

# A LEVEL OPTIONS 2010

DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

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# THE SIXTH FORM COURSE

## INTRODUCTION

The choice of subjects for study in the Sixth Form is among the most important choices that each of us ever makes. It determines the course of our intellectual development at an age when we are most receptive to new ideas and skills and most energetic in our creative response to them. For most people their A Level subjects will also point them in the direction they will take at university and in their career beyond that. And, thirdly, A Level study is an intense and time consuming business in itself. For all these reasons it is obvious that making the right choice of subjects to study at A Level is a matter of vital importance.

## RECENT CHANGES TO GCE QUALIFICATIONS

The old Curriculum 2000 was updated for teaching beginning in September 2008. The main differences are that in most subjects the number of modules has been reduced from six to four (although in Mathematics, Music and the Sciences six modules will be retained) and that a new A\* grade will be introduced. To be awarded an A\*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A-level qualification and at least 90% of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the A2 units. In other respects, the basic existing system of A Level study remains the same.

## HOW DOES THE SYSTEM OPERATE?

An Advanced Level qualification is awarded in a subject for the successful completion of four (in Mathematics, Music and the Sciences six) units of assessment.

In each subject, the first two units of study (three in Mathematics, Music and the Sciences), designed to be followed in the Lower Sixth, lead to the award of an Advanced Subsidiary Level qualification. These units are assessed at a standard that students are expected to have reached in one year of full-time study.

The next two units (three in Mathematics, Music and the Sciences), designed to be studied in the Upper Sixth, complete the course and lead to the award of an

Advanced Level qualification. These units are assessed at a slightly higher level than the first two/three modules. It is possible for individual units of assessment to be retaken prior to certification at AS or A Level.

The four/six units which make up the Advanced Level award for any given subject may be assessed at different times during the course, or all at the end of the course.

## HOW MANY SUBJECTS WILL I STUDY?

Students will be expected to study four subjects to Advanced Subsidiary Level during their first year in the Sixth Form, unless the School believes that this is not in an individual student's best interests. They will have the opportunity to continue to study all four subjects to full Advanced Level standard in the Upper Sixth or (in the majority of cases) to accept an AS Level grade in one subject and reduce to three subjects for the second year. Students are expected to learn to work independently and to read around their chosen subjects. Personal motivation and intellectual curiosity are important attributes for success.

## WHICH SUBJECTS ARE AVAILABLE?

Whilst care is taken to ensure that all students are given as flexible a choice as possible, it is not feasible to timetable every possible combination of subjects. There is, therefore, a blocking system in operation. Students whose first language is not English do not choose to study their mother tongue, but will be given the opportunity to obtain the relevant qualification.

## ARE THE OPTION BLOCKS FIXED?

The School's policy is to try and ensure that each student's three main choices can be studied, though this cannot always be guaranteed. There is therefore always some change made to the option blocks. The Director of Studies then tries to ensure that as many students as possible are granted their fourth option, but it is never possible to ensure this for all students. Due to the complexity of the blocking arrangements, it is vital that each student takes great care over the subject choices and that a definitive choice is made at as early a stage as possible.

Once work begins on the new timetable after Easter, the option blocks as they then stand become immovable and any change of subjects that a student may wish to make will only be allowed if the new combination fits with the new option blocks and the timetable.

If a given subject has a particularly small take up, the Head Master may decide that it is not economically viable to offer it in a given year.

### **WHICH COMBINATIONS ARE SENSIBLE?**

The subjects should be chosen so that there is an element of contrast, whilst ensuring that the choice of subjects is coherent and sensible. It is important that students choose subjects that they enjoy and that they are good at.

Students must also think carefully about the course of study that they wish to follow at university and should bear in mind a possible career. For some careers or Further Education courses there may be certain subjects that need to be studied to AS or A Level. Anyone, for example, wishing to study Medicine at university must study Chemistry and, usually, Biology as well as one other Science. All House Masters and House Mistresses have a copy of the current UCAS University Compendium, which lists the entrance requirements for individual university courses and this should be consulted at an early date. Another useful source of information is Brian Heap's book Degree Course Offers. Further information can be obtained from the Careers Guidance Coordinator, or from the member of staff responsible for overseeing university entrance, and from university websites.

### **DO I NEED ANY PARTICULAR QUALIFICATIONS BEFORE EMBARKING ON A GIVEN AS OR A LEVEL COURSE?**

Some subjects are available for the first time at AS and A Level, such as Business Studies and Economics and no corresponding GCSE qualification is needed to study these subjects. However, there are many subjects that cannot be taken up for the first time in the Sixth Form, such as Biology, Chemistry, Classical Greek, French, German, Latin, Physics and Spanish.

All students embarking on an AS Level course are expected to have at least 6 GCSE passes at grade C or above to include at least 3 passes at grade B or above, although individual cases are looked at carefully where this requirement is not satisfied. A GCSE pass at grade B or above in the subjects to be studied at AS or A Level is recommended where this applies; for Physics, Chemistry and Biology a GCSE pass at grade A or A\* is recommended.

### **CAN I RESIT ANY GCSES?**

Resit courses in Mathematics and English are provided every year and students are expected to ensure that they obtain matriculation passes in these subjects at the earliest opportunity. They are entered, therefore, for the autumn/winter examination in their Lower Sixth Form year. It is possible to resit GCSEs in other subjects if the Head of Department approves and if there is a commitment on the part of the students to do their very best to ensure that they are successful.

### **WHEN DO I MAKE A DECISION ABOUT MY AS LEVEL CHOICES?**

The decision-making process begins with a briefing from the Director of Studies that is attended by all members of the Fifth Form. This is followed by the Fifth Form Parents' Conference when parents have the opportunity to discuss possible Sixth Form options with members of staff. Fifth Formers also discuss possible options with their Tutors.

Students register their provisional choices with the Director of Studies by the end of the Lent Half Term. They are then expected to discuss these with their parents during the course of the first half of the Lent Term, prior to confirming their choice during the second half of the Lent Term. At this stage students will be asked to list their three preferred subjects and every effort will be made to ensure that this selection, if sensible, is timetabled. A fourth subject will be provisionally noted down at this stage, though this may need to be changed if the timetable does not make the choice possible. The final combination of subjects to be studied may be dependent upon the GCSE results, which are published towards the end of August.

### **CAN I CHANGE MY MIND?**

Although students are encouraged to make final choices as soon as possible, changes can be made right up to the beginning of the Michaelmas Term, provided they are approved by the Director of Studies and are possible within the constraints of the timetable. Once the AS Level course has started, changes are only approved after careful consultation, and need to be made very early on in the Michaelmas Term and certainly within the first fortnight.

### **WHAT OTHER SUBJECTS MUST I STUDY?**

Every member of the Sixth Form must attend lessons in Religious Studies and General Studies.

## **NON-GCE COURSES**

### **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

All members of the Sixth Form must attend one period of Religious Studies each week.

In the Lower Sixth there is a modular programme covering such topics as the Social Teaching of the Church, Ethics, Prayer, Psychology and Religion, Religious Art, and An Idiot's Guide to the Bible. This is aimed at helping students to think more critically about Christian faith in relation to modern life, building on the knowledge gained in the GCSE.

In the Upper Sixth the delivery of the programme continues through a more flexible programme of talks and small group discussions covering topics such as The Four Last Things, Atheism, Benedictine Values and Ambition and Vocation.

### **GENERAL STUDIES**

Every member of the Lower Sixth takes part in a limited General Studies programme.

In the Michaelmas term guidance is offered for students who wish to do the Extended Project Qualification. The Extended Project Qualification is worth one half of an A level. Pupils will produce a 5,000 word essay on a topic of their choice and present their findings to a group at the end of the project. During the Michaelmas term there will be one lesson per week, and after Christmas individual support is offered. The project will be completed by the end of the Lent term. It is designed to allow pupils to research a subject in which they have an interest, and to prepare them for university work. The topic is ideally directed towards their future university degree, and completing the project will be of benefit when completing the UCAS personal statement and in any interview. The Russell Group of leading universities is favourable to the qualification. It will be compulsory for Academic Scholars and optional for all other Lower Sixth pupils. For further information, please see Mr Grinsell or Dr Roberts.

In the Lent term all Lower Sixth students attend regular sessions advising them on Careers and on the university entrance process.

### **ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

Lessons in English as an Additional Language (EAL) are available to students whose mother tongue is not English and who need extra assistance in order to follow their chosen curriculum. The lessons will be aimed at improving students' ability to use English competently in their academic subjects and to communicate fully in an English speaking environment. A termly charge is made.

Students who enter the Sixth Form without a GCSE in English will be able to gain a matriculation qualification for higher education in Britain by taking the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination. It tests ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as the command of grammar and vocabulary.

## UNIVERSITIES AND CAREERS

### UNIVERSITY APPLICATION

The process of university application begins after the first term of the Sixth Form, when there is an initial briefing about the procedures to be followed and students are invited to arrange a personal interview with the School's Higher Education Adviser. They may in addition ask for an interview with the careers adviser, who visits the School regularly. The School's Careers Guidance Coordinator is always available on request.

During the Summer Term of the Lower Sixth there is a conference for all Lower Sixth students and their parents, when the procedures are explained and some guidance is given on how to choose a university and a course. A brief introduction is also given to the variety of Gap Year opportunities that are available. There is a question-and-answer session to deal with any point that may arise, and this conference also provides an opportunity for parents to consult with teachers, tutors and Heads of Department. A professional careers adviser is also in attendance.

It is during the Summer Term that most of the university Open Days take place, and students are advised to attend at least two of these. Also this term, students are registered on the UCAS website and begin the process of filling in an online application form. Plenty of guidance is given with this, and students are shown how to write a persuasive personal statement, which is an important part of the application. Applications are not sent until the teachers responsible are satisfied that the applicants have done the best possible job. They should be completed by the beginning of the Michaelmas Term.

For a student who wishes to take a Gap Year, these procedures can be left until the Upper Sixth, which means that the UCAS form is not sent until after the A Level results are known. Any university place offered will then be definite, and not a conditional offer as given to a pre-A Level applicant.

### OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

Well over 10% of Downside students usually put in applications for these two universities. In last year's Upper Sixth, eight students from a year group of 65 gained places, the highest number for some time. Competition is increasingly fierce not only from UK candidates but from the EC and further afield.

Oxford and Cambridge differ from the others in their collegiate and tutorial system and in the intellectual maturity that they expect of applicants. Other universities aim to turn each student into a scholar by the time he or she leaves; Oxford and Cambridge expect their applicants to be already using the techniques of scholarship. Candidates must, therefore, be keen and habitual readers of books, not only ones which are of direct relevance to their subjects, but on a wide range of topics including politics, philosophy, literature and current affairs. They must have very strong GCSE grades (A\*/A in all subjects) and high marks, as well as top grades, in their AS levels. They must demonstrate rigour, flair, originality and edge.

The process of applying for Oxford and Cambridge through UCAS is now the same as that for other Universities. However, they also require separate application forms, which they receive directly. All offers of a place are made after an interview.

At the start of the Lent Term the Director of Studies, in consultation with Heads of Departments, begins to compile a list of potential Oxbridge candidates. These students receive additional support to stimulate their interest in reading around their own subject, and exploring ideas not to be found in the A Level specifications. They are also expected to attend a course of general classes, which begins in the Lent Term and runs until November. The list of possible candidates usually changes considerably during the course of the Lower Sixth year.

Students not on this list who achieve exceptional A Level results may be encouraged to apply after their A Levels. This provides the opportunity for a gap year. Some students plan from the start to apply after their A levels – a strategy with much to recommend it – but they should still attend the preparation classes in the Lower Sixth. Half of the successful applicants from last year's Upper Sixth gained their places by applying after their A levels.

In general we strongly encourage suitable students to apply for Oxford or Cambridge, but it has to be realised that it is a demanding and unpredictable process; great dedication and hard work are a prerequisite.

## **CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE**

The Sixth Form Careers Guidance programme:

### **LOWER SIXTH**

#### **Lent Term**

Preparation for the writing of Personal Statements and UCAS during General Studies lessons.

UCAS/COA 'Centigrade' Higher Education Courses Selection programme.

Sixth Form Careers Seminar. Individual UCAS interviews/Careers interviews with Careers Adviser. Visit to Higher Education Convention at Bath University.

#### **Summer Term**

Lower Sixth Parents' Conference - talk from Careers Staff on HE and Gap Year.  
Individual UCAS interviews and applications for Higher Education and Gap Year.  
Visits to Higher Education institutions encouraged, especially during half-term.

### **UPPER SIXTH**

#### **Michaelmas Term**

Lecture on interview technique; mock interviews with interviewers from outside the school. Completion of Oxbridge and UCAS applications. Upper Sixth Parents' Conference.

#### **Lent Term**

Sixth Form Careers Seminar. Interviews with Institutions of Higher Education. Offers from universities arrive. Occasional careers talks during term time.

#### **Summer Term**

Most offers and rejections notified. Completion of UCAS forms by Gap Year students. A Level examinations. A Level results due mid-August; advice available if requested.

The School is fortunate to have the services of a professional Careers Adviser. He helps run the Centigrade programme with the Lower Sixth, offering advice on Higher Education and careers. He is also available for advice at Parents' Conferences. Tutors also play a vital role in the guidance of their tutees, as do teachers and parents in this important decision-making process.

There is a well-resourced Careers Room. In addition to general information on careers, there are numerous sources of information on Higher Education institutions including prospectuses. UCAS has an interactive data base on Higher Education institutions which is available on the internet.

# ART

## EXAMINING BOARD

Edexcel

## SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

8AD01 AS Fine Art

9AD01 A Fine Art

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A high grade at GCSE or equivalent.

## ASSESSMENT

The Advanced Subsidiary course is made up of 2 units:

### **6AD01 Art and Design Coursework** (60% AS; 30% A)

This unit is internally set and marked and externally moderated.

### **6AD02 Art and Design Externally set Assignment** (40% AS; 20% A)

This unit is externally set, internally marked and externally moderated.

Submissions to both units above must include supporting studies and evidence of the student's personal development and outcome in response to a theme.

Students studying for the full A Level must, in addition, complete the following units:

### **6AD03 Art and Design Coursework** (30% A)

This unit is internally set and marked and externally moderated.

Submissions to this unit must include: supporting studies, evidence of the student's personal development and outcome in response to the theme, and a written study of 1000-3000 words.

### **6AD04 Art and Design externally set assignment** (20% A)

This unit is externally set, internally marked and externally moderated.

Submissions to this unit must include supporting studies and evidence of the student's personal development and outcome in response to a theme set by the examination board.

## THE COURSE

The course is intended to form a part of an educational continuum, which progresses from the GCSE Art Criteria. It is intended to meet the needs of the following groups of students:

- those who, whilst having an interest and aptitude in the subject, are not intending to study the subject beyond AS or A Level;
- those who will undertake further studies in Art and Design;
- those who will study subjects or take up careers for which an Art and Design background is relevant.

The aims of the course are to develop a student's:

- intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive powers;
- investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgment;
- understanding of the interrelationships between art, craft and design, and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate;
- knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design in contemporary society and in other times and cultures.

There is a mandatory requirement that each student keep a work journal, which should contain evidence of the development of ideas throughout the course, including reference to the work of others, showing understanding of meanings, contexts and the ability to make skilled judgements using an appropriate visual/written form.

Art is not an easy option. It requires genuine interest coupled with enthusiasm, ability and hard work. It helps students to develop skills such as creativity, self-expression and visual communication. Art is a serious option for those students who are thinking of a career in advertising, art, textile design, fashion, architecture, film or art history. As well as timetabled lessons, students are expected to attend a one-and-a-half-hour life drawing session when it is offered.

Work produced for this course will demonstrate the use of the formal elements of art and creative skills, and give visual form to individual thought, feelings, observations and ideas. Students will show evidence of trying to extend their own and others' way of seeing the world. They will use visual language sensitively and thoughtfully to support their intentions.

## BIOLOGY

### EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

### SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

1411 AS Biology

2411 A Biology

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students wishing to study Biology at this level need to have ideally achieved a Grade A at GCSE in Biology or Coordinated Science and a B in Mathematics. If a student has not studied Coordinated Science, it is advisable to have achieved the equivalent of Grade A or above at GCSE in Chemistry.

### ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed on the following units at AS Level:

**Unit 1 Biology and Disease** (1 hour 15 minutes) (331/3% AS; 162/3% A)

**Unit 2 The Variety of Living Organisms** (1 hour 45 minutes) (462/3% AS; 231/3% A)

**Unit 3 Investigative and Practical Skills** (20% AS; 10% A)

Candidates studying for the full A Level are also assessed on a further three units:

**Unit 4 Populations and Environments** (1 hour 30 minutes) (162/3% A)

**Unit 5 Control in Cells and in Organisms** (2 hours 15 minutes) (231/3% A)

**Unit 6 Investigative and Practical Skills** (10% A)

Practical work comprises 20% of the Advanced Subsidiary and 10% of the Advanced Level qualification. Practical Skills Assessments (PSA's) are carried out throughout each year and two Investigative Skills Assignments (ISA's) in each year are assessed. This work is assessed by the examination board. There is no coursework in either year of the A Level Biology course.

### THE COURSE

There is a new emphasis on how Biologists work and how Biology can contribute to society.

The AS course looks at the Digestive and Gas Exchange Systems and the Diseases that affect them. The extensive Variety of Life is also studied using the very modern Genetic approach as well as time honoured Classification systems. Elements of Biochemistry and Cellular Biology are incorporated into these two main units.

The A2 course begins with the study of Speciation and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems. This unit also covers how Human Activity is affecting Ecological Balance. In the September of the A2 course a field trip is attended on the Isle of Wight where various surveying techniques are used to assess population sizes (including a crab hunt!). Homeostasis, Genetic Research and the Endocrine and Nervous Systems are also studied.

The A Level course is wide and interesting. The opportunities in employment for those with knowledge of the natural sciences are increasing as appreciation of man's impact on the global environment, and understanding of the causes of disease, increases. It is a course recommended to those who wish to go on to University to study any of the sciences, prospective doctors, dentists and veterinary surgeons, to those students who have an interest in living organisms and to those who wish to consider environmental issues and recognise their importance. The subject blends well with a number of other subjects and those studying Chemistry and Mathematics in particular would benefit from opting for Biology.

## BUSINESS STUDIES

### EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

### SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

1131 AS Business Studies

2131 A Business Studies

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are no specific entry requirements, but students should have achieved at least matriculation grade C in English and Mathematics at GCSE.

### ASSESSMENT

Candidates will be assessed on the following two AS units at the end of the Lower Sixth:

**Unit 1 Planning and Financing a Business** (1 hour 15 minutes) (40% AS; 20% A)

The examination consists of short answer questions and extended answer questions based on a case study.

**Unit 2 Managing a Business** (1 hour 45 minutes) (60% AS; 30% A)

The examination consists of compulsory data response questions.

The further two units for the full A Level, assessed in the Upper Sixth, are:

**Unit 3 Strategies for Success** (1 hour 45 minutes) (25% A)

The examination contains questions on a compulsory case study.

**Unit 4 The Business Environment and Managing Change**

(1 hour 45 minutes) (25% A)

This unit is assessed by a two section essay paper. Section A contains a choice of two essay questions based on a pre-release research topic. Section B consists of a choice of 3 general essay titles.

## THE COURSE

In the first year students embark on a basic introductory study of the business world and environment. They study starting a business, marketing, accounting and finance, people (personnel and human resource management), operations management (production), external influences (the role of the government) and objectives and strategy of businesses. The first year is intended as an introduction to the subject. In the second year students are expected to deepen and widen their knowledge of the subjects already studied. They are also required to develop even further their analytical and evaluative skills. Business is undoubtedly the strongest social and economic force of the age. A study of it can therefore only enhance the career opportunities of the student. However, it should not of itself be regarded as a passport to a business career. The popularity of Business Studies at university continues to grow.

The most important quality that students must possess is dedication to study. The most important qualities that they will develop will be communication and numeracy, but most important of all, skills of analysis and evaluation.

## CHEMISTRY

### EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

### SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

1421 AS Chemistry

2421 A Chemistry

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students studying AS chemistry should have at least an A grade in Chemistry or Science at GCSE or IGCSE. Chemistry is a challenging subject and most people will find success more likely if they also study at least one of Mathematics, Physics or Biology at AS level.

### ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed on each of three units at AS Level, including an experimental skills component.

**CHEM1 Foundation Chemistry** (1 hour 15 minutes) (331/3% AS; 162/3% A)

**CHEM2 Chemistry in Action** (1 hour 45 minutes) (462/3% AS; 231/3% A)

**CHEM3 Investigative and Practical Skills in AS Chemistry** (20% AS; 10% A)

This unit is assessed internally and consists of an Investigative Skills Assignment and a Practical Skills Assessment.

Candidates studying for the full A Level are assessed on a further three units.

**CHEM4 Kinetics, Equilibria and Organic Chemistry** (1 hour 45 minutes) (20% A)

**CHEM5 Energetics, Redox and Inorganic Chemistry** (1 hour 30 minutes) (20% A)

**CHEM6 Investigative and Practical Skills in A2 Chemistry** (10% A)

This unit is assessed internally and consists of an Investigative Skills Assignment and a Practical Skills Assessment.

### THE COURSE

Chemistry occupies a central position in science. It has links with Physics, Materials Science and Engineering, and also with Biological and Environmental Sciences, Medicine, Veterinary Science and Forensic Science. Its applications form the basis of industry and, indeed, our everyday life.

Chemistry is concerned with studying the underlying principles that define how the molecules of substances bond and react. It looks at long-term questions such as “How can we overcome increasing problems caused by pollution?” and immediate problems such as “Can we design drug molecules that can target cancer cells, avian influenza or the AIDS virus?” The course aims to stimulate each student’s interest and understanding of Chemistry by providing a satisfying blend of the abstract and the practical. As at GCSE, the balance has shifted towards understanding and applying concepts rather than acquiring factual knowledge, but there is still a large body of facts to be learned.

Chemistry A Level is a requirement for those who want to read Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Pharmacy, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Chemical Engineering and Metallurgy. It would be helpful for those intending to study Physiotherapy, Food Technology, Geology, Biology and Physics. The study of Chemistry at A Level and beyond will provide the student with a variety of transferable skills that are of great value in many different occupations. These skills include logical analysis of problems, retrieval of information, accurate calculation of numerical solutions, critical appraisal of results and the clear presentation of reasoned argument. Most Chemistry students at Downside will study the subject because it is seen as being central to a wide range of scientifically and technologically orientated disciplines. Chemistry at A Level supports study in Biology and Physics, and certainly combining Chemistry with one or more of Biology, Mathematics and Physics at AS Level is helpful. However it is certainly possible to study Chemistry as part of a more diverse set of subjects.

Chemists are employed in research, development and production but many go into management, business, law, accountancy, insurance and banking. The UK chemical industry is very successful and it is the sixth largest in the world. It is one of the UK’s highest export earners and provides employment for thousands of UK citizens. There are also a great many opportunities for travel and employment overseas.

## CLASSICAL GREEK

### EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

### SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

H040 AS Classical Greek

H440 A Classical Greek

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to have achieved at least grade B in GCSE Greek.

### ASSESSMENT

Assessment at AS Level is by means of two written papers:

**Unit 1 Greek Language** (1 hour 30 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

**Unit 2 Greek Verse and Prose Literature** (1 hour 30 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

Candidates attempting the full A Level are also assessed by means of two additional written papers.

**Unit 3 Greek Prose: Prescribed Literature and Unprepared Translation**

(2 hours) (25% A)

**Unit 4 Greek Verse: Prescribed Literature and Unprepared Translation**

(2 hours) (25% A)

### THE COURSE

This is a traditional A Level course that involves both language and literature in depth. The literature is in various genres: history, epic, tragedy, comedy, oratory and philosophy. The chief aims are expertise in reading the language and ability to understand the literature. Some in-depth study of the cultural ambience is part of the course.

The qualities needed by an A Level student in Greek are similar to those for Latin. They include not only the love of words and the desire to ask questions, but also a real wish to understand poetry and to empathize with the people who gave Europe the beginnings of philosophy, science, politics and drama.

# DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY: PRODUCT DESIGN

## EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

## SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

H053 AS Design and Technology

H453 A Design and Technology

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Although it is not necessary for Design to have been studied at GCSE, a pass at grade B or above in either GCSE Art or GCSE Design is desirable.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment at AS Level is through the following two modules:

### **F521 Advanced Innovation Challenge** (40% AS; 20% A)

F521 is a seven-hour design challenge set by OCR. It is undertaken in two three-hour sessions over the period of one day and a one-hour session at a later date.

A theme is released in the September prior to the examination. Each theme runs for a year, enabling candidates to research and gather resources to form a personal handling collection/inspiration box/mood board, etc. Candidates should identify and collect these resources themselves. A challenge sheet based on the theme will be included with the workbook and will first be seen in session 1. Candidates select one challenge from the sheet, related to the material area of their choice.

The advanced challenge requires candidates to work with materials in a supervised workshop. In session 1, with their job bag as inspiration, candidates produce a specification and design brief using annotated sketches, notes and models to describe their ideas and designs. They choose one design to take forward into session 2. In session 2, candidates model their chosen design, record their thoughts and further ideas in their workbook and evaluate their final design and model against the original specification. In session 3, candidates have the chance to reflect on the product designed in sessions 1 and 2 in a written examination.

The unit requires approximately 75 hours of work.

### **F522 Product Study** (60% AS; 30% A)

The product study consists of product analysis and product development, prototype modelling and testing.

It is not envisaged that this task will involve the complete redesign of an existing product, but rather identify opportunities for its further development or enhancement. This unit requires approximately 75 hours of work.

Students wishing to complete the full A Level course will also be assessed on the following:

### **F523 Design, Make and Evaluate** (30% A)

Candidates are required to produce a coursework portfolio and product that fully demonstrates their designing, making and evaluation skills, using creativity, flair and innovation, which can be assessed against the Assessment Criteria. The coursework consists of designing, making and evaluating a product, a marketing presentation, and review and reflection. This unit is intended to draw upon and develop skills learnt in other units. The project is marked by the teacher, internally standardised within the centre and externally moderated by OCR.

This unit requires approximately 75 hours work.

### **F524 Product Design** (20% A)

#### **Component One**

The subject content of this unit is focused towards products and applications and their analysis in respect of:

- Materials, components and their uses;
- Manufacturing processes;
- Industrial and commercial practices.

Candidates should be familiar with a range of materials, components or ingredients as used in the manufacture of commonly available products, and be able to make critical comparisons between them.

### Component Two

This section assesses the ability of candidates to make immediate design responses to a given situation.

Candidates are required to respond to a given design situation. They will start by producing a specification and then produce a range of developed ideas. The ideas must be innovative and consider manufacturing/construction techniques, materials, components or ingredients and appropriate measurements. Ideas must be evaluated with reference to the specification and volume production.

Sketches and appropriate annotation should be used to show a final developed outcome. Specific features must be identified along with justification for these choices. Candidates will be marked on their ability to communicate their ideas effectively.

## ECONOMICS

### EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

### SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

1141 AS Economics

2141 A Economics

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are no specific entry requirements, but students should have achieved at least matriculation grade B in English and Mathematics at GCSE.

### ASSESSMENT

Candidates will be assessed on the following two AS units at the end of the Lower Sixth:

#### **Unit 1 Markets and Market Failure** (1 hour 15 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

Allocation of resources in competitive markets; monopoly; market failure and government intervention. The paper contains 25 multiple-choice questions and candidates also answer one data-response question chosen from two.

#### **Unit 2 The National Economy** (1 hour 15 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

Performance of the UK economy and government policy objectives; how the macro-economy works; instruments of government macro policy. The paper contains 25 multiple-choice questions and candidates also answer one data-response question chosen from two.

The further two units for the full A Level, taken in the Upper Sixth, are:

#### **Unit 3 Business Economics and the Distribution of Income** (2 hours) (25% A)

Competitive and concentrated markets; the labour market; government intervention in the market. The paper consists of one data-response question from a choice of two (one based on the European Union and the other based on the global economy) and one essay chosen from three titles.

#### **Unit 4 Government Policy, The National Economy and the International Economy (2 hours) (25% A)**

The growth of the economy and cyclical instability; managing the national economy; the international economy. The paper consists of a choice of two data-response questions (one based on the European Union and the other on the global economy) and one essay chosen from three titles.

#### **THE COURSE**

The specification aims to encourage students to:

- develop an understanding of economic concepts and theories through a critical consideration of current economic issues, problems and institutions that affect everyday life;
- apply economic concepts and theories in a range of contexts and to appreciate their value and limitations in explaining real-world phenomena;
- analyse, explain and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the market economy and the role of government within it.

As members of society, we are making economic decisions all the time. This involves choosing between alternative ways of spending our time and money, as well as methods of earning an income. The main economic problem faced by most people is that their needs and wants exceed their ability to satisfy them with a given amount of income. As a result, the best use of limited resources is when the most important needs of the individual are met.

On a national level, the same problems have to be solved. The country wants to continue to improve the standard of living of its population by producing more, and better, goods and services. This involves the use of raw materials, capital and labour – all of which are in relatively short supply and have alternative uses. Economics is the study of how these problems are tackled, and studies the complexities of how the economic system is organised to enable people to enjoy improved standards.

We live in a global economy, a world that is undergoing significant economic, political and social change. This is apparent in the communications revolution which is going on around us together with the increasing economic significance of China and India. We cannot escape the economic facts of life and many of us feel that they are outside our control. However, we are in a much stronger position to understand these facts if we know something about the subject.

Economics may not provide you with all the answers, but at least it may enable you to unlock a few of the doors.

Economics combines well with many other subjects and enables students to broaden their studies. Students of Economics acquire skills that are valuable in many other areas of life. The main transferable skill is the habit of independent and critical analysis. About 10% of Economics graduates entering employment use the knowledge they have gained directly in their work, but the majority choose careers that make use of their analytical, numerical and communication skills - all much valued by employers. Examples include careers in banking, insurance, accountancy, government administration, marketing, management and commerce.

# ENGLISH LITERATURE

## EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

## SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

H071 AS English Literature

H471 A English Literature

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to have attained Grade B or higher in both English and English Literature at GCSE.

## ASSESSMENT

The Advanced Subsidiary units to be assessed at the end of the Lower Sixth Form are:

### **F661 Poetry and Prose 1800-1945** (closed text) (2 hours) (60% AS; 30% A)

Candidates will study the selected poems of one poet, and answer one question on one poem of the poet studied. Candidates will also study a prose text from the period; there is a choice of two questions on each set text and candidates answer one question on the text they have studied.

### **F662 Literature post-1900** (coursework) (40% AS; 20% A)

Candidates will study three post-1900 texts, at least one of which must have been published or performed after 1990. Candidates are required to produce a folder of coursework of a maximum of 3000 words with two tasks.

The further units, to be assessed in the second year for the award of a full A Level are:

### **F663 Drama and Poetry pre-1800** (closed text) (2 hours) (30% A)

Candidates will study a Shakespeare play. Two essay questions are offered on each text; candidates answer one question on the play they have studied. Candidates also study another play and a poetry text, and essay questions will be offered asking candidates to make a comparative study of the two texts they have studied; candidates answer one question.

### **F664 Texts in Time** (coursework) (20% A)

Candidates cover three texts from at least two genres of poetry, prose and drama. Candidates are required to produce one extended essay of 3000 words maximum, consisting of a comparative study of the three texts on a particular theme or linked in some other way.

## THE COURSE

A serious and rigorous study of a variety of literary texts broadens our cultural knowledge and deepens our understanding and enjoyment of imaginative literature. The critical faculty is sharpened and the imagination and sensibility are enriched. This course provides an opportunity for sensitive and yet precise responses to literature. Students are given the chance to express their individuality while at the same time they are encouraged to respect the disciplines established within the critical tradition.

A Level English students are taught to read attentively, argue coherently and to respond to what is finest in our written culture with sympathy and imagination. While A Level English is a demanding course, its rewards in terms of intellectual development and personal enjoyment are correspondingly great and long-lasting. Our study of literature has a direct bearing on our lives in a way that few other subjects have.

The course is an excellent preparation for the study of English at a university. A Level English also prepares students for degree courses in humanities and the social sciences. Good A Level passes in English command considerable respect in universities: it is a highly valued Arts A Level. Advanced Level English studies at school are a sound basis for careers in higher education, the Civil Service, the law, journalism, school teaching, the theatre, publishing, business management: indeed any career in which independent critical thought, the ability to make a case and clear expression are needed. In other words, in so far as the study of English Literature teaches skills, the skills it teaches are valuable ones, and they are recognised to be so.

# GEOGRAPHY

## EXAMINING BOARD

WJEC

## SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

2201 AS Geography

3201 A Geography

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to have achieved at least grade B at GCSE. It should also be emphasised that much of the course is based on knowledge of the British Isles.

## ASSESSMENT

The Advanced Subsidiary units, assessed at the end of the Lower Sixth Form, through two written examination papers are:

**G1 Changing Physical Environments** (1 hour 30 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

Two Themes:

- Investigating climate change
- Investigating tectonic and hydrological change

**G2 Changing Human Environments** (1 hour 30 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

Two Themes:

- Investigating population change
- Investigating settlement change

Students studying for the full A Level will also be prepared, in the Upper Sixth, for the following units:

**G3 Contemporary Themes and Research in Geography** (2 hours 15 minutes) (30% A)

Section A: 1 hour 30 minutes

Candidates will be expected to write two essays - one from each of the two contemporary themes. One theme selected from three physical options (Extreme environments, Landforms and their management and Climatic hazards) and one theme selected from three human options (Development, Globalisation and studies in the theme of Emerging Asia)

Section B: 45 minutes

Candidates design and carry out a research enquiry based on their chosen theme and prescribed topic area. This will be assessed by a two-part question based on research enquiry and the findings of their research.

**G4 Sustainability** (1 hour 45 minutes) (20% A)

Decision Making Exercise based on pre-release material prior to the examination on the following: Sustainable Food Supply, Sustainable Water Supply, Sustainable Energy and Sustainable Cities.

## THE COURSE

At AS Level the emphasis in G1, Changing Physical Environments, is upon the dynamic systems of climate and landform change and how people react to and manage those changes. Students will develop their understanding of the complex and debated theme of climate change, an issue that will affect their lives and enables them to appreciate contrasting attitudes and values. G2, Changing Human Environments, similarly focuses upon the dynamic system of changing settlements and introduces the complex theme surrounding population change. In progressing to A2 students are introduced to a selection of more complex topics that are at the heart of Contemporary Themes and Research in Geography.

## FIELDWORK

Fieldwork plays a crucial role in allowing the geographer to study the environment of a variety of areas at first hand. It is thus an integral part of the AS and A Level course and an examination requirement. Normally Sixth Formers are expected to attend two day courses at a Field Studies Centre during the Michaelmas and the Lent terms, for which an additional charge is made. Local fieldwork is also carried out.

Geography is an intellectually rewarding subject for the academically minded A Level student. Geography can be combined with many subjects. With Sciences, it suits Architecture, Life Sciences and some Engineering courses.

Geography fits readily into courses leading to Economics, Politics, Business Studies and Law. Geography also readily combines with Arts subjects such as English, Modern Languages and History. Courses in Geology, Agriculture and Land Economy are all closely linked with Geography.

Geography graduates follow a variety of careers in the Services, national and local Government, Banking and Commerce. Geography is relevant to a large number of employment opportunities. Directly it is concerned with:

- Environment and Landscape,
- Development and Management,
- Surveying and Architecture,
- Planning and Conservation,
- Agriculture, Estate and Land Management.

## HISTORY

### EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

### SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

H106 AS History

H506 A History

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Prior knowledge of History is not a requirement for this course; potential candidates will need to have achieved at least a B grade in GCSE History or English if they wish to do well.

### ASSESSMENT

The units assessed at Advanced Subsidiary Level are:

**F961 British History Period Studies** (1 hour 30 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

For this question paper candidates cover a wide range of subjects from the Anglo-Saxons to Post-War Britain in two components (1035-1642 and 1783-1994). Options for study from the Department will be either 'Lancastrians, Yorkists and Tudors, 1450-1509' or 'Henry VIII to Mary I, 1509-1558'.

**F964 European and World History Enquiries** (1 hour 30 minutes)  
(50% AS; 25% A)

For this question paper candidates will study documentary evidence on a possible seven options. As a Department we will be offering the topics of either 'The First Crusade and the Crusader States, 1073-1130' or 'The German Reformation'.

Candidates opting for the full A Level are also assessed on the following at A2:

**F965 Historical Interpretations and Investigations** (Coursework) (20% A)

Internally assessed and externally moderated coursework. Candidates will produce two 2000 word essays: a task based on interpretations in passages and a separate individual investigation on a topic chosen by the candidates themselves. The areas of study might include 'Alfred the Great', 'The Wars of the Roses', 'Elizabeth I' and 'Philip II of Spain'.

### **F966 Historical Themes** (2 hours) (30% A)

This is a paper that assesses a period of at least 100 years with emphasis on patterns of change and continuity. Possible options might include 'Rebellion and Disorder in England 1485-1603', 'The Catholic Reformation 1492-1610' and 'The Changing Nature of Warfare 1792-1945'.

### **THE COURSE**

Firstly, History candidates should be interested in the causes and consequences of events that have occurred in the past. A Level questions assume a knowledge of events, but never ask for descriptive answers. For that reason an enquiring mind and a willingness to think for oneself are desirable qualities in an A Level candidate. Secondly, they should enjoy reading and not be deterred by the prospect of note making and essay writing. A good command of English is vital.

The study of History has many benefits. It develops an understanding of the background to our own times. It fosters the skill of synthesis and an analytical approach to information. Above all, it encourages students to evaluate what they read and to take an objective view of the past.

Voluntary classes are also run for those interested in the philosophy of the history and broader historical issues in preparation for reading History at university.

A qualification in A Level History leads to degree courses not only in History, but also in Politics, Law, International Politics, Sociology, Business Studies, Management, Media Studies etc. The skills which the study of History fosters are valuable in a wide range of careers and good History graduates currently enjoy better employment prospects than many others. Apart from the more obvious careers such as teaching, archive and museum work, History graduates find employment in law, the media, publishing, public relations, management and commerce. Their understanding of what makes people tick, the ability to research and synthesise information, to formulate logical arguments and present objective reports makes historians attractive to employers.

## **LATIN**

### **EXAMINING BOARD**

OCR

### **SUBJECT ENTRY CODE**

H039 AS Latin

H439 A Latin

### **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

Students are expected to have achieved at least grade B in GCSE Latin.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment at AS Level is by means of two written papers:

**Unit 1 Latin Language** (1 hour 30 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

**Unit 2 Latin Verse and Prose Literature** (1 hour 30 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

Candidates attempting the full A Level are also assessed by means of two additional written papers.

**Unit 3 Latin Prose: Prescribed Literature and Unprepared Translation**  
(2 hours) (25% A)

**Unit 4 Latin Verse: Prescribed Literature and Unprepared Translation**  
(2 hours) (25% A)

### **THE COURSE**

This is a traditional A Level course that involves both language and literature in depth. The literature is in various genres: oratory, mythology, history, epic and love poetry. The chief aims are expertise in reading the language and ability to understand the literature. Some in-depth study of the cultural ambience is part of the course.

Among the necessary qualities for an A Level student in Latin are keenness of observation, a love of words and the desire to read and analyse. The course develops the habit of questioning and criticism and encourages effective communication. The student is also expected to achieve some understanding of the religious, political and philosophical thought of the ancient world and to begin to apply that understanding in a critical fashion to modern societies.

Latin is in demand as a subject that has retained its academic nature at a pre-University stage. It can be combined with a wide variety of other A Level subjects and can be read at the University not only as part of the Classics course but also in a wide variety of dual honours and combination courses.

## MATHEMATICS

### EXAMINING BOARD

MEI (Mathematics in Education and Industry, OCR)

### SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

3895 AS Level Mathematics  
7895 A Level Mathematics  
3896 AS Level Further Mathematics  
7896 A Level Further Mathematics

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Any student wishing to embark on an A Level or AS Level course in Mathematics should have gained the equivalent of a grade B pass at GCSE and studied the Higher Tier specification of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4.

### ASSESSMENT

21 modules are offered by MEI. An A Level is awarded for the successful completion of six modules, and an AS Level for the successful completion of three modules. Each module counts equally towards the award of an AS or A Level, and is examined by a 1 hour 30 minutes written paper at some stage during the course. At Downside we offer 12 modules as standard:

- six modules in Pure Mathematics (C1, C2, C3, C4, FP1, FP2),
- two modules in Mechanics (M1, M2),
- two modules in Statistics (S1, S2),
- one module in Decision Mathematics (D1),
- one module in Numerical Methods (NM).

Students may be prepared for one of the following awards:

AS Level Mathematics: Modules C1, C2 and S1.

A Level Mathematics: Modules C1, C2, C3, C4, M1 and S1.

A Level Mathematics and AS Level Further Mathematics: Modules C1, C2, C3, C4, S1, M1, FP1 and two modules from M2, S2, D1, NM.

A Level Mathematics and A Level Further Mathematics: Modules C1, C2, C3, C4, M1, M2, S1, S2, D1, NM, FP1 and FP2.

## COURSEWORK

Modules C3 and NM contain a coursework element, which accounts for 20% of the final mark for those modules. Candidates sitting module C4 will sit a comprehension paper, which counts for 20% of the final mark, in addition to the 1 hour 30 minutes standard examination paper.

## THE COURSE

"I advise my students to listen carefully the moment they decide to take no more mathematics courses. They might be able to hear the sound of closing doors." James Cabellero. The importance of Mathematics in the life of Britain or any other advanced nation is evident to most people. However, Mathematics is not the exclusive preserve of mathematicians, scientists and engineers. The phenomenal advance in computer technology now makes it easier to apply Mathematics to real world problems in almost every sphere of human endeavour. Statistics is an area widely made use of by geographers, social scientists, economists and by many people working in industry or medicine. Recent years have seen the introduction of Decision Mathematics into many schools and into many A Level specifications with its emphasis on problem solving that has applications in business and industry. A pass in some form of A Level Mathematics can only enhance the higher education and career prospects of students.

It is not the case that A Level mathematicians are necessarily very gifted in that sphere. Many are following the course partly because they enjoy the intellectual challenge and partly because some of the aspects covered overlap with other A Level courses. This applies as much to students who study primarily Arts subjects as to those who study primarily Science subjects. Indeed, Mathematics is sometimes seen to complement Arts subjects in that it offers variety compared with subjects that are primarily essay-based.

Mathematics is often regarded by people as a difficult A Level but an average student can do well provided he or she is prepared to work steadily at the subject over the course of two years, to persevere and battle with problems and to be persistent in asking questions when difficulties arise.

Students can opt to be prepared for:

### **A single A Level in Mathematics.**

All students will sit 4 pure modules as well as studying some statistics and some mechanics.

### **An A Level in Mathematics and an A Level in Further Mathematics**

This is an option for students who are particularly strong in Mathematics and who really enjoy the subject. The course would usually be taken alongside two other A Levels.

Both Mathematics and Further Mathematics are available as AS options.

The principle areas of study are:

#### **Module C1:**

Mathematical Processes, Algebra, Co-ordinate Geometry, Polynomials, Curve Sketching. Note: Calculators may not be used in the C1 examination.

#### **Module C2:**

Algebra, Sequences and Series, Trigonometry, Differentiation, Integration, Curve Sketching.

#### **Module C3:**

Proof, Exponentials and Natural Logarithms, Functions, Calculus, Numerical Methods.

#### **Module C4:**

Algebra, Trigonometry, Proof, Parametric Equations, Calculus, Vectors.

#### **Module FP1:**

Proof, Algebra, Complex Numbers, Curve Sketching, Matrices.

#### **Module FP2:**

Polar Coordinates, Calculus, Series, Complex Numbers, Matrices, Hyperbolic Functions, Investigation of Curves.

**Module M1:**

Modelling, Vectors, Kinematics, Force, Newton's Laws of Motion, Projectiles.

**Module M2:**

Force, Centre of Mass, Momentum and Impulse, Work, Energy and Power.

**Module S1:**

Processes, Data Presentation, Probability, Discrete Random Variables, The Binomial Distribution and Hypothesis Testing.

**Module S2:**

Bivariate Data, Poisson Distribution, Contingency Tables, The Normal Distribution.

**Module D1:**

Modelling, Algorithms, Graphs, Networks, Linear Programming, Critical Path Analysis, Simulation.

**Module NM:**

Solution of Equations, Errors, Numerical Calculus, Approximations to Functions.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES: FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH

**EXAMINING BOARD**

AQA

**SUBJECT ENTRY CODE**

1651 AS French

1661 AS German

1696 AS Spanish

2651 A French

2661 A German

2696 A Spanish

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

We would normally expect students to have achieved at least the equivalent of a GCSE Grade A in the language concerned before embarking upon the corresponding AS level course. They should also have an interest in developing their knowledge and understanding of the culture and way of life of the target-language country.

**ASSESSMENT**

Candidates are assessed on two units for AS:

**Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing.** (2 hours) (70% AS; 35% A)

The Listening section is designed to last approximately 30 minutes. Candidates listen to about 5 minutes of material which is within their individual control.

This section comprises a task involving transfer of meaning into English and 2-4 items requiring short target-language or non-verbal responses.

The Reading and Writing section is designed to last about 45 minutes and comprises 3-4 items requiring short target-language or non-verbal responses, together with a cloze exercise, in which candidates will be required to manipulate a given noun/verb/adjective.

The Writing section is also designed to last about 45 minutes and candidates must write a minimum of 200 words, answering one question from a choice of three. There will be one question on three of the four AS topic areas.

**Unit 2: Speaking** (35 minutes, including 20 minutes preparation time)  
(30% AS; 15% A)

The first part of the speaking test will last 5 minutes and is the discussion of a stimulus card which candidates will have 20 minutes to prepare. The card will be based on one of the four AS topic areas and will include a sub-topic and five printed questions, which will form the basis of the discussion, although candidates will be expected to respond to broader issues within the sub-topic.

The second part of the speaking test, which will last 10 minutes, will comprise a conversation covering three of the four AS topic areas. The first topic will be the candidate's choice and the discussion of that will last up to 3 minutes. The examiner will then question the candidate on the remaining two topic areas that were not part of the stimulus card or the candidate's topic choice.

For A2 candidates are assessed on the following two units:

**Unit 3: Listening, Reading and Writing.** (2 hours 30 minutes) (35% A)

The Listening section of this unit is designed to last approximately 30 minutes, and will comprise about 6 minutes of recorded material. There will be 3-5 items requiring short target-language or non-verbal responses.

The Reading and Writing section should last about 1 hour and will comprise 2-4 items requiring short target-language or non-verbal responses, together with a task involving transfer of meaning from the target language into English and a task involving transfer of meaning from English into the target language.

In the Writing section, which will also last about 1 hour, candidates will have to answer one question based on the Cultural Topics they have studied. Candidates only have to answer on one of their Cultural Topics and must write a minimum of 250 words.

**Unit 4: Speaking.** (35 minutes, including 20 minutes preparation time) (15% A)

The first 5 minutes of the A2 speaking test will be spent discussing a stimulus card that the candidate will have had 20 minutes to prepare. Candidates will have a choice of 2 randomly selected cards. The cards will each be based on one of the

A2 topics, i.e. Environment, Multicultural Society and Contemporary Social Issues. Candidates will have to choose one of the two points of view expressed on their chosen card, present this point of view for no more than one minute and then defend or justify it.

In the remaining 10 minutes of the test, the conversation will cover both Cultural Topics studied by the candidate, with approximately 5 minutes on each topic.

## SUBJECT CONTENT

The topic areas for the AS course, which very much build upon those studied for GCSE, are Media, Popular Culture, Healthy Living and Family/Relationships. At A2 the additional topics of Environment, Multicultural Society and Contemporary Social Issues are studied. Candidates at A2 also have to study two Cultural Topics, choosing from a region, a period of 20th century history, the work of an author; the work of a dramatist or poet or the work of a director; architect, musician or painter. Clearly the cultural topics subjects must be based in the target language-speaking country.

## THE COURSE

Students who are interested in languages and communication and who enjoy learning about other cultures and ways of life are particularly suited to languages at this level. Similarly, those interested in the business world, travel or tourism, in literature, or in journalism and the media also find the courses relevant and appropriate. One of the advantages of the course is that students can choose topics and questions to suit their own interests. The course will equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to cope with languages at work, to further their study and training, or simply to communicate in leisure situations.

Languages are increasingly important in the workplace. There is a range of opportunities open to students of languages, where they can continue to use and develop their skills and knowledge of contemporary society. Some students choose to do degree courses in languages; others choose to pursue a Higher Education course in another subject, but to maintain a language option alongside it. Having a language at AS or A Level will certainly improve employability.

# MUSIC

## EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

## SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

H142 AS Music

H542 AS Music

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A good pass at GCSE is not a prerequisite of the course, but candidates must be established, proficient and committed performers if they are to be successful. As a rough guide, a minimum standard of Associated Board Grade 5 is required.

## ASSESSMENT

At AS Level, candidates are assessed on the following units:

### **G35: Performing** (40% AS; 20% A)

Candidates perform solo (on any instrument or voice) a programme of pieces which demonstrate representative features of the repertoire for the instrument or voice presented. If it is appropriate to the repertoire being performed, candidates may improvise. Candidates then demonstrate an extension to their ability by either performing on a second instrument, as a member of a small ensemble, as an accompanist, perform their own composition, or improvise a given stimulus. Performing is assessed by visiting examination through recital and a short viva voce.

### **G352 Composing 1** (30% AS; 15% A)

Candidates are required to submit a portfolio representative of work undertaken throughout the course. This should demonstrate their developing compositional skills through a series of set exercises and through a composition or arrangement of their own choice. Candidates should demonstrate their ability to communicate clearly and accurately using staff notation and detailed performance directions. Composing is assessed through a centre marked portfolio (part of which is compiled under controlled conditions), which is externally moderated.

### **G353 Introduction to Historical Study in Music** (1 hour 45 minutes + 15 minutes listening/preparation) (30% AS; 15% A)

In this unit, candidates must demonstrate skills of aural perception that will allow them to recognise, describe and compare techniques and effects within selected extracts of music. By comparing similarities and differences in the contextual background to each of the prescribed works, candidates should begin to develop an awareness of musical history as an exploration of continuity and change over time. This is a Listening/Analysis paper, assessed by an externally set and marked examination.

The further units which are additionally assessed for the award of the full A Level are:

### **G354 Performing (Interpretation)** (20% A)

Candidates are required to demonstrate interpretative skills and understanding through performing and in discussion with the examiner. The performance will be a focussed recital, performed as a soloist, a member of an ensemble, or as an accompanist, but not a mixture of these roles. Candidates are required to have listened to, and compared, at least two interpretations of music relevant to the style or genre that is the focus of their recital and to have supported their study by appropriate research. Candidates will be questioned on their listening, composition and research as part of a viva voce.

### **G355 Composing 2** (15% A)

Candidates are required to submit a portfolio representative of work undertaken throughout the course. Candidates are expected to show the development and extension of their compositional skills from Unit G352 through a series of set exercises and a single composition, chosen from vocal music, programme music or music for film or TV. Compositions can be for any medium.

**G356 Historical and Analytical Studies in Music** (1 hour 45 minutes + 15 minutes listening/preparation) (15% A)

Candidates should develop their knowledge and understanding of the two Areas of Study, Tonality and Interpretation. They should become familiar with the expressive features found in music that interpret text or other subject matter, and with the ways in which this interpretation can create dramatic tension, characterisation, mood or feeling as appropriate to the genre, within the structural integrity of the whole. Candidates should also study the expressive use of tonality in response to words or other stimulus.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

### SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

1580 AS Physical Education

2580 A Physical Education

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are no specific entry requirements but candidates will be expected to have achieved a C grade in Coordinated Science at GCSE. Candidates should also be of above average physical ability in at least one team sport and/or individual activity.

### ASSESSMENT

At AS Level the assessment is through one examination paper and coursework.

**PHED1 Opportunities for and the effects of leading a healthy and active lifestyle** (2 hours) (60% AS; 30% A)

**PHED2 Analysis and evaluation of physical activity as performer and/or in an adopted role/s** (40% AS; 20% A)

Internal assessment with external moderation.

The further units, which are assessed for the full award at A Level, are:

**PHED3 Optimising performance and evaluating contemporary issues within sport** (2 hours) (30% A)

**PHED4 Optimising practical performance in a competitive situation** (20% A)

Internal assessment with external moderation.

### THE COURSE

The aim of the AS course is to develop knowledge and skills to help understand the opportunities for and effects of leading a healthy and active lifestyle.

Candidates will be given the opportunity to build on their experience and improve their personal skills/techniques across a variety of roles in a sport of their choice to improve performance.

### Topic list

- The physiological effects of adopting a healthy lifestyle
- The short term effect of exercise/performance and the long term effects of training
- Analysis of movement across a range of sporting actions
- Acquisition of skills and the impact of psychological factors on performance
- Opportunities for physical activity, benefits to the individual and society and the potential barriers faced by minority groups.

At A2, the specification enables candidates to further develop their understanding of key philosophical concepts, themes, texts and techniques. Candidates will be given the opportunity to specialise further, selecting two themes to study in depth and focusing on philosophical problems through the study of a key text. Problem areas relate directly to other areas of the specification and candidates will be able to draw on, develop and apply material from both the AS and A2 modules.

### Topic list

- Energy sources and systems
- Elite preparation and training
- Specialised training and sports injuries
- The use of psychological theories and techniques to optimise performance
- Concepts and characteristics of World Games and their impact on the state and individual
- Development and impact of sports technology on performers, equipment and facilities
- The development of sport from rational recreation to its modern day format

The study of A Level Physical Education might lead to University courses in Sports Science, Recreation Management, Sports Technology, Sports Engineering, Physical Education Teaching or Physiotherapy.

If you choose to take the A Level, your sporting performance will be videoed and you will be able to improve your performance by analysing and evaluating yourself. You will also have an opportunity of being fitness tested at Bath University and attend a series of talks given by experienced professionals. The lectures provide important revision opportunities and also stimulate an interest in the theory units of the course.

# PHYSICS

## EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

## SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

1451 AS Physics

2451 A Physics

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Physics is a mathematical science. While it is not absolutely necessary to study AS level Mathematics, the two subjects complement each other well. Any student wanting to study Physics at AS level would ideally have an A grade in both Science and Mathematics at GCSE or IGCSE.

## ASSESSMENT

The AS course is split into three units:

**Unit 1 Particles, Quantum Phenomena and Electricity** (1 hour 15 minutes)

(40% AS; 20% A)

**Unit 2 Mechanics, Materials and Waves** (1 hour 15 minutes) (40% AS; 20% A)

**Unit 3 Investigative and Practical Skills** (20% AS; 10% A)

The A2 course is also split into three units:

**Unit 4 Fields and Further Mechanics** (1 hour 45 minutes) (20% A)

**Unit 5 Nuclear and Thermal Physics + Topic Option** (1 hour 45 minutes)

(20% A)

In this paper students answer a section of compulsory questions on Nuclear and Thermal Physics and then choose to answer questions on one of following topics: Astrophysics, Medical Physics, Applied Physics, Turning Points in Physics.

**Unit 6 Investigative and Practical Skills** (10%A)

## THE COURSE

Studying Physics will give you the opportunity to explore and understand the world and beyond from the smallest parts of atoms to the planets, stars and the Universe itself. You will develop numerical, analytical, and practical skills that are highly sought after by Universities and employers. No subject will give you wider prospects while maintaining such fundamental academic interest.

Physics opens a wide range of career options for you and is a useful gateway to further study in many fields. The three major employers of career physicists are academic institutions, government laboratories, and private industry. People who are trained as physicists, however, use their skills in other parts of the economy, in particular in engineering, computing, and finance. Some physicists take up careers where their knowledge of physics can be combined with further training in other disciplines, such as medicine, patent law in industry or private practice.

# PSYCHOLOGY

## EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

## SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

1181 AS Psychology

2181 A Psychology

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Pupils wishing to study Psychology at A level need to have studied the material for the Highest Tier of the National Curriculum for Science at Key Stage 4 and achieved at least a grade B for the Science GCSE or equivalent examination.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment is through four written examination papers: two for the AS level, which are sat in the summer of the Lower Sixth

### **PSYA1 Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology and Research**

**Methods** (90 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

### **PSYA2 Individual Differences, Social Psychology and Biological Psychology**

(90 minutes) (50% AS; 25% A)

and an additional two for the A level qualification in the summer of the Upper Sixth:

**PSYA3 Topics in Psychology** (90 minutes) (25% A)

### **PSYA4 Psychopathology, Psychology in Action, and Research Methods.**

(90 minutes) (25% A)

## COURSEWORK

There is no coursework, controlled assessment or practical work for the A level in Psychology.

## THE COURSE

### **PSYA1**

Students answer structured compulsory questions including short answer, stimulus material and one requiring extended writing.

The Cognitive Psychology looks at models of memory and strategies for memory improvement. The developmental Psychology covers early social development and attachment. The Research Methods include aspects of investigational design, data analysis and presentation, and case studies.

### **PSYA2**

Students answer three compulsory structured questions, one on each aspect of the specification. This unit covers social influence, stress, and psychopathology / abnormality.

### **PSYA3**

Students answer three essay-style questions chosen from the 8 topics.

Topics which may be studied include:

- Biological rhythms and sleep
- Perception
- Relationships
- Aggression
- Eating behaviour
- Gender
- Intelligence and learning
- Cognition and the development of thinking

### **PSYA4**

Students answer 3 questions for which there may or may not be a choice within each section. In Psychopathology students will study schizophrenia, depression and anxiety disorders (phobic disorders and obsessive compulsive disorder), and will answer one essay-style question chosen from these three topics. In studying Psychology in Action students will answer one question chosen from addiction, media psychology or anomalistic psychology (including pseudoscience, scientific fraud, paranormal experiences, superstition, psychic healing and mediumship). The Research Methods will feature one compulsory structured question covering objectivity, hypothesis testing, theory construction and data analysis.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## EXAMINING BOARD

Edexcel

## SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

8RS01 AS Religious Studies

9RS01 A Religious Studies

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are no specific entry requirements although students are normally expected to have obtained grade B or above at GCSE level.

## ASSESSMENT

### AS Level

**Unit 1: Foundations** (1 hour 45 minutes) (50% AS 25% A)

Philosophy of Religion and at least one other topic, currently the New Testament option on the Fourth (St John's) Gospel. Three questions to be answered.

**Unit 2: Investigations** (1 hour 15 minutes) (50% AS 25% A)

A large range of possible titles are offered by the board on a range of topics and areas from the nature of God in the Old Testament to medical ethics, from suffering in the book of Job to life after death in the New Testament.

The examination is an extended essay following a term of personal research and some class teaching as preparation for one of the topics chosen. This allows a good deal of room for any personal interest to be developed at length.

### A2 Level

**Unit 3: Developments** (1 hour 45 minutes) (25% A)

Philosophy of Religion and one other topic, currently the New Testament option on the Fourth Gospel. Three questions to be answered.

**Unit 4: Implications** (1 hour 15 minutes) (25% A)

A paper based on an anthology of texts from one of the topics above, with one question to be answered. Currently we examine the meaning of the person of Christ and his death and resurrection in theological perspective.

## THE COURSE

This modular course offers the opportunity to examine in detail some of the questions that most people ask at some point. Can we prove the existence of God? Is there life after death? How can a good and loving God allow such suffering? What does it mean to have faith in God? Does the Bible help with modern day problems?

Students are introduced to both philosophical and theological approaches: this is a demanding but rewarding course, offering an academic approach to the study of religion.

The course is widely regarded as an excellent guide to the ability to think through and evaluate complex ideas, requiring a logical analysis of human problems and an accurate presentation of critical views; several students have gone on to study Theology at leading universities including Oxford and Cambridge and graduates of Theology or Philosophy can be found in all walks of life. This A Level complements other humanities options but also requires an analytic mind more usually associated with the sciences.

This is a stimulating and challenging option for the more philosophically minded and religiously motivated.



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