



THORNS

COLLEGIATE ACADEMY

Option Choices 2022

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 EduLink messaging service 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

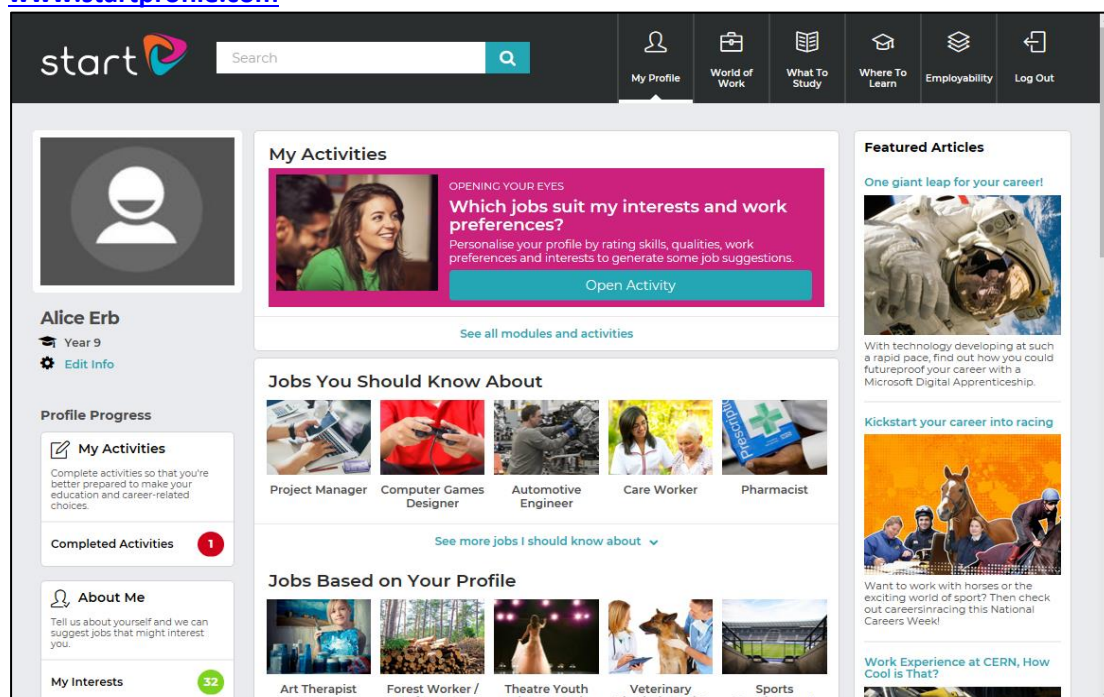
COLLEGIATE ACADEMY TRUST

Key Stage 4 Options Process 2022

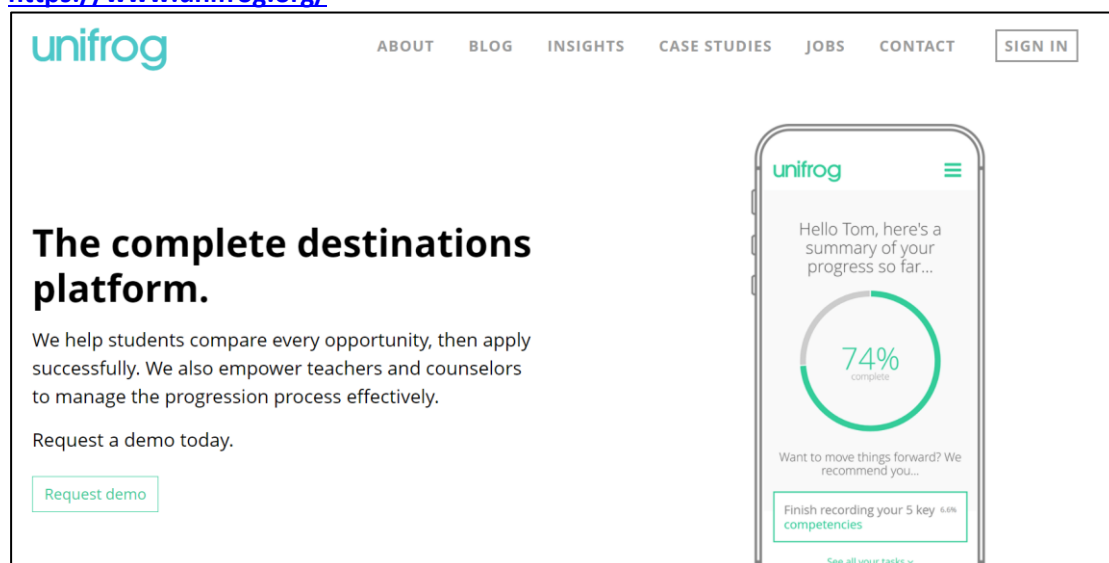
Before the Options Evening

- Your child has access to two online platforms for support, these have been referred to during the Year 9 choices assemblies and recent careers sessions, these are called Start Profile and Unifrog. Please discuss these 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

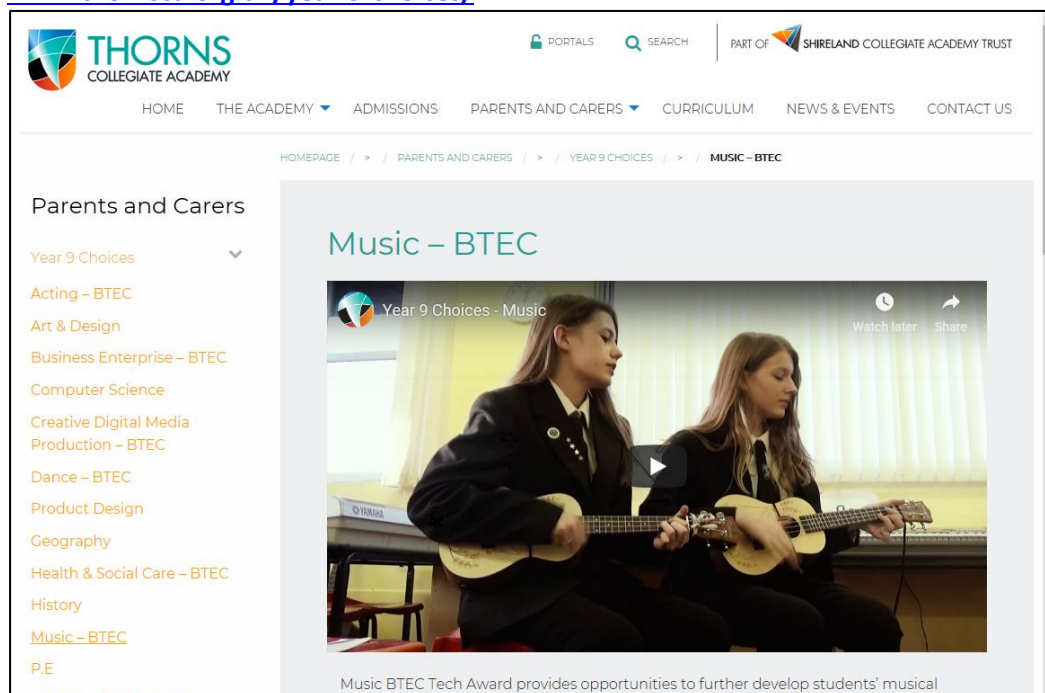


<https://www.unifrog.org/>



- You are also able to 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 if further information is required.

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



Options Evening Tuesday 5th April

There will be 2 parts to the evening:

- Choice's interview with a senior member of staff.** The purpose of the interview is to guide you and your child through the choices which need to be made, considering the skills and attributes of your child, as well as their career plans. We expect the interviewer will be able to answer most questions you might have. You will be guided through a Microsoft form as a way or 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 this 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.

- 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, 30th March, 9am. 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.

If you require a conversation with the Business Studies departments please contact the school reception and a member of staff will phone you as a representative from this department is not available on this evening.

After the Options Evening

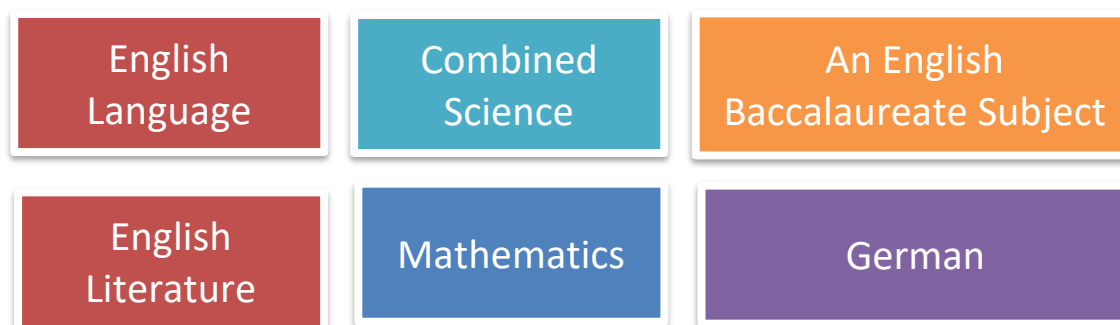
Your son/daughters' choices will have been made on **Tuesday 5th April** however, we acknowledge that some students may have a change of heart after a period of reflection. With this in mind, we will enable students to adjust subject choices in the following few days up until **Friday 8th April**. If 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 **may be** considered within the first 3 weeks of the new timetable, we will therefore consider a change up until **Friday 23rd September**. 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, all students will take them as part of their KS4 curriculum.



Regardless of the option subjects chosen, all students should gain six GCSE grades purely from the core offering. It is our aim for all students to study ten GCSE or equivalent qualifications in total. As part of the core offering, students will also have one hour per week of non-examined Physical Education and one hour twenty minutes of Personal Development and RE. Core lessons will take up the majority of hours per week. Students are set by ability in English, Mathematics and Science. PE is taught in mixed ability groups and Personal Development and RE is taught in session one groups.

English Baccalaureate or EBacc

You might have heard of the EBacc (English Baccalaureate) but are unsure of which subjects are included and the benefits of completing the EBacc.

The EBacc is not a qualification in its own right but rather a combination of GCSE subjects. The EBacc was introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010 to encourage students to study a broad range of core subjects to help them go on to study higher education courses and increase the likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education.

The Subjects included in the EBacc are:

- English Language and literature
- Maths
- Science
- A Language
- History or Geography

Should students wish to obtain the 'personal EBacc' they should choose History or Geography in their options as all other subjects already form part of the core offering at Thorns.

Optional Qualifications

Your child must select four 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 a gold subject from below:

GEOGRAPHY	COMPUTER SCIENCE
HISTORY	TRIPLE SCIENCE

Students may choose more than one of these subjects should they wish.

All students will undertake one of our Design based subjects, options available here include Design and Technology, Three Dimensional Design or Textile Design. We believe this is essential as these subjects prepare students for the world of work in our local area, a hub of industry. The use of technology 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.

Future career

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:

- Which careers are you interested in? Are there any qualifications at GCSE/A level/Degree level that you need to enter this profession?
- If you had to choose three A-Level qualifications to study tomorrow, what would they be? Which careers do these subject lead towards?
- Are the A-Level qualifications available as options you can take at today at Key Stage 4? 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 available that students have not studied before. If your son/daughter is considering one of those subjects, then ensure they are aware of the requirements of the course and the career path this course can lead to.

Encourage them to 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 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.

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.

Target Grades

The Department for Education measure which is used to judge educational establishments is based on students ability on entry to the academy. We use this measure to define a student's target grades. It should be noted that a targets is not their destiny, 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.

Final 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 10/11 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 2022

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. These choices will need to be selected during Option Evening on Tuesday 5th April.

Design	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Design and Technology	History	History	History
Three Dimensional Design	Computer Science	Geography	Geography
Textile Design	BTEC Creative Media (ICT)	Separate Sciences	BTEC Enterprise Tech Award (Business Studies)
	BTEC Enterprise Tech Award (Business Studies)	BTEC Enterprise Tech Award (Business Studies)	BTEC Health & Social Care
	BTEC Health & Social Care	BTEC Creative Media (ICT)	GCSE PE
	Dance	GCSE Art (Cannot be selected with 3D or Textile Design)	Music
	Drama		

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 course may not be able to take place and students will be contacted as soon as possible.