

Choosing Your JAMB Subject Combination

How to match your four subjects to the course you actually want

BRIX ONLINE ACADEMY / EXAM PREPARATION

Every year, candidates score well in the UTME and are still refused admission — not because of the score, but because the subjects were wrong for the course. It is the most avoidable failure in the entire admission process, and it is decided months before anyone sits the exam.

This guide sets out the method for getting it right. It deliberately does not reproduce a full list of course requirements, because those are published by JAMB each year and change. What follows is how to find, check and confirm your own combination.

How the UTME is structured

Element	Detail
Subjects	Four in total. Use of English is compulsory for every candidate , plus three subjects you select.
Questions	Use of English carries more questions than the other three, which are equally weighted.
Delivery	Computer-based, in a single timed session.
Score	Reported out of 400 across the four subjects.
What decides admission	Your UTME score, your O'level results, your post-UTME or screening performance, and the cut-off set by your chosen institution for your chosen course.

Your three chosen subjects are not free choices. JAMB specifies which subjects each course requires. Selecting a combination that does not match will disqualify you from the course regardless of your score.

The method: five steps, in this order

Step 1 — Start from the course, never from the subjects. Decide what you want to study first. Choosing subjects you find easy and then looking for a course that fits is how candidates end up in a degree they did not want.

Step 2 — Read the requirement in the current JAMB brochure. The brochure lists, for every course at every institution, the required UTME subjects and the O'level requirements. Use the edition for your year. Requirements do change.

Step 3 — Check the specific institution as well. Two universities offering the same course can differ in what they accept. Read the requirement for the exact institution you are naming as first choice.

Step 4 — Cross-check your O'level results. The UTME combination and the O'level requirement are separate hurdles. You must satisfy both. A candidate with the right UTME subjects but missing a required O'level credit is still ineligible.

Step 5 — Confirm before you register, not after. Changing your subject combination after registration is difficult and sometimes impossible. Verify everything before you pay.

Worked examples

These are the common patterns for widely chosen courses. Treat them as illustrations of how the logic works — **not** as your requirement. Confirm your own in the current brochure.

Course	Typical UTME pattern
Medicine & Surgery	Use of English, plus the three sciences — Physics, Chemistry, Biology
Pharmacy	Use of English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
Nursing	Use of English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
Engineering (all branches)	Use of English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry
Computer Science	Use of English, Mathematics, Physics, and one further science subject
Architecture	Use of English, Mathematics, Physics, and one of Chemistry, Geography or Art
Accounting	Use of English, Mathematics, Economics, and one further commercial or social science subject
Business Administration	Use of English, Mathematics, Economics, and one further social science subject
Economics	Use of English, Mathematics, Economics, and one further subject
Law	Use of English, Literature in English, and two from Government, History, CRS or IRS
Mass Communication	Use of English, Literature in English, and two further arts or social science subjects
Political Science	Use of English, Government, and two further arts or social science subjects
English Language	Use of English, Literature in English, and two further arts subjects
Agriculture	Use of English, Chemistry, Biology or Agricultural Science, and one of Physics or Mathematics

Six mistakes that cost admission

- **Choosing subjects before choosing the course.** The order matters. Work backwards from where you want to end up.
- **Using last year's requirement.** Brochure requirements are revised. Check the current edition every time.
- **Assuming all universities are identical.** Requirements vary between institutions for the same course.
- **Ignoring the O'level side.** A correct UTME combination does not rescue a missing O'level credit in a required subject.
- **Dropping Mathematics too readily.** It is required far more widely than candidates expect, particularly across commercial and science-adjacent courses.
- **Leaving the second-choice institution blank or careless.** It is a genuine fallback, and it has its own requirements.

Your confirmation checklist

Do not register until every line below is ticked.

- I have named the exact course and the exact institution.
- I have read the requirement in the brochure for the current year.
- I have checked the institution's own published requirement as well.
- My four UTME subjects match that requirement exactly, including Use of English.
- My O'level results satisfy the separate O'level requirement, including the required credits.
- I have applied the same checks to my second-choice institution.
- I know the cut-off mark my chosen course normally sets, and I have a realistic target above it.

Confirm with the official source. Subject requirements, cut-off marks and registration rules are set by JAMB and by individual institutions, and they change between years. Always verify in the current JAMB brochure and on your chosen institution's website before registering.