

Options 2026

Year 9 Guide to Key Stage 4
Courses commencing September 2026



Table of Contents

Your Guide to Courses in Years 10 and 11	2
<u>Core Subjects</u>	
English Language	6
English Literature	7
Mathematics	8
Combined Science - Biology, Chemistry and Physics	9
PCRE (Core)	10
PE (Core)	11
<u>Options Subjects</u>	
Geography	12
History	13
Spanish	14
Art and Design	15
Business	16
Design Technology	17
Music	18
Photography	19
Religious Studies	20
Health and Social Care	21
Hospitality & Catering	22
Media Studies (Creative Digital Media)	23
Performing Arts (Drama)	24
Sport (Physical Education)	25
Reduced Options (by invite)	26
Careers and Work-Related Learning	27
GCSE Classifications	28
Completing Your Options Form	29

YOUR GUIDE TO THE KS4 OPTIONS PROCESS

COURSES RUNNING SEPTEMBER 2026 - JULY 2028

YEARS 10 AND 11

Introduction

By the time students reach the end of Year 9, they will have spent three years studying very nearly the same subjects as everyone else in their year.

From Year 10 onwards, though there are certain subjects that all students must continue with, students are given more of a choice in the subjects they study. If they want to, they can continue studying subjects they enjoy or are good at. On the other hand, there are some subjects students currently study that they can choose not to continue beyond Year 9. As part of this process students will have the opportunity to choose from a number of new subjects that they have not studied before.

The courses students study in Years 10 and 11 will lead to qualifications in summer 2028.

Though Year 10 may seem a long way off, during the course of January 2026 all Year 9 students will have to make decisions about the courses they will be following in September 2026.

Students are required, by law, to continue in education or training until they are 18. Decisions made now can affect the choices or 'pathways' open to students when they reach the age of 16.

The purpose of this booklet is to guide students/families through this process, which we refer to as the '*Key Stage 4 Options*'. Below are some frequently asked questions about this Key Stage 4 Options process:

1. "What subjects must students continue to study?"

ENGLISH / MATHEMATICS / SCIENCE / CORE PE / CORE PCRE

We call these subjects the '*core*' subjects.

Students will study for one GCSE in mathematics. Students will study for two GCSEs in English: *English Language* and *English Literature*. In Science students will study *combined science* leading to the award of two GCSE grades. Students will not obtain GCSE qualifications in either core PE or core PCRE but these lessons ensure that students cover statutory elements of the school curriculum at KS4.

2. "What qualifications will students take?"

Most of the courses we offer at The Ilfracombe Academy will lead to GCSE qualifications. Other courses lead to a vocational qualification. A vocational subject is one that is related to a particular job or occupation.

GCSEs will be graded on a 1 to 9 scale, and any vocational courses will be graded Level 1 Pass to Level 2 Distinction*. A chart comparing the new and old GCSE grading scales, alongside the vocational qualification levels, can be found on page 28.

3. "How many qualifications will students gain at the end of Year 11?"

Taking a student's *core* and *options* subjects together, the majority of students will study for a total of 8 qualifications.

4. “What are the ‘option’ subjects students choose from and how many do they choose?”

Students choose three options plus one reserve subject. The subjects they can choose from include all the subjects they currently study plus some subjects that are new to them. It is helpful to think of each subject as belonging to a family of subjects. Those families are:

- **Humanities subjects**
Geography GCSE
History GCSE
Religious Studies GCSE (*chosen in addition to (not instead of) ‘core’ PCRE*)
- **Modern Language subjects**
Spanish GCSE
- **Creative, Expressive or Technology subjects**
Art and Design GCSE
Design Technology GCSE
Music GCSE
Photography GCSE
- **Vocational subjects**
Drama - Edexcel BTEC
Health and Social Care - Cambridge National Certificate
Hospitality and Catering - EDUQUAS
Media Studies - Edexcel BTEC
Sport - Edexcel BTEC (*chosen in addition to (not instead of) ‘core’ PE*)

Please note - around 75% of the assessment on vocational qualifications is coursework, completed throughout Years 10 and 11. For this reason good attendance to school (95% or higher) is key to success on these courses. If attendance in term 1 or Year 10 becomes a barrier to success on a vocational course it may be necessary to re-course a student.

Please note - each year we review these vocational qualifications (exam board and unit selection). The core principles of course content and methods of assessment outlined in this options guide will however not change significantly.

- **Other subjects**
Business Studies GCSE

5. “What should I be considering when making my choices?”

There are lots of good reasons for choosing option subjects:

- Enjoyment of the subject
- Interest in the subject, or an interest in a career linked to the subject
- Being good at the subject

There are also some bad reasons for choosing option subjects.

- Choosing a subject because friends are - there is no guarantee students will be in a class together
- Choosing a subject in the hope of having a particular teacher in Years 10 and 11 - there is no guarantee of a specific teacher in Years 10 and 11

Students should make decisions which are best for them. This means considering the points above and making decisions about their KS4 options as an individual.

6. “How will KS4 (Years 10 and 11) options inform what students can do later in life?”

Achieving well within the core curriculum (English literature, English language, maths and combined science) will ensure that every students can access a significant number of courses at college (KS5/aged 16-18).

Studying a broad and balanced range of KS4 qualifications will ensure that students have the widest range of choices available to them at college and beyond.

Our KS4 options guidance is designed to promote a broad and balanced curriculum.

- All students **must choose** at least **one** of the following three subjects:

HISTORY or GEOGRAPHY or SPANISH

(Note - It is possible to study more than one of these subjects.)

- We would strongly advise students to consider taking a subject from the family of **technology, creative and expressive** or **vocational** subjects.

7. “Are students guaranteed to study the subjects they would like to?”

The majority of students will be able to study their first-choice subjects. However, there are times when this may not be possible:

- Some course combinations may become incompatible as we start to produce the school timetable. This is most likely to involve option subjects with only x1 class within the school timetable (the options form subsequently identifies these subjects as ‘highest risk of re-coursing’).
- There are a limited number of places available on certain courses and it may be necessary to turn away some students from a popular course. Again, this is most likely to involve option subjects with only x1 class within the school timetable.
- A course may not run if not enough students choose it.
- Late applications (received after the communicated deadline).

To provide the best possible outcome for as many students as possible during this process we ask that

1. Option choices are ranked (1 = compulsory option, 2 = highest priority option, 3 = second priority option).
2. Students nominate a reserve (R) option subject.

In the event that a student cannot study their preferred x3 option choices we will look to replace, 3 (their second priority option subject) with their identified reserve subject, R.

In the event that a subject is oversubscribed the school would look at a range of information when making decision about the allocation of places, these include (but are not limited to); the ranking of students option choices, historical levels of effort and application, attendance would be a key consideration for allocating places on course with significant amounts of ongoing coursework (e.g. vocational courses).

8. “Can students change their option choices?”

We provide advice and guidance to students and families in advance of handing-out the options forms, this is done in an effort to minimise requests for changes to option choices.

We will acknowledge and record any requests for changes to option choices received after the agreed submission deadline but prior to the summer holidays. We will consider these requests in the summer term before responding – as a guide these decisions would normally be communicated in early July.

Where changes are possible, we will support them. However, changes may not be possible for a range of reasons. We would therefore encourage you to consider your option choices carefully at this stage.

We will listen to all requests for option changes made during the first half-term of Year 10 (Sept-Oct) and support them where possible. However, beyond October half-term we do not support changes to option choices.

9. “What should students do next?”

We would encourage students and parents/carers to read the remainder of this booklet. It tells you in more detail about each of the subjects and courses students can choose from. Students will receive further advice and guidance during assembly and from their teachers and tutor. When students are ready, they indicate their choices by completing a simple form.

We will distribute Options forms from **Monday 19th January 2026**.

The deadline for completing the Options form is **Friday 30th January 2026**.

(Students can collect a replacement form from the main school office or their tutor, if required.)

10. “How will the outcome of the options process be communicated?”

We will analyse the students option choices following the submission deadline. This will enable us to begin our strategic planning/timetabling. A small number of targeted meetings may be required if there are issues with an individual students’ option choices.

At the end of the option process we will send home letters confirming each individual student’s option subjects.

We would regard the decisions communicated in these letters as a firm commitment to our students in relation to their KS4 studies from September 2026 and as a result you should not anticipate further communication.

The options process in Year 9 marks the start of a student’s KS4/GCSE experience here at the Ilfracombe Academy. As part of my role at school I oversee this process. I feel incredibly privileged to also work closely with Year 11 students during their final preparation for coursework/exams leading to the award of qualifications they selected in Year 9.

Thank you in advance for the support and guidance you will provide our Year 9 students with throughout this process.

Mr Twomey
Deputy Headteacher
January 2026

English Language

Exam Board	AQA	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	-----	----------------------	------

Course Overview

English Language GCSE is a core subject that all students must study. A good grade in this subject is crucial for students moving into higher education, apprenticeships and the world of work. Together with Maths, it is the key to a successful future.

For their English Language GCSE, students will study a wide range of literary texts as well as non-literary texts such as high-quality journalism, articles, reports, essays, travel writing, accounts, sketches, letters, diaries, autobiographical and biographical passages. They will develop their writing skills, being able to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Overview of Course Content

Throughout the course, students will be given opportunities to develop the crucial skills needed for the examination.

Reading

- Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas, select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
- Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.
- Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.
- Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

Writing

- Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using appropriate features.
- Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

Spoken Language

- Demonstrate presentation skills in a formal setting.
- Listen and respond appropriately to spoken language, including to questions and feedback on presentations.
- Use spoken Standard English effectively in speeches and presentations.

Assessment Model

There are two examinations that will take place at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1 (1 hour 45 mins, 50%)

- Section A - Reading skills using one unseen fiction extract
- Section B - Writing skills (writing to describe or narrate)

Paper 2 (1 hour 45 mins, 50%)

- Section A - Reading skills using two unseen non-fiction extracts
- Section B - Writing skills (writing to persuade and argue)

English Literature

Exam Board	AQA	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	-----	----------------------	------

Course Overview

English Literature is a vital subject that encourages students to develop their analytical reading skills together with the opportunity to experience a wide range of significant texts from our English literary heritage.

Students will be encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking. Through literature, students have a chance to develop culturally and acquire knowledge of the best that has been thought and written. Studying GCSE English Literature should encourage students to read widely for pleasure, and as a preparation for studying literature at a higher level.

Overview of Course Content

Students will be required to study plays, poetry and novels as part of the course. The list below is not definitive but gives a guideline of what will be studied on the course.

Shakespeare	'Macbeth'
The 19 th Century novel	'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens
Modern Drama	'An Inspector Calls' by J B Priestley
Poetry	Students will study a range of poems from the AQA anthology 'Power and Conflict'

Assessment Model

There are two examinations that will take place at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1 (1 hour 45 mins, 40%)

- Shakespeare
- 19th Century novel

Paper 2 (2 hours 15 mins, 60%)

- Modern drama/modern prose
- Poetry
- Unseen poetry

Mathematics

Exam Board	Edexcel	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	---------	----------------------	------

Course Overview

A GCSE in Maths is essential for most jobs or further education courses. A Grade 2 or 3 provides access to a range of post-16 courses. Employers are often looking for a Grade 4 whilst a Grade 5 or better is vital to many higher education courses and therefore to many careers.

A good qualification in Mathematics at either A-Level or Degree can open the door to a variety of careers; accountancy, banking, engineering and teaching to name but a few.

Overview of Course Content

Students will need to demonstrate fluency with the relevant methods and techniques, and will have to learn key mathematical formulae.

A greater emphasis is being placed on:

- problem solving involving multi-step problems where the required method or technique is not specified,
- reasoning, with students being expected to explain how or why something happens.

The content falls into six main categories:

- number
- algebra
- ratio, proportion and rates of change
- geometry and measures
- probability
- statistics

Maths will continue to be tiered, with the Foundation tier covering grades 1–5 and the Higher tier covering grades 4–9.

Assessment Model

GCSE Maths is a linear course with three examinations taken in the summer of Year 11.

Paper 1 (1 hour 30 mins, 80 marks)

- Non-calculator paper

Paper 2 (1 hour 30 mins, 80 marks)

- Calculator paper

Paper 3 (1 hour 30 mins, 80 marks)

- Calculator paper

As two of the three papers require a calculator, we recommend that all students have their own scientific calculator. We recommend the Casio FX-83GTCW.

Combined Science

Exam Board	AQA	Qualification	GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy)
-------------------	-----	----------------------	---------------------------------

Course Overview

Students start studying the GCSE content in January of Year 9. At the end of their two-and-a-half-year GCSE programme, students will obtain GCSE 'Combined Science' (equivalent to two GCSE grades).

Students will complete their GCSE Science studies with a team of three expert teachers, with each teacher being responsible for the delivery of one of the three science disciplines.

The skills required for success within biology, chemistry and physics are broadly similar:

- knowledge - an ability to retain key scientific information
- application - an ability to apply concepts to both common and unfamiliar questions
- an ability to discuss and analyse the results from experimental procedures
- an ability to manipulate numerical information within calculations
- an ability to discuss environmental, social and ethical issues in science

These skills will be developed simultaneously within the three subjects.

Overview of Course Content

Topics within the three disciplines are listed below:

Biology	Chemistry	Physics
Cell biology Organisation Infection and response Bioenergetics Homeostasis and response Inheritance, variation and evolution Ecology	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 Chemistry of the atmosphere Using resources	Energy Electricity Particle model of matter Atomic Structure Forces Waves Magnetism and electromagnetism

Our aim is to inspire students to consider continuing their study of one or more of the sciences within the Sixth Form. Should students choose not to continue their GCSE studies of science into the Sixth Form, we aim to have developed in them a fundamental understanding of key scientific concepts that will enable them to make informed decisions about scientific issues in the future and to have a meaningful understanding of the world around them.

Assessment Model

Students will be entered for either Higher or Foundation Level examinations. Every student will sit two exams in each science subject (six exams in total). Each paper is out of 70 marks and 1 hour 15 minutes in length. There is no coursework component to GCSE Science.

Please note that a scientific calculator is required for all science examinations.

PCRE (Core)

Exam Board	N/A	Qualification	N/A
-------------------	-----	----------------------	-----

Course Overview

Core PCRE at KS4 aims to develop skills and knowledge so they may engage in a diverse world and make safe, healthy and informed choices.

Students will have the opportunity to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of world views
- engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose and truth
- reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what they have learnt
- construct well-informed and balanced arguments on matters concerned with religious beliefs and values
- gain knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their confidence and self-belief

Core PCRE delivers the statutory requirements for RE and RSHE.

Overview of Course Content

Personal Development

- Healthy bodies and minds
- Summer safety
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Money matters
- Living in good health
- Revision skills

RE

- Good and evil
- Crime and punishment
- Religion and the law
- Religion and the media
- Philosophy and ethics
- Inspirational figures
- Religion and life

Assessment Model

Students do not obtain a GCSE qualification through their studies of Core PCRE. These lessons ensure that students receive statutory elements of the KS4 national curriculum and as a result participation in these lessons is compulsory.

Students will be assessed in the following areas:

- Making sense of beliefs and practices
- Understanding the impact of belief
- Making connections between different understandings of the world.
- Understanding the importance of and evaluating strategies that promote physical, sexual, mental and emotional health

Physical Education (Core)

Exam Board	N/A	Qualification	N/A
-------------------	-----	----------------------	-----

Course Overview

The Key Stage 4 physical education programme has a major focus on students continuing a healthy, active lifestyle beyond school:

- tackle a broad range of complex and demanding activities
- apply their knowledge of skills, techniques and effective performance
- promote health, well-being and healthy choices
- develop personal fitness
- take on roles which suit them best, including performer, leader and official
- identify the types of activity they prefer
- gain confidence to get involved in exercise and activity out of school and in later life

Overview of Course Content

Students will have the opportunity to follow a pathway of sporting activities that best suits their interests in PE. There will be the opportunity for students to try new activities and develop their health, fitness and wellbeing. All students will engage in three hours of physical activity across KS4 per fortnight to aid their mental and physical wellbeing. Activities, where possible, will be adapted to suit the interest of the groupings.

Assessment Model

Students do not obtain a GCSE qualification through their studies of Core PE. These lessons ensure that students receive statutory elements of the KS4 national curriculum and as a result participation in these lessons is compulsory.

The focus of assessment at Key Stage 4 is on positive attitude to learning and making good lifestyle choices by ensuring you wear the appropriate PE kit for lessons.

Geography

Exam Board	AQA	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	-----	----------------------	------

Course Overview

The study of Geography stimulates an interest in and a sense of wonder about places. It helps young people make sense of a complex and dynamically changing world. It explains where places are, how places and landscapes are formed, how people and their environment interact, and how a diverse range of economies, societies and environments are interconnected. It builds on pupils' own experiences to investigate places at all scales, from the personal to the global.

The GCSE Geography course covers a wide range of topics: physical, human and environmental. It is studied over three years, starting in Year 9, and will result in three written exams at the end of Year 11.

Overview of Course Content

Year 9 units

- Tectonic Hazards
- Climatic Hazards
- Climate Change
- Tropical Rainforests
- Hot Deserts or Cold Environments
- Coasts

Year 10 units

- Rivers; World Population
- Global Urban Change
- Urban Challenges
- Sustainable Development
- 1 x Physical environment field trip
- 1 x Human environment field trip

Year 11 units

- Global Resource Management
- Food Resources
- Geographical Skills and Decision Making
- Revision

Assessment Model

Paper 1 (1 hour 30 mins, 35%)

- Living with the Physical Environment

Paper 2 (1 hour 30 mins, 35%)

- Challenges in the Human Environment

Paper 3 (1 hour 30 mins, 30%)

- Geographical Applications

History

Exam Board	Edexcel	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	---------	----------------------	------

Course Overview

Studying History is important because it allows us to understand our past, which in turn allows us to understand our present and make informed decisions about our future.

Studying History provides a student with skills which are not confined to the study of the past. Skills of analysis are invaluable in many jobs, and the ability to analyse and then prioritise information is vital to decision making. This not only provides a solid skill-set, but it also keeps career options open.

The History GCSE will be studied over three years, starting in Year 9, and students will take three written exams at the end of Year 11.

Overview of Course Content

Thematic Study and Historic Environment

- Medicine in Britain, c1250-present
- British sector of the Western Front, 1914-1918: injuries, treatment and the trenches

Period Study and British depth study

- Early Elizabethan England 1558-1588
- Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941-1991

Modern Depth Study

- Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939

Assessment Model

Paper 1 (1hour 20 mins, 30%)

- Thematic Study and Historic Environment

Paper 2 (1hour 50 mins, 40%)

- Period Study and British depth study

Paper 3 (1hour 30mins, 30%)

- Modern Depth Study

Spanish

Exam Board	Edexcel	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	---------	----------------------	------

Course Overview

It may seem that everyone speaks English, but in fact 75% of the world's population does not. If you enjoy being with people and chatting and joking with them, you will enjoy doing this in Spanish too. A massive range of topics are covered in your classes, so as well as learning a language you also learn all about the culture and lifestyle of Spain: school life, food, travel, sports, famous people, traditions and customs.

There are many reasons to choose Spanish as an option. Here are some you might consider:

- you enjoy the subject at Key Stage 3
- you enjoy the challenge of academic subjects
- you are interested in visiting other countries and meeting new people
- speaking another language really makes you and your CV stand out from the crowd
- you develop four key skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing

Note - There may be a small number of students for whom we feel GCSE Spanish is an inappropriate option choice, e.g. we would not recommend a student selecting GCSE Spanish if they are at risk of not passing GCSE English.

Overview of Course Content

Students will focus on:

- independent and spontaneous use of the spoken language
- culture and identities of the countries and communities where the language is spoken
- understanding how grammar works, in order to communicate effectively in writing
- how to translate into English and from English into the target language

Questions across all four language skills are set in common contexts, addressing a range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes. The five themes are:

- identity and culture
- local area, holiday and travel
- school
- future aspirations, study and work
- international and global dimension

Assessment Model

For languages you are marked on four key areas - reading, writing, listening and speaking. These will be important skills to have when you apply for college, university or a job.

Listening (25%)

- understand and respond to different types of spoken language

Speaking (25%)

- communicate and interact in speech

Reading (25%)

- understand and respond to different types of written language

Writing (25%)

- communicate in writing

Art and Design

Exam Board	AQA	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	-----	----------------------	------

Course Overview

Choosing Art and Design as one of your areas of study for KS4 will not only prove enjoyable but will also open up an enormous range of career and job prospects in the creative industries. We will help you to develop a discerning eye, as well as acquire the skills needed to turn ideas and concepts into finished pieces of work. You will look at how other artists and cultures have worked and experiment with their techniques.

Overview of Course Content

Students in Years 10 and 11 will study for a Fine Art GCSE, where they will explore a range of two- and three-dimensional media. The final submission is made up of a coursework section (60% of the total marks) and a controlled test section (the remaining 40% of the marks and carried out within a 10-hour time limit).

Candidates will explore media in the following areas:

- drawing and painting
- print making
- three-dimensional studies
- mixed-media

Homework - Homework is an essential part of the course and is used to encourage all students to supplement their project and develop their observational skills by completing a series of drawing tasks in their sketchbooks. These books are seen as a valuable store of ideas, experiments and resources. Students are expected to make careful organisation of their time to enable them to meet assessment deadlines for the various projects.

Extra Work Time - All of the art studios are available at break and lunchtimes. These are ideal opportunities to extend projects.

We look forward to working with YOU next year. Come and join us!

Assessment Model

Coursework (60%)

Externally set exam (40%)

Business

Exam Board	OCR	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	-----	----------------------	------

Course Overview

Would you like...

To be your own boss running your own business? To understand just what goes on in the world of work? To know what businesses look for when they recruit staff, or see how a business gets its money to operate? Do you want to know why so many adverts are aimed at teenagers or understand why the same big businesses operate around the world?

OCR GCSE Business is the course to take if you want the answers to these and many other questions.

When you leave school you may be working for a business or other organisation. After studying Business you will have an insight into just how businesses operate, and understand more about all that goes into running a business. This is a practical course using real businesses as examples, that will help you learn skills to help you in decision making and be one step ahead in understanding how businesses, and the world around you, operates.

Overview of Course Content

The business course is split into two units, designed to help students explore key functional areas and activities carried out within business.

Business 01: Business activity, marketing and people - Students are introduced to business concepts and issues concerning the activities of a business. They explore the purpose and role of a business from spotting an opportunity through to the growth of an established business. They also look at the role of marketing and human resources.

Business 02: Operations, finance and influences on business - Students take a closer look at the role of operations and finance in business activity. Operations include production processes, quality of goods and services, customer service, and working with suppliers. Finance covers its role, its sources, costs, profit and loss, cash and cash flow. They also explore how business responds to external influences, such as ethical and environmental considerations, the economic climate and globalisation, and the interdependent nature of business.

Assessment Model

The two component above are assessed by two separate examinations held at the end of Year 11. These exams are 90 minutes long and are weighted equally at 50% each.

Design Technology

Exam Board	AQA	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	-----	----------------------	------

Course Overview

GCSE Design and Technology is an exciting subject that allows you to express your creativity and skills across a range of Design and Technology areas. If you want to investigate how and why products work and what makes them fit for purpose, then Design and Technology is for you. The subject opens the door to a wide range of careers and whatever you choose the knowledge and skills you learn, particularly those concerned with rapidly developing technologies, will be extremely valuable.

GCSE Design and Technology is a practical subject which requires the application of knowledge and understanding when developing ideas, planning, producing products and evaluating them. The course helps you to develop the ability to design and make products with creativity and originality, using a range of materials and techniques.

The final product that is designed and made for the NEA will be completely individual to you based on the contextual challenge given by the exam board.

What is next for me after this course?

The course will provide a very good foundation for A-Level or Technical Level 3 qualifications. It will provide a basis for a career in design, manufacturing or engineering. It can also be the foundation for design and technical apprenticeships.

Overview of Course Content

Subject content

- Core technical principles
- Specialist technical principles
- Designing and making principles

Assessment Model

Written exam (2 hours, 50%)

Non-exam assessment (NEA) (30-35 hours approx., 50%)

You will complete a substantial design and make task, producing a prototype and a portfolio of evidence.

Assessment criteria:

- Investigating
- Designing
- Making
- Analysing and evaluating

Music

Exam Board	EDUQAS	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	--------	----------------------	------

Course Overview

The EDUQAS GCSE in Music is an exciting, creative, and inspiring qualification that gives students the opportunity to engage actively in the study of music. They will have the opportunity to perform by themselves and as a group/band any style of music and develop their performance skills on an instrument of their choosing. Students will develop their creative music skills by learning how to compose in a range of musical styles using technology and their instrument. Students will broaden their musical experience and interest through the study of music in contrasting genres, styles and traditions, developing historical awareness and theoretical and analytical skill.

In short, this qualification (prized by employers, FE colleges and beyond) gives students the opportunity to develop their musical skills and gain a broad knowledge of musical styles in a fun, practical music making environment.

The course suits all pupils with an interest in performance on an instrument or voice. It supports and develops musicians in their practical and theoretical skills, leading to further study of music at post-16 level and beyond on academic and vocational pathways.

Overview of Course Content

Component 1: Performing

A minimum of two pieces, one of which must be an ensemble performance of at least one minute duration. The other piece(s) may be either solo and/or ensemble. One of the pieces performed must link to an area of study of the student's choice.

Component 2: Composing

Two compositions, one of which must be in response to a brief set by the exam board. Students will choose one brief from a choice of four, each one linked to a different area of study. The briefs will be released during the first week of September in the academic year in which the assessment is to be taken. The second composition is a free composition for which students set their own brief.

Component 3: Appraising

The academic and creative study of music from different genres:

Area of study 1: Musical Forms and Devices

Area of study 2: Music for Ensemble

Area of study 3: Film Music

Area of study 4: Popular Music

Two of the eight questions are based on extracts known as "Set Works" set at the start of the course. These are currently Bandiniere by JS Bach and Africa performed by the band Toto.

Assessment Model

Component 1 (30%) - Non-Exam Assessment 1: Performing

Internally assessed, externally moderated.

Component 2 (30%) - Non-Exam Assessment 1: Composition

Internally assessed, externally moderated.

Component 3 (1 hour 15 mins, 40%) - Written and Listening Exam: Appraising

Externally assessed

Photography

Exam Board	AQA	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	-----	----------------------	------

Course Overview

Choosing Photography as one of your areas of study in Year 10 will not only prove enjoyable, but will also open up an enormous range of career and job prospects in the creative industries. We will help you to develop a discerning eye, as well as acquire the skills needed to turn ideas and concepts into finished pieces of work. You will look at how other artists and cultures have worked and experiment with their techniques.

Overview of Course Content

Students in Years 10 and 11 will study for a GCSE in Photography: *Lens Based Media* endorsement in the revised syllabus offered by AQA. The final submission is made up of a coursework section (60% of the total marks) and a controlled test section (the remaining 40% of the marks and carried out within a 10-hour time limit).

Candidates should work in one or more areas of lens-based and light-based media such as those listed below. They may explore overlapping and combinations of areas:

- portraiture
- landscape photography (working from the built or natural environment)
- still life photography, (working from natural or manufactured objects)
- documentary photography, photo journalism, narrative photography, reportage
- photographic installation
- photography involving a moving image (television, film and animation)
- new media practice such as computer manipulated photography and photographic projections

Homework - Homework is an essential part of the course and is used to encourage all students to supplement their project and develop their photographic skills. Often students will need to take photo shoots at different locations away from the school site and this would be done as homework. Students are expected to make careful organisation of their time to enable them to meet assessment deadlines for the various projects. There is an expectation that students will store their work electronically, so access to the internet at home would be helpful.

Extra Work Time - All of the art studios are available at break and lunchtimes. These are ideal opportunities to extend projects.

We look forward to working with YOU next year. Come and join us!

Assessment Model

Coursework (60%)

Externally set exam (40%)

Religious Studies

Exam Board	Edexcel B	Qualification	GCSE
-------------------	-----------	----------------------	------

Course Overview

GCSE Religious Studies is a dynamic and thought-provoking course that helps you understand the beliefs, values and worldviews that shape people's lives today.

Through this GCSE you will:

- explore religious and non-religious worldviews, using key teachings, texts and sources of wisdom.
- learn how to build strong written arguments that are clear, balanced and well-supported.
- reflect on your own ideas, values and assumptions, preparing you for adult life in a diverse and global society.
- understand how religion impacts individuals, communities and wider society.

Religious Studies develops highly valued skills in critical thinking, communication, empathy, debate, and written analysis. These are essential in a wide range of futures - from law, journalism, teaching, medicine and public services, to business, politics, social work and beyond.

Overview of Course Content

Christianity: Religion and Ethics

Belief in God

The nature of God, theological concepts, origins of the universe and the problem of evil and suffering.

Marriage and the Family

Sacraments, the role of family, sexual ethics, divorce and contraception.

Living the Religious Life

Worship, prayer, charity, pilgrimage and community.

Matters of Life and Death

The sanctity of life, life after death and gender prejudice.

Islam: Religion, Peace and Conflict

Belief in God

The nature of God, Sunni and Shi'a Islam, angels, prophets, peace and the problem of evil.

Crime and Punishment

Judgement, causes of crime, forms of punishment, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation and capital punishment.

Living the Religious Life

Islamic sacred text, statements of faith, pilgrimage, charity, prayer, festivals and Jihad.

Peace and Conflict

The sanctity of life, causes of conflict, just war theory, conflict in the 21st century and pacifism.

Assessment Model

Paper 1 (1 hour and 45 mins, 50%)

Christianity - Religion and Ethics

Paper 2 (1 hour and 45 mins, 50%)

Islam - Religion, Peace and Conflict

Health and Social Care

Exam Board	Cambridge National Certificate	Qualification	Level 2 Cambridge National (OCR)
-------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------	----------------------------------

Course Overview

The Health and Social Care course is designed for students seeking employment in a range of health and care professions such as social work, childcare, elderly care, nursing, teaching, physiotherapy and many more.

During Year 10 students will complete 1 unit of coursework and some of the exam content. The first coursework element is worth 30% of the final mark, and this unit includes learning 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.

In Year 11 students will complete another coursework unit and continue work on their exam unit. The 1st coursework piece is worth 30% and the exam is worth 40% of the final mark. For the 2nd coursework unit, you will explore suitable creative and therapeutic activities for a specific age group in health, social or childcare. You will be expected to plan and carry out a creative or therapeutic activity as part of this. In the exam unit you will learn about the key topics that are important when caring and protecting people in health, social and early years settings.

In the Sixth Form, there is an opportunity for students to progress onto the Level 3 Health and Social Care course, to gain the Cambridge Technical Extended certificate worth the equivalent of one A-Level.

Overview of Course Content

Year 10:

Supporting Individuals through Life Events

Topics include: life stages, impacts of life events and sources of support.

Creative and Therapeutic Activities

Topics include: planning and delivering a creative activity, evaluating your own performance, describing and explaining benefits of your chosen activity to the individual.

Year 11:

Principles of Care in Health, Social and Early Years Settings

Topics include: the rights of individuals, person centred values, effective communication and protecting individuals.

Assessment Model

Component 1 (internally assessed assignments, 30%)

Unit RO33 - Supporting Individuals through Life Events

Component 2 (internally assessed assignments, 30%)

Unit RO34 - Creative and Therapeutic Activities

Component 3 (external exam, 1hr 15 mins, 40%)

Unit RO32 - Principles of Care in Health, Social and Early Years Settings

Hospitality and Catering

Exam Board	WJEC	Qualification	Level 2 (EDUQUAS)
-------------------	------	----------------------	-------------------

Course Overview

Have you ever wondered what it takes to work in a top hotel or restaurant? Does food and discovering new flavours in the kitchen inspire you? Maybe you're interested in developing the skills you need to cook a wide range of dishes or work front of house in a hotel or restaurant? If so, Hospitality and Catering is the course for you!

Overview of Course Content

This qualification is made up of two units.

Unit 1: The Hospitality and Catering Industry

In this unit you will:

- learn about the hospitality and catering industry, the types of hospitality and catering providers, and working in the industry.
- learn about health and safety, and food safety in hospitality and catering, as well as food related causes of ill health.

Unit 2: Hospitality and Catering in Action

In this unit you will:

- learn about the importance of nutrition and how cooking methods can impact nutritional values.
- learn how to plan nutritious menus as well as factors which affect menu planning.
- learn the skills and techniques needed to prepare, cook and present dishes, as well as learning how to review your work effectively.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop a range of skills which are attractive to employers, colleges and universities including communication, confidence, learning independently, organisation, problem solving, research, self-discipline, stamina, taking responsibility, and time management.

Careers within the hospitality and catering industry

The hospitality industry offers a wide range of exciting opportunities which include:

Chef de partie, Commis chef, Concierge, Executive chef, Front of house manager, Head waiter, Housekeeper, Maître d'hôtel, Pastry chef, Receptionist, and Sous chef.

Assessment Model

You will be assessed through a written examination and an assignment.

Unit 1 will be assessed through an exam, which is worth 40% of your qualification.

For Unit 2 you will complete an assignment where you will plan and prepare a menu in response to a brief. This will be worth 60% of your qualification and will take 12 hours.

Media (Creative Digital Media)

Exam Board	Pearson	Qualification	Level 2 BTEC (Pearson Edexcel)
-------------------	---------	----------------------	--------------------------------

Course Overview

A weather app on a smartphone, a racing game on a video game console, the TV and films we all enjoy. These are all examples of digital media and they are successful because they are engaging, easy to use, and deliver results. Digital Media is a blend of technology and content, and building digital media products requires teams of professionals with diverse skills, including technical, artistic, analytical and production coordination skills.

The BTEC Level 2 Technical Award in Creative Digital Media gives students the opportunity to develop sector-specific knowledge and skills in a practical learning environment. The main focus is on four areas of equal importance, which cover:

- the development of key skills that prove your aptitude in creative media production
- the process and theory that underpins effective ways of working in creative media production
- the attitudes that are considered most important in creative media production
- the knowledge that underpins effective use of skills, processes and attitudes in the sector

This course complements the learning in other creative GCSE-level courses, by broadening the application of 'design and make' tasks, working with a media brief, and understanding and engaging different audiences through making compelling audio/visual media products.

Overview of course content

The course is split into three components which give students the opportunity to develop broad knowledge and understanding of the media sector, and relevant skills such as research, planning, problem solving and communication. They each focus on the assessment of knowledge, skills and practices. They are all essential to developing a basis for progression and, therefore, learners need to achieve all components in order to achieve the qualification.

Component 1 - Exploring Media Products

Students will develop their understanding of how media products create meaning for their audiences, examining existing products and exploring media production techniques.

Component 2 - Developing Digital Media Production Skills

Students will develop and apply skills and techniques in media production processes by creating a moving image media product (short film or music video).

Component 3 - Create a Media Product in Response to a Brief

Students will apply and develop their planning and production skills and techniques to create a media product in response to a client brief.

Assessment Model

Components 1 and 2 are assessed through non-exam internal assessment (coursework assignments). These assignments are set by Pearson, marked by the school, and then moderated by Pearson.

Component 3 is externally assessed. This is based on a key task that requires students to demonstrate that they can identify and effectively use an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories and knowledge from across the whole qualification in an integrated way. The external assessment is taken under supervised conditions, which is then marked and a grade awarded by Pearson. The assessment will be completed over a 15-week period timetabled by Pearson.

Performing Arts (Drama)

Exam Board	Pearson	Qualification	Level 2 BTEC (Edexcel)
-------------------	---------	----------------------	------------------------

Course Overview

Performing Arts is one of the most enjoyable and creative subjects a student can choose. It not only develops a strong working knowledge of theatre and an understanding of a wide range of dramatic forms but also builds confidence and self-esteem. BTEC Performing Arts encourages independence, self-organisation, and a variety of valuable transferable skills, including communication, adaptability, resilience and effective teamwork.

You will have the opportunity to explore, develop and apply practical drama skills, as well as investigate the technical side of theatre through hands-on work with lighting, sound, music and costume.

This popular BTEC course has a strong track record of excellent results, with many students achieving Distinction* and Distinction grades. It provides an ideal foundation for further study in the Sixth Form, whether in Performing Arts or a wide range of other subjects, thanks to the skills and experience it helps you develop.

Overview of Course Content

Component 1: Exploring the Performing Arts

This component gives students valuable insight into the diverse and demanding world of the Performing Arts. Students will investigate a piece of professional work, such as a play, focusing on its stylistic qualities, key features, creative intentions, and the skills, roles and responsibilities involved in bringing it to life. All investigation is linked to a theme set by the exam board. Students will carry out independent research, take part in practical exploration, and then draw their findings together in a written portfolio completed under controlled conditions.

Component 2: Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts

Building on the skills introduced in Component 1, students will take part in workshops and rehearsals designed to develop their performance techniques as actors. They will refine practical skills within their chosen discipline (acting) and work towards a live performance of existing professional repertoire, such as an extract from a play, linked to a theme set by the exam board. Alongside their practical work, students will complete coursework in controlled conditions. This takes the form of a logbook in which they explain, analyse and evaluate both their rehearsal process and their final performance.

Component 3: Performing to a Brief

This externally examined component requires students to develop and present ideas in response to a specific brief set by the exam board. Working in groups, students will discuss, devise and perform a practical piece that addresses the requirements of the brief. In addition to the performance, students will complete three written tasks, similar in style to coursework, produced under supervised exam conditions.

The assessment of each of the units takes place in a 12-week time frame given by the exam board. All coursework is completed on computers and in exam conditions and for all assignments students are permitted notes to support their progress.

Assessment Model

Component 1 (internally assessed assignments, 30%)

Component 2 (internally assessed assignments, 30%)

Component 3 (externally assessed task, 40%)

Note: Students **will** be expected to perform practical pieces in front of each other. Delivery of the course is planned to facilitate time to develop confidence in the class, but practical exploration and performance is a course requirement. All components comprise of a combination of practical exploration, performance and written coursework meaning the practical/theory assessment for the course is weighted at roughly 50% each.

Sport

Exam Board	Pearson	Qualification	Level 2 BTEC (Edexcel)
-------------------	---------	----------------------	------------------------

Course Overview

This course covers theoretical aspects of sport, which whenever possible will be taught in a practical context.

The course is made up of three components:

1. Preparing Participants to Take Part in Sport and Physical Activity - internally assessed via three written assignments and one practical leadership session.
2. Taking Part and Improving Other Participants' Sporting Performance - internally assessed via three written assignments and assessing your practical ability in a selected sport.
3. Developing Fitness to Improve Other Participants' Performance in Sport and Physical Activity - assessed at the end of Year 11 with a written exam.

Overview of Course Content

Component 1: Preparing Participants to Take Part in Sport and Physical Activity

- Explore the different **types and provision of sport and physical activity** available for different types of participants, and **barriers to participation and ways to overcome these barriers** to increase participation in sport and physical activity.
- They will also research **equipment and technological advances** in a chosen sport or physical activity.
- **How to prepare our bodies** for participation in sport and physical activity.

Component 2: Taking Part and Improving Other Participants' Sporting Performance

- Investigate the components of fitness and their effect on performance, **take part in practical sport**, explore the **role of officials** in sport and learn to **apply methods and sporting drills to improve other participants' sporting performance**.
- Within this you must produce a series of **video clips** that will demonstrate sports skills for your selected sport being demonstrated in isolated practices and sports skills and strategies being demonstrated in competitive situations.

Component 3: Developing Fitness to Improve Other Participants' Performance in Sport & Physical Activity

- Develop an understanding of the importance of fitness and the **different types of fitness** for performance in sport and physical activity. They will also **develop an understanding of the body and fitness testing**.

To succeed in this course it is essential that you demonstrate a willingness to participate fully in every lesson; only a small part of this course will be practical. Some units also require photographic or video evidence to demonstrate that students have achieved the success criteria. For further guidance please seek the advice of your PE teacher.

Assessment Model

Component 1: Four internal coursework tasks including the planning and delivery of a session to your peers.

Component 2: Three out of the four internal coursework tasks will be taught during Year 10, but all tasks have to be assessed during a set window at the start of Year 11. These will include video evidence of you performing in a sport and delivering progressive drills to improve others.

Component 3: Written exam, 1hr 30mins

Reduced Options

(By Invitation Only)

Each year, a small number of students are identified as likely to benefit from studying two option subjects rather than three. This reduced options pathway leads to the award of **seven GCSE qualifications**.

Students following the reduced options pathway in Years 10 and 11 should select **two option subjects** on their options form. There is no expectation that these students choose History, Geography, or Spanish, although they may do so if they wish to continue their studies in any of these subject areas.

The school will carefully review each student's option choices before determining how best to support their progress during Years 10 and 11. This support will typically involve allocating **double option time** to one of the selected subjects (10 hours per fortnight instead of the usual 5). In most cases, this additional time will be assigned to a subject with a significant coursework component.

Example:

- **Reduced Options Student:** *The student selects GCSE History and GCSE Art.*
- **Proposed School Support:** *Double option time is allocated to GCSE Art.*
- **Rationale:** *GCSE Art includes substantial coursework and requires consistent, high-quality homework. Double option time allows students to complete much of this coursework in school, which in turn supports improved homework completion across other subjects.*
 - *Once the Art GCSE is completed (typically in April of Year 11), the school may review and adjust this support by reallocating the double option time to GCSE History if appropriate.*

Students who are considered likely to benefit from the reduced options pathway will be approached directly by the school. Parents and carers will also be contacted to provide further information and to explain how this pathway may support their child's overall progress.

Careers & Work-Related Learning

In Years 10 and 11, careers information is provided through the tutorial programme and through dedicated part-day or whole-day work-related learning events, for which your normal timetable is suspended. These events typically involve employers and other work-related advisors and take place in school, but some involve visits to other locations, including local businesses. Some key examples are the annual Next Steps Day and our careers workshop focussed You're Hired! event. These events are popular and well regarded by the students.

Careers information and impartial advice and guidance (IAG) equips students with the knowledge, skills and understanding to manage their own lifelong learning and career development. Through IAG, students have the opportunity to develop a positive view of themselves, to raise their aspirations and to take responsibility for their own careers. They can explore the nature of careers and work so that they are better able to recognise opportunities and cope with change.

Students will become more familiar with online platforms such as Unifrog which they will receive training on both in assemblies, National Careers week as well as sessions in their PCRE lessons. Online platforms such as this (and others) provide valuable labour market information and numerous resources to support students on their careers journey through the school.

It is also likely that students will visit a university for a tailor-made open day as well as take part in events planned and facilitated by careers specialists NSSW (Next Steps South West) and NCS (National Careers Service). Also included as part of the Year 10 careers offer is a trip to a PETROC taster day and the option to view Exeter College.

At Key Stage 4, activities are designed to continue to develop the following themes: self-development, career exploration and career management. A range of topics will be explored, including:

- **careers information sources,**
- **preparation for work skills,**
- **job seeking,**
- **labour market information,**
- **CV writing,**
- **financial capacity & understanding,**
- **progression routes open to students post-16,**
- **higher education,**
- **apprenticeships, and**
- **interview skills.**

We also anticipate facilitating student participation in a week of work experience in the summer term of Year 10. Our provision for careers and work-related learning (including work experience week) is an ever-moving, fluid picture as we continue to look to provide the best guidance and experience to all students.

Our careers goal is to ensure that students continue to explore their options as they start to think about **“The Next Best Step”** in terms of their post-16 options and post-18 aspirations.

For further information please speak to or contact Head of Careers, Mr Vale on rvale@ilfracombeacademy.uk.

Comparison of Grading Structures

Old GCSE grades	New GCSE grades	Vocational qualification levels
A*	9	Level 2 Distinction *
A	8	Level 2 Distinction
B	7	Level 2 Merit
C	6	Level 2 Pass
D	5	Level 1 Distinction
E	4	Level 1 Merit
F	3	Level 1 Pass
G	2	
U	1	
U	U	

How to Complete Your Options Form

You **MUST** fill in your name and tutor group.

You **MUST** select one subject from Category 1 – tick one choice only.

You must select two subjects from Category 2 – tick TWO choices.

You must select two reserve choices from Category 2 – mark TWO choices with an R.

For example, if you would like to study Geography, Design Technology and Health and Social Care, with reserve choices of Art and Media Studies, your form would look like this:

Key Stage 4 Options Form (September 2026 - July 2028)

Version 1 Jan 26

Name **Ann Example**

Tutor Group ... **9RG**

1. Select your **compulsory option** (history, geography or Spanish) by placing a number 1 against your chosen subject.
2. Select your highest priority **open option** subject by placing a number 2 against your chosen subject.
3. Select your second priority **open option** subject by placing a number 3 against your chosen subject.
4. Select one **reserve subject** by placing an R against your reserve choice subject.
5. **Return** your completed form to your tutor or to the main school reception by the deadline.

Compulsory Option (Pick one = 1)		Open Options (Pick two and rank; 2 = highest priority, 3 = second priority) (Pick one reserve = R)					
		Historically 3 classes (lowest risk of re-coursing)		Historically 2 classes (medium risk of re-coursing)		Historically 1 class only (highest risk of re-coursing)	
History		History	R	Art		Music	
Geography	1	Geography		Photography	2	Performing Arts	
Spanish		Spanish		Design Technology		Business	
				Hospitality & Catering		Religious Studies	
				Sport		Media Studies	3
						Health & Social Care	

Deadline: Friday 30th January 2026

The form in this booklet is for information only. You will be given an A4 form to complete and hand in.



Front cover: [KS4 Photography Coursework](#)

Back cover: [KS4 Art Coursework](#)

For more information about Options 2026 please contact:

[Mr James Twomey, Deputy Headteacher](#)

[Mr James Greenaway, Head of Year 9](#)

The Ilfracombe Academy
Worth Road
Ilfracombe
Devon
EX34 9JB

Tel: 01271 863427

Email: admin@ilfracombeacademy.uk

Web: www.ilfracombeacademy.uk

