



THORNS

COLLEGIATE ACADEMY

Option Choices 2021

A guide for families

This document is designed to guide you through the process of helping your child in choosing their options for Years 10 and 11. You will find information to prepare for the Options Evening and details about the 3 options blocks available. Subject specific content is provided on the academy website: www.thornsca.org.uk/year-9-choices/.

You will receive a separate letter through the post with your appointment time. If the appointment you have been given is not suitable, then please telephone the academy (01384 987973) to ask for a different time slot. We trust that you will support your child by making every effort to attend on that evening so that you can access all of the advice on offer, but if it is not possible for you to attend on that evening, then please contact the academy.



SHIRELAND
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Key Stage 4 Options Process 2021

Before the Options Evening

- Your child has been referred to an online platform during recent Year 9 choices assemblies, this is called startprofile.com. Please discuss this with your child, we encourage you to ask them to log on, show you what they have been doing and discuss with them their career ideas.

www.startprofile.com

The screenshot shows the startprofile.com website. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation icons for My Profile, World of Work, What To Study, Where To Learn, Employability, and Log Out. The main content area is divided into several sections: a user profile for Alice Erb (Year 9), My Activities (featuring an activity titled 'Which jobs suit my interests and work preferences?'), Jobs You Should Know About (listing Project Manager, Computer Games Designer, Automotive Engineer, Care Worker, and Pharmacist), and Jobs Based on Your Profile (listing Art Therapist, Forest Worker / Craftsperson, Theatre Youth and Community, Veterinary Physiotherapist, and Sports Development). There are also featured articles on the right side.

- Visit the Thorns subject choices site. Each subject has a video introducing the course on offer, as well as detailed information explaining what is involved. Ask your child to speak to/email the subject teacher(s) of subjects they are interested in studying

www.thornsca.org.uk/year-9-choices/

The screenshot shows the Thorns Collegiate Academy website. The header includes the school logo, navigation links (HOME, THE ACADEMY, ADMISSIONS, PARENTS AND CARERS, CURRICULUM, NEWS & EVENTS, CONTACT US), and a search bar. The main content area features a video titled 'Music - BTEC' showing two students playing ukuleles. The video is part of a series of subject choice videos for Year 9. The page also includes a sidebar for 'Parents and Carers' with a list of subject choices: Year 9 Choices, Acting - BTEC, Art & Design, Business Enterprise - BTEC, Computer Science, Creative Digital Media Production - BTEC, Dance - BTEC, Product Design, Geography, Health & Social Care - BTEC, History, Music - BTEC, and P.E.

During the Options Evening Wednesday 31st March

- 1. Choices interview with senior member of staff.** The purpose of the interview is to guide you and your child through the choices which need to be made, taking into account the skills and attributes of your child, as well as their career plans. They will be able to answer most questions you might have. The teacher will guide you and your son/daughter through a Microsoft form as a way of keeping a record of the conversations taking place. During this meeting your son/daughter will make their 3 subject choices.

Members of staff unfortunately cannot share their screen during the choices interview. This will mean that staff will be typing on a second device throughout, this will enable them to complete the relevant options documentation.

- 2. Subject and Careers Marketplace.** There will be subject teachers on hand to offer specific information about our examination courses. This information is also available on the Thorns choices website (www.thornsca.org.uk/year-9-choices/). If you wish to make a virtual appointment with any of the department representatives, please book a specific time slot via the EduLink website or app, available from Wednesday 24th March, 4pm. In addition, Mrs Mackay, our careers link at Thorns is also available to take individual appointments should you wish for any guidance regarding careers advice.

After the Options Evening

Your son/daughters choices will have been made on **Wednesday 31st March** however, we are aware that some students may have a change of heart after a period of reflection. With this in mind, we will enable students to adjust subject choices in the following weeks up until **Friday 23rd April**. If you would like to propose a switch please contact me, Mr Fletcher at the Academy via email (sfletcher@tca.shirelandcat.net).

On rare occasions a student may wish to change their option at the start of Year 10. If this scenario arises with your son/daughter, then a change maybe considered within the first 3 weeks of the new timetable. I must state at this time, there needs to be extenuating circumstances for a proposed change to be considered. Unfortunately, any requests after this period will not be possible.

The KS4 Curriculum

Compulsory Qualifications

The following qualifications are compulsory, and all students will take them as part of their KS4 curriculum.



Regardless of the optional subjects chosen, all students should gain six GCSE grades purely from the core offering. It is our aim for all students to study at least nine GCSE or equivalent qualifications in total. Students will also have one hour each per week of non-examined Physical Education and one hour twenty minutes of Personal Social & Health Education. Core lessons will take up the majority of hours per week. Students are set by ability in Mathematics, English and Science. PE is taught in mixed ability groups and PSHE is taught in form groups.

All students will undertake GCSE Design and Technology as part of our core offer. We believe this is essential because Design and Technology prepares student for the world of work in our local area, a hub of industry. The skills taught in the subject are necessary to prepare our students for these workplaces. Technology also provides our students with the essential skills of the design process, which are valuable in a wide variety of careers, as well as providing students with an insight into the latest technological developments that will shape our future world.

The government expect all students to undertake at least three English Baccalaureate subjects; students can take more than this if they wish. Students will get two of these subjects from their Combined Science award. Further English Baccalaureate subjects are:



Should students wish to obtain the 'personal EBacc' (slightly different from the requirement for schools), they should choose German or French plus History or Geography in their options.

Optional Qualifications

Your child must select three qualifications, **one qualification from each of the option blocks**. This makes up the remaining hours of their weekly timetable.

Furthermore, at least one of these choices **MUST** be one of these subjects:

French, German, History, Geography, Computer Science, Triple Science

They may choose more than one of these subjects.

It is important for your child to think carefully about the career field that they are considering entering when they are older. Questions you might ask your child are:

- If you had to choose three A-Level qualifications to study tomorrow, what would they be?
- Are they available as options you can take today? If they are, then it may well be worth considering them as your options.
- Consider carefully what you are talented in. What is your best subject? What does your school report say? Often the subject that you are best at is the one that you will enjoy the most.
- There are several subjects that you have not studied before. If you are considering one of those subjects, then ensure you took part in the taster sessions in taster week. Talk to the subject leader before choosing these courses. Perhaps also talk to Year 10 or 11 students who are currently doing the course.

How to select option subjects

Students achieve their best results when they choose according to their strengths and because of this, some subjects have entry requirements. Students may also be restricted from some subjects which require a skill level if they have not demonstrated an aptitude for those subjects over the past three years. Examples of these subjects are: Physical Education, Music, Drama, Dance and Art. If you are considering one of these subjects and are unsure if you meet the requirements, please encourage your son/daughter to speak to their teachers within these subjects prior to your interview. Furthermore, you can book appointments for these subjects in the marketplace on the options evening for further clarity.

The Department for Education measure which is used to judge educational establishments is based on their ability on entry to the academy. We use this measure to define a student's target grades. It should be noted that this is not their destiny and we are expecting students to be working so that they exceed their targets in at least some of their subjects. If, during the year, students are consistently achieving above their target grade, then it will be increased.

Subject areas will have different ways of determining if students are likely to achieve these target grades, based on test data, classwork, end of year examinations and the class teacher's professional judgement.

Some students may be asked to consider specific vocational programmes which will allow them the best chance to be successful. Further discussions have taken place with Heads of Department, the Special Educational Needs Department and Senior Staff to determine if guidance is necessary.

Key Tips for Students

DOS

- **DO READ** the information about the subjects on offer - www.thornsca.org.uk/year-9-choices/
- **DO ASK** subject teachers or Head of Year if there is anything you are not sure about or if you would like more information.
- **DO THINK** about all the subjects open to you.
- **DO THINK** carefully about your possible educational and career future.
- **DO TALK** about your ideas and choices with your carers.
- **DO TALK** about subjects you are choosing with teachers of that subject and Year 10 students who currently study that subject.
- **DO MAKE SURE** that if you want to do a subject but are unsure of whether you meet the entry requirements, you see the Head of Department and get them to agree.

DON'TS

- **DON'T** choose a subject simply because your friends are choosing it. Their needs may be totally different from yours and you probably will not be in the same teaching group anyway.
- **DON'T** choose a subject just because you like the teacher – you may have a different teacher next year.
- **DON'T** choose a subject just because it is new or because it sounds glamorous. Check it out carefully.

Options Blocks 2021

The table below lists all the options available. You will be expected to choose **one** subject from each option block and make sure you have picked **at least one gold** subject. Please remember that some subjects have entry requirements and if you do not meet these you will need permission from the Head of Department.

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Computer Science	Separate Sciences	French
History	History	History
Geography	Geography	Geography
German	Business Studies (BTEC Enterprise Tech Award)	GCSE Art
GCSE Art	BTEC Creative Media (ICT)	BTEC Creative Media (ICT)
Business Studies (BTEC Enterprise Tech Award)	BTEC Health & Social Care	Travel & Tourism
Drama	Music	BTEC Health & Social Care
Dance	Engineering	GCSE PE

Although we will make every effort to ensure that all courses listed above run, if there is very low demand for a specific course then the group may not be able to take place.