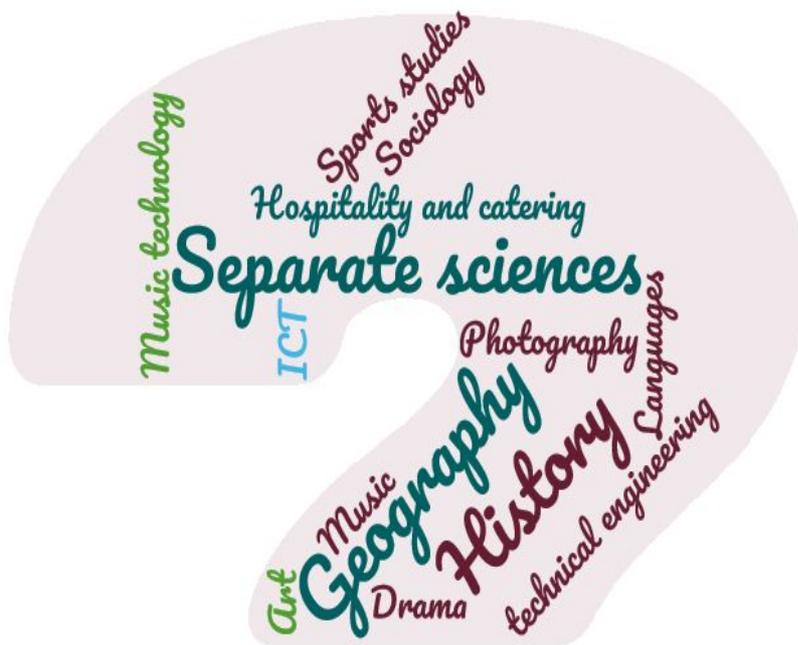




UXBRIDGE
HIGH SCHOOL

Year 9 Options 2021



This booklet has been designed to help and inform students and their parents or carers of their choices for their next phase of education. The Mastery stage covers years 10 and 11 and finishes with GCSE exams at the end of Year 11. Students will need to select some of the subjects which they wish to take forward and this should only be done after careful and thoughtful planning. Details of the courses studied at Mastery can be found at the back of this booklet.

We hope that you find this information informative and interesting. Should you need any points clarified, please do not hesitate to ask members of staff. We are only a phone call or email away if you need extra help.

During the Mastery stage students will study GCSEs, BTEC First qualifications and other vocational courses, complete coursework and sit examinations. The result of this work will make up the qualifications upon which future study and career prospects will depend.

In the Foundation stage, all students follow the same curriculum. However, for the Mastery stage, different arrangements exist. There are some decisions that have to be made as to the courses that each student will follow.

Some decisions are automatic. All students will continue to study:

- English (2 GCSEs);
- Mathematics (1 GCSE);
- Science (2 GCSEs);
- Religious education (1 GCSE);
- Physical education (enrichment);
- Citizenship (enrichment).

In addition, students will follow three other courses and it is the selection of these courses that requires careful and thoughtful consideration. Our aims with these choices are to ensure that:

- All students embark upon a course of study that will enable them to achieve at the highest level;
- All students can work towards obtaining 9 examination grades at grade 5 or higher, including English and maths;
- All students plan to continue their studies in our Sixth Form.

The Mastery curriculum at Uxbridge High School

All students must study English, mathematics, science, religious education at GCSE level, together with physical education and citizenship as enrichment courses. Students will also be able to select three additional subjects to study.

We have designed our curriculum for Mastery to allow choice and flexibility in which subjects students can opt for, whilst also ensuring students study a broad and balanced range of subjects that keep future and changing career options open to them.

Types of course

There are some variations in the types of courses on offer. These include GCSEs, BTECs and VCERTs (Vocational Certificates). The GCSEs are classified as academic subjects and the others are classified as vocational.

GCSE courses

These are traditional qualifications that can involve controlled assessments (coursework) and examinations. Most GCSEs have a higher proportion of examinations than non-examined assessment and many are assessed entirely through examination.

Equivalent vocational courses

Vocational courses are offered in music technology, PE, Creative iMedia, dance, engineering and health and social care. These have a vocational or work-related bias with a high non-examined assessment component and a reduced number of formal examinations to sit compared with GCSE. These courses are all offered at level 2 and are equivalent to one GCSE.

These courses are assessed largely by non-examined assessment rather than examinations, Typically 60% of the course is assessed through NEAs and 40% by an examination. There are often two opportunities to sit the examination.

English Baccalaureate

Students and parents may be aware of the 'English Baccalaureate' which is a specific combination of GCSE subjects. These are: English, mathematics, science, history or geography and a modern foreign language. Students can opt to follow this combination of subjects if they are performing well in these subjects and have a genuine interest in them. Please be encouraged to ask questions on the suitability of this curriculum for your child.

Please note that when choosing a modern foreign language, students should select the one they currently study. It is not possible to change languages at this point as GCSE builds on the prior learning completed in Foundation and Transition stages.

How are your subjects graded?

Examinations and controlled assessments are designed to assess what students know, understand and can do.

Subjects will often have examination papers and non-examined assessment at different levels of difficulty so that knowledge, understanding and ability can be tested properly. Different grades may be awarded for each level and certificates will represent fairly how good students are at a subject.

GCSEs are graded on a numerical scale between 9 and 1. Grade 5 is the new benchmark for progressing to A levels and other Level 3 qualifications.

Some vocational courses are graded differently. Students can gain a level 2 pass, merit, distinction or distinction* grade – each of these grades are equivalent to a GCSE grade 4 to 9, or a Level 1 pass, merit, distinction which is broadly equivalent to a GCSE grade 1 to 3.

Written papers

All GCSEs have written papers taken under formal examination conditions. These examinations are taken in the final term of Year 11.

Students will be given practice in examination techniques, both in lessons and in 'examination' conditions in an exam hall.

Some subjects have practical examinations taken in specialist rooms, such as art and drama. All examinations are very formal, with strict rules as to what may or may not be allowed, e.g. what equipment may be taken into the examination.

Non-examined assessment

A few subjects have some form of non-examined assessment, although this is being reduced by the exam boards. Success with non-examined assessment requires a different range of skills compared with passing exams and it is therefore a good idea to find out how much of a GCSE is assessed in this way, when making a decision.

Options selection form

You will be emailed an electronic options form. There will be the opportunity to meet with a member of staff to go through the form through an online parents' evening on the 2nd March. This form must then be returned. Completed forms must be returned by 5th March, when they will be checked by your son/daughter's form tutor, before going to the head of year for a final check.

It is important that the form is completed accurately and indicates the preference of the subject opted for. This is shown clearly on each form. However, if you have any queries, please contact the school directly.

After examinations

The courses taken during the next two years will result in the highest possible grades for our students. These grades will help determine future study and career opportunities.

The sixth form at Uxbridge High School offers a full range of courses to meet the needs of all students.

Advanced level courses (Level 3) will normally require the higher pass grades. Students will need to achieve 5 GCSEs at Level 5 or merit or distinction level in BTEC or VCERT.

There are also Level 2 courses in a range of subjects. These are one-year courses and require a lower range of GCSE / BTEC First Certificate passes.

Although the majority of students continue to study and gain more qualifications in our sixth form, a number do enter the world of work and take up apprenticeships. For these students every effort is made to ensure that their qualifications are the most suitable.

Careers education and guidance

All students at Uxbridge High School follow a planned programme of careers education and guidance. Three broad aims are identified for this programme:

- to help students to understand themselves and develop their capabilities;
- to help students to investigate careers and opportunities;
- to help students to implement their career plans.

There will be many more opportunities for our students to develop skills that will enable them to take a greater responsibility for managing their lifelong learning and career development.

Making decisions

Students have been introduced to the following four-step plan to help them handle the process of making decisions.

- Step 1 Get the question clear
- Step 2 Find out all the facts
- Step 3 Weigh the facts up in your mind
- Step 4 Make the decision

Careful and thoughtful planning now will help ensure success at the highest possible level.

Step 1 Get the question clear

What subjects can I choose from?

Do all the subjects lead to examinations?

How long have I got to make up my mind?

Who is around to help me if I get into difficulties?

Step 2 Find out all the facts that matter

What is the content of the subjects I am about to choose?

Are there any new subjects I have not studied before?

What methods of study does each course use?

What special skills might I need to be successful in them?

Where do my subject strengths and weaknesses lie?

Step 3 Weigh up the facts in your mind

Which subjects do I consider more important at this stage?

If my career choice changes, will my subject choice still suit?

How much of a balance do I get in my choice?

Will my abilities change as I get older?

Step 4 Make the decision

Has everyone been consulted - parents, subject teachers, careers teachers?

Is this choice my own individual one?

Am I happy about my choice?

Have I got any worries?

Who is the person to talk to if there are any worries?

Completed options forms are checked to make sure the most appropriate and suitable courses have been chosen.

During this period, students may be invited to an interview to discuss their option choices.

Parents will be informed by letter of the courses allocated to their son/daughter late in the summer term.

Please remember that every effort is made to offer all the courses mentioned in this booklet but financial, timetable and staffing constraints could mean that if only a small number of students select a particular course it may not be possible to offer it. If this is the case, students will be offered a reserve subject.

More information?

It is important that students consult fully with their parents and subject teachers if they are to make informed decisions.

Please find below the names of other staff who may be able to provide additional information or help you answer your questions:

Head of Year	Mr Janar
Art/Photography	Mr Williams
Business Studies	Mrs Kaur-Hender
Dance	Miss Gardner
Drama	Mrs Moore
Creative iMedia	Mr Burton
English	Miss Gingles
Geography	Miss Sonigra
Health and Social Care	Miss Gardner
History	Mrs Harris
Languages	Mr Smith
Maths	Miss Devani
Music	Mr Dawson
PE	Mr Emery
RE	Miss Brown
Science	Mrs Kaur
Sociology/Psychology	Mr Baichande
Technology	Mr Buckley

Form tutors are also fully involved in supporting students at this critical time. They will check and sign the options selection form when completed.

Online Support

The following websites may be of some help:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

<http://www.plotr.co.uk/career-choices/school/gcse-options-advice-guide/>

<https://www.brightknowledge.org/knowledge-bank/education-pathways/year-9-11>

Important Dates

Monday 22 February 2021

Y9 options assembly

Tuesday, 2 March 2021

Year 9 parents' information afternoon 2-6pm

Friday, 5 March 2021

Deadline for the return of the completed options forms.

March 2021

Year 9 appointments with Head of Year/other staff