

Year 8 and 9 Options – Frequently asked questions

1) What is the English Baccalaureate?

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a performance measure for schools, not a qualification for students. It is not compulsory. It is a measure of success and shows where students have secured a grade 4 or above across a core of academic subjects (English, Maths, Science, Geography or History and a Language) at key stage 4 and enables parents and students to see how our College is performing. Put simply, it is a way for the government, and parents looking at school league tables, to measure and compare how many students in a school are getting grade 4 or above in certain academically focused GCSEs.

2) What is the difference between the EBacc and an EBacc subject?

The EBacc is a performance measure used to judge schools. EBacc subjects are the core academic subjects that make up the EBacc and are most regularly asked for by college and university courses – worth bearing in mind when your child is deciding which GCSEs to take. Students do not need to have studied all of these to go to university, but having their GCSE mix steered towards EBacc subjects will help keep their options open. EBacc subjects consist of the following choices:

- English (and English Literature)
- Maths
- GCSE Sciences; Core and Additional or Triple Science and including Computer Science
- History
- Geography
- A modern or ancient foreign language.

3) Do all students have to take the English baccalaureate?

No! For year 8 students we have created an EBacc option block which asks students to pick one EBacc subject from a choice of Geography, History, French, Italian or Spanish. This alone will not give students the EBacc but will ensure they have a broad and balanced range of subjects. It will enable them to be more flexible in their university course choices later down the line – which is helpful if they're not sure what they want to do yet. Students have the opportunity to pick additional EBacc subjects in other option blocks in both years 8 and 9 which could allow them to get the full EBacc if they wish.

4) What is the difference between a one year, two year or three-year GCSE subject?

The qualification that students achieve at the end of each of these courses is exactly the same; it is just the duration of the study that is different. In fact, over the course of the GCSE, students will receive approximately the same amount of teaching time. In the one-year course students have 10 lessons a cycle to complete the GCSE at a relatively intense and fast pace. In the two-year course they have 6 lessons a cycle in year 10 and 6 in year 11 and in the three-year course students have 5 lessons a cycle in years 9, 4 lessons a cycle in year 10 and 5 in year 11.

5) Can anyone choose the EAL Engineering course?

This course is targeted at certain students who will be spoken to by the Technology department and/or their YM or a member of SLT. The course is designed for learners who want to learn about the variety of opportunities that an engineering career can offer through a 'hands on', practical approach. It is the first part of a three-year programme that could potentially enable students to progress to a level 2 qualification.

6) Can anyone choose one-year Computer Science, Citizenship and Business Studies?

Computer Science

The one-year course is fast-paced and intensive, aimed at students in the top two maths sets 8ab/Ma1, 8ab/Ma2, 8cd/Ma1 and 8cd/Ma2.

Students who are not quite as strong mathematically would be better placed in the three-year option.

Business Studies and Citizenship one-year courses

The one-year course is fast-paced and intensive, aimed at more able students. Students who are not suited to such a fast pace may study either of these subjects as either three or two year options.