

L6 students wishing to drop their 4th subject - guidance for students

By now you may feel that continuing to study a 4th subject is counter-productive, you can confidently identify the one you want to drop and feel that the gained time could be better spent. You would gain approximately 15 hours per fortnight, which could be used towards eg:

- Strengthening your remaining three with more consolidation;
- Attending extension/support classes, doing research projects, entering essay competitions & reading;
- Broadening your skill set & CV in the Other Half.
- Working towards the EPQ (if this year-long commitment to independent learning is a sensible choice for you.)

In addition, for some of you, studying four subjects has become unmanageable in terms of workload. With this in mind, L6 students will be allowed to drop their fourth subject at/just before Christmas.

No student should feel compelled to drop a subject at this stage. Continuing to study all four subjects for longer will broaden your education. It will also give you more experience, enabling a better informed decision to be made about which 3 A Levels you might eventually focus on. You should only drop a subject if you're not coping or there's danger of another subject being compromised.

For those L6 aspiring to Oxbridge, Imperial College and other highly selective programmes, applying with 4 A levels can make you stand out in a field that is increasingly competitive every year. A strong application to these universities requires A* grades and plenty of evidence of learning outside of the classroom though. Continuing with 4 A levels may give them an advantage, but only if they can expect to achieve A*AAA minimum and still engage in the wider reading and learning required. Of course, 3 excellent grades are better than 4 mediocre ones.

The fourth subject can be dropped at a later point during the L6, but only at the end of each half term. You are able to study all four subjects in the U6 if you wish and drop at any point during your final year. Universities that have made you offers on the basis of you studying four subjects need to be informed if you drop a subject. Ideally you would avoid dropping post-UCAS application.

Your tutor will make the final decision and will ask you to justify your request:

A. Is this the right subject to drop?	If it is not clear that this is your weakest subject, then relevant subject teachers need to be consulted to ensure you are not continuing with a subject that you are unsuited for.
B. Are you confident that the subject is not essential/desirable for university entrance or career? ¹	You need to prove to your tutor that this subject is not needed for your proposed post-A Level plans. If there is any doubt you should consult Mrs Hoddinott, Mr Ambrose, Mr Taylor or Mr Triff.
C. Do you have your parents' permission?	Factor in the guidance that you are receiving at parent's evening on 29th and 30th November, and talk it through 2nd/3rd Dec.
D. Have you shown your tutor a clear plan for how 15 hours/fortnight of gained time will be used?	You need to broadly quantify how you will use your gained time. A number of you will need to attend extra sessions that departments run or individual teachers have offered. Opting for an EPQ simply as an easy justification is a bad plan.

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then tutors will not give their permission for you to drop the subject at this stage.

Procedure:

1. Review your exam scripts, feedback and results. Listen to what your teachers are telling you. Consider advice from the OA careers fair. Engage with the self reflection Mindsets session (29th Nov).
2. Attend Parents' Evening (29th and 30th November).
3. Speak to your parents about your intentions.
4. Complete Mr Lomax's Form (Opens 4th December).
5. Your tutor receives parental permission.
6. Your tutor has a conversation with you about questions A-D above, and gives green light (or not).
7. Mr Lomax amends your timetable & tells your tutor.
8. **Your tutor tells you you are released from lessons.**
9. You hand back your textbook, etc to the department & **thank your teachers.**

SJ

Nov 2023

¹ Make sure that you are not carrying on with a combination which might be viewed as too narrow by universities (eg carrying both Econ and BS as part of 3 A Levels). Make sure desirable skills are being developed (is keeping an essay subject a consideration unless following a STEM route?).