

# GCSE Options 2011-2013



# **GCSE CHOICES HANDBOOK 2011-2013**

## **GCSE COURSES**

During your first three years at Sheffield High School you have been following a broad course of study covering a wide variety of subjects designed to further your education. You are now at the stage where you must make some choices about which subjects to study at GCSE level. The GCSE courses provided for you have been designed to be interesting, useful and relevant to the world today and in many cases will help to prepare you for advanced level study. During these two-year courses you will be assessed by examination on the knowledge, understanding and skills which you have acquired. Many subjects will also have an assignment that will be completed in lesson time. Practical work, fieldwork, research, oral and communication skills may contribute to your final grade. It is important to choose your subjects carefully, bearing in mind your own interests and strengths. This booklet is designed to help you and your parents make these choices.

## STUDY PROGRAMME

It is important to bear in mind what you enjoy, the skills you will develop, what you are good at and what your career plans are. You should aim to achieve a broad and balanced set of choices on which you can build later in the Sixth Form.

### You will study ten GCSE subjects:

Mathematics  
 English Language  
 English Literature  
 One language which you are already studying  
 Three separate Sciences

Then choose three more subjects from the lists below to make a total of ten. We recommend that you choose a humanity (Geography, History or Religious Studies). Try to have a good spread of subjects but remember you can choose additional languages/humanities if you wish.

You must also choose an additional subject as an alternative as it is not always possible for the timetable to provide all your choices.

You may study GCSE Physical Education within the option system or as an additional subject.

### Subject choices

#### Languages

French  
 German  
 Spanish  
 Latin

#### Humanities

History  
 Geography  
 Religious Studies

#### Technical/Aesthetic

Art and Design  
 Music  
 Drama  
 PE  
 Information and Communication Technology  
 Business Studies

GCSE 2011 - 2013			
SUBJECT	% OF TOTAL MARK	CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT	APPROXIMATE TIMING
ART	60	Coursework	In class/homework
	40	Controlled Test	May Y11
BUSINESS STUDIES	25	Controlled research assignment	Autumn Term of Y11
ICT	30	1 Board-set assignment	Spring term of Y10
	30	1 Research Task	Autumn term
DRAMA	60	3 performances	Throughout Y10 & Y11
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	40	Various pieces	Throughout Y10 & Y11
ENGLISH LITERATURE	25	Various pieces	Throughout Y10 & Y11
GEOGRAPHY	25	1 fieldwork investigation	In class/homework Autumn Term Y11
HISTORY	25	1 piece	In class. Autumn Term Y10
FRENCH	60	2 writing & 2 speaking pieces	Throughout Y10 & Y11
GERMAN	60	2 writing & 2 speaking pieces	Throughout Y10 & Y11
LATIN		None	
SPANISH	60	2 writing & 2 speaking pieces	Throughout Y10 & Y11
MATHEMATICS		None	
MUSIC	40	2 compositions	In class
	40	2 performances	Homework by December of Y11
PE	60	Performance	Ongoing
BIOLOGY	25	1 piece	In class
CHEMISTRY	25	1 piece	In class
PHYSICS	25	1 piece	In class
RELIGIOUS STUDIES		None	

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE & ENGLISH LITERATURE

During Y10 and 11, you will follow AQA's Specification in which English Language and English Literature is taught as a combined course. The course is structured for the integration of both English Language and English Literature leading to two separate GCSE grades. Nevertheless, in Y11 some of you who might struggle in English Literature may be entered for the single GCSE English.

The course will enable you to demonstrate your ability to use English in real life contexts and use an imaginative and analytical approach to language topics drawing on personal experience. It will provide you with opportunities to explore your literary interests, offering an experience of: Literature today, Literature globally and The Literary Heritage. In the Spoken Language Study, you will have an opportunity to investigate the way oral communication takes place. This may involve the exploration of your own spoken language and that of other people led by enquiry and data rather than academic study. You will broaden your own skills as a writer, learning how to successfully match your writing to audience and purpose.

During the course of two years, you will complete a number of Controlled Assessments. In preparation towards this Assessment, you will be given the opportunity to read and explore many different texts such as 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Macbeth', 'Of Mice and Men', and poetry by some of the most influential modern writers like Simon Armitage and Carol Ann Duffy. You will also study the poetry of writers from The Literary Heritage like Robert Browning, Dylan Thomas and Wilfred Owen. At the end of Year 11, you will sit one English Language examination and two English Literature examinations.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

You may choose PE as one of your choices within the option scheme. Alternatively, you may study GCSE PE as an additional subject. In this case the lessons will take place during the PE sessions that take place as part of the PSHE course. In both cases homework will be set and you will be expected to make a commitment at some PE clubs.

Assessment is by a written paper (40%) on health-related exercise and sport in society; the remaining 60% is based on a practical performance (understanding and applications of tactics in a range of sports). To be successful at this subject you need to be both committed to sport and to have a good knowledge and understanding of sport.

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

This is an exciting and stimulating course for those wishing to broaden their horizons and understand more about some of the issues facing the world in which we live. The course covers topics that are useful for many careers including health care, social work, law and journalism to name but a few. Throughout the course you will continue to develop skills of evaluation, analysis, discussion and structuring arguments which will be of value to any A-Level subject.

What will I study? OCR Full Course. In Year 10 you will explore the religion of Buddhism. You will look at the key areas of beliefs, festivals, divisions and practices. This will include topics such as the life of the first Buddha, reincarnation and enlightenment.

In Year 11 you will take a further two modules, Christian Perspectives and Ethics. In these modules you will look at current ethical issues and study how society and religion responds to them. This includes some really important questions on current issues such as abortion, test tube babies, the right to a child, euthanasia, capital punishment and human rights.

How will I be assessed? At the end of Year 10 you will sit two Buddhism modules (1hr each). This allows you to complete 50% of your GCSE by the end of Year 10!

At the end of Year 11 you will sit the Christian Perspectives and the Ethics modules (1 hr each). This will be the final 50% of the course.

Is there a controlled assessment? No

Why Buddhism? Buddhism is one of the fastest growing religions in the West. Studying it at GCSE allows you to examine a belief system that differs greatly from other religions you have looked at previously. This allows everyone in the group to start from the same position and learn together.

Are there any trips? Yes. In Year 10 you will visit two Buddhist centres and have the chance to talk to Buddhists about their faith. In Year 11 you will visit Coventry Cathedral to study peace and reconciliation.

Do I have to be religious? No all we ask is that you have an open mind.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

**Geography helps you to make sense of and understand our complex and ever changing world.** Geography is a very interesting, relevant and challenging subject that will broaden your education and develop your skills.

The GCSE course is divided into 3 sections

### **Unit 1 Physical Geography (37.5%)**

A selection of topics/issues are:

The hazards and impacts created by earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis.

What would happen if a 'super volcano' erupted and how we might manage the effects.

The weather and climate of the UK and impacts of our more 'extreme' weather

The event which will affect us all – global climate change – causes, effects and solutions

The extreme weather created by tropical storms

The impact which ice has had and is having on the landscape

How we use fragile Alpine environments for tourism

### **Unit 2 Human Geography (37.5%)**

A selection of topics/issues are:

Global population growth - good or bad?

The impacts of our ageing population

The causes and impacts of migrating people

Changing urban environments and how to make cities more sustainable.

The global growth and importance of tourism

How can tourism be managed to bring long term benefits and make it more sustainable

The impact of tourism and adventure holidays on extreme environments

### **Unit 3 Local Fieldwork Investigation (25%)**

During the course you will visit the Snowdonia National Park in North Wales on a **3 day residential field trip** to collect data for your fieldwork investigation and to look at valuable case study material.

Geography keeps your options open and geographers are among the most employable people on leaving university.

## **DRAMA**

If you enjoy acting and writing about plays and live theatre productions then this could be the right course for you.

There are three practical controlled assessments for which you will devise and rehearse your own plays and perform extracts from published plays in groups of 2 or more. You are not just assessed on your final performance but on your contribution to rehearsals.

You will sit a one and a half hour external examination at the end of the course in which you will answer two questions on your practical work.

## **SCIENCES**

The separate sciences are taught in Y10 and you will continue with the GCSE specifications started in Y9. As well as developing your knowledge of science and how models can be used to explain observations, you will extend your understanding of the evaluation of evidence and the implications of science for society.

Each GCSE consists of four equally weighted units. Three units are tested by examination and the fourth is a controlled practical skills unit, which will be assessed during lessons. At the end of Y10, you will sit examinations in the first units of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The second units will be examined in January of Y11 and the final units the following summer. The resulting qualifications will be three GCSEs, one in each of the Sciences.

## **MATHEMATICS**

All students follow the Edexcel GCSE Mathematics higher tier syllabus. Topics extend and build on work covered in Y7-9 and include number, geometry, measures, algebra, statistics and probability. You will increase your knowledge of Mathematics and also learn how to further develop your problem solving skills.

GCSE Mathematics is assessed by external examination and there is no coursework component. All students study three units each of which is assessed by a single examination. Units may be taken at regular intervals throughout years ten and eleven (modular assessment) or the three units may all be taken at the end of year eleven (linear assessment).

## FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH

These courses have similar syllabuses and content. Some of the topic areas are already familiar to you, such as free time and holidays. The emphasis is on developing your ability to use the language effectively for practical communication in situations when you are abroad or when you meet foreign visitors to this country. The study of one or more languages also gives you an insight into the culture of these countries. Assessment is by examination in the four language skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing.

In French and Spanish, we use the AQA syllabus. Listening and Reading each count for 20% and are assessed in an examination at the end of Y11. Speaking and Writing count for 30% each. The assessments for speaking and writing are carried out through Y10.

In German, the Edexcel syllabus is used. The Listening and Reading each count for 20% and are assessed in a final exam, whilst Speaking and Writing count for 30% each and are both assessed during the course by your teacher. For Speaking, we submit two recorded tests on different topics which your teachers undertake with you. These are like normal speaking tests that you are used to, except that they are recorded. Pupils must submit two pieces of writing in German which are produced under controlled conditions in class. You will however do more writing than this and then submit your best pieces for final assessment. We do one piece of written course work each term throughout Y10 and Y11 up to the Easter of Y11.

This is an exciting new examination with a slimmed-down content compared to the old GCSE syllabus and is designed to be more appealing to learners.

## LATIN

If you take Latin you continue to develop your skills in translation and in comprehension exercises since the emphasis is on understanding written Latin. For the examination you also study "real" Latin, written by famous Roman authors. You continue to use the Cambridge Latin Course, initially. (Find out what happens to Salvius!)

## ART AND DESIGN

GCSE Art and Design gives you the opportunity to express yourself through drawing and painting, printing, 3D clay work, textiles, digital photography, graphic and computer aided design using skills acquired during Technology and Art lessons from KS3.

Students are encouraged to explore their own creative journey. Gallery visits enable them to develop a personal and critical appreciation of the work of artists and designers and an ability to relate this, where appropriate, to their own practice.

## HISTORY

*'The broad mass of the nation will more easily fall victim to a large lie than a small one'.  
Hitler 1925*

Students of History will be less likely to believe large lies or small ones!

You should find this course interesting, stimulating and a good basis for understanding issues in the news today, as well as a great deal of fun. History will also allow you to develop skills of analysis, explanation, evaluation and debating. These skills are extremely useful in any career which you might pursue in later life.

The course consists of three parts. Firstly you study Sheffield in the nineteenth century for a controlled assessment, secondly you study how and why medical knowledge has developed from prehistoric peoples to the present day.

In Y11 you will look at Nazi Germany, exploring the reasons why Hitler got into power and then looking at the state which Hitler created, including the Holocaust.

There are two examination papers which test your factual knowledge and your skills. The controlled assessment is worth 25%.

## ICT

The new GCSE ICT course emphasises the development of transferable skills such as problem solving and thinking creatively, logically and critically. It gives students the skills and practical experience to make ICT engaging and fun.

The specification content will be assessed in these 3 units:

### **Unit 1: Systems & Applications in ICT External examination (40%)**

Areas of study include: Current & emerging technologies, tools & techniques, Society's use of ICT & collaborative working.

### **Unit 2: The Assignment: Applying ICT Controlled Assessment (30%)**

Set by the examination board - The scenario will change each year. The tasks will vary but could involve setting up a website for a band, setting up a system to calculate costs and linking it to the website.

### **Unit 3: Practical Problem Solving in ICT Controlled Assessment (30%)**

Students get to choose a task set by AQA. All the tasks reflect practical problems which they may face in their daily lives.

Recently you have been receiving advice about making choices in PSHE lessons. During the first few weeks of the Spring Term you will be participating in a short course designed to help you make a sensible choice of subjects for GCSE. Your form tutor, Mrs Heaton (Head of Y9) and Mrs Ashby (Head of Careers) will help you with these decisions. Also Mr Mozley (Deputy Head), Miss Goodwin (Director of Studies) and Mrs Bennett (Head of Pastoral Care) are available to answer questions.

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

On Tuesday 1 February 2011 at 7.00pm you and your parents are invited to attend an open evening where Mrs Dunsford will give you a general introduction and staff will be available to answer any queries about courses.

On Thursday 17 February 2011 your parents will be invited to make appointments to discuss your progress and possible choices with your subject teachers.

By Friday 4 March 2011 please return your completed GCSE choices form to your form tutor.

## MUSIC

Do you enjoy playing an instrument or singing?

GCSE Music enables you to develop your skills and interest through performance, listening to music and composing.

**Performing:** This practical section of the examination accounts for 40% of the total marks, so competent players or singers have every opportunity to do well.

**Composing:** This encourages you to explore and express your own ideas. Throughout the course, you be taught various practical composition techniques which will help you with your composition coursework.

**Listening and Appraising:** You will be introduced to many different types and styles of music (e.g. world music, film music, music theatre) in preparation for the listening section of the examination which is the main written paper.

The course is ideally suited to students who already play an instrument or sing and would like a deeper insight into the subject. It is essential for anyone considering study of music at a higher level and an excellent core of knowledge and skills for all who participate in music making.

## Business Studies

GCSE will provide you with knowledge of all the key aspects of setting up, operating and succeeding in business. No matter what career path you take in life Business Studies will support your understand of how organisations work; therefore to have an understanding of business is a valuable life skill.

Initially you will complete a module titled Starting a Business. This details the process of developing business ideas, raising finance, setting aims and objectives and managing a small company. Then in Y11 module two makes the logical progression to look at business growth and the impact this has on the main functions of Business such as Marketing, People management and accounting. In addition to this a controlled assessment task will take place which includes a research phase into a business problem with students then tasked with writing a report making key recommendations.

### Assessment:

Unit 1 - Setting up a Business (40% of GCSE in Y10)

Unit 2 - Growing as a Business (35% of GCSE in Y11)

Controlled Assessment task (25% of GCSE in Y11)

During your time studying Business we also offer the exciting Coca Cola Challenge enterprise competition where we have enjoyed success reaching the regional final for the past 5 years! This allows you to apply your understanding of business to a set problem and develop your presentation, communication and team working skills. In addition to this enrichment opportunity you will also have the chance to go on an educational visit to a large company such as Cadbury or Coca Cola to see how classroom theory relates to the real world.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

In addition to these subjects you will also follow a programme to encourage your individual development. This includes PSHE, physical education and careers, as well as a General Studies programme that will encourage you to think of eg. ethical issues and current affairs.

## CAREERS EDUCATION

You will have Careers lessons during Y10. You will also take the Morrisby Psychometric tests.

At the start of Y11 you will will be given a personality profile and a careers guidance report to help you make further decisions about Sixth Form Education.

In Y11 you will have a careers interview and be given advice so you can produce your own action plan for career development.

## COMPLETING THE CHOICES FORM

1. Choose a language and an additional three subjects ie. A total of four. Enter your choices on the form.
2. Enter your alternative choice. You will be allocated four of your choices, depending upon the timetable, so you must make sure you would be happy studying any listed.
3. If you wish to study GCSE PE as an additional subject enter this on the form.
4. If you have any ideas about your future career or post-sixteen education, please mention them under 'Future Plans'. You may also add any other information which you consider important.
5. Return the form to your form tutor by Friday 4 March 2011.