

PANGBOURNE

— A community where you can flourish —

A GUIDE TO CHOOSING SUBJECTS AT
SIXTH FORM

September 2025

THE SIXTH FORM AT PANGBOURNE COLLEGE

The Sixth Form is the time when you take ownership of your own learning and shape your future beyond school. Life inside and outside of the classroom takes on a different, more independent and more rewarding perspective, as you immerse yourself in your chosen subjects.

Your academic life will transform in many ways:

- You have more time to work on your own
- The work becomes more interesting and independent
- The classes usually become smaller
- The relationship with your teachers becomes less formal and more collaborative
- You have more autonomy and freedom of action

When you begin to prepare for university and choose courses, you hold your own destiny in your hands.

In addition, an independent boarding school offers you a multitude of ways to fulfil yourself outside the classroom: sport, music, drama, a wealth of enrichment and societies, opportunities for service, and overseas tours and expeditions. Furthermore, you are given much greater responsibility not only for yourself, but also in taking charge over the care of others. The closeness of our community and an extended Sixth Form social life will ensure that you form friendships that will last well beyond your time at school.

However, your academic work is clearly your first priority. Read this booklet and see what we have to offer you in the Sixth Form.

I am always available for consultation if I can help. In the meantime, good luck with your GCSEs!

I look forward to welcoming you to our Sixth Form.

Ms Indy Kaur
Head of Sixth Form

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SIXTH FORM

A summary of the minimum requirements for entry into A Level and BTEC courses.

SUBJECT	GCSE MINIMUM GRADES FOR ACCEPTANCE	STRONGLY RECOMMENDED	OTHER ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES	GCSE ESSENTIAL?
Applied Science	4 in Maths, Science and English		An interest in Science	Yes
Art	6 in Art	Portfolio	Creativity and Imagination	Yes
Biology	6 in Bio & Chem or 6 6 in Comb. Sc.	Good Maths	Diligence, interest; supporting A Level subjects	Yes
Business		5 in Maths & English Language	Enjoyment of problem-solving; numeracy and data handling	No
Chemistry	7 in Chemistry or 7 7 in Comb. Sc.	Good Maths	Supporting A Level subjects (Maths, Physics or Biology)	Yes
Computer Science	5 in Maths	Reasonable English	Interest in understanding how to make computers work	No
Criminology		4 in English	An interest in criminal behaviour and the criminal justice system	No
Economics	6 in Maths	Good English	Interest and willingness to keep abreast of current affairs	No
Design Technology BTEC		4 in Design Technology (if taken)	Dedication, creativity: problem-solving ability	No
Product Design	6 in DT		Independence, creativity, analytical thinking.	Yes
Drama	5 in Drama (if taken)	Good English	Interest in/experience of live theatre; open-mindedness	No
English Literature	6 in English Literature	6 or above in English Language	Commitment to serious reading and writing	Yes
French	7 in French		Enjoyment of language and commitment	Yes
Further Maths	7 in Maths	8 in Maths	Enjoyment of problem-solving	No
Geography	5 in Geography	6 or above in English	Interest in people and their environment	No
History	5 in History	Good English	Attitude - all important!	No
Mathematics	7 in Maths		Enjoyment of problem-solving	Yes
Media BTEC	4 in English Language		Enjoyment of working digitally and being creative	No
Music	6 in Music		At least Grade 7 standard on the main instrument.	Yes
Physical Education	6 in Biology and/or PE		Interest and ability in sport	Yes

Sport BTEC	4 in PE (if taken)			No
Photography		Portfolio		No
Physics	7 in Physics or 7 7 in Comb. Sc.	Maths A level	A logical, analytical mind; good practical skills	Yes
Politics		Good English, 5 in History (if taken)	Interest in Politics and current affairs	No
Psychology		Good Maths, 6 in GCSE Science & English	Interest in the human mind and behaviour	No
Religious Studies	5 in RS (if taken)	Good English	Interest in religious and ethical issues	No
Sociology		5 In English Lang	An interest in wider social issues and human behaviour	No
EPQ			Willingness to be a self-starter	No
Trinity Drama or Communication Skills		Helpful if previously studied Drama/Trinity/LA MDA courses	Interest in performance, reading plays and a willingness to be self-sufficient with guidance	No
Core Maths		Good Maths	Interest in subject and using some Maths to support other A Levels or university application	Yes

SIXTH FORM ENTRY CRITERIA

Entry to the Sixth Form depends on the achievement of five Grade 4 GCSEs including English and Maths. However, this general entry criteria needs to be matched against the more specific subject entry criteria.

In practice, the majority of our students achieve a 7 or better at GCSE in the subjects that they continue on to do at A Level (and a good pass in any subjects they take up as a BTEC).

Please note the following:

- The individual Head of Department, in consultation with the Head of Sixth Form, may accept a student with less than the minimum requirements for a subject; however, there is no 'right' of entry.
- 'English as an Additional Language' students will be assessed in light of their national qualifications and their language skills.
- All overseas students must undergo English and Maths tests, as organised by the College, before a place can be offered.
- Science subjects: for those who do Combined Science at GCSE, 6 6 is the minimum entry for Biology, Chemistry and Physics, but experience suggests that high Grade 7s (or better) are more likely to succeed.

SIXTH FORM AWARDS AND BURSARIES

Pangbourne College seeks to attract and reward excellence in academic study, in the Performing Arts and in sport.

The College offers a limited number of honorary awards for Sixth Form entrants to the College for excellence in the

Following fields:

- Academic Study
- Art, Music and Drama
- Sport

In fairness to members of the cohort coming up through the ranks of the College, we also actively seek those whose progression and contribution merit Sixth Form Awards in these same areas. A number of Honorary Scholarships are therefore awarded in the February of the year leading up to the September entry to the Sixth Form.

All awards are made for a maximum of two years and are subject to performance.

The College offers a number of bursaries which are means-tested. Recipients of a Sixth Form award may also apply for a bursary in cases of clear financial need.

Further details of these, and the awards described above, can be obtained from the Admissions Team, by calling 0118 976 7415, or by sending an email request to admissions@pangbourne.com

CHOOSING A PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Time should be taken when decision-making about Sixth Form programmes. In particular, there are new subjects available and a range of practical BTEC subjects that will play to the strength of a number of students.

Students are welcome to start four subjects in the Lower Sixth, and about half use this opportunity to sort out their 'third choice' subject. By the Michaelmas Half Term, most will have identified their three key subjects.

About half our students undertake an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), Trinity Speech & Drama exam, Core Maths, or a similar 'extra string to their bow'. Higher tier universities do seem to be favourably impressed by an additional academic achievement such as EPQ, a fourth 'complimentary' subject (e.g. a language taken to AS), Trinity Speech & Drama exams at Grade 6, 7 & 8 (which carry UCAS points for two years), Core Maths or other similar qualification where these can be attained alongside the three key subjects.

A-Levels at Pangbourne College are taught in a 'linear fashion' – i.e. exams are sat at the end of two year courses. We hold internal College exams in the Summer of the Lower Sixth, as well as Trial Exams in both the Michaelmas and Lent Terms of the Upper Sixth by way of preparation for the final A Levels.

In addition to A-Levels, Pangbourne College offers BTECs in a limited number of subjects: Creative Digital Media Production (Media), Design Technology, Business Enterprise, and Sport. We have run a set studying the BTEC Sport Diploma (the equivalent of two Sixth Form subjects).

Although BTECs have traditionally been associated with 'continuous assessment' there are now exams at the end of these courses.

CHOOSING YOUR SIXTH FORM SUBJECTS

There are three crucial questions to ponder:

- In what subject areas have you achieved the most to date?
- What subjects (and styles of learning) do you enjoy most?
- What are your future aspirations – what are the implications for higher education and careers?

CHOOSING INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTS

With any luck, your answers to the first two questions above will be closely related. Ability and interest are vital qualities if you are to study a subject intensively for two years.

The nature of a subject may change or develop considerably between GCSE and A Level/BTEC. It is vital, therefore, that you find out exactly what the subject and the course entails, and whether it is what you want to study.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF SUBJECTS

How to choose a subject combination is not always well understood. Some subjects fall naturally into groups or families – such as the Arts, Humanities or the Sciences. You should be trying to select obviously related subjects, such as Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology; related subjects will help instil similar skills and reinforce progress and learning. There is simply no such thing as 'too many essay subjects' or 'too much science.'

Most students at Pangbourne College consider a university course after Sixth Form. Appropriate combinations of subjects that have reinforced key learning skills are attractive to admissions tutors and prepare candidates far better for tertiary courses.

An aspiration towards certain careers such as medicine, architecture, and engineering, for example, will closely determine your choices at A Level. If you do not know what you want to study, the 'facilitating' nature of certain, more broadly recognised A Levels may be an advantage. Nevertheless, the majority of admissions tutors are most impressed by the grades you achieve above all else.

It is worth pointing out that the government takes great steps to ensure that all A Levels are 'equally difficult' through their various educational watchdog bodies. The A grade in any subject is meant to be the equivalent achievement as the A grade in any other. That is why the national picture can show pupils in one subject attaining 40% A* to A grades, whilst in other subjects only 13% of candidates might be recognised with A* to A grades.

Moreover, results in BTEC subjects can attain as much credit for a student as A Level subjects. A BTEC Pass is equal to an E grade, a BTEC Merit carries the same UCAS tariff credit as a C grade at A Level, BTEC Distinction is worth an A grade at A Level, and there is a Distinction* which is equivalent to an A*.

A NOTE ON SET SIZES AND VIABILITY OF COURSES

Pangbourne College is a relatively small school and pupils often wish to finalise their subject choices in the light of GCSE results in August. In some years this can lead to unforeseen pressures on sets at the start of September.

We consider 8 to 12 an 'ideal' size for a set in terms of group dynamics and economic use of resources. Experience shows that numbers up to 14 or 15 can be reasonably accommodated in Lower Sixth classes; when this happens Upper Sixth sets tend to be smaller.

If for any reason a subject experienced a late surge in uptake, the College's policy would be to direct the right support, strategies and resources to departments to manage 'large sets' until such a time as we can feasibly cater for pupils in more appropriately sized groups. However, in a last resort, we may have to 'cap' a set and close it to late joiners.

Pangbourne College will offer the courses outlined in this booklet subject to staffing availability and student numbers. It may, in certain circumstances, become impractical to run subjects if fewer than three students opt for it.

We are always seeking ways to enrich our curriculum. Please do discuss with the Head of Sixth Form if you have strong feelings for a subject that we don't offer, but you feel we should.

KEY DATES

Final choices do not have to be confirmed until after GCSE results day but the idea behind initiating the process early is to allow ample time for reflection and consultation.

The following timeline is designed to help you with your decision-making:

- **Michaelmas Term of Year 11:** Sixth Form Information Evening
- **October:** Taster Day - Year 11 pupils visit 'taster lessons' in the subjects they are considering
- **February:** GCSE Trial Exams, followed by GCSE grade predictions
- **March:** Year 11 Parents' and Guardians' meeting
- **March:** Provisional course choices in 4 subjects are made

NB: In the light of these returns, 'Option Columns' are constructed. After this point, certain combinations may not be possible if you decide you want to change.

- **March:** 10 minute interviews with Head of Sixth Form (or Head of Key Stage 4/Deputy Head Academic) to discuss proposed Sixth Form combinations. A number of subject choices are changed in the light of these.
- **May/June:** GCSE Exams.
- **August:** GCSE results published after which final subject choices will be made before the Term starts.

UNIVERSITY AND FUTURE PATHWAYS

A university place should be viewed as part of the journey, and not as the destination itself.

Given recent changes to the way most students now fund their own education, it is more important than ever that a university education prepares you for what follows. Your experience at university should put you in a far better position for the 'outside world' than you would be if you started without a degree.

Most Pangbournians do progress to university, though apprenticeships and other forms of work-related learning are attracting a growing number of our leavers. Others proceed to Art and Drama Colleges, and a few to universities outside the UK. Only a small number go straight into work.

A Sixth Form student's ideas about further education should evolve during the Lower Sixth year, hardening into preferences for particular courses and institutions during the Summer Term and Summer holidays between Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth.

Pangbourne College offers a carefully planned programme during this research period. Tutors will regularly consult with you about your Higher Education options and which of these offers the best prospects.

All Lower Sixth students will have access to online platform UNIFROG which provides them with a one-stop-shop for their UCAS applications, opportunities for virtual work experience and access to links for various levels of apprenticeships.

In the Lent Term of the Lower Sixth year, there is an online meeting for parents and students to launch the higher education process. The whole year group will have the opportunity to attend a UCAS event and also be given support to start their applications during their General Studies sessions. Students are encouraged to visit relevant Open Days and highly encouraged to take part in any taster courses and/or summer schools during June and July.

Starting their UCAS application in the summer term, the Upper Sixth return in the Michaelmas Term and in conjunction with their tutors, apply through UCAS for chosen courses and institutions. We place the very highest emphasis on the compilation of positive references and the meticulous filling in of the application form, particularly the student's personal statement. The statement can often go through half a dozen drafts to bring it to the right pitch. We also supervise applications to non-university courses such as Art and Drama Colleges.

Some students will be called for an interview, where each student will undergo interview practice, often conducted by an outside expert. By the end of March (though in most cases far earlier), institutions will have made their decisions, allowing candidates to hold one firm and one insurance offer for a university place.

When results come through in August following the examinations, universities confirm the places of all those who have met their conditions. There is a safety net, known as 'clearing', for those who have not met the conditions of their chosen institution but who may gain acceptance elsewhere. Throughout the post-result period, a team of staff, led by the Head of Sixth Form, are available for consultation and lobbying to secure these valuable places.

CAREERS EDUCATION AND ENTERPRISE

HEAD OF CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE:

Werner Nel B.Com (University of the Free State, South Africa) PGCE

INTRODUCTION

The Head of Careers and Enterprise co-ordinates the careers education, information, advice and guidance activities that take place within the College. He works closely with the tutors, the Heads of Section and Housemistresses/Housemasters to provide this service. The Careers Education and PSHCE programmes aim to equip students with the skills they need to make the successful transitions from Year 11 to the Sixth Form and beyond.

The Careers mission statement is as follows:

Furnishing pupils with the skills and confidence to make realistic and informed decisions about their futures. Helping them manage the transitions from one stage of their education, training and work to the next.

In the increasingly competitive world of work, sound career advice is essential. We aim to enable students to maximise their potential and to have the opportunity to discover the career areas most appropriate to their individual talents and aspirations.

Students are encouraged to carry out their own research using the resources available to them, but under the guidance of one or more of the adults mentioned. We subscribe to UNIFROG which helps to signpost the students researching university options and alternative career paths.

Within the Pupil Hub there is a growing presence in the Careers section, where there are links to useful websites for industry sectors and professions, upcoming external events and initiatives.

There is a successful Sixth Form Careers Conference in the Lent Term where a variety of professions and future choices have a presence. Students also undergo work-related 'mock interviews' in the Summer of the Lower Sixth year to encourage and prepare them for getting holiday work and work shadowing in the years that follow.

For those looking at apprenticeships, internships and learning while you work options, we run a number of events with local businesses and organisations offering useful advice in this ever competitive environment.

Whilst we encourage the vast majority of Pangbournians to stay on into the Sixth Form, alternative routes can be discussed for those in the Year 11 who would benefit from a more vocational and less academic regime.

TUTORS AND THE SIXTH FORM PROGRAMME

THE ROLE OF THE SIXTH FORM TUTOR

The tutors, working alongside the Housemistress or Housemaster, are the vital links between the academic and the pastoral sides of the College. Tutors are responsible for fostering each tutee's academic, intellectual and personal development.

In particular, your tutor will help you cultivate an increasing sense of self-awareness and responsibility, in both academic and personal life. Sixth Form students see their tutors at some point every day. Sixth Form group tutorials are held on a weekly basis and there are regular individual tutorials.

As you progress through the Sixth Form, your tutor will advise at key stages on choosing higher education courses and careers (alongside the Head of Sixth Form and Head of Careers).

During the Lower Sixth this will involve:

- Discussion and research of Higher Education courses and options for after Pangbourne
- A Pangbourne 'Careers Event' during the Lent Term
- Guided use of UNIFROG
- Attending presentations from visiting university lecturers
- Open Day visits and taster courses

During the Upper Sixth year the following takes place:

- Selecting appropriate courses after arranging visits to universities via Open Days or private arrangement
- Supervising the accurate completion of the UCAS form
- Compiling the UCAS reference in conjunction with subject teachers and tutors
- Preparing you for a university interview where necessary
- Following the application through to its completion

THE SIXTH FORM PROGRAMME

Throughout the Sixth Form, students are stretched and developed in an integrated programme of PSHCE, General Studies, Study Skills, Life Skills, and other wider opportunities for personal development. This is delivered in the weekly year-group lesson on a Friday, as well as through tutors and in the many activities which the year group undertakes together.

In their first Michaelmas Term, students are, to some extent, in unfamiliar territory as they adjust to the more independent approach of the Sixth Form. During this transition period, the emphasis of the modules lie firmly on the academic habits, progress and wellbeing of individuals. Tutorial sessions cover issues such as self-development, target setting, methods of study and review, and stress management. At the end of the Michaelmas Term, students have an opportunity to complete a short psychometric profile which will start to focus their thoughts on possible Higher Education courses.

In the Lent Term, alongside regular academic progress checks, we focus on areas such as work-related learning and Higher Education options. Important issues concerning health, wellbeing and citizenship are also tackled. All Lower Sixth students are encouraged to organise a minimum of one (preferably two) weeks' relevant work experience ready for the Summer holidays.

THE GENERAL STUDIES LECTURES

Throughout the Sixth Form, a variety of speakers will be invited into the College to give lectures and talks to the students. These take place on Friday afternoons. Through these talks, key elements of PSHCE, Citizenship, and Life Skills are delivered; however, topics covered in General Studies are wide-ranging and eclectic.

ACADEMIC EXTENSION AND OXBRIDGE/COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Individual departments offer extension opportunities for their students, usually in the form of extra classes, trips, outside speakers, and societies. These are usually available to all students in a subject and are intended to inspire and challenge them while fostering a wider enjoyment of learning. In addition, an exciting programme of events is provided for scholars and students identified as gifted and talented.

Students applying to Oxbridge, medical school or other similar competitive courses are assigned a mentor - a teacher from a relevant department who will guide them through the application process. Mentors provide guidance on all aspects of the application, from the personal statement, to admissions tests, to interview.

PUPIL DEVICES

We require all pupils to have a device they can use to complete classwork and prep. In order to standardise the devices used and to make a device choice straightforward, we have partnered with Easy4U, a company that specialises in the education sector. Through consultation with subject leaders and other schools we have specified the following for all pupils:

One of:

- Microsoft Surface Pro 9/10 with keyboard and stylus [several performance models available].
- Dell Latitude 5340 '2-in1 Touchscreen' with stylus.

A case is also included, suitable for the device and its use in a school.

These devices may be purchased or rented over 2 - 4 years and include a comprehensive support package that also covers accidental loss or damage throughout the term chosen. The support package continues after the pupil has left the College, if the term chosen is longer than their time here.

Each device is managed by our IT department to ensure they are kept up to date and secure. They also arrive 'ready to use', with all the necessary software and the pupil simply needs to sign in with their Pangbourne email address and password. All settings are automatically configured to ensure the device can connect to Wi-Fi and access the internet.

For further information or to place an order, go to <https://www.easy4u.school/order> and enter the school code **W9DFWJ6**.

All orders must be placed before the end of July in the year of entry to guarantee delivery for the start of term.

APPLIED SCIENCE (National Level 3 Extended Certificate)

New for September 2025

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Study the three sciences, from diseases and infections in Biology, to titrations and chromatography in Chemistry, and waves and circuits in Physics! The course builds upon all three of the sciences. It focuses on broadening your understanding of science and in the second year looks at diseases and infections.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

First Year	Unit 1 - 25% <i>Principles and applications of science</i>	Covers key concepts across all of the sciences, building upon GCSE knowledge. Externally assessed via a 90 minute exam.
	Unit 2 - 25% <i>Practical scientific procedures and techniques</i>	Very practically based looking into quantitative laboratory techniques (titrations, colorimetry, chromatography and calorimetry). Internally assessed via several assignments throughout the year and externally moderated.
Second Year	Unit 3 - 33.3&% <i>Science investigation skills</i>	Develop their skills in planning investigations across all of the sciences (investigating enzyme activity, diffusion, plant growth, energy of fuels and electrical circuits). Externally assessed via a written task in which students carry out a specified investigation (practical).
	Unit 12 - 16.6% <i>Diseases and infections</i>	Students will investigate 5 types of diseases, their causes and how to prevent and treat them. Internally assessed via several assignments throughout the year and externally moderated.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

The course reflects the fact that it focuses on practical scientific investigation and work-related assignments, rather than a broad range of scientific theory for its own sake.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Students studying Applied Science can progress onto a wide range of university courses including BSc courses in Sports Science, Sports Therapy, Teaching, Paramedics, Nursing, Radiography, and Equine Science, as well as broader based Foundation degrees in Biomedical Science and Animal Behaviour.

ART AND DESIGN A LEVEL

EXAM BOARD:	AQA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Emma Green BA (Reading College) GTP
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Georgina Bouzyk BA (Aberystwyth) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Art offers a distinctive way of learning; where seeing, thinking and making are combined in a powerful form of visual and tactile communication. Students are encouraged to be creative, to enquire and question, and to make connections with the work of others.

You will need a Grade 6 or above at GCSE. However, students not meeting this may be granted access to the A Level course at the discretion of the Head of Art. You also need to be dedicated, creative and able.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

This course enables students to explore a range of two and three-dimensional approaches to their studies. The disciplines associated with this course, among others, are drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and photography. However, the nature of the course allows it to be adapted to suit students' requirements, especially at A Level.

LEVEL	COMPONENT	COMPONENT CONTENTS	TIME	% OF A2
A Level	Component 1 - Personal Investigation	Practical project and 1,000-3,000 essay	No time limit	60%
	Component 2 - Externally Set Assignment	Preparatory period and 15 hour exam	15 hours	40%

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Students have the opportunity to identify, discuss and resolve visual problems. They will manipulate materials, processes and technologies, responding, experimenting and adapting their thinking to arrive at different solutions. Students develop knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the achievements of artists, craftspeople and designers from different cultures past and present. This informs and enables the development of their creative practice.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Possible career options include advertising, architecture, illustration, animation, game design, graphics, film and television, fashion, textiles, and all other creative forms of design. It also opens the door to careers in the art world, including gallery work, auction houses, art criticism, restoration, and museums. Art is seen as equal in academic status to all other subjects by universities and can lend an application a distinctive edge. Careers advice and portfolio preparation for further and higher education courses are available to all students.

BIOLOGY

EXAM BOARD:	Edexcel
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Kate Klymow MA (Cambridge) PGCE
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Dr Jo Hart BSc PhD (Bristol) PGCE Jack Sims MSc (Southampton) PGCE
DEPARTMENT TECHNICIAN:	Arpita Mondal

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Students intending to study A Level Biology should have at least a Grade 6 in Science, or a 6 in each Biology and Chemistry separate sciences. Maths GCSE with at least a Grade 5 is also required.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

The specification builds on concepts and skills that will have been developed at GCSE. It introduces Biology as exciting, relevant and challenging, presenting essential principles in contexts that we know students find interesting, particularly those interested in medical topics. It emphasises the way in which scientists work and the contributions of science to modern society.

THE COURSE STRUCTURE

The new A Level course is assessed at the end of two years by three written papers which include reference to practical work, and about 10% maths. The practical endorsement is a separate but important qualification for which students need to complete a minimum of 12 specified practical activities. Their performance in these practical activities is assessed in class.

In the first year, the emphasis is on biochemistry and cell biology, including the role of DNA. Simple genetics is covered, as well as developments in the use of stem cells and gene therapy. In the Upper Sixth, important principles such as respiration and photosynthesis are studied in depth, as well as defence against disease and forensic science.

Homeostasis, control of heart rate, the nervous system, the impact of exercise on the body, and brain structure and development are some of the human physiology topics.

There is plenty of opportunity for fieldwork, either in the local area or on a field course. Students are encouraged to get out and see biology working 'in situ'. Recently we have visited the Baylab at Bayer in Reading, the Diamond Light Source, Marwell Zoo, and Rushall Organic Farm.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Biology is the choice for those intending to enter medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy, nursing, and agriculture. Recent students have gone on to study neuroscience, sports science, physiotherapy, marine biology, biochemistry, and biomedical sciences. Because biology graduates develop a wide variety of transferable skills and knowledge, they are highly employable.

WHAT SUBJECT DOES IT GO WITH?

Biology asks for a more in-depth perspective of science and is well suited to students studying other scientific courses, including Chemistry, Maths and Physics. However, it is a popular subject and frequently successfully taken in combination with Geography, Psychology or PE.

BUSINESS

EXAM BOARD:	Edexcel
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Koen De Mulder BA (Antwerp, Belgium) MBA (Vlerick) iPGCE
MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT:	Werner Nel BCom (University of the Freestate, South Africa) PGCE Mark Seccombe BSc (Southampton) MSc (Sheffield) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

During the two years you will gain an appreciation of all aspects of business and why an integrated approach is required. We will ensure that the theory of marketing, finance, operations, and human resources will be contextual by linking to current affairs to help develop your understanding.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	ASSESSMENT
Theme 1 Marketing and People	Theme 3 Business Decision and Strategy	Paper 1 Theme 1 and Theme 4
Theme 2 Managing Business Activities	Theme 4 Global Business	Paper 2 Theme 2 and Theme 3
		Paper 3 Pre-released Case Study
Required Skills Strong numerical understanding Logical reasoning Critical thinking Interest in current affairs	Required Skills Strong numerical understanding Logical reasoning Critical thinking Global awareness	Each paper is 120 minutes Short answers Calculations Analytical and Evaluative Essays

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Business A Level offers you a chance to gain an insight into the ideas which have shaped current business practices and investigate the forces which are altering the way in which people buy, sell and behave.

The department enjoys trips to see the ways in which businesses function and compete. In the past, this has included visits to Mini, Citibank, Coca-Cola and the London Stock Exchange.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

The course is rigorous and is well-respected by universities. Business is a useful subject if you are considering entering into the corporate world, yet also opens doors to sociology, public policy and management.

WHAT SUBJECT DOES IT GO WITH?

Business would sit well with many subject combinations due to the breadth of the skills which are involved. Aspects of Psychology and Geography overlap with certain parts of the course. NB: Option combinations including both Business and Economics are not recommended and should be discussed with the Head of Business Studies prior to commencing A Level.

CHEMISTRY

EXAM BOARD:	Edexcel/Pearson
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Robert Pickett MA (Oxford)
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Heston Orchard MChem (Oxford) Edward Hardyman BSc (Durham) PGCE
DEPARTMENT TECHNICIAN:	Frances Bromidge

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

An A Level chemist should have a positive attitude towards this subject, as well as an inquiring mind. Academically, you will need at least a Grade 7 in GCSE Chemistry, or a comparable grade in the chemistry component of GCSE Additional Science. Students coming to Chemistry A Level from abroad should have studied the subject for at least two years; however, a lack of practical experience in that time will not be held against you.

You will need to demonstrate a good level of understanding of maths. Chemistry should ideally be taken with at least one other science, and the selection of Maths is encouraged. Those choosing Biology are strongly encouraged to choose Chemistry as well. Chemistry should also be taken up with the intention of following the course through to the full A Level qualification.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

The course follows the Edexcel Chemistry Specification (9CH0). The main components of the course are Physical, Inorganic, and Organic Chemistry, supplemented by a series of chosen and core practicals.

Practical skills are essential to this course, and are assessed internally throughout both years. The A Level includes a Core Practical course (CPAC), which, although it does not count towards the final A Level grade, the content of those practicals is assessed in the written examination papers. To our knowledge, all university courses accepting Chemistry A Level expect the practical course to have been completed and passed.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Chemistry and its many branches are rarely out of the news, especially in the fields of biochemistry and the environment. This course enables you to understand the principles behind this continually expanding subject.

There are opportunities to learn outside the laboratory. Recent trips have included visits to businesses operating in chemically-based industries, working laboratories and research establishments, the Science Society, and the Royal Society of Chemistry for lectures.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

The world needs good chemists. The study of chemistry at university is as broad as it is fulfilling, and the reputation that British chemistry has in the world testifies to the quality of our universities. Courses available include Pure Chemistry, Chemical Engineering, Biochemistry, Metallurgy, Material Science, Pharmacology... the list is endless.

Many other courses, including Medicine, Veterinary Science, and most branches of Engineering, regard Chemistry to be an essential A Level.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

- EXAM BOARD:** OCR
- HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:** Tom Walford BSc (University of Durham), PGCE
- MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:** Danielle Burns BA (Thames Valley University) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

You will have an interest in computing and technology in general, and be keen to understand and explore how computer systems work. You will also be interested in, or may have even tried, computer programming.

A GCSE in Computing/Computer Science at Grade 5 or above is useful, but all the required content is taught over the course. Good Maths and English grades are essential.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Computer Science is a two-year A Level course in which your understanding is examined at the end of the second year. There are two terminal examinations (each worth 40%) and a Non Examined Assessment (worth 20%)

FIRST YEAR OF A LEVEL	SECOND YEAR OF A LEVEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Object Oriented Programming• Computational thinking• The characteristics of contemporary processors, input, output and storage devices• Software and software development• Data storage• Problem solving and programming• Algorithms• Introduction to the Non Examined Assessment (NEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer networks• Web Technologies• Legal, moral, cultural and ethical issues• Data structures• Boolean algebra• Completion of the NEA

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Computer Science offers you a chance to:

- Acquire in-depth knowledge and understanding of computer systems, their importance, and use
- Develop programming skills in a high-level language
- Develop problem solving, analytical and evaluative skills

Outside the classroom the department enjoys lively debates on new technologies and ethical discussions on the use of computers in society, along with trips to computer businesses and sites of historical interest in the computing field.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Many students continue studying Computer Science or a related discipline at university and may specialise in Software Engineering, Cyber Security, Digital Forensics, and Games Programming, amongst others.

A Computer Science A Level is accepted at all UK universities.

CRIMINOLOGY

(Level 3 Applied Diploma) New from September 2025

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

If you have a natural interest in crime and enjoy watching crime documentaries along with an interest in the law, then you will find this is the course for you. Looking at the different elements of criminality, students who study this course often want to work in the criminal justice system or within social work.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Year 1	Unit 1: Changing Awareness of Crime - 25%	This looks at different types of crime, influences on perceptions of crime and why some crimes are unreported. This helps students to develop an understanding of the complexity of behaviours and the social implications of crimes and criminality. Internal assessment (8 hours over multiple days).
	Unit 2: Criminological Theories - 25%	This develops learning from Unit 1 and explores the difference between criminal behaviour and deviance and the theories behind why people commit crime. External exam (1hr 30 mins).
Year 2	Unit 3: Crime Scene to Courtroom - 25%	Students gain an understanding of the criminal justice system from the moment a crime has been identified to the verdict in court. They develop the skills needed to examine information in order to review the justice of verdicts in criminal cases. Internal assessment (8 hours over multiple days).
	Unit 4: Crime and Punishment - 25%	This unit allows students to apply their understanding of the awareness of criminality, criminological theories and the process of bringing an accused to court in order to evaluate the effectiveness of social control and deliver criminal justice policy. External exam (1hr 30 mins).

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Studying criminology will provide you with an understanding of criminal behaviour and the wider criminal justice system. You will develop a range of skills from doing research, organisation and time-management.

WHERE DOES IT LEAD YOU?

The course allows students to progress onto university to study Criminology, Psychology, Sociology and Law which can be done as single honour or joint honours degrees.

Students are often interested in careers in the criminal justice system whether it is the police service, probation or working in the courts and tribunals service.

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

Studying Criminology naturally lends itself to pursuing subjects like Sociology, Psychology and Politics at College.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Craig Wiles BA (Buckinghamshire Chilterns) PGCE

MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT: Tom Cheney BA (Southampton Solent) PGCE
Rosie Jewell BA (Bournemouth Arts) QTS
Paul Williams (Technician)

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

A Design Technology GCSE is required to pursue the A Level Product Design course, however it is desired, but not essential, for the Design Technology BTEC qualification. An Art GCSE would also be beneficial. You must be self-motivated and have a strong passion for design, and a clear desire to develop and apply this interest. Creativity and thoughtfulness are important qualities in a designer. Being an inquisitive consumer and curious as to how the world around you works will set you up well to excel.

OPTION 1 - BTEC LEVEL 3 EXTENDED CERTIFICATE

Art & Design with 3D Design Materials, Techniques and Processes

Exam board: Pearson

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Year 1	Unit 1: Visual recording and communications	Students produce a body of design work to a given theme and submit a portfolio of evidence.	Externally set and assessed by Pearsons.
	Unit 13: 3D design materials, processes and techniques	Students explore a range of materials and processes, with an in-depth focus on woods, metals and poured plastics. They develop their skills and apply these to a set brief.	Internally set and assessed body of work, verified by Pearsons.
Year 2	Unit 2: Critical and contextual studies in design	Students are provided with a research brief and given five weeks to prepare a response. They are assessed during a period of five hours in exam conditions.	Externally set and assessed by Pearsons.
	Unit 3: The Creative Process	Students continue to refine their practical skills and apply these to a set brief, carefully considering the role of each stage of the creative process.	Internally set and assessed body of work, verified by Pearsons.

The course runs over the full two years of Sixth Form and all four units must be passed to gain the qualification.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Design Technology learnt through the BTEC gives you the chance to:

- Have practical experience of working on real-world assignments and briefs.
- Take responsibility for your own learning and how you develop your individual style as a designer.
- Develop interpersonal and practical problem-solving skills.
- Have a strong core base of workshop knowledge in a wide range of materials and processes.
- Learn to efficiently manage your time with frequent set deadlines.

OPTION 2 - A Level Product Design

Exam board: AQA

SUBJECT CONTENT

The course has imaginative practical work at its heart and will allow students the opportunity to test their creativity through a range of design and manufacturing tasks throughout the two years.

Students will gain a real understanding of what it means to be a designer, alongside the knowledge and skills sought by higher education and employers. Consequently, all students are encouraged to participate in design-based trips and excursions, such as industrial manufacturing visits, as these offer students a first-hand insight into factors which influence design and the relationship between materials and manufacture.

This creative and thought-provoking qualification gives students the practical skills, theoretical knowledge and confidence to succeed in a number of careers, especially those in the creative, engineering or design-based industries.

Paper 1 - 30% of the final grade	Technical Principles. 2.5 hour written paper.
Paper 2 - 20% of the final grade	Designing and Making Principles. 1.5 hour written paper.
Non-Exam Assessment - 50% of the final grade	Project-based practical application of technical principles, designing and making principles, and specialist knowledge. Approximately 40 hour design and make project.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Design Technology combined with Maths and Science leads to engineering and industrial design. Design Technology combined with Art, Business, Humanities, or a Language leads to Product Design, Graphic Design, Marketing and Advertising. Previous students have also gone on to study Fashion Design and textile-based courses.

WHAT IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COURSES?

The BTEC qualification takes a more practical approach to learning and builds on an understanding of the processes involved in an art and design project. Students respond to creative briefs and carry out a research-based project, ensuring that their final outcomes suitably relate to the initial area of creative intent. Theory is minimal in comparison to the A Level, where students extend on the learning that has taken place at GCSE. The Product Design qualification is an excellent starting point for a future career in a host of creative industries, covering the terminology and advanced knowledge required for an easier transition to a higher level qualification, or direct entry to industry.

The Lower Sixth course has a £30 recharge for the Michaelmas, Lent and Summer Terms.

The Upper Sixth Course has a £30 recharge for the Michaelmas and Lent Term only. Individual recharges will be in addition to this fee where a student has pursued a project that uses more expensive materials.

Students will need a mid/high specification laptop for both courses in order to access the software that is used on the course.

DRAMA & THEATRE

EXAM BOARD:	Eduqas
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Rebecca Atack BEd (Royal Central, London)
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Rhiannon Bland BA (Cardiff Metropolitan) PGCE
DRAMA TECHNICIAN:	Ben Kearny BSc (Middlesex)

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

You will need a minimum grade of 5 in Drama and English GCSE. This course will help you to become emotionally literate, develop your ability to pitch ideas and concepts, lead a discussion, and prepare for interviews, as well as deepening your cultural appreciation of plays, art, history, and literature. This A Level is highly regarded by Oxbridge, Russell Group Universities, Medicine and Businesses alike, as it proves that students have a well-rounded knowledge of interpreting situations, people skills, confidence, and the ability to work in a team.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

The Drama Department follows the Eduqas specification. This course is made up of three components studied over the two year course. Students can opt to do either acting or design for this exam.

Component 1: Theatre Workshop Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 20% of qualification	Learners participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of theatre based on a reinterpretation of an extract from a text chosen from a list supplied by the exam board. Learners must produce a realisation of the performance or design a creative log.
Component 2: Text in Action Non-exam assessment: externally assessed by a visiting examiner 40% of qualification	Learners participate in the creation, development and performance of two pieces of theatre based on a stimulus supplied by the exam board and then perform them in front of the visiting examiner; a devised piece and a scripted piece. Learners produce a process and evaluation report within one week of completion of the practical work.
Component 3: Text in Performance Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes 40% of qualification	Sections A and B Two questions, based on two different texts, <i>Small Island</i> (Andrea Levy, adapted Helen Edmundson) and <i>Home I'm darling</i> (Laura Wade). Section C A question based on a specified extract from <i>A Monster Calls</i> (Patrick Ness).

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

This A Level can lead to further study in Drama, Drama and English, or technical degrees at university, such as Stage Management, Set Design, and Lighting and Sound. It can also be used for a wide range of other degrees such as Management, Events Management, Medicine, the Police Force, Marketing, Media and Retail, to name just a few. Drama and Theatre develops many 'strings' for the students 'bow' as it teaches a broad and balanced set of skills and knowledge, advantageous to any degree, apprenticeship or future career.

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

Drama & Theatre offers a performance-oriented alternative to English, although it can also be fruitfully combined with other Arts, Humanities and Science subjects, as it allows a practical outlet.

ECONOMICS

EXAM BOARD:	Edexcel
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Koen De Mulder BA (Antwerp, Belgium) MBA (Vlerick) iPGCE
MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT:	Werner Nel BCom (University of the Freestate, South Africa) PGCE Mark Seccombe BSc (Southampton) MSc (Sheffield) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Economics is a social science and by the end of the two years you will be able to understand the intricate relationships between households, governments and businesses. You will be required to combine analytical models with an awareness and consideration of the real world limitations during the course.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	ASSESSMENT
Theme 1 Markets and Market Failure	Theme 3 Business Behaviour and Labour Market	Paper 1 Theme 1 and Theme 3
Theme 2 The UK Economy	Theme 4 Global Perspective	Paper 2 Theme 2 and Theme 4
		Paper 3 Synoptic Economics
Required Skills Strong numerical understanding Logical reasoning Critical thinking Interest in current affairs	Required Skills Strong numerical understanding Logical reasoning Critical thinking Global awareness	Each paper is 120 minutes Multiple Choice and short answer Data response Analytical and Evaluative Essays

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Economics offers you a chance to:

- Understand the interactions of global forces which affect our everyday lives.
- Develop the skill of assessing ideas and concepts critically.
- Apply structured, logical thinking to complex real-world problems.

In the past, trips have included Citibank, the London Stock Exchange and attending Economics In Action.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

It would be effective preparation for the degree study of International Relations, Politics, Business Management, Modern History and Human Geography. It is highly-respected by university admissions tutors. Please note: Option combinations including both Business and Economics should be discussed with the Head of Business prior to commencing A Levels.

WHAT SUBJECT DOES IT GO WITH?

As a social science, Economics works effectively in combination with many other subjects. Certain university Economics courses do require A Level Maths.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

EXAM BOARD:	Edexcel Pearson
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Elly Hayward MA (Glasgow) PGDE NPQML (UCL IOE)
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Abbie Stephenson MA (Oxford) QTS Ben Payne MA (Oxford) PGCE Rosemarie Seccombe-Wade BA Hons (Warwick) PGCE Clint Tessororf MA (University of Cape Town) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Literature can be transformational; this course offers a unique opportunity to challenge your attitudes, perspectives and experiences.

It is essential that you enjoy reading and are willing to read extensively in your own time to support class work. Discussion is crucial to the development of ideas and perspectives and, therefore, you should be willing to offer informed and thoughtful contributions in class. You must also enjoy writing and be prepared to produce several essays per Half Term.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE COURSE?

- The opportunity to study some of the greatest authors ever to have written in English, such as Shakespeare, Christina Rossetti, Keats, Tennessee Williams and Oscar Wilde, as well as a variety of contemporary, modern poets.
- Seminar-style lessons with an emphasis on discussion and close reading.
- An exciting coursework unit which enables you to pursue your own literary interests by choosing two texts to read, analyse and compare.
- A programme of trips, events and enrichment activities designed to complement your studies.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

The two-year A Level is assessed at the end of Upper Sixth. All students sit three exams. There is also the opportunity for independent study of pieces of literature in the coursework (20%). Coursework begins in Lower Sixth and is completed in the Michaelmas Term of Upper Sixth. You will be taught by three members of the department, each taking a component of the course.

Course components
1. Drama: A Shakespeare play and one other play; <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> or <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> .
2. Prose: Two novels linked by genre, with additional reading in that genre. E.g. 'Colonisation and its Aftermath: <i>Heart of Darkness</i> and <i>The Lonely Londoner</i> ' or 'The Supernatural: <i>Dracula</i> and <i>The Little Stranger</i> '
3. Poetry: A 'Movement' Study of a Specific Poet/Movement - Christina Rossetti or John Keats; Modern Poetry - Post-2000 Anthology including poets such as Simon Armitage, Patience Agbabi, Daljit Nagra, Sinead Morrissey, Ciaran O'Driscoll and Vicki Feaver.
4. Coursework: Independent choice of two pieces of literature. You will write an extended essay of 2,500 words on your chosen texts.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

English Literature A Level is required if you want to study English at university and is an ideal supporting subject for other arts and humanities degrees. English Literature is also a 'facilitating subject', i.e. one of the A Levels most commonly required, or preferred, by leading universities for entry on to a range of degree courses. The A Level can lead to a career in law, politics, theatre, film, journalism, media, education, publishing, the creative arts, and many more.

BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Level 3 BTEC (Extended Certificate) in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

EXAM BOARD:	Edexcel
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Koen De Mulder BA (Antwerp, Belgium) MBA (Vlerick) iPGCE
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Werner Nel BCom (University of the Freestate, South Africa) PGCE Mark Seccombe BSc (Southampton) MSc (Sheffield) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

You will need to have an interest in startup businesses and entrepreneurs. A GCSE in Business will mean that some of the topics covered during the course will be familiar to you, but you do not need to have studied Business before. You cannot choose this course as well as Business A Level.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

UNIT	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Enterprise and Entrepreneurs	Learners study enterprise and the mindset of entrepreneurs, exploring the risks, opportunities and constant constraints of starting an enterprise.	Internal assessment by project, presentation and business report.
Developing a Marketing Campaign	Learners will gain skills relating to and an understanding of how a marketing campaign is developed and financed.	External assessment where candidates develop a marketing campaign in response to a business case study.
Personal and Business Finance	Learners study the purpose and importance of personal and business finance. They will develop the skills and knowledge needed to understand, analyse and prepare financial information.	Examination
Enterprise and Intrapreneurship in Practice	Learners study the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs and consider the strategies that can influence the development of intrapreneurship in an organisation.	Business report on developing an intrapreneurial culture in a local enterprise.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

This course will develop the skills and knowledge needed to bring an idea to market and develop an effective business. In addition to the content related to enterprise development, the course will also encourage a number of skills which will be useful regardless of your future career choices, such as an understanding of personal finance and the ability to present to an audience. Some of the units will involve working with existing enterprises.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

This course will be effective preparation for Business courses at university, especially those which involve enterprise or marketing. It is also an attractive option for those who might be considering an apprenticeship. This is an especially useful course if you already have an idea for a business you would like to start, as it will help you understand what is needed to turn your idea into reality.

GEOGRAPHY

EXAM BOARD: Cambridge International (*specification changing for exams in 2027*)

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Mr Thomas Poynter BA Hons (Exeter) PGCE

MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT: Mr David Metcalfe BSc (Cardiff) PGCE
Mr James Capel MA (Edinburgh) PGCE
Miss Chloe Knight BSc (Reading) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

In addition to an interest in people and their environment and, of course, a willingness to work hard, we are looking for the following qualities in our students:

- A curiosity about the world, not least our impact on the world.
- A questioning approach coupled with a willingness and desire to read more widely.
- Articulating your understanding and analysis coherently on paper.
- A willingness to appraise your own values and attitudes.
- Minimum of Grade 5 at GCSE Geography.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Development of geographical skills, examining the actors and factors that create change in our dynamic environment. Analysis of the earth systems and major hazards, as well as the assessment of our integrated global economies and the drivers of change in and around human settlement.

Geography is modular. With 50% of the course examined at the end of L6th and the remaining 50% in U6th. Students “bank” their marks in L6th reducing the pressure in U6th or have the opportunity to retake and improve their grade. There is no coursework. Students will go on a number of trips and to university lectures to apply understanding and to enrich learning. Additionally, there are talks and seminars led by staff.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Geography is about our dynamic world for those who wish to affect changes in our world. Being arguably the broadest of all the academic disciplines, it is a subject that gives perspective and an overview. That is not to say that Geography lacks rigour; its breadth and emphasis on connections provide perspective, in contrast with the narrower approaches of other disciplines. Geography is about the real world, thus its topicality must, therefore, be drawn upon to illustrate understanding gleaned from wider reading and not least to a student’s own experiences.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Obvious geographical careers are international development, environmental and resource planning, management, tourism, insurance, and commodity brokerage. In addition, a wide range of other pathways are opened up with a Geography qualification as it indicates a high level of academic ability, coupled with a balance and ‘roundness’, and an ‘earthed’ global view.

WHAT SUBJECT DOES IT GO WITH?

Geography provides an academic bridge between the arts and the sciences, and combines well with other humanities subjects, as well as Economics or Business. The breadth of skills developed and honed in Geography help to earth those studying sciences, and brings the subject reality into the complex abstract world of mathematics due to content and essay skills.

HISTORY

EXAM BOARD:	AQA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	James Frost LLB MA (UWE, Bristol) PGCE
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Anthony Hammond BA (UWE, Bristol) PGCE Ben McLeod MA (St Andrews) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

A Grade 5 at History GCSE is not a prerequisite, but it is desirable. Those who have not studied History GCSE are also welcome. The most important quality is attitude.

Anybody who is reasonably literate can pass History A Level provided they are prepared to work sensibly. If you are prepared to do so, and to read widely, you have every prospect of achieving a good grade.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

At A Level there are three modules. One is a breadth study, one is a depth study and one is a historical investigation personal study. We plan to teach the following modules:

Component 1: Breadth Study: 1C The Tudors: England, 1485–1601

Component 2: Depth Study: 2P Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918–1945

Component 3: Historical Investigation

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

History requires you to absorb information and to juggle it, so as to answer a specific question. The 15th and 16th centuries are periods of massive change and of giant historical figures, while the study of 20th Century Germany presents burning moral questions of democracy and participation. The ability to write an essay answering a specific question and to make a logically analysed judgement is a skill which is useful anywhere.

Outside of the classroom, we invite external speakers to present to students, as well as attending lectures in London.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

History is one of the most popular subjects at university for the simple reason that it will take you wherever you want it to go. It leads to almost any of the humanities subjects, as well as other subjects such as Law. The ability to write a reasoned argument, to answer a specific question, and to present a case will be of enormous use whatever career you choose to follow.

WHAT SUBJECT DOES IT GO WITH?

Traditionally, History combines with other arts-oriented subjects, such as English or Modern Foreign Languages. However, in recent years the combinations have changed and it now fits with almost any subject.

MATHEMATICS AND FURTHER MATHEMATICS

EXAM BOARD:	AQA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Adam Beake BA (Durham) MSc (Durham) PGCE
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Charlie Allison BA (Oxford) MA (Oxford) Sara Carbery BSc (South Wales) QTS Jenny Jones BEd (Gloucestershire) Danny Quinlan BA (Brighton) QTS Mark Skidmore Bsc (Newcastle) PGCE Fergus Yuille BSc (Liverpool) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Studying Mathematics can be very enjoyable! The reasons why people opt to study Mathematics vary widely but include the desire to study something interesting, stimulating and challenging.

Mathematics is one of the best subjects to develop your analytical, research and problem-solving skills. Not only will studying Mathematics help give you the knowledge to tackle scientific, mechanical, coding and abstract problems, it will also help you develop logic to tackle everyday issues, like planning projects, managing budgets, and even debating effectively.

Only students who have gained Grade 7 to 9 at GCSE or iGCSE should embark on the course.

COURSES OFFERED

The content of the Mathematics A Level courses are split into three areas: Pure Mathematics, Statistics and Mechanics.

- A Level Mathematics (2/3 Pure mathematics, 1/6 Mechanics and 1/6 Statistics)
- A Level Further Mathematics (2/3 Pure mathematics, 1/6 Mechanics and 1/6 Statistics)

Further Mathematics can only be taken in conjunction with A Level Mathematics and not independently.

PURE MATHEMATICS

The Pure Mathematics modules cover some areas with which you are familiar: the development of algebraic skills, including solving polynomial equations and manipulating algebraic expressions, further techniques and uses of trigonometry and the solution of complex geometrical problems, graphical work including coordinate geometry and functions, numerical techniques for solving equations (for example, by trial and improvement), and calculus (differentiation and integration).

MECHANICS

Mechanics is the application of Mathematics to physical situations, for example motion, both linear and circular; forces and equilibrium; energy, work and power.

STATISTICS

Statistical elements of the GCSE course include analysing and displaying data. The A Level course uses different and more sophisticated statistical techniques to manipulate and evaluate data, including hypothesis testing which is essential for anyone interested in research.

FURTHER MATHEMATICS

The Further Mathematics course bridges the gap between A Level and degree Mathematics. It is excellent preparation for a mathematical-based degree. Some of the areas of study include matrices, complex numbers, conic sections, and hyperbolic functions.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Mathematics A Levels are a good foundation for degrees in Mathematics, Science or Engineering and some social sciences such as Economics, but the subject also provides excellent training in problem-solving and thinking skills which are useful throughout life.

People with mathematics qualifications can go into accounting, medicine, engineering, forensic pathology, finance, business, consultancy, teaching, IT, games development, scientific research, programming, the Civil Service, design, construction and astrophysics, to name but a few areas.

Examples of specific job roles include Actuary, Business Analyst, Software Engineer, Technology Analyst, Information Engineer, Speech Technology Researcher, and Maths Teacher.

Careers enjoyed by mathematics graduates tend to be very well paid. The combination of a skills shortage and a growing need for maths skills means more and more employers are on the lookout for mathematics graduates.

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

Mathematics will usually combine well with any other subject.

MEDIA STUDIES

Level 3 BTEC (Extended Certificate) in Creative Digital Media Production

EXAM BOARD:	Pearson
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Clint Tessendorf MA (University of Cape Town) PGCE
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Rhiannon Bland BA (Cardiff Metropolitan) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

You will need to have an interest in the media and be prepared to watch, read and listen to a broad range of texts. You will have creative ideas and want to use these in the development of your own media products. You will need a Grade 4 in English Language. There are written components of both the internally assessed units (coursework) and externally examined units.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

There are three mandatory units and one optional unit as detailed below:

UNIT	%	How is it assessed?
Media representations	25	External examination
Pre-Production Portfolio	25	Internally marked
Responding to a Commission	33	External examination using prepared materials*
Film Production - Fiction	17	Internally marked

The externally assessed units can be retaken twice (three attempts in total) over the two years. The BTEC is graded using a Pass, Merit, Distinction, Distinction scale. These grades are equivalent to E, C, A, A* respectively at A Level. The BTEC National attracts UCAS points. Please see the UCAS website for full details.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

This qualification provides an introduction to the digital media industry. You will gain a broad understanding of the range of sectors including music video, short film, animation, news, websites, digital games and print advertising. It will support you in the development of a number of skills including planning productions, budgeting, filming, editing and evaluation, as well as the analysis of existing media texts.

Outside the classroom, the BTEC is designed to be a vocational course and the specification encourages links to local media businesses.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Level 3 BTECs are recognised by higher education providers so it could lead to a degree in Media, Communications, Design or Marketing. It is also designed to provide transferable skills relevant to the workplace and could lead directly to possible careers in the film or television industry, photography, sound creation or the advertising industry.

FRENCH

EXAM BOARD:	AQA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Amy Ellerington BA (UCL) MA Education, PGCE
MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT:	Annabel Cruwys BA (Bath) PGCE Carmel Rice BA (Newcastle) PGCE Emily Walker BA (Portsmouth) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

You will have a keen interest in the language and culture of the country and have a desire to communicate in another language. As a minimum, a Grade 7 GCSE pass is expected for entry to the course. A Level is about spontaneity and creativity with language, in addition to an in-depth study of the language, including through literature and film.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

AS Level

Paper	Time and Marks	Weighting
Paper 1: Listening, reading and translation into English	1 hour 45 mins (90 marks)	45%
Paper 2: Writing on set film and translation into the target language	1 hour 30 mins (50 marks)	25%
Paper 3: Speaking exam	12-14 mins (60 marks)	30%

A Level

Paper	Time and Marks	Weighting
Paper 1: Listening, reading and two translations	2 hours 30 mins (100 marks)	50%
Paper 2: Writing on set book and film	2 hours (80 marks)	20%
Paper 3: Speaking exam	21-23 mins (60 marks)	30%

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

Anything, as it will enhance any other skills that you acquire.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

The qualification leads to careers in translating and interpreting, teaching, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, working in embassies, and international journalism. Indirectly, and combined with other subjects, it helps to advance a variety of careers in marketing, publishing, law, and engineering. Universities are offering numerous joint-honours courses with languages.

MUSIC

EXAM BOARD:	EDUQAS (WJEC)
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Chris McDade BA (Huddersfield) LTCL PGCE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:	George Picker BMus MA (Birmingham) MSc (Oxford) PGCE
HEAD OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC:	Andrew Thornhill MMus (Portsmouth) MA (Salford) LRSM

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

The study of Music at A Level is both academically challenging and creatively stimulating. This new course provided by Eduqas provides more 'specialist' routes than the more traditional A Level course and can be adapted to suit the strengths of both the performer (Option A) and composer or arranger alike (Option B).

Ideally, students embarking on the course will have achieved at least a Grade 6 at GCSE and be competent performers on at least one instrument. While it is not essential to have achieved graded music exams in their main instrument, in order to achieve a good grade in performance at A Level, students should ideally be performing at about Grade 7 by the time of the assessment in the Upper Sixth. A good working knowledge of music theory is also highly recommended.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Unit 1 – Performing

Students can opt for either Option A or Option B:

Option A (35% of the qualification) – a performance of at least three pieces (approx 10 to 12 minutes in duration) which may include both solo and ensemble performances.

Option B (25% of the qualification) – a performance of at least two pieces (approx 6 to 8 minutes in duration) which may include both solo and ensemble performances.

Unit 2 – Composing

Students can opt for either Option A or Option B:

Option A (25% of the qualification) – Two compositions lasting between 4 to 6 minutes.

Option B (35% of qualification) – Three compositions lasting between 8 to 10 minutes.

Unit 3 – Appraising

A written examination at the end of the course – 2 hours 15 minutes in duration

There are 3 areas of study:

Area of Study 1: The Western Classical tradition – focusing on the development of the Symphony with a close study of two set works by Haydn (Symphony 104) and Mendelssohn (The Italian Symphony).

Area of Study 2: A choice of study selected from either Rock and Pop or Music Theatre.

Area of Study 3: A specific focus on music of the 20th century.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

The study of Music at A Level can lead to a whole range of courses and careers. For some this will be at university or conservatoire (recent Pangbourne students have gone on to study Music at Newcastle and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire), or in recording and production (a recent former student is now studying at the Academy of Contemporary Music) or into a whole range of careers in the vast array of opportunities associated with the music industry. Musicians are hard-working, creative and innovative people – more importantly, they are team players – critical skills in any walk of life!

WHAT SUBJECT DOES IT GO WITH?

Music develops a whole range of academic and practical skills and consequently the subject combines well with almost any combination of subjects, both arts and science-based.

PHOTOGRAPHY

EXAM BOARD: AQA

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Emma Green BA (Reading College) GTP

MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT: Georgina Bouzyk BA (Aberystwyth) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

You will need a Grade 5 or above at GCSE Art and Design. However, students who have not studied Art at GCSE may be granted access to the A Level course at the discretion of the Head of Art after submitting a personal photographic portfolio. Requirements for this portfolio will be issued by the Head of Art in advance of option choices.

You will need a keen desire to explore photographic techniques, both in the darkroom and digitally. It is possible to approach photography in either a technical or creative way, or both. Photography offers a distinctive way of learning, where seeing, thinking and photographing are combined in a powerful form of visual communication. Students are encouraged to be creative, to enquire and question, and to make connections with the work of other photographers.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

The course follows the AQA specification. This enables students to explore a range of photographic processes and respond to topics that they personally find interesting and engaging. Students will have the opportunity to work with black and white film processes, use digital processes, and learn Photoshop techniques. The nature of the course allows for individual interpretations of topics to suit their skills and preferred ways of working.

LEVEL	COMPONENT	COMPONENT CONTENTS	TIME	% OF A2
A Level	Component 1 - Personal Investigation	Practical project and 1,000-3,000 essay	No time limit	60%
	Component 2 - Externally Set Assignment	Preparatory period and 15 hour exam	15 hours	40%

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Students have the opportunity to identify, discuss and resolve visual problems. They will experiment with photographic processes, responding, experimenting, and adapting their thinking to arrive at different solutions. Students develop knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the achievements of photographers and artists from different cultures past and present. This informs and enables the development of their creative practice.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Photography can be a vocational subject and may lead directly to a career as a photographer. Possible career options include advertising, graphic design, illustration, gallery work and photojournalism. Photography is seen as equal in academic status to all other subjects by universities. Careers advice and portfolio preparation for further education courses are available to all students.

PHYSICS

EXAM BOARD:	OCR
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Dr Stephen Hennah BSc MSc PhD (Reading) PGCE
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Dr Ian Hart BSc PhD (Bristol) PGCE Dr Jo Hart BSc PhD (Bristol) PGCE Andrew Sumner BSc (Oxford Brookes) PGCE
DEPARTMENT TECHNICIAN:	Heather Stevenson BSc (Leeds)

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Successful study of Physics requires a logical, analytical mind, an ability to communicate, practical ability and, of course, commitment. As you will note from the entry requirements, a strong performance (a high grade 7 or better) in GCSE Physics or Combined Science is required, as are strong numeracy and literacy skills. With 40% of the marks available within the final written exams at Level 2 standard (GCSE Maths), or higher, it is necessary to study A Level Mathematics and, if possible, Further Maths, alongside A Level Physics.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

The linear assessment enables us to teach the subject in depth across the two years of the A Level course. The topics covered in the first year of the course include: Mechanics, Materials, Electrical Circuits, Waves and Optics. The second year then goes on to investigate: Further Mechanics, Gravitational, Electrical & Magnetic Fields, Thermodynamics, Nuclear Physics, Particle Physics, Astrophysics, Medical Physics and Oscillations.

Practical skills are a core aspect of the course, integrated throughout both years, and are assessed both as part of the written examinations and also a 'Practical Endorsement' is reported separately on the certificate of results at A Level.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Physics sets out to explain everything from the smallest subatomic particles to the structure of the universe. Through physics, we begin to understand why things behave as they do. Much of the technology which affects our lives is physics-based. We aim to turn out physicists with inquiring minds and the skills necessary to be successful in a wide variety of careers.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Most physicists go on to follow STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) based courses at university; when combined with Maths, Engineering is a popular option. However, depending on your other A Level subjects, an extremely wide variety of courses can be taken. Physics is a highly respected A Level and degree, as it shows that you have a strong ability to problem-solve and can think in a way that employers like.

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

Physics is often successfully combined with Maths and one, or both, of the other sciences. However, it is possible to combine it with a wide range of non-science subjects; the enquiry-based nature of the subject works well with all the humanities. Those wishing to study courses such as architecture and engineering often combine their studies in Physics with those in arts-based subjects.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION - A LEVEL

EXAM BOARD:	Edexcel
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Sam Hewick BA (Brighton) QTS MSc (Bristol)
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Richard Follett BA (Liverpool) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Who is your favourite sports person? How do you think they reached such a high level? Is it down to ability, skill, physical fitness, nutrition, media coverage, mental preparation, personality, attitude, or practice? All these questions and more will be answered in Physical Education. Strong biology knowledge is required.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Component 1: Scientific Principles of Physical Education

Written examination: 2 hours and 30 minutes, 40% of the qualification

Content overview: Topic 1: Applied anatomy and physiology

Topic 2: Exercise physiology and applied movement analysis

Biomechanics is embedded within the content of Topics 1 and 2.

Component 2: Psychological and Social Principles of Physical Education

Written examination: 2 hours, 30% of the qualification

Content overview: Topic 3: Skill acquisition

Topic 4: Sport psychology

Topic 5: Sport and society

Component 3: Practical Sport

One chosen sport to be assessed via video evidence and based on performance within that sport, 15% of the qualification

Component 4: Performance Analysis and Personal Development Plan

Written coursework: 3,500 words, 15% of the qualification

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Central to the study of Physical Education is the development of health and fitness, and an understanding of the place of sport in today's society. Implicit within this is the requirement to participate and perform

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Examples of Higher Education qualifications include:

- BA (Hons) in Sport and Exercise Science
- BA (Hons) in Sport Studies and Business, if taken alongside A Levels in Business and Maths
- BSC (Hons) in Sport Psychology, if taken alongside A Level in Psychology
- BA (Hons) in Sports Education

Learners should always check the entry requirements for degree programmes with specific Higher Education providers.

Other options for further study include:

- Sports Science or Leisure Management-based courses in Higher Education
- Sports Psychology / Sports Therapy / Sports and Business / Strength and Conditioning
- Teaching and coaching Physical Education and Sport; Personal training
- Sports Medicine – Physiotherapy, Osteopathy
- Sports Engineering and Design

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

Physical Education combines well with most other subjects, although the study of Biology is an advantage, alongside Psychology.

BTEC NATIONAL EXTENDED CERTIFICATE IN SPORT

(1 A LEVEL EQUIVALENT)

EXAM BOARD:	Pearson / Edexcel
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Sam Hewick BA (Brighton) QTS MSc (Bristol)
MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT:	Ben Sainsbury BSc (Gloucestershire) PGCE Steve Thompson BSc (Hull) PGCE Louise Tremlett BSc (Oxford Brookes) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

The BTEC National Extended Certificate in Sport is an Applied General qualification for post-16 learners who want to continue their education through applied learning, and who aim to progress to higher education and, ultimately, to employment in the sports sector. The qualification is equivalent to one A Level, and it has been designed as a full two-year programme when studied alongside a further Level 3 qualification.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Students will study four mandatory units, two of which are exams and two coursework. The exams can be sat up to three times and are spread across the two years of study:

Unit 1: Anatomy and Physiology (exam)

Unit 2: Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and wellbeing (exam)

Unit 3: Professional Development in the Sports Industry

Unit 7: Practical Sport

In addition to the sport sector specific content outlined above, the requirements of the qualification will mean that learners develop the transferable and higher order skills that are valued by higher education providers and employers. Study of sport particularly encourages the development of skills and behaviours such as teamwork, leadership, performance analysis, resilience, evaluation, analysis and synthesising concepts. These skills are developed through the variety of approaches to teaching and learning enabled by the specification.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Examples of Higher Education qualifications include:

- BA (Hons) in Sport Studies and Business, if taken alongside A Levels in Business and Maths
- BSc (Hons) in Sport Psychology, if taken alongside a BTEC National Extended Certificate in Applied Science and A Level in Psychology
- BA (Hons) in Sports Education and Special and Inclusive Education, if taken alongside an A Level in English Language and a BTEC National Extended Certificate in Performing Arts

Learners should always check the entry requirements for degree programmes with specific Higher Education providers.

Other options for further study include:

- Sports Science or Leisure Management-based courses in Higher Education
- Sports Psychology / Sports Therapy / Sports and Business / Strength and Conditioning
- Teaching and coaching Physical Education and Sport; Personal training
- Sports Medicine – Physiotherapy, Osteopathy
- Sports Engineering and Design

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

BTEC Sport combines well with A Levels such as Biology and Psychology or alongside other BTEC options.

BTEC NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN SPORT

(2 A LEVEL EQUIVALENT)

EXAM BOARD:	Pearson / Edexcel
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Sam Hewick BA (Brighton) QTS MSc (Bristol)
MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT:	Ben Sainsbury BSc (Gloucestershire) PGCE Steve Thompson BSc (Hull) PGCE Louise Tremlett BSc (Oxford Brookes) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

The BTEC National Diploma in Sport is an Applied General qualification for post-16 learners who want to continue their education through applied learning and who aim to progress to higher education and, ultimately, to employment in the sport sector. The qualification is equivalent to two A Levels, and it has been designed as a full two-year programme when studied alongside a further Level 3 qualification. A significant interest in sport is required.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Students will study nine units across two years. There are three exams, spread across the two years and each of these can be sat up to three times.

Unit 1: Anatomy and Physiology (exam)

Unit 2: Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and wellbeing (exam)

Unit 3: Professional Development in the Sports Industry

Unit 4: Sport Leadership

Unit 5: Fitness Testing

Unit 7: Practical Sport

Unit 8: Coaching for Performance

Unit 22: Investigating Business in Sport and the Active Leisure Industry (exam)

Unit 23: Skill Acquisition in Sport

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Examples of Higher Education qualifications include:

- BA (Hons) in Sport Studies and Business, if taken alongside A Levels in Business and Maths
- BSc (Hons) in Sport Psychology, if taken alongside a BTEC National Extended Certificate in Applied Science and A Level in Psychology
- BA (Hons) in Sports Education and Special and Inclusive Education, if taken alongside an A Level in English Language and a BTEC National Extended Certificate in Performing Arts

Learners should always check the entry requirements for degree programmes with specific Higher Education Providers.

Other options for further study include:

- Sports Science or Leisure Management-based courses in Higher Education
- Sports Psychology / Sports Therapy / Sports and Business / Strength and Conditioning
- Teaching and coaching Physical Education and Sport; Personal training
- Sports Medicine – Physiotherapy, Osteopathy
- Sports Engineering and Design

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

BTEC Sport combines well with A Levels such as Biology and Psychology, or alongside other BTEC options.

POLITICS

EXAM BOARD:	AQA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	James Frost LLB MA (UWE, Bristol) PGCE
MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT:	Ben McLeod MA (St Andrews) PGCE Anthony Hammond BA (UWE, Bristol) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Politics is a lively, popular subject and A Level Politics suits a variety of individuals and their interests. It is the perfect course for those who keep their finger on the pulse of news and current affairs, and the study of Politics extends and develops your debating skills when expressing your opinions. In order to study A Level Politics, it is advisable to have a GCSE Grade 5 or above in English and/or History, Business Studies, or Geography, as well as five GCSEs in total. Anybody with a good standard of literacy can pass A Level Politics provided they are prepared to work sensibly.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

There are three broad areas of study in this specification:

Paper 1: The Government and Politics of the UK

Paper 2: The Government and Politics of the USA, and Comparative Politics

Paper 3: Political Ideas – including topics such as: Conservatism, Socialism, Liberalism, Feminism

The A Level requires an in-depth study of UK and US government and politics. Comparisons across the two political systems are required in the topic entitled 'Comparative Politics'. The political ideas to be studied have relevance to both of the systems of government and politics. The study of the four ideologies will enhance your knowledge and understanding of politics, political debate, and political issues in both the UK and USA.

You will learn to identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of politics. This will ensure that you develop a critical awareness - essential in the world of 'fake news' - of the changing nature of politics and the relationships between political ideas, political institutions and political processes. You will also take part in a number of debates and political discussions, as well as attending political visits.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Politics affects the whole nation and studying it at A Level can help you shape the future in a political role, or just give you a better understanding into how politics shapes the country and how it works. Politics involves the important decisions that affect your life, concerning wealth, health, education and morality.

It is ideal if you are considering studying Politics, Sociology, Ethics, Advertising or Journalism at university and is highly regarded by employers in industries including politics, international organisations, the media, government, and the civil service.

WHAT SUBJECT DOES IT GO WITH?

A Level Politics combines well with the humanities subjects such as History, Geography, Economics, as well as arts-oriented subjects, such as English or Modern Languages; but in the modern, flexible world, it can combine with almost any subject.

PSYCHOLOGY

EXAM BOARD: AQA

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Annabelle Cook MSc (Brunel) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

This course is designed to help you understand yourself and other people. Learning about aspects of human behaviour will assist you in daily life, interactions with others, and learning and memory performance. It enhances your ability to cope with pressure and understand the cause of psychological disorders. Psychology is a science and we use the scientific approach to learn about behaviour and mental life. To help support you in the course, we recommend that you demonstrate strong numeracy and data handling skills in your GCSEs and elsewhere.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

We use the AQA Psychology specification which is a linear course. It is examination-based and there is no coursework.

Paper 1 - 33.3% - 2 hour exam	This unit comprises of four sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Influence• Memory• Attachment• Psychopathology
Paper 2 - 33.3% - 2 hour exam	This unit comprises of three sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches in psychology• Biopsychology• Research methods
Paper 3 - 33.3% - 2 hour exam	This unit comprises of four sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues and debates in Psychology (compulsory) Students will take one topic each from three option blocks: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Option 1 – Relationships, Gender, Cognition and Development• Option 2 – Schizophrenia, Eating behaviour, Stress• Option 3 – Aggression, Forensic Psychology and Addiction

We are currently studying: Relationships, Schizophrenia and Forensic Psychology.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Psychologists enjoy a fascinating range of career options, including occupational psychology, clinical psychology, forensic/criminal psychology, and health psychology. An awareness of psychology is becoming increasingly important in a wide range of disciplines, including sports and exercise psychology, business, human resources management, and teaching.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

EXAM BOARD: Edexcel

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: The Reverend Neil Jeffers MA (Oxon) MTh (Oak Hill) ARSM

MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT: Caroline Bond BA (Hull) PGCE
Rachel Braham BA (Birmingham) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

The GCSE course provides an excellent introduction to Religious Studies (RS) A Level. However, this is not a compulsory prerequisite and candidates with a proven interest in RS and PSHCE, and a willingness to work hard, will be welcome on the course. You will be expected to bring a strong commitment to the importance of the subject and be prepared to engage with it critically. No religious commitment is presumed and the course will appeal to anyone interested in religion and moral and ethical issues. A willingness to read is essential, as well as regular essay writing.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
New Testament (Mr Jeffers)	Religion and Ethics (Miss Braham)	The study of Islam (Mrs Bond)

Outside of the classroom, we invite external speakers to present to pupils and attend lectures in London and Oxford. We also visit places of worship. If you wish to know more about these components and what they entail please speak to any member of the department.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

Religious Studies at A Level develops an understanding of people through a wide range of academic disciplines (history, philosophy, languages, textual studies). It is both intellectually challenging and intensely relevant in today's world where so much tension exists between people of different religions and cultures.

On a practical level, you will develop a range of skills which are highly valued by employers: the ability to research and analyse a topic, how to think critically and come to a clear, informed decision, and how to present information in a structured way. RS will certainly develop your essay-writing abilities.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

RS A Level is a long-established academic subject and is widely accepted as a valuable qualification for entry to degree courses at universities. Specifically, it may be that you wish to further your interest and study Theology or Religious Studies at degree level. Universities are particularly keen to fill places in these subjects in recent years, making this one of the easier degree courses to gain entry to at Russell Group universities.

An A Level in RS will equip you with a wide range of skills which employers will find highly appealing. RS graduates are often found in law, politics, civil service, education, journalism and business.

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WELL WITH?

Traditionally, RS combines well with other humanities subjects. However, it is possible, and indeed desirable, for the subject to integrate with a wide range of combinations. It is very commonly combined with History, Politics, English, Sociology or Psychology.

SOCIOLOGY

EXAM BOARD:	AQA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Indy Kaur BSc (Aston) MSc (Birkbeck College) PGCE (Bedfordshire)
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Rachel Braham BA (Birmingham) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

Sociology is the study of human society. On the course you are asked to look at your own personal experiences and of those around you to be able to understand, connect and develop an understanding of why individuals behave the way that they do. We want you to be curious and to be willing to look at the world through a critical lens. You are expected to question behaviour, habits and customs that we have come to see as 'natural' around us. During class, we take 'normal', taken-for-granted assumptions about life and turn them upside down, looking for meaning and viewing them from a different perspective. No prior knowledge of Sociology is required.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

Sociology is a 100% exam-based A Level course and follows the AQA specification. You will sit three papers of equal weighting (33.3% each) at the end of the course. Each paper is 2 hours long and there is a combination of short answer (4, 6 and 10 marks) and long answer (essay based - 20 & 30 marks) questions.

Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods

Paper 2: Topics in Sociology (Families & Households and Beliefs in Society)

Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods

The course content is focused on UK society with reference to the impact of globalisation. The underlying themes of the course include socialisation, culture and identity, along with an examination of issues on social differentiation, power and stratification.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER?

You will develop a greater critical awareness and understanding of social and cultural issues and their impact on human behaviour and life chances. You will also learn key analytical and evaluative skills when writing and the ability to apply contemporary examples. You will be encouraged to read widely, engage with the news, and watch recommended documentaries.

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Students often go on to university to study Sociology with some also doing joint degrees combining it with subjects such as Psychology, Law, Politics, Criminology and Anthropology. It can lead to careers in social research, policy roles, charitable work, social work, teaching and education, journalism and media, marketing, and the police.

WHAT SUBJECTS DOES IT GO WITH?

Sociology complements many A Level courses. Typically, students who are following a humanities pathway tend to pick Sociology. So, subjects like English, History, Law, Politics, Geography, Media etc., are the norm. A very popular combination is Sociology with Psychology as by studying both you develop a more holistic understanding of human behaviour.

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION (EPQ)

EXAM BOARD: AQA

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Chloe Knight BSc (Reading) PGCE

THE EXTENDED PROJECT

This independent project allows you to specialise in an area that really interests you. It appeals to top universities because it shows a real passion for a subject and mirrors the style of learning that university students undertake on a daily basis.

WHAT IS IT?

An EPQ is equivalent to half an A Level and attracts up to 28 UCAS points. Final marks are graded A* to E. There are a number of different approaches to an EPQ and the content is unlimited – the only rule is that it must not be in an area which you have studied in your other courses. Examples of what could be done include:

- an extended piece of writing
- a musical or theatrical performance
- a sculpture or other artefact
- a report on an investigation or experiment
- a model of an architectural structure you would build
- a bike you have made
- a song
- a performance (song, or group performing a piece of drama)

TEACHING

As part of the course you will be taught a series of key core skills. These take approximately 30 hours and are delivered in a number of different ways, by a number of staff. This will help you to develop and acquire a huge number of transferable skills required. Examples of the skills include:

- Critical thinking
- How to put together a well-structured piece of work
- Time management and planning
- How to avoid plagiarism
- Referencing and bibliography skills
- Presentation skills

Whilst the final product is important, it is the 'journey' which the examiners are particularly interested in. Constant reflection, adaptation and evidenced use of skills throughout the process are all extremely important. Keeping a log/study diary or blog is vital for a successful project.

WHY TAKE IT?

The EPQ is something which puts you in a strong position for A Level and university. The key skills allow you to study an area which you enjoy and the independent nature puts you firmly in control – with some help from your own dedicated supervisor. Top universities value the EPQ and consider it in their offers. We have seen increased university offers when a student has completed an EPQ.

TRINITY EXAMS IN DRAMA OR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Grades 6, 7 and 8

EXAM BOARD:	Trinity College London
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Rhiannon Bland BA (Cardiff Metropolitan) PGCE
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT:	Rebecca Atack BEd (Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, London)

WHAT IS IT?

Trinity College London offers a variety of practical exams in Speech and Drama, Acting, and Performing Text, as well as pair and group performances. Trinity's graded acting and speaking exams provide a structured, yet flexible, framework for progress, which encourages students of all levels and abilities to demonstrate their skills in performing and speaking, through engaging with as wide a variety of performance activities and texts as possible. The exams assess performance and speaking skills through face-to-face practical assessment; there is no written element to this qualification. It offers students of any age the opportunity to measure their development as performers against a series of internationally understood benchmarks, taking them from beginner level to the point where they can progress to entry for Trinity's performance diplomas, higher education or employment.

ASSESSMENT AND MARKING

The exams are normally assessed by one examiner who watches the work presented and asks questions about the student's research and understanding of their chosen texts. The examiner writes a report on the extent to which the candidate has met the learning outcomes of the qualification, and awards marks in line with the published assessment criteria and attainment descriptors. Grades 6, 7 & 8 carry UCAS points reflecting their difficulty and rigour. Students can opt for exams in Acting, Speech & Drama, and Performing Text as well as Communication skills. Depending on which exam they take will depend on what content they will research and explore. Content can include researching, learning and exploring extracts from plays, poetry, extracts of prose, and stand up comedy monologues.

TEACHING

This will happen in timetabled lessons on a regular basis. The student and teacher will find appropriate texts, then it is down to the student to read the plays, learn the extracts and then discuss with the teacher. The teacher will support the practical exploration, learning and understanding of the texts, work through questions that the examiner might ask, and offer guidance on all aspects of the work.

WHY TAKE IT?

Top universities and the work-place like a student who has experienced drama. It proves they have skills they want to see: adaptability, perseverance, cooperation, knowledge of the wider world and cultures, people management, compromise, multitasking, and problem solving. All of these are learnt through drama, and Trinity offers a wide range of accessible texts which will allow the student to engage and enjoy their research and reading.

MATHEMATICAL STUDIES (Core Maths)

EXAM BOARD:	AQA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:	Adam Beake BA (Durham) MSc (Durham) PGCE
MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT:	Charlie Allison BA (Oxford) MA (Oxford) Sara Carbery BSc (South Wales) QTS Jenny Jones BEd (Gloucestershire) Danny Quinlan BA (Brighton) QTS Mark Skidmore BSc (Newcastle) PGCE Fergus Yuille BSc (Liverpool) PGCE

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE COURSE?

This is a course suitable for students who do not want to commit to taking a full A Level in Mathematics, but want to learn some really useful maths.

It is a Level 3 qualification, studied ideally over one year, which is equivalent to an AS, or half an A Level. The course will prepare learners for the mathematics requirements of higher education courses, outside of the sciences, and equip learners to apply for university, training or employment. This subject cannot be taken alongside a Mathematics A Level or Mathematics AS Level qualification.

Core Maths earns a similar number of UCAS points as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), and should be considered equivalent in terms of the commitment required by the student.

There are two timetabled lessons a week and an activity slot to enable everyone to complete the course in one year. Successfully completing this course in that timeframe has led to increased UCAS offers.

WHAT DOES THE COURSE CONSIST OF?

The emphasis of the course is on applications of mathematics to real-life problems. Topics studied include:

- Maths for personal finance
- Critical analysis of data
- Estimation (the single biggest deficit in student ability identified by university lecturers)

WHERE WILL IT LEAD YOU?

Core Mathematics is a suitable 'companion' course for any other AS or A Level; it may be combined with the Sciences, Economics, Geography, Business Studies, Psychology or Computer Science. Not only will studying Maths help give you the knowledge to tackle scientific, mechanical, coding and abstract problems, it will also help you develop logic to tackle everyday issues such as planning projects, managing budgets and even debating effectively.