



LOUGHBOROUGH
Amherst School



GCSE

Option Choices 2024-2026

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Why do we have GCSE Options?

We are coming up to the time when you need to start making decisions about the future of your education, and in particular, which subjects you would like to continue to study beyond Year 9 and towards GCSEs.

Pupils at Amherst can normally expect to take anything from six to ten GCSEs, depending on aptitude and capacity. There are **core subjects**, which everyone takes, and **optional subjects**, which allow you an element of choice in the balance and overall shape of your GCSE curriculum. In some circumstances, the academic load may be reduced. So, if you are an elite athlete following a recognised pathway to sporting excellence, or if English is not your first language, or if you have a particular learning need that means you need the time to be reallocated, then your timetable will reflect this.

Core Subjects

Most pupils at Amherst study English Language, English Literature, Maths, Science and RS to GCSE. Information about those subjects is provided below.

Choosing your GCSE Options

Optional subjects give you the chance to choose to study those subjects that you find most interesting and enjoyable. We strongly believe that you should experience a range of subjects at GCSE, and so you are asked to choose your provisional options to give you a curriculum that is sufficiently broad to be of both interest and benefit to you.

Optional Subjects

Art and Design	Geography
Business	History
Computer Science	Music
Drama	PE
Food Preparation and Nutrition	Spanish
French	
Combined Cadet Force (CCF)* and Higher Project Qualification (HPQ)*	
* Subject to viability	

The Process of Choosing

If you already have some idea about the sort of career path you would like to follow, look into the entry requirements for that career. Your GCSE choices can have an impact on the A Level choices that you will have, which in turn can have an impact on your future post-18. Find out what you need to know. Speak to the subject teachers, particularly where you are unsure of what the GCSE course entails. Speak to your Form Tutor or to Head of Year for advice, if you are unsure where to begin.

Find out all you think you will need to know about the structure and content of the different GCSE courses, so that you know what you will be letting yourself in for.

When you have decided your preferred choice of subjects, please complete the GCSE Provisional Options Form and indicate your three options. If you have any specific requests that you would like us to consider, such as a reduced allocation of subjects, or if you have a particular interest in key subjects, there is an option to add additional comments to your Options Form.



The Next Stage

At Amherst, we create the Options Blocks each year based on the subject intentions of the Year 9 cohort. This gives much greater flexibility than most schools, enabling us to ensure that most pupils can be allocated their first choice subjects.

It is therefore very important that you please complete the following GCSE Provisional Options form no later than **09:00 on Thursday 1 February 2024**. The fixed Options Blocks that follow will offer the best fit for the whole Year Group.

Once the Options Blocks are fixed, we will be in touch if your Options choices cannot be accommodated in good time so that you can reconsider and review your choices in light of the fixed Options Blocks.

GCSE Provisional Options Form



Mr Xinhai Lin
Deputy Head Academic



IGCSE English Language and Literature

All pupils at Amherst work towards IGCSEs in English Language and Literature, gaining two separate qualifications.

English Language equips pupils with the communication skills needed for future life and therefore focuses on developing competency in reading and writing. Pupils study a variety of non-fiction and fiction texts and undertake both transactional and imaginative writing. The qualification is assessed by means of examination and coursework.

English Literature intends to develop pupils' skills as independent and critical readers. The study of texts such as Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* fosters the ability to explore authorial intent as well as encouraging detailed analysis of how this is conveyed. Assessment is by means of examination and coursework.



Mathematics IGCSE (Edexcel 4MA1, 9-1)

"Mathematics is the language with which God has written the universe."

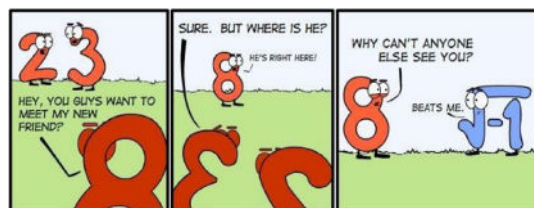
Galileo

Mathematics is an essential subject for all pupils, which has many applications in other areas of study. Edexcel IGCSE Mathematics encourages the development of mathematical knowledge as a key life skill, and provides excellent progression to the Edexcel A Level we offer. This is a fully examined course through which learners develop not only knowledge and understanding of Mathematics, but also skills in creative thinking, enquiry and problem solving.

Content

Pupils will study:

- Numbers and the number system
- Equations, formulae and identities
- Sequences, functions and graphs
- Geometry and trigonometry
- Vectors and transformation geometry
- Statistics and probability



Pupils should be able to demonstrate mathematical reasoning skills by:

- Making deductions and drawing conclusions from mathematical information and drawing conclusions from mathematical information
- Constructing chains of reasoning
- Presenting arguments and proofs
- Interpreting and communicating information accurately

We aim for all pupils to sit the higher tier examination, allowing them access to the top grades on the 9-1 scale. In some circumstances we may need to support a pupil by allowing them to sit the foundation tier paper if it is right for them.

Assessment

Higher Curriculum, Grades 9-4

Mathematics A Paper 1H: 2hr examination, 50%

Mathematics A Paper 2H: 2hr examination, 50%

Foundation Curriculum, Grades 5-1

Mathematics A Paper 1F: 2hr examination, 50%

Mathematics A Paper 2F: 2hr examination, 50%



Pupils can use a scientific calculator for both papers (graphical calculators are not allowed). Pupils have access to a formulae sheet.



Religious Studies

WJEC Eduqas GCSE grades 9-1: Route B Catholic Christianity and Judaism

Compliant with the requirements of the Bishops' conference of England and Wales.

Three year GCSE starting in Year 9.

This is a three-component exam:

C1. Foundational Catholic Theology: Theme 1 Origins and Meaning, Theme 2 Good and Evil

C2. Applied Catholic Theology: Theme 1 Life and Death, Theme 2 Sin and Forgiveness

C3. Judaism: Beliefs, Teachings and practices

Areas for assessment:

Pupils need to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, practices and sources of wisdom, including areas of Religious Art and Music. They need to evaluate and analyse these beliefs and practices and their significance and influence on religion and society.



Science

The IGCSE Science course is started in Year 9. You will study all three Sciences as part of the core curriculum.

In consultation with staff, pupils and parents, you will follow one of three science GCSE routes:

Triple Sciences (Separate Sciences): this route leads to two examinations in each of the Science disciplines: Biology, Chemistry, Physics and to three separate GCSE grades, studying additional topics to achieve three independent grades in each Science. These additional topics are useful to bridge the gap between GCSE and the A Level Sciences.

Double Award Science: this route leads to one examination in each of the the Science disciplines: Biology, Chemistry and Physics and to two GCSE grades awarded for Science. It is also possible to study the Sciences at A Level with two good grades in Double Award Science.

Single Award: this route leads to one examination in each of the Science disciplines: Biology, Chemistry and Physics and to one GCSE grade awarded for Science.

The IGCSE course covers many topical issues including climate change, energy resources and transfers, inheritance and selective breeding. Practical work is an important aspect of the course and is tested within each of the exam papers in each Science.

The study of IGCSE Science helps you to understand how Science works in the world around you. It will allow you to improve your practical skills, critical thinking and encourage you to develop your opinions through debate.





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