

COURSE GUIDE



Lawrence Sheriff School
A National Teaching School

Current Entry Requirements For 2020

Entry Profile

Eight GCSEs: 4 GCSEs graded at 5 and 4 GCSEs graded at 6 or above

These must include

English: Grade 5 in either Language or Literature

Maths: Grade 5 or above

Genuine interest in chosen A Level subjects

Subject	Essential (Minimum)
Art and Design	6 Art
Biology	6 Biology (or 6-7 Combined Science)
BTEC Engineering	6 Maths 6 in a Science subject
Business	5 English Language or English Literature
Chemistry	6 Chemistry (or 6-7 in Combined Science) 6 Maths
Computer Science	6 Maths Evidence of an interest in programming and problem solving
Economics	6 Maths
English Language	6 English Language
English Literature	6 English Literature
French	6 French
Geography	6 Geography

German	6 German
History	6 History
Mathematical Studies	5 Maths. One year AS course
Mathematics	7 Maths
Further Mathematics	8 or 9 Maths
Music	6 Music and a pass in Grade 5 Theory. Ability to read music
Philosophy and Ethics	6 Religious Education
Physical Education	6 in either Biology, Chemistry, Physics or 6-6 in Combined Science
Physics	6 Physics (or 6-7 in Combined Science) 6 Maths
Politics	5 English Language or English Literature
Psychology	6 Maths
Spanish	6 Spanish

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Art & Design

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE Art.

How the course is assessed.

A Level: 60% coursework portfolio plus written essay, 40% Externally set Assessment.

Exam board.

Edexcel.

Where does it lead?

Art A Level can lead to many different opportunities. Previous candidates have achieved direct entry onto Higher Education courses such as Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Product and Transport Design and Fine Art. Others enrol onto Foundation courses which lead them onto BA (Hons) Degrees in various Art and Design fields. Past students have won the LTI National Taxi design competition and have had their work displayed at the Frankfurt Motor Museum.

Course overview

This is a fully-flexible qualification which will allow you to follow a broad, open course, or to specialise in one or more of the endorsed titles.

At A Level students produce one problem solving unit of their choice which includes practical work, art journal as well as a dissertation of approximately 3,000 to 5,000 words. They conclude their A Level by completing an externally set exam unit consisting of preparations studies, art journal and a final sixteen hour examination.

You can expect to:

- Have opportunities to generate practical work and ideas.
- Research from primary and contextual sources.
- Develop your knowledge and critical understanding of a range of art, craft and design.
- Experiment with media and materials.
- Express ideas and opinions through visual and written annotation.
- Develop and refine ideas presenting their outcomes.
- Write a dissertation based on art critical studies of approximately 3,000 to 5,000 words.

Other useful information

- Students are encouraged to visit galleries and exhibitions.
- It would be useful for students to have a digital camera or a phone with a camera in order to record primary resources and catalogue their work.
- Students will require basic art materials for home based work and an overall or lab coat (essential to keep suits clean) for class work.

The department also offers the BTEC Foundation Diplomas in Art & Design, which through direct application to the department can be undertaken along with one other A Level over a two year period. The Foundation Diploma is the equivalent of three A Levels.

Students' views ...

"I see the world around me in a totally different way; the possibilities to express myself are endless."

"I found that inspiration for my work came from looking at how others have been inspired."



Biology

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology or 6 -7 in Combined Science.

How the course is assessed.

100% examination (with a practical endorsement).

Exam board.

OCR. AS Biology A H020, A Level Biology A H420.

Where does it lead?

Many students go on to complete Biology-based courses at University including Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Physiology, Biochemistry or Biological Sciences. However a good grade in A Level Biology will also be useful for non-science based courses such as Law and English.

Course overview

If you enjoyed studying Biology at GCSE and are fascinated by living organisms, their structure and function then you will enjoy the depth of the A Level Biology course. Many of the topics will be completely new and not really touched upon at GCSE. The course is content heavy, particularly when compared with the other science A Levels. It also requires significant mathematical skills. Full course content can be found on the OCR website.

You can expect to:

- Develop research skills.
- Develop strong practical skills.
- Analyse information and draw conclusions from data.
- Answer essay type questions.
- Present information.
- Carry out group work.

Other useful information

- All students will need a text book which can be loaned to students for the duration of the course.
- We also recommend that you purchase a revision guide, any brand, but it should be relevant to the OCR specifications.

Students' views ...

"More interesting than GCSE Biology because you go into much more details particularly on topics like the heart."

"We got to do some dissections! Which really help you to understand how organs work."



BTEC Engineering

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE Mathematics.

Grade 6 or above in a GCSE Science subject.

How the course is assessed.

Unit 1: External exam.

Unit 2: Internally set assignment (moderated by exam board).

Unit 3: Externally set and marked task.

Unit 4: Internally set assignment (moderated by exam board).

Exam board.

Pearson.

Where does it lead?

Engineering is currently one of the brightest parts of the UK economy. The success of companies like Jaguar Land Rover, Aston Martin and Bentley are some well-known examples of booming success stories over recent years. In the West Midlands, we have a long tradition of engineering companies with worldwide reputations. All of these companies, especially those in the high tech areas, are keen to recruit young people and provide them with a well-paid, rewarding career. Especially those with good A Levels, a BTEC qualification and plans to study to post graduate level.

Course Overview

The LSS BTEC National Engineering course is an Extended Certificate course equivalent to one A Level.

There are four units covered over two years. Three are mandatory:

Unit 1: Engineering Principles,

Unit 2: Health & Safety,

Unit 3: Designing & Making.

The optional unit is Unit 10: Computer Aided Design. All are taught concurrently with a specialist teacher for each unit.

You can expect to:

BTEC courses are designed to provide an area of study which includes a significant practical content with real life relevance to the workplace. It is also academically rigorous with challenging units based on how maths and design is applied to engineering scenarios and how health and safety is central to all engineering activities. Technical drawing and Computer Aided Design are also integrated and the course will be enhanced by specialist visiting speakers and industrial visits. We also expect students to play an active role in securing a relevant work experience placement.

Other useful information

Assessment is by a variety of methods, some internal, others external. Unit 1 is by external exam, Unit 2 by internally set assignment (standardised by the exam board). Unit 3 is assessed by an externally set and marked task and Unit 10 is by internally set assignment, again standardised by the board.

The whole course takes two years to complete and there is no mechanism for 'cashing in' at the end of year 12.

Business

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 5 or above in GCSE English.

How the course is assessed.

100% examination.

Exam board.

Edexcel.

Where does it lead?

Through the study of this subject students will gain an understanding of the world of business and develop the skills necessary for reading a variety of subjects at university. A large proportion of our students have gone on to university to study Business, Economics, Mathematics and Social Sciences as well as languages. Others have pursued a more vocational route and have undertaken apprenticeships at well-known engineering and financial institutions.

Course overview

Students will look at the following topics:

Year 1: Theme 1: Marketing and People and Theme 2: Managing Business Activities.

Year 2: Theme 3: Business Decisions and Strategy and Theme 4: Global Business.

Students will have the opportunity to analyse the strategic position of a variety of small and large businesses and discuss how they manage change. Through the use of corporate case studies, videos and ICT, students will gain a broad understanding of these key topics, whilst also gaining a range of transferable skills such as data analysis, building arguments, recognising and solving problems; in addition to essay writing and carrying out research. Full course content can be found on the Edexcel website.



You can expect to:

- Learn about a wide range of private and public sector organisations, the markets they serve and how they add value.
- Investigate businesses from the perspective of a range of different stakeholder groups.
- Undertake group work and independent study.
- Develop literacy, numeracy, research and presentation skills.
- Learn about the current structure of business and business practice.

Other useful information

Students are encouraged to participate in Young Enterprise and a variety of business challenges. Students will also have the opportunity to attend a range of trips and participate in a range of enrichment activities. Students will be expected to keep up-to-date with current affairs and read around the subject using journals, newspapers and textbooks.

Students' views ...

"I enjoyed the course as topics were related to businesses I knew. I also found our business scrapbooks useful as I was able to keep all my business research in one place."

"I initially found writing essays very difficult but once I learnt how to structure them I started to achieve really good grades."

Chemistry

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 6 or above in GCSE Chemistry or 6-7 Combined Science.
Grade 6 in Maths.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination covering theory and practical skills.
Exam board.
AQA.

Where does it lead?

In recent years the department has sent pupils to study at most of the top universities in the UK. These include Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Nottingham and Warwick for courses as varied as Chemistry, Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Engineering, Law and Geology.

Course overview

The course itself is taught over six lessons a week by two members of staff. There are three modules entitled:

- Unit 1** - Physical Chemistry
- Unit 2** - Inorganic Chemistry
- Unit 3** - Organic Chemistry

You can expect to:

Experience a variety of teaching methods, not least practical skills and analysis. Also each student will be provided with an electronic copy of past papers, extensive PowerPoint presentations and notes.

Other useful information

It is important to stress that the primary responsibility for learning lies with the pupil. Homework will be set on a regular basis and pupils who are serious about top grades are expected to spend at least five hours a week on the course in their own time. The Chemistry staff have constantly provided additional support when required and it is this commitment to the pupil that produces results consistently above the national average.

Students' views ...

36% of pupils rate the teaching in Chemistry as above average and 57% of pupils rate the teaching as very good.

Certificate in Financial Studies

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
None.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
Exam board.
London Institute of Banking and Finance.

Where does it lead?

This qualification provides a comprehensive introduction to personal finance. Its purpose is to prepare students for further study through the development of the core skills of critical analysis and evaluation, synthesis, verbal communication (through classroom discussion) and written communication.

It would be well-suited to students who have an interest in banking and finance, economics, business as well as those who wish to understand how to make sensible financial decisions.

Course overview

Students will look at the following topics:

This qualification consists of two units:

Unit 1: Financial Capability for the Immediate and Short Term (FCIS).

Unit 2: Financial Capability for the Medium and Long Term (FCML).

Each unit is worth 50% of the overall qualification.

CeFS develops the knowledge and skills required for young people to make informed financial decisions by

introducing them to the risks and challenges involved in personal finance and the tools for effective planning. Within this, it provides a solid basis for creating financial inclusion, by exploring social-economic factors which may influence an individual's life choices.

Specific topics include:

- Importance of financial capability in the immediate, short, medium and long term.
- Financial services and products, including sources of help and advice.
- Borrowing, budgeting, financial planning and cash flow forecasting.
- The impact of external influences at different stages in the personal life cycle.
- Risk and reward in managing personal finance.

You can expect to:

- Learn about a wide range of private and public sector organisations, the markets they serve and how they add value.
- Investigate businesses from the perspective of a range of different stakeholder groups.
- Undertake group work and independent study.
- Develop literacy, numeracy, research and presentation skills.
- Learn about the current structure of business and business practice.

Other useful information

Students will be expected to keep up-to-date with current affairs and read around the subject using journals, newspapers and textbooks.



Computer Science

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE Maths.

Evidence of an interest in computer programming and problem solving.

How the course is assessed.

AS Level

1 1/2 hour on-screen exam - 50% of AS.

1 1/2 hour written paper - 50% of AS.

A Level

2 1/2 hour on-screen exam - 40% of A Level.

2 1/2 hour written paper - 40% of A Level.

Non-exam assessment - 20% of A Level.

Exam board.

AQA.

Where does it lead?

Computer Science is suitable for students wishing to follow a career in a range of science based subjects, including Computer Science and Engineering. It is also suitable for a future in business, Medicine or Law.

Course overview

The course is not about learning to use tools or just training in a specific programming language. There is an emphasis on abstract thinking, general problem solving, algorithms and mathematical reasoning.

You can expect to:

- Engage in problem solving, write and use algorithms.
- Learn to write and test programs.
- Learn about hardware and software, networks and the Internet.
- Understand the ways in which data is represented in a computer system.
- Understand the ethical and legal constraints when using computer systems.
- Use relational databases.
- Understand the system development lifecycle and the needs of a real end user.

Other useful information

Free online resources are also used throughout the course. Installation of the free Visual Studio programming suite on a home computer is recommended.

Students' views ...

"The A Level contained a good mix of coursework and theory that covered all basic knowledge and in some cases stretched us to learn very important topics in the study of Computer Science."

Economics



Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

There are no specific requirements for Economics but, to do well, students need to be literate and numerate.

A grade 6 at Maths GCSE is required.

How the course is assessed.

100% examination.

Exam board.

Edexcel.

Where does it lead?

Many sixth form economists go on to take a degree in the subject but many more will find that they have to study some economics at university in courses such as Finance, Business Studies, Surveying and Economic History. Economics provides students with analytical and evaluation skills which are useful in many other careers, including financial services, business management and consultancy, marketing, law, civil service and engineering. With the state of the current Economic climate those who have an understanding of the Economic world are well respected by future employers.

Course overview

Economics has long been considered the choice subject of many of society's leaders. Economics gives us an insight into the levers of wealth and well-being. Economists today analyse problems in the economy and attempt to create innovative ways to correct them. The World needs bright young people with a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century global economy. Studying A Level Economics is a fabulous opportunity to begin developing this understanding.

You can expect to:

- Learn the tools that economists use to understand how markets and economies work, why they might fail and how to improve them.
- Analyse and apply economic theories to a range of real-world contexts but, by learning to think like economists, you will learn a wide range of holistic skills.
- Learn how to effectively structure a balanced argument and how to evaluate the significance of different factors over different timescales.

Other useful information

- Economics is a topical and fluid subject and you are encouraged to read widely from quality newspaper and journal articles to a variety of digital sources.
- Text books used including 'Economics A Level' - Alain Anderton.
- There are six lessons a week, delivered by two teachers.

Students' views ...

"The AS course has made me much more aware of how economies work and fail. I've really enjoyed the learning experience in economics, particularly the discussions."

"The economics course made the news make sense! I am now able to explain to my family what is going on in the UK Economy."

"Economics fits really well with my other A Level subjects. If you like thinking, this is the subject for you."

English Language



Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE English.

How the course is assessed.

20% coursework. 80% examination.

Exam board.

OCR.

Where does it lead?

Many graduates who study English Language go on to start their careers in the media as some form of journalist, working on a newspaper, or for a magazine or website. Publishing is another popular career choice. English students acquire strong research skills, which makes them suitable for a researching role while working behind the scenes on television, or radio or even as an archivist or librarian. Surprisingly the largest percentage of recent English graduates went into Business Management or Marketing training schemes.

Course overview

A Level English Language is an exciting and integrated course in which students learn to be 'language scientists', collecting and examining examples of language from different contexts and testing different theories and ideas about how language works. The course is essentially a study of social linguistics and you will discuss the reasons for the variations in ways people speak and communicate.

You can expect to discuss:

- Has social media influenced the way people use language?
- Why some words are considered wrong, unacceptable or obscene? And is it always wrong to swear?

- The application of linguistic knowledge, methods and insights to the forensic context of law, crime investigation, and judicial procedures.

Other useful information

- We describe different varieties of language, not state what is right or wrong.
- We focus on language in its social contexts: how we change the language we use according to who is speaking and where it is being spoken or written.
- We study the ways politicians and marketing companies use language to exercise power and influence audiences.

Students' views ...

"It's a fascinating and relevant insight into the language used in everyday and real life contexts."

"It's really thorough and detailed. It's really useful to be able to discuss the ways writers and speakers communicate. We can improve our language skills which can then be applied to all subjects, not just English."

"I've liked learning more about how professional writers use language. I have decided to study Sports Journalism at university as a result of my studies in English Language."

English Literature

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 6 or above in GCSE English Literature.
How the course is assessed.
20% coursework. 80% examination.
Exam board.
Edexcel.

Where does it lead?

English Literature is both academically challenging and hugely enjoyable when studied at A Level. Some students choose it because they want to study Literature at higher education level. Others choose it simply because they enjoy reading and studying authors' works. Graduates of English Literature often pursue careers in law, journalism, teaching and business management.

Course overview

The course covers a wide range of poetry, drama and prose literature. At AS, you will be introduced to two novels, a drama text and a selection of exciting new poetry written after 2000. At A Level, the course becomes more independent. Students are expected to read widely and independently, with guidance from the teachers. Students have told us they very much enjoy being able to make their own text choices and set their own coursework tasks.

You can expect to:

- Read widely and independently both set texts and texts selected by yourselves.

- Engage creatively and develop your knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation.
- Explore the historical and social contexts of the texts and other critics' interpretations of them.
- Deepen your understanding of the changing traditions of literature in English.

Other useful information

Students often ask about our choice of texts. We have a very experienced team of A Level English Literature teachers and set texts are chosen with the groups' personal interest in mind. Set texts include: Othello, A Streetcar Named Desire, Frankenstein, A Handmaid's Tale, Richard II, Dracula, Hard Times, Dr Faustus, The Duchess of Malfi. Students will study a range of poetry taken from a particular poetic movement such as the Romantics or Metaphysical poetry.

Students' views ...

"Learning about the significance of cultural concerns of the author's contemporaries, and the historical, social and political contexts in which the famous works of literature were written is fascinating."

"The teachers show a real and genuine enthusiasm for the subject. We are challenged to read and discuss books and concepts we may not have chosen ourselves."

"I've enjoyed learning how Literature shapes our culture, ethics and values so much that I've applied to study English Literature at University."

Extended Project Qualification

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
There are no specific entry requirements other than the general entry requirements for the sixth form.
How the course is assessed.
100% coursework, which takes the form of a dissertation/report/artefact and a formal assessed presentation.
Exam board.
Edexcel.

Where does it lead?

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) will enable you to develop research skills, produce detailed extended writing, undertake academic reading, construct an argument, evaluate and communicate your ideas effectively. All these skills are required for higher education and in many careers.

Course overview

The EPQ is an opportunity to extend and develop subject knowledge and personal interests. Most students complete a dissertation based upon a research question, which, for the most part, is developed independently and chosen to reflect individual interests. Students have explored a range of topics: cryptography, genetics, artificial intelligence, history of conflict in the Middle East, alternative medicine, cardiovascular diseases, the impact of social media, the Russian Revolution, the Coen brothers, performance enhancing drugs in sport and many other diverse and interesting subjects. For those

who are more creative or practically minded there is an option of doing an artefact based project or a field-study/investigation style project.

You can expect to:

- Be writing about a subject that interests you.
- Learn how to reference your work appropriately.
- Read widely at an academic level.
- Have a dedicated supervisor to help guide you through this independent Project.
- Gain a number of valuable skills.

Other useful information

Universities greatly value the Extended Project Qualification: the skills demonstrated throughout the Project process are ones that are in great demand. Some universities will reduce grade offers if you have an EPQ. An EPQ will enable you to demonstrate to university professors that you have gained a much deeper understanding of an aspect of a subject than A Levels alone will allow.

Students' views ...

"EPQ is a way to learn and discover things you wouldn't ordinarily."

"EPQ teaches us useful research and essay skills which are vital for later in life."

"EPQ is a great subject where we have the freedom to develop our knowledge in a subject of our own interest."

"A great way to learn something that isn't on the school syllabus."

French

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 6 or above in GCSE French.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
Exam board.
AQA.

Where does it lead?

Languages can be used these days in almost all areas of the working world; business, finance, teaching, translation, retail, civil service and international organisations. Many university courses can also be combined with a language to give you that extra edge to your qualification.

Course overview

As the world gets smaller, British holidaymakers travel the world and businesses become increasingly international, there has never been such an important time in our history to study a foreign language in depth. We aim to open your mind to the fascinating aspects of the language, life and times of France and its people. Full course content can be found on the AQA website.

You can expect to:

- Read and understand authentic texts.
- Listen to and comprehend the spoken language.
- Understand the key social and cultural aspects of France.
- Express ideas and opinions about key modern issues in written form.
- Write extended essays.
- Talk about important issues in French.



- Study two cultural topics in greater depth in the second year.

Other useful information

Students are encouraged to take part in a 5-day cultural visit to France. Cost to be advised. Text books used are "AQA A Level French" (Hodder Education). You will need to purchase a dictionary suitable for study at this level. You will receive information about this in your first AS lesson.

Students' views ...

"It's been much more interesting to learn French at AS because you go into much more detail and you get much more knowledge about how the language works."

"I've really enjoyed reading French newspapers and watching the French news which we didn't do at GCSE."

"The grammar was difficult at first but I soon got to grips with it."

"I found the listening exercises much easier than I'd expected as you can listen to the passages through headphones as often as you like!"

Further Mathematics

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 8 or 9 in GCSE Mathematics.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
Exam board.
Edexcel.

What is Further Mathematics?

Further Mathematics is an A Level qualification which both broadens and deepens the mathematics covered in A Level Mathematics. Further Mathematics is taken alongside an AS or A Level in Mathematics.

Where does it lead?

Almost three quarters of Russell Group universities mention Further Mathematics in their entrance requirements for BSc Mathematics. This course should be the first choice for any student intending to specialise in Mathematics or subjects that require a high level of mathematical competence, for example, Computer Science, Theoretical Physics, or Engineering.

Course overview

The course is designed to allow specialisation in the subject by the study of a wide range of topics, as well as a more sophisticated approach to some topics that are included in the Mathematics A Level.

You can expect to:

- Study further content in Pure Mathematics, Statistics and Mechanics.

Other useful information

A calculator with advanced statistical functions is required. The Casio fx-85GT PLUS or fx-991ES PLUS, used at GCSE, are no longer sufficient for Advanced Mathematics. The school will endeavour to make a range of suitable models available for purchase at below High Street costs. More information will be available on joining the Sixth Form.

Students' views ...

"I have two teachers who make themselves available to help me however trivial the problem."

"The pace of this course was difficult to cope with until I scheduled regular times out of lessons to work on practising the skills that had been introduced in the lessons."

"It has been both enlightening and very interesting to see the skills learnt in the A Level course come into play in higher mathematical concepts."

Geography



Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE Geography.

How the course is assessed.

AS - 2 exams both incorporating fieldwork skills.

Paper 1 - Landscape and place - 55% of AS.

Paper 2 - Geographical debates - 45% of AS.

A Level - 3 exams and an independent investigation.

Paper 1 - Physical systems - 22%.

Paper 2 - Human interactions - 22%.

Paper 3 - Geographical debates - 36%.

Independent investigation - 20%.

Exam board.

OCR.

Where does it lead?

Geography is highly valued by universities as an A Level choice. Geographers are among the most employable university graduates because of the broad range of skills they develop. The subject gives students a perspective on a wide range of exciting issues such as tourism impacts, managing natural hazards, globalisation and population pressures. Geography is uniquely both a science and humanity, complementing a wide range of other A Level options.

From the global scale through to the local, Geography is an ever changing discipline. Whether you prefer the physical side or the human, A Level Geography leads naturally to university-level courses. Recognised as a 'facilitator' subject by Russell Group universities, Geography allows students to progress to the top universities.

Geographers have the ability to plan, collect and analyse primary data; synthesise and evaluate a variety of data sources, and target plan and progress through their own learning journey.

You can expect to:

- Develop understanding of global issues and broaden global perspectives.
- Learn new exciting content.
- Engage with very topical and up to date case studies and topic content.
- Attend AS fieldtrip to investigate and support AS modules (small cost involved).
- Attend A2 residential fieldtrip to North Wales (cost involved), to study fieldwork skills.
- Develop a range of skills - presentations, essays, projects, ICT skills.
- Be part of a department with consistently outstanding A Level results.
- Enjoy the course!

Other useful information

Staff - Mr L Brown, Mr D Clarke, Miss C Woolliscroft.

Students' views ...

"The course is loads better than the GCSE one - the global issues topics are really contemporary and relevant to your life. It's my favourite subject and so interesting."

Royal Geographic Society

"Geographers enter a very wide range of career areas and put simply there is no such thing as a geography job, there are jobs that geographers do."

German

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE German.

How the course is assessed.

100% examination.

Exam board.

AQA.

Where does it lead?

Languages can be used these days in almost all areas of the working world; business, finance, teaching, translation, retail, civil service and international organisations. Many university courses can also be combined with a language to give you that extra edge to your qualification.

Course overview

As the world gets smaller, British holidaymakers travel the world and businesses become increasingly international, there has never been such an important time in our history to study a foreign language in depth. We aim to open your mind to the fascinating aspects of the language, life and times of Germany and its people. Full course content can be found on the AQA website.

You can expect to:

- Read and understand authentic texts.
- Listen to and comprehend the spoken language.
- Understand the key social and cultural aspects of Germany.
- Express ideas and opinions about key modern issues in written form.
- Write extended essays.
- Talk about important issues in German.



- Study German film and Literature in greater depth in the second year.

Other useful information

- Students are encouraged to take part in a 4-day cultural visit to Germany (varies from year to year). Cost to be advised.
- Text books used are "AQA A Level German" (Hodder Education). You will need to purchase a dictionary suitable for study at this level. You will receive information about this in your first AS lesson.

Students' views ...

"It was a far more relaxed atmosphere at AS than at GCSE and we do much more interesting activities."

"I enjoy the challenge of becoming increasingly fluent in German and speaking German in creative contexts."

"Small class sizes mean that we can get individual help and support."

"I like the fact that we go into the Language lab every week and get to work more independently."



History

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE History.

How the course is assessed.

A2: 80% examination; 20% coursework (NEA).

Exam board.

AQA.

Where does it lead?

History is a highly respected academic discipline for university entrance and leads on to a wide variety of career options. These include the legal profession, journalism, the media (written and broadcast), finance, the civil service and local government, the armed forces, museum, archival and library services, the heritage industry, teaching and almost any career that involves a management capacity. History is also valuable and interesting for its own sake and one of the best reasons for choosing it is because you have a genuine interest and enjoy it.

Course overview

The course centres on British and World History, considering continuity and change over time and in-depth investigation. We currently study Tudor England 1485-1603, Russia in Revolution 1917-53 and provisionally plan to offer the Causes of World War One for the NEA/ Coursework component.

You can expect to:

- Investigate historical problems through the study of texts, written sources, visual records and film or documentary material.
- Engage in group and class discussion on a range of historical issues.
- Deliver seminars and presentations.
- Develop your independent research skills.
- Use your analytical and evaluative skills to produce coherent, detailed and persuasive written and verbal responses to specific historical tasks and issues.

Other useful information

There are opportunities for participation in field trips both related to the History course and conferences provided by universities to aid understanding, appreciation and insight into the various aspects of historical study.

Students' views ...

"History has really improved my communication skills. I can now put a fluent argument together in essays and in presentations. This really helps my progress in other A Levels."

"I now understand the modern world so much more by studying the past."

Mathematical Studies

(AS Core Mathematics)

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 5 or above in GCSE Mathematics.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
Exam board.
AQA.

Where does it lead?

Mathematical Studies aims to prepare students for the mathematical demands of higher education and work where there is a distinct mathematical or statistical element, but where the mathematical demands do not stretch to a requirement for A Level Mathematics. For example, in Geography, Business Studies, Psychology or Economics.

Course overview

This qualification will consolidate students' mathematical understanding, build their confidence and competence in applying mathematical techniques to solve a range of problems and introduce them to new techniques and concepts that will prepare them for further study and future employment within a broad range of academic, professional and technical fields.

You can expect to:

- Learn about estimation, personal finance, probability, statistics and more.
- Solve problems which may not be well defined and may not have a unique solution.
- Develop confidence in using mathematics.

Other useful information

This course carries UCAS points and is available at AS Level only.

<http://www.core-maths.org/about-core-maths/>

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/mathematics/aqa-certificate/mathematical-studies-1350>

Students' views ...

"This course has helped me to get a maths based AS for my career in Computing"

Mathematics

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 7 or above in GCSE Mathematics.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
Exam board.
Edexcel.

Where does it lead?

Mathematics is a means of communication, a tool of analysis and a problem-solving resource. It is important as a language in a technological world. An understanding of mathematics leads to a better understanding of the world around us. The world relies so much on technology that people who possess a high level of mathematical knowledge and competence are valued and very highly regarded by Higher Education and employers alike. Some of the areas of employment with a significant mathematical content include: Accounting; Actuarial work; Architecture; Computer Science; Economics; Electronic Data Processing; Engineering (all disciplines); I.T.; Medicine; Operational Research; Sciences; Statistics; Teaching.

Course overview

Mathematics is a very challenging course and it assumes knowledge of the whole GCSE course, including the most demanding material. Can you answer the following questions with an emphatic 'yes'? If so, A Level Mathematics may be a right choice for you.



1. Have you obtained a grade 7 or better at GCSE?
2. Do you enjoy the way that new concepts expand your understanding of the whole subject?
3. Do you understand algebra?
4. Are you prepared to work on your own initiative and persevere with challenging problems until you reach a solution?

You can expect to:

- Deepen and extend your knowledge of algebra, trigonometry and Statistics, and be introduced to Calculus and Mechanics.
- Apply these new skills for yourself by solving problems that involve several stages of logic.
- Have six lessons per week and spend an average of one hour per night practising these skills.

Other useful information

A calculator with advanced statistical functions is required. The Casio fx-85GT PLUS or fx-991ES PLUS, used at GCSE, are no longer sufficient for Advanced Mathematics. The school will endeavour to make a range of suitable models available for purchase at below High Street costs. More information will be available on joining the Sixth Form.

Students' views ...

"I found algebra difficult at first but by spending more time practising I got better."

"Thoroughly understanding a topic enables you to answer any question that you are asked."



Music

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 6 or above in GCSE Music and a pass in Grade 5 Theory. Grade 5 practical or equivalent.
Ability to read music.
 How the course is assessed.
30% Performing [Public Recital], 30% Composing [Coursework], 40% written exam.
 Exam board.
Edexcel.

Where does it lead?

Music can lead to a vibrant career as a performing musician, working as a composer/arranger in the TV and film industry, teaching, music therapy, publishing and music journalism. Music develops many transferable skills, such as teamwork, leadership, analysis and communication.

Course overview

This is a two year A Level course. You will perform regularly on your instruments, compose original music and make arrangements, and study set works taken from the western classical tradition, popular music and world music. Full course content can be found on the Edexcel website.

You can expect to:

- Perform regularly in public and to the class.
- Continue lessons on your instrument.
- Critique and analyse your performances.
- Compose original music of your own choice and also to a brief set by Edexcel.
- Complete a series of harmonisation exercises.
- Study 18 set works from an Anthology.
- Analyse previously unseen music.

Other useful information

The minimum standard for performing at A Level is approximately equivalent to ABRSM grade 6. To achieve the highest mark bracket the standard is approximately grade 8. As this is a two year course we would expect students to a minimum of grade 5 when they begin in year 12. All instruments and musical styles are acceptable. Students are encouraged to perform as regularly as possible, both as a soloist and as a member of an ensemble. To undertake this course you should be able to read music.

Students' views ...

"I enjoyed the compositional aspect as it gave me the chance to write music in my favourite style."

"Studying music was a welcome creative complement to my other maths and science based courses."

"I really enjoyed the lively and encouraging atmosphere the department offered."

Philosophy & Ethics of Religion

Religious Education

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 6 or above in GCSE RE.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
Exam board.
OCR.

Where does it lead?

Quite apart from philosophy being the basis of human thought, this A level is highly regarded by Universities for the development of thought it enables and encourages. For future employment in the fields of politics, business strategy and law the philosophy element is most apt. Careers in medicine, law and the environment most obviously apply to the ethics section.

Course overview

Ever wondered why? Not why anything in particular, just why? Philosophy has been the joy of thinking humans through the centuries, and remains an important ideal today. It is not always about answers, it is about exploring questions. Ethics continues to be one of the most important fields of study in society too, as humanity pushes forwards its boundaries of knowledge, we have to ask; is it right to spend money on space exploration above educating children? Who determines the right to die? What IS right and wrong? Following this the Christian beliefs that have shaped

western society are addressed and dissected thoroughly identifying some key challenges of secular thought.

You can expect to:

- Read and understand philosophical and ethical works, from Plato to Dawkins.
- Express your own opinions on issues such as sex, God and existence.
- Write extended essays.
- Discuss and debate with peers.

Other useful information

Text books cover the entire course, but these are yet to be published and so further details will be available closer to the time. A good book to start with is the Puzzle of Ethics (Peter Vardy) or An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion (Third Edition, Brian Davies). There is an expectation of other reading too though and a list of recommended reading will be given to you at the start of the course.

Students' views ...

"This course is the first genuine opportunity you get in school to think freely without being marked down for it."

"We argue a lot, with the teacher, with each other, it's fantastic, it has really challenged my beliefs."

"Philosophy and Ethics is by far the best preparation for university."



Physical Education

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 at GCSE in one of the separate sciences (either Biology or Chemistry or Physics) or a 6-6 in Combined Science) and a Grade 6 in English.

How the course is assessed.

70 % Examination, 30% Practical and Oral assessment.

Exam board.

OCR.

Where does it lead?

The course is ideal for students who wish to pursue a career in Physical Education, Teaching, Medicine, Sports Science, Sports Coaching, Physiotherapy, Sports Psychology, Leisure Management, Sports Development Officer etc.

Course overview

The specification takes a multi-disciplinary approach, encouraging the development of different methods of enquiry drawn from a wide range of disciplines, with the focal point being the performer and the performance. The specification is based on the interaction between the theory and practice of Physical Education.

Full course content can be found on the OCR website (H555).

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/234833-specification-accredited-a-level-gce-physical-education-h555.pdf>

You can expect to:

- Study a thorough programme over a 2 year A Level.
- Be assessed in ONE practical activity from the list; <https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/234840-guide-to-non-exam-assessment.pdf>
- Be assessed in both Technique and by Effective Performance (20%).



- Produce an oral Evaluation and Analysis of Performance for Improvement in a chosen activity (10%).
- Theory Content: Skill Acquisition, Sports Psychology, Sport and Society, Contemporary Issues, Applied Anatomy and Physiology, Biomechanics, Exercise Physiology.
- Written exams are worth 70%.

Other useful information

All practical activities need video evidence to support the mark awarded and you will be expected to provide overlaying annotation and commentary to help the moderator identify you correctly.

We aim to run two A Level PE trips – History of Sport at Rugby School and Application of Exercise Physiology at the University of Birmingham.

Students' views ...

"The pictures and practical demonstrations used during teaching make it easy to see and understand."

"It is much more interesting and in depth than GCSE."

"If you like sport then you will love PE A Level!"

Physics

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE Physics or 6-7 in Combined Science.

Grade 6 or above in GCSE Maths.

How the course is assessed.

100% examination.

Exam board.

Edexcel (Specification for 2015).

Where does it lead?

Physics is accepted worldwide as being a demanding and rigorous qualification at A Level. Apart from the more obvious employment opportunities in areas such as engineering and medicine, physics is also an avenue into a number of sectors of work, including law and accountancy.

Course overview

Physics plays an enormous role in our understanding of why many of the processes we see on Earth (and beyond) occur. It gives us an insight into both the benefits and risks of many physical processes, such as radioactivity and electricity. However, it also enables students to express their mathematical understanding of concepts such as forces, cosmology and quantum theory. As with any A Level science course, practical work forms a large part of our lesson time at this level. However, this is not assessed as a separate unit, but incorporated into the written examinations.



Those who remain on the course in Year 13 have a separate qualification to demonstrate practical competence in Physics, although this does not contribute to the overall A Level score.

You can expect to:

- Undertake practical work, including planning, obtaining results, analysing and evaluating.
- Explain the nature of physical processes.
- Perform calculations.
- Discuss theoretical aspects of Physics.
- Produce presentations about topics in Physics.

Other useful information

- Our A2 students are invited to go on a trip to CERN in Geneva in the Autumn Term. The cost is usually in the region of £300-£400.
- Further advice about textbooks to be used will be given at the start of Year 12.

Students' views ...

"Inspired greater interest in the subject."

"A variety of visual aids and experiments were used to explain theories."

"Supported me, answered my questions, and helped me when I was stuck!"

"Opportunity for lunchtime and after school advice and revision was invaluable."



Politics

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 5 in GCSE English.
 How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
 Exam board.
 AQA.

Where does it lead?

Politics fits very well with subjects like Economics, History, Law, Psychology and Sociology. Many students go on to read Politics at university and it is excellent preparation for a career in the civil service and public sector, business and management, the media, and the voluntary and community sector.

Course overview

The two-year A Level course consists of three units:

- Government and Politics of the UK: our different elections and electoral systems; referendums; political parties and pressure groups; our constitution and judiciary; the role of parliament; how our prime ministerial and cabinet system operate; and finally, local and devolved government and the main institutions of the European Union.
- Government and Politics of the US and comparative politics: in which students cover US presidential and congressional elections, the US Constitution and role of the Supreme Court; Congress; and the Presidency. We then compare and contrast the main features of British and American government and politics.

- Political Ideas: in which students look at the main ideas of socialism, conservatism, liberalism and one other from a list that includes feminism and anarchism.

You can expect to:

- Be aware of the main political stories on a daily and weekly basis.
- Participate in a lot of debate and discussion.
- Develop a good understanding of British and American politics and political ideologies.

Other useful information

Each year we organise a trip to a student conference in Westminster for Year 12s and this year we also visited Parliament and met with the MP for Rugby.

Students' views ...

"Politics has become one of my favourite subjects and it has helped my understanding of international and global society which is what I would like to follow at university."

"It has helped me to learn about the inner workings of government and interested me to engage in political discussion due to my improved knowledge."

"Lessons have typically been engaging and intriguing. I'm much more interested in now in the news thanks to class discussions."

Psychology

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 6 or above in GCSE Mathematics.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
Exam Board.
Edexcel.

Where does it lead?

The A Level Psychology course covers a broad range of topics in Psychology and is an excellent foundation for students who go on to study Psychology at University. This then opens up a wide range of future careers, from Sports Psychology and Clinical Psychology to working as a researcher.

However, this course will also benefit students who are looking to pursue other courses or careers. For example, the Social Psychology module is relevant to anyone considering studying Business and Management, while the focus on mental health disorders may appeal to those considering a future in Medicine. However, the development of key skills, such as the ability to think critically and to construct an effective argument, will be beneficial to a range of fields.

Course overview

The initial part of the course focuses on examining behaviour from different 'approaches', applying this to issues such as prejudice, aggression, phobias and memory. In the second year of the course students then look at the practical applications of these approaches by applying knowledge to Criminal Psychology and Mental Health Disorders. Throughout the course students will also develop an understanding of research methods, ethics and data analysis through a series of practicals,

and the course culminates by looking at the wider issues and debates within the subject.

Overall the course offers something for everyone, and links are consistently made with both current and historical events.

You can expect to:

- Learn about a range of behaviours, from obedience to schizophrenia.
- Be taught to question what you learn and the world around you.
- Develop your writing skills.
- Undertake your own research, both on your own and in groups.
- Reflect on the decisions you make as a researcher.

Other useful information

Advice and support is available for students considering studying Psychology at University and all students are also given the opportunity to be exposed to wider research in Psychology through the Psychology Reading Group.

Students' views ...

"Psychology is an exciting course that takes into account aspects unexplored by other subjects."

"The support received during the course is extremely helpful throughout, and the subject as a whole is both interesting and applicable to the real world."

"The range of topics you cover really opens your eyes and allows you to broaden your knowledge on current affairs whilst incorporating your own opinions and abilities into discussion and evaluation."

"Psychology will push you, however you will always be engaged."

Spanish

Fact Focus

Subject specific entry requirements.
Grade 6 or above in GCSE Spanish.
How the course is assessed.
100% examination.
Exam Board.
AQA.

Where does it lead?

Languages can be used these days in almost all areas of the working world; business, finance, teaching, translation, retail, civil service and international organisations. Many university courses can also be combined with a language to give you that extra edge to your qualification.

Course overview

As the world gets smaller, Britain plays its part in the EU, holidaymakers travel the world and businesses become increasingly international, there has never been such an important time in our history to study a foreign language in depth. We aim to open your mind to the fascinating aspects of the language, life and times of Spanish and its people. Full course content can be found on the AQA website.

You can expect to:

- Read and understand authentic texts.
- Listen to and comprehend the spoken language.
- Understand the key social and cultural aspects of Spanish.
- Express ideas and opinions about key modern issues in written form.
- Write extended essays.
- Talk about important issues in Spanish.
- Study two cultural topics in greater depth in the second year.

Other useful information

Text books used are "AQA A Level Spanish" (Hodder Education). You will need to purchase a dictionary suitable for study at this level. You will receive information about this in your first AS lesson.



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