



**Hillhead High School**  
Oakfield Avenue  
Glasgow G12 8LJ  
Phone 0141 582 0100

**Head Teacher**  
K McAlaney

## Sixth Year Options Choice 'FAQs' and Additional Information

**\*Please read ahead of final online options selection\***

### Construction of our S6 options structure and 'Scoping Exercise' (online survey undertaken in March):

Ahead of moving to the 2019 session we changed the way we devise our S6 options menu. Prior to this, the range of options available, and placement in columns was more static, with minor iterative changes each year. We identified the total range of options, and the variety of combinations available as a key school improvement priority. In order to improve levels of pupil choice satisfaction, and make timetabling decisions fair and equitable we moved to a scoping exercise system. Now all prospective S6 pupils are invited to participate in the scoping exercise in March.

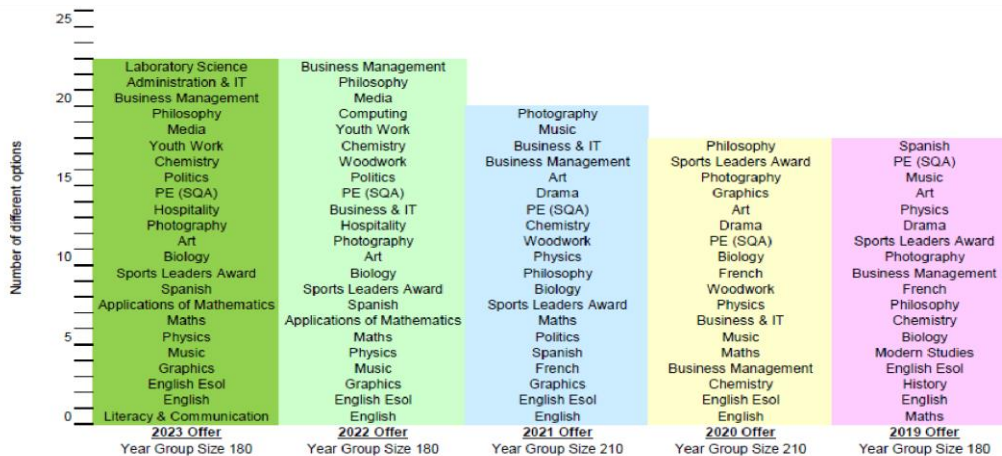
The Scoping Exercise asks pupils in S5 to list their preferred subjects for S6 by order of priority. Pupils were asked to identify four preferred subjects along with a set of 'reserve' subjects. The reserve subjects are ones that they would be prepared to do if any of their four preferred subjects were unavailable. We use the data returned through the scoping exercise to inform decisions in two key areas:

- The level of demand for individual subjects – allowing us to determine how to deploy our staffing resources equitably and offer course that are both desirable, and of benefit to pupils.
- The different combinations of subjects desired by pupils – allowing us to determine which subjects go in each column so that we maximise levels of satisfaction.

Since 2019 we have continuously increased both the range of subjects, and the different presentation levels available for prospective S6 pupils. The changes year on year reflect two core principles:

- Our recognition that each year group has a different profile to that before it – our curricular offer needs to complement our learners needs/wants.
- Through the cycle of continuous improvement, the school leadership team has identified both successes and area of improvement – we wish our curricular offer to include opportunities for all to succeed.

The graphic below shows how we have expanded and adapted our course choice menu to prospective S6 pupils since 2019:



*Q: A subject I wished to do and had selected in the Scoping Exercise is not available on the final form. Why is this?*

*A: Where indicated demand for subjects is low, and particularly where there have been low numbers of pupils identifying the subject as a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> choice decisions have to be taken, sometimes, to remove a subject from the final options structure. This year, only one subject (French Advanced Higher) has been unable to be offered following inclusion in the Scoping Exercise. This is due to extremely low numbers identifying (<5 pupils selecting as options 1 to 4 or reserve in any) these as preferred choices in the Scoping Exercise.*

*Q: A subject I want do is not available. I can also see that this subject has been offered in previous years. Why is this?*

*A: As above, we sometimes discontinue courses due to declining demand. As well as lack of demand, there can be other factors that lead the school to decide to no longer offer a particular course. One reason may be that there are staffing shortages. Another reason for discontinuing a course is the level of success we have had in delivering it. As well as the level of demand at the beginning of a course, we pay close attention to the success rate for learners at the end. Where a course leads to fewer students passing or gaining a qualification we see it as essential to respond appropriately. Sometimes this has meant the discontinuation of one course and the staff moving to deliver an alternative. More positively, some less commonly chosen courses are increasingly being made available through both regional and national E-Learning platforms (for example, ESgoil).*

*Q: All of the subjects I want to do are on the options choice menu. However, two subjects that I wish to do are in the same column. Can I ask that a subject moved to a different column?*

*A: No. We have to develop a course choice menu that allows the fairest opportunity for all to access the subjects they wish to take, while deploying our staffing resources in a sustainable and equitable way. The placement of each and every subject in the options menu, relative to the others is done considering the choices made by the majority through the scoping exercise. Each subject is placed in the menu structure in a way designed to maximise access. If any single pupil requested and had a subject moved from one column to another, that individual may as a result be satisfied, however many more would, as a result not be able to access their desired combination of options.*

*Q: If I cannot ask for a subject to be moved, or taught at a different time to suit me, what can I do if subjects I wish to do 'clash'?*

*A: This is why we have, through the Scoping Exercise, asked prospective S6 to identify 'backup' choices. Selecting an alternative option and 'broadening' a pupil's curriculum is a common and healthy part of S6 life. Other options may be available if there are special considerations – if for example you 'need' a subject for university acceptance or if you wish to resit something you did not pass the year before. In certain circumstances we will be able to allow you to access learning in some S5 classes – useful if you need or wish to repeat or resit a subject you did last year.*

## **Making final choices, meeting deadlines, scoping exercise participation and changes of plan:**

*Q: If I confirm my options fastest or first does this mean I am in a class first and will be prioritised if the class runs out of spaces?*

*A: No, This is not a race. We have worked to design the columns so that there is adequate capacity in each subject/class taking account of the scoping exercise responses.*

*Q: What happens if an option in a column is oversubscribed (full)? Do some people not get a space and how is that decided?*

*A: Through getting pupils to participate in the Scoping Exercise the school has created what is viewed as a reasonable estimation of what pupils will likely choose at the point of making final selections. If a class/ subject becomes oversubscribed the school will of course look to timetable in an alternative way to meet learners needs. However, if this is not possible, and there are not enough places to meet the demand through final choices, preference would be given to pupils considering: 1) whether they had identified it as one of their choices in the Scoping Exercise 2) whether they had participated in the Scoping Exercise, and or met the deadline for the final selection form. In recent years the Scoping Exercise system has meant that there has been adequate space in all classes.*

*Q: If you confirm the options what happens next?*

*A: For a while – nothing. You should enjoy the rest of your S6 induction programme and let us setup your timetable ahead of you beginning your courses in August. We will contact you if there is any problem (for example, you select a course that does not go ahead through unforeseen circumstances).*

*Q: What happens if I forget to make an entry in the 'Next Steps' Options Choice Form or miss the deadline?*

*A: Teachers set assignments with deadlines all the time so you should be used to them in school. This deadline is among the most important you will face at any time in school. If you fail to make a return you will not be listed in any classes in August. Before the school term starts in August, we will (during the holidays) invite in any new S6 pupils for options consultations. If you leave it until then, you risk popular subjects/classes being oversubscribed.*



**Hillhead High School**  
Oakfield Avenue  
Glasgow G12 8LJ  
Phone 0141 582 0100

**Head Teacher**  
K McAlaney

*Q: What happens if I select options now, and because of the results gained in August I need to change things?*

*A: You are completely entitled to change your mind – plans change and we will do our best to accommodate this. It may be that you are hoping to pass Higher and move on to study Advanced Higher but you end up with a result that means you wish to resit the subject again in S6. We would hope to be able to support this. If your results mean that your plan changes, or that you simply change your mind on one of your subject choices through the summer, please attend the options consultation session that we will schedule in August, before we begin the new school term. The staff work hard to ensure that all of you are placed in suitable subjects, so will be there (during their holiday) to consult with you should you wish. More details on this event will be communicated during the holidays through Microsoft Teams.*



KINDNESS



AMBITION



INTEGRITY



RESILIENCE



RESPECT