

S5 Prospectus

Subject Choice and Higher Education



Session 2018 - 2019

INTRODUCTION

The last time you made subject choices was at the end of S2, when the main aim was to keep your options open.

Read through this booklet carefully before completing your option form for S5, and remember that individual interviews can always be arranged for you, via Mr Campbell, with a member of the Career Development and Higher Education Department.

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SUBJECT CHOICE

One secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes.

Benjamin Disraeli

S5: The Golden Year

Next session you will enter the key year for examinations in your school career. This year you will be doing external examinations in some subjects for the first time. Rightly you are keen to do well in these and you will be making preparations accordingly. However, the Higher examinations are regarded as the 'Gold Standard' in Scottish education. This means that Highers are the first set of examination results that universities and colleges will look at when considering your suitability for a particular course. It is important therefore to think very carefully about how you will plan for this 'Golden Year'. It is very important that you are ready to hit the ground running at the beginning of S5.

Why do I need to choose?

At the end of S2 you reduced the number of subjects that you studied from 16 to 7 or 8. This was to allow you to specialise and so examine these subjects in more depth, having experienced a wider range of different subject areas in S1 and S2. To study Highers to the required depth in S5 it is necessary for you to further reduce the number of subjects that you will tackle within the school timetable.

How do I make up my mind about Highers?

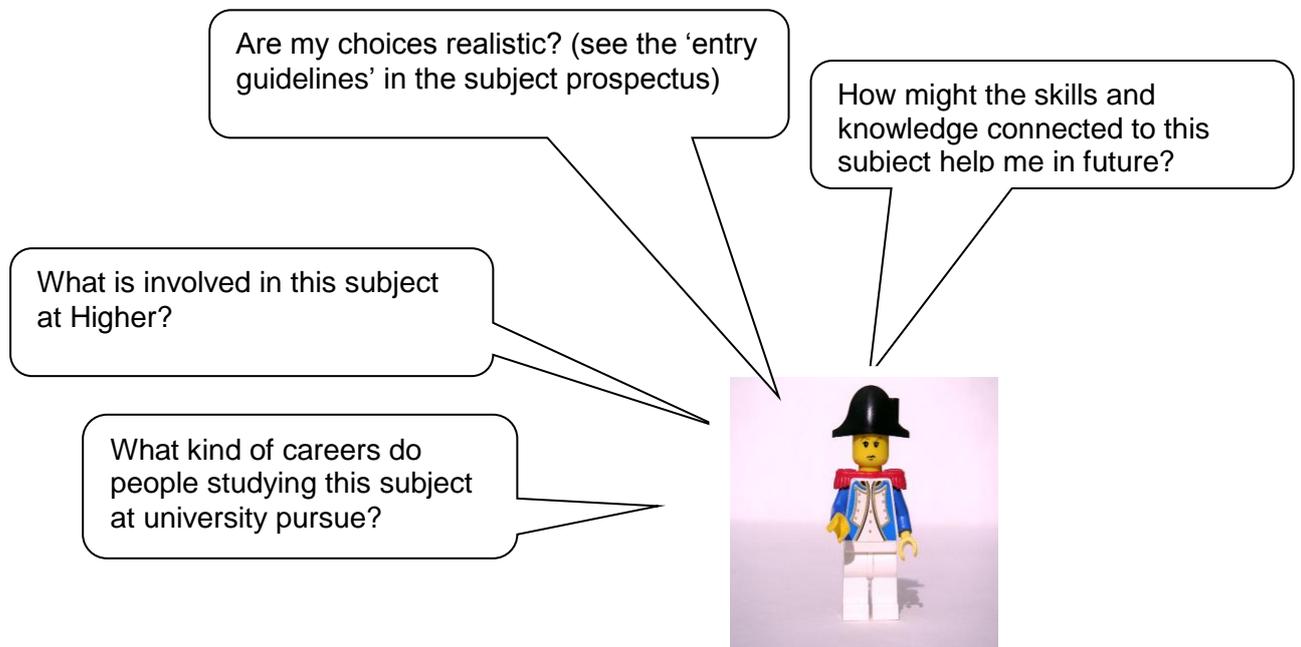
Two years on from S2 you should feel better equipped to make decisions about subject choice, but for many of you it will remain a difficult process. There are four factors to consider – advice, preferences, ability and aspirations.

➤ Advice

The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.

Robert M. Hutchins

There are many potential sources of advice about subject choice available, most of it positive and helpful. Occasionally, however, it may be contradictory or confusing. Friends, peers, family, information or impressions gained from television, the internet or elsewhere need to be carefully balanced with the up to date sources of advice available within the school. It is important to know as much as possible about the subjects that you are considering taking for Higher (and potentially beyond). The best source of information about the subjects themselves will be the **teachers** who teach those subjects, whether these are subjects that you have done before or not. The 'Subject Descriptions' booklet will outline some of the information about the S5 subject courses, but your teachers will probably have more expert information and advice that they can provide about what you study in S5 and beyond, which may be similar or different to your existing experience of those subjects. Seek them out and ask your teachers the right questions, which might include:



Careers and Higher Education staff are best placed to give you up to date advice about how your subject choices may relate to future courses of study and careers. There is more information about this later in the prospectus. The **Year Tutor Team** will interview you to review the reasoning behind your choices and the practicality of what you propose to study in S5.

➤ Preferences

Wherever you go, go with all your heart.

Confucius

The world is changing at a very fast pace. Many jobs now available did not even exist 15-20 years ago. This makes it difficult to plan very far into the future. As a general rule, it makes sense to say that the more you do of what you enjoy in your school activities, the closer you will be to a career path that suits you. Think about what you enjoy about particular subjects. If it is a particular teacher or a particular set of classmates, that may not be the best guide to subject choice. On the other hand, if there are areas of knowledge that you find particularly fascinating, or types of skills that you get particular satisfaction from exercising, enjoyment is a good guide. These kinds of subjects will be likely to lead to University courses and job types that exercise these same skills, explore similar types of knowledge. Also, as you will realise if you have already embarked on a Higher course in S4, the step up from National 5 work is a big one: it will be much easier for you to take on the challenge successfully if you choose subjects that you enjoy and are motivated to study. Note that courses currently being studied at Higher this year may seem harder at the moment but this is to prepare you more effectively in these subjects for Higher work next year. You should take this into account when thinking about how you feel about these subjects when you make your choices.

➤ **Ability**

It is more often than not the case that you will perform best in those subjects that you enjoy the most. It is not always the case however, and you should take account of both your relative and overall ability in the subjects that you are considering. It will probably not come down to one particular assessment or examination grade, but you should be realistic in considering what your teachers have reported about your ability in a given subject area as this will reflect your prospects of success in S5. It is important to note, however, that in many subjects Higher will represent a significant increase in challenge – something that you should relish, but be prepared for. To help you with this, the 'Entry Requirement' section in the subject prospectus lets you know what level you should be at to take on the additional challenge of Higher.

➤ **Aspirations**

Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.

Aristotle

You should be careful that the combination of subjects you choose does not absolutely exclude a course or career to which you have realistic aspirations. For example, Chemistry and Biology are required for Medicine and Vet Medicine (and Physics is often desirable), while for Law it is important to show a facility with language and argument. There is more detailed information about this later in this booklet. Only English is compulsory in S5 but do think carefully about what for you is an appropriate balance of Sciences, Social Sciences, Technologies, Expressive Arts, Languages and Mathematics, deciding to specialise or 'keep your options open' depending upon your plans for the future. You should realise that a first degree is more often taken as an opportunity to shine in an area of particular interest unrelated to a particular profession rather than a vocational course, so for many it's best to keep an open mind at this stage. Again the level of ability indicated in the subject prospectus for each subject and your reports, should help to keep your aspirations high, but realistic.

How many Highers?

You must choose **at least** four subjects to study in S5. For the great majority this will mean embarking on 5 Higher courses. However, for a number it is beneficial and appropriate to tackle 6 Highers in S5. This allows you to demonstrate a high ability in a wide range of subjects taken at the S5 stage of your school career and says something special about you as a student. This is a fulfilling challenge for the right individual. At Hutchesons' Grammar School the timetable is organised to allow you to do this. However it is very important that you bear in mind the following considerations:

- Taking 6 Highers is as much about organisation and the hard work that you have done in S4 and S5 as it is about ability.
- If you are doing 6 Highers you will do this in 4 hours rather than 4½ hours a week. This adds up to a significant amount of time over the year. Your "sixth" Higher subject will take place in the hours when those taking five Highers have an additional ½ hour consolidation of their 5 Higher subjects or PE or PSE and some Form time. You will still be able to take full part in Games.
- You will be placed in a top band set for *either* Mathematics or English consisting exclusively of pupils taking six Highers. Normally you **must** have completed S4 Higher **bypass** in Mathematics. However, you **may** still be able to take 6 Highers without Mathematics provided that you have **bypassed** another subject, such as History or Modern Studies, that you are very strong in all six subjects that you plan to take and that you would be comfortable in a top English set.
- If you are taking six Highers it is an advantage to have taken more than one bypass class in S4.
- You should be confident of gaining top grades in all your subjects. It would be better to get 5 A passes than 6 passes of various lesser grades.
- You need to think carefully about the cost in time involved in doing a Sixth Higher. Good organisation should enable you to balance your academic commitments with extra-curricular ambitions.

Advice and Guidance

- **Subject Choice Week**

Your subject teachers and the Heads of Department will be able to give you guidance on your future prospects in their own subjects. They are the experts in what their subject has to offer now and what experiences it will provide in the coming years. As well as taking some time in class we are also holding a **Subject Fair on Tuesday 30 January** in the Assembly Hall from 12.45 so you can ask questions of subject representatives.

- **Parents' Subject Choice Evening**

Your parents are invited to this evening event also on **Tuesday 30 January** when they too can meet department representatives, hear about the support and advice on offer and ask any questions they may have.

- **Individual Interviews**

After you return your draft Subject Choice Form on **Monday 5 February** we will use the next few weeks to speak to each one of you individually about your choices. These interviews will be conducted by your Year Tutors and by members of the Careers and Higher Education Department. If you are having particular difficulties with making a decision Mr Campbell or Mr Bagnall will also discuss your options with you at a second interview.

- **Specialist Staff**

Mr Campbell, in charge of Higher Education matters, is available to give advice on university/college entry requirements as well as on particular careers. His office is in A14 and you are welcome to knock on his door any time.

Miss Chisholm, Head of Careers, and the Careers Team are also available in the Career Development and Higher Education Office to give advice and support.

- **Careers Library**

The library contains prospectuses for most UK universities and colleges, information on employment opportunities and the qualifications required. Individual institutions also have their own dedicated websites as you might expect.

In summary

- Choose subjects that motivate you by firing your interest.
- Take into account university or college requirements.
- Take into account subject requirements outlined in the subject booklet.
- If there is a conflict, consider postponing a Higher until Sixth Year or doing six Highers (but only if you feel confident of achieving 6 A grade passes).
- Read the subject description booklet: speak to your teachers about their subjects.

APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE

From Fifth Year or Sixth Year?

Almost all of our pupils move on to university or college courses, mostly from Sixth Year, some after a 'Gap Year'. Over the last few years an average of about 8 pupils or 4% of the year group in S5 made Higher Education applications. Of these, fewer than half proceeded directly to university. Most Fifth Year leavers do not feel ready to fend for themselves away from home, in addition to coping with degree level studies, and the majority of leavers from S5 go to one of Glasgow's Higher Education Institutions. Some courses do not consider applicants direct from S5, notably all of the Medical Schools, and others have minimum age limits for entrance. English universities have no standard system of offers to applicants offering Scottish qualifications. Entrance from Fifth Year can be difficult, because English students entering Higher Education are post-A Level, and normally at least eighteen years old. In total over 90% of S6 leavers enter a wide range of Scottish and English Universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.

Researching Courses and Institutions

This is a vitally important task for you, which can be worked on in stages. Dropping out of university because you are not happy with the course or the institution where you are studying is a costly mistake in many ways. Students, understandably, are becoming more discriminating and more demanding about what and how they are taught.

There are key questions for you to consider:-

- What would I like to study?
- Will I be able to gain the right qualifications for this course?
- Where am I going to study?
- Will my course lead to a career or help my proposed career?

What would I like to study?

Among the vast range of university and college courses available there is a clear distinction between those which lead to a professional qualification and those which do not. With vocational courses such as Architecture, Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing or Physiotherapy, much of the course content is firmly laid down in order to meet professional requirements, and so there may be only limited choices in the curriculum, although teaching methods and assessment may vary for different institutions. Non-vocational courses, on the other hand, are often much more flexible, especially at those Scottish universities which operate a traditional faculty entry system. Over 60% of graduate posts are open to graduates in any discipline. Remember that a student with a genuine interest in a subject has a better chance of completing a degree successfully than one on a vocational course which they do not enjoy.

You will all have the opportunity to discuss your plans and options with your Year Tutor and/or a member of the Career Development & Higher Education Department. Some questions you should consider before you come to your appointment are:-

- Do I have a specific career in mind?
- Which school subjects do I enjoy/ am I good at?
- Do I want to work mainly with people, with books, with numbers, in a lab?
- Do I want to do something creative, artistic?
- Would I like to mix academic study with practical work experience?
- Would I like to spend part of my course abroad?

When making your subject choices you will find it useful to refer back to your **MyCareersProfile document** and the points discussed in your individual interview.

What are the entrance qualifications for the course/s that interest me?

Scottish universities and colleges still state 'going-rates' for entry to courses in Highers, though they recognise the value of post-Higher study at Advanced Higher and A Level. In a few cases, for applicants with good post-Higher grades, entry to the Second Year of a course may be offered. English universities, especially the older ones, often ask for post-Higher passes since many Honours degree courses in Arts, Social Sciences and Science are completed in three years. The advantage of the four-year Scottish degree course is that it offers more flexibility in the first, and often second, year to study a range of subjects before the decision about what Honours subject/s will be taken.

Current entrance requirements for Scottish University degree courses can be obtained, along with the requirements for all degree courses at UK institutions, on the UCAS website www.ucas.com or via the institution websites; links to these are provided on the UCAS website.

You also need to check whether you need to gain relevant practical experience for your chosen course. This is essential for Vet Medicine, Medicine, other health care professions and teaching. For Fine Art, Design and some Architecture courses a portfolio is required.

Further Education – An alternative

There is another route into Higher Education. Those who have not achieved a strong group of Higher passes may embark on a Diploma Course at a College of Further Education or College of Technology. If you successfully complete an HND course you may gain admission to a degree course at university, even into the second year of some courses.

Where am I going to study?

There are several issues to bear in mind here; the content and structure of the course, the place itself, the costs and the career implications.

Unless you intend to study something very unusual, you will have to choose between several institutions offering similar courses. Be aware, however, that courses with the same name at different institutions may have much less in common than you would think. You may have to take subsidiary subjects at some universities, but not at others. The range of specialisms/options may differ from place to place. Teaching and assessment methods may differ. The way to check out these and other differences is by close reading of the individual university prospectuses. These are available in the Careers Section of the School Library, free of charge from the relevant institutions and also via the UCAS or individual university websites. Information may also be obtained from the representatives of the institutions at our Higher Education Fair which takes place in June and by attending Open Days.

On the matter of place ask yourself whether you wish to stay at home or not - there are advantages and disadvantages to both choices. If you intend to leave home to study decide whether you would prefer to be in a large city, a small town, at a purpose-built campus. Consider travel costs and check out accommodation. Visit the places you are considering, and weigh up whether or not you would enjoy spending three, four or more years of your life there. Talk to people who have studied at places which appeal to you. There is a network of Former Pupils you can use to contact current students and find out about their experiences.

Find out what graduates in your course at your choice of institutions go on to do. Are there options within your course which will improve your employability, such as computer literacy, opportunities to keep up your languages or learn a new one? An AGCAS annual publication "What do Graduates do?" is available in the Careers Section of the School Library.

A Gap Year

Some of you may consider taking a 'year out' before starting your degree course. There are both advantages, and disadvantages to this decision. If you are considering a gap year after Fifth Year you need to be sure that you will achieve the grades at Higher in Fifth Year which will gain you a place on the course of your choice. Planning a gap between Sixth Year and university is often a safer option.

Application Procedures

Applications to universities and colleges are made electronically through UCAS. The majority of pupils apply from Sixth Year, and at the end of S5, after your examinations, the **Futures Conference** will give you the opportunity to begin your UCAS application. Those of you who decide to make an application from Fifth Year will be briefed by Dr McQueen and given detailed written instructions and advice on how to complete the form. The closing date for applications to UCAS is normally **15 January**, but as an academic reference is required for each applicant we have internal deadlines before this date. The October/November tests are used to help predict grades at Higher, which is information given in the academic reference.

Careful research needs to be carried out prior to making any UCAS application.

HIGHER SUBJECT CHOICE

Some frequently asked questions.

Why is Higher subject choice so important?

- Highers are the gold standard for university entrance.
- Scottish universities make their offers for most courses on the basis of your Highers.
- Highers can be taken in S5 **and** in S6 – it is important to get the balance right

What subjects can be taken at Higher in S5?

Provided you did well, any subject which you did in S3 and S4 - whether or not you did an external examination at the end of S4.

Are there any “new” subjects I can take?

- It is not usual to try a Higher in a subject you have not already studied in S3 and S4 and generally it is not advisable. It will only be permitted if you are already achieving at a high level in all of your existing subjects and following consultation with the Director of Curriculum.

Are any subjects compulsory at Higher?

- Yes. English is still compulsory for all pupils.

Are there any subjects that CANNOT be taken at Higher?

- Physical Education and PSE - all pupils are required to take PE and PSE because of their importance; however, these are not Highers.
- Home Economics.

Is Maths compulsory?

- Maths is not compulsory at Higher.
- However, it is highly desirable for a large number of courses including Sciences, Engineering, Architecture, some Business courses and Psychology.
- It is always a good idea to check university course requirements to determine the importance of subjects that you are considering dropping for the university or college course which interests you.

Is it necessary to take a Modern Language?

- No. Only English is compulsory in Fifth Year.
- However, in a global economy demonstrating the ability to learn a foreign language to a high level is certainly to your advantage.
- As with everything, interest and ability should be your guide first, followed by its relevance to what you may wish to do later.

Is a Science required?

- No. You do not have to take Biology, Chemistry or Physics at Higher although it does undoubtedly show a particular aptitude in this type of subject and is required or recommended for some courses.
- As with everything be honest about where your interests, abilities and future plans lie.

Which Science should I take?

If you are choosing between sciences, choose the one which contains the types of knowledge, skills and activities that appeal to you. Be honest. This is likely to point you towards the career that is for you. Check carefully the science subject requirements for the following courses:

- Architecture
- Dentistry
- Engineering
- Medicine
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Veterinary Medicine
- or any science based course

Do I have to finish the course in History, or Modern Studies if I bypassed S4 external examinations in that subject?

- No. You will gain credit on your certificate for the Higher unit(s) you did in S4.
- You can complete the Higher course in S6 if you wish, although it is undoubtedly easier to complete the course in consecutive years.

How many Highers should I do?

- In S5 the majority of pupils will do 5 Higher subjects.
- It is common in many schools in Scotland to do five Highers in a sitting in S5. If you are capable of doing five Highers in S5 with good prospects of passing them, you should certainly do so, as you will be in competition with a very large number of pupils who have done so. If you are capable of it you should consider that completing 6 Highers in one sitting will say something about your determination, organisation, work ethic and love of learning as well as your ability (see below).
- For a few, not all of the subjects in S5 will be at Higher level. You may start a course in S5 to complete in S6 at Higher level.

Should I do six Highers?

Yes, if you are capable of achieving top grades in all 6.

Why?

- If you are capable of doing well in six Highers you should consider doing so. There has been a long and successful tradition of a significant number of pupils taking six Highers in S5 at Hutchesons' Grammar School.
- Although it will require additional preparation at home, you can be taught six Highers inside the normal school hours.
- If you have successfully by passed in more than one subject, such as History and Mathematics in S4 it makes six Highers a more realistic option for you as you have already embarked on two or more Higher courses.
- In an increasingly competitive environment for university courses and, later, for employment, it says something special about you that you can successfully undertake six Highers in S5 rather than the five most will take in many schools across Scotland.
- You relish the challenge and have the capability and commitment to be successful in six subjects.
- You wish to maintain as broad a range of subjects and different ways of understanding the world as possible.
- It broadens your options for what you can do in S6 and beyond.
- You like six subjects equally and you are reluctant to drop one of them.
- You have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge.
- You must be in a Higher bypass class for Maths in S4 or, if you are not taking Mathematics in S5, confident of your six remaining subjects. In this case you will be placed in a top English set with others taking six Highers

Why not?

- No university course will publish a requirement for six Highers.
- If you have not by passed Mathematics in S4 you **cannot** do six Highers except in the case outlined above.
- You will need to be confident of getting a top grade in at least five of your six Higher subjects (and at least a B in the other). Listen carefully to the advice of your teachers on this, both in your reports and by speaking to them.
- You will need to be able to cope with the pace of a top set in Mathematics or English in just 4 hours per week.
- You will have less time for extracurricular activities and work experience. However, strong organisational skills should enable you to find a sensible balance.

May I do 7 Highers?

- Although two or three pupils in S5 have achieved 7 A's at Higher in recent years, it is **not** recommended.
- It has only been achieved where the '7th subject' has been Music where a very high level of pre-existing proficiency in the instrument and a little time with the Music Department outside the timetable has made this viable

May I do four Highers?

Yes.

Why?

- Although we would always encourage you to aim high, you may have been advised that you may struggle with the work of five Highers.
- If you are sure that your chosen university course only requires four Highers and you are confident of getting the required grades. However, your aims and ambitions can change, so think carefully about this.
- You should also be thinking about the combination of qualifications that you can obtain in both S5 and S6.

Why not?

- If you are capable of passing five you should do so.
- Some courses require five passes at one sitting. It will sometimes be noted whether all 5 Highers were taken in S5, or some in S6. Find out about this if you are unsure for a course you are interested in.
- You should never aim to underachieve. Ambition raises your performance, lack of it can drag it down.

Do I need to think about what I want to do in S6?

S5 and S6 should be seen as a 2 year programme of study. Increasingly in the competitive university and workplace environment, building on successes in S5 with Advanced Highers and A Levels in S6 can be a distinct advantage.

It is also worth being aware at this stage, that some Highers that you may not have studied before are available as “crash” Higher or A/S courses in S6:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| • Accounting | • Law |
| • Biology | • Modern Studies |
| • Business Management | • Music |
| • Classical Studies | • RMPS |
| • Critical Thinking | • Physical Education |
| • Economics | • Psychology |
| • Engineering Science | |
| • Graphic Communication | |

Courses which are difficult to “crash” or restart in S6 after an extended break:

- Languages
- Chemistry

What are the main aims in choosing Highers?

- Choose the subjects which interest you most and which motivate you to continue study.
- Meet the university requirements for courses which interest you.

Are there any Highers which universities value less highly?

- No. All Highers are valuable.
- However, some of the traditional universities do not like certain combinations of subjects.

Which combinations may cause difficulty?

- Some traditional universities do not like more than one of the aesthetic subjects - Art, Music, Drama.
- Vet Medicine at Edinburgh may not count aesthetic subjects as one of the five Highers required.
- A combination of Engineering Science, Computing Science and Physics may not all be counted.

Where can I get advice on the course requirements for different universities?

- UCAS website – www.ucas.com
- Careers section of the school library
- Seek an appointment with Mr Campbell or a member of the Career Development and Higher Education Department.
- Ask the universities.

Main Aim

Choose subjects you like best - if possible.

Motivation is a key to success.

Fifth Year is the most important year for academic results in Scotland, but should be thought of as part of a two year programme of courses.

How will the school curriculum work for me?

S1 c.14 subjects			S2 c. 16 subjects			S3/4 7or 8 subjects		S5 5 or 6 subjects		S6 3- 6 subjects	
English			English			English		English		UCAS/ Career Development	
Mathematics			Mathematics			Mathematics		Mathematics		Mathematics	
Spanish	French	German	Spanish	French	German	Foreign Languages		Foreign Languages		Languages/ English	
Latin			Latin							Law	
Biology			Chemistry			Natural Sciences		Natural Sciences		Psychology	
Chemistry			Biology							Natural Sciences	
Physics			Physics							Social Sciences	
RMPS			History			Social Sciences		Social Sciences		Natural Sciences	
Geography			Geography							Social Sciences	
History			Modern Studies							Social Sciences	
			Economics	Business Management		Social Sciences					
Music			Music			Aesthetic Subjects		Aesthetic Subjects		Technologies	
Art			Art							Aesthetic Subjects	
Drama			Drama							Technologies	
ICT			ICT			Technologies		Technologies		Independent Learning	
			Technology		Graphic Communication						
PE,PSE, Extra-curricular activities			PE, PSE, Extra-curricular activities			Twilight? PE, PSE, Extra-curricular activities		PE, PSE, Extra-curricular activities		PE, PSE, Extra-curricular activities	

The colour diagram above is a rough representation of the balance of academic subjects available throughout the school curriculum. As you become better informed about your own preferences, strengths and aspirations you have the opportunity to focus your efforts upon increasing the depth of your studies in the combination of subjects most appropriate to you as an individual. This degree of depth is necessary to prepare you for studies and qualifications in the later years of your schooling and after school. The number of subjects and skills on offer to a high level at Hutesons' Grammar School allows the curriculum to be closely tailored to your needs. Because the particular skills that you may require in future will always be unpredictable to a greater or lesser degree, you will need to give some thought to the balance of different types of skills and knowledge that different subjects offer. The colour coding in the table should help to illustrate this. For example, although Music, Art and Drama are very distinct disciplines and develop their own sets of skills and areas of knowledge, they occupy broadly similar territory in culture and society. An exposure to these 'aesthetic' subjects should be a part of any rounded education. However, the level to which you take these subjects and which of these you choose to specialise in to that level will depend upon you. The same applies to foreign languages, natural sciences, social sciences and technologies. To the end of S4 English, Mathematics and a foreign language are compulsory to ensure that a balance of the essential skills that are a part of these subjects are not abandoned too early. Currently only English is compulsory in S5.

Heads of Department

Art	Mrs S Breckenridge
Biology	Mr A Kerr
Chemistry	Mr P Uprichard
Classics	Mrs E Carey/Dr H Cochrane
Computing	Ms R Housley
Drama	Mrs V Alderson
Economics/Bus Man	Mrs C Keddie
English	Mr M Symington
Geography	Mrs E Prentice
History	Dr A McQueen
Mathematics	Mr A Eadie
Modern Languages	Mrs E Bertram
Modern Studies	Mr G Broadhurst
Music	Mr E Trotter
Philosophy and Religion	Ms S Carey/ Mr M Hughes/Mr C Bagnall
Physical Education	Mr S Lang
Physics	Dr S Lonie
Psychology	Mrs A Luker
Technology	Mr C McCormick

Career Development and Higher Education Department

Mr D G Campbell (Depute Rector)

Miss K Chisholm (Head of Department)

Mrs L M McNeill

Mrs L Munro

Mrs L Stewart

Dr M Walker