



UVHS
Year 9 Options

ULVERSTON VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL

Options 2026

Key Stage 4

Study Guide

An exceptional school at the heart of the community



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Sample Options Form



Dear Parents

As your child approaches the most important stage in his/her school life so far, we feel that making the correct decisions and choices is of vital importance. This study guide will guide you through the subjects and courses available at Key Stage 4, and we hope that every student in Year 9 will make an informed choice in the subjects he/she would like to study in Years 10 and 11.

Every student will have the opportunity to study between 5 and 9 GCSEs or equivalent. This includes the core subjects which every child must study. Each child will be advised to select courses suitable for his/her strengths.

The National Curriculum allows all students to have some choice in the subjects they study at Key Stage 4. The staff at Ulverston Victoria High School will do their very best to implement these arrangements as effectively as possible within the confines of available resources.

This study guide has been put together to help your child make the right decisions. We hope that you will have a chance to read through this guide with your child and discuss the choices available. Your child should also seek help from his/her tutor and subject teachers, who are always available to offer advice and guidance on appropriate courses.

The study guide is in three sections: General information; Core subjects; Optional subjects.

At the back is a copy of the Options Form; **this is a sample copy for your records.**

On **Wednesday 14th January** your child will be able to access the **online Options Form** to make their choices. Please help them to complete this by **Monday 2nd February**.

The **Year 9 Parents' Evening** on **Thursday 22nd January** will be an opportunity for you and your child to discuss the information in this study guide with subject teachers.

We cannot guarantee the availability of all subjects. Alterations may have to be made depending on student choices and availability of staff. In the event of an oversubscribed group, the Headteacher will make the final decision.



The English Baccalaureate

Implications for Students' Option Choices

What is the EBacc?

The EBacc is a performance measure which was introduced into school performance tables in 2011. It is not a qualification in itself. The measure shows how students have achieved across a range of academic subjects – English, Mathematics, Science, History or Geography and a Language.

The Purpose of the EBacc

One purpose is to reverse a perceived trend in students taking too many non-academic qualifications which the government feel do not carry sufficient weight for entry to higher education or employment.

Another purpose is to encourage more students to take core subjects such as Modern Foreign Languages, History or Geography at Key Stage 4 and to encourage students from disadvantaged backgrounds to take academic subjects.

The EBacc and 'UVHS'

Government policy has meant that we are making it compulsory for all students to take Geography, History, German or Spanish in addition to English, Maths and Science.

**If you require any further information regarding option choices please contact
Mr A Nayler (Assistant Headteacher)**



Dear Student

During the first three years of secondary school, most students study the same subjects. As you enter Year 10 you have more choice about the subjects that you study. You are also starting to study these subjects to GCSE level. Options are about choosing the right subjects for you. This might mean....

- continuing a subject you study now
- dropping a subject you study now
- starting a new subject

You have some control over which subjects you study so it is important that you make the right choices.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why have I got this study guide?

This guide helps you plan your next two years at Ulverston Victoria High School, for some of you these will be your final two years. Most of you will go on to Further Education, some of you will get a job, but whatever you do you will find your career will involve further training.

What does this study guide contain?

This guide contains information about the courses you could follow and the choices you will make. Read it carefully and discuss these options with your parents, subject teachers, form tutor, Mrs Gardiner (Pastoral Leader), Miss McKenny (Assistant Pastoral Leader) and Mrs McIlvogue (Pastoral Support Officer). The more information you can get the better!

Why do I have to make a choice?

The next two years are a foundation for the rest of your life. Whatever you decide now may make a difference to the options you have available in the future. You are not able to take all your current subjects to examination level and there are subjects you have never studied before available to you. It is important you keep your options choices broad in order to get a balanced education.

Can I choose whichever subjects I want?

Not exactly - you must study Mathematics, English, Science, Personal Development and PE. After that you should not attempt to specialise too much as this might limit your opportunities for the future.

What do I have to do to succeed?

The next two years are very important, and you must aim to learn as much as you can for the basis of your future qualifications. Careful planning and serious revision are the key to examination success. Ulverston Victoria High School has a very good record of examination success because students take their education seriously.

Will I get my first choices?

It is hoped that most students will get their preferred choice of option subjects but with a huge number of students all selecting different subjects it is sometimes impossible to satisfy everyone. However, the majority are successful. You should therefore make sure that your options reserve choice is a subject that you definitely want to study, because it will be impossible to change afterwards. You have been given several weeks to make sure that you are certain about your decisions, so ensure you use this time wisely and speak to as many different people as possible.



Should I choose the same subjects as my friend?

You need to think very carefully about the subjects that **you** want to study. There is no point choosing a subject you do not like, just because your friend wants to do it. The way the timetable works out, you might not even be in the same group as your friend anyway!

How do I decide?

The first thing you must do is find out as much as you can about the subjects concerned. You can do this by looking at this study guide and the UVHS website, but more importantly by talking to the teachers of the different subjects.

You need to find out if there are any subjects you need to study if you have a particular type of job or career in mind for the future. Make use of the information available in the Employability section of the school website.

If you have not decided on the type of employment you would like in the future, you need to choose courses that are not going to limit your choices later. You should think about your own strengths and the subjects that you like doing at the moment. You are far more likely to be successful if you choose subjects that you are interested in and enjoy.

There are three important questions for you to ask yourself...

1. **WHAT AM I GOOD AT?**
2. **WHAT DO I ENJOY?**
3. **WHAT DO I NEED?**

What happens next?

You should talk to your parents, subject teachers and tutor, listen to their advice and then fill in the online **Options Form** you are sent. A few individuals may have difficulty completing the form and they will be offered an individual interview about their choices. Your choice of subjects will be agreed and we will then try to give you that combination of subjects. Each year a small number of students cannot be given all their first choices because of group sizes and facilities. If this is the case you will be given an individual interview to help you to finalise your choices.

A sample Options Form is in the back of this guide. Use this to prepare your choices before completing the final online Options Form by:

Monday 2nd February 2026



Important Dates

Monday 12th January 2026	Y9 Options Assembly and Options Evening for parents
Tue 13th - Wed 14th January 2026	Option Subject Assemblies
Wednesday 14th January 2026	Options Study Guide sent home. Options Form available online
Thursday 22nd January 2026	Year 9 Parents' Evening
Monday 2nd February 2026	Options Form deadline

Terminology

Here is a short explanation of some of the words and phrases used in this guide:

Core subject	A subject you must study in Years 10 and 11
Final examination	An assessment which you complete at the end of the course (usually).
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
Key Stage 3	The collective name for Years 7-9
Key Stage 4	The collective name for Years 10-11
National Curriculum	The subject areas every student in England must study.
Non-examination Assessment	Work which you do during the course, usually assessed by your teachers, that contributes to your final grade.
Optional subject	A subject which you can choose to study (usually GCSE) in Years 10-11.
Specification	The information you have to know and the things you must be able to do by the end of the course.
Terminal examination	Same as final examination
Tier	Some subjects have different levels of entry for the exams at the end - Foundation or Higher.



Assessment

SCHOOL POLICY ON EXAMINATION ENTRY

Certificates at GCSE/Key Stage 4 are awarded by:

AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
PEARSON UK	Edexcel GCSE and A Level provider
OCR	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations

Most of the courses offered lead to public examination. The school has a good record of success in these for students of all abilities. However, examination entry is not guaranteed, and as you will see as you read on, the level you obtain will often depend on which examination papers you take. Furthermore, you will not be entered if you have made insufficient progress, through lack of effort or failure to complete the required non-examination assessments.

Fees are the responsibility of the School Governors. Our fees, paid out of the school budget amount to many thousands of pounds each year. Students who complete the necessary components in any subject will be guaranteed payment by the school. Parents may be asked to pay for entries in some subjects when the level of attendance to school is deemed to be unacceptable. Details of this are explained at the Year 11 Parents' Evening.

Entries are compiled by the Subject Leader. Entry procedures are operated by the School Examinations Officer in consultation with staff, students and parents, in February of Year 11. Parental attendance is very important at the Year 11 Parents' Evening.

Attendance on a regular basis is essential throughout the course. Unauthorised absences will be recorded. Whilst serious ill health can be covered by a doctor's certificate with the examining board concerned, casual absences lead to a reduced grade or no grade at all.

Work rate, continuous, consistent, planned effort, effective revision, homework organisation, and determination to succeed are the qualities needed for exam success. There is no easy way to pass an examination. Teachers give regular advice on the necessary study skills but you cannot rely on your teacher to carry you through the course. The school has a good record at GCSE mainly because the vast majority of students have developed good work habits and attended regularly.

Grades From the summer of 1994 onwards, GCSE results were awarded and reported by a grade within the range A* - U. The new revised GCSE courses are now awarded grades as numbers 1 to 9 with 9 being the highest. A grade 4 is equivalent to an old style C grade and grades 8 and 9 are both equivalent to A*, so grade 9 will be very rare but significantly outstanding. Qualifications in Health & Social Care, Creative iMedia and Sport Studies will be graded Distinction*, Distinction, Merit and Pass.



Assessment (continued)

GCSE Tiering

Subjects will be divided into two groups; **no tiers** and **two tiers**.

- Subjects without any tiers are Art, Business, Computer Science, Dance, Drama, English Language, English Literature, Food and Nutrition, Design & Technology, Geography, History, Music and Religious Studies.

All students following these courses will take the same examination papers and the grade awarded will be in the range 9 - 1.

- Subjects with two tiers include Mathematics, Science and Modern Foreign Languages. You can be entered for the Higher tier (to achieve grades 9 - 4) or the Foundation tier (to achieve grades 5 - 1).

Where there are two tiers, candidates on the Higher tier who fail to attain the minimum mark for grade 4 will be unclassified (U). On Foundation tier, candidates cannot gain above grade 5.

Higher	9	8	7	6	5	4			
Foundation					5	4	3	2	1

Health & Social Care, Creative iMedia and Sport Studies have no tiers but will be graded as follows (GCSE equivalent in brackets):

Level 2 - Distinction * (8/9), Distinction (7), Merit (6/5), Pass (4),
Level 1 - Distinction (3), Merit (2), Pass (1)

Many occupations and Further Education courses require a minimum GCSE grade in certain subjects. Historically this was often a grade C, but may be a higher or lower grade. Under the new system, the equivalent will be a grade 4/5.

In some subjects there is a compulsory element of non-examination assessment which counts towards the final examination grade. If the controlled assessments are not completed you will be unable to gain a grade.

For more information please contact Mr A Nayler (Assistant Headteacher)



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GCSE English—Exam Board AQA

All students will complete a two year course leading to two GCSE qualifications: GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature.

English Language: Over the two years you will study and compare a range of high-quality, challenging fiction and non-fiction texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. You will have opportunities to develop higher-order reading and critical thinking skills that encourage genuine enquiry into different topics and themes. You will also produce your own creative writing using a range of stimulus materials.

You will sit two terminal examinations to secure your final GCSE grade – see below. 50% of your mark is for reading and 50% of your mark is for writing: **20%** of your final mark, however, is awarded for **quality of written communication**: accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The course also requires you to complete at least one speaking assessment, presenting to a real audience on an issue or topic of your choice. Your score will be recorded as Pass (P), Merit (M) or Distinction (D) on your final GCSE certificate. This award does not affect your overall GCSE grade.

English Language assessment overview

Assessments

All texts in the examination will be unseen.

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	+	Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives	+	Non-examination Assessment: Spoken Language
<p>What's assessed</p> <p>Section A: Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one literature fiction text <p>Section B: Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> descriptive or narrative writing 		<p>What's assessed</p> <p>Section A: Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text <p>Section B: Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> writing to present a viewpoint 		<p>What's assessed</p> <p>(AO7–AO9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presenting responding to questions and feedback use of Standard English
<p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 80 marks 50% of GCSE 		<p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 80 marks 50% of GCSE 		<p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teacher set throughout course marked by teacher separate endorsement (0% weighting of GCSE)
<p>Questions</p> <p>Reading (40 marks) (25%)</p> <p>– one single text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 short form question (1 x 4 marks) 2 longer form questions (2 x 8 marks) 1 extended question (1 x 20 marks) <p>Writing (40 marks) (25%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy) 		<p>Questions</p> <p>Reading (40 marks) (25%)</p> <p>– two linked texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 short form question (1 x 4 marks) 2 longer form questions (1 x 8, 1 x 12 marks) 1 extended question (1 x 16 marks) <p>Writing (40 marks) (25%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy) 		

For more information please contact Miss Rowland

English Literature

Alongside the English Language specification you will study and compare a range of prose, poetry and drama from different cultures and periods. Studying GCSE English Literature will encourage you to read widely for pleasure and serve as preparation for studying literature at a higher level. This is a varied and enjoyable course, introducing you to different authors and literary traditions which will influence your own reading and writing. You will develop the skills required to respond to and compare whole texts and their authors' intentions, as well as the ability to respond to unseen extracts, demonstrating understanding of language, form, structure and context.

You will sit two terminal examinations to secure your final GCSE grade – see below. 40% of your mark is for responding to Shakespeare and a 19th-century novel and 60% of your mark is for responding to modern texts and poetry. **5%** of your final mark is awarded for **quality of written communication**: accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

English Literature assessment overview

Assessments

All assessments are closed book: any stimulus materials required will be provided as part of the assessment.

All assessments are compulsory.

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel	+	Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry
<p>What's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakespeare • The 19th-century novel 		<p>What's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern texts • Poetry • Unseen poetry
<p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • 64 marks • 40% of GCSE 		<p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written exam: 2 hour 15 minutes • 96 marks • 60% of GCSE
<p>Questions</p> <p>Section A Shakespeare: students will answer one question on their play of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.</p> <p>Section B The 19th-century novel: students will answer one question on their novel of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.</p>		<p>Questions</p> <p>Section A Modern texts: students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text.</p> <p>Section B Poetry: students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.</p> <p>Section C Unseen poetry: Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.</p>

UVHS set texts

Shakespeare: Macbeth

19th century novel: A Christmas Carol

Modern text: An Inspector Calls

Poetry: Power and Conflict

For more information please contact Miss Rowland



GCSE Maths—Exam Board Edexcel

Our GCSE Maths curriculum builds on the skills that students learn in years 7 to 9. There is an emphasis on retrieval practice and students regularly revisit and review topics that they have previously learned in order to keep these skills sharp. This then enables them to tackle new content with confidence. The course covers the topics of Number, Algebra, Geometry, Data Handling, Ratio, Probability and Problem Solving.

There are two tiers of entry: Foundation with grades 1 to 5 available and Higher with grades 4 to 9 available. Students' progress is closely monitored and final decisions on the tier of entry are made late on in year 10.

Students have access to the online platform Sparx Maths where their weekly homework will be set. This is consistent with years 7 to 9 so they should find the transition seamless. Sparx Maths is an online learning platform that creates personalised maths homework. This homework is based on what is currently being covered in lessons and adjusts to the needs of each individual student, ensuring that they get exactly the input that they need. Sparx Maths can also be used for independent learning and if a student requires support with how to navigate this they can discuss this with their Maths teacher. This is a superb resource which the school has purchased for use by our students in preparing for their final exams. The Maths department also make ample packs of Maths exam papers available in Year 11 for students to practise their skills.

Assessment is entirely by examination.

For more information please see Mr Ironmonger or your Maths teacher



GCSE Combined Science— Exam Board AQA

At UVHS we believe that Science has something to offer every student. From a trainee chef to a nuclear physicist, a construction apprentice to a cancer researcher, everyone needs some level of relevant science understanding. The GCSE Science options that are available to students have changed in the last few years under the direction of the DfE and Ofqual. We offer Key Stage 4 qualifications, to suit students of all abilities and all aspirations.

Students will have started covering key concepts during Year 9 to prepare them for the step up to GCSE. All Science courses will cover aspects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The new style GCSEs are being 100% examined, there are no coursework elements. All of the written GCSE exams for Science will be at the end of Year 11. There are two pathways available to students in Science depending on their future aspirations and current progress in Year 9.

GCSE Combined Science

This course is for students who would benefit from an underpinning Science curriculum and is recommended to those students who are not thinking at this stage of A levels, or other post-16 qualifications, in Science. This forms part of a student's core curriculum. Students have specialist Science teachers and 6 lessons of Science per week.

Combined Science is a double GCSE and has a 17 point grading scale, from 9–9, 9–8, 8–8 through to 2–1, 1–1.

As practical work is at the heart of Science, students will conduct 16 required experiments, that will be examined in the final exam. Good attendance is therefore essential.

Students will need to apply their mathematical skills in a range of scientific contexts as this makes up a proportion of the marks in each exam.

Exams

Six papers: two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics. Each will assess different topics.

Duration: all the papers are 1 hour 15 minutes each.

Tiers: Foundation Grade Range 1-5 and Higher Grades 4-9.

Weighting: the papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 16.7% of the final grade and has 70 marks

Question types: multiple choice, structured, closed, short answer and open response.



Combined Science subject content

Biology	Chemistry	Physics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cell biology• Organisation• Infection and response• Bioenergetics• Homeostasis and response• Inheritance, variation and evolution• Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Atomic structure and the periodic table• Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter• Quantitative chemistry• Chemical changes• Energy changes• The rate and extent of chemical change• Organic chemistry• Chemical analysis• Chemistry of the atmosphere• Using resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forces• Energy• Waves• Electricity• Magnetism and electromagnetism• Particle model of matter• Atomic structure

For more information please see Mr Lowe



Physical Education

Students in Years 10 and 11 have a double lesson of Physical Education per week. There may be an opportunity for students to gain a certificate of achievement for regular participation in all activities and making good progress.

The programme of activities is a continuation of Key Stage 3. Students are involved in a wide range of activities. Examples include -

Football, Basketball, Badminton, Cross-country running, Athletics, Cricket, Softball, Rugby, Aussie Rules Football, Volleyball, Handball, Rounders, Ultimate Frisbee, Trampolining, Netball, Hockey, Tennis, Aerobics and Boxercise

All pupils have the opportunity to take part in leadership activities throughout Key Stage 4, which includes assisting with activities in the local Primary Schools.

Personal Development

Preparing our students for an ever changing and complex world is an important part of school life. In partnership with parents, ensuring our students are ready for the exciting opportunities they have as young adults as well as the challenges and risks they will find in their path as they grow up is a holistic part of school life.

As part of the KS4 timetable, students in Year 10 and 11 will have one period a week of Personal Development which continues with the learning they have already covered in KS3 form time.

Our bespoke Personal Development curriculum is here to support students to flourish, and will include content from the following areas:

- **PSHE** (Personal, Social, Health & Economic) Education
- Statutory **RSE** (Relationships, Sex Education)
- **Citizenship**
- **SMSC** (Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural)
- **British Values**
- Careers Information Education Advice & Guidance (**CIEAG**)

For more information please contact the PE department or Mrs Ford for Personal Development



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• Fine Art	26
• Design & Technology	27
• Food Preparation & Nutrition	28
• Health and Social Care	29
• Drama	30
• Music	31
• Dance	32
• Sport Studies	33



GCSE Geography—Exam Board Edexcel

The Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1) in Geography A consists of 3 externally examined papers.

Students must complete all assessments at the end of Year 11.

Bold and underlined text

Highlights the optional 'sub topic' selected by UVHS

Component 1: The Physical Environment

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes

37.5% of the qualification 94 marks

- Topic 1: The changing landscapes of the UK – including optional sub-topics from which students choose **two** from three, **1A: Coastal landscapes and processes, 1B: River landscapes and processes** and 1C: Glaciated upland landscapes and processes.
- Topic 2: Weather hazards and climate change
- Topic 3: Ecosystems, biodiversity and management

Component 2: The Human Environment

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes

37.5% of the qualification 94 marks

- Topic 4: Changing cities
- Topic 5: Global development
- Topic 6: Resource management – including optional sub-topics from which students choose **one** from two, **6A: Energy resource management** and 6B: Water resource management

Component 3: Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes

25% of the qualification

64 marks

- Topic 7: Geographical investigations – fieldwork
- Topic 8: Geographical investigations – UK challenges

For more information please see Mrs Mardell-Burns



GCSE History—Exam Board AQA

Paper 1: Understanding the modern world. Written exam 50% of GCSE

Section A

Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship. This focuses on the development of Germany during a turbulent half century of change. It was a period of democracy and then dictatorship – the development and collapse of democracy and the rise and fall of Nazism. Students will study the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of these two developments and the role ideas played in influencing change. They will also look at the role of key individuals and groups in shaping change and the impact the developments had on them.

Section B

The Cold War 1945 – 1975. This course follows on well from what students studied in Year 9 and examines the nuclear conflict between America and the USSR that developed soon after the end of the Second World War. This wider world depth study enables students to understand the complex & diverse interests of different individuals & their conflicting ideologies. The course looks at the causes & events of Cold War conflicts. Students will study topics such as the Iron Curtain; the building of the Berlin Wall; the Cuban Missile Crisis; the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

Paper 2: Shaping the nation. Written exam 50% of GCSE

Section A

Britain's health & the people. This course will look at how medicine and public health developed in Britain since the fall of the Roman Empire until the 20th century. Students will study the Middle Ages, including the Black Death; the Renaissance, including the Great Plague; the development of Pasteur's Germ Theory; the revolution in surgery, including the development of anaesthetics and antiseptics; and modern treatment of disease, such as penicillin, the influence of the two world wars, modern surgery, x-rays and finally the development of the NHS and the Welfare State.

Section B

British depth study including the historic environment: Elizabethan England 1568 – 1603. This course looks at the final 35 years of Elizabeth I's reign including problems over her marriage, relations with parliament, the Elizabethan theatre, problems with the poor, Catholic plots, Mary Queen of Scots, English exploration, Drake & Raleigh and the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Students will also get a chance to study a specific site in depth and examine its historical context. This site will be a Tudor manor house, a theatre, a village or a battle site.

For more information please see Mrs Fairclough



GCSE Spanish—Exam Board AQA

Travel further, improve your employment prospects, experience different cultures, try new foods, earn more money, make new friends!

Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world. Students who choose to study Spanish will not only be able to communicate with those in Spain, but also many countries in South America, such as Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Peru, Chile and Uruguay.

Year 10 Spanish students will have the opportunity to take part in our fantastic educational visit to Barcelona in July, where they get to visit the famous World Heritage Site, the Sagrada Familia cathedral, and Europe's biggest football stadium, the Nou Camp. Students will also use their Spanish to order authentic tapas and buy fresh fruit and smoothies at the *Boquería* market on the world-famous street, *Las Ramblas*.

Learning Spanish is not only beneficial for your brain (scientific studies have shown that learning a foreign language can delay the onset of Dementia in later life!), but it also increases your employment opportunities and earning potential - bilingual employees can earn between 5%-20% more per hour than those who only speak English!

In their GCSE, students will learn how to speak and write about a wide range of topics, such as describing their local area, holidays, hobbies and plans for the future.

The exams which take place at the end of Year 11 are divided into two tiers, Foundation and Higher, with Foundation covering grades 1-5 and Higher covering grades 4-9. Students will be entered for the tier most suited to their ability.

Students wishing to opt for GCSE Spanish must already be studying Spanish in Year 9 or already have a good level from speaking Spanish at home etc.

Assessment

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
25%	25%	25%	25%

For more information please see Miss Beardsley



GCSE German—Exam Board AQA

The aim of the course is to develop your language skills through the topic areas of film, holidays, leisure, school environment, social issues, global issues, customs and festivals.

The GCSE course will improve your language, thinking and communication skills as well as develop your cultural understanding. It will broaden your horizons and prepare you for further language study. A GCSE language qualification is highly regarded by universities and employers.

Assessment

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
25%	25%	25%	25%

All four skills will be tested at the end of the course. Translation from and into the target language will be assessed in the reading and writing exams. The speaking test will be conducted by your teacher and will involve a role-play, photo card discussion and conversation. This will be marked by the exam board. You can be entered at Foundation Tier (grades 1-5) or Higher Tier 9 (grades 4-9). All four skills must be taken at the same tier.

For more information please see Mr Graham



GCSE French—Exam Board AQA

The aim of the course is to develop your language skills through the topic areas of film, holidays, leisure, school environment, social issues, global issues, customs and festivals.

The GCSE course will improve your language, thinking and communication skills as well as develop your cultural understanding. It will broaden your horizons and prepare you for further language study. A GCSE language qualification is highly regarded by universities and employers.

Assessment

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
25%	25%	25%	25%

All four skills will be tested at the end of the course. Translation from and into the target language will be assessed in the reading and writing exams. The speaking test will be conducted by your teacher and will involve a role-play, photo card discussion and conversation. This will be marked by the exam board. You can be entered at Foundation Tier (grades 1-5) or Higher Tier 9 (grades 4-9). All four skills must be taken at the same tier.

We hope to offer an opportunity to go on the French visit to Paris at the end of Year 10 where you will be able to practise the language you have learned. You will also have the opportunity to correspond with a penfriend from France.

For more information please see Miss Beardsley



GCSE Separate Science— Exam Board AQA

Separate Science GCSEs (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)

This extra option is available for students to take on top of the core Science curriculum; in order to boost their progression to A-level and science related careers. Students will use their core and one option lesson time to study for three separate GCSEs in Science. We strongly advise that any student wishing and capable of Science study beyond GCSE should take this option to give them the best possible foundation. Students will have in total 9 Science lessons per week and will have specialist subject teachers for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Students should be working towards at least grade 6 in Year 9 Science to show that they are capable of meeting the demands of this subject, and at least a grade 5 in Maths. This is because the new Physics GCSE has 30% of questions which will require mathematical demand.

It is essential that students conduct 8 required practicals for each of the three GCSEs, which will be assessed in the final exams (15% of questions will be on required practicals). Good attendance to school is therefore essential.

Exams for each of the separate Science GCSEs

Exams = 100% of the final marks

Two papers: each paper will assess different topics.

Duration: both papers are 1 hour 45 minutes.

Tiers: Foundation tier grade range 1-5 and Higher tier grade range 4-9.

Weighting: the papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 50% of the grade and has 100 marks available.

Question types: multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

For more information please see Mr Lowe



GCSE Computer Science— Exam Board OCR

This course is aimed at students who are logical, like problem solving and have enjoyed programming at KS3.

This course is assessed over 2 Components: J277/01 and J276/02 .

J277/01— Computer Systems — 50%

Assessed by written external exam in Year 11.

In this component you will learn about computer systems and how they function together:

Internal components of computer systems (CPU, memory, & storage), how data is stored, networks, topologies, protocols, security vulnerabilities & mitigations and system software.

Along with developing an understanding of the impact of Computer Science in our day-to-day lives and globally.

J277/02 — Computational thinking, algorithms and programming — 50%

Assessed by written external exam in Year 11.

This component is broken down over two sections: A and B.

Students will develop an understanding of algorithms and programming. Through learning new programming techniques, how to produce robust programs, computational logic, translators and facilities of computing languages. Section A will focus on theoretical questions from the topics above.

Section B will focus on writing and refining algorithms written in either program code (Exam Reference Language or Python).

In class students will further their programming ability using Python 3, creating a wide range of coded solutions to scenario based problems. They will have the opportunity to explore a wide range of techniques and foster a deeper understanding of computational thinking.

Finally

Students who enjoy problem solving or have a desire to know how and why the devices they use function will flourish in this subject.

There is a skills shortage in terms of computer literate candidates. Whether it be data analysts, cyber security experts, web developers or designers, software engineers or system administrators.

This course is a gateway to an evolving employment landscape.

Are we going to become less reliant on computers? Why not get ahead!

For more information please see Ms Wolfsohn



ICT: OCR Cambridge Nationals— Creative iMedia

This course has 3 units, 2 of which are coursework units, internally assessed and externally moderated. The remaining unit is an external exam of the overall qualification.

Unit R093—Creative iMedia in the media industry (Mandatory exam)

Assessed by examination in June Year 11 - 1 hour 30 minutes

In this unit you will learn about the media industry, digital media products, how they are planned, and the media codes which are used to convey meaning, create impact and engage audiences. Topics include:

- The media industry
- Factors influencing product design
- Pre-production planning
- Distribution considerations

Unit R094 - Visual identity and digital graphics (Mandatory coursework)

Assessed by coursework. This is assessed by completing a set assignment.

In this unit you will learn to how to develop visual identities for clients and use the concepts of graphic design to create original digital graphics to engage target audiences. Topics include:

- Developing visual identity
- Planning digital graphics for products
- Creating visual identity and digital graphics

Unit R097 – Interactive digital media

Assessed by coursework. This is assessed by completing a set assignment.

In this unit you will learn to how to develop an interactive digital media product for a specific client brief and audience. The product will include a range of multimedia and interactive elements.

- Planning an interactive digital media product
- Creating an interactive digital media product
- Testing and reviewing an interactive digital media product

For further information please see Ms Wolfsohn



GCSE Business—Exam Board OCR

Students apply their knowledge and understanding to different business contexts ranging from small enterprises to large multinationals and businesses operating in local, national and global contexts. Students develop an understanding of how these contexts impact on business behaviour. Students will apply their knowledge and understanding to business decision making.

The specification requires students to draw on the knowledge and understanding to:

- use business terminology to identify and explain business activity
- apply business concepts to familiar and unfamiliar contexts
- develop problem solving and decision making skills relevant to business
- investigate, analyse and evaluate business opportunities and issues
- make justified decisions using both qualitative and quantitative data including its selection, interpretation, analysis and evaluation, and the application of appropriate quantitative skills.

Paper 1 - 1 hour 30 minutes (50% of total GCSE)

Business Activity
Marketing
People

Paper 2 - 1 hour 30 minutes (50% of total GCSE)

Operations
Finance
Influences on Business
The interdependent nature of Business

For more information please see Mrs Lightfoot



GCSE Religious Studies

(Philosophy and Ethics)—

Exam Board AQA

The Philosophy and Ethics GCSE offers students the opportunity to explore the world of belief and religious life through the study of, and reflection on, stimulating philosophical and ethical issues. Students will have the opportunity to offer personal responses and informed insights on these fundamental questions and issues.

For this full course exam students will study 2 components:

Component 1: The beliefs, teachings and practices of 2 religions. Christianity and Buddhism.

Component 2: Four ethical and philosophical themes:

1. Peace and conflict. This includes global terrorism, the use of force and the use of nuclear deterrents.
2. Relationships and families.
3. Crime and punishment.
4. Religion and life, including environmentalism, medical ethics, the origins of the universe and evolution.

In this GCSE we will study these philosophical and ethical issues through the perspectives of two religions, depending on the topic. Students will also be encouraged to explore and research the viewpoints and perspectives from other faiths. In the assessment students are encouraged to argue from a secular viewpoint and, where appropriate, to explore perspectives from faiths other than the six major world faiths.

There are no controlled assessments for this GCSE. Assessment is by exam only (a 1 hour 45 minute written paper for each unit).

In the exam students will be expected to show sound factual knowledge relating to the issues and an ability to demonstrate understanding and explanation of religious viewpoints. The ability to describe, explain and analyse using appropriate knowledge and understanding will be important, as is the ability to produce a personal view in response to modern ethical concerns.

This is a valuable GCSE which is respected by sixth form colleges, universities and employers. It will help to develop enquiring minds, critical thinking and the ability to respond to a range of philosophical and ethical issues through the development of analytical skills.

For more information please see Mr Peake



GCSE Fine Art—Exam Board AQA

GCSE Art and Design will introduce you to a variety of materials and processes in Year 10 including painting and drawing, textiles, photography, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics and mixed media work. The Fine Art specialism allows you the freedom to explore different media over the 2 year course, leading to the Year 11 project where you can focus on a specific area of your choice. The GCSE Art course provides an ideal foundation for A level, further study, and access to the Art and Design industry. We have had students progress to become everything from architects to filmmakers and fashion designers to wildlife illustrators.

You will be expected to produce observational drawings and photographs, experiment with materials and study the work of other artists to support your coursework and exam.

Students interested in choosing Art and Design need to show an enthusiasm for the subject, a willingness to experiment with different materials and methods, and have the ability to research and develop ideas in their own time as well as during lessons.

Assessment

The non-examined assessment is 60% of the final grade and includes classwork, homework and school exams.

The terminal exam is 40% of the final grade which is conducted over a 10 hour period.

The final assessment and grading is made at the end of the course.

For more information please see Mrs Hine-Johnson



GCSE Design & Technology

Design and Technology will involve students working in a hands-on way to develop the core skills required to **design**, model and make high-quality prototypes. Students have access to a range of materials and components that could include woods, metals, polymers, textiles and modern materials. They can also make use of electronic and mechanical systems and will have the opportunity to develop design strategies, use traditional practical skills and also utilise modern technologies e.g. CAD/CAM. Students will develop a whole range of relevant and useful knowledge, skills and experience which could potentially open the door to a career in related industries. This is a valued qualification and fulfils entry requirements for further study on our A Level Product Design course, or it could spark an interest in applying for an engineering, construction or creative industries based apprenticeship.

Examination (50%)

The theory will be taught alongside practical or coursework based lessons. Student will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- Core technical and making principles, which cover all materials and their working properties, manufacturing, new technologies, new materials, energy & the environment, systems and mechanical devices.
- Specialist technical principles requires students to study at least one material category in much greater depth. They will be required to know where materials are sourced, how they are processed, shaped, formed, joined and finished.
- **Designing** principles looks at how design and technology activities take place within a wide range of contexts. Study includes the knowledge of: past and present designers, safety, design strategies, business & enterprise, quality and tolerances.

Please note that 15% of the examination will be maths based questions with D&T contexts.

Non-Examination Assessment (Coursework 50%)

All creative and technical subjects have a coursework element to their qualification that must be carried out in school and moderated by the examination board.

The NEA focuses on real world contexts and the **design** of a prototype. As well as researching and developing solutions students also use problem solving, planning, communication and other valuable skills that are so important to their development.

Whilst manufacturing their prototype model/product students are encouraged to make use of a mixture of traditional and new technologies e.g. laser cutting, 3D Printing, hand tools and machines

Students often use their coursework portfolio to showcase their creativity, technical skills, knowledge and understanding when applying to Sixth Form College and Apprenticeships. Generations of students have successfully undertaken a D&T related piece of coursework at UVHS and have gained valuable experience and real satisfaction from seeing a piece of work through from start to finish.

For more information please see Miss Bentham



GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition

We are very proud to be able to offer a Food course to our students which is stimulating, exciting, and allows students to flourish in an ever changing subject. It is challenging both practically and academically, and allows for a modern mix of science and creativity in all lessons. An interest in Chemistry and Biology as well as Food will be beneficial.

Students will cover content from the following topics in a mixture of practical and theory lessons:

- ⇒ **12 Food Preparation Skills:** General mise en place, knife skills, preparing fruit and vegetables, use of the cooker, use of equipment, cooking methods, preparing, combining and shaping foods, sauce making, tenderising and marinating, dough, raising agents and setting mixtures
- ⇒ **Food, Nutrition & Health:** Macro/micronutrients, nutritional needs and health
- ⇒ **Food Science:** Cooking of food and heat transfer, the functional and chemical properties of food
- ⇒ **Food Safety:** Spoilage, contamination and the principles of food safety
- ⇒ **Food Choice:** Factors which affect our choice of food, British and international cuisine, sensory testing, food labelling and marketing
- ⇒ **Food Provenance:** The environmental impact and sustainability of food and food production and processing

The course is designed to be accessible for all students who are thinking of either working in the food industry or who would like to further their own personal ability in the kitchen. Students who have left UVHS in recent years to continue their qualification Post 16 have been accepted at both Kendal and Furness College, and have completed apprenticeship schemes with prestigious hotels in the area, with some students working at The Low Wood Hotel, L'Enclume and The Samling. This course can also foster an interest in other related areas such as: dietary planning, nutrition, food product development and food production and marketing, including qualifications at University level - the possibilities are endless!

This is a linear course, with all assessment material completed in Year 11, split into:

- ⇒ **NEA1 (15%) Food Investigation:** A scientific report testing knowledge and understanding of how ingredients react in the preparation and cooking of food
- ⇒ **NEA2 (35%) Food Preparation Assessment:** A 3 hour practical exam and supportive folder based around a set brief. This allows students to show off all their practical ability.
- ⇒ **Written Exam (50%):** A terminal exam which is marked out of 100 and is 1h 45min long.

For more information please see Mrs Ford, and feel free to use the QR codes which direct you to further information on the UVHS website





OCR Cambridge National— Health and Social Care

This new and exciting Level 2 Award in Health and Social Care is aimed at students who have an interest in developing the skills and learning the theory to prepare them for further study or employment in the health and social care sector. It is practical in nature with two coursework based units which are externally assessed by the exam board and one unit which is assessed by an exam.

Two of the units are mandatory and described below, there is flexibility on the other unit studied and it will be chosen to suit the nature of the students who choose the subject.

R032: Principles of care in health and social care

This is assessed by an exam. In this unit you will learn about the key topics that are important when caring for and protecting people in health and social care. Topics include:

- The rights of service users in health and social care settings
- Person-centred values of care
- Effective communication in health and social care
- Protecting service users and service providers in health and social care settings

R033: Supporting individuals through life events

This is assessed by a Set Assignment. In this unit you will learn about growth and development through the life stages. You will also learn how to understand the needs of individuals who have been affected by life events and how to recommend support to meet their needs. Topics include:

- Life stages
- Impacts of life events
- Sources of support

One of the following optional units will also be covered.

R034: Creative and therapeutic activities

R035: Health promotion campaigns

For more information please see Mrs Sewell



GCSE Drama—Exam Board

Pearson

The GCSE Drama course is designed for students who have an interest in Drama and the Theatre. Students must be confident performing in front of others, as well as be prepared to write a significant amount to meet the assessment requirements. There is also a requirement that all students attend at least one live theatre performance over the course - the school will run several theatre trips each year to fulfil this component. Of course, the more live theatre the students experience, the better. A passion and commitment to Drama and a willingness to rehearse outside of timetabled lesson time is crucial.

There are three sections to the course, all of which are connected:

1. **Devising (40%)**

This is coursework and is assessed internally. Students must create and develop a piece of drama from a stimulus chosen by the group and teacher.

Section A: a portfolio of written work (1500-2000 words) covering the creating and developing process of the piece of drama as well as an evaluation of the process after it has been performed. This is weighted at 45/60 marks. A practical performance to a live audience is also assessed and makes up the remaining 15 marks out of 60.

Section B: the performance of the devised piece

2. **Texts in Practice (20%)**

Students will perform or design two main extracts from a play chosen by the group and teacher. Students will need to submit a piece of writing explaining their creative intentions in realizing their role.

Externally assessed by a visiting examiner

Can include group, solo and/or partner based performances

3. **Understanding Drama (40%)**

Written examination (1 hour 45minutes). Students must study one of the eight plays set by the exam board and also see at least one live theatre production

- Section A: set text
- Section B: live theatre evaluation

The entire course is designed to reflect the theatrical/dramatic experiences of each student whatever their background in the subject, so that they can develop their own skills in both writing and performance. There is one level of entry.

There are many opportunities for students to get involved in theatrical performances throughout the course, including twice yearly theatre productions, the whole-school Musical Production and Trinity College Drama exams.

For more information please see Mr Vogler



GCSE Music—Exam Board AQA

The GCSE course is designed for students of all abilities. Students **must** have an interest in music and the ability to play an instrument or sing, as well as appreciate all styles from Classical through to the latest popular music. By the time they start the course, they must also have a basic understanding of reading and writing music. There are three sections to the course, all of which are connected:

1. Understanding Music (40%)

This is a 90 minute exam during which students are required to comment on a variety of musical styles and genres, from Baroque to modern day, under four set Areas of Study.

Section A: answering 8 questions on pieces of unfamiliar music. However, all the pieces are related to the four Areas of Study taught in Section B.

Section B: answering specific analytical questions on the 2 Set Pieces studied (chosen by school) from the four Areas of Study.

1. Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910
2. Popular Music
3. Traditional Music
4. Western Classical Tradition 1910-present day

2. Performing Music (30%)

Students are required to produce two performances in Year 11, one solo and one as part of a group, totalling between 4 and 7 minutes. All students **MUST** receive tuition on one instrument (either in school with one of our outstanding peripatetic teachers or, if you wish, with a teacher outside school; although if this is the case we can take no responsibility for progress and/or success) and must take part in at least one musical ensemble. If, by the end of the course, students can perform pieces of ABRSM/Trinity/RockSchool Grade 5 standard they can achieve full marks (due to a difficulty scale), but beginners in Year 10 can still achieve up to a 6 in this unit.

3. Composing Music (30%)

Students must submit two compositions totalling between 3 and 4½ minutes - one composition written to a brief, set by AQA in September of Year 11, and one free choice composition. These are recorded on either acoustic instruments or using computer technology. Traditionally, most (if not all) UVHS students achieve the top grades in this unit each year.

The entire course is designed to reflect the musical experience of each student whatever their background in the subject, so that they can develop their own style in both composition and performance. Historically, UVHS Music Department has not only consistently achieved the top grades in Cumbria for GCSE Music, but also achieved some of the best 9-8 (A*) and 9-4 (A*-C) grades in the country.

For more information please see Mr Butler



GCSE Dance—Exam Board AQA

GCSE Dance is split into three core areas, each of which aim to develop your knowledge, understanding and skills of Dance.

Performance

Students will be judged on their ability to demonstrate physical, technical and expressive skills through the four set phrases set by AQA. For the performance aspect of the course, pupils will learn two of the set phrases and perform them. The remaining two set phrases must be incorporated into a duet/trio performance choreographed by the teacher. This performance must have a choreographic intent with the set phrases developed throughout the piece.

The weighting for this section is 30%.

Choreography

With this section of the course, pupils have a chance to create a solo or group choreography in any style or dance fusion. The stimulus for this piece is sent by AQA and pupils then use this to create an interesting choreography that shows their chosen choreographic intent. Throughout Years 10 and 11 pupils will be given different choreographic tasks to encourage innovative choreography.

The weighting for this section is 30%.

Dance appreciation

This component is the written exam paper of one and a half hours, set in the summer of Year 11. The question paper is split into three sections:

Section A: Knowledge and understanding of the choreographic process and performance skills.

Section B: Critical appreciation of own work, relating to the choreography pupils have created and the performances they have done.

Section C: Critical appreciation of professional works relating to the dance anthology consisting of six works. Together the six works include:

- Different dance styles and fusions of style
- A selection of established and emerging choreographers
- Different numbers and combinations of dancers
- A variety of choreographic approaches
- Different choreographic structures
- A variety of types of performance environment
- A variety of aural settings
- Inclusive dance influenced by other cultures.

The weighting for this section is 40%.

For more information please see Mrs Latimer



OCR Cambridge National— Sport Studies

The Cambridge National Sports Studies course gives pupils the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge about different types of sport and physical activity, skills development and leadership in their own practical performance.

3 units need to be completed over the two years. Pupils have to take the two mandatory (M) units and one optional unit (O).

They equate to 200 raw marks overall.

Contemporary issues in sport (M) 80 marks

This unit is externally assessed. Pupils will sit a 1 hour 15 minute exam set and marked by OCR

- Understanding the issues which affect participation in sport.
- Know about the role of sport in promoting values.
- Understand the importance of hosting major sporting events.
- Understand the role of national governing bodies.
- Understand the role of technology in sport.

Performances and leadership in sports activities (M) 80 marks

This unit is externally assessed. UVHS will set assessed practical tasks which will be moderated by OCR.

- Demonstrate skills, techniques and strategies as an individual or team performer.
- Be able to lead a 30 minute sports session in a chosen sport.
- Apply practice methods to support improvement in a sporting activity.

One optional unit decided by the school:

The optional unit will be assessed internally and will be assignment/portfolio based.

Outdoor and Adventurous (O) 40 marks

- Research a range of OAA sports both regionally and nationally.
- Identify safety aspects including clothing needed for each.
- Be practically assessed in a Kayaking session on Coniston Water.
- Be able to evaluate their own performance in Kayaking.

For more information please see Mr Pierce

Sample Year 9 Options Form 2026

Student Name: Form:

Subjects		Choices	
A	Geography History Spanish German	Choose one subject from Box A	
B	Geography History Spanish German French Separate Science Computer Science ICT: Creative iMedia Business Religious Studies (BPE) Fine Art Design & Technology Food Preparation & Nutrition Health & Social Care Dance Drama Music Sport Studies	Choose three more subjects from Box B	
		Subject	Priority
			1
			2
			3
C	Reserve Choice We will always try our best to give you your first four choices, but please identify an additional subject as a reserve choice.	Reserve Subject	

Please complete the online Options Form by
Monday 2nd February 2026