

Choosing subjects for S3 and S4

During second and third year you'll be encouraged to think about your future learning and career pathways. You'll also need to make decisions about which subjects and courses to take in the senior phase.

This isn't always easy, but it is important! So, it's worth thinking them through properly and planning ahead.

What matters most is taking the subjects and courses that will suit **you** best.

Options and choices

The range of subjects and courses open to you will depend on your school, and its partners. These may include local colleges and community, youth and voluntary groups. Each school develops a curriculum to suit the needs of its own pupils.

At the end of third year you'll have the opportunity to review your subject choices; your teachers will use your S3 profile to help you decide which subjects and qualifications you want to study in fourth year and beyond.

Remember! It's important to choose subjects and courses that will keep your future study and career options as open as possible.

If you are thinking of going to university you need to be aware that some university courses ask applicants for at least two science subjects. A few courses will require three sciences. Fortunately, Maths is counted as a science! And, it may be possible to take a third science in S6.

The 'dos and don'ts' of subject choice

Do...

- subjects that you will enjoy
- what you're good at - and can do well in
- look back at your achievements - what have you done well
- subjects that are right for you - ones that relate to your interests, strengths and abilities
- think ahead - about what you might like to do when you leave school
- explore career ideas and pathways and check which subjects and qualifications you might need, or find useful, in the future
- keep your options open by taking a balanced mix of subjects
- ask for help and information when you need it
- talk with your parents about your ideas and options.

Don't...

- choose a subject just because you like the teacher
- choose a new subject without finding out as much as you can about it
- limit yourself by thinking that certain subjects are only for boys or girls

- pick a subject just so you can be in the same class as your friends
- choose a subject because you think it's easy
- worry if you have no clear career ideas yet - keep your options open.

How to choose

Here are some simple steps you can take to help you choose.

1. Work out which subjects you like most.
2. Work out which subjects you are good at.
3. Check with your teachers that they agree with your views on your progress.
4. Find out about any subjects you haven't studied before. You can do this by:
 - reading the school's Options Booklet
 - talking with the teachers who deliver the subject in class
 - reading the subject descriptions in the [Schools section of Planit](#).
5. Think about your skills and interests. There are two online skills and interests self-assessments on Planit. Just sign up for a portfolio, complete the assessments and print out your report.
6. Identify your strongest skills and favourite interests.
7. Explore future career options - see the [Careers A-Z](#) and [CareerMatch](#) tools on Planit.

Don't worry if you don't have any particular career interests yet. It's OK, most people don't or have only vague ideas at this point.

Planit has lots of tools and resources designed to help you make your subject choices. As well as our job profiles and CareerMatch, you can also use:

- [Options S3](#) - three multimedia activities to help you to work through your option choices
- [Subject/career lists](#) - links every school subject to a list of related careers.