



# FUTURE SKILLS

Rationale and Details for Staff and FAQ

# Curriculum Consultation Context

- During the consultation of Parents, Students and Staff a number of key issues were raised by all contributor groups:
  - Importance of skills beyond those covered by GCSEs was highlighted and reinforced.
  - The importance of study skills, and study time was highlighted, on top of the need for a full range of co-curricular activities.
  - Skills to apply, and empower, the knowledge that other qualifications provide.
  - The increased pressure on students resulted in greater concern for mental health.
  - The perception that reducing curriculum during the course was “failing”, and that some damage was done before the right choice was made.

# Recruitment Context

- **University Degrees, Degree Apprenticeships or other Higher Education**
  - Selection commonly includes exam results
  - Universities make offers on the basis of 8 GCSEs and 3 A-levels.
  - Selection is made, and offers awarded on that basis.
  - Broader qualifications (eg EPQ) are often factored in to lower offers, or additional UCAS points.
- **Employers**
  - Recognise the skills developed during the GCSE years, not only the grades.
  - Interviews, and therefore final opinions, focus much more on the skills achieved outside the curriculum.
  - Self assurance, awareness and knowledge of how skills are developed and improved.
  - Experience suggests recruitment proceeds much more with recruitment tests, online video tasks or interviews etc.

# What is in Future Skills?

- Bridges GLP and EGA throughout the school.

- |                           |   |                |                      |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|----------------------|
| • Business                | • Projects                              | Certificates   | • MOOCS              |
| • Personal finance        | • Debate                                | • Teamwork     | • Leadership         |
| • Politics                | • Critical thinking                     | • Independence | • Entrepreneurialism |
| • World affairs           | • Mini EPQ project<br>and presentation. | • Coaching     | • Resilience         |
| • Environmental<br>action | • Digital Skills                        | • Self help    | • Creativity ...     |
|                           |   | • Mindfulness  |                      |

# Outcome: Future Skills

- The Future Skills programme will:
  - Provide a structure for students to broadly identify and develop their skills and experiences into a personal profile that is based on their unique strengths.
  - Allow students to communicate, demonstrate and evidence the learning, skills, attributes and dispositions that are going to make them a “success”.
    - *Success criteria are too many to mention but wide and varied: happy, a positive impact on society, rich, socially engaged, inspiring, leading.*
  - Offer opportunity to work independently on curriculum work and wider projects.
  - Allow for further accredited courses where appropriate.
  - Ensure that students develop their own skills and strengths that they can both **evidence** and **communicate**.

# FAQ: Perspectives on Future Skills

- Is it right for University acceptance?
- Is it right for employability?
- Is it right for breadth of study?
- Is it academic?
- Does it preserve aspiration for students?
- Are the benefits of Future Skills worthwhile?
- Is it radical?



# Is it right for universities?

- The most selective Universities look at the GCSE grades, and not the number of grades.
- To make broad generalisations:
  - At the top end a shorter string of 9s is more valuable than a greater number of 8s.
  - In the middle, to proactively chase 7s is better than spread effort to achieve 6s
  - A greater number of 6s is more likely to tip the balance than an extra 5.
- Once the grade criteria are met, Universities are much more interested in the person, and their integration into the course and cohort, than they are about GCSEs (or 4<sup>th</sup> A-level).
- Universities have explicitly said that they would far rather greater weight was placed on project qualifications than currently because they demonstrate skills

# Oxbridge Perspective

- Excellent grades required.
- No formal GCSE requirements.
- However, GCSEs used as a “performance indicator”.
- eg “high proportion of 7,8 and 9 grades”
- Contextualised, reference will give school curriculum details.
- The background of our GCSE results is very good, so allowing for “context” we would expect to need high proportions of 8 and 9 grades.



# MedVet Perspective:

- Aptitude Tests
- Example criteria opposite.
- Value of higher grades is much greater than more grades.

## Scoring an application

An application score is generated from GCSE and UCAT results as well as a contextual element as follows:

### GCSE

Each application will receive a score for academic achievement based on results in seven GCSE (or equivalent) subjects. The subjects that will be scored are: English (both English Language and English Literature), Mathematics (or one, but not both, of Methods in Mathematics and Applications of Mathematics), Biology and Chemistry (or dual award science), plus two additional GCSEs in any subject. We will not exempt anyone from requiring a score for all identified subjects.

For the subjects specified above a minimum of grade B/6 must be offered and the scores allocated to the different grades are as follows:

8 or 9/A\* = 4

7/A = 2

6/B = 1

For each of the two unspecified subjects, a score of 2 will be allocated when an 8 or 9/A\* grade has been obtained. Lower grades will not receive a score.

The total GCSE score will be scaled to a maximum of 4.5.

Because we rank applicants according to a total score, we cannot define a GCSE grade profile that will be acceptable.

# Is it right for employability?

- As business groups, parents who are recruiters, and careers experts will reinforce:
  - The high grades might get you the **interview**, but the wider skills will **get you the job**.
- And this is only the start:
  - Once you get the job, the qualifications might enable you to **do it**, but the wider skills will enable you to **thrive and progress**.
- Even if students have the skills, they need to **communicate** the skills and **evidence** the skills before they can apply them in a role. See the hierarchy of skills.

# Everyone needs to stand out from the crowd...

- GCSEs alone won't do that
- Personal characteristics will help
- Wider experiences will help
- Confidence in communicating will make all the difference in interviews, selection days, or even online meetings.



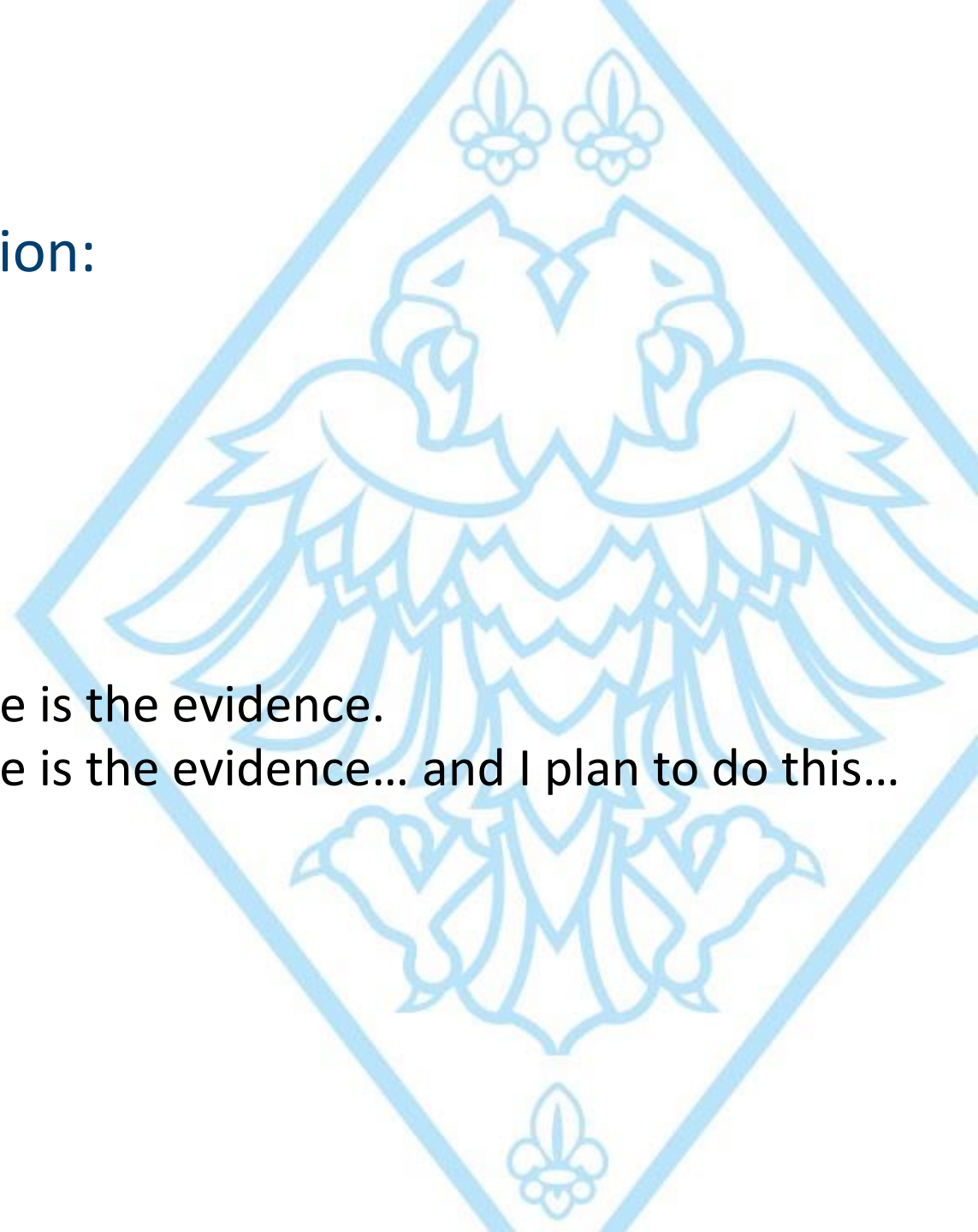
# Skills Hierarchy – what can we add to GCSE... that gives better value for students skills.

- Experience
- Acquire and Establish
- Develop
- Recognise
- Apply
- Communicate
- Evidence
- Train and Proactively pursue.



# Who would you employ?

- Hierarchy of answers to a skills based question:
  - What?
  - Maybe
  - Yes.
  - Yes, I did this...
  - Yes, I did this ... because...
  - Yes I did this ... because ... and chose ...
  - Yes I did this ... because ... and chose ... and here is the evidence.
  - Yes I did this ... because ... and chose ... and here is the evidence... and I plan to do this... next.
- Every step is an improved answer.



# Is it right for breadth of study?

- Yes, a tiny fraction of university courses are on offer at GCSE, similar pattern at A-level – broadening horizons is key.
- A lot of A-levels are “direct entry”
- Many of the skills developed will apply greater breadth than the addition of a GCSE.



# Is it academic?

- Yes, it can be if that is right for the students:
  - Option to include Higher Project Qualification
    - *GCSE equivalent, level 2*
  - The same skills at A-level increase **completion rates of uni**, improve grade of **degree**
  - Example project topics.



 <p>To research, plan and produce (own needlework) an eighteenth century ball gown.</p>	 <p>Can true happiness be found in a single moment?</p>	 <p>To what extent do genetic factors contribute to a propensity towards addiction in humans?</p>	 <p>How dimples affect the aerodynamic drag of a golf ball.</p>	 <p>Should you be concerned about mass surveillance?</p>
 <p>Could hydro-electric power be created outside our front door?</p>	 <p>How sustainable is the financial inequality between teams in the English Premier League?</p>	 <p>How can we help those suffering from elderly loneliness?</p>	 <p>Can emergency whistles be optimised for design and use in rural environments?</p>	 <p>Construction and testing of a small-scale hybrid rocket motor.</p>

# Is it radical?

- No...
- Some exam boards (NFCE) are investigating “**escape rooms**” instead of exams.
- Universities are **asking to weight** project qualifications more heavily.
- Employers want **skills** not just **knowledge**.
- IB includes a lot of taught and skills content that is not in a **curriculum**.
  - Eg Theory of knowledge, Extended Essay, Activity, Service
- Other schools have moved to curriculum with no breadth to GCSE curriculum, everything that is **not core is not GCSE**.