

Options Choice Tips and Myths for moving to S3/5/6

- **Is there an ideal subject choice?** No, that is why it is a choice. If there was one ideal set of subjects there would be no choice.
- **I can only choose from what I am already studying, isn't that right?** Not always, continuation is good as it gives a good base for the next level of study if you are doing well. But carrying on in something you are struggling in is a bad idea. It's not a good idea to take on *lots* of new subjects but sometimes 1 or 2 can work – ask and AGS will discuss this with you. Also, there are sometimes new subjects available that you couldn't have taken before anyway. All the choices available to you will be explained before you decide.
- **I am really good at Subject X but I won't take it next year because I don't know what career it could lead to.**
Taking subjects that you are good at but don't currently fit into your future plans might still be a good idea. A grade "A" in Subject X could be used to get you into many different careers and courses depending upon your other subjects and grades. Often good grades are looked for by college/uni/employers and the subject the grade is in is less important. E.g. – you could use an "A" in Art or PE to get into a Law degree.
- **I will take Subject X but I am not good at it and don't like it.**
Why are you taking it then? If a subject is a large part/entrance requirement of a course or job, and you aren't good at it, you probably won't like or won't be good at that course or job.
- **I will take all 3 sciences and the more "traditional, hard" subjects because these will look better on my CV and applications in the future.** Largely, all subjects are equal and times change. We all find different things hard. Subjects like PE, Art, Music, HE, Applications of Maths, Health and Food Technology, Foundation Apprenticeships, Criminology, etc, etc are recognised and valid. Better to get As in subjects you love than C/Ds in subjects you are making yourself take. No job/course asks for 3 sciences, so why take up so many options with science? Don't assume, check with us.
- **I am going to take all my subjects right up through school.**
You can't.
This years S2s will take 8 Nat4/5 subjects in S3/4 – study over 2 years.
Think forward if you hope to stay on until S5/6, what would be your choices for those years be? Generally, in S5 we take 5 subjects and S6 we take 3 Advanced Highers or 4 subjects.
Do your subjects have a next level?
- **You have to study Maths and English in S5/6, don't you?**
No you don't. Don't assume, speak to staff about other plans.
- **All Universities ask you to have Higher English/Maths/Language/Science.**
No they don't. Universities don't always ask for any particular subject. Many do ask for specific subjects and grades depending upon the institution and/or course you are applying for. Use the universities websites, don't assume.

- **Surely staying on until S6 and then going to university is always the right choice – you will be more employable and earn more...isn't that right?**

The right people need to study at university, the right people need to go to college, the right people need to do an apprenticeship. The right people need to stay for S5 and/or S6.

Staying for S5 and/or S6 and performing poorly can have a negative effect on you, your grades and motivation. There is no one best plan for all – just the best one for you. Also maybe one of these destinations isn't your 1st stop after school – maybe university in your 30's...maybe an apprenticeship when you are 19...maybe college after S4 for now. People with degree level qualifications do (usually) earn more money in the end, but there's more than one way of getting those qualifications.

- **Apprenticeships are for folk that don't do very well in school, aren't they?**

Nope. Modern Apprenticeships have academic entrance requirements and Graduate Apprenticeships (where you get a degree while working) ask for similar entrance requirements to universities. Foundation Apprenticeships are school subjects that are worth a Higher (sometimes 2 Highers). Apprenticeships are for folk that want to learn on the job, it's about learning style not intelligence. Use www.apprenticeships.scot

- **Taking an extra/early Higher is rare but always a good idea.**

Not always. Everyone's situation is different. Universities/colleges/employers don't ask for early Highers or for 6 Highers in 1 sitting – so you have to weigh up if it's the right thing for you. Will you still get the best grade you can in all your subjects if you put pressure on yourself? Will you run out of things you want to do at school? Because you still have to have a full timetable in S5/6 if staying on.