

# Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School



## KS4 Options 2021-2023

*Educating Women of the Future*

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## Introduction

This booklet is designed to

- explain the school policy on the Key Stage 4 curriculum
- give guidance about making the right choices, both from an educational and career point of view
- outline the procedure that will be followed in the decision making process
- outline the information, advice, guidance and support that is offered by the school
- provide both students and parents with information about the courses offered so that everyone knows what each student is studying and what is expected in each course
- outline what the various courses may lead to in terms of Post 16 courses and careers.

We hope this guide provides students and parents with the necessary information to understand the principles behind the curriculum we offer and that it helps students to make the right choices for their future.

There has been considerable discussion nationally about what students should study at GCSE level. At Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School, we have always believed that all students should study a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4. This is supported by the government, universities and employers.

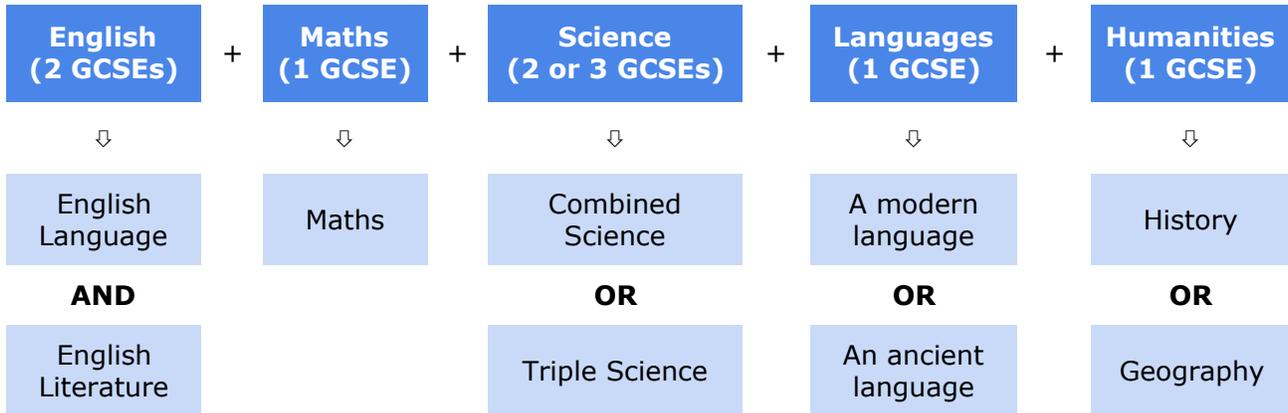
Students currently in Year 9 will be required to stay in full-time education or training until at least their 18th birthday. Anyone who does not achieve a GCSE Grade 5 or above in English Language or English Literature is likely to be legally required to study GCSE English Language in the Sixth Form or at College, until they do so. Similarly, students who do not achieve Grade 5 or above in GCSE Maths are likely to be required to continue GCSE Maths until they do so. For this reason we are offering some students who will particularly benefit from the opportunity to study the additional English and/or Maths Pathway in Years 10 and 11.

The National Curriculum requires all students to study English, Mathematics, Science, Religious Studies, Citizenship, Computing and PE. At Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School this is organised as follows: -

- English - leading to GCSEs in English Language and English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science - students will study Combined (2 GCSEs) or Triple Science (3 GCSEs)
- Religious Studies - leading to a full GCSE qualification in Philosophy and Applied Ethics
- PE and Citizenship are the remaining core subjects which are compulsory but are not examined. Citizenship is delivered through PSHE lessons in Year 10 and specific events and activities in Year 11
- Students may choose to study GCSE Computing as one of their option subjects. Aspects of ICT and Computing are delivered across a range of subjects in Years 10 and 11.

## What is the English Baccalaureate?

The EBacc is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers. These subjects are looked on favourably by Universities. To be eligible for the EBacc, students must take GCSE qualifications across :



Therefore, to achieve the EBacc students need to gain GCSE Grade 5 or above in English Language or English Literature, Mathematics, History or Geography, a Language and Combined or Triple Science. A full list of the qualifications that count towards the EBacc is available at:- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-eligible-qualifications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-eligible-qualifications)

## Reformed GCSEs

Reformed GCSEs have been introduced gradually since September 2015. The new qualifications are linear with examinations at the end of the course, with more demanding content and less non-exam assessment. They are graded from 9 to 1, instead of A\* to G.

## Controlled or non-exam assessment

This table shows the percentage of each subject which is made up of non-exam assessment.

None	Business Studies, Computing, English Language, English Literature, Geography, History, Maths, Religious Studies, Combined and Triple Sciences
25%	French, Spanish (Languages have Speaking Assessments)
30%	Media
40%	Physical Education
50%	Design and Technology, Food Preparation and Nutrition
60%	Drama, Music
100%	Art (40% is under controlled conditions), Health and Social Care

## GCSE Grading Structure

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

GOOD PASS (DFE)  
5 and above = top of C and above

AWARDING  
4 and above = bottom of C and above

### BTEC Qualifications

A more practical and skills-based approach to learning, these qualifications offer learners the chance to experience applied learning. It should be noted that these qualifications are not accepted by all institutions as entrance requirements for A Level study.

The BTEC grades are: Distinction, Merit, Pass.

### Support and Guidance for Students

It is vital that every student and her family is as well informed as possible. A programme of presentations of new and existing subjects has already taken place and the pastoral and PSHE programmes have been focusing on option choices. All students and their parent(s)/carer(s) have the opportunity of joining an individual student interview during the school day, to discuss their option choices before they are finalised.

The school aims to write the option blocks around student preferences and through careful discussion at option interviews to get the right balance for each individual.

### When Making Decisions

Before completing your Options Choice Form think about the following questions:-

- What are your thoughts about career possibilities?
- What plans do you have after you have completed your GCSEs?
- Do you plan to go on to further/higher education? If so, what courses might you study?
- What career ideas do you have for the future at the moment?
- What are your strengths?
- Which subjects do you enjoy?

## OPTION PATHWAYS

All students follow a broad and balanced curriculum which ensures that they are prepared for whatever pathway they move towards in the future. The curriculum for all students includes a **Core** of compulsory subjects plus a choice of **Options** which allows each individual to pursue interests and develop their particular talents and aspirations.

### The Core Subjects

English Language  
English Literature  
Mathematics  
Science (Combined or Triple)  
Religious Studies  
Personal, Social and Health Education  
Physical Education

### Option Pathways

There are four option pathways:

**EBacc plus Triple Science and STEM enrichment** – This option offer is tailored to support breadth and academic success for students with a particular interest and aptitude in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)

**EBacc** – This option offer is tailored to students who want to secure the EBacc with the flexibility to study a wide range of subjects. It is suited to students who have a secure grounding across the range of subjects in Key Stage 3

**EBacc Plus** – This option is tailored to offer additional support to help students to secure the EBacc. Students opt for one subject less, which provides time for additional support in the EBacc subjects. It is suited to students who have a developing grasp of the subjects studied in Key Stage 3.

**Non-EBacc with additional English and/or Maths** – This pathway offers support to students who may prefer a less traditional route through Key Stage 4. It offers greater flexibility in subject choice alongside additional support in English and/or Maths.

Based on the school's progress and other data for each student, they will be guided to consider an appropriate pathway which will be shared with families. All students must follow one of the school's pathways. Details about the courses available can be found on the school website.

In 2021 we will use an online process to collect option choice subjects for each student. Below is a diagrammatic overview of the options pathways and the choices to be made for each.

<p><b>Compulsory Courses - GCSEs (or equivalent)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● English Language and Literature</li> <li>● Mathematics</li> <li>● Combined or Triple Science</li> <li>● Religious Studies: Philosophy and Applied Ethics</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Compulsory Courses - not examined:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Core Physical Education</li> <li>● Personal, Social, Health &amp; Citizenship Education (including Careers Education and Guidance)</li> </ul>
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Students must also choose a reserve option as we cannot guarantee to give all students their first 4 choices.

There are four option pathways offered by the school. All students must follow one of these.

Pathway	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3	Choice 4	Reserve
EBacc with Triple Science & STEM* Enrichment	French <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/>	Geography <input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/>	Triple Science		
EBacc	French <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/>	Geography <input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/>			
EBacc Plus	French <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/>	Geography <input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/>	EBacc Plus		
Non EBacc	French <input type="checkbox"/> Geography <input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/>	Additional English and/or Maths			

\*STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

<p><b>Arts Subjects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Art</li> <li>● Drama</li> <li>● Music</li> <li>● PE</li> <li>● Media</li> </ul>	<p><b>Humanities Subjects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Business</li> <li>● BTEC Health and Social Care</li> <li>● Geography</li> <li>● History</li> </ul> <p><i>BTEC Health and Social Care not available to EBacc with Triple Sci pathway</i></p>	<p><b>Languages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● French</li> <li>● Spanish</li> </ul> <p><i>If you have, or intend to, take a GCSE exam in a community language please see the next page.</i></p> <p><i>Where it has been agreed that a community language is being taken, students may also study a language in school or may choose another subject instead.</i></p>	<p><b>Technology Subjects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Computing</li> <li>● Design and Technology</li> <li>● Food Preparation and Nutrition</li> </ul>
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## **Qualifications counting as Language in the Baccalaureate**

The list below details the GCSE language qualifications which count towards the EBacc.

- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin)
- French
- German
- Greek (Modern)
- Greek (Classical)
- Gujarati
- Hebrew (Biblical)
- Hebrew (Modern)
- Italian
- Latin
- Japanese
- Panjabi
- Persian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Turkish
- Urdu

Some students sit examinations in community languages that are separate from their lessons in school. Families should notify the school if their daughter has already taken, or intends to take, a GCSE in one of these languages, by emailing [examinations@qegschool.org.uk](mailto:examinations@qegschool.org.uk)

## Options Process for Students

You are now in the position to choose the courses you wish to study in Key Stage 4. You should reflect on the careers work you completed in PSHE, your Year 9 report and the feedback from your teachers at Year 9 Parents' Evening. You need to take a full and active part in the options process so that you are able to discuss your plans with your family, keep them well informed and ensure you are in the best possible position to make the right choices for you.

### Step 1

**Subject Information:-** in lessons and in tutor time you will have heard your subject teachers talk about their subject at Key Stage 4. Make sure that any questions you may have are answered before you make your final choices.

### Step 2

**Options Information on the school website:-** read this information carefully to make sure you fully understand the content of each course which you are considering applying for. The options information can be found in the 'Students' section of the school website.

### Step 3

**Virtual Options Evening:-** is an important opportunity for you and your family to hear more about the organisation of the Options process. After the presentation there will be an opportunity to ask general questions about the options process.

### Step 4

**Opportunity to ask questions:-** Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available for each subject on the school website. Any additional questions you have about individual subjects should be emailed to the relevant subject lead.

### Step 5

**Options pathways and making subject choices online:-** Details of the online option choice process will be emailed to families after February half term. Recommended pathways will be shared at this stage and any queries regarding pathways should be emailed to [examinations@qegschool.org.uk](mailto:examinations@qegschool.org.uk). Please complete the online form by Wednesday 3rd March, unless you wish to request an interview and submit the form straight afterwards.

### Step 6

**Optional Individual Student Interviews:-** Families have the opportunity to request a virtual individual meeting with a member of staff, however, if you have chosen the pathway recommended for you this is not compulsory. Interviews will begin during week commencing Monday 8th March 2021 and invitations will be sent out as required. Families can request an options interview by emailing [examinations@qegschool.org.uk](mailto:examinations@qegschool.org.uk)

### Step 7

**Confirmation of your Key Stage 4 Courses:-** Option blocks will be written to maximise the number of students who are successful in getting their preferred combination of subjects. On completion of this process you will receive written confirmation of your Key Stage 4 curriculum.

We will endeavour to meet all students' subject choices within the limitations of staffing and funding constraints. If the number of students selecting a course is too few to make the course viable on educational and economic grounds, it will not be able to run. There are other courses where the numbers are limited. In the event of there being too many students for a course, applications will be considered individually.

## Careers Guidance

During the GCSE options process and in the coming years girls and their parents may wish to gain additional advice. Year 9 students have already received presentations during tutor time about the subjects on offer. They have also had input via the PSHE programme and the individual subjects.

Students who have clear ideas about what they might wish to study at university are advised to research the entry requirements. Some specify A level courses which can only be studied if the subject has already been studied at GCSE level, whilst some require particular subjects and grades to have been achieved at GCSE.

In school, we have access to a range of information sources, including:

- Mrs Douglas – Careers Coordinator
- Mrs Walker (Headteacher), Miss Southwell (Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form), Mr Jones and Mr Duffy (Deputy Headteachers) who can advise on A level and higher education routes.
- JED - Our careers ICT programme offering impartial advice and guidance about routes into employment and up to date labour market information.

There are also a range of useful websites:

<https://chas.careersoft.co.uk/jed/?Linkmaker=da336295-b4bc-4d0d-8a46-a649ee4db16a> - JED.

Job explorer database - Jed helps students plan their school choices and explore the different careers available. The online quizzes also provide students with a starting point for accessing information about routes into employment.

<http://www.plotr.co.uk> – Games, and activities which are matched to you to get you thinking about your next steps

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk> - The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential and impartial advice. This is supported by qualified careers advisers.

[www.apprenticeships.org.uk/](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/) - The official government website to find out about apprenticeships.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship> - National database of apprenticeship vacancies.

[www.careersbox.co.uk/](http://www.careersbox.co.uk/) - A free online library of careers related film, news and information. Case study films show real people doing real jobs, giving viewers insight into careers across all sectors and helping them to find the right career.

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk> Career pilot offers quick videos and impartial information and advice about options and different types of qualifications.

## **Options – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **I don't have any career plans yet. What should I do?**

Choose the subjects you enjoy and do well at – as much of a mix as possible. Choosing subjects that meet the EBacc requirements will ensure you have plenty of routes open to you later on.

### **Should I risk trying out new studies like Media or Business Studies that I've never done before or stick to subjects I know?**

Think of whether they interest you – or fit in with your career plans – even your hobbies. Ask the teachers in charge about them.

### **Who should I speak to for advice on my option choices?**

The people that know you best – your subject teachers, form tutor, older brothers and sisters, parents and close friends.

### **What things should I think about when choosing a GCSE or other subject?**

Do you do well? Do you enjoy it? Do your teachers tell you you're doing well? Do you find it interesting or want to try it at a higher level? Do you enjoy the homework? Are you good at writing or more hands-on subjects? What are your career plans? Is there a lot of, or little, non-exam assessment?

### **Will I get all the option choices I ask for?**

The school will try to accommodate your wishes but it is impossible to give all students everything they want. Courses that don't get enough students may be cancelled and over-popular courses may mean that not all students get a place. This is why it is important you make some second choices.

### **Will I be with my friends next year?**

Even if you take exactly the same options as your friends, there is no guarantee you will be in the same group as them. You will no longer be taught with your tutor group but you will of course see your friends at form time and breaks.