



DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

A LEVEL OPTIONS



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THE SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

The choice of subjects for study in the Sixth Form is among the most important choices that each of us ever make. 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. Thirdly, A Level study is an intense and time consuming business in itself. For all of 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 A LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

The new A Level examination reform will occur in three stages and is a return to linear system whereby pupils are examined at the end of a two-year course. Until last year, pupils sat AS examinations at the end of the Lower Sixth and these modules accounted for 50% of the full A Level. From September 2017, all courses except Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Design Technology will be linear.

SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM

We would recommend that pupils study a staple of 3 A Levels for two years. Pupils entering the Lower Sixth in September should also consider the following:

- We recommend the EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) as a fourth option in Lower Sixth. This is completed by the end of the Lent term in Lower Sixth and is worth half of an A Level (see specific section on the EPQ).
- Pupils considering an application to Oxford or Cambridge, or for Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine or Dentistry, may wish to consider a fourth subject in Lower Sixth in order to maintain a breadth of learning, or to pursue a particular academic interest.
- For example, an aspiring medic may wish to study Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics in order to develop a good foundation in all sciences. Conversely, a medic may study Biology, Chemistry, English and Mathematics because they enjoy English and wish to show that they have other academic interests.

- It should also be remembered that most Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry courses, and some Engineering courses, have separate admissions assessments, including tests and interviews. Pupils should consider if a fourth subject would help with their preparation. For example, pupils wishing to apply for Modern Languages would find the study of English to be of great benefit in preparing for an admissions test. Advice can be sought from subject teachers, tutors and, in particular, the UCAS and Higher Education Coordinator.
- See specific section on Universities and Careers for further information.
- Pupils wishing to study Engineering, Mathematics and some Economics courses at university should study Further Mathematics as a fourth option.
- Pupils whose first language is not English may be able to sit an A Level in their home language, if it is available, but this should be taken as an extra subject and will not be one of their main 3 A Levels.
- Pupils, who are studying 'new' subjects or who are unsure of their three strongest subjects, are recommended to begin with four subjects in the Lower Sixth and decide upon their main three subjects at the end of the Lower Sixth year.

It should be remembered that pupils studying three subjects in Lower Sixth will not be able to change subjects after the first two weeks of the Michaelmas term if they find it difficult, or it is not what they were expecting.

Recent feedback from universities is that pupils should study three A Levels, and that they should have a 'fourth stream'. The fourth stream could be a fourth subject in the Lower Sixth or it could be an EPQ. We will be introducing a new 'Pre-University Study Skills' programme for Lower Sixth pupils next academic year. This will complement the study skills seminars provided by Elevate, a recognised company providing seminars and workshops for schools, and so enable pupils to develop key independent learning skills. All of this will be particularly useful for those pupils interested in undertaking an EPQ.

WHICH SUBJECTS ARE AVAILABLE?

Whilst care is taken to ensure that all pupils 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. Pupils whose first language is not English do not normally choose to study another language, in which they are fluent, but will be given the opportunity to obtain the relevant A Level qualification.

If a given subject has a particularly small cohort, the Head Master may decide that it is not 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 pupils choose subjects that they enjoy and for which they have a demonstrable aptitude.

Pupils 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 A Level. Anyone, for example, wishing to study Medicine at university must study Chemistry 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 UCAS and Higher Education Coordinator.

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

Each subject has its own entry requirement, which is listed in this booklet.

For new subjects such as Business Studies, Economics, History of Art, Physical Education and Psychology, the entry requirement will be a minimum grade in a closely related subject if the pupil has not studied the subject for GCSE.

We may ask pupils to reconsider a particular subject if their target grade for that subject does not meet the entry requirement. For external applicants, we advise that they ask their current school for either a target grade or a predicted grade for GCSE. If external applicants have not studied GCSEs, as will be the case for most international students, we will make our assessment for suitability in various courses depending upon the results achieved in the entrance assessment papers.

WHEN DO I MAKE A DECISION ABOUT MY A LEVEL CHOICES?

Tutors will begin to discuss the options with their tutees during the Michaelmas Term. Pupils will also have an opportunity to attend an A Level Subject Fair to speak to teachers about their particular subject at GCSE.

We expect pupils to discuss options with their tutors, subject teachers and parents so that they are in a position to make an informed choice. Provisional option choices will be made by the end of the Michaelmas Term.

CAN I CHANGE MY MIND?

We appreciate that pupils may wish to alter their options as a consequence of their GCSE results or if they have had a 'change of heart' during the summer vacation. After the GCSE results are released, pupils may request an option change. Each request will be considered individually. Unfortunately, we may not be in a position to make a change to a pupil's options if teaching sets are full or there is a timetable clash.

WHAT IS THE EPQ (EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION)?

The EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) offered by Edexcel involves writing a 5,000 word report akin to a dissertation on a question of the pupil's own choice, and completed under the guidance of a supervisor. Pupils present their findings at the end of the project. During the Michaelmas term, there will be one lesson per week and, after Christmas, individual support is offered by the pupil's supervisor. The supervisor is a member of the teaching staff, who agrees to supervise your project and teaches a subject related to the title of the project. It is optional for all Lower Sixth pupils.

The Sixth Form Curriculum *(cont.)*

The main reason for undertaking an EPQ is to follow one of your interests. You will develop your time management, planning and research skills. It is good preparation for university study. It will provide good material for your personal statement (you can emphasise that it prepares one for independent study), and could be used at interview.

An EPQ is an accredited qualification, which is worth more than half of an A level and has commensurate UCAS Tariff Point values. The EPQ is welcomed by the Russell Group of leading universities and may enhance an application. The grading and UCAS tariff is as follows:

Grade	UCAS points
A*	70
A	60
B	50
C	40
D	30
E	20

The link for all of the official advice is:

www.edexcel.com/quals/project/level3/Pages/default.aspx

and the specification is found at:

www.edexcel.com/quals/project/level3/Pages/documents.aspx

The timeline for the EPQ is as such:

1. Project Proposal Form: By half term in the Michaelmas term
2. Research (keep record of research carried out and resources used in Activity Log)
3. Milestone one: By end of Michaelmas term
4. Milestone two: Start of Lent term
5. Dissertation (5,000 words): Lent half term
6. Presentation with Oral Presentation Record Form: Second half of Lent term
7. Candidate Record Sheet, Project Proposal Form, Activity Log, Dissertation, Presentation slides, Oral Presentation Record Forms: End of Lent term

NON-A LEVEL 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 pupils 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.

UNIVERSITIES & CAREERS

UNIVERSITY APPLICATION

Although the current economic recession, along with the dramatic changes in tuition fees and drastic government funding cuts, affects the picture of higher education passed on through the media, the fact remains that very large numbers of young people are applying, and securing places at, the very broad range of university courses on offer in the UK. However, 80% of applicants tend to apply for 20% of universities (especially Russell Group universities) making entry into university in this country very competitive in certain subjects, especially Medicine, Economics, English, Law and Psychology. Nevertheless, your son or daughter has every opportunity both to compete and to succeed in securing a place at a university of their choice, provided they undertake the necessary research and planning using the guidance available. They should, however, be realistic.

The basic message from our point of view is still the same as it has always been: universities want keen, able and interested students for the academic courses they offer and everything that can be done to convince a university that you are that person, should be done. The ways in which universities select students will involve a mixture of predicted and actual grades at A Level and GCSE, sometimes contextualised; a reference from the school, and; a personal statement from the candidate. More universities are also turning to interviews to distinguish the better candidates or to confirm an offer; some are also using the A* grade as part of an offer. Many universities have also made it clear verbally that the EPQ is an additional factor in favour of a candidate. Extra-curricular involvement such as music, drama and sport, for example, is important as it demonstrates that a pupil is well-rounded. Positions of responsibility are also evidence of particular personal skills and attributes, and can contribute to a university application. In saying this, it should be remembered that pupils are applying for academic courses and academic performance is the key differentiating factor.

The method of university applications is a process, which needs to begin as early as GCSE and should, in the Lent term of the Lower Sixth, begin to be a serious quest for an appropriate course and place of study. The actual process is the UCAS Apply system, which begins in June of the Lower Sixth and normally ends by the end of the Michaelmas

Term in the Upper Sixth. The UK Apply system is used for all universities in the UK. Key deadlines are 15th October for Oxbridge/Medicine/Veterinary Medicine/Dentistry and 15th January for most other courses.

You can research all these courses, and other useful information, using the UCAS website (www.ucas.com/course_search). Another good source is Degree Course Offers by Brian Heap, available in the Careers Library. You should choose a subject about which you are passionate and are likely to succeed.

Art Foundation courses adopt a different application process, involving the presentation of a portfolio of work, and any interested pupils should begin discussions with the Head of Art in the Lower Sixth year.

The USA has attracted an enormous amount of interest recently; it has thus become fashionable. Unless you obtain a full or part scholarship, the overall costs will still probably be more than a university place in this country. If you are exceptionally brilliant at something (not necessarily academic!) or are a genuine all-rounder, it is worth considering. Application is lengthier and involves much more work on the part of the candidate. The school will help those wishing to consider courses in the USA, and you should start preparation, especially for the SATS entrance tests early in the Lower Sixth.

It is also worth looking at some European universities such as Maastricht or Utrecht, or indeed Trinity College, Dublin, which run courses in English and have attracted attention from pupils in the UK in recent years. For those applying to Medicine, courses in Malta and at the University of Prague are becoming increasingly popular amongst students from the UK, and we can provide further advice upon request.

It is wise as a parent to be aware that whatever happened in your day probably does not apply any longer! However, what is common to all of these possibilities is that a genuine interest in a subject, a university or college, evidenced by attending open days, contacting the university, if necessary, and generally showing how keen you are, is all to the good.

UNIVERSITIES & CAREERS *(cont.)*

APPLICATION SCHEDULE

LOWER SIXTH

Michaelmas Term

Tutors allocated to Sixth Form
Prospectuses available in Careers Room

Lent Term

Careers Seminar Downside School
Introduction to UCAS Personal Statements
Lower Sixth Parents' Conference on Higher Education

Summer Term

UCAS Higher Education Convention (WE Bristol)
Careers guidance – Course Finder
Plan to attend Open Days, arrange work experience,
if necessary
Pupils begin personal statements
Registration on the UCAS Apply system

UPPER SIXTH

Michaelmas Term

September: UCAS predicted grades given
Registration for tests: BMAT, ELAT, TSA
October: Oxbridge and Medics/Veterinary Science/
Dentistry candidates complete applications
for 15th October deadline.
November: Tests eg BMAT, ELAT, TSA
Mock interview programme
Remaining UCAS applications completed

THE UCAS APPLY SYSTEM

All applications for UK universities are now completed online using the UCAS Apply system run by wwwucas.com. The following hints may help in completing an application. All Lower Sixth pupils will have the opportunity to log on to the system in June and applications can be submitted from 6th September onwards. You are allowed five choices, but candidates for Medicine/Veterinary Science/Dentistry can only select four. The fifth can be left blank, or be another subject. You should carefully research your choice of university as well as the actual course you are applying for. Nearly all the details you need and much more useful information can be found online.

OXBRIDGE AND MEDICINE

The UK has many world-class universities. Entry to Oxford and Cambridge is very competitive, although the actual numbers applying per place vary and are worth examining on the respective websites. Ideally, you should have 6 or more A* grades at GCSE with no grades below A. A typical offer may be in the region of AAA, and will be made following a rigorous selection process, including an interview. Overseas students will probably need an IELTS qualification. You can find the expected grades on the university websites.

Places for Medicine courses are very competitive, with over 10 applicants per place. Subjects studied at A Level are important with the most likely requirement being A Level Chemistry as well as one other Science. Mathematics counts as a science, and we will normally recommend Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics as the main three subjects to be studied. Increasingly, universities require A Level Biology for Medicine and candidates may be disadvantaged if they do not study Biology.

It is important to realistically assess your chances for these places. A Level predictions are based on GCSE results and pupil's ability within a particular subject, as evidenced by assessments, so it is important to work hard in all of your subjects throughout the year. Many top courses, especially Medicine and those at Oxford and Cambridge, require additional entrance tests (those for medicine are the UKCAT and the BMAT). You can find information on these on course websites.

The most important aspect of your UCAS form for any course is the academic part, so anything that provides evidence of your academic credentials is useful. Examples include lectures, reading, research projects (e.g. EPQ), competitions. For Medicine, you should also choose activities wisely and engage in meaningful work experience. If you have personal contacts use these and the Development Office has many OG contacts that can help. Gap years that are productive and linked to your course of study will be advantageous.

KNOWLES SOCIETY

All pupils wishing to apply for Oxford, Cambridge and/or Medicine, Veterinary Science and Engineering may be invited to attend the Knowles Society. This is an academic society, which focuses on preparing pupils for the rigours of the application process.

CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

The new Careers Education and Guidance programme in the Sixth Form focuses on increasing the awareness of the career options open to each individual. This includes broadening pupils' knowledge of various careers as well as helping them to choose their A Level subjects. Downside School is a member of the Independent Schools Career Organisation (ISCO), and works in partnership with Futurewise and Inspiring Futures. In addition to the support and guidance offered in School, pupils will also have the opportunity to benefit from membership to Futurewise, which is a careers service for young people from age 15 years.

- Membership for pupils of Futurewise, including webspace, information, advice and guidance, until their 23rd birthday.
- Profiling test (Gold) – this is a psychometric test and a personal report is provided for each pupil.
- Interviews with a careers guidance specialist.
- Support and guidance from the Careers Coordinator.
- A 'Course Finder' programme for university applications.
- Video interviews with a careers specialist.

We host an annual Careers Seminar, which provides pupils with the opportunity to meet a range of speakers covering different careers such as law, finance, entrepreneurship, travel-writing, film production, journalism and archaeology. Pupils have an opportunity for Q&A in small groups with the speakers and discuss what the profession entailed.

There is a well-resourced Careers Room and, as well as general information on careers, there are numerous sources of information on Higher Education institutions.

LEARNING SUPPORT

When pupils are seen to experience difficulty in their learning due to conditions such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, for example, we aim to be supportive in a holistic way across the curriculum.

This means that pupils in particular need of Learning Support are integrated into ordinary classes where the teacher will be made aware of specific learning needs as they apply to individual pupils. Provision may be offered on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. These lessons will be timetabled and are taught by our Learning Support Department. Assessment is usually carried out within the Learning Support Department.

EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE)

When pupils have English as an additional language, we aim to be supportive in a holistic way across the curriculum. Additional language support lessons are available to pupils whose home language is not English and who need extra assistance in order to follow their chosen curriculum. The lessons will be aimed at improving pupils' ability to use English competently in their academic subjects and to communicate fully in an English speaking environment.

Some pupils will study for IELTS so that they can enter UK universities.

A LEVEL COURSES

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Examining Board **Subject Entry Code**
OCR H472 A English Literature

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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

ASSESSMENT

Component 1:

Shakespeare & Drama and poetry pre-1900
(written examination, closed text) (2 hours 30 mins) (40%)

Component 2:

(written examination, closed text) (2 hours 30 mins) (40%)
Close reading in chosen topic area Comparative and contextual study from chosen topic area

Component 3:

(Non-examined assessment) (40%)
Critical piece OR re-creative writing piece with commentary

THE COURSE

The aims of this course are to encourage learners to develop their interest in and enjoyment of literature and literary studies as they:

- Read widely and independently both set texts and others that they have selected for themselves.
- Engage critically and creatively with a substantial body of texts and ways of responding to them.
- Develop and effectively apply their knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation in writing.
- Explore the contexts of the texts they are reading and others' interpretations of them.

MATHEMATICS

Examining Board **Subject Entry Code**
OCR (MEI) H630/H640 Mathematics B

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Pupils wishing to study Mathematics at A Level are expected to have studied GCSE at the Higher Tier and achieved at least an A grade.

ASSESSMENT

A Level Mathematics is a 2 year course and will be assessed at the end of the course with 3 written papers:

Pure Mathematics and Mechanics (01):

2 hr paper - 100 marks.

Pure Mathematics and Statistics (02):

2 hr paper - 100 marks.

Pure Mathematics and Comprehension (03):

2 hr paper - 75 marks

THE COURSE

The new A Level course will be a linear structure. There will be more emphasis on problem solving, reasoning and modelling, and a requirement for the use of technology to permeate teaching and learning. The content of A Level Mathematics will include pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics (including analysis of large data sets). It is suitable both as a subject in its own right, and also as a support subject for pupils studying science and for other subjects that require various branches of Mathematics, such as Geography and Economics.

FURTHER MATHEMATICS

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
OCR (MEI)	H635/H645 Further Mathematics B

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Pupils wishing to study Further Mathematics at A Level are expected to have studied GCSE at the Higher Tier and achieved an A* grade. Further Mathematics cannot be studied without A Level Mathematics.

ASSESSMENT

A Level Further Mathematics is a 2 year course and will be assessed at the end of the course with 3 written papers:

Core Pure – Mandatory Unit:

2 hr 40 min paper - 144 marks

Major option paper: (options: Mechanics or Statistics)

2 ¼ hr paper - 120 marks each

Minor option paper: (options: Mechanics, Statistics, Modelling with algorithms, Numerical methods, Extra pure, Further pure with technology) – 1 ¼ hr paper - 60 marks each

THE COURSE

The Further Mathematics qualification is for those pupils, who find Mathematics particularly enjoyable or relatively straightforward, or for those who intend studying Mathematics or a closely related subject (e.g. Engineering) at university.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
Edexcel	9RS0 Religious Studies

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are no specific entry requirements, although pupils are normally expected to have obtained grade B or above at GCSE level or in a closely related subject such as English Literature or History, for example.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1 – Philosophy of Religion

(Written examination: 2 hours) (33.3%)

Philosophical issues and questions; the nature and influence of religious experience; problems of evil and suffering; philosophical language; works of scholars; influences of developments in religious belief.

Paper 2 – Religion and Ethics

(Written examination: 2 hours) (33.3%)

Significant concepts in issues or debates in religion and ethics; a study of three ethical theories; application of ethical theories to issues of importance; ethical language; deontology, virtue ethics and the works of scholars; medical ethics: beginning and end of life issues.

Paper 3 – New Testament

(Written examination: 2 hours) (33.3%)

Social, historical and religious context of the New Testament; texts and interpretation of the Person of Jesus; interpreting the text and issues of relationship, purpose and authorship; ways of interpreting the scripture; texts and interpretation: the Kingdom of God, conflict, the death and resurrection of Jesus; scientific and historical-critical challenges, ethical living and the works of scholars.

THE COURSE

Pupils are introduced to both philosophical and theological approaches: this is a demanding, but rewarding course. Every year, pupils gain places to read Theology at the best universities, including Oxbridge. This A Level complements other humanities options, but also requires an analytical mind more usually associated with the sciences.

A LEVEL COURSES (cont.)

BIOLOGY

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
AQA	7402 Biology

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Any pupil wishing to study Biology at A Level should have achieved a minimum of an A grade in both Biology and Mathematics at GCSE. Biology is a very adaptable A Level and works well with most other subjects. Pupils with an interest in the latest genetic procedures as well as the more traditional physiology aspects of the subject are well catered for by the course we follow.

ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed with three written papers.

Paper 1: Topics 1-4

(2 hour exam) (35% A Level)

Paper 2: Topics 5-8

(2 hour exam) (35% A Level)

Paper 3: Topics 1-8 and practical skills

(2 hour exam) (30% A Level)

THE COURSE

A Level Biology provides a fascinating introduction to many aspects of this modern science. It is designed and taught to stimulate the pupils and create a lifelong interest in the subject. It is a very well regarded subject by Universities and lends itself to undergraduate study in Science, Medicine, Veterinary, Engineering and Law. Practical work is undertaken throughout the course. If a candidate completes this satisfactorily, their A level certificate will be endorsed with a 'Pass'.

The 8 topics in A Level Biology:

1. Biological molecules
2. Cells
3. Organisms exchange substances with their environment
4. Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms
5. Energy transfers in and between organisms
6. Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
7. Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
8. The control of gene expression

CHEMISTRY

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
AQA	7405 Chemistry

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Any pupil wishing to study Chemistry at A Level is expected to have achieved at least an A grade in both Chemistry and Mathematics at GCSE.

ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed with three written papers.

Paper 1: Physical and Inorganic Chemistry

(2 hours) (35%)

Paper 2: Physical and Organic Chemistry

(2 hours) (35%)

Paper 3: Physical, Inorganic and Organic Chemistry

(2 hours) (30%)

Practical skills are assessed in all three papers. Practical work is undertaken throughout the course. If a candidate completes this satisfactorily, their A level certificate will be endorsed with a 'Pass'.

THE COURSE

A Level Chemistry is a challenging course highly respected by universities and employers. It is an excellent preparation for university entrance in subjects such as Chemistry, Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Physics, and Engineering, and it is an essential requirement for the majority of Medical, Dental and Veterinary Science courses. The analytical, practical and problem solving skills gained are also highly desirable in many fields such as Business, Accountancy and Law, amongst others.

PHYSICS

Examining Board Subject Entry Code

AQA 7408 Physics

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Physics is a mathematical science. While it is not absolutely essential to study A Level Mathematics, the two subjects complement each other well. Any pupil wishing to study Physics at A Level would ideally have achieved at least an A grade in both Physics and Mathematics at GCSE.

ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed with three written papers.

Paper 1: Core Physics

2 hours (34%)

Paper 2: Core Physics

2 hours (34%)

Paper 3: Practical skills and Option topic

2 hours (32%)

Practical work is undertaken throughout the course. If a candidate completes this satisfactorily, their A level certificate will be endorsed with a 'Pass'.

The option topic examined in paper 3 will be one from: Astrophysics, Electronics, Engineering Physics, Medical Physics, Turning Points in Physics.

THE COURSE

A Level Physics is a challenging course highly respected by universities and employers. The fundamental knowledge and understanding gained, plus the skills of analysis and problem solving, are highly desirable in many fields. This subject is an excellent preparation for university entry in subjects such as Science, Engineering, Computer Science, Accountancy, Law and Medicine.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Examining Board Subject Entry Code

AQA 7582 Physical Education

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Candidates will be expected to have achieved at least a B grade in either Double Award Science or two separate sciences such as Biology and Chemistry, for example. Candidates should also be of above average physical ability in at least one team sport and/or individual activity.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Factors affecting participation in physical activity and sport (*Written examination: 2 hours*) (35%) *multiple choice, short answer and extended writing*

- Section A: Applied anatomy and physiology
- Section B: Skill acquisition
- Section C: Sport and society

Paper 2: Factors affecting optimal performance in physical activity and sport (*Written examination: 2 hours*) (35%) *multiple choice, short answer and extended writing*

- Section A: Exercise physiology and biomechanics
- Section B: Sport psychology
- Section C: Sport and society and technology in sport

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity and sport (*Internal assessment*) (40%)

Pupils are assessed as a performer or coach in the full sided version of one activity, plus they need to provide a written and verbal analysis of their performance.

THE COURSE

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. Subject content

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Skill acquisition
- Sport and society
- Exercise physiology
- Biomechanical movement
- Sport psychology
- Sport and society and the role of technology in physical activity and sport

A LEVEL COURSES (cont.)

ART

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
Edexcel	9AD0 Art and Design

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

It is normally expected that pupils embarking on an Advanced GCE course in Art will have a high level of interest and motivation in this subject. They should have achieved at least a B grade or above at GCSE. Pupils entering the Lower Sixth Form from outside Downside should present a portfolio containing both sketchbook work and individual larger pieces. This may be done digitally if the pupil is unable to present actual work.

ASSESSMENT

Incorporates two major components:

Component 01: (60%)

A portfolio of practical work showing the pupils personal response to their chosen starting point which they will begin in the Summer Term of LV1 and a related study minimum of 1000 words.

Component 02: (40%)

OCR externally set task which is released 1st February and consists of a choice of seven themes to be used as starting points. Pupils select one starting point and produce preparatory studies, they have 15 hours to produce a final outcome in exam conditions. The date and time of the exam is set by the Art Department.

Submissions to all components above must include supporting studies and evidence of the pupil's personal development and outcome in response to their chosen themes.

COURSE

The first phase of the course will involve the pupils exploring a range of drawing, painting, print and sculpture with an emphasis on observation and building their creative skills. There will be weekly life drawing class which it is expected pupils will attend. They will also research a range of related artists, developing their critical and contextual analysis.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
OCR	H406A

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

It is expected that those pupils wishing to study the subject should have either passed Design and Technology GCSE at grade B or above, or have achieved at least a B grade in Art and Design.

ASSESSMENT

01 Principles of Product Design (25%)

This is a one hour and 30 minute written paper. The paper is set out through four sets of questions that nominally cover technical principles within Product Design. Pupils are required to analyse existing products, demonstrate applied mathematical skills, and demonstrate their technical knowledge of materials, manufacturing processes and techniques. Pupils are also required to have an understanding of wider social, moral and environmental issues that impact on the design and manufacturing industry.

02 Unseen Challenge (25%)

This is a two hour and 30 minute written paper. In section A of the paper focuses on pupils applying their knowledge, understanding and skills of designing and manufacturing prototypes and products.

03/04 Iterative Design Project (50%)

The 'Iterative Design Project' requires pupils to undertake a substantial design, make and evaluate project centred on the iterative processes of explore, create and evaluate. Pupils identify a design opportunity or problem from a context of their own choice, and create a portfolio of evidence in real time through the project to demonstrate their competence.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
AQA	7132 Business Studies

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Pupils do not require GCSE Business Studies, but we would expect pupils to have achieved at least a grade C in both English and Mathematics at GCSE.

ASSESSMENT

Business 1: Topics 1-10 – 2 hours 100 marks (33.3%)

Business 2: Topics 1-10 – 2 hours 100 marks (33.3%)

Business 3: Topics 1-10 – 2 hours 100 marks (33.3%)

THE COURSE

The course comprises the following topics:

1. What is business?
2. Managers, leadership and decision making
3. Decision making to improve marketing performance
4. Decision making to improve operational performance
5. Decision making to improve financial performance
6. Decision making to improve human resource performance
7. Analysing the strategic position of a business
8. Choosing strategic direction
9. Strategic methods: how to pursue strategies
10. Managing strategic change

This course is a high quality qualification, which has been designed following extensive teacher feedback, operational experience and by working closely with universities and the wider academic community. By taking a holistic approach to the subject, pupils will learn about the inter-related nature of business using business models, theories and techniques to support analysis of contemporary business issues and situations to provide a dynamic specification. The content is designed to engage pupils through topics and issues that are relevant in today's society – they will study key contemporary developments such as digital technology and business ethics, and globalisation is covered throughout the topics. In addition, the course provides pupils with opportunities to acquire and develop real life skills. Pupils will develop the knowledge and skills needed to analyse data, think critically about issues and make informed decisions – all skills that are needed for further study and employment.

ECONOMICS

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
Edexcel	9ECO Economics

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Pupils do not require GCSE Economics, and it is expected that pupils will have achieved at least an A grade in English Language (First Language) and Mathematics, and a closely related subject such as Business Studies or Geography.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Markets and Business Behaviour (themes 1 and 3) 2 hours 100 marks (35%)

Paper 2: The National and Global Economy (themes 2 and 4) 2 hours 100 marks (35%)

Paper 3: Micro and Macro Economics (all themes) 2 hours 100 marks (30%)

THE COURSE

The course comprises the following topics:

Theme 1: Introduction to markets and market failure

This theme focuses on microeconomic concepts. Students will develop an understanding of: Nature of economics, How markets work, Market failure and Government intervention.

Theme 2: The UK economy – performance and policies

This theme focuses on macroeconomic concepts. Students will develop an understanding of: The measures of economic performance, Aggregate demand, Aggregate supply, National income, Economic growth and Macroeconomic objectives and policy.

Theme 3: Business behaviour and the labour market

This theme develops the microeconomic concepts introduced in Theme 1 and focuses on business economics. Students will develop an understanding of: Business growth, Business objectives, Revenues, costs and profits, Market structures, Labour market and Government intervention.

A LEVEL COURSES *(cont.)*

Theme 4: A global perspective

This theme develops the macroeconomic concepts introduced in Theme 2 and applies these concepts in a global context. Students will develop an understanding of: International economics, Poverty and inequality, Emerging and developing economies, The financial sector and the Role of the state in the macro economy.

GEOGRAPHY

Examining Board **Subject Entry Code**
AQA 7037 Geography

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Prior knowledge of Geography is not a requirement for this course. Potential pupils would, however, find it of great benefit to have achieved at least a B grade in Geography at GCSE.

ASSESSMENT

Component 1 – Physical Geography

(Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes) (40%)

Component 2 – Human Geography

(Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes) (40%)

Component 3 – Geographical Investigation

(3,000–4,000 words) (20%)

THE COURSE

The course comprises of a selection of following topics:

Physical geography

1. Water and carbon cycles
2. Hot desert environments and their margins
3. Coastal systems and landscapes
4. Hazards
5. Ecosystems under stress
6. Cold environments

Human geography

7. Global systems and global governance
8. Changing places
9. Contemporary urban environments
10. Population and the environment
11. Resource security

Geography investigation

12. Fieldwork requirements
13. Investigation requirements

Geography skills

14. Geographical skills checklist

Geography is a highly relevant subject and is both an Art and a Science. It, therefore, bridges many subjects and can be highly useful when applying to university. Geography improves skills in essay writing, fieldwork techniques, independent research, debate of contemporary issues, use of qualitative and quantitative data, presentation skills and of scientific enquiry.

HISTORY

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
CIE Pre-U	9769 History

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Prior knowledge of History is not a requirement for this course. Potential pupils are expected to have achieved at least an A grade in GCSE History or English if they wish to do well.

ASSESSMENT

The units assessed at the end of the two year course are:

Paper 1: British History Outlines (2 ¼ hours) (25%)

For this question paper, pupils cover a wide range of topics from the 300 – 2000 AD in three components (300-1547, 1399-1815 and 1689-2000). At Downside, one set will study 1066-1216 and the other 1453-1603.

Paper 2: European History Outlines (2 ¼ hours) (25%)

For this question paper, candidates cover a wide range of topics from the 300 – 2000 AD in three components (300-1516, 1378-1815 and 1715-2000). At Downside, one set will study 1054-1204 and the other 1453-1610.

Paper 5: Special Subject (2 hours) (25%)

For this question paper, pupils will study documentary evidence on a possible thirteen options. At Downside, one set will study the Crusades and the other European Reformation.

Paper 6: Personal Investigation (Coursework) (25%)

Externally marked extended essay of around 3,500 – 4,000 words on a topic of the pupils own choosing approved in advance by CIE, but not their Special Subject topic.

THE COURSE

Firstly, History pupils should be interested in the causes and consequences of events that have occurred in the past. Post-16 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 a Sixth Form historian. Secondly, pupils should enjoy reading and research.

The successful study of History at this level has many benefits. Most obviously, 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 pupils to evaluate what they read and to take an objective view of the past.

A qualification in History leads to degree courses not only in History, but also in Politics, Law, International Politics, Sociology, Business Studies, Management, Media Studies, for example. The skills fostered by the study of History are valuable in a wide range of careers and good History graduates enjoy excellent employment prospects. 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.

A LEVEL COURSES (cont.)

HISTORY OF ART

Examining Board **Subject Entry Code**
AQA History of Art 7257

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Prior knowledge of History of Art is not a requirement for this course. Potential candidates are expected to have achieved at least an A grade in History or English at GCSE.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1 Themes (50%)

Section A :Visual Analysis

This section of the exam will assess skills of visual analysis and is designed to equip pupils to analyse and interpret the formal visual features and stylistic elements of painting, sculpture and architecture.

Section B: Thematic Study of World Art and Architecture

Thematic study is intended to be an inherently broad-based exploration of the developments in art and connections between movements and periods (before and after 1850). Pupils will study work across at least three types of art. Two themes will be selected from the four options:

1. Nature in Art
2. Identities in Art
3. War in Art
4. Journeys in Art

Paper 2 Period Study (50%)

Period Study of Art and Architecture

The study of a specific period is intended to allow pupils the opportunity to research and explore in detail the key movements, concepts, artists, contextual factors and related developments in a specific place/s and across a clearly bonded time frame.

Two periods will be selected from the following five options:

5. Invention and illusion: The Renaissance in Italy (1420-1520)
6. Power and persuasion: The Baroque in Catholic Europe (1597-1685)
7. Rebellion and revival: The Avant-Garde in Britain and France (1848-1899)
8. Brave new world: Modernism in Europe (1900-1939)
9. Pop life: Contemporary art and architecture in Britain and the USA (1960-2015)

THE COURSE

History of Art offers pupils the opportunity to explore art and architecture of the world from 500 BC to 2017. The study of art and architecture in historical and contemporary forms will give pupils a broad knowledge of world civilisations, including the artistic production of different cultures, groups and individuals from across the globe. Pupils will gain a life-long enjoyment of the art and architecture that surrounds them; knowledge and understanding of the formal characteristics and terminology of History of Art, and; a general knowledge and understanding of historical, social and cultural contexts of painting, sculpture and architecture. Themes such as conflict, identity and the environment demonstrate how studying art of the past and present has a relevance to, and a place within, our daily lives. The periods of study have been selected to introduce pupils to some of the most exciting and significant eras in the history of Art and Architecture. The study of History of Art requires pupils to develop visual and analytical skills that can be applied to many walks of life, as well as learning tools to understand how images and objects shape our social and political identities.

PSYCHOLOGY

Examining Board Subject Entry Code

AQA 7182 Psychology

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Pupils wishing to study Psychology at A level must have achieved at least a B grade in GCSE Mathematics, Biology (or BB in Dual Award Science) and English.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Social Influence, Memory, Attachment, Psychopathology (compulsory content 1-4)

written examination: 2 hours (33 %)

Paper 2: Approaches in Psychology, Biopsychology, Research Methods (compulsory content 5-7)

Compulsory content 5-7: written examination: 2 hours (33%)

Paper 3: Issues and Debates in Psychology

Compulsory content 1-4, plus one from Option 1, one from Option 2 and one from Option 3: written examination: 2 hours (33%)

THE COURSE

Compulsory content

1. Social influence
2. Memory
3. Attachment
4. Psychopathology
5. Approaches in Psychology
6. Biopsychology
7. Research methods
8. Issues and debates in psychology

Optional

Option 1

- Relationships
- Gender
- Cognition and development

Option 2

- Schizophrenia
- Eating behaviour
- Stress

Option 3

- Aggression
- Forensic psychology
- Addiction

Psychology is now the third most popular A Level choice in the country. A very challenging and stimulating subject, Psychology A Level is a highly respected qualification and is accepted for an extremely wide variety of further education courses.

A LEVEL COURSES (cont.)

CLASSICS (LATIN, CLASSICAL GREEK)

Studying Latin and/or Classical Greek is valuable preparation for a wide range of university courses in humanities, natural sciences, theology, medicine, economics and law. It is also useful for many careers. Studying these languages gives pupils an opportunity to master a system of challenging yet manageable proportions, and to understand how languages function. Studying their literature provides insights into many essential characteristics of modern thought. In addition, a knowledge of Latin or Classical Greek is a proven route to more articulate use of the languages of today by all who wish to acquire the highest skills of expression and persuasion.

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
OCR	Latin H443
	Classical Greek

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Pupils are expected to have achieved at least the equivalent of a GCSE Grade B in the language concerned before embarking upon this course. They should also have a lively interest in developing their knowledge and understanding of the classical world as the common heritage of European civilisation.

ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed on four units:

1. Unseen Translation (33%)
2. Prose Composition or Comprehension (17%)
3. Prose Authors (25%)
4. Verse Authors (25%)

THE COURSE

The course is based on the original writings of classical authors in Latin and Greek, respectively. Core authors for Latin are Caesar, Pliny, Ovid, Cicero, Tacitus, Virgil, and Seneca. Core authors for Greek are Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon, Herodotus, Homer, Lysias, Euripides, Sophocles, and Aristophanes. At A Level a selected portion from the works of two of the core authors (one verse and one prose) is studied in the original Latin / Greek as 'set text'.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH)

Examining Board	Subject Entry Code
AQA	French 7652
	German 7662
	Spanish 7692

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Pupils are expected to have achieved at least the equivalent of a GCSE Grade A in the language concerned before embarking upon this course. They should have an interest in developing their knowledge and understanding of the culture and way of life of the target-language country. Pupils will also need a full-size dictionary. The department recommends the Collins suite of dictionaries.

ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed on three units. All examinations are sat at the end of the two-year course.

Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing

2.5 hours (50%)

This paper assesses aspects of the target-language society, including current trends and issues, the artistic culture of the target-language society, aspects of the political life of the target-language society and grammar. The examination includes listening and reading comprehension exercises and translations to and from English. No dictionaries are permitted in the examination.

Paper 2: Writing

2 hours (20%)

For this paper, candidates must study either two literary texts or one literary text and one film from the prescribed list. Candidates must write one essay in the target language on each of the works studied. Candidates are expected to demonstrate a critical appreciation of the concepts and issues covered in the work, as well as a critical and analytical response to features such as form and technique of presentation. Candidates are expected to write approximately 300 words in each of the two essays. No dictionaries are permitted in the examination and students will not have access to the text or film during the assessment.

Paper 3: Speaking 21-23 minutes (30%)

Candidates are assessed on an individual research project and on one of the four sub-themes of the main content themes. The examination will be conducted by one of the Downside teachers.

THE COURSE

The core content of the course consists of 3 areas: Social issues and trends, Political and artistic culture and Grammar. In addition, students study a combination of cultural topics from the prescribed list of literary texts and films.

MUSIC**Examining Board** **Subject Entry Code**

CIE

Pre-U Music (9800)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A good pass at GCSE is not a prerequisite of the course, but candidates must already be established, proficient and committed performers if they are to be successful. A minimum standard of Associated Board Grade 6 is required, together with a pass at Grade 5 Theory.

ASSESSMENT**Component 1: Listening, analysis and historical study** (30%)

Two papers, each 1½ hours long, externally marked. Most of the music to be studied is drawn from the Western Classical Tradition.

Component 2: Performing (22.5%)

Candidates give a 25-30 minute performance, choosing 2 from these 4 disciplines: solo recital; ensemble performance; improvisation; performance on a second instrument.

Component 3: Composition (22.5%)

Stylistic exercises and commissioned composition.

In the stylistic exercises candidates choose two from baroque, classical, romantic and jazz genres. Coursework and a 2-hour paper.

The commissioned composition can be in any style of the candidate's choice, in response to one of three commissions given by the board. Coursework.

The paper is externally set. All the work is externally marked.

Component 4: Personal study (25%)

Candidates choose one of a dissertation, advanced recital, free composition or music technology project.

None of the work in this component may duplicate work from the other components.

Internally marked; externally moderated.



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