



## **Year 9 - Building Your Curriculum (March 2025)**

The next milestone for our Year 9 students involves building their GCSE curriculum.

Our aim as a school is clear: we want students to choose subjects that they will enjoy and can achieve success in. Students will receive an **expression of interest form** that they complete online which is their way of formally communicating the subjects they are interested in.

### **GCSEs & Vocational Courses**

The GCSEs are a set of qualifications your child will take in Year 11. These exams play a crucial role in shaping their future academic and career paths. In their assembly before February half-term, we discussed the idea of GCSEs being like 'keys', they let them into the next step of their academic journey, whatever that looks like. Whether they want an apprenticeship in the future or want to pursue further education, GCSEs unlock those opportunities for them. We also have vocational courses on offer for our students which offer an element of coursework to be completed as well as examinations. It's important to note that we do not recommend students studying more than one vocational course - traditionally, some students have thought this to be an easier route when that is not the case at all. Vocational subjects are suitable for students who will be motivated to complete what is often a heavy coursework load and can meet strict deadlines. We would like students to elect a balanced mix of subjects: the ones they enjoy as well as those they do well in

### **Support**

Every student in year 9 will have the opportunity to discuss their options with a member of staff, whether that is their form tutor, a career adviser, a member of the FLC or the school's pastoral or leadership team - we want to be able to offer personalised guidance based on their strengths, interests, and future aspirations. As well as subject teachers and form tutors, there is a whole team of colleagues at UHS who are here to support your child in making some of those choices.

*Leadership: Mr Scaife*

*Raising Standards Lead: Miss Silva*

*Head of Learning: Mr Humpleby*

*Assistant Head of Learning: Mr Irwin*

*Guidance Leader: Miss Cardoso*

### **Building a Curriculum for 2024-25**

The process has already started. Students have been spoken to about their GCSE curriculum in assembly in the Autumn term and again in the Spring term. Our Careers Lead, Mr Heslin has arranged a menu of careers events taking place over the next few weeks to support learners with their choices. The Personal Development curriculum for Year 9 also features opportunities to

discuss career pathways. From a careers fair to appointments with a career's adviser, students will be gaining a greater understanding of future paths they can take. We want students to be open minded: students are preparing for roles and jobs that in some cases do not yet exist.

### **GCSE Taster Sessions**

To support with the process, your child's teachers are currently in the process of designing GCSE Taster sessions. If students would like a flavour of what a course entails and any further information, they will be able to sign up for a session to help steer their decision.

### **Compulsory Courses**

All students will be studying a core set of subjects in line with the National Curriculum: every Year 10 student studies English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, as well as PE and Personal Development. Students will then express their interest in four of the subjects on offer.

Those studying for the EBACC, The English Baccalaureate, will select a Language, French or Spanish alongside History or Geography. The EBACC is designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects. More information about the EBACC can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc>

### **How can you support your child during this process?**

Talk to your child about their interests and aspirations. Encourage them to explore different subjects and understand the rationale behind their choices. Discussing their GCSE subjects is a significant decision for your child. While you and us can offer guidance and support, ultimately, they will be completing the work and sitting the examinations so please encourage them to choose subjects they are passionate about.

**Final subject allocations:** Based on the information gathered, your child will complete their expression of interest form, signalling four subjects they would be interested in pursuing at GCSEs (Level 2 courses). It is important to note that resourcing or timetable constraints can occasionally impact the courses we are able to offer. We will engage you throughout the process and enter into a dialogue should we need to revisit the subjects we can offer.

### **Completing the Expression of Interest Form**

The expression of interest form will be sent out to student email addresses by **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025**. All forms need to be returned by 31<sup>st</sup> March at the latest. For further questions and queries, please reach us at [parents@uhs.org.uk](mailto:parents@uhs.org.uk) where we will endeavour to reply within 48 hours.