

# MAKING SUBJECT CHOICES FOR S3, S4 AND BEYOND

**During second and third year you'll be encouraged to think about your future learning and career pathways. You'll also need to make decisions about which subjects and courses to take in the senior phase.**

This isn't always easy, but it is important!

Your choices in school do affect your future career and apprenticeship, college or university options. So, it's worth thinking them through properly and planning ahead.

What matters most is taking the subjects and courses that suit **you** best.

The range of subjects and courses open to you will depend on your school, and its partners. These may include local colleges and community, youth and voluntary groups. Each school develops a curriculum to suit the needs of its own pupils.

At the end of third year you'll be given the opportunity to review your subject choices; your teachers will use your S3 profile to help you decide which subjects and qualifications you want to study in fourth year and beyond.



**Remember it's important to choose courses that will keep your future study and career options open.**

## THE "DOS AND DON'TS" OF SUBJECT CHOICE

### Do ...

- subjects that you will enjoy
- what you're good at - and can do well in
- look back at your achievements – what have you done well?
- subjects that are right for you – ones that relate to your interests, abilities and strengths
- think ahead - about what you might like to do when you leave school
- find out about careers and the different pathways you can take to get into them
- check which subjects and qualifications you might need, or find helpful, to get into any careers or courses you are interested in
- think about the skills you will need to be successful in the future
- keep your options open by taking a balanced set of subjects
- ask for help or information if and when you need it
- ask to see your school's career adviser if you need help planning your career
- talk to your parents or carers about your ideas and options.



## Don't ...

- choose a subject just because you like the teacher
- choose a subject without finding out as much as you can about it – including how it will be taught
- pick a subject just so you can be in the same class as your friends
- worry if you have no clear career ideas yet – keep your options open
- choose a subject because you think it's easy
- limit your future career options by thinking that some subjects and careers are only for girls or boys.

## HOW TO CHOOSE

Here are some steps you can take to help you choose.

### 1 Work out which subjects you like most

SUBJECTS I LIKE

### 2 Work out which subjects you are good at

SUBJECTS I AM GOOD AT

Check with your teachers that they agree with your assessment of how well you are doing.

### 3 Find out about any subjects you haven't studied before

You can do this by:

- reading the school's Options Guide or Booklet
- talking to the teachers who are delivering the subject
- reading the subject descriptions in the 'Schools > Nationals' section of the Planit website at [www.planitplus.net/Nationals](http://www.planitplus.net/Nationals)

Note down any new subjects you might be interested in studying.

### SUBJECTS I MIGHT LIKE TO STUDY


See the section below on **Explore future career options** for online activities to help you think about the link between subjects and careers.

### 4 Think about your skills and interests

In Planit there are a number of interactive tools to help you think about your skills, strengths, interests and qualities. Login to or register for a Planit Portfolio account to access these and to save your results.

#### MY STRONGEST SKILLS ARE


#### MY KEY STRENGTHS ARE


#### MY FAVOURITE INTERESTS & ACTIVITIES ARE


### 5 Explore future career options

If you don't have a particular career in mind yet, don't worry, as lots of young people are the same. What you can do is do some research into the link between the subjects you study at school and what careers might suit you.



The information and interactive tools at [www.planitplus.net](http://www.planitplus.net) can help you to do this. Have a look at the following and complete the activity below.

- CareerMatch – a quiz that helps you identify careers that might interest you
- Subject Choice – a tool that allows you to choose different combinations of subjects to see what careers match
- Subject/career list – lists careers related to each school subject, with links to job profiles
- Career Areas and Careers A-Z – information on

working in different career areas and links to related job profiles.

### Activity

- Think about **two or three** jobs or types of career you might like to do in the future.
- Find out which, if any, subjects you **must** have to get in to each career. These are **essential** subjects.
- Find out which subjects might be **useful** to you in getting into this career.

MY CAREER IDEAS	ESSENTIAL SUBJECTS	USEFUL SUBJECTS



**Does it look like you might have to take a subject you are not doing well in? If so, speak to your pastoral care teacher and careers adviser for advice.**

Thinking of going to university? Some university courses including: Dentistry, Dietetics, Engineering, Medicine, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Radiography and Science ask applicants for at least two science subjects.

### WHERE TO GET HELP AND INFORMATION

You can get help and information from:

- your parents or carers
- your subject teachers who can give you information on career pathways related to their subject
- your guidance, pupil support or pastoral care teacher who can help you think about what might suit you best
- your school career adviser
- the careers library in school (or your local Skills Development Scotland centre)
- the **Nationals in a Nutshell** website which is a useful source of information on National Qualification courses for parents and pupils: [www.npfs.org.uk](http://www.npfs.org.uk)

**My career adviser / coach is:**



[www.planitplus.net](http://www.planitplus.net)




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## OPTION CHOICE CHECKLIST

Check that you're on the right track. This checklist sets out some action points that will help you to make realistic and suitable choices. Check off each item, or date it, as you complete it.

Action Points	Completed
Read the school Options Guide carefully.	
Make sure I understand the Subject Options Form and know how to fill it in.	
Find out who I can ask for help if, or when, I need it.	
Find out what each subject or course involves.	
Talk about my option choices with my parents or carers.	
Think about what I really like, and what interests me most. (You usually do better at the subjects you really enjoy.)	
Think about how well I am doing in my subjects now. What am I really good at?	
Find out if I will need any specific subjects to get into the career, or career area, I am interested in. What are they?	
Check if I have left my future career options as open as possible.	
Check that I am choosing my subjects for the right reasons. (Wanting to stay in the same class as your friends, or liking the teacher doesn't count.)	
Check that I've not ruled a subject (or career) out just because people might think it's a 'boys' or 'girls' subject.	
Think about the skills I am good at and the skills I need to develop in the future. Which courses or other opportunities will help me develop these?	