



WELLINGTON
COLLEGE

**SUBJECT CHOICES
BOOKLET**

SIXTH FORM 2019 - 2021

In itself, choosing subjects to study in the Upper School is only one particular decision point in a much larger scheme of events that will see pupils make further decisions over Higher Education and Careers. It is an important decision that can be seen as the start of a process which runs from now until the pupils leave in the summer of 2021, but is not the only decision point that will affect them during their time at Wellington.

Pupils may start this process from different situations. While some pupils will have a clear idea of the subjects they wish to study and the curriculum which is best suited to them, others may not have a clear idea yet. Some pupils may have an idea of what they would like to study at University; others may not reach such decisions for a while. Of course, even those pupils who think they have a good idea of what they will choose, may end up changing their minds. We hope that all pupils and parents will enter into this process with an open mind.

The purpose of this booklet is to set out a framework for making these decisions. In conjunction with presentations for parents, assemblies for pupils and opportunities for parents and pupils to meet with teachers to discuss the options, it is hoped that pupils will have the resources necessary to make informed and sensible decisions. In addition to this booklet, there is more detailed subject specific information on the subject choices website which will launch at the end of term: <http://subjectchoices.wellingtoncollege.org.uk>.

Making Subject Choices

Many schools publish a column structure which limits the combinations of subjects that pupils can pick. The Wellington College curriculum has so much choice that this model would be complex and place many limitations on what could be chosen. Instead, we would rather start from a position where pupils have a free choice and then accommodate as much as we can. Over the past few years, we have been able to accommodate around 98% of first choices.

Of course, there will be some limitations to what can be offered as the College does not have infinite resources for staffing. It is important to note that all courses are offered subject to demand. In particular, some subjects which typically have fewer overall numbers of pupils may only run in either the A Level or the IB.

The timeline for making choices

Pupils will have many opportunities to find out about the various subjects on offer. It is important that they discuss this decision with their parents, teachers, tutors, housemasters and housemistresses.

By the time of the Fifth Form Parents' Conference on the 25th January, we hope that pupils will have reached a decision and this event is a useful time for parents to discuss, and hopefully confirm this, with teachers. There is then a further month, which includes exeat for final decision-making before pupils must submit their subject choices on 25th February (the Monday straight after exeat).

Changing Subject Choices

Just as we try to provide a flexible framework for the initial decisions, we also try to provide flexibility afterwards for pupils to change their minds. While we hope that pupils and parents have reached a well-informed decision, the experience of mock exams or the arrival of GCSE results can prompt a change of mind. In the past, around half of pupils have changed their subject choices when they return to College in September for their Lower Sixth year and we are able to accommodate the vast majority. Late changes, however, will be subject to space in sets and the existing timetable structure at that point.

When pupils change subjects, it is important that HMs and teachers are aware and can advise if necessary. For this reason, changes to subject choice decisions will be dealt with during term time. During the Summer holidays especially, it is better to wait until after GCSE results and pupils are back in College before making changes. There

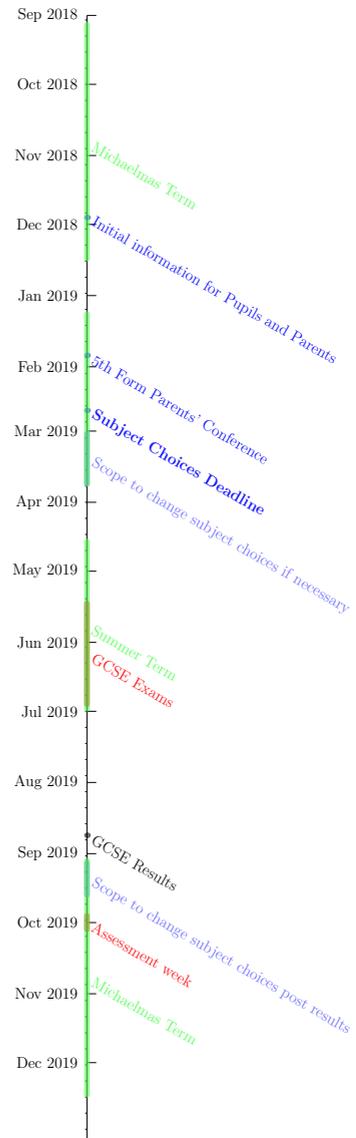


Figure 1: The timeline of the subject choices procedure and the Upper School key events.

is a dedicated process at the start of the year which will be in action at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term 2019. While there are often many changes made during the first few days of term, these are usually complete by the end of the first two weeks.

Choosing a Curriculum

Wellington College is proud to be able to offer a twin-track curriculum in the Upper School and has done so for more than a decade. While the numbers taking each will never be an exact 50:50 split, they have been within 40:60 for the past 5 years.

The IB and A Level programmes are both rigorous and well-regarded by universities and either curriculum will very suitably act as a stepping stone to the full range of future education and employment. However, the two curricula are different in nature and it is this difference which gives our pupils the opportunity to tailor their curriculum choice to their individual strengths and needs.

By its nature, the IB supports a spectrum of subjects and enforces a breadth to a pupil's curriculum. At the same time the Higher Level subjects allow pupils to go into depth and to develop specialisations which they can take on to Higher Education. For those pupils wishing to pursue future courses of study which require a breadth of ability, the IB is an excellent choice. These pupils include potential medics or those wishing to pursue the liberal arts programme at a US university, but could also include those who have a wide range of academic talents or those who wish to maintain a broad interest.

The A Level programme, on the other hand, naturally lends itself to a selection of fewer subjects. The majority of A Level pupils will leave with three A Levels. This curriculum lends itself, therefore, to those who wish to develop a more focussed field of study and for whom the breadth of subjects in the IB would provide too many distractions from their genuine interests. While these pupils may not have a completely firm idea of what they would like to go on to do, it is likely that they will be specialising in a certain range of subjects¹. For A Level pupils it is important that the selection of subjects is such that each subject fits with and supports the others.

¹ e.g. Humanities or Maths and Sciences etc...

A Levels

Following a review of A Levels the government announced an overhaul of the A Level system which started with the exams sat in 2016. This summer, all A Levels are now updated and so the new exams will be fully implemented and embedded by the time this cohort of pupils sit their exams.

The most significant change is that all A Levels are now linear courses. This means that the entire grade is awarded on the basis of the exams sat in the Upper Sixth year. While AS exams continue to exist, they are a separate qualification and do not count towards a final A Level grade.

Choosing A Level Subjects

The A Level subjects available are shown in Table 1. Most pupils will choose three subjects from these. Some pupils may wish to select four subjects. This might include pupils who wish to take Further Maths (who must also choose Maths A Level) but might also include linguists or classicists who also can have a significant overlap between their subjects.

Just because a selection of subjects is offered does not necessarily mean that these subjects will form a good combination. A Level students are advised to pay attention to the section on choosing subjects and the information contained in Tables 4 and 5.

The EPQ

In addition to their A Level subjects, all pupils who take three A Levels will undertake the Extended Project Qualification. This additional is designed to add breadth to their A Level studies (in a similar way to the Extended Essay and ToK in the IB diploma). The EPQ is increasingly well-regarded by universities and it is not uncommon for an offer to be lowered by a grade subject to a good grade in the EPQ (normally an A).

Those pupils who start on four A Levels but then drop to three within the first term will be able to start the EPQ in January. Those who continue with four A Levels may opt to take an EPQ, but will have to do so “*off-timetable*”.

A Level Subjects
Ancient History
Art
Art History
Art Textiles
Biology
Business
Business BTEC
Chemistry
Classical Greek
Computer Science
Dance
Design Engineering
Drama
Economics
English
French
Further Maths
Geography
German
History
Latin
Mandarin
Maths
Music
Music Technology
PE
Photography
Physics
Politics
Religious Studies
Spanish

Table 1: the A Level subjects offered for September 2019. All courses are offered subject to demand.

The IB

² There are almost 200 pupils taking the IB in the Sixth Form

³ The average result over the last three years is in excess of 39 points.

⁴ Please note that this is not the timetabling column structure. Combinations of subjects permitted by the IB may not be possible within the timetable if there is insufficient demand.

The College has significant experience in running the IB diploma having offered it for more than a decade. This programme of study is popular², our pupils have had outstanding results³ and they have been successful in their university applications. The demand of the Higher Level courses is sufficient to stretch the brightest pupils and rigorously prepare pupils for future university study while the broad curriculum is ideal for pupils who wish to keep their options open or who wish to continue studying a broader range of subjects.

Pupils taking the IB choose six subjects, one from each of six groups shown in table 2⁴. The sixth subject may be a second language, humanities or science subject instead of an arts subject. Three subjects are chosen at Higher Level and three at Standard Level. Higher Level subjects are generally equivalent in complexity and depth to their A Level counterparts.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
<i>Language A</i>	<i>Language B</i>	<i>Humanities</i>	<i>Sciences</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Arts</i>
English Literature	Classical Greek (HL)	Art History (SL)	Astronomy (SL)	Maths (<i>Analysis</i>) (HL)	Visual Arts
Literature & Performance (SL)	French	Business & Management	Biology	Maths (<i>Applications</i>)	Music
	German	Economics	Chemistry	Maths Studies (SL)	Theatre Studies
	Latin	Geography	Computer Science		Dance
	Mandarin (SL)	History	Design Technology		(Or another subject from groups 2, 3 or 4)
	Spanish	Philosophy	Physics		
		Politics	Sport Science		
		Psychology			
		Environmental Systems & Societies (SL) [†]			

Table 2: Subject groups for the IB curriculum. Modern Languages in Group 2 may also be offered at *ab initio* level. Group 6 may be an arts subject or it may be a second subject from one of the other groups.

[†] NB Environmental Systems & Societies can count for group 3 and group 4.

⁵ The maximum total points available from the IB diploma is therefore a maximum of 7 points from each of six subjects plus 3 points from the core bringing the total to 45 points.

The IB is examined at the end of the two year course with exams usually falling in May. Each subject is graded from 1-7 with 7 being the highest score. In addition, pupils must also complete the Core which consists of the *Extended Essay* (4000 words on a subject of the pupil's choice), *Theory of Knowledge* (an interdisciplinary course exploring the nature of knowledge) and *Creativity, Action, Service* (CAS) –sports, arts, leadership activities and community service or CCF. The Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge contribute a maximum of 3 points⁵ to the total. There are no points awarded for the CAS programme, but pupils can only be awarded the Diploma if they have completed their 150 CAS hours.

Subject	GCSE Requirements
Ancient History	7 in Classics subject or essay-based subject
Chemistry	7 in Maths
Classical Greek	8 in Greek
Dance	7 in Dance
Design Engineering	7 in Maths or Physics
Economics	7 in Maths and English
English	6 in English Language, 7 in English Literature
History	7 in History
Latin	8 in Latin
Maths (inc Further Maths)	8 in Maths
Music	7 in Music
PE / Sports Science	7 in Biology
Physics	7 in Maths

Table 3: Some courses are not advised unless a certain minimum GCSE grade has been achieved. This table shows the minimum GCSE requirements to take a subject at A Level or IB Higher Level. There are no minimum requirements for IB Standard Level subjects. For any subject, where a pupil has scored a 6 or lower at GCSE, it is advisable to discuss with the Head of Department what the likely outcomes of that course of study might be.

Choosing Subjects

There are many valid reasons for pupils to choose different subjects. Pupils may choose subjects because they enjoy them or because they excel in them, indeed these two reasons often go hand-in-hand. These reasons are certainly valid - pupils are more likely to work hard in subjects that they enjoy and are therefore more likely to enjoy success in them. Equally, choosing subjects in which they excel may seem obvious, however, it is worth noting that choosing an overambitious set of subjects and ending up with lower grades could be more of a hindrance to further study than better grades in a more sensible set of subjects.

Historically, there are some subjects in which pupils have struggled unless they have attained a certain level in GCSE. These subjects, along with the minimum GCSE standard required to access them, are shown in table 3. We would not advise pursuing these subjects at A Level or IB Higher Level without this attainment, although it would not necessarily preclude studying the subject at Standard Level.

Some subjects naturally support each other. For pupils wishing to choose the A Level curriculum, it is important that they pay attention to the overall set of subjects and check that they are all mutually supporting and form a coherent package of qualifications. Some of the more important subjects which support each other are shown in Table 4. This is less applicable to the IB where the breadth of subjects

is enforced by the nature of the curriculum.

Subject	Strongly advised subjects	Preferable subjects
Art, Art Textiles		Another Art subject / English / History
Art History, Photography		
Biology	Chemistry	Maths
Chemistry	Maths	Biology and/or Physics
Computer Science	Maths	Further Maths
Design Engineering		Maths / Physics
Drama	English	History
English		History / Classics / RS / Art History
History	Politics / Economics / English	Humanities / Languages
Music		Science (Physics / Maths) or Humanities
Physics	Maths	
Religious Studies		Humanities, English or other essay based subject

Table 4: Suggested combinations of subjects. This is particularly important for A Level combinations. In addition to this, it is worth noting there are many opportunities for Languages to be taken in combination with Economics, Business, History, Politics, English, Geography, Classics or another language as this can open up many options for joint honours university courses.

Some pupils will have an idea of what they may wish to go on and study at university. Even if it is only a vague idea at this stage, this can still be used to guide subject choices and at the very least, ensure that these options remain open to them through their subject choices. Table 5 contains information on some of the more popular university courses and which subjects are required to study them.

The media has often mentioned the list of facilitating subjects that are published by the Russell Group. These include Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English, Modern Languages, History and Geography. Whilst it is true that these subjects do help keep options open, it should be remembered that these are not necessarily facilitators for every course. Indeed any university course will have some subjects that are necessary for a successful application and others that would facilitate: e.g. facilitating subjects for architecture courses could include Art or Design Engineering; the necessary subject for medicine applications is Chemistry.

University Subject	Essential Subjects	Useful Subjects
Accountancy		Maths, Business / Economics
Archaeology		Geography, History / Ancient History, Sciences
Architecture	<i>Art / DET</i>	Art, Maths, DET, Physics
Art and Design	Art / DET	
Biochemistry	Chemistry, Biology	Maths, Physics, Further Maths
Biology	Biology , Maths	Chemistry
Biomedical Sciences	Chemistry, Biology	Maths, Further Maths, Physics
Business Studies		Maths, Business
Chemical Engineering	Chemistry, Maths , <i>Physics</i>	
Chemistry	Chemistry, Maths	another Science
Classics	Latin / Greek	Ancient History
Computer Science	<i>Maths / Computer Science</i>	DET, Physics
Dance	Dance	Drama, Music, English, Biology, PE
Drama	<i>English / Drama</i>	
Economics	Maths	Economics, Computer Science, History, Geography
Engineering	Maths , Physics	Further Maths, Design Engineering, Computer Science
English	English	History, RS/Philosophy, Languages, Classics
French	French	Another Language, English, History, Politics
Geography	Geography	Maths, Economics, Politics, Biology
Geology	Chemistry + Maths/Physics/Biology	Geography, Computer Science
German	German	Another Language, English, History, Politics
History	History	Economics, English, RS / Philosophy, Politics, Classics, Languages
History of Art		Art, English, History, RS / Philosophy, Art History, Languages
Law		History
Materials Science	2 from Chemistry/Maths/Physics/Biology, <i>DET</i>	Further Maths, Computer Science
Mathematics	Maths , Further Maths	Physics, Computer Science
Medicine	Chemistry, Biology , Maths	Physics, Further Maths, contrasting subject e.g. History, Geography
Music	Music	an essay based subject
Philosophy		RS/Philosophy, Maths, Classics
Physics	Maths, Physics	Further Maths, Chemistry, Computer Science
Politics		Politics, History, RS / Philosophy, Economics, English
Psychology	<i>Biology or other Science / Maths</i>	
RS / Theology		RS / Philosophy, English, History, Classics
Spanish	Spanish	Another language, English, History, Politics
Sports Science	A Science / Maths	PE
Veterinary Science	Chemistry, Biology , Maths	<i>Physics</i>

Table 5: Essential and useful subjects for applying to some popular university courses. Subjects in **bold** are those which are absolutely essential, those in *italics* are required by the majority of courses, although there are some courses which exist which do not require these.

Important Contacts and Dates

Queries relating to the possible combinations of subjects and the timetable should be directed to Dr Heathcote. Subject specific queries may be better answered by the Heads of Departments, whose contacts can be found in the calendar.

Please note that, in general, queries regarding subject choices and changes will be dealt with during term time. Queries made during College holidays will be put on hold until the beginning of term. This will enable discussion between subject heads where necessary and results in answers being available within a couple of days rather than a couple of weeks.

Useful Contacts	
Director of Organisation <i>Timetabling etc.</i>	Dr WH Heathcote (whh@)
Deputy Head (Academic & HE)	Mr MJ Oakman (mjo@)
Head of IB DP	Mr RH Atherton (rha@)

Table 6: Useful contacts for the subject choices process. NB all email addresses are @wellingtoncollege.org.uk

Important Dates	
Fifth Form Parents' Conference	25th January 2019
Subject Choice Deadline	25th February 2019

Table 7: Important dates for the subject choices process