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# Subject Choice for

# Parents/Carers of S3

**Parents/carers have a very important role to play in helping their child make decisions on the subjects they take at school and the subsequent course or career they decide to follow after leaving school.**

# http://strategicbusinessacademy.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/choices-1200x478.jpg

# So how can you help?

**Subject Choices**

When making subject choices, things can seem a little overwhelming, and, when helping a young person make them, you may not know where to begin! Before rushing into anything, it is worthwhile simply taking the time to consider some of the following. Hopefully this information will prove useful when looking to make any upcoming decisions.  
  
**General considerations** for yourself and the young person:

* **Be prepared to talk and listen openly – the best decisions are made jointly**
* **Strengths and skills they have and what they may need for the workplace**
* **Use any knowledge you have about the world of work to consider career choices**
* **If they have a career in mind, are there any specific subject requirements that are necessary?**
* **Ability and enjoyment – is the young person going to be successful in the subject? Will they enjoy it?**
* **What are they looking to do after school?**
* **Forward plan! Although it may seem too soon to be thinking about the future, consideration now will mean you’re more prepared for the future**

Looking ahead – **Career decisions:**

* **Through Learner Journey classes in school, students are told about the 8 main experiences which will ultimately develop into a Career** (Employment, College, University, Modern apprenticeship, Training, Volunteering, Running Own Business, and work/ gap experience)
* **Modern Apprenticeships are increasingly being used by employers to recruit professional trainees in finance, engineering, construction, ICT, sport, as well as the traditional trades**
* If thinking about university or college then there may be some **subject requirements for courses in particular (these could be a combination of National 5s and Highers):**
* Medicine, Veterinary & Dentistry – Maths, Chemistry, Biology & English
* Teaching – Maths (National 5 ‘B’ minimum) and English (at Higher)
* Science subjects – often require Maths as well as Sciences either directly related to the discipline or complementary to the subject
* Although some courses will have very specific entry requirements, some are happy with a **broad range** of subjects
* There is **no one route into higher education**. Entry can be gained upon completion of articulating college courses, through work, or following other vocational qualifications all as direct applications.

**Preparing for Life after School**

It is a priority of Earlston High School to ensure that all of our youngsters are ready for the world of work when they leave school.

The future world of work demands that each of them has to be equipped with transferable and sustainable employability skills that will allow them to successfully move from one job/career to another. It is, therefore, vitally important that every opportunity is taken to develop and demonstrate key skills and qualities throughout the years at school.

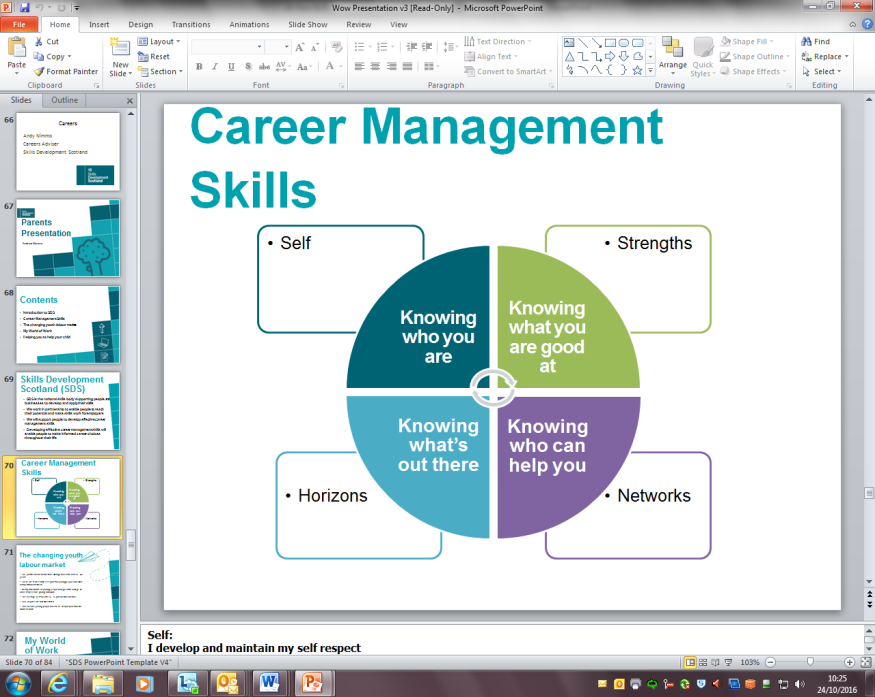
Employers are increasingly informing us of the importance of these skills in particular:

***Communication, Time Management, Initiative, Working with Others, Problem Solving, ICT skills, Resilience, Motivation, Flexibility, Organisation and Creativity***

There are many ways of developing and demonstrating these skills through activities in and out of school. These include:

* Leadership roles
* Vocational and Personal Development awards
* Through school course activities and experiences
* Work-based learning (including work placements and volunteering)
* Involvement in school clubs, groups, events and shows
* Community groups and projects
* Trip and excursions

As part of this process, it is crucially important that each youngster also develops Career Management Skills. These are:

* **Self** – being aware of personal qualities and interests
* **Strengths** – being aware of own skills and abilities
* **Horizons** – researching different options and routes to employment
* **Networks** – seeking help and advice from various sources

In order to maximise the chances of success, it is really important that these aspects are considered along with subject choices when planning for the future.

Before going any further it may be helpful for yourself and the young person to consider the following questions alongside any decisions you are making.

Answer each question ranging from 5 definitely yes, to 1, definitely no. What scores the highest?

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| Questions  Subjects | Do I like this subject? | Am I good at this subject? | Do I need this subject for the careers I’m considering? | Am I choosing this subject regardless of what subjects my friends are doing? | Does my teacher think I will be able to succeed in this course? | Total |
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**Which subjects would be chosen and why?**

Although there is no definitive list of areas within which you can find work, there are some **key skills sectors in Scotland** that could assist in narrowing future plans and thus subject choices. Note that the entry requirements noted can be different across establishments and can change over time. It is important to do your own research when required.

* **Chemical sciences** – Salaries: range £20000 - £62500 + averaging **£47,500 \*& 9,000** people employed across Scotland. There looks to be an increasing number of job opportunities.

INCLUDES: Biotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, petrochemical & more

There are growing numbers of apprenticeships within this sector. This has created the opportunity to earn whilst you learn. There is also a growing market for Scottish exports making this a growing sector.

*Going forward... As this is a more Science based path, Biology and Chemistry would be helpful and a broad range of subjects to accompany would maintain a breadth of options.*



* **Construction** – Salaries: range £25000- £65000 + averaging **£41,500\* & 178,400** employed across Scotland with much of those being opportunities for young people.

INCLUDES: Bricklayers, joiners, architects, civil engineers & more

As with other sectors, there is an aging cohort meaning that future opportunities could be significant. There are multiple routes into the sector and subsequently there is a great deal of opportunity within it.

*Going forward... Although many courses within this sector often do not have specific entry requirements Maths and Design/Technology based subjects would provide a solid foundation. However for careers such as Civil Engineering, Maths and Physics are often core entry requirements*

* **Energy** – Salaries: range £25000- £47500 + averaging **£37,500\* & 125,000** employed within Scotland. Areas of the sector are developing steadily.

INCLUDES: Renewables, nuclear waste management, oil, gas & more

Within Scotland there is a massive drive on renewable energy sources. This means that in the coming years over 15,000 more recruits are required to achieve all renewable energy sources by 2020.

*Going forward... dependant on the area within which an individual is seeking to work there could be slight variations in requirements. Having Sciences – Physics and Chemistry – will leave you in a good position and Maths is likely to also be of assistance.*

* **Engineering** – Salaries: range £27500- £60000 + averaging **£47,500\* & 120,000** employed across Scotland alongside increasing opportunities for growth.

INCLUDES: Mechanical, aviation, medical, transport, defence & more

It is predicted that double the numbers of our current workforce will be required by 2022. There is also a huge range of different areas within the sector.

*Going forward... Engineering is such a diverse sector that the directions available to people to choose from to progress vary depending on specialism. Regardless of this, subject choices are often rather uniform. These include Physics and Maths, with some employers looking for a Design and Technology subject choice as well.*

* **Financial services** – Salaries: range £23000 - £60000 + averaging **£32,500\* & 85,000** employed within Scotland. This has been a steadily growing sector.

INCLUDES: Advisors, supply chain, ICT & more

As an industry there is the potential to obtain professional qualifications on the job. There is also an increasing need for ICT and customer service professionals as the banking industry becomes more digital through banking apps etc.

*Going forward... ,Considering a career within the sector there are some subjects such as business, maths and English that will assist in course entry at a later date*

*  **Food and drink** – Salaries: range£17000- £35000 + averaging **£25,000 \*& 18,850** people employed across Scotland. This sector has increasing job opportunities.

INCLUDES: Marketing, production, food sciences, logistics & more

One of the largest areas of Scottish export, there is a great deal of diversity in relation to the available roles, as well as there being many apprenticeship opportunities across the sector.

*Going forward... Although diverse certain subjects may assist you in progressing: Business/ Finance, Maths, a Science and English.*

* **Health and social services** – Salaries: range £21000 - £70000 + averaging **£32,500\* & 137,000** people employed across Scotland in NHS alone. Nearly 60,000 private sector posts as well with there being increasing demand for professionals.

INCLUDES: Public or private roles, care giving, administrative & more

As an area with an increasingly ageing workforce, there are going to be many opportunities within the sector. This, combined with its growth over recent years makes it a good area to consider within career choices.

*Going forward... with there being such a range of opportunity the end destination is key here. For Medicine Biology and Chemistry, Maths and English are necessary. Dependant on other choices, the more practical careers like Nursing would still require sciences.*

* **ICT and digital technologies** – Salaries: range £20500 - £47000 + averaging **£26,000\* & 80,000** people employed across Scotland with growth expected.

INCLUDES: Working across every sector as developers, programmers, managers & more  
Quickly expanding sector, it is projected that 11,000 job opportunities will be created annually in order to satisfy demand.

*Going forward... of course, having ICT as a subject would prove to be beneficial although not essential as would having a Science such as Physics. Alongside these a broad range of subjects including Graphic communication, Art & Design and business could all prove useful.*

* **Life sciences** – Salaries: range £19000 –£ 50000+ averaging **£37,500\* & 30,000** employed within Scotland. This sector has strong future growth prospects.  
  INCLUDES: Research assistant, marketing manager, biologist & more

With this sector looking to potentially double its economic contribution to £6.2 billion by 2020 there is considerable growth in job opportunities.

*Going forward... Within the life sciences there is clearly an array of options when considering specialism however in order to obtain a good foundation, Biology, Chemistry and Maths are helpful in maintaining an element of choice.*

* **Tourism** – Salaries: £20000 - £45000 + averaging **£29,000\* & 13,040** employed across Scotland as well as there being growth forecast.  
  INCLUDES: Chefs, events organisers, hotel managers, tour guides & more  
  This industry has seen steady growth in recent years. This is expected to continue with billions projected as visitor (inward and outward) spends by 2020 – there are a great variety of roles within the sector.

*Going forward... Within this sector, there are many avenues to pursue. Such a broad spectrum means that an equally broad range of choices would leave options open. Of course catering would require Food Technology to be obtained and the more managerial roles would benefit from a business perspective. Along the same lines, both Maths and English would be helpful.*

***\*******Although average salaries and promotion opportunities are highlighted here, please note that there are many other factors that are important in being happy in a job; location, hours worked, good relationships with colleagues and the benefit that you can give to others through your work for example.***

This guide is **by no means meant to prove exhaustive** when assisting yourself and young persons in making their subject choices. If there are any questions that have gone unanswered then there are numerous resources that you can turn to for **further useful information**:

My World of Work, National Parent Forum of Scotland, Earlston High School website, SCQF & UCAS websites, **Andy Nimmo – careers advisor** & University websites.

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/> (Skills Development Scotland website covering all aspects of the Labour Market in Scotland)

<http://www.parentforumscotland.org/> (website containing many helpful news articles and supporting information for parents)

<http://www.earlstonhigh.scotborders.sch.uk/> and <http://ehsguidance.weebly.com/careers-and-choices.html> (information about the school including subject information and opportunities available in the school community, as well as links to resources)

<http://scqf.org.uk/>(information about how the Scotland qualification system operates)

<https://www.ucas.com/> (University application website containing information about courses as well as helpful articles about applying for courses)

<https://planitplus.net/> (containing information about jobs, apprenticeships, and courses in Scotland particularly good for course search in Scotland)

[http://www.bewhatyouwant.org.uk](http://www.bewhatyouwant.org.uk/) (website aimed at getting young people involved in ‘STEM’ subjects and careers in ‘shortage areas’ but with good parents information section as well)



On page 8 is a grid which may be useful for you to map out a potential journey over the next few years which will be not only help you to plan out at least in outline what you may want to do for the next 2/3 years, but also is helpful for guidance, support teachers, careers, SMT and subject teachers to assist you in making sure the correct choices are made.

If your son / daughter is unable to decide what they want to do that is OK, it means that options need to be kept as open as possible and the target should be to get the best possible results from any exams to give the maximum opportunity from the subjects selected. It would also be good to get some work / voluntary experience in areas that they may have an interest in, to ‘test out’ this particular sector of work

Remember ideas will change, for many, over the next few years, so use the information sources above to help keep track of how any changes may impact on you.

