



Choosing your Key Stage 4 Options from a Career Perspective	2-3
Combined or Triple Science?	4
Why are Maths and English so important	5
Local Labour Market Information	6-7
One-to-one Careers Appointments - how to book a careers appointment	8
Careers Events for Years 9 and 10	9
Unifrog – How Unifrog can help you decide on your GCSE options	10

Dear Year 9 Parents, Carers and Students,

The good news is there are no ‘wrong’ choices when choosing your Key Stage 4 (KS4) Options – rather the question is “What are the best options for me?”. Put simply, the best options for you will be the subjects that play to your strengths and that you enjoy, and/or subjects you may want to continue on to A-Level / Key Stage 5 if you already have a career aim that requires certain subjects.

I hope this careers information sheet provides more information around choosing your options from a careers’ perspective.

If you have any questions please do get in touch with careers@severnvaeschool.com

Choosing your KS4 options from a Career perspective



Choosing your KS4 options is a great opportunity to think about what you might like to do in the future. If you have a career in mind you can research, using Unifrog, about which subjects will help you to get there. However, you also need to consider that your career ideas may well change.

If you are not sure what you want to do, think about what motivates you and what you enjoy. The good news is that very few careers have set subject requirements at GCSE/KS4, over and above English, Mathematics and possibly Science. For the majority of careers, it is the grade you achieve rather than what you study that makes the difference. It is therefore important to play to your strengths and study subjects that you enjoy and are good at.

Top tips on how to choose KS4 Options

- You need to choose subjects that you **enjoy** and will **do well** at. Think about your strengths and how you can play to them. For example, if you're better at practical subjects, consider DT, Music, Sport or Child Development. If you're good at writing essays then consider History, Sociology or Citizenship and Politics.
- Keep your options open by having a balanced selection of subjects. Many Year 9s will not have a clear idea of a career path at this stage and so it is good to keep options open. Also keep in mind that what you want to do now might well change.
- Think about where your choices might lead you. Do your research with Unifrog or Careerpilot. For example, you can see what careers link to any subject you are considering here: <https://careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/subjects>
- You might also need to look 2 steps ahead and consider what A-Levels you might need for certain degree courses you're interested in. This is because you often need to have studied the GCSE to be able to take the A-Level. You can do a degree course search and look at the entry requirements through www.ucas.com
- Do not choose a subject just because you like the current teacher or your friend is doing it. Please choose what is right for you, as the current subject teacher might not be the one teaching you and your friend might be talented in a different way to you.
- Speak to the subject teachers, they can offer you great advice.

GCSE and Vocational Courses

At Severn Vale School we offer some vocational qualifications alongside GCSEs.

Vocational qualifications offer a mix of practical and theoretical learning that is directly related to a specific area of employment.

These work-related courses can be a good option if you have a job sector in mind or if you would like to gain employability skills linked to a particular type of work. They typically involve more hands-on practical learning and are often assessed through coursework as well as exams.

The vocational BTEC or Cambridge National Certificates that we currently offer are:

Child Development

Health & Social Care

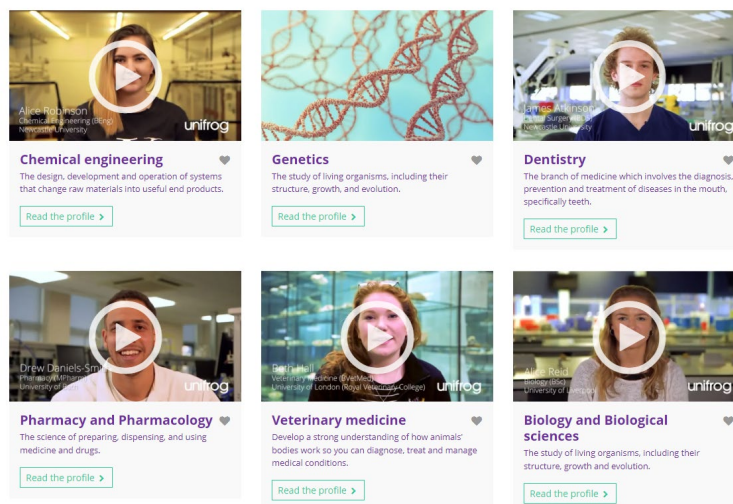
Creative iMedia

Sport Science

Combined or Triple Science?



Combined or Triple science... that is the question. **Chemistry** is essential for many careers including medicine, pharmacy, forensic science and research and development in drugs, pesticides, fuels and the food industry. **Biology** is essential for many careers in healthcare and science and directly relevant for jobs including zoologist, conservationist, doctor or bio-scientist. **Physics** on the other hand is essential for many careers including engineering (energy, electronics, materials and aerospace) and is very useful for careers in medicine and pharmacy. You can use Unifrog to search for careers that value science qualifications.



Combined Science is where students study all three subjects and at the end they are awarded two GCSEs. It is important to note that a student can still do A-Level Biology, Physics &/or Chemistry with combined science grades. It is the grade that matters most (you usually need a grade 6 or 7 at GCSE to take a science at A-Level). However, you will not have covered some topics that the Triple Science curriculum covers, so there may be some catch-up work to do before you start A-Levels if you have taken Combined Science.

GCSE grades matter a lot when wanting to study a science at A-Level and so please take advice from SVS science teachers to work out whether you would be best to study combined or triple science.

Triple science is where students study Biology, Chemistry and Physics separately and at the end they are awarded three GCSEs. It therefore takes up one of your options subjects. Triple Science has more maths content and so it is essential that triple science student is also studying higher tier maths.

English and Maths are valued by employers

The majority of employers look for at least a GCSE grade 4 in both English and Maths. It is worth pointing out that when we talk of GCSE English, we are usually referring to English Language and not English Literature. Getting a 4 in Maths and English could be the difference between you getting the job you want and not getting it.

Maths and English are important for apprenticeships

Most Apprenticeships ask for five GCSEs at grade 4 or above, including Maths and English. However, there are different levels of apprenticeships and employers set their own entry requirements, so it's important to check individual vacancies.

You are more likely to get into university

The majority of university courses look for at least a grade 4 in GCSE English and Maths.

Maths and English are important for entry to most Sixth Forms and most Level 3 courses

Most school sixth forms and level 3 courses at college (e.g. A-Levels, T-Levels, L3 Diplomas) look for at least a grade 4 in GCSE English and Maths. More selective sixth forms may require grade 5. Therefore you may not get onto your preferred choice of course or post 16 provider without them.

These subjects help you to communicate with, and understand, the world around you

Being able to express yourself clearly, hold a conversation, persuade others and think critically, are skills we all need to master. Even though we are in a digital age and rely on computers and tablets at work, you still need to be able to write well, with correct punctuation and spelling. Plus, a good level of Maths will enable you to have more control over your finances.

English, Maths and the law

All students who do not achieve a good pass (grade 4) in Maths and English by the age of 16 must continue to work towards achieving a qualification in these two subjects. This means if you do not get a grade 4 in Maths and English you will have to continue to study them at college, 6th form or whilst taking an apprenticeship.

For this reason and all of the other reasons above, it therefore makes sense to work hard in these subjects and gain as much support as you can whilst you are at SVS.

What does Labour Market Information (LMI) mean and why is it useful?

It is a useful tool to help research future jobs in the local area, understand the skills needed for certain roles and the demand for future employment. Via Unifrog you are able to search by favourite school subject or by job title and Unifrog will give you more information around careers and the qualifications needed, together with LMI – see below.

Did you know Gloucester is the “youngest city” in the Southwest, with 25% of the population aged under 19 and 39% under the age of 30. Gloucester also has a fast-growing population which is due to increase by 20% to 150,000 before 2035. This makes it the fastest growing city in the UK. In addition, there are some really exciting projects happening in the county that will result in job creation.



Gloucestershire has some really exciting building projects happening at the moment.

The Golden Valley Development near GCHQ in Cheltenham will be the home to the UK’s growing cyber sector through the development of the National Cyber Innovation Centre. As Cheltenham hosts 11 x the national average number of cyber companies and Gloucestershire boasts 6 x the national average, the project will provide a place to nurture and expand the UKs thriving sector, generating a fruitful future for the area.

Severn Vale School is a CyberFirst School - CyberFirst is a programme designed specifically to expose all students to the potential of cyber to inspire and encourage students to apply for jobs in cyber regardless of their background or experience. However, in addition to cyber-related jobs, there will be job creation in hospitality, construction, office management etc.



Work on turning the former bus station in Gloucester into the Forum - a place where people in the city will live and work - is gathering pace. The second part of the King’s Quarter project, will see a 130-room, four-star hotel and a rooftop restaurant bar in the city centre. It will also include a 35,000 sq ft workspace with state-of-the-art digital conference facilities, a 9,000sq ft wellness centre and a member’s club. This Project not only provides job opportunities in construction, but also in hospitality, fitness, office management, project management, etc.



There’s plenty to celebrate about Gloucestershire’s food and drink industry. From globally recognised brands like Wall’s Ice Cream and Ribena, to fast-growing start-ups like Tubby Tom’s and Sibling Distillery, there is a thriving food and drink industry in Gloucestershire. July 2022 saw the launch of a brand new initiative, “Made in Gloucestershire” to support local food and drink producers and the hospitality industry, with the aim of encouraging everyone to buy and love local.

One-to-One Careers Appointments



Independent and impartial careers guidance is provided by Dawn Salmon, a professional careers advisor who visits the school weekly during term time to meet with students individually and to give group talks. We try to arrange at least one personalised one-to-one careers appointment during KS4 for every Severn Vale student.

If you would like to book a careers appointment please email careers@severnvaeschool.com

Your Career Adviser can support you in the following ways:

- Listen to your ideas / thoughts about your KS4 Options
- Support you to better understand your strengths, likes and dislikes and how these relate to careers
- Help you to understand all of the education and training pathways
- Help you to research careers, post 16 and post 18 options and entry requirements
- Create a plan of action so that you're clear about what needs to happen next

Careers Events for Years 9 and 10



Year 9

- Access to Unifrog (from home or at school)
- Employer talks in assembly to inspire and inform about a variety of careers
- Post-16 provider talks in assembly around post 16 options
- GCSE Option Choices advice by the Careers Advisor in assembly and tutor time
- Individual 1:1 career guidance meetings by request or referral
- Options Evening with our independent careers advisor in attendance
- Career elements of Futures lessons and curriculum lessons

Year 10

- Access to Unifrog (from home or at school)
- Employer talks in assembly to inspire and inform about a variety of careers
- Post-16 provider talks in assembly around post-16 options
- All students given at least one careers meeting with the Careers Advisor in KS4
- Flexi Learning Day with Careers Carousel. Whole day of employability focused activities including Application Form and CV writing, personal presentation, and skill profiling
- One week of work experience with preparation, workbook and review.
- Career elements of Futures lessons and curriculum lessons.



To support our commitment to provide students with outstanding careers guidance and tailored support when choosing their GCSE options and next steps after school, we are fortunate to have Unifrog (an award-winning, online careers platform) as our main careers information tool. The Unifrog platform is designed to support learners in making the most informed decisions about their futures and has a range of tools that are suitable for all year groups.

Each student (Years 7-11) has their own personal account that provides a wide range of information related to their interests and aspirations. We have also set up a parent login so that you can use Unifrog as if you were a student yourself, allowing you to support your child with their careers choices throughout their time at Severn Vale. Please sign up using the form code **SVRVParents** at www.unifrog.org/code

You are able to search by favourite school subject or by job and Unifrog will give you more information around careers and the qualifications needed to succeed.

