

Abingdon School

Towards the Sixth Form

advice on choosing subjects

November 2018

Overview

Graeme May, Deputy Head Academic

- * All subjects have been reformed as linear courses.
- * “AS” still exists but as a stand-alone subject. Abingdon is not using this qualification (very few schools are).
- * All public examinations are at the end of the Upper Sixth (universities more reliant on GCSE score, predictions, personal statements, specific tests and interviews)

Curriculum Plan

- * L6th: boys choose 4 subjects (Ma/FM =1 subject)
- * Pursue courses until at least the end of Lent Term.
- * Summer Exams. Guidance Grades
- * Decide whether to drop a subject for U6th if not already dropped (beginning of or soon into U6th)
- * Take 3 or 4 subjects through to A Level in U6th.

Curriculum Organisation

- * 48 possible periods per fortnight (ppf)
- * 4 subjects (@ 9 or 10 ppf; 12 if FM)
- * 2 x Mindsets/Lecture
- * 6 – 10 study periods per fortnight (supervised at first)
- * Sport is separate – 2 hours core + Wed pm
- * Other things: EPQ, GCSE MFL, tutor group, chapel, assemblies...

Subjects (24)

red = AL subjects not taught at GCSE

Ancient History

Art (§)

Biology (§)

Chemistry (§)

Computer Science

DT

Drama (joint with SHSK)

Business or Economics (with SHSK girls)

English Literature (§)

French (*§)

Geography (§)

German (*§)

Politics (at SHSK)

Greek (§)

History (§)

Latin (§)

Maths **or** Further Maths (§)

Music (§)

Philosophy or RS

Physics (§)

Spanish (*§)

(*) pre-U

(§) subject GCSE required

New subjects

- * Taster lesson especially important.
- * Talking to teacher more than once, looking at syllabus, talking to 6th formers ...

Guidance from website:

“For subjects that do not have a GCSE equivalent in Abingdon's curriculum, we would look for strength in subjects with similar skills to judge if a boy is likely to prosper in it. For example, in Economics it is useful to have mathematical and essay writing skills. For Politics, aptitudes for History and English probably offer the best guides. Philosophy needs the kind of thinking and writing that one sees in Religious Studies and other humanities subjects but also benefits from the rigour of the mathematically gifted.”

(The myth of) Facilitating Subjects

(those in blue below)

Ancient History

Art

Biology

Chemistry

Computer Science

DT

Drama

Business or Economics

English Literature

French

Geography

German

Politics

Greek

History

Latin

Maths or Further Maths

Music

Philosophy or RS

Physics

Spanish

(The myth of) Facilitating Subjects

- * NOT a statement of subjects that are *de facto* preferred over others
- * NOT a measure of hard/soft
- * It's a numerical measure of how often a subject appears in a required list for degree courses at Russell Group universities

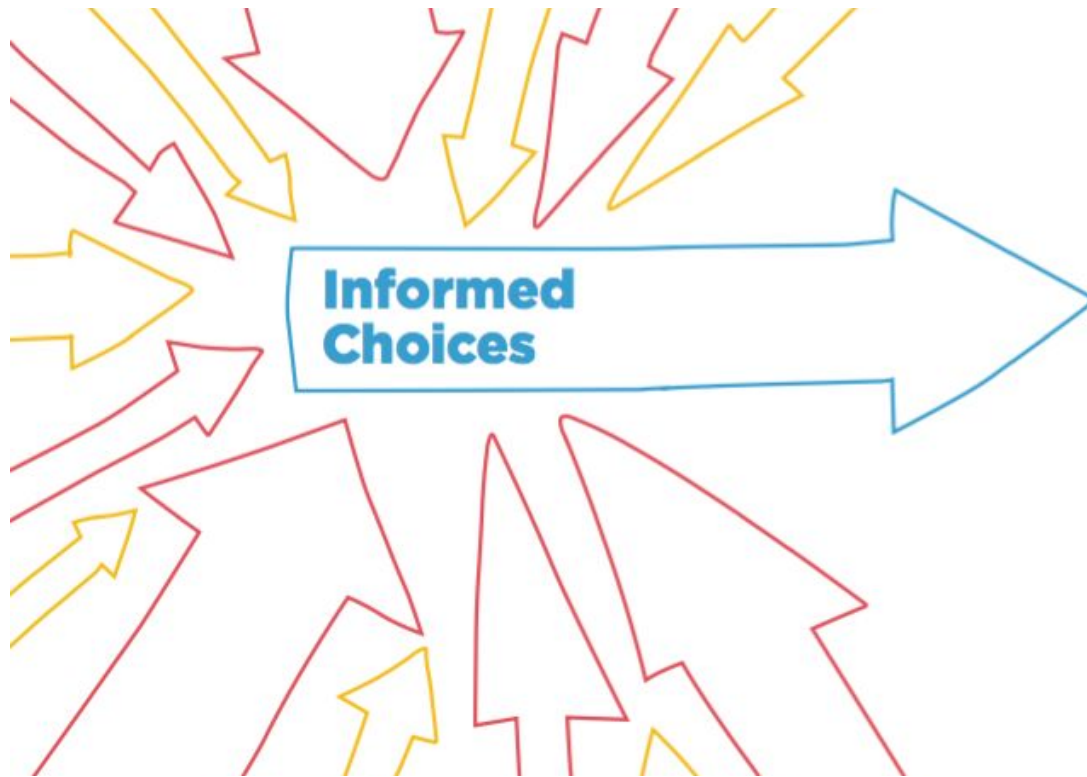
All subjects on Abingdon's curriculum have a strong standing with all of the top universities – none of our subjects is considered 'soft'.

(The myth of) Facilitating Subjects

“Many courses at university level build on knowledge and skills which you will gain while still at school. 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** university courses may require you to have studied a specific subject prior to entry, others may not. However, there are some subjects that are **required more often than others**. These subjects are sometimes referred to as facilitating subjects.”

(Informed Choices)

(The myth of) Facilitating Subjects



A Russell Group guide
to making decisions
about post-16 education

2016/17
Fifth edition

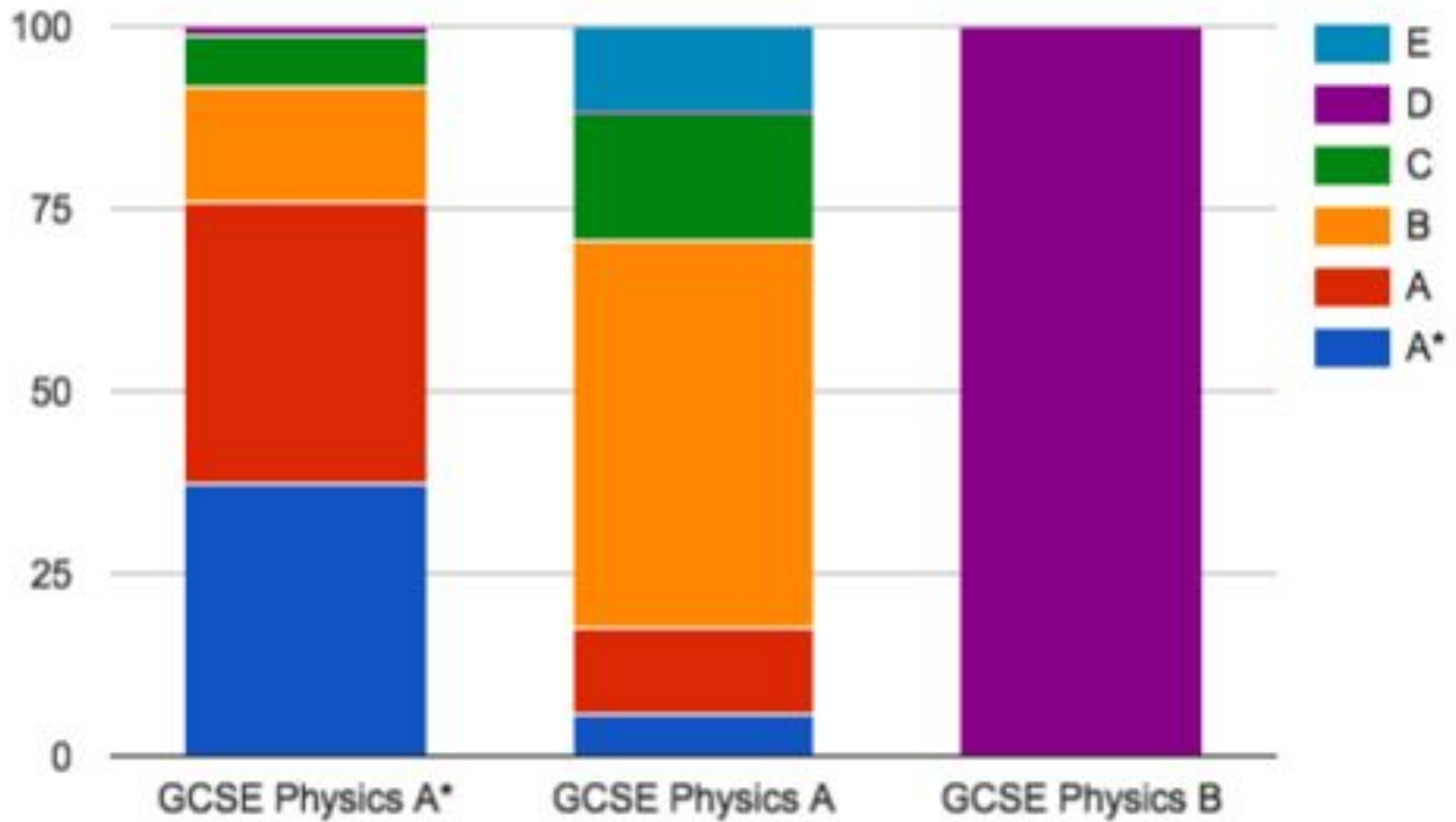
(The myth of) Facilitating Subjects

- * If (reasonably) sure of university course, make sure you're aware of likely entry requirements
- * If completely unsure, taking two facilitating subjects will keep your options as open as possible ...
- * ... **BUT** do subjects that you actually want to do and will enjoy for at least one more year
- * ... **AND** not doing two facilitating subjects does not mean you can't get into a Russell Group university

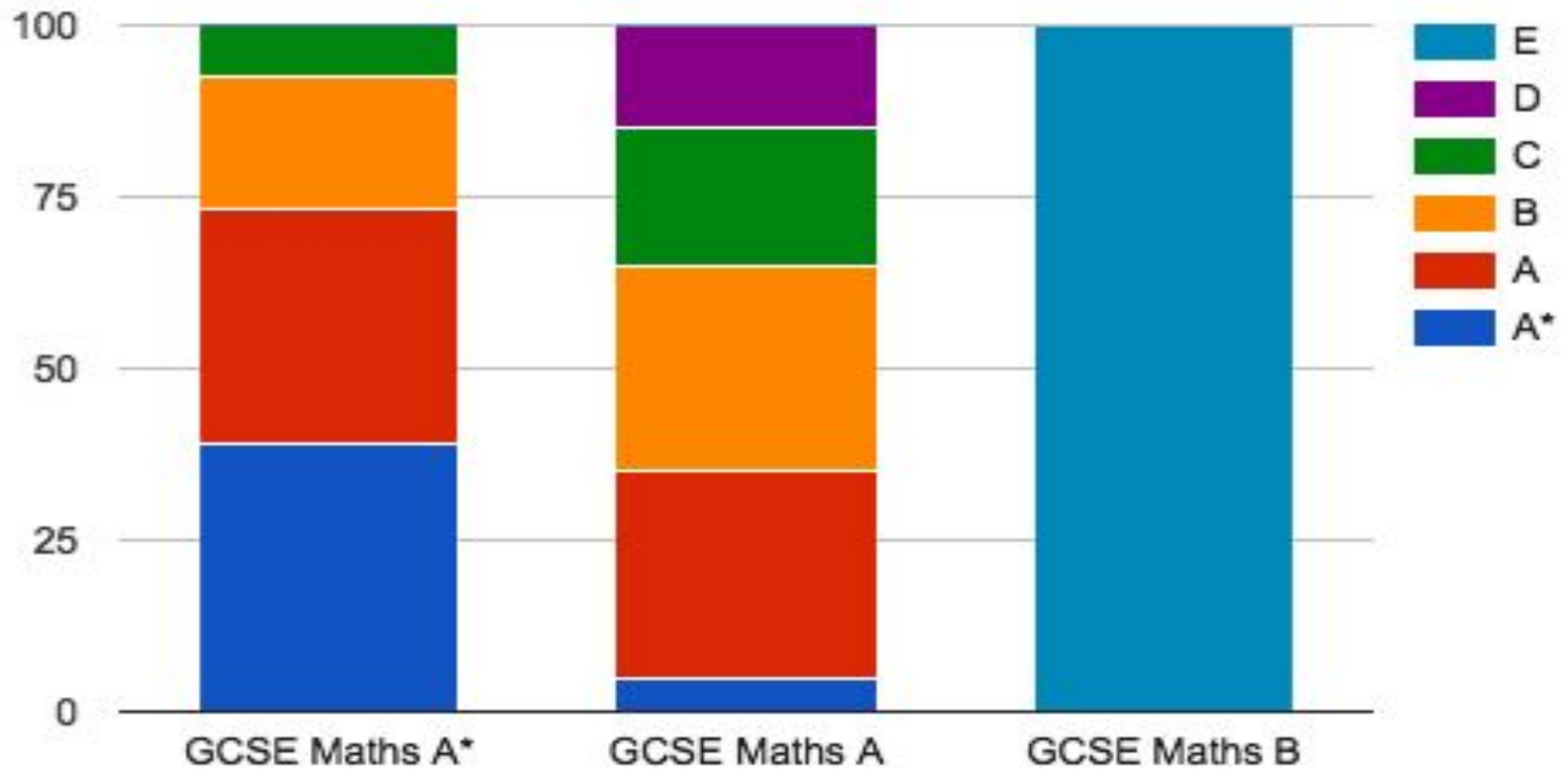
Other things to consider

- * **What do I really want to study for another year?**
 - * **NOT:** what do my parents want me to study?
 - * **NOT:** which teachers do I like?
 - * If it's a new subject, have I really done my research?
- * **What's the balance look like?**
 - * Lots of writing? Very little writing? A blend?
 - * A variety of skills or very similar skills?
 - * Employability skills: Creativity, Communication, Teamwork ...
- * **Am I any good at it?**
 - * Don't just judge from GCSE grade
 - * Sometimes we like subjects but they don't like us...

Physics AL chances from Physics GCSE



Physics AL chances from Maths GCSE



12 November	Into the Sixth Form Information evening.
26 November	Tentative Preferences submitted
early December	Tentative Preferences analysed by staff for anomalous decisions
w/c 8 January	Mock examinations
mid January	Interview with tutor/housemaster following mocks
mid January	A Level Taster Lessons Day
28 January	Parents' evening
4 February	'Final' Sixth Form choices submitted
2 September	Students obtaining less than grade 7 in an A Level/pre-U subject (8 in Ma for FM) to meet with relevant HoD for permission to start course

Subject sessions start at 6.40pm in Greening Court

