



# Your Future Your Choice

Eaton Bank Academy  
Sixth Form



## Your Future, Your Choice.

### WELCOME

We hope that you will find **Your Future, Your Choice** helpful as you consider the best subjects and courses for you to study. We have created this booklet with you in mind; however, we also hope that your parents or carers, teachers and advisers will also find it useful in supporting you to make the **right choices for YOUR future**. We are here to help you, as we know that the subjects you choose to study now will affect your options at university or career prospects. We want to help you get this important decision right!

### Why we have written this guide

At Eaton Bank Academy, we have years of experience in advising, supporting and guiding Year 11 students through their Post-16 Next Steps, and we decided to create this guide for you, to help support you further. We believe that it is our job to offer you **impartial and accurate information** about **how to choose your Next Steps** and we consulted the **Informed Choices Guide** created by The Russell Group of Universities.

### What are A Levels and how should you choose the right combinations?

In Year 12 we generally expect all of our students to select three subjects to study at advanced level. Three full A Levels is what is expected by universities. Any students interested in taking four subjects at A level will receive careful guidance about whether this is in their best interests as top universities requiring three A grades will not accept, for example, four B grades or even two A grades plus two B grades! This is why careful research and informed guidance is so important to you both now and throughout the Sixth Form.

Students wishing to take a combination of A Levels and BTEC courses will be supported and offered guidance, to ensure that they have the right combination and number of courses alongside any necessary work experience.

## **A good place to start!**

**We will help you to find a course that matches your interests, career aspirations and talents!**

The best way to decide what you would like to study at advanced level is to ask yourself the following questions:

- Which subjects interest me?
- What am I good at?
- What would I like to do after university or college?
- Which academic skills would I like to develop further?

Having an answer to any of these questions is a good starting point, but don't worry if you cannot answer them all: speak to any member of the Sixth Form team or your teachers for advice and guidance. That's why we are here!

## **Research, research, research!**

Do your research. Check out [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) (UCAS is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK. They process more than two million applications for full-time undergraduate courses every year, and help students to find the right course.) Find out more about entrance requirements for courses. Get reliable information from:

- Unifrog – The complete destinations platform.
- School
- Parents
- Colleges
- Employers

## **Take your time, weigh it up, then decide what is right for you!**

Some professions require specific subjects to be studied at higher education level. If you know what career you would like to do in the future, research the job in detail to see if any qualifications are essential.

## **The challenges!**

As you know, employment and university places are highly sought after, and whilst they can be extremely competitive, with the right attitude and outlook, you will succeed! To put you in the best position possible, it is important to gain the **best exam results** that you can now, as they will be considered in any university or job application.

## **Your GCSE results really do matter**

Some universities may ask for a specific number of GCSEs (or their equivalent) or for specific grades in some subjects, so it is important that you try as hard as you can over the coming months to achieve your best possible grades. Don't give up! It really is possible to improve grades significantly between now and May/June.

## **GCSE English and Maths requirements...**

**Grade 4/5 or above in GCSE English and Maths** is expected to be the entry requirement for most universities and higher-level apprenticeships, so we support all students in our Sixth Form by providing English and Maths re-sits to ensure all our Sixth Formers meet this requirement when applying for jobs/university. Re-taking Maths or English to try to secure these grades is also one of our entry requirements.

## **How to select the right course for you:**

### **Our guide to making the right choice for studying a subject at Advanced Level**

Before deciding to continue studying a subject at a higher level, consider the following:

- Have you been good at the subject and enjoyed it in the past?
- Do you need this subject to enter a particular career or course?
- Have you not studied the subject before, but looked into it and think it will suit your strengths?
- Do you realise that most subjects are distinctly more difficult at an advanced level than at standard level?
- Have you got your facts straight? There are many misconceptions about subjects required for courses and careers.
- Do you really know what the subject is about?

Students staying on at Eaton Bank Sixth Form will be guided by their teachers into making the right choices. They will challenge you and look for:

- ✓ Evidence that you are good enough to take the subject at advanced level.
- ✓ Evidence that you are interested enough in a subject to take it at advanced level if you have not studied it before.

This guidance continues after you have received your GCSE results and throughout your time in the Sixth Form whenever there are decisions to be made.

## **Get it right first time...**

If you are aiming for incredibly competitive courses at university, such as Medicine, Veterinary Science or Dentistry, you will need to have achieved outstanding GCSE grades (standard level qualifications).

Does your performance to date match your ambition? Are your decisions based on accurate information and clear thinking? Your choices for Post-16 study will commit you to certain directions at university and perhaps rule out certain careers.

## **This decision is a big one so do the research in order to get this right first time!**

## **Do you know what you want to study at University?**

If you know what you wish to study at university and want to know what subjects you will need to have studied in preparation, you will find detailed information on each university's entry requirements on the UCAS website. This section will give you some idea of general patterns.

Some degrees will be open to you whatever subjects you choose to study for your advanced level qualifications. This will be something to check before you apply.

Some popular degrees will normally be open to you without any specific subject background. These include:

Accountancy, Anthropology, Archaeology, Business Studies, History of Art, Law, Management Studies, Media Studies, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology, Surveying.

## **Maybe you don't know what you want to study in the future...**

### **If you want to keep your future options open, you can!**

Many courses at university level build on knowledge which you will gain while still at school. Where this is the case, universities need to make sure that all the students they admit have prepared themselves in the best possible way to cope with their chosen course. For this reason, some university courses may require you to have studied a specific subject prior to entry, others may not. However, there are some subjects that are required more often than others. These subjects are sometimes referred to as **'facilitating' subjects**. Subjects that can be viewed as **'facilitating' subjects** are:

Mathematics and Further Mathematics

English (Literature)

Physics

Biology

Chemistry

Geography

History

## **Keep your Career/University options open...**

By choosing two of the **facilitating subjects** at advanced level, you will have a much wider range of options open to you at university (provided you are good at these subjects and are interested in them!).

**You are not restricted to applying for degrees or jobs which require those subjects either;** for example, even if you study three facilitating subjects at advanced level, you will still be able to apply to study Law at university (for which most universities do not require any specific advanced level subjects).

One of the best ways to keep your options at university open is to choose your advanced level subjects from the list of facilitating subjects.

**If you are not sure of what to study at university, why not think about your two favourite subjects from the facilitating subjects list and then one other subject which you particularly enjoy and are good at?**

## **Do your Subject Combinations make sense? Some combinations WILL give you broader options!**

Certain subject combinations at advanced level tend to relate to broad groups of university degree courses.

## **Do you enjoy writing essays? Maybe Arts/Humanities or a Social Science pathway is right for you?**

Perhaps all of your subject choices will fall into the Arts/Humanities and Social Sciences (with perhaps one creative/talent-based subject). A large range of university degrees in the arts/humanities, social sciences and business fields will be open to you if you choose this pathway.

Let's imagine that you do History, English Literature and Sociology at advanced level. This combination could lead to one of the following degrees at university: History, Politics, English Literature, Sociology or how about Philosophy, Psychology or even something more vocational e.g. Law or Management Sciences!

## **Maybe you are more interested in the creative and practical A Levels? If you fall into this category, read on!**

If you have talent in a creative and practical subject and would like to study it at university, it is important that you take this subject at A Level.

If you have a talent in **Art**, you may well be thinking about an Art foundation course after A Levels as a precursor to a degree programme. You might want to consider choosing A Levels in Art and Design or Media Studies. These will provide you with the basis for your portfolio, which you will need to gain entry to an Art foundation course.

For **Drama** and **Dance** courses, you may gain a place through an audition process rather than being required to gain specific grades in specific subjects, although for a few courses (particularly those with a strongly theoretical base), Theatre Studies may put you at an advantage. As entry to higher education in these fields is often largely dependent on performance at an audition, preparation for such auditions should be gained from different out-of-school activities, within school and, of course, from your school leaving qualifications themselves.

## The Scientist

If you fancy yourself as a Scientist, it may be in your best interests to choose **Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics** or **Physics** as you will then keep open all the **Science/Mathematics options** at university.

In the Science field at university, many degrees fall into one of two camps: **Biological/Life Sciences** and **Physical Sciences**.

**Biological/Life Sciences** are degrees based on Chemistry and Biology so choosing these at A Level could lead you to a possible degree in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Pharmacy, Dietetics or degrees based on research (for example, Biochemistry, Biomedical Materials Science, Pharmacology).

**Physical Sciences** involve the practical application of Mathematics and Physics. As long as you take these two subjects at A Level, a huge range of degrees will be open to you, such as Engineering (mechanical, electronic/electrical and civil), Physics and Materials Science.

'If you are a very talented scientist/mathematician, it is important that out of the four available sciences – Biology, Chemistry, Maths (which includes both Mathematics and Further Mathematics) and Physics – you should choose three. If you know you are inclined towards the life sciences, then you should choose Chemistry and Biology. If you know you are on the engineering side, you should choose Mathematics (and possibly Further Mathematics) and Physics.' Informed Choices | Russell Group 2012

## The Eaton Bank University Advice Programme

Our excellent programme ensures that the overwhelming majority of students who wish to go on to Higher Education succeed in gaining places at their first-choice institutions. Last year was no exception.

The substantial increase in university tuition fees means you will want to be confident that you are receiving the best possible advice to enable you to choose the course and institution most appropriate for you! We have many years of experience in providing this guidance and our former students testify to the success of our programme of advice.

# Think that you are ready to choose your Post-16 Next Steps Subjects at Advanced Level?

**Consult our Checklist before you do!**

**1. Know what you want to study at University?** – Check out the entry requirements for University courses to see what A Levels you need.

**2. Not sure yet?** – Keep your options open by choosing 2 facilitating subjects (Maths, English Literature, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, History) as these will keep more options open to you at degree level.

**3. GCSEs and other standard level qualifications matter...**

Make sure you understand the GCSE or standard level requirements for entry to a competitive university. Find out if you are on track to achieve the standard level grades to progress onto the course/courses that you want to do at advanced level and check that these grades are enough to get you onto the university course that you may choose to do.

**4. Think balance**

Do you have a balance of subject choices that reflect your abilities, strengths and interests?

Have you considered how certain subject combinations relate to university courses?

**5. Make sure you know WHY**

If you want to take a subject that you have not studied before, can you talk for a minute on what this subject is about? Try and unpick why you wish to study this subject. It's not enough to say 'It's interesting', 'I think I'll like it' or 'It will be fun'.

**Take your time, weigh it up, then decide what is right for you!**

**Checked out UCAS? Well, you may have discovered that most universities have Entrance Requirements!**

Some degree courses require or prefer specific A Levels to have been studied alongside the main subject. Subject requirements vary from university to university and precise requirements may change. Only the universities' websites or [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) should be considered authoritative.

At present the following guidelines should be borne in mind:

**Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science**

Chemistry is essential and Biology is strongly advised. Maths can also be helpful.

**Engineering**

Maths and Physics are normally required. (Chemistry for some types of Engineering is also needed e.g. Chemical Engineering.)

**Computing**

Maths may be required.



## **Psychology**

Some courses require/prefer one or two sciences (which could include Psychology A Level) but entries with arts subjects are also accepted.

## **Economics**

Maths is required/preferred at most universities. Some are now requiring Economics at A Level, most others express it as a preferred subject.

## **Architecture**

An Art or Design portfolio is essential. Either Maths or Physics is helpful.

## **Law**

Good grades are required in academic subjects. No preference on entry is given to students who have studied A-level Law and it is of no advantage once the degree course starts.

**So... choosing the right courses at A Level is vital in determining the university courses/job opportunities open to you and researching any subject requirements will help you to make informed choices about your advanced level subjects.**

## **We help you to stand out from the crowd...**

### **We also offer excellent guidance and advice to those of you wishing to gain employment...**

We are able to advise you on training schemes and apprenticeships which may allow you to continue your education and gain excellent additional qualifications while enjoying the benefits of a salary. If you feel that further education or training is not for you, then we will of course help you with the job applications you make.

### **Who possibly knows you better than we do?**

### **Our personal references for you really *are* personal to you!**

Our close Sixth Form community ensures that we know all our students very well so the references we write are personal and stress your unique skills and qualities. We are small enough to support you well, whilst large enough to provide you with many opportunities to ensure you leave here with the skills and confidence to make a success of your adult life in whatever field is right for you.

### **Fancy applying for Oxford or Cambridge University?**

**We are here to help you be the best that you can be and we offer a special Oxbridge Programme...**

Each year students apply to Oxford and Cambridge and are successful in gaining offers. Undergraduates then return to Eaton Bank to advise our current students. A separate booklet detailing our programme is available.

**If you aspire to be a Doctor, Lawyer or Vet we can also support you further....**

### **Specialist Medics, Vets and Law Programmes**

We are able to offer tailored support for students planning to apply for these highly competitive courses. We will advise you on work experience and are happy to support you when preparing for the BMAT, UKCAT and LNAT examinations. We will also help you with background reading and will challenge you with subject-specific discussion groups.

### **Enrichment Opportunities in the Sixth Form**

Life in our Sixth Form is about much more than just your academic courses. The whole experience is designed to ensure that you grow in confidence and maturity throughout your time with us and leave ready to begin the next stage of your life, whether that be in a higher education setting or in employment. At a time of growing national and international competition, we value time spent each week on 'Curriculum Enrichment' and leadership development. Students pursue a wide range of opportunities as described below. In addition to our careers guidance and university application programme, our PHSE programme includes topics such as 'Health and Wellbeing', 'Finance and Budgeting', 'Culture and Diversity'...

**You may need Work Experience to get onto an Apprenticeship/Degree or into employment.**

**We give you the time and support to do this.**

We will encourage you to set up work experience placements. Such experience will be an essential part of your application for some university courses and will give you an advantage over others if you plan to leave Sixth Form to go straight into employment. Current students are working in a wide variety of different locations including local vets, care homes, schools and offices.

**Play a bigger part in the school and wider community!**

You will also be encouraged to participate in the local and wider community. Students are involved in fund raising for local and national causes, give their time to run a peer support service for younger students in the school, support Forms during core time and help in local community projects. What you do is up to you! We look forward to supporting you in helping causes of particular interest to you.

## **Sixth Form only Sports Opportunities**

You will have the opportunity to get involved with Sixth Form only sports teams. If you are interested in sports, you will also be encouraged to set up individual or team sports for the Sixth Form and to challenge other local schools to fixtures. We also encourage students to assist with coaching lower-school teams and individuals.

## **Want to gain leadership skills? Our 'Sixth-Form-within-a-school' community gives you the opportunity to do this**

### **Leadership and Responsibility**

Hone your leadership skills and take responsibility. You can apply to be a Deputy Head Boy/Head Girl or you could get involved in the Sixth Form Senate, the Student Body, the Eco Leads, the Peer Support group or the Creative Team. You could also take part in the 6<sup>th</sup> Forum, where representatives from each form have a say in what happens in the Sixth Form. You could organise the Leavers' end-of-year event or run sports sessions and clubs for younger students. Many of our students are also involved in sports coaching, mentoring GCSE students and literacy support for younger pupils.

## **Gain new experiences, travel and see the world with us!**

### **Trips and Expeditions**

Students have the opportunity to take part in many subject-related trips and some overseas trips including our annual ski trip or our Dance and Art and Design trip to New York/Washington. Expeditions have enabled some students to visit places like the Gambia, challenging them to experience a very different environment and to help children in our partner Gambian school.

## **Aspiring Actor, Musician or Dancer?**

### **Drama, Music and Dance opportunities in the Sixth Form**

Sixth Formers participate in the plethora of 'Arts' opportunities available within the school; they benefit from chances to take part in productions and to lead groups and ensembles, acting as role models for younger students. There are regular theatre trips to see a variety of performances and workshops from visiting companies.

## **And more opportunities in the Sixth Form to make you stand out from the crowd!**

TEDx Youth, Choir, Band, Senior Maths Team, Musical Performance weekend, Biology, Chemistry and Physics Olympiads, Synthesis and Spectroscopy experience (University of Manchester), Auschwitz, Houses of Parliament, Bank of England, Theatre outings, Photography and Geography trips... The list is endless! If we don't currently run a trip that you think we should, we encourage our Sixth Formers to tell us so we can!

## **You have nearly made it through... Want to find out more?**

If you would like further guidance, we are all here to help! Either chat with subject teachers, Tutors or the Director of Sixth Form who are always available. Alternatively, the following organisations can provide additional advice:

**Conservatoires Admissions Service (UK)** - <http://www.ucas.com/ucas/conservatoires>

**Careers Advice** - <http://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

**University and higher education** - <http://www.gov.uk/higher-education-courses-find-and-apply>

**14 to 19: your life, your options** - <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/index.htm>

**LearnDirect** - <http://www.learndirect.co.uk/>

**Apprenticeships/University/Courses** - <http://sacu-student.com/>

**Apprenticeships** - <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

**National Apprenticeship Service** - <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>

**Prospects** - [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs.htm)

**Student Finance in England** - <http://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

**Unifrog** - <https://www.unifrog.org/>

**UCAS** - <http://www.ucas.com>

**If you would like to apply to Eaton Bank Academy Sixth Form, please scan the QR code below to go to the online application form:**



