



Gracemount High School 2017/18

S4/6 Course Choice

**“Committed to
Care and Excellence”**

Dear Parent/Carer

As you may be aware, pupils in S4-6 form a single cohort for the senior phase and will share many classes and options. This approach enables us to offer a very rich course choice, full of a variety of options which we believe will ensure all pupils can elect to follow a curriculum which best suits their own needs.

The senior years in school can be the most enjoyable and rewarding time of a student's school career. Within the environment of the senior phase students are expected to take more responsibility for their own learning and are encouraged to contribute to the wider community life of the school.

Gracemount High School will offer a range of courses at Advanced Higher, Higher and National 3-5 levels to maximise opportunity for all students. We also offer a wide range of vocational, college and work-based learning opportunities which allow for several different personalised pathways for all learners. As is the case in all schools, however, some of the courses shown on the "Course Choice Sheet" may have to be withdrawn because too few students choose the course or because of timetable and staffing constraints. If this is the case we will be in contact to discuss the options available.

The school is committed to supporting all pupils to a positive and sustained destination post school. The decision for S5 and S6 pupils to return to school is an important one and students should be clear about the reason for continuing their education. It is expected that senior students will demonstrate a high level of commitment to their studies. There is an expectation that pupils behave in a mature and adult manner, adhere to the school dress code, guarantee punctuality, good attendance and commit themselves fully to their studies. Senior pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own actions. The school is committed to supporting all pupils to a positive and sustained destination post school.

Should you have any questions or require information regarding course choice arrangements please contact your child's Guidance Teacher in the first instance - Mrs Ellis, Mr Whale and Mrs O'Connell.

Yours sincerely

Mr Ross Hunter
Head Teacher

Exams and Qualifications

At the end of S3 pupils will enter the senior phase and choose subjects to study towards qualifications. Gracemount High school offer qualifications at the levels below. Pupils can work at a wide range of levels in different subjects, aiming to achieve the highest possible qualifications in as many subjects as possible.

Qualification levels offered
Advanced Higher
Higher
National 5
National 4 (no final examination)
National 3 (no final examination)

Other Achievement & Qualifications

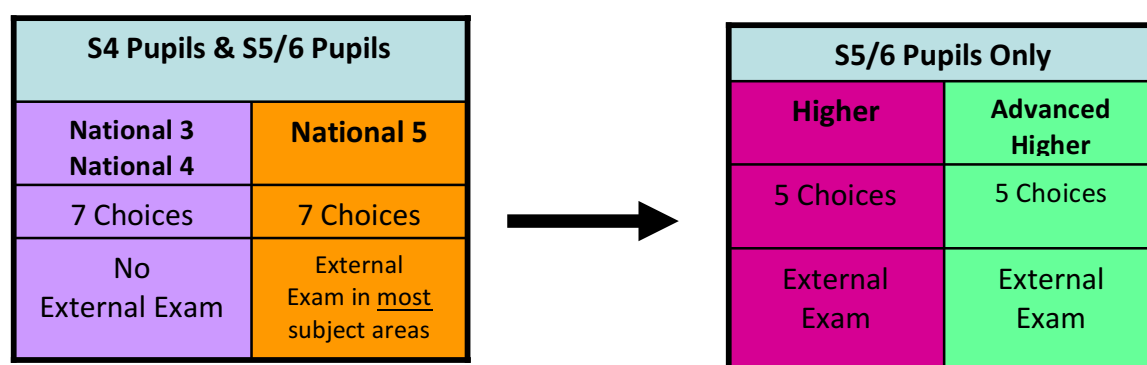
We also offer vocational and personal development opportunities through the following options:

Vocational & personal development opportunities		
Sports Leaders	Job + Education + Training (JET)	Childcare
Sport & Recreation	Volunteering award + Saltire	Mandarin
Computer Games design	College	Practical cake craft
Cyber security	Foundation apprenticeships	Travel & Tourism
Retail	Mandarin	Independent living skills
Dance Leaders	Public speaking/debating	Lab skills
Global citizenship	Service to the school	Design, engineer, construct.

The Senior Phase (S4-6)

Senior pupils have a wide range of qualifications to follow and the amount of subjects they choose will be dependant. Advice on this can be found on the course choice sheets and any further assistance with this process should be referred to the relevant Guidance Teacher.

It is possible that pupils will sit a mixture of National & Higher courses throughout the senior phase.



Course Choice Process

This Section on the school website contains information and advice for students entering S4, S5 and S6.

All the departments in the school have included a detailed description of the courses available and the levels offered in each subject. They have highlighted the skills that will be developed through the course and the future career pathways in which pupils could progress.

Investigating Course Choice

For students entering the senior phase the course choices made will have significant impact on future career and educational opportunities.

Before making choices about courses to study it is important that students find out as much information as possible about the opportunities available and the qualification required for entry to the job or career areas which interest them.

A little research at this stage ensures that mistakes are not made in choosing inappropriate courses.

Within the school students can obtain valuable information by:

- Asking for advice on course choice from their Guidance Teacher.
- attending an appointment with the school Careers Adviser to find out about job/career opportunities.
- Accessing the My World of World careers website at <http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk>
- Discussing appropriate levels of progress with their teachers (course choice sheets must be signed off by a teacher, agreeing with the level chose

Choosing a Course

Having researched the opportunities available students should be in a strong position to make their course choice.

When choosing individual courses students should think carefully about:

- Advice from their current teachers, teachers must sign off the course choice form to confirm the choice has been made at the appropriate level of study.
- which subjects they enjoy most and are best at. We encourage all pupils to take their strongest subjects to the highest level possible for them.
- Qualifications required for entry to a job, Further Education College or University. Researching this as early as possible is key to avoid disappointment in the future.

S5/6 Pupils Returning to Full-time Education

Pupils should be aware that they are returning into **full-time education**. All Pupils should be expected to follow a full timetable comprising of up to 7 courses. This will vary dependant on levels of subjects being sat. Pupils will have the opportunity to include volunteering & work experience as part of their timetable in S5/6, this will be planned and agreed upon before it is put in place.

If pupils are not willing to commit to a full time education and all this entails, then a discussion around the best progression pathway will take place.

Pupils whose sixteenth birthday falls on or after the 1st October cannot leave school until the end of the term at Christmas, even if employment can be obtained. In a few cases, it may be possible for students to begin a full-time college course or undertaken work experience. This arrangement can be made only with the written consent of the school.

1 & 2 period options

This session some departments are offering 1 or 2 period options. These will be designed to allow pupils to gain a skill which will benefit them in their Life, learning or future work and in some cases also gain a unit towards a qualification which will increase their achievements within the school. These are in place to avoid too much "spare time" when the time could be put to better use. Pupils will be guided towards 1 or 2 period options if they have several gaps in their course choices.

Presentation for SQA Examinations

Normally all those students who embark on a National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher course will be presented for the examination.

However, where coursework is unsatisfactory, and/or the formal assessment mark low, the department concerned may recommend that the student should not be presented.

If the School's professional judgement is that it is in the best interest of the student to withdraw from a subject, parents will be informed by letter and asked to ratify the recommendation.

After S4 there are several options open to students:

- **Staying on at school** - this involves selecting relevant subjects to be studied during S5 or S6 and needs careful consideration. The Careers Adviser can discuss career ideas and help student's select appropriate subjects.
- **University** - Many students will be aiming to enter **Higher Education** after completing S5/6 - the Careers Adviser and Guidance Teachers can give information about the range of courses offered by universities and colleges and discuss entry requirements and graduate destinations. A UCAS application must be completed for any University entry.
- **Going to college** - the Careers Adviser can provide information about suitable courses, entry requirements, progression routes and funding.
- **Training** - the Careers Advisers can give information about Skillseeker and Modern Apprenticeship programmes including availability, vocational qualifications and training allowances.
- **Entering employment** - the Careers Adviser can raise awareness of local labour market opportunities and discuss the qualifications, skills and personal qualities required. The Career Development Centre has details of vacancies available throughout Edinburgh and the Lothian's.