



NORTH DURHAM
ACADEMY

Guided Pathways Information and Advice

“It is wiser to find out than to suppose”. – Mark Twain

INTRODUCTION

Introduction for Students

Believe it or not, this booklet is one of the most important you will ever read. For the first time in nine years of education, you get the chance to choose some of the subjects you study. It's an exciting time, but also a very important one, because the decisions you make could play a big part in your future progression.

For this reason, you should take your time and talk to people before you decide your options. Talk to your parents or carers; they will have made similar decisions of their own in the past, and will be able to advise you. Talk to your teachers; they will tell you whether they think their subject is suitable for you, and they can answer any questions you might have. Talk to older students, who are already doing courses that you might be interested in; they will know exactly what each subject is like. Talk to your tutors too, who will be able to give you unbiased advice.

Introduction for Parents

This booklet is designed to help your child make the best choice of subjects to study at GCSE / Vocational level. For parents this can be quite a confusing time. You will want to help your children make the right choices, but you may feel that you don't know enough to give them the right advice. Any member of staff will be more than willing to discuss your child's options.

A Pathway Evening will be organized this academic year.

We hope you find this year's option booklet informative and useful to help you make the best choices with your child. Our aim is to ensure that we get the "right students onto the right courses". We hope that this booklet will help you to support these important decisions.

Questions and Contact Information

Please contact g.dawson@ncdat.org.uk or K.Lax@ncadat.org.uk for a meeting to discuss any curriculum issues or concerns.

THE GCSE CURRICULUM

Aims of the Process and our Curriculum Intentions:

At North Durham Academy we believe that students should be offered a broad and balanced range of subjects to study at GCSE/Vocational level. We are also mindful that losing some subjects at the end of Year 8 could limit the breadth of knowledge on offer if students continued to study the whole curriculum until the end of Year 9. We have listened to the views of current Year 8 and 9 students and parents who, overwhelmingly believe that selection at the end of Year 8 is the right thing to do for our young people.

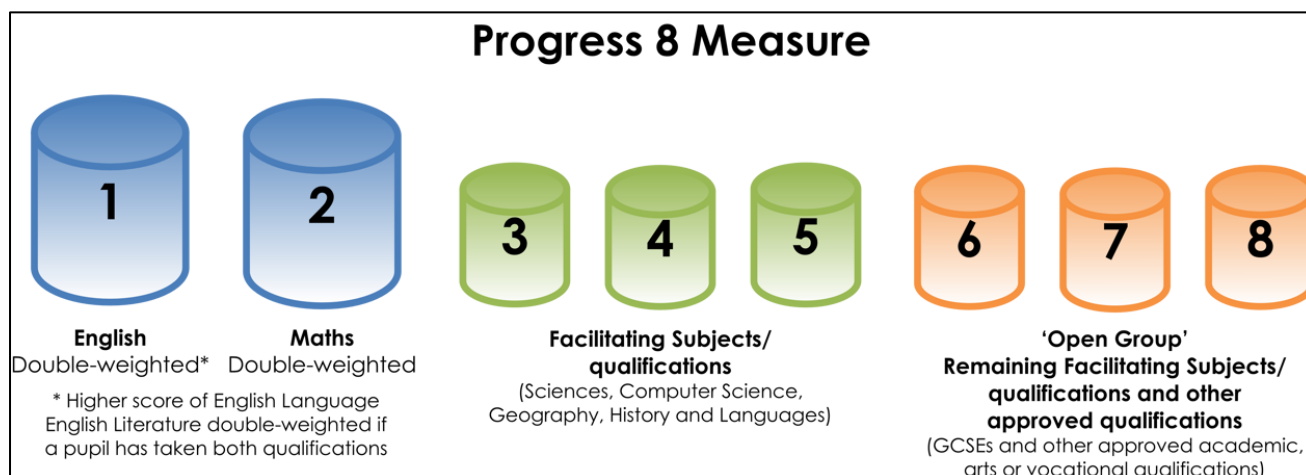
To ensure that this breath of knowledge is still offered to all students in Year 9, students will also attend two hours of Life Enrichment lessons to enable them to become responsible and 'worldly wise' citizens. During these lessons they will be exposed to a vast range of activities, skills and experiences including religious education, social and emotional resilience, sex and relationship education, careers advice and guidance, Information and communication technology and digital literacy, British Values, citizenship, managing money and enterprise.

These topics will be explored and applied through different subject topics. For example, British Values may be explored through a focus on history, enterprise and economics through a geographical theme, relationships through the medium of drama.

This will enable students to enrich their life skills, develop a more holistic understanding of becoming a responsible adult and encourage them to become reflective, resilient and confident young people. Life Enrichment lessons will also be complemented through our daily Tutorial Programmes.

All students must study a minimum of 8 GCSE / VOCATIONAL subjects until the end of Year 11 and non-examinable subjects such as physical education and life enrichment lessons.

The 8 subjects are shown below and make up the Progress 8 Measure.



1. The Core Curriculum - **compulsory** (you have to do them by law)
2. Guided Pathways – **chosen by you** but guided by government legislation. All children must study three facilitating subjects. Every child will study 2 sciences and must choose one other facilitating subject.

The Core Curriculum

The core curriculum includes those subjects that are compulsory for all students to study until they leave in Year 11.

Year 9 to Year 11	Subject Type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Language • English Literature • Mathematics • Science – combined award • Core PE • Life Enrichment* <p>*Covered in Tutorial Time in Y11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE • GCSE • GCSE • GCSE • Non-examinable • Non-examinable

The Guided Pathways

To ensure that all students can study a range of courses and qualifications that best suit their ability, learning styles and future ambitions, we have looked closely at their Key Stage 2 data and matched a pathway to ensure students select the subjects that will allow them to maximise their life chances.

Therefore, we are offering two pathways – blue and green.

Blue Pathway

This has been designed to encourage **all students with target grades in English and maths of grade 6 or above** to follow an English Baccalaureate pathway. The government states:

- *The EBacc is made up of the subjects which are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors.*
- *Research shows that a pupil's socio-economic background impacts the subjects they choose at GCSE, and that this determines their opportunities beyond school.*
- *A study by the UCL Institute of Education shows that studying subjects included in the EBacc provides students with greater opportunities in further education and increases the likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education. Sutton Trust research reveals that studying the EBacc can help improve a young person's performance in English and maths.*
- ***The government's ambition is to see 75% of pupils studying the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2022, and 90% by 2025.***

Green Pathway

This has been designed to give all students the opportunity to follow the EBacc pathway if they choose to.

HOW THE MODEL LOOKS IN PRACTICE

	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Core	English 5 hours Maths 4 hours Science 4 hours PE 1 hour Life Enrichment 2 hours	English 5 hours Maths 4 hours Science 4 hours PE 1 hour Life Enrichment 1 hour	English 5 hours Maths 4 hours Science 6 hours PE 1 hour
Guided Pathways	<p>Students can choose three subjects from a list of courses.</p> <p>History, Geography, Computer Science and Spanish (EBacc subjects) will be completed at the end of Year 11. Students will study this for 3 hours per week in Y9, 2 hours in Y10 and 3 hours in Y11</p> <p>All other subjects will be completed at the end of Year 10 and given 3 hours per week in Y9 and 4 hours per week in Y10</p> <p>The expectation is that all students will study at least one EBacc subject in Year 9/10/11; (GREEN PATHWAY) and that many will study for the Full EBacc (1x MFL and 1x Humanity). (BLUE PATHWAY)</p>		<p>In Year 11 students will choose subjects to fill up to 6 hours of Guided Pathway time.</p> <p>Depending how many EBacc subjects a student is studying in Year 9, they will have either 3 or 6 hours of Guided Pathway time available in Year 11.</p> <p>This time could be used to pick up a new subject or consolidate performance in the key subjects of English and maths.</p>

		Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Possible Pathways	3xEBacc (Incl Full EBacc)	Choice 1 = 3 hrs EBacc Choice 2 = 3 hrs EBacc Choice 3 = 3 hrs EBacc	2 hrs EBacc 2 hrs EBacc 2 hrs EBacc +4 hrs accelerated course # or consolidation	3 hrs EBacc 3 hrs EBacc 3 hrs EBacc
	2xEBacc (Incl Full EBacc)	Choice 1 = 3 hrs EBacc Choice 2 = 3 hrs EBacc Choice 3 = 3 hrs Other	2 hrs EBacc 2 hrs EBacc 4 hrs Other # +2 hrs accelerated course # or consolidation	3 hrs EBacc 3 hrs EBacc +3 hrs Guided Pathway
	1xEBacc	Choice 1 = 3 hrs EBacc Choice 2 = 3 hrs Other Choice 3 = 3 hrs Other	2 hrs EBacc 4 hrs Other # 4 hrs Other #	3 hrs EBacc +6 hrs Guided Pathway

Courses completed at the end of Year 10

EXAMPLES

YEAR 9 (Blue Pathway)	Hours of study	YEAR 10	Hours of study	YEAR 11	Hours of study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics English Literature/Language Science Dual Award History Spanish Art Life Enrichment PE 	4 5 4 3 3 3 2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics English Literature/Language Science Dual Award History Spanish Art(Course completes) Life Enrichment PE Accelerator course or intervention (Eg 1:1 maths support) 	4 5 4 2 2 4 1 1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics English Literature/Language Science Dual Award History Spanish Re-opt for another subject (3 hours over one year) OR Extra maths/ English/ science PE 	4 5 6 3 3 3 1
Total Hours	25		25		25

YEAR 9 (Green Pathway)	Hours of study	YEAR 10	Hours of study	YEAR 11	Hours of study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics English Literature/Language Science Dual Award History Health and Social Care (Vocational) Art Life Enrichment PE 	4 5 4 3 3 3 2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics English Literature/Language Science Dual Award History Health and Social Care (course completes) Art (Course completes) Life Enrichment PE 	4 5 4 2 4 4 1 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics English Literature/Language Science Dual Award History Re-opt for another subject (6hours over one year) OR Extra maths/ English/ science PE 	4 5 6 3 6 1
Total Hours	25		25		25

POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT GCSE AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS

- Both GCSE and Vocational subjects have a heavy written content with the exception of art and photography
- Both GCSE and Vocational subjects have an examination. Vocational examinations are sat in January with the opportunity to re-sit in April. GCSE examinations do not have the option of a re-sit.
- Non EBacc subjects will conclude at the end of Year 10.
- EBacc and Core subjects will conclude at the end of Year 11 (English, maths, science, humanities, Spanish)
- There is no coursework for the majority of GCSE subjects other than those with a clear practical focus (Design Technology, art, photography).
- All vocational subjects have coursework

GCSE Grades 9 to 1 and Vocational Grades

The traditional grading from A*-G has been replaced by a 9 to 1 scoring system, with 9 being the highest. This will apply to all GCSE subjects your child studies.

Grades 1-9	9 8 7	6 5 4	3 2 1	U
Traditional comparison A*-G	A* A	B C	D E F G	U

Vocational subjects are graded as:

- Level 1 Credit and Advanced Credit (C/AC)
- Level 2 Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction* (P/M/D/D*).

Vocational grade	GCSE equivalent
Level 2 Distinction * (L2D*)	8/9
Level 2 Distinction (L2D)	7
Level 2 Merit (L2M)	6
Level 2 Pass (L2P0)	4/5

The minimum expectation for all students to achieve in vocational subjects is a Level 2 pass as this is equivalent to a grade 4 GCSE qualification.

Grade 4 (L2P) will be considered a 'standard pass', whilst grade 5 (or above) will be viewed as a 'strong pass'.

Despite every effort to give all students their preferred choice, this may not always be possible.

Alternatives may have to be considered if:

- Too many students opt for a particular course
- Too few students select a particular course
- We wish to advise a better range of courses to meet a student's needs
- Combinations of courses are chosen which don't work once the blocks have been created

We will write to you in the summer term to confirm your choice.

We always do our best to ensure that all students' choices can be matched but please bear in mind that students who submit choices after the deadline may not find it possible to be placed on their first choice courses. As soon as the options deadline has passed, work begins on timetabling. Alterations to choices may not be possible from this point onwards.

Once a decision has been made and a course begun, it is extremely difficult to make any changes. It is therefore essential that time and thought be given to the combination of courses to be taken.

Terminology to Help You

Core	These are compulsory subjects: English, maths, science, PE, RE/Life
Guided Pathway Choices	There is an element of choice about which of these subjects to study
Level 1	GCSE grades 3-1 or equivalent
Level 2	GCSE grades 9-4 or equivalent With grades 5+ being classed as strong pass grades
Level 3	'A' Level grade A*-E or equivalent
GCSE	A course graded 9-1. These are assessed mainly or solely by examination (see individual subject guides for further information)
BTEC Technical Award / OCR National	Vocational qualifications, graded pass/merit/distinction/distinction*, and equivalent to a GCSE. Larger portfolio/coursework based elements, with some assessment by exam (see individual subject guides for further information). Designed to equip students with applied knowledge and associated practical skills; and closely aligned with the world of work
Facilitating Subjects	The Facilitating Subjects are: maths, English, sciences (including computer science), geography, history and modern foreign languages. Please see link below regarding the value placed on these subjects
Full EBacc (EBacc = English Baccalaureate)	For students to achieve the Full EBacc they must attain GCSE grade 5+ in maths, English, at least two sciences, one of history or geography and a modern foreign language

<https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

MAKING CHOICES - ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

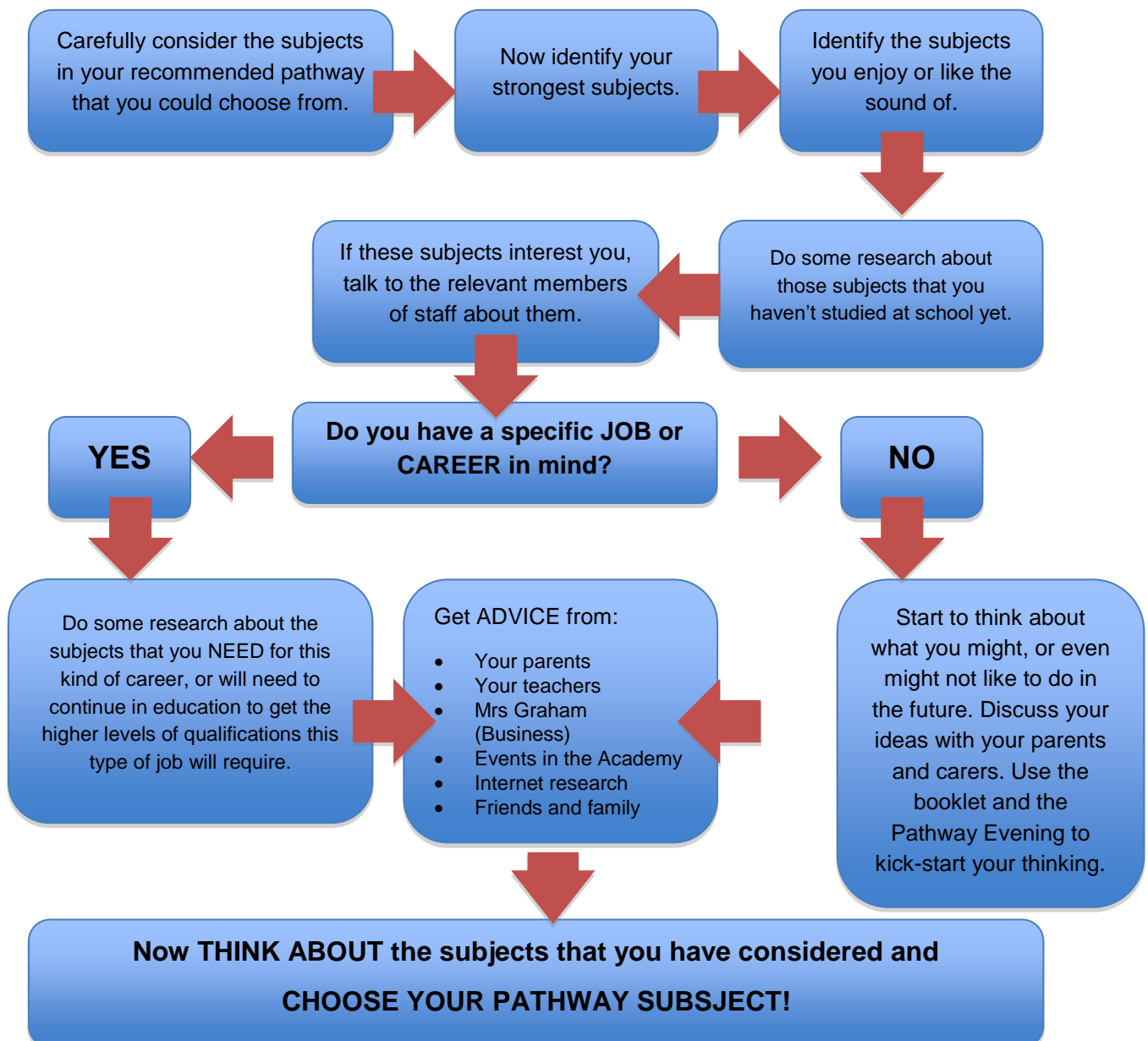
Successful Choices

Success cannot just be measured by grades, or choosing subjects which people think are the 'best'. Success for each individual student will include:

- Beating your goals
- Achieving your full potential
- Developing as a person
- Achieving a place on the post-16 courses that will lead to your chosen future career

Choosing Your Pathway Flow Chart

Below is a simple flow chart to help guide you through choosing your option subjects:



Do's and Don'ts When Choosing Your Pathway Subjects

Making Choices – Advice for Students

1. **Take time** – Don't choose your courses straight away. Take time to consider your options and discuss these with the people who can advise you.
2. **Collect information and advice** – Do some research into the jobs you may be interested in when you leave education, and which qualifications and subjects you may need to study. You need to follow this up with conversations with your subject teachers to find out even more. Teachers, tutors and Year 10 or 11 students you know who are already studying the courses will all be able to help you.
3. **Choose for yourself** - Do not be influenced by what your friends are choosing or by which teacher has taught you this year. Next year will be different and you will have your lessons in different teaching groups.
4. **Work Hard** -It is important that whatever options you choose to study in Year 9, you must show maturity and commitment by attending all current subjects and you do your best during the rest of this year. **You need to work hard in all your subjects now so that you make good progress when you start GCSE or VOCATIONAL courses.**

Useful Careers Advice

Consider subjects you think you will be good at and will enjoy. You may wish to explore possible careers, however a balanced range of subjects will ensure as many options as possible are open to you. Ask yourself:

- Which subjects interest me?
- Which subjects do I like and why do I like them?
- Which are my best subjects and how do I know?
- What do my teachers say my strengths are?
- Would I prefer a course with examinations or coursework?

Few employers expect specific GCSE passes with the exception of English, maths and science.

Your GCSE subject choices and the grades you achieve can affect your ability to study some subjects at sixth form, college or an apprenticeship, so speak to the sixth form and college staff who will be there on Pathways Evening. It always helps to have your questions ready so you know exactly what you want to discuss.

In some subjects like History and Geography, it may be possible to study these at A Level without having first taken them at GCSE. However, this does not apply to all subjects, for example languages, to be sure check entry requirements with Post 16 staff.

Career Websites

You can find information on job sectors and specific careers using the 'Career Tools' and then 'Job Profiles' on the National Careers Service website. Go to www.direct.gov.uk/NationalCareersService

Whether you've got a career in mind or you haven't got a clue, Plotr can help you discover your future and guide you to careers you'll love. Go to www.plotr.co.uk

An apprenticeship is where you are learning through hands on experience of a job and gaining a nationally recognised qualification. To find out more information and to view vacancies, register online at www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Post-16 Options

Choosing the correct pathway is the first 'Key Decision Point' most young people will face in their lives. The next "Key Decision Point" will be when they choose what type of education destination to choose after Year 11. Although this may seem a long way off, the best way to make sure you can do what you want in the future, is to give it some thought now and make sure the choices you make now leave as many options open to you as possible. After Year 11 you will have four learning pathways.

These are:

- Sixth Form
- College
- Apprenticeships
- Employment with Training

During the course of Year 11 you'll have to decide:

- What do I want to do next?
- Where and how can I achieve this?
- What will be available?

It's a good idea to begin planning early to make sure you make the right decision.

There are some fantastic resources to help you make your choices now at post-16 on the Durham County website Help4Teen at www.help4teens.co.uk

Thinking Ahead ... Considering University

It may seem like a long time away, but if you are considering applying to a competitive university and especially a competitive course at a competitive university, it is important that you consider all the aspects of the entrance requirements, including the GCSE requirements.

The summary below gives an idea of the GCSE requirements that you might come across for certain degree courses. Remember that these are only examples. It is important to check university websites for detailed requirements before applying.

- Applicants to study Medicine are usually required to have very good GCSE results in Maths, Science and English
- For a degree in English, universities often look for applicants to have a GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language
- A grade B in Maths and sometimes Science is often required for a degree in psychology or teacher training

Many courses at university level build on knowledge which you will gain whilst studying at the Academy. Where this is the case, universities need to make sure that all the students they admit have prepared themselves in the best way to cope with their chosen course. For this reason, some of the top university courses may require students to have studied a specific subject at A level prior to entry, others may not.

If you are considering university or completing a degree course, then research and explore entry requirements. Go to www.ucas.ac.uk

Or

www.russellgroup.org/InformedChoices-latest.pdf

Local Careers advice in County Durham can be found on the www.help4teens website.