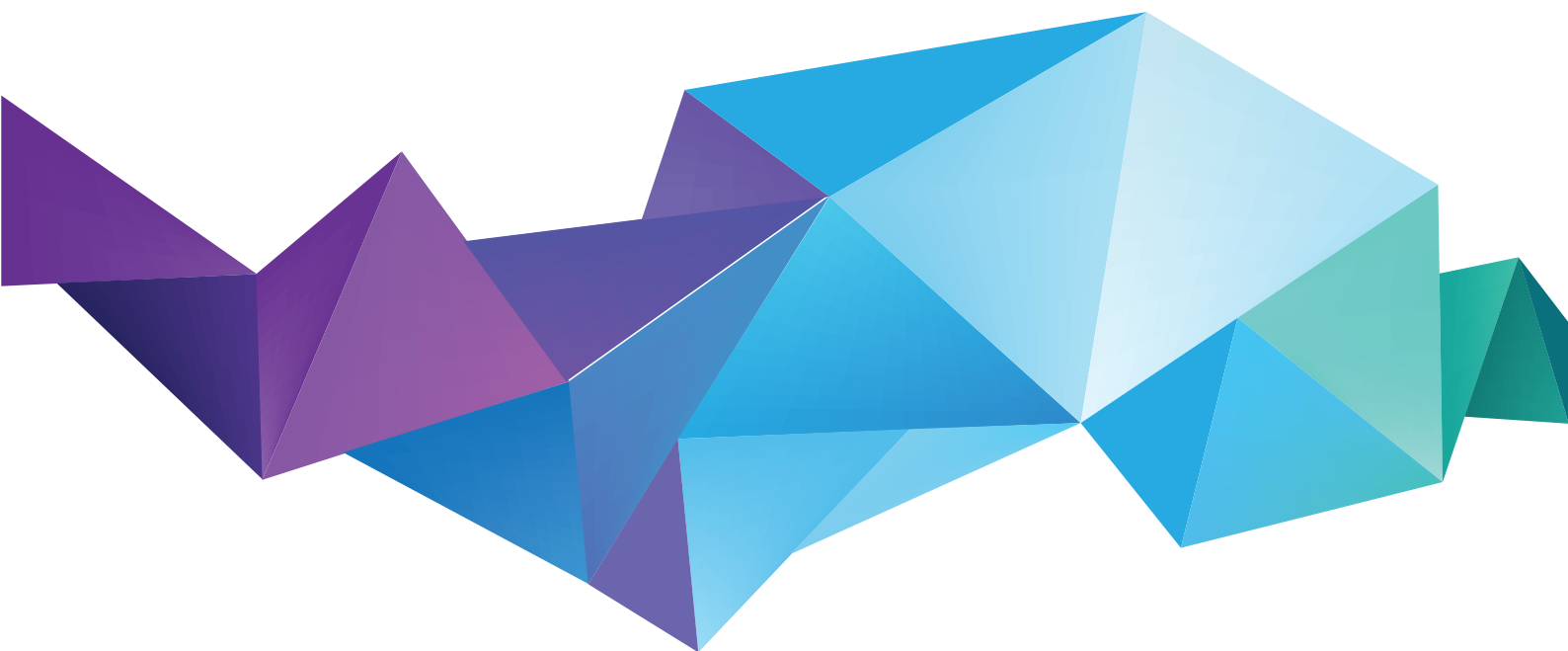




**CREATIVE, DIGITAL & PERFORMING ARTS
ACADEMY**

YEAR 10 OPTION CHOICES



The Key Stage 4 Curriculum - 2028 to 2028

An Introduction

Dear students

You are at the start of a crucial stage in your education where you will make important choices about what you study at Key Stage 4 after carefully considering your own personal goals.

The choices you make over the coming months as part of this process will shape your experience during the next two years of your time at Birmingham Ormiston Academy (BOA) and will be of vital importance when considering your progression to further education and the world of work.

You have already chosen to attend BOA to pursue one of our specialist pathways in the creative, digital or performing arts. The BTEC Level 2 qualification that you will study on this pathway will provide you with the equivalent of one GCSE qualification, as well as providing you with the opportunity to take complementary skill awards (Arts Awards or LAMDA Acting Awards etc.) related to your chosen specialism. During the *GCSE Options* process you will select two further GCSE subjects that complement the compulsory subjects and the specialist pathway you have already chosen, as well as broadening your learning experience at BOA.

As with all aspects of academy life, we continually update what we do to reflect current thinking in education, as well as listening to what previous students tell us about their experiences. What remains constant is that every year we aim to offer each student a broad education that contains variety, challenge and personalisation.

By the end of Key Stage 4, our aim is that you will be fully prepared for the next stage in your life and that we will have equipped you with fantastic examination results alongside a lifelong thirst for learning. You will be a resilient, confident young adult who possesses transferable skills and the personal characteristics required to contribute positively to the wider community.

I hope that this booklet is helpful to you when making the choices about your future.

Dear parents

We live in an ever-changing world and preparing young people for the future is both crucial and challenging. One of the only certainties in education is change and BOA ensures that staff, parents and students are kept up-to-date with all changes to policies and practice. As a centre that champions the Arts, we also recognise the importance of a broad education. By working in partnership with parents we will ensure that each student chooses courses that demonstrate his or her strengths and interests, as well as achieving good levels of literacy and numeracy.

This booklet has been written primarily to advise students about their Key Stage 4 option choices but parents are also asked to study its contents since your involvement during this process is vital.

Alistair Chattaway
Principal

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum at BOA

What subjects are offered in Years 10 and 11?

The curriculum at BOA combines compulsory subjects with a specialist pathway course and two additional GCSE option subjects. The academy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and offers the option to follow the English Baccalaureate.

The Specialisms:

Students study for a BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in their chosen pathway.

The BTEC is a specialist vocational qualification highly valued by industry and higher education. It encourages and stimulates students' achievement through practical learning and forms of assessment based on applied knowledge and understanding of the relevant subject area. BTEC courses provide considerable opportunities for teamwork and in-depth study based on specialist activities. The BTEC Level 2 TECH Awards are equivalent to one GCSE qualification. Students are also given the chance to take complementary skills awards, such as the Arts Awards, LAMDA Acting Awards or the IDTA Dance Awards, in order to strengthen their abilities within specific disciplines.

The specialist pathways on offer at BOA for September 2025 are as follows:

Creative Arts

- BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Art & Design Practice

Digital Arts

- BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Creative Media Production

Performing Arts

- BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Music Practice
- BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Performing Arts: Acting
- BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Performing Arts: Dance
- BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Performing Arts: Musical Theatre

The Compulsory Subjects:

In Year 10, all students will study the following compulsory subjects:

1. English Language and English Literature (2 GCSEs)
2. Mathematics (1 GCSE)
3. Combined Science (2 GCSEs)
4. Citizenship Studies (1 GCSE)

GCSE Option Subjects:

Students choose two further subjects from the following lists of GCSE options in order to broaden their learning:

Option A:

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| French | Geography | History | Triple Science |
|--------|-----------|---------|----------------|

Option B:

| | | | | |
|----------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|
| Fine Art | Dance | Media Studies | Music | Spanish |
|----------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|

Are there any restrictions on what I can choose?

- All students should consider the advice offered in the sections on the *Progress 8 Measure* and the *EBacc qualification* (see *A Broad Curriculum* section - Page 4.)

A Broad Curriculum

Recent years have seen a growing emphasis by the government on the importance of having a solid core of well-established traditional GCSE subjects at the heart of each student's Key Stage 4 (years 10 and 11) curriculum. At the same time, the more vocational non-GCSE qualifications (BTECs) have been revised and redesigned in order to make them more challenging and more useful for progression to post-16. Part of this movement has been the introduction of two new measures, the *Progress 8 measure* and the *English Baccalaureate*.

The Progress 8 Measure

The *Progress 8 Measure* works alongside the EBacc qualification (see below) and has been designed to recognise broad academic achievement. In 2016 the *Progress 8 Measure* replaced 5+ A* to C as a key measure that informs performance tables for all schools and academies. *Progress 8* looks at how much progress students make from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4. The *Progress 8 Measure* is used by further education and higher education institutions as an indication of a student's progress at Key Stage 4, as well as an assurance that students have followed a broad, knowledge-rich curriculum.

The Progress 8 Measure is calculated from a student's best eight grades taken from the following subject areas:

- Group 1: English Language and English Literature
- Group 2: Mathematics
- Group 3: EBacc subjects (Humanities, Modern Languages and Sciences)
- Group 4: All other 'approved' GCSE or vocational qualifications, including BTEC

The English Baccalaureate

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) has also been designed to recognise broad academic achievement. It is awarded to students gaining grades 5 to 9 in all of the following subject areas:

1. GCSE English Language
2. GCSE Mathematics
3. GCSE Science (Double Award – Combined Science)
4. GCSE History or GCSE Geography
5. GCSE French or GCSE Spanish (or any other approved Modern Language)

The EBacc qualification was introduced in 2011 and is one of the measures of success at KS4. Recent announcements by the government have confirmed its status for the future. Employers and universities are increasingly aware of the significance of the EBacc and its guarantee of a broad education. The option choices required to fulfil the EBacc measure also enables students to meet the requirements of the *Progress 8 measure*.

At BOA, the curriculum is designed to ensure that students achieve well in the Progress 8 measure. We strongly recommend that all students of appropriate academic ability ensure that their option choices meet the requirements of the Progress 8 measure. As part of our options guidance, we will be giving clear advice about these decisions to individual students.

Overview of Assessment

Vocational Qualifications (BTEC Level 2 TECH Award)

Vocational courses that underpin the specialist pathways at BOA provide experiences and education relevant to working life. You will develop your knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad vocational area, and will also gain experience of work in that area. BTEC courses are assessed mainly through evidence collated in portfolios but external examinations also contribute significantly.

GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education)

GCSE courses are taught over a two-year period and are started in Year 10. Assessment of GCSE is usually via a combination of external examinations and non-exam assessments, all of which are completed under supervised conditions in the academy. The balance between exam and non-exam varies from subject to subject and has been outlined in the 'Assessment by Subject' table on Page 6. It is no longer possible to enter students for module / units throughout Year 10 and Year 11, and students will not be able to re-sit modules / units throughout Year 10 or Year 11.

New GCSE grading system

GCSE subjects have moved over to new, revised qualifications. English Language, English Literature and Mathematics changed in September 2015, with all other GCSE subject having changed by September 2018. Students studying the new GCSEs will receive numerical grades (9 to 1) rather than the more familiar A* to G grades, as outlined below:

Assessment Tables

GCSE

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| New GCSEs | U | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Old GCSEs | U | G | F | E | D | C | B | A | A* | |

BTEC

| | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| BTEC | Distinction* | Distinction | Merit | Pass |
| GCSE (equiv.) | A* | A | B | C |

GCSE Citizenship

Since September 2020, all maintained schools and academies must ensure that they deliver RE (relationships education), RSE (relationships and sex education) and PHSE (personal, health, social and emotional education) as part of the curriculum. As GCSE Citizenship Studies enables teachers to deliver large sections of the content outlined in the statutory guidance, all students at BOA are entered for the qualification.

Assessment by Subject

You should choose a combination of subjects that provides the right amount of challenge and gives you the best chances for success. The subject descriptions in the following table indicate the methods of assessment for all subjects on offer at BOA:

| Subject | Assessed by external examination | Non-exam assessment |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Art & Design Practice | 40% | 60% |
| BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Creative Media Production | 40% | 60% |
| BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Music Practice | 40% | 60% |
| BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Performing Arts – Acting | 40% | 60% |
| BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Performing Arts – Dance | 40% | 60% |
| BTEC Level 2 TECH Award in Performing Arts – Musical Theatre | 40% | 60% |
| GCSE Art & Design - Fine Art | 40% | 60% |
| GCSE Citizenship Studies | 100% | - |
| GCSE Dance | 40% | 60% |
| GCSE English Language | 100% | - |
| GCSE English Literature | 100% | - |
| GCSE French | 100% | - |
| GCSE Geography | 100% | - |
| GCSE History | 100% | - |
| GCSE Mathematics | 100% | - |
| GCSE Media Studies | 70% | 30% |
| GCSE Music | 40% | 60% |
| GCSE Combined Science (Double Award) | 100% | - |
| GCSE Spanish | 100% | - |
| GCSE Triple Science | 100% | - |

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum – in brief:

The table below condenses the information provided throughout this booklet and provides a clear overview of the curriculum offer at Key Stage 4, along with details of qualifications and time allocations per subject:

| Subject | Qualification | Time allocation |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| GCSE English and GCSE English Literature | 2 GCSEs | 5 hours per week |
| GCSE Mathematics | 1 GCSE | 4.5 hours per week |
| GCSE Combined Science | 2 GCSEs | 5 hours per week |
| Pathway (creative, digital or performing arts) | BTEC Award (equivalent to 1 GCSE) | 6.5 hours per week |
| GCSE Option 1 | 1 GCSE | 2.5 hours per week |
| GCSE Option 2 | 1 GCSE | 2.5 hours per week |
| Citizenship Studies | 1 GCSE | 2 hours per week |
| TOTAL | Equivalent of 9 GCSEs | 28 hours per week |

Choosing the right GCSE Option subjects

It goes without saying that it is of vital importance that you choose the right GCSE option subject(s). Firstly, students should see the GCSE as a continuation of their studies at Key Stage 3 as opposed to the beginning of a new course. There are a number of GCSE Option subjects, if not all, where prior learning is essential. **GCSE Triple Science** is often taken by gifted scientists who are on track to achieve grades 6 to 9 by the end of Key Stage 4. Elsewhere, students who opt for **GCSE Music** should have achieved at least Grade 4 in a musical instrument and/or music theory. Similarly, students interested in **GCSE Art & Design** or **GCSE Dance** should be able to demonstrate aptitude within those areas.

Students who opt for either **GCSE French** or **GCSE Spanish** should have studied the subject for at least two years during Key Stage 3 and should be making good progress in the subject, while students interested in **GCSE History** or **GCSE Geography** should have studied and excelled at the subject at Key Stage 3. In the case of subjects that are not typically offered at Key Stage 3 – like **GCSE Media Studies**, where students are asked to analyse and write at length about different media forms – students must ensure that they are familiar with the demands of the course and pay close attention to the way the subject is assessed.

To ensure you choose the correct GCSE option subject(s), please refer to the subject guides that are handed out during the *Year 10 Options Evening* and are also advertised on the academy website, under the following link:

<https://www.boa-academy.co.uk/page/?title=Option+Subjects&pid=27>

Making your choices

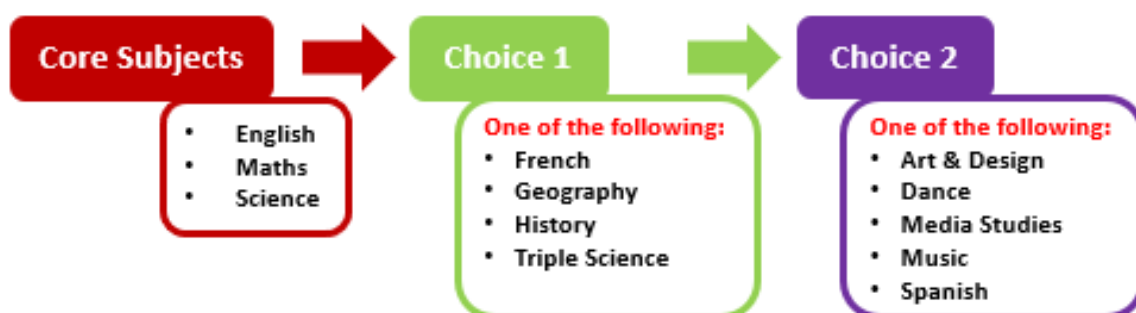
Below are examples of the option choices that you can make at BOA. The following examples ensure that KS4 students receive a broad education, in line with guidelines from the Department for Education.

Students will choose one of the following routes:

Route 1: Standard Option Route (against Progress 8 Measure)

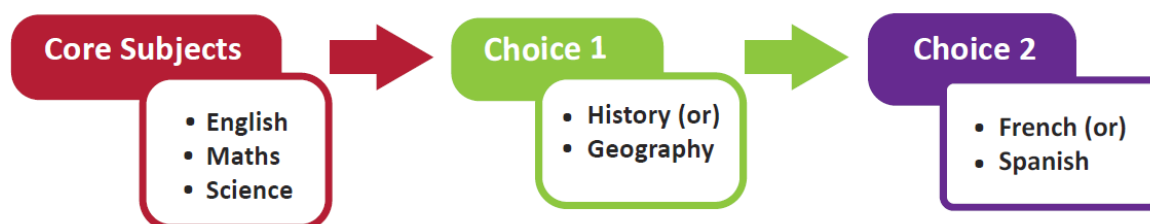
Students should choose **one** subject from the **Choice 1** option block and **one** subject from the **Choice 2** option block.

The subjects on offer in these option blocks will ensure that students achieve a broad education, in line with guidance set out by the DfE (as outlined on Page 4 of this booklet)



Route 2: English Baccalaureate

Students will need to choose a humanities subject (History or Geography) and a language (French or Spanish) in order to achieve the English Baccalaureate award, as outlined below:



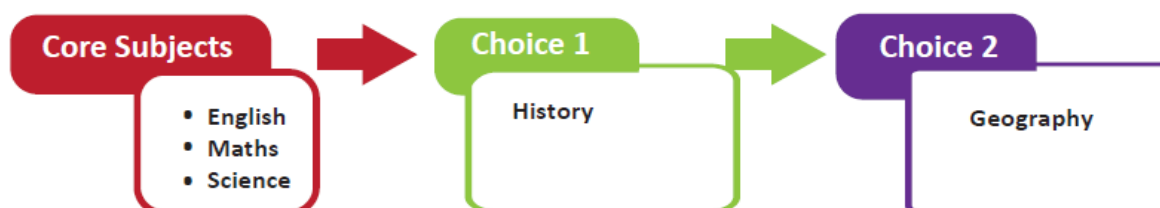
Alternative Routes

We will consider requests for alternative GCSE option combinations but decisions are dependent on the following:

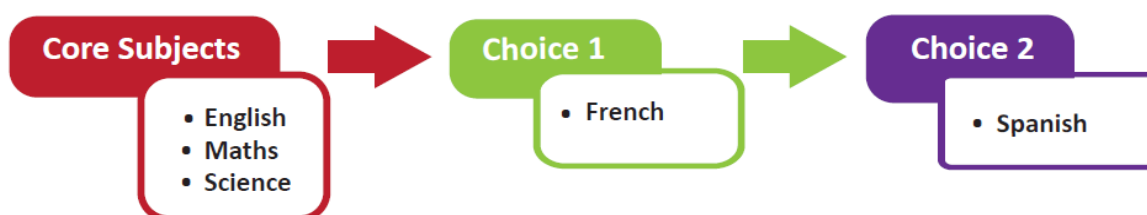
1. That all KS4 students at BOA have chosen options that are broadly in line with DfE guidance, as outlined on Page 4 of this booklet;
2. That requests can be accommodated on the whole-academy timetable, as certain subjects may be delivered during the same teaching periods / timetable block.

The following Options Routes are examples of requests we have received in the past:

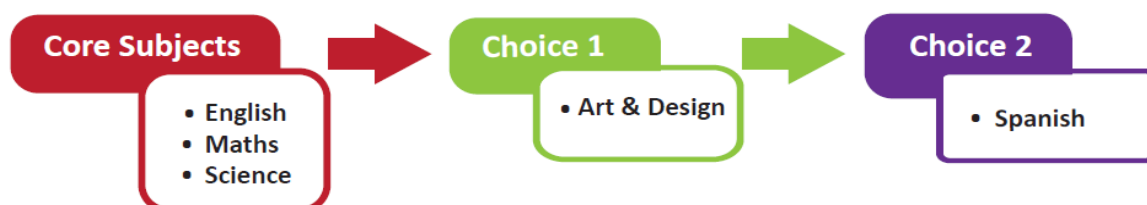
1.



2.



3.



NB: As part of our guidance, we will be giving you clear advice about the decision to choose an alternative route. If we firmly believe that you have the ability to choose either the English Baccalaureate or Progress 8 route, you will be advised to choose subjects from the lists on Page 7 and Page 8.

Combinations that we do not permit:

The Academy's overarching approach is to ensure students receive a broad and balanced education, in line with the *Progress 8 measure*. We advise students to avoid taking subjects that are too similar in nature, where the education of those students would be considered too *narrow*.

Students must also avoid 'discounting', where courses – even though different qualifications – are considered to be the same. Please be aware that students on the following pathways cannot choose the following subject combinations:

1. Students on the Creative Media Production Pathway cannot choose GCSE Media Studies as they already study a BTEC Creative Media Production qualification.
2. Students on the Dance Pathway cannot choose GCSE Dance as they already study a BTEC Dance qualification.
3. Students on the Music Pathway cannot choose GCSE Music as they already study a BTEC Music qualification.
4. Students on the Visual Art & Design Pathway cannot choose GCSE Art & Design (Fine Art) as they already study a BTEC Art & Design qualification.

Final Advice

1. The GCSE options on offer are dependent on the number of students per class. If class sizes are too small, for example in GCSE Dance, students will be restricted when attempting group work or ensemble work. If we are not able to run classes for certain option subjects, we will contact students and ask them to indicate their second choice.
2. If you have any specific questions or would like advice on alternative *GCSE Options* routes, please email: options@boa-academy.co.uk
3. We are asking all new Year 10 students to submit their GCSE option choices via BOA Applicaa. You can access the GCSE option section via your BOA Applicaa account in May, following the information evening we will hold for all new Year 10 students.



Birmingham Ormiston Academy
imagine everything

