

Wootton Academy Trust

WOOTTON UPPER

AND ARTS COLLEGE

SCHOOL



Key Stage 4 Options

Information for Year 9 pupils and parents/carers



March 2020

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The information in this booklet was correct at the time of publication 10th March 2020



Making curriculum choices in Year 9 is a very important part of your time in school; it is an opportunity for you to take control of your education and shape the way you want your future to be. The options you choose for Years 10 and 11 will affect how you spend your time at school for the next two years. Your choices may also influence what course or training you are able to do after Year 11.

It is important to choose subjects that will interest and motivate you. Spend some time thinking about what you enjoy doing, what keeps you interested in something and what makes you work hard. Remember that you are not alone in making these decisions; everyone in Year 9 is going through the same process. Teachers, friends, parents, carers and family will be able to guide, advise and support you in this important decision-making process.

All pupils continue in education or training until the age of 18. This means that you will remain at school, go to college, or be working in employment, **with appropriate training**, until July 2024. After that, many pupils will continue to study for degrees or higher/degree level apprenticeships at university or in college.

You need to look further ahead than GCSE in your planning. Many of you will be aspiring to go to university or planning to complete a degree apprenticeship; therefore, you need to be aware of which subjects you might be expected to have studied at GCSE and at A Level. Some universities may prefer pupils to have a Modern Foreign Language and either Geography or History at GCSE. A website 'Informed Choices' brings together guidance from admissions teams at Russell Group universities to give pupils clear information about the subjects they should consider if they are hoping to progress to a competitive university. A link to this website is available on the school website and on page 11 of this booklet. You can view degree apprenticeship vacancies on the national '*find an apprenticeship*' website in order to research any subject specific requirements for opportunities at this level. You can also search for degree courses and apprenticeships on **Unifrog** using your personal log in. This will show entry requirements including required subjects.

Please read the subject information leaflets available on the school's website (www.woottonupper.co.uk > **Curriculum > Year 10 Courses**) and also look at other information from other sources.

On **Wednesday 18th March** there is an opportunity for your parents/carers and you to meet with your teachers to get their guidance on how well you are performing in that subject and whether or not they believe it is a good idea for you to continue with that subject next year.

Pupils will make their option choices via an online system where we will ask you to make your final choices. The system will be open from Wednesday 11th March with the deadline for choices to be made by **Wednesday 25th March**. Details of how to access the system are given on Page 15.

Find out as much as you can from your subject teachers and form tutor to help you to make informed decisions.

Curriculum Reform

Most courses at Key Stage 4 are GCSEs; new GCSE courses have been introduced over the last four years:

GCSEs with 9 - 1 Grading

A grading scale of 9 to 1 is used with 9 being the top grade (higher than A*) allowing for greater differentiation between pupils at the higher grades and also to help distinguish the new GCSE from legacy versions which were graded from A* to G. Full details can be found in the web link below but the key points are in the diagram below:

<https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2018/03/02/gcse-9-to-1-grades-a-brief-guide-for-parents/>

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	A*
8	
7	
6	B
5	
4	
3	C
2	
1	
U	D
	E
	F
	G
	U

Grade 9 is only awarded to 2% of candidates nationally.

- Grades 7-9 are equivalent to A and A*
- Grades 4-6 are equivalent to C and B
- Grades 1-3 are the equivalent of the current GCSE grades G – D

Assessment is mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where needed to test essential subject skills, for example, in Drama there is a performance assessment.

Greater content

Current GCSE courses have more content than was the case in the past. Also, there is an increased expectation that young people remember content and can apply it to a wide range of question types and sometimes surprising contexts in exams.

Two-year courses with assessment at the end of the course

GCSE are intended for study over two years and are no longer divided into different modules. Pupils must take all their exams in one period at the end of their course.

GENERAL INFORMATION



What is compulsory for all pupils in Years 10 and 11?

Pupils continue to study the following:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- PE (Core)
- Philosophy, Religion & Ethics (Core)
- PSHE (including Careers)

In English, pupils will complete two separate courses: GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature. The assessment is examination based and will be completed at the end of Year 11.

All pupils will study GCSE Mathematics with the examination at the end of Year 11.

In Science, most pupils will study 'Combined Science: Trilogy' (double award) – this course includes elements of the three separate GCSE courses (Biology, Chemistry and Physics). Pupils may opt, instead, for Separate Science which will lead to GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This will require them to select **Separate Science** as one of their option subjects, as more time is needed to complete the three GCSEs than is available in the compulsory lessons. If you wish to take **Separate Science**, your MEG (Minimum Expected Grade) should be at least a **grade 6**

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic) education - which we call 'Guidance' - remains obligatory for all pupils. PSHE includes sessions on Careers Education and some additional Citizenship topics.

All pupils will continue to follow PE/Sport and Philosophy, Religion & Ethics. However, pupils have a choice which one of these they wish to follow as an examination course.

If pupils wish to follow the GCSE full course in Philosophy, Religion & Ethics which embraces the themes of Citizenship then they will also follow two lessons of core PE per timetable cycle.

If they would rather follow a BTEC Sport course then they will also follow two lessons of core Philosophy, Religion & Ethics per timetable cycle.

How long do I spend on each subject?

The proposed number of lessons per fortnight for each subject in Year 10 and 11 are:

Subject	Number of lessons
English	8
Mathematics	8
Science	8
PE / Sport	2 (or 4)
Philosophy, Religion & Ethics	2 (or 4)
Option A	5
Option B	5
Option C	5
Option D	5
Total:	50

Please note:

Whilst we encourage pupils to choose the subjects that suit them we will look at all pupil choices and if we feel that their choices are not appropriate then we will speak to the pupil and direct them to subjects that are more suited if necessary.

What would you recommend to a pupil who does not know what subjects to study?

Firstly, do not worry – you will be in the majority as most pupils do not have a clear idea at the age of 14 what it is they want to do!

We would recommend that pupils take a **broad range of subjects**, including a:

- Humanities subject (Pupils will choose at least one of History or Geography)
- Modern Language subject – if you enjoy and are good at languages.
- Creative or Technology subject

However, we recognise that some pupils may prefer to opt for a more vocational curriculum, choosing a vocational course alongside one or two other subjects.

What is the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)?

The Ebacc is not a new qualification in itself. It is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers and therefore is a national measure of the number of pupils who follow a broad and balanced curriculum.

The EBacc is made up of the subjects which are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors and consists of English language and literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history and a language.

Our aim is such that each pupil can follow a personalised learning plan which is both broad and balanced both in terms of the range of subjects they study and also with regards to the type of qualification and the learning style involved.

The EBacc is one measure of pupils following a broad and balanced curriculum. However, we believe that the arts, design and technology and other subjects are also just as important in achieving this balance.

How many subjects can I choose?

You should choose four main options as subjects to study during Years 10 and 11.

How much time do I spend on my option subjects?

Option subjects are allocated 5 lessons per fortnight.

What are BTECs and Cambridge National courses?

BTECs are vocationally related qualifications, where learners develop knowledge and understanding by applying their learning and skills in a work-related context. They engage young learners in taking responsibility for their own learning and develop essential work-related skills, such as working to deadlines and presenting information effectively.

BTECs are mainly assessed through project/coursework which is marked and moderated internally, before being sent off for external moderation. **All BTEC courses have at least one examined unit which it is necessary to pass to achieve the qualification.**

A BTEC First/Tech Award is equivalent to one GCSE.

Cambridge Nationals are more practical in nature and provide pupils with knowledge and highly sought-after skills to prepare them for further study, apprenticeships and the workplace. They contain at 50% external assessment.

BTEC and Cambridge National qualifications may suit pupils who are organised, driven and like working independently. They may suit pupils who prefer coursework to exams.



Which subjects can I choose as an Option?

- Art (GCSE)
 - Business (GCSE)
 - Child Development (Cambridge National)
 - Computer Science (GCSE)
 - Creative Media (BTEC)
 - Dance (GCSE)
 - Design and Technology (GCSE)
 - Digital Information Technology (BTEC)
 - Drama (GCSE)
 - Food Preparation and Nutrition (GCSE)
 - French (GCSE)
 - Geography (GCSE)
 - Graphics (GCSE)
 - History (GCSE)
 - Music (GCSE)
 - Separate Science - Biology, Chemistry and Physics (GCSE)
 - Spanish (GCSE) - (*You must have followed this in Year 9*)
 - Textile Design (GCSE)
- These are in addition to the additional choice of Philosophy, Religion & Ethics (GCSE) **OR** Sport (BTEC)

ONE of your choices MUST include Geography or History.

To select **Separate Science** or **Computer Science**, your MEG (Minimum Expected Grade) should be at least a **grade 6**.

Details of all the subjects on offer are available on the Wootton Upper School website:

www.woottonupper.co.uk > Curriculum > Year 10 Courses.

Please note:

We try very hard to accommodate every pupils' option choices; however, we may not be able to operate all the subjects contained in the lists if there is insufficient 'demand' made by pupils or where subjects have a limited number of spaces. In this case then a reserve option may need to be followed or pupils will be informed if any other options need to be considered.

Business – we are currently attempting to recruit another Business teacher but if we are unable to then we may need to restrict the number of groups we can offer and consider reserve choices.

OPTIONS BLOCKS



- 1.** You will be asked to select which of the following you would prefer to follow as a GCSE/BTEC qualification

GCSE Philosophy, Religion and Ethics	
BTEC Sport	

- 2.** You will then be asked to choose **one option from each of the following columns.**

When choosing these using the online system – you can select these in a priority order so that we can see which is your most preferred subject.

Option A	
History *	
Computer Science *	
French *	
Spanish *	
Art	
Design & Technology	
Graphics	
Child Development #	
Creative Media (BTEC) #	
IT (BTEC) #	
Music	

Option B	
Geography *	
History *	
Computer Science *	
French *	
Art	
Design & Technology	
Graphics	
Textile Design	
Business	
Creative Media (BTEC) #	
Dance	

Option C	
Geography *	
History *	
Separate Science *	
Drama	
Food	
IT (BTEC) #	

Option D	
Geography *	
History *	
Separate Science *	
Business	
Child Development #	
Drama	

* EBACC subjects # non-GCSE subjects

ONE of your choices MUST include Geography or History.

To select **Separate Science** or **Computer Science**, your MEG (Minimum Expected Grade) should be at least a **grade 6**

You may **only** choose **1** of the following subjects – Art, Design & Technology, Graphics or Textile Design. You can **only** choose a maximum of **2** subjects labelled with #.

- 3.** You will also need to select a **Reserve choice in each column** – again when completing this via the online system the order you choose these will show your order of priority (i.e. The first one you click will be your preferred reserve choice).

Reserves:

Priority	Subject	Option Block
1		
2		
3		
4		

The 'reserve' subjects will only be used if it is not possible to accommodate all your main choices.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PERSONALISED TIMETABLE



Choosing your GCSEs are difficult. There are very few people who are sure about exactly what they want to take, likewise very few people know what career they wish to pursue. However, even at this stage, it is wise to consider the future, starting with your A Levels.

Deciding what is best for you depends on what subjects you enjoy studying. If you are unsure what subjects to choose, remember that balance and breadth are important. It is also wise to speak to your subject teachers; they will be able to provide you with an insight into the course and help you decide whether that subject is right for you.

Very often pupils are sure about some subjects, but still have to make a difficult decision between one or two others: Should I take separate sciences? Should I continue with both Modern Languages? Do I choose Geography or History or both?

You should find that most careers and companies do not mind which GCSEs you take, but are more interested in the grades you achieve. The compulsory subjects of Maths and English and sometimes a foreign language are required by universities and employers.

Taking subjects you enjoy will make sure you get the best grades, as you will be enthusiastic about them.

Take some time to think carefully about your choices before you decide.

Talk to your parents, discuss with your Form Tutor or ask your subject teachers for help. Find out about the subjects on offer.

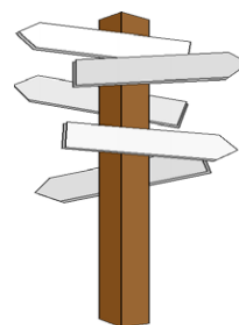
Ask yourself the following important questions:

- **Do I enjoy the subject?**
You are more likely to do well at subjects you really enjoy and at which you are more successful.
- **Do I intend to choose particular subjects because I like my present teachers?**
You may not have the same teacher next year, so this is not a sound reason for your choice.
- **Do I wish to do the same subjects as my friends so that I will be in a group with them next year?**
Again, because of the timetable and the numbers of groups, you may find you are no longer with current friends even if you have made the same choices.
- **Will my choices help me in the future, even if I do not know what I want to do?**
Our Careers Adviser and Head of Careers are available for drop in sessions for any pupils who wish to discuss their options and how these relate to future career ideas. Details of these sessions are advertised in the weekly tutor PowerPoint. Our Careers Adviser will also be available for drop in on parents evening on Wednesday 18th March. The choices offered in Year 10 are a suitable basis for a very wide range of careers.
- **Can I change my mind after I have filled in my form?**
Your parents may write to or email Mr. Freemantle (gfreemantle@wootton.beds.sch.uk) to request a change of course. However, once the timetable has been written and decisions made about the number of classes there will be in each subject, it is very unlikely that we will be able to accommodate further changes. We will consider any changes where possible but if groups are at capacity then we may not be able to accommodate the request. **No requests will be considered after Monday 21st September.**



What do I know already?

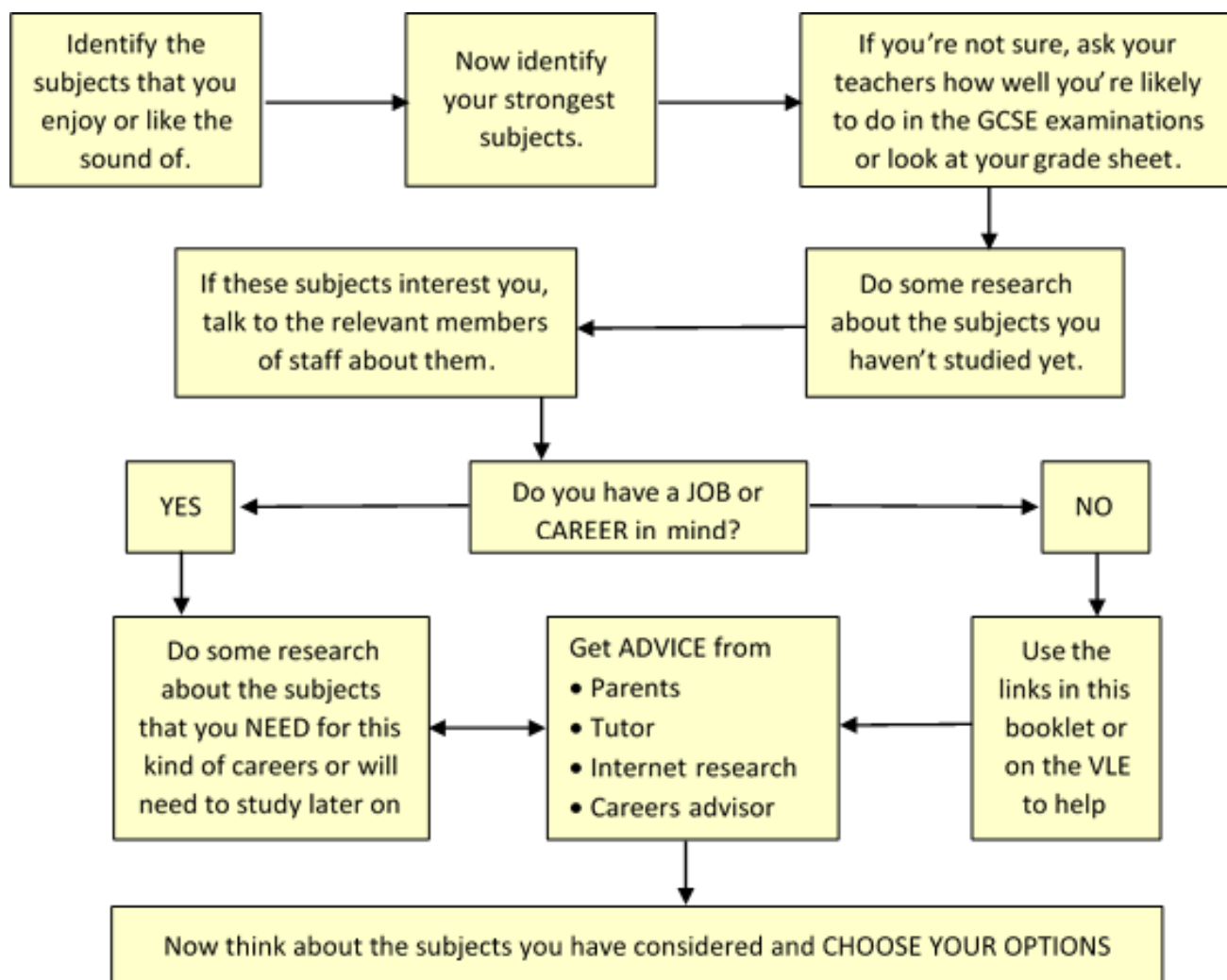
- You are currently covering a PSHE unit relating to Key Stage 4 options and careers (February/March 2020).
- You are aware that you can access support during drop-in sessions from our Careers Advisor (Miss Gadsby) every Monday and Tuesday, and from our Head of Careers (Mrs Ashby) who is in school every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
- Work Experience is in Year 12 at Kimberley College.



Where can I get more information?

- Look at the school website to see details of the courses on offer and where they can take you (www.woottonupper.co.uk > Curriculum > Year 10 Courses)
- Use some of the links below to get more information:
 - www.unifrog.org – log in using your personal log in, a parent log in is also available. Look at careers information, search for apprenticeships and university courses and much more
 - www.bbc.com/bitesize/careers - a new resource which links subjects you enjoy to careers
 - Visit the National Careers Website and look at their Job Profiles: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/job-profiles/home>
 - Take a look at careers videos, job profile and articles. Focus on 14: <https://icould.com/videos/choosing-your-gcse-options/>
 - Visit Future Morph for information about taking science and maths at KS4 and beyond <http://www.futuremorph.org/11-13/>
 - Read about where different subjects can take you, including where History can take you: <https://successatschool.org/advisedetails/391/Careers-in-History-Where-Can-History-Take-You%3F>
 - Help and advice for your creative career: <https://ccskills.org.uk/careers>
 - See where languages can take you: <http://www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk/>
 - Interested in finding out about entry requirements for apprenticeships? Look at live vacancies here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
 - Search for University courses and their entry requirements: <https://www.ucas.com/>
 - What can I do with a degree in: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree>
 - www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/your-choices-at-14
 - <https://guest.startprofile.com/>
 - <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

Details of all the subjects on offer and copies of the Options materials are available on the Wootton Upper School website: www.woottonupper.co.uk > Curriculum > Year 10 Courses



IMPORTANT DATES



Information Evening presentation to parents and courses booklet distributed to pupils.	Wednesday 11th March
Online options system opens for completion	Wednesday 11th March
Year 9 Parent/Carer Consultation Event, 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Wednesday 18th March
Deadline for completion of Option Choices	Wednesday 25th March
Follow up interviews with pupils re. Option Choices	April - May
Confirmation of final Year 10 Courses	Friday 26th June
Deadline for request of modifications	Monday 21st September

If you have any concerns, then please contact:

Mr G. Freemantle
Assistant Principal (Curriculum)
gfreemantle@wootton.beds.sch.uk



When you reach the end of Year 11 in 2022 there are various alternatives open to you:

- To continue in **full-time** education beyond the age of 16 in school or college.
- To start a recognised Apprenticeship (with a built-in training programme).



It is worth mentioning why you might choose to remain in full-time education at school or college beyond the age of 16:

- To take Level 3 courses, including A Level, BTEC Nationals or other vocational courses, either in preparation for a higher apprenticeship/employment at 18 years of age or to go on to Higher Education.
- To pursue a one-year Level 2 course, leading to a BTEC qualification (or equivalent), then to continue a course of study leading to a Level 3 qualification or start an Apprenticeship aged 17 years of age.

Pupils wishing to take Level 3 will have to meet minimum general entry requirements for these courses.

Current Level 3 entry requirements at Kimberley College are:

- Pupils entering Year 12 to study A Levels should have a good range of GCSE grades. The entry criteria are based on an average point score of the grades you gain.
- Pupils must additionally meet the subject specific entry requirements usually a GCSE grade 5 or 6 (current model) for Sixth Form courses.
- Any pupil not achieving a high-level pass in English or Maths at the end of Year 11 will be required to continue studying the subjects until they achieve a high-level pass. This currently applies to all pupils up to the end of Year 13. Pupils will need these high-level passes for application to university.


USING OPTIONS ONLINE

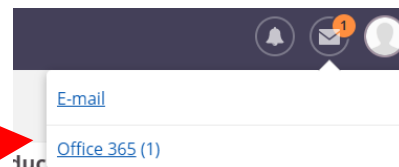


Options Online - www.sims-options.co.uk

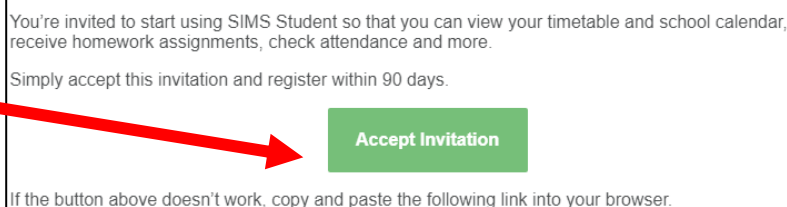
Step 1 – Receiving Your Invitation

Log on to your school email - <https://bb.itslearning.com> - use your itsLearning username (**username.wu**).

Click on the  in the top right and select **Office365**



You should have received an invitation to use SIMS Pupil. Click on **Accept Invitation**.



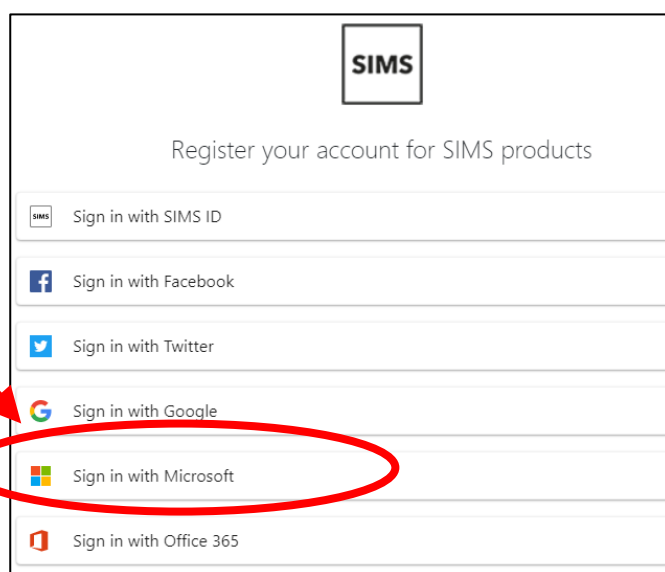
Step 2 – Setting Up Your Account

Make sure that you click to **Sign in with Microsoft**

The first screen will be where your details are confirmed (your name and invitation code will be filled in automatically).

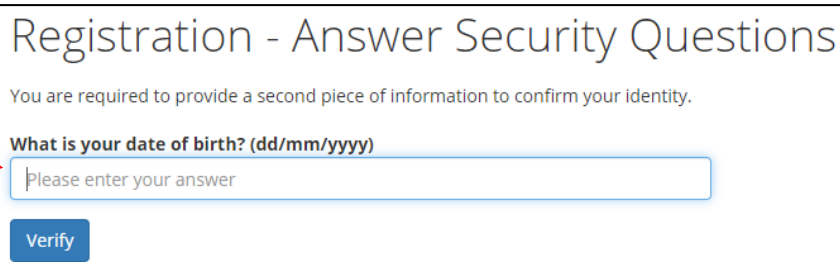
Click

Register



You will then be asked to confirm your date of birth.

Then click on **Verify**



Step 3 – Loading up Options

Click on **SIMS Options**



Please note, you only have Accept the Invitation once for the process to work. For subsequent logins, simply go to the website www.sims-options.co.uk and

 **Sign in with Microsoft each time.**

Step 4 – Selecting your options

Click on one subject in each Option block.

Then select a reserve subject in each block.

Please remember that at least one of your main choices must be Geography or History

The screenshot shows the 'Sims Options' web application. At the top left is a 'Save' button. The main area is divided into two columns. The left column has a header 'PRE or Sport' and a sub-header 'Option A'. Below these are two rows of course selection boxes. The first row shows 'Philosophy, Religion & Ethics' (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course) and 'Sport' (BTEC Award Level 2). The second row shows 'Art' (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course), 'Child Development' (Other), 'Computing' (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course), 'Design & Technology' (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course), 'French' (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course), 'Graphics' (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course), 'History' (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course), 'IT' (BTEC Award Level 2), 'Creative Media' (BTEC Award Level 2), and 'Music' (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course). Each course box has a 'Reserve' button and a note indicating it is also available in other options. The right column has three sections: 'Priority Choices' (Total Choices: 0), 'My Choices' (Total Choices: 0), and 'My Reserves' (Total Reserves: 0). Each section contains instructions on how to select and prioritize courses.

As you select your choices, these will appear in your Priority Choices box on the right-hand side. If this is not the correct order then please deselect them and reselect them in the right order.

When completed – click  in the top left corner.

The screenshot shows the 'Priority Choices' box with a title bar 'Priority Choices (Total Choices: 4)'. Below the title bar is a list of four selected courses, each with a numbered circle and a 'Reserve' button: 1 IT (BTEC Award Level 2 Option A), 2 Dance (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course Option B), 3 Geography (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course Option F), and 4 Food Tech (GCSE 9 - 1 Full Course Option E).

Step 5 – Amending your choices

Altering your options, you can return to amend your options choices before the deadline.

Go to www.sims-options.co.uk

Select **Sign in with Microsoft**

You will then be asked to enter your school email address which is in

the format: username@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Then enter your itsLearning/VLE username (username.wu)

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Sign in page. It has the Microsoft logo at the top left, followed by the text 'Sign in'. Below this is a text input field with the placeholder text 'Email address, phone number or Skype'.

Where to get assistance

If you have any problems then please email dataoffice@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Alternatively, IT1 will be open for Year 9 pupils at breaktime on each day between Thursday 12th- Wednesday 25th March for assistance with logging on or to make their selections if they have no internet access at home.

