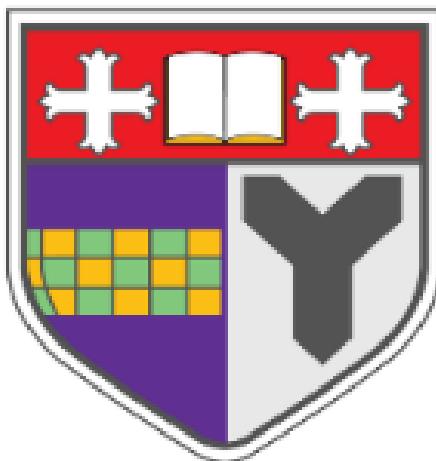


Broad General Education

S2 into S3 Personalisation and Choice

A Guide for Pupils, Parents and Carers



FIDELIS · JUSTUS · PRUDENS

St. Joseph's Academy

January 2026

Dear Pupil,

In the coming weeks, you will take part in a programme of events to help you make informed choices about your learning in S3.

Through this programme you will have an opportunity to reflect on the following:

- your own strengths and interests
- the importance of keeping an open mind about possible career choices
- how to find and use career resources at home

After considering the content we will share with you, we expect you to access the My World of Work website with your parent/carer. During January, every pupil in S2 will take part in an interview with a member of the Pastoral Care Team where your options will be finalised.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Buchanan
Acting Head Teacher

Broad General Education

During S1 and S2 you have had the opportunity to study subjects from across eight curricular areas.

Our S1 and S2 Curriculum

Language and Literacy	Numeracy
English	Maths
French and/or Spanish	
Social Studies (Integrated course)	Technologies
History	Business and IT
Geography	Computing Science
Modern Studies	Technical
Religious and Moral Education (RC Schools)	Expressive Arts
RERC	Art and Design
	Drama
	Music
Health and Wellbeing	Sciences (integrated course)
PE	Biology
PSE	Chemistry
	Physics

S3 – Part of the ‘Broad General Education’

Courses in S3 are still part of the Broad General Education. You will build on what you have learned in S1 and S2. You will usually be working at what is known as fourth level. Many pupils will have completed third level work by the end of S2.

S4 – Part of ‘The Senior Phase’

During the latter part of S3, you will undertake another personalisation and choice exercise, where you will select the seven subjects you wish to study in S4. It is important to consider the pathway you wish to follow in S4 when making your choices for S3.

National 3 or SCQF Level 3

This qualification continues at broadly the same level of content covered at third level in the Broad General Education. There are no final exams, and all of your work is marked in school. You will either pass or fail a National 3 course.

National 4 or SCQF Level 4

This qualification continues at broadly the same level of content covered at fourth level in the Broad General Education. There is no exam within a National 4 course. Your work is assessed in school, and you can either pass or fail.

If you pass a National 4 course in S4 then you may progress to the National 5 course in that subject during S5. In some cases, progression to National 5 in the same subject may not be the best course of action. Sometimes, supplementary National 4 qualifications or alternative SCQF5 qualifications may be better suited to your needs. Each case can be examined and discussed with pastoral care and principal teachers on a pupil-by-pupil basis.

National 5 or SCQF Level 5

National 5 courses cover content at a level beyond that in the Broad General Education. In nearly every subject you will sit an exam at the end of S4. The marks you gain in this exam will be added to coursework tasks to determine your final grade. The course is graded using the letters A, B, C, D and F.

How many subjects will I study in S3?

In total, you will study fourteen subjects in S3. Six of the fourteen are core subjects that you must study. The other eight are choices that you make from within curricular areas.

Core Subjects

All pupils must study:

- Maths (4 periods per week)
- English (4 periods per week)
- Modern Languages (3 periods per week or 4 if choosing two languages)
- PE (2 periods per week)
- RE (2 periods per week)
- PSE (1 period per week)

Modern Languages

Modern Languages is compulsory in S3. You will choose to study one of French, Spanish and German or two of French, Spanish and German.

You choose one of the following.

- French only
- Spanish only
- German only
- French and Spanish
- Spanish and German
- German and French

If you take two Modern Languages, you cannot elect to take a College Course in S3.

PE

All pupils study PE as a core subject in S3 and S4. However, some pupils will also wish to take PE as an elective subject at National 4 or National 5 level in

S4. Pupils who think they may consider taking National 4 or National 5 PE in S4 must select PE in the Arts and Wellbeing column.

Personalisation and Choice

Once you have selected your Modern Language(s), you will then choose to study two subjects from each of the columns shown below. You will attend each subject twice per week.

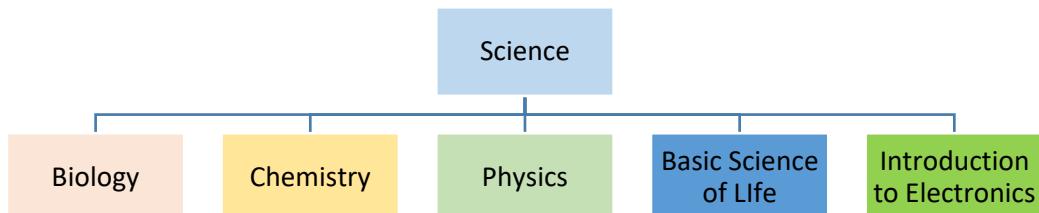
Social Studies	Science	Arts and Wellbeing	Technologies
Geography History Modern Studies Travel and Tourism	Basic Science of Life Biology Chemistry Introduction to Electronics Physics	Art and Design Drama Music PE (Team Sports) OR PE (Aesthetic)	Administration and IT Business and IT Computing Science Music Technology College/DYW For College/DYW, one of: Early Education (Childcare) Barista (Hospitality)
<i>Choose two of the subjects listed above</i>	<i>Choose two of the subjects listed above</i>	<i>Choose two of the subjects listed above</i>	<i>Choose two of the subjects listed above</i>

Are there any new subjects on offer in S3?

Yes, because some of the subjects that you study in S1 and S2 are split into several, more specialist, subjects in S3.

Science

In S1 and S2 you study Science as one integrated subject. In S3 you can study two of the three traditional Sciences or one traditional Science with Health Sector. In total you must select two of the five subjects shown below.



Science Combinations

It is not possible to select three Science subjects at the end of S2. Only one very specific University course states the need for three Sciences as an entry requirement. The overwhelming majority of courses seeking a Science qualification from school leavers will state Chemistry as a necessary Science.

Pupils wishing to study Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Studies or Optometry at University should select Biology and Chemistry. Pupils wishing to study courses related specifically to Physics or Engineering Science are advised to study Chemistry and Physics in S3.

There are too many specific courses to provide an absolute overview in this booklet. If you would like more specific advice, then please speak to your Science teacher or Miss Faulds, our careers adviser. While you are only able to study two Sciences in S3-S5, it is possible to leave school with a wide range of Science qualifications, including all three Higher Sciences. For example:

N5 Chemistry (S4)
N5 Physics (S4)
Higher Chemistry (S5)
Higher Physics (S5)
Higher Biology (S6 crash, dependent upon appropriate attainment in the other Sciences)
Advanced Higher Chemistry and/or Advanced Higher Physics (S6)

Basic Science of Life (S3) leading to Health Sector (S4)

This course is a 1-year course which offers candidates the chance to secure a N3 Biology qualification. Pupils will study 3 topics: Cell Biology, Multicellular Organisms and Life on Earth. Pupils can choose to study this subject alongside Biology to support them further, or alongside Chemistry or Physics if they wish. This subject would be ideal for candidates who would like extra help with their learning in Biology or who have an interest in learning about the basic science of living things. Candidates will learn about how our body defends us against disease, the role of vaccines, how embryo development can be affected and many more interesting topics! Upon completion of this course, pupils can

choose to study Health Sector at N4 level if they wish to continue studying a science subject in S4.

Health Sector (S4)

Pupils taking Basic Science of Life in S3 can progress to Health Sector in S4.

Health Sector is not directly covered in S1 or S2. The course introduces pupils to the Health Sector. Candidates will investigate the different types of services provided and the roles and responsibilities of those working in a type of health provision. They will also investigate career opportunities in the Health Sector.

Pupils considering a career as a carer, dental nurse, early learning and childcare worker, midwife or nurse may find this course beneficial alongside Biology. Central to the course is developing the employability skills valued by employers in general and necessary for effective work in the health sector. These skills are embedded in the different units providing learners with the opportunity to practise and develop these skills throughout the course.

Introduction to Electronics

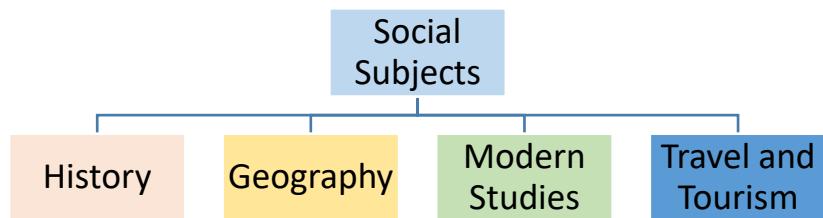
With electrical engineering an area of focus in terms of foundation and modern apprenticeships, this S3 course provides pupils with the opportunity to learn more about the fundamentals of electronics. There is some crossover with elements of prior learning in Physics, as well as new content. Depending upon uptake, we aim to consider introducing a pathway in S4 and/or using this course in preparation for taking on a similar College qualification in the Senior Phase.

Science across the Curriculum

It is also important for pupils and parents to consider that subjects in other areas of the curriculum can help develop scientific thinking without the need to study three or four Sciences at this early stage of education. Maths, Graphic Communication, Geography and Computing Science provide opportunities to develop scientific awareness and problem-solving ability without narrowing choices too early.

Social Subjects

In S1 and S2, you study Social Subjects as one integrated subject. In S3, you must choose to study two of the following four subjects.

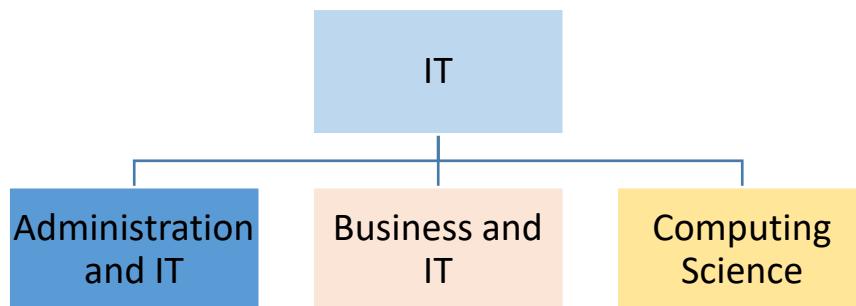


Technical

We are offering Graphic Communication or Practical Woodworking in S3, however our staffing is temporary. We are hopeful we can maintain staffing in Technical however, if not, this will not be offered and pupils selecting might have to choose another subject. This will be confirmed by June 2026.

IT

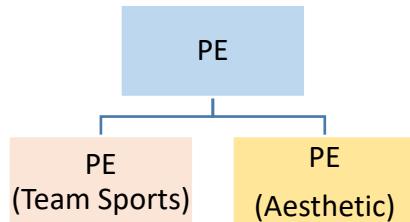
In S1 and S2 you study IT as one integrated subject. In S3 you can choose to study no IT strands, one IT strand or two IT strands. There are three subjects within the 'IT' umbrella.



More information in relation to the content of the above courses can be found at the end of this booklet in the subject guidance section.

PE

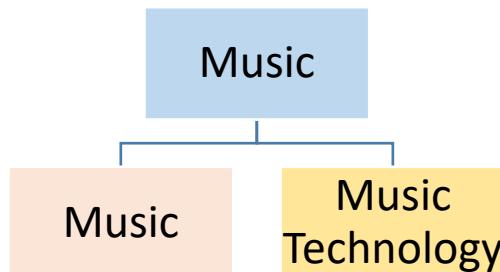
All pupils are obliged to take core PE. In S3, you can elect to study an additional two periods of PE (Team Sports) or PE (Aesthetic).



PE Team Sports focuses on activities such as football, basketball, volleyball and handball. PE Aesthetics focuses on Dance and Gymnastics. If you elect PE (Team Sports) in S3, your SQA assessment of PE (should you select PE in S4) will focus on Team Sports. If you elect PE (Aesthetics) in S3, your SQA Assessment of PE (should you select PE in S4) will focus on Dance or Gymnastics.

Music

Music in the traditional sense is available to select from within the Arts and Wellbeing column. In addition, you can elect to take Music Technology from within the Technology column.



Application of Maths

N5 Application of Maths will not appear on the options form but will be offered as a potential additional subject to some pupils depending on their level. Mr Johnston will speak to pupils about this in June. There is a guide which provides more detail on the content of this course within this booklet. Later, in S4 it is also possible to take N5 Application of Maths.

Flexible Period

One period per week is set aside as a 'flexible period'. This period allows us to offer some combinations that would otherwise be impossible. In the case of those wishing to study two languages in S3, we utilise the additional flexible period to take your contact time in Modern Languages to four periods per week. We would then split the four periods evenly between your two languages (two of French, German and Spanish). Those young people wishing to utilise the flexible period to take two languages are locked into this decision for the entire academic year and cannot access any of the other provision within the flexible column.

The nature of timetabling means that options in this column cannot be released to pupils and parents/cafes until late April 2026. The list below is not a guarantee, nor is it exhaustive, but it does offer an insight into how this period could be used.

- College provision (mandatory for those taking a College course and explained overleaf)
- Second language (mandatory if taking two Modern Languages)
- Additional Numeracy for targeted pupils
- Additional Literacy for targeted pupils

Other than in the cases of College provision and Modern Languages, we will only be able to confirm the offering in this column once we have processed all options and drafted the school timetable for every year group.

College Partnerships and Flexible Curriculum

Within our curricular model in S3, we also offer some young people the chance to work with Ayrshire College. The courses on offer are delivered via a mixture of direct teaching from our staff, input from College staff and practical activity.

Some young people would benefit from taking on a college course in S3 with a view to continuing with College input in S4. At the time of writing, courses on offer next session are (subject to change):

- Early Education (Childcare)
- Hospitality/Barista

College courses require three periods per week, so two will be taken from the technologies column and one from the flexible period column.

If electing to take a College course, you select only one other Technology.

Is there any advice that I should follow when choosing my subjects?

Yes, this is an important time of your school life, and you should speak to your teachers, family and our careers adviser about your thoughts and ideas. In general, it is important to consider the following when making your choices:

Your skills, talents and interests

You should think carefully about your own God given skills and talents. Some of us are very creative, others very sporty, some enjoy problem solving, others reflective writing or number processing. Think about what you are naturally good at. It is also important to think about subjects that capture your attention or interest out with school.

Your family

Your family know you best and always have your best interests at heart. The advice that you receive from your family plays an important role in the subject choices that you make. Take time to talk to your family about your choices. Ask those at home to help you decide if you are not sure. Your family will also have an idea of your progress based upon your homework and school reports. Often the advice that your family can provide is crucial at this time of your life.

There are some great resources available to families as they help their child make his or her subject choices.

My World of Work

[Making option choices | My World of Work](#)

My World of Work is a Skills Development Scotland service that provides a unique mix of resources, features and job information to help people discover more about themselves and the future world of work.

Parentzone

[Parentzone Scotland | Education Scotland](#)

This website has been designed by Education Scotland to support parents and carers as they strive to understand the new curriculum and qualifications.

Your friends

Friends are important people in your lives, and you will often share similar interests. However, it is important to remember that your friends may have skills and talents that are different to yours. We always advise you to make choices that provide you with the opportunity to study subjects that you enjoy.

Sometimes this means that you won't choose to take the same subjects as your friends. Even if you pick the same subject as your friend, there is no guarantee that you would end up in the same class. Be careful that you don't pick a subject just because your friend has taken a subject. You could end up studying a course that doesn't make best use of your talents and skills.

Your teachers

All of your teachers are highly professional and strive to offer you a first-class education. Naturally, you may have teachers that you get on with very well and who bring subject content to life and inspire you. In a similar way to the influence of your friends, this is an important part of school life. However, you do not know if your teacher will be able to take your class in S3. The relationship that you have with your teacher is very important, but it should not be the only factor that you consider when taking a subject on.

Your class teachers should, from time to time, share with you your current working level within the BGE. Progression is not always linear, and it is not unusual to be working at different levels across each curricular area or subject.

BGE levels (notionally) operate as follows:

Early Level	Pre-School and P1
First Level	P2 – P4
Second Level	P5 – P7
Third Level	S1 and part of S2
Fourth Level	part of S2 and S3

It can be the case that a young person is working at First or Second Level when of Secondary School age. A young person may progress through the levels in one curricular area at a faster rate than in another.

Your future

Some pupils will have a clear idea about what they want to do when they leave school. Other pupils will not yet have thought about the future or have not decided on a pathway. If you have a clear idea about what you would like to do, then talk to your Pastoral Care teacher or our Careers Advisor about what you need to take on in S3. If you are undecided, then don't worry. Think about your skills and talents and make choices that will bring out the best in you.

Will I definitely get to study my first-choice subjects?

We always aim to ensure that all pupils get to study their first-choice subjects in each column.

In general, we work to guarantee your first choice in each column. If a course is oversubscribed, we may need to look at your second-choice subject in each column. If we need to look at your second choice, we will ask you to complete the process a second time and we will talk to your parents and carers about the choices that are available to you. In our experience, only a very small number of pupils are impacted by over-subscription in second choice subjects, and our return of both choices is around 98% in the past three sessions.

Progression to S4, S5 and S6

Remember that the choices you make now will have an influence on what you can study in S4, S5 and S6. You cannot take a subject in S4 that you did not study in S3. This is because the S4 curriculum builds upon the skills and knowledge developed in S3.

Consider the future

When you are making your choices, remember that you will not be able to take a subject in S4 if you have not studied it in S3. Progression pathways are shown below.

S4	S5	S6
National 3/SCQF3 →	National 4/SCQF4 →	National 5/SCQF5
National 4/SCQF4 →	National 5/SCQF5 →	Higher/SCQF6
National 5/SCQF5 →	Higher/SCQF6 →	Additional Highers or Advanced Higher (SCQF7)

Sometimes pupils do not progress from one level to the next. This table is illustrative of the desired progression route for pupils. Each pupil is different and sometimes progression takes the form of adding supplementary qualifications at the same level of study but in a different subject area (there are some specific alternative courses not on offer in S3 that can be taken 'cold' in S4).

Labour Market Intelligence and Regional Skills Assessments

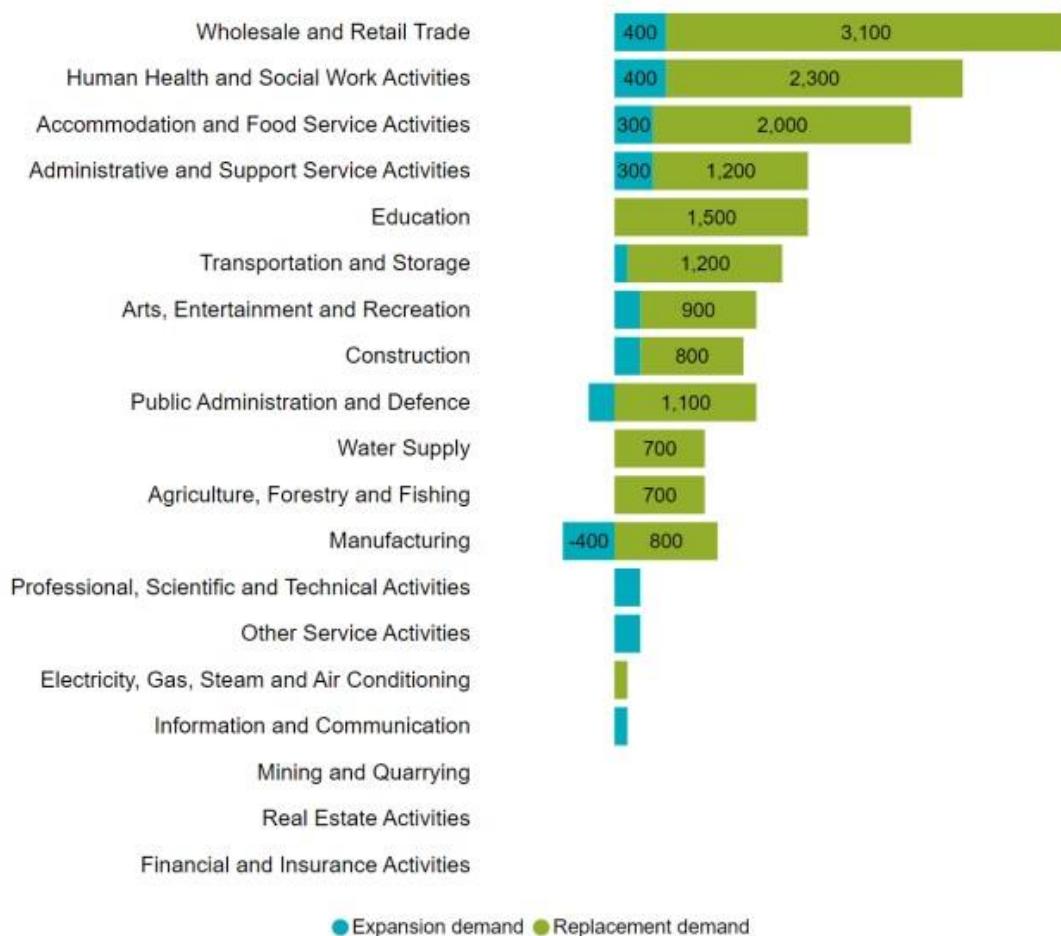
Skills Development Scotland release data every year which identifies trends in the 'labour market'. This means that they look at employment opportunities in a geographical area and provide advice about where there may be opportunities for work.

This intelligence is a critical part of the decision-making process when you begin to think about your future. Take time to sit with your parents or carers to look at this information. Parents/Carers may find the Ayrshire Regional Skills Assessment of particular interest. It can be found via the link shown below.

[Regional Skills Assessment – Ayrshire \(October 2024\)](#)

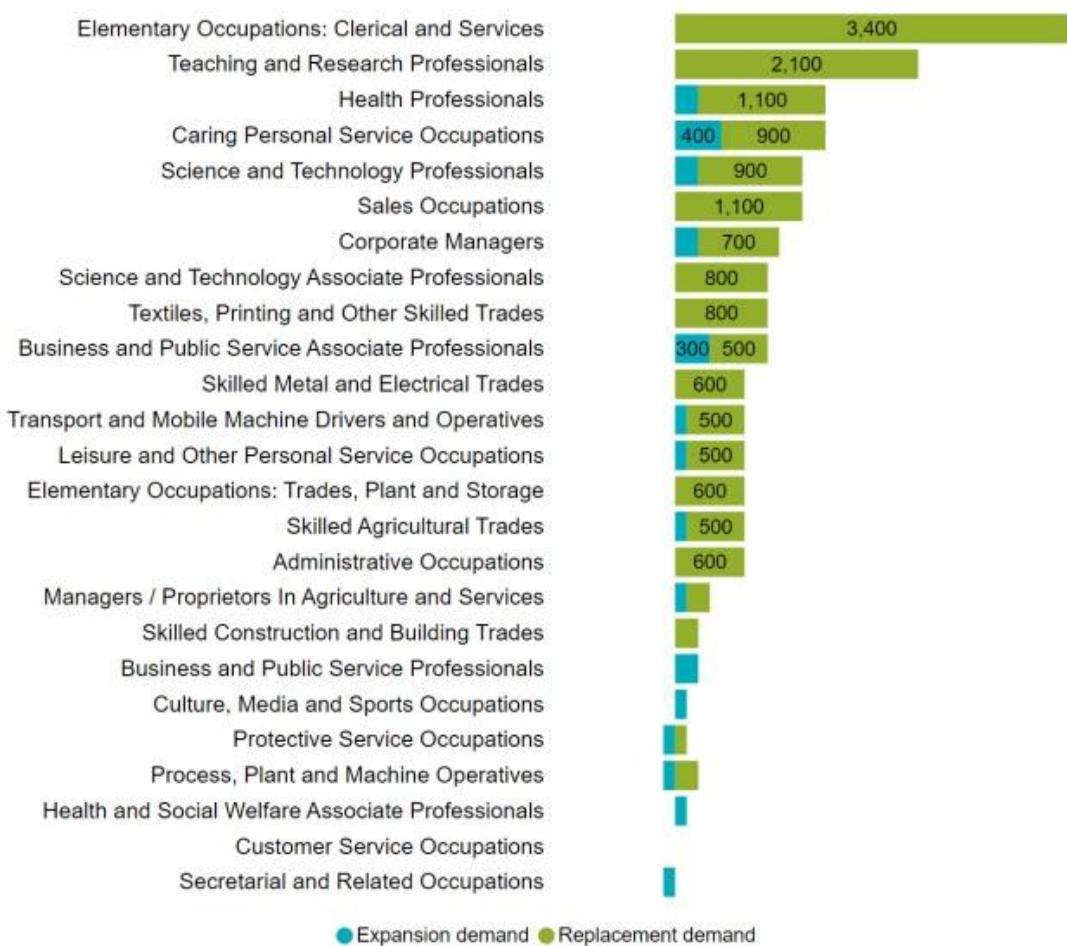
The graph shown below highlights the fact that in Ayrshire, the Scottish Government predict that employment opportunities up to 2027 will grow in industries such as Wholesale and Retail, Human Health and Social Work, Accommodation and Food Service and Administrative and Support Services.

Forecast Total Requirement by Industry (2024-2027), Ayrshire



The data above focuses on industry level trends. In terms of specific occupations, the anticipated trend to 2027 is shown below. By occupation, Health, Clerical and Services (including hospitality services), Teaching/Research and Care sector employment are occupations where the greatest number of employees will be required.

Forecast Total Requirement by Occupation (2024-2027), Ayrshire



Who will help me?

- Subject teachers will clarify the different learning pathways and course choices that are open to you in each department
- The PSE Programme will include a visit from the Careers Advisor, Kate Faulds who will talk to you about the planning for the future
- A member of the Pastoral Care Teams will carry out personalisation and choice interviews to talk to you about the decisions that you have made

S2 into S3 Personalisation and Choice Form – Completed during one-to-one interview

Pupil Name:

Career Aspiration:



Modern Languages	Social Subjects	Science	Arts and Wellbeing	Technologies	Flexible Period
<i>(Circle one language or one combination)</i>	<i>(Circle two)</i>	<i>(Circle two)</i>	<i>(Circle two)</i>	<i>(Circle either two school courses, or one school course plus one college course)</i>	<i>(Select one)</i>
French	Geography	Basic Science of Life	Art and Design	School Courses	Two languages
OR	History	Biology	Drama	Administration, Business and IT	
Spanish	Modern Studies	Chemistry	Music	Computing Science	College/DYW
OR	Travel and Tourism	Introduction to Electronics	PE Games Performance Pathway (Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Handball, Badminton, Tennis)	Music Technology	Other
German		Physics	OR	Practical Woodwork (subject to staffing)	
OR			PE Movement	Graphic Communication (subject to staffing)	
Both French and Spanish			Performance Pathway (Gymnastics, Dance, Cheer and Netball)	College/DYW Programme	If you selected two Modern Languages in the first column, you would study two languages all year and cannot take any option from this column.
OR				Early Education (Childcare)	
Both Spanish and German				Barista/Hospitality	Other choices will be confirmed later in the session but are likely to be:
OR			(You can only choose one PE option in this column)	Select either two School Courses, or one School Course and one College/DYW Course	Numeracy Literacy
Both German and French					

Pupil Signature:

Parent/Carer Signature:

Pastoral Signature: