



GEORGE  
WATSON'S  
— COLLEGE —

# Welcome to the S4 Subject Choice Parents' Forum



Mr Richard Kettley  
(Miss Beth Dunham from 20  
April)

Principal Teacher of Guidance

S3 & S4



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Mr Ian Jordan

Principal Teacher of Guidance

S5 & S6

# Subject Choice

- All relevant information has been posted on school website
- Pupils have been given a paper copy of the column structure

# Subject Choice

## How many subjects?/Basic aims/Rules

- Five subjects
- Core Time is important
- Choose only one subject from any column
- Take an S4 subject to a more advanced level
- New subjects at 'H' level in S5, without previous standard grade/ Intermediate 2, require approval from the Head of Department

# Subject Choice

## Which Subjects?

- English is compulsory
- Maths may only be dropped if a Credit pass has been obtained at Standard Grade. Dropping Maths requires Mr Jordan's permission.
- Many courses require Credit Standard Grade or a good pass at Int 2. Others require a '3' from General Standard Grade or a pass at Int 2
- Modern Language can be particularly useful
- Some post-school courses have specific requirements
- Beyond these constraints students are encouraged to continue with subjects which they enjoy

# Subject Choice

## Which Level?

- Subject Departments will advise on the appropriate level for individual pupils to target in S5. Intermediate 2 can lead to Higher in S6 if appropriate
- Not always the right answer in totality - we need to take an overall view
- Consider achievements over 2 years - S5 & S6 so that students don't do too much at once
- 'Entry Requirements' are published for every course
- Prelim results and Parents' Meeting may help with this

# Subject Choice

Standard Grade/Intermediate 2 → Higher Grade

- There is a gulf between Standard Grade/Intermediate 2 and Higher
- Highers are much harder than Standard Grades/Intermediate 2 and there are only two terms of actual lessons

# Subject Choice

## Core Time

- Pupils do five subjects, so one column is empty  
This is 'Core Time'
- 1 period - Religion and Philosophy Discussion Groups - compulsory
- 2 periods - PE (optional) - opt in
- 1 period - PSD
- Remaining periods - Private Study time



# Making Informed Choices

Dr Rodney Mallinson

Deputy Head

Careers and Course Choice

# Making Informed Choices

- In looking ahead to SQA Exams in S5 and S6 and to life beyond Watson's, the following points may be of help
- It should be understood that there may well be significant differences in individual cases. The guidelines cannot possibly cover all the circumstances which may be relevant to a particular pupil
- Staff from the Careers Department will be happy to deal with enquiries at any time

# Making Informed Choices

- Higher passes are graded A, B and C. An award at grade D is a narrow fail. A bad fail is recorded as No Award
- In general, it is the quality of passes which counts, not the quantity (ie BBB is better than CCCCC)
- Do not assume that A and C average BB - they may not! For example, AACCC cannot be assumed to be equivalent to BBBB
- Basic threshold for entry to Higher Education is 3 Higher passes

# Making Informed Choices

- Most courses at traditional institutions of HE need 4 Highers and some need 5
- No course in Higher Education needs 6 Highers at one sitting
- Some high-tariff subjects (medicine, vet, dentistry, law and physiotherapy) require 5 Highers at particular grades at the first sitting
- For many courses, there are specific subject requirements. Please check with Careers Department
- Published entry requirements are usually for the first sitting

# Making Informed Choices

- For the vast majority of courses, qualifications can be obtained over two sittings (but see above regarding requirements at the first sitting). However, a greater total will then be needed. For example, a course which requires BBBB over one sitting may require BBBBBB or AABB over two and a course which requires AAABB over one sitting may require AAABBB or AAAABB over two

# Making Informed Choices

- Scottish universities occasionally take Advanced Highers into consideration when building up qualifications over 2 sittings, but are much more likely to require further Highers. An Advanced Higher will not be taken into consideration for “upgrading” purposes if an A pass has already been obtained in that subject
- Some Scottish universities may make offers for second-year entry (advanced standing) based on Advanced Highers

# Making Informed Choices

- English universities may require up to 3 Advanced Highers regardless of performance at Higher in S5. If applying to English universities, students must consult the Careers Department as well as making contact with appropriate Admissions Officers at an early stage in the application process
- Most English universities now understand that a particular level of performance in three Advanced Highers is a greater achievement than the same level of success in three A Levels

# Making Informed Choices

- S5 Students choose a very wide range of Highers
- This session, the average number of Highers per S5 student is 4.6
- 88% of Fifth formers are sitting 4 or 5 Highers



# Subject Choice Procedure

Mr Ian Jordan

Principal Teacher of  
Guidance

S5 & S6

# Subject Choice Procedure

## Provisional Choices

- Online choices should be made by 4 March
- Staff will be consulted regarding correct level of study advised in S5
- Provisional at this stage to act as a starting point for further planning

# Subject Choice Procedure

## Personal Target Setting

- During the Summer Term
- Run by Careers/Guidance staff
- Aim to discuss agreed targets for S5
- N.B. Students may wish to make changes in light of results.  
These will be done on Day Zero at start of next Session

# Subject Choice Procedure

- 10 February Information posted on school website
- 24 February Subject Choice meeting for students
- 24 February Parents' Forum
- 4 March Deadline for choices to be made online
- June Pupil Personal Target Setting Interviews
- 4 August SQA Results
- 25 August Finalise choices  
(Day 0)
- September Parents asked to confirm final Curriculum for S5



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# S4 Parents' Subject Choice Forum

Thank you for attending