

ANNEX 26 - Overview of the Impact of Size of Sixth Form on the Curriculum Offer

Sixth Forms in Suffolk vary enormously in size from the smallest at around 75 students to the largest at around 500 students. Clearly the number of students will have a link to the number of subject groups an institution is able to offer and this will then impact on the variety of courses and subjects from which students can choose. To timetable these courses subjects will be put into option blocks. Depending on how these are constructed these can limit a student's choice even further, especially in a smaller institution that is not able to run more than one group of a subject across more than one option block and so increase the number of possible combination of subjects students can take.

For an average sized Suffolk Sixth Form (150 Year 12 students)

Assuming an average group size of 15 in a Year 12 group of 150 students on AS programmes, with the average number of AS subjects being taken of 3.5 per student, the following number of groups would be available:

$$150 \times 3.5 = 525 \text{ student spaces} / 15 = 35 \text{ groups}$$

These could be arranged in a number of ways but the most common would either be in 4 blocks with 8 groups in each block (and 3 General Studies groups at a different time that would be open to all) or in 5 blocks of 7 groups with General Studies integrated in the main blocks.

An example of a curriculum like this would be:

| Block A | Block B | Block C | Block D | Block E |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Biology | Art | Biology | Business Studies | General Studies x 3 |
| Business Studies | English Literature | Chemistry | Design Technology | |
| Drama | History | French | English Literature | |
| English Language | Leisure and Recreation | Health and Social Care Single Award | Geography | |
| Health and Social Care Double Award | Maths with Statistics | History | Health and Social Care Double Award | |
| History | Psychology | Maths with Mechanics | Media Studies | |
| ICT | Sociology | PE | Physics | |
| Media Studies | Travel and Tourism | Sociology | Psychology | |

This particular curriculum would give students a choice of 23 AS levels with multiple groups in 8 of these subjects enabling a wider variety of choice combinations for students. Clearly the number of groups in any one subject and the arrangement of subjects within these blocks would change from year to year depending on the choices of the students.

For a small sized Suffolk Sixth Form (50 Year 12 students)

In the smallest of our Sixth Forms students have a curriculum made up of 5 Blocks with 2 or 3 subjects in each block and no multiple groups. This clearly restricts choice and if student choices need the arrangement of the blocks to be changed it can be much harder to do this. For example:

| Block A | Block B | Block C | Block D | Block E |
|---------|--------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Art | Chemistry | PE | Geography | Photography |
| Biology | English Literature | English Language | Maths | Physics |
| | History | ICT | | |

In this example many of the students had selected Biology, PE, English Language and ICT. It was very difficult for the school to move these subjects around to enable every student to get their first choice of subjects, with no capacity for multiple groups and only 12 AS subjects to choose from clearly options are much more limited here than in the previous example.

For a large sized Suffolk Sixth Form (275 Year 12 students)

In our largest institution the following curriculum exists:

| Block A | Block B | Block C | Block D | Block E |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Biology | Biology | Biology | Art (3 groups) | General Studies (for all – 1 period a week) |
| Business Studies (2 groups) | Chemistry | Chemistry | Biology | |
| English Literature | English Language | Design Technology (2 groups) | Business Studies | |
| Geography | English Literature | Economics | Chemistry (2 groups) | |
| German | Geography | English Language | Computing (2 groups) | |
| History | Government and Politics | English Literature | English Language | |
| Human Biology | ICT | French | English Literature | |
| Mathematics (2 groups) | Mathematics | History (2 groups) | Geography | |
| Media Studies (2 groups) | Music | ICT | Home Economics | |
| Photography | Psychology (2 groups) | Media Studies | Mathematics | |
| Physics | Sociology | Performance Studies (2 groups) | Psychology (2 groups) | |
| Psychology | Spanish | Photography | Sociology | |
| Religious Studies | PE | Physics | Double Mathematics | |
| Double Mathematics | Double Science AVCE | Psychology (2 groups) | Double Business Studies AVCE | |
| Double Business Studies AVCE | Electronics | Film Studies | | |
| Double Science AVCE | Textiles | | | |

This is based on 275 students doing 4 AS subjects each (all students also follow a General Studies AS programme). It gives students the option to study 36 different AS subjects and by putting multiple groups into the same option blocks it gives a further opportunity for wider curriculum choices. For example 2 History groups in the same block can study different time periods without narrowing overall subject combinations by placing one specific period in one specific block which may clash with another chosen subject.