



SHIPLAKE COLLEGE
HENLEY-ON-THAMES

Sixth Form Options Guide *2025-2027*

Headmaster's Welcome

Mr Tyrone Howe

Thank you for considering Shiplake College for your Sixth Form experience – with a new Sixth Form Centre, new multi-activity centre, record numbers – you'll be joining a Sixth Form at a school which has never been in better shape.

Sixth Form at Shiplake is a positive co-educational experience within a tight-knit community that embodies the core values of the school – inclusive, individual, and inspirational. It offers a truly holistic education fuelled by aspiration and ambition and develops young people with a genuine sense of purpose.

The core of a Shiplake education is first-rate academic provision. The Sixth Form offers an impressive breadth of curriculum options, which guarantee genuine choice and small class sizes. Excellent teaching complements quality bespoke careers advice spanning the various avenues of university, the growing world of apprenticeships or straight into the work place.

But we will do a lot more than that because an all-round education which shapes character is as much, if not more, about what happens outside the classroom. In a stunning setting, a unique and extensive co-curricular programme offers participation for the many and excellence for the elite.

This was improved further with the opening of the Davies Centre, a multi-activity centre which incorporates a state-of-the-art boathouse, fitness suite, two-storey climbing wall, an indoor archery and rifle range, and enhanced facilities for our comprehensive outdoor education programme. Moreover, Marjorie's Café in the Sixth Form Centre is providing an ideal space for girls and boys from both Year 12 and 13 to socialise and work together.

Yet, some things remain the same - above all, it is the people who give Shiplake its magic. For this reason, while we are a selective school what is far more important is the sort of person you are.

We want you to bring your own magic to school and take advantage of the exceptional teaching and abundance of opportunities – if you do, you will find that Shiplake College has the power to be transformational.



About the Sixth Form

Our Sixth Form curriculum has evolved in recent years to reflect the changing nature of the qualifications on offer and to increase the chances of success for our pupils as they apply for places at university or enter the competitive world of employment. The Sixth Form subject choices now available at Shiplake are even more bespoke and can be tailored to suit individual pupils' interests, aptitudes and aspirations. A wide range of subjects (both A-level and vocational) are available from September 2024 and full details can be found in this booklet.

Pupils' three subject choices will be complemented by a choice of compulsory qualifications within our Personal Understanding, Learning Skills and Enrichment programme. The PULSE programme facilitates the development of key academic skills including the Shiplake Seven, all highly valued by both universities and employers. The PULSE programme also provides the opportunity for pupils to explore areas of personal interest that they may not be able to pursue within the core subjects on offer. Our Sixth Form curriculum is designed to stimulate and challenge our pupils as they enter an exciting time in their education, helping them work hard to develop existing aptitudes and to discover new ones.

Number of Subjects

All pupils will be expected to pursue three academic subjects, drawn from the wide variety of A-level and vocational options on offer.

Universities make offers based on three subjects and we believe that focusing greater attention on fewer subjects is likely to lead to improved grades. The wide range of options means that every pupil in our Sixth Form will find their studies accessible, providing that pupils display a mature attitude to learning and their choices fit within our option blocks.



Academic Approach

At a Glance



Normally three subjects studied (four with Further Mathematics)



Six periods per week per subject



Curriculum extension PULSE programme two periods a week



Weekly careers meetings/lessons



40+ Co-Curricular and Games Options



Eight supervised (Year 12) or independent (Year 13) study periods

Structure of Courses

All A-level subjects are fully linear in structure, meaning the absence of externally assessed AS examinations at the end of Year 12.

Following the A-level reforms of recent years, pupils now only sit their external examinations in the summer of Year 13. We do not offer the standalone AS Level qualifications. Instead, our pupils will sit rigorous internal examinations at the end of Year 12 for the purpose of tracking progress and informing UCAS predicted grades. This will also allow increased teaching time in the summer term of Year 12 which will be used to continue to strive for success in Year 13.

Teaching Time

The number of taught lessons per subject is six periods per week.

The reformed Sixth Form qualifications has meant an increase in academic rigour, a significant increase in subject content and a greater emphasis on the final examinations. Additional teaching time available in the Sixth Form is key to ensuring our pupils are well prepared for these final A-level examinations.

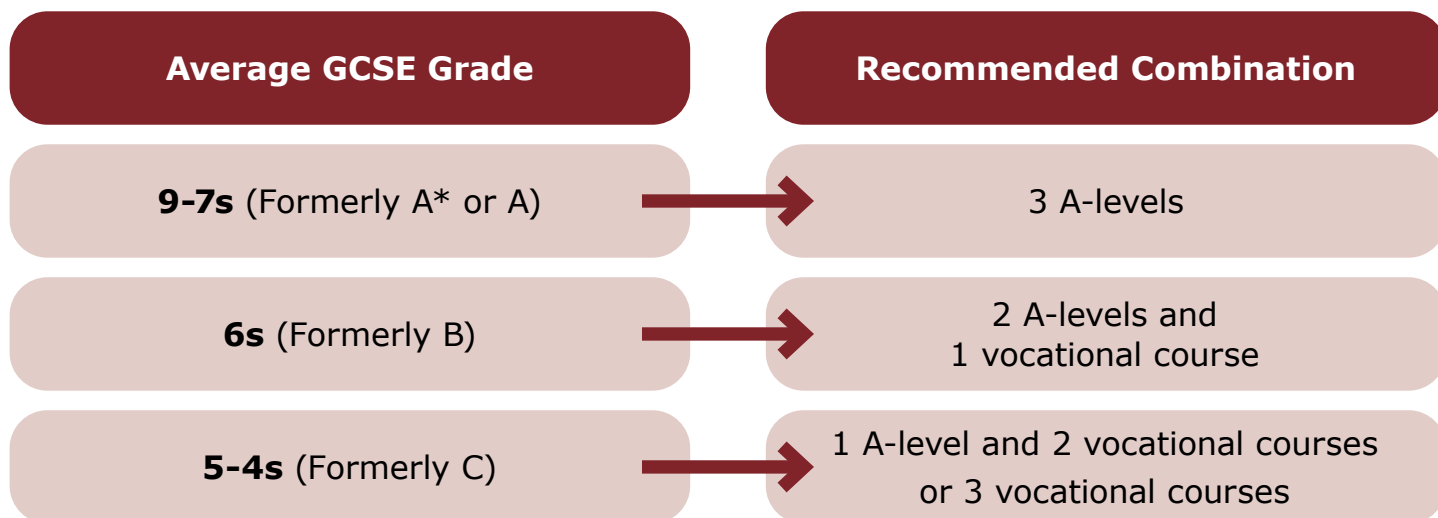
Academic Enrichment

All pupils, in addition to their core subject choices, will study for an externally-recognised qualification as part of the curriculum extension programme, taught over two periods per week with one independent study period and completed by the end of Year 12.

Pupils are offered the choice of highly regarded qualifications: for example, the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and Level 3 Sports Leadership, etc. To complement this taught programme, there will be a programme of lectures by visiting speakers, drawn from a range of backgrounds and expertise, to inspire and educate our Year 12 pupils. The initial weeks of the programme will also provide training in key academic skills for all pupils, such as independent learning, effective research skills, digital literacy, planning, time management, and presentation skills. The chosen qualification will provide additional UCAS tariff points to improve the chances of success in higher education applications.

The 21st-century job market and highly competitive university application process requires individuals to show evidence of their willingness to go that little bit further in their education. We want our pupils to stand out from the crowd, to tailor their Sixth Form studies to their specific areas of academic interest, and develop the key transferable skills listed above.

Course Types and Subjects



We offer a wide range of subjects and possible subject combinations, enabling pupils to make choices which will offer them the greatest chance of success and meet the requirements of their chosen university or career.

When choosing their subjects, we encourage pupils to seek the advice of key teachers, Heads of Department, the Head of Sixth Form and the Head of Careers to ensure that their choices are appropriate to their academic aptitude and their future aspirations. Provisional choices will be requested in **January 2025**.

Please note that courses will run subject to demand. Following the publication of GCSE results in August 2025, late changes to subject choices may be possible but will be wholly dependant on our option blocks at the time.

When choosing courses, pupils and parents are encouraged to speak with subject teachers and to consider the following: how the course is structured and examined; where a pupil's strengths and weaknesses lie; how the course will support a pupil's future studies or career aspirations. For those pupils with more technical or science based aspirations after Shiplake, careful choice of subject will need to be made in order to not restrict future pathways. In order to achieve the best possible academic outcomes, based on experience, we recommend the above qualification combinations for specific GCSE grade profiles.



Entry Requirements

Selection Criteria



Interview with senior member of staff



Commitment to wider school life



Minimum of five good passes at GCSE



Engagement with learning



Reference from School (External Candidates)



Literacy and Numeracy Tests (External Candidates)

Entry Requirements

Any pupil (internal or external) wishing to enter the Sixth Form at Shiplake is expected to have a good history of engagement with their learning, an excellent disciplinary record together with evidence of commitment to the wider school life (such as music, drama, sport and volunteering, etc).

An offer of a place into Year 12 is conditional upon the candidate achieving a minimum of five good passes at GCSE (including English language and mathematics) and a strong performance at GCSE in those subjects they wish to pursue at Sixth Form.

In accordance with the Shiplake College ethos, academic ability forms only one part of the selection process but with the increased rigour of Sixth Form qualifications it is an important part. A strong performance at GCSE is necessary to start any A-level course to ensure that pupils are able to cope with the demands of the subject. Please read the subject pages in the booklet for GCSE grade entry requirements and, if in doubt, it is advisable to speak with subject teachers and Heads of Department about the suitability of courses.

Internal Entry

Current Year 11 pupils at Shiplake College are required to complete the Sixth Form Statement of Intent by Friday 15 November 2024.

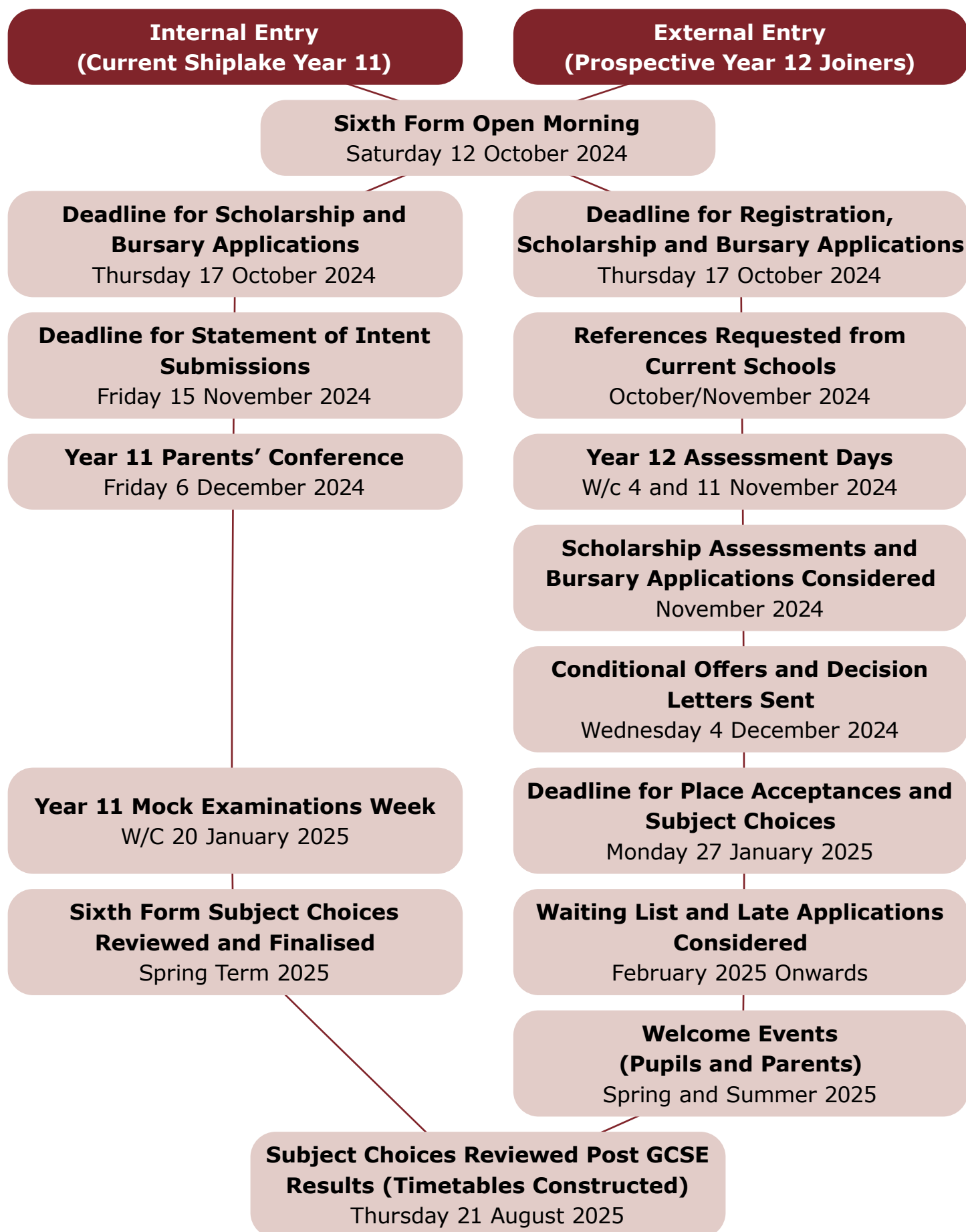
Pupils' academic progress will be tracked very closely during Year 11 and results from Exams Week in the Autumn Term and mock examination results in February will help inform discussion about subject choices and whether joining the Sixth Form at Shiplake is the most appropriate next step.

External Entry

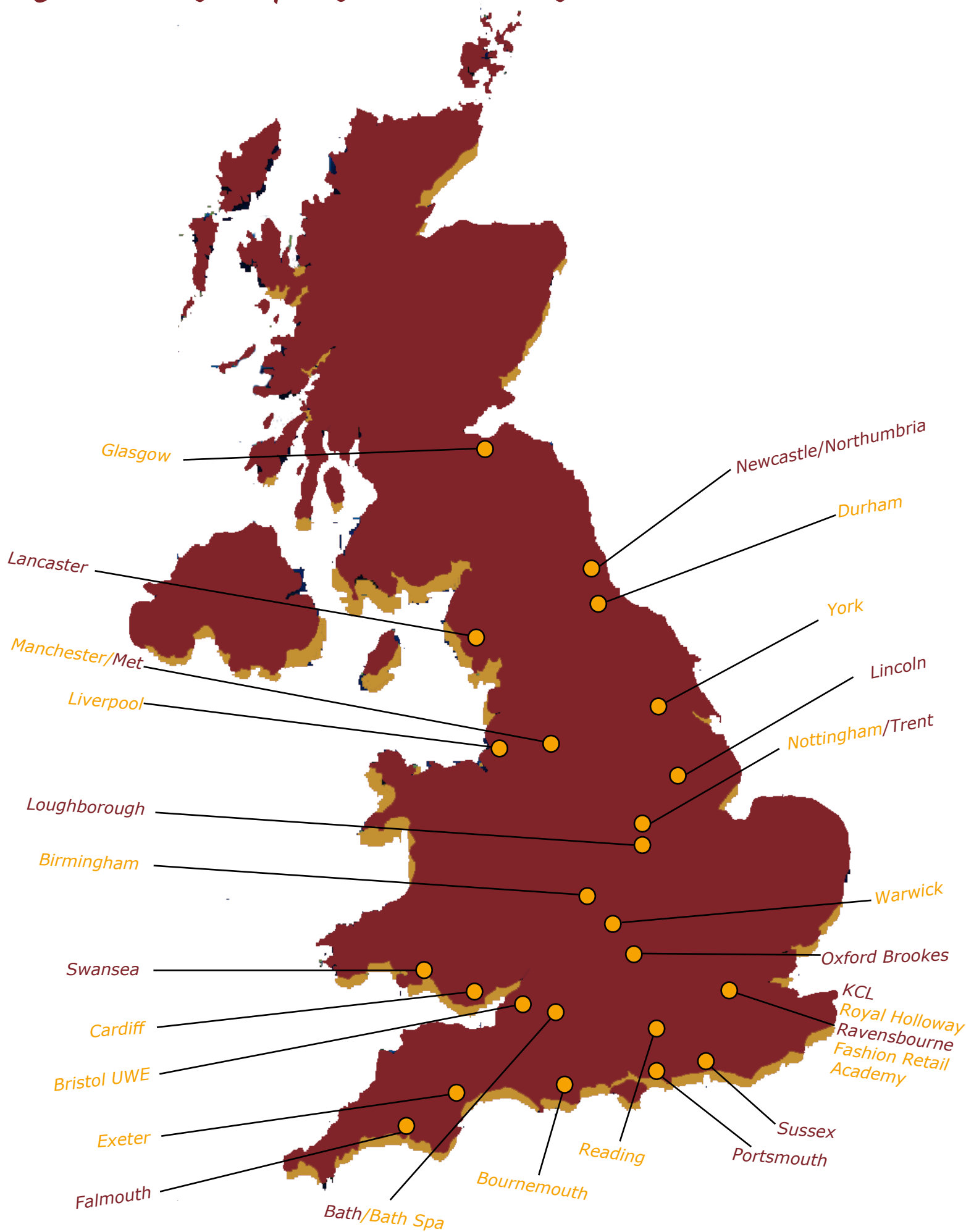
Pupils not currently at Shiplake College should submit a registration form by Thursday 17 October 2024.

External applicants must be formally registered in order to be included in the assessment process. Assessment days take place in November. Candidates will be informed whether they have been offered a place following the Sixth Form assessment days in December 2024. A provisional subject choices form will be sent along with any offer letters. All offers are conditional on satisfactory performance at GCSE.


Admissions Timeline




Leavers' Destinations 2024



Destinations

 **92%** of 2024 leavers applied to university

 **91%** of 2024 leavers secured places at first or second choice university

Top Universities

 **66%** of 2024 leavers progressed to top third UK universities

 **39%** of 2024 leavers progressed to Russell Group universities

Most Popular Universities 2024



Nottingham Trent



York



Exeter



Cardiff



Nottingham



Oxford Brookes



Swansea



Royal Holloway



Loughborough



Reading



Lancaster



Glasgow



Bath



Birmingham

Recent Overseas Universities



Harvard



Yale



Princeton



Washington



Iowa



Chicago



Boston

Most Popular Subjects



Business-Related



Sports-Related



Marketing



Engineering



Criminology/
Sociology



Real Estate/
Urban Planning



Politics/Int.
Relations



Finance/
Economics



Philosophy



Geography



Film-Related



Psychology



Computer
Science



Pharmacology

Recent Apprenticeships, Internships and Employment



Engineering



Hovis



British
Airways



Amazon



Accountancy




Quantity
Surveying



Sales
Internship

Learning Development

Director of Learning Development: Mrs Judit Coulehan

 Watch 'An Introduction to Learning Development at A-level'

The purpose-built Learning Development Department is situated on the first floor of the revolutionary John Turner Building. The Department provides a first-class environment for pupils to receive additional support, with one large classroom and four seminar rooms all equipped with high-quality technological resources. This will ensure that pupils have access to the best possible learning resources in the years to come.

From Years 7-11, the Learning Development team helps pupils develop the strategies and skills required to overcome their individual learning needs as they prepare for, and navigate, their GCSEs. Pupils also develop their metacognitive skills and awareness of 'learning to learn'. We find that this is different in the Sixth Form as pupils' needs change. Increasingly, we have found that pupils in the Sixth Form no longer require this intensive support. Instead, at this stage in a pupil's career, pupils benefit from more subject-specific strategies such as structuring their essays, planning coursework tasks and conducting effective research.

Recognising the changing needs of our older pupils and to prepare them for the next phase of their education, our provision in the Sixth Form is different. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are offered support on an 'opt in' basis where pupils choose to receive two lessons of 'guided study support'. Year 12 pupils who received extra support for their GCSEs (either at Shiplake or at their previous school) are encouraged to reflect on their need for this extra support. Pupils may then 'opt in' if they feel this guided study support will be beneficial for them or to move away from the Learning Development programme.

The provision within the Sixth Form closely mirrors what is on offer at universities. By helping our Sixth Form pupils take more responsibility for their own learning we hope that they will become more confident in their ability to work independently. Guided study support is very much pupil-led. Teachers are available to advise and guide pupils and to ensure that prep and coursework deadlines are met.



The Pulse Programme

Personal
Understanding,
Learning
Skills,
Enrichment

What is the PULSE Programme?

The PULSE Programme facilitates the development of both academic and personal core skills in Shiplake Sixth Form pupils. Universities and employers are increasingly seeking individuals who can offer more than simply a 'set of grades' and are equipped for success in further study and the world of work.

Examples of these skills include:

- Time management
- Problem solving
- Initiative
- Research skills
- Digital literacy
- Oral presentation
- Collaboration
- Discussion
- Critical thinking
- Self evaluation

The PULSE Programme is integrated into the Year 12 timetable, allowing Year 13 to focus more on preparation for the important subject examinations.

The programme involves a taught study skills component which aims to equip pupils for the demands of Sixth Form study and beyond. **Pupils then follow a route to gaining an accredited qualification which will attract UCAS points to aid university or job applications.** The qualifications will not have a traditional examination component, but will be assessed through a combination of 'The Three Ps' - Project, Presentation and Portfolio.

There is a very strong emphasis on independent learning in these qualifications, and we intend to develop and support this key trait in all of our pupils.

The PULSE programme also contains elements of PSHE and there are regular talks on key issues that will face our Year 12 pupils. Further enrichment is provided by our *Café Lecture Series* where visiting speakers inspire and educate our pupils.



Extended Project Qualification

How many points is an EPQ worth?

UCAS Tariff Points: A* (28), A (24), B (20), C (16), D (12), E (8)

The EPQ Level 3 qualification is our most popular PULSE course. It holds more UCAS Tariff points than an AS Level and achieving a good grade provides an opportunity for some universities to reduce their standard grade offer.

Pupils select a research question based on their specific academic interest. This allows for extension of one of their core subjects, for those wishing to explore a specific topic in much greater detail, or it allows for new academic areas to be developed that are not offered through the core subjects at Shiplake (such as law, international relations, finance, earth science, astronomy, architecture, history of art, and so on).

Pupils will be allocated a supervisor with whom they have regular lessons to discuss, inform and review their progress on the qualification. In addition to the research element of the course, there is a taught component covering research skills, time management, critical thinking, referencing and presentation skills.

The beauty of this qualification is the variety of methods of submitting the project; it may be through a written document, a performance, or even the construction of an artefact. Pupils will be required to complete a detailed research review and also to present their ideas to an audience at the end of the course.

"We welcome the Extended Project and would encourage you to undertake one as it will help you develop independent study and research skills and ease the transition from school/college to higher education."

University of Cambridge

"The beauty of this qualification is the variety of methods of submitting the project; it may be through a written document, a performance, or even the construction of an artefact."



ICM Level 2 Award in Psychology


The **ICM Level 2 Award in Psychology** is an exciting new qualification which focuses on contemporary research and current issues to engage Learners through hands-on practical work, debate and independent study. It places ethical and social issues at the core of the qualification and explores areas of psychology including social psychology (prejudice and discrimination), biological psychology (sleep and dreaming) and conducting research.

This course will be best suited to students who:

- Enjoy group work
- Are motivated to work independently
- Are passionate about developing arguments
- Want to develop critical thinking skills
- Have an interest in psychology and research

This qualification is designed to enhance Learners' skills in group work, research design, project writing and awareness of social and moral issues, many of which are essential to the workplace.

In terms of assessment, pupils will sit one 60-minute exam worth 50 marks. The exam will focus on the three topics - social psychology (15 marks), biological psychology (15 marks), and conducting research in social and biological psychology (20 marks). The exam will be sat in May 2024.



Once complete, students will be awarded with an ICM Level 2 Award in Psychology (RQF)

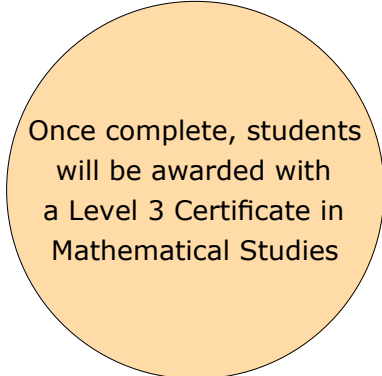
Core Maths

Maths is for everyone. It is diverse, engaging and essential in equipping students with the right skills to reach their future destination, whatever that may be. This Level 3 Certificate Mathematical Studies qualification will consolidate students' mathematical understanding, build their confidence and competence in applying mathematical techniques to solve a range of problems and introduce them to new techniques and concepts that will prepare them for further study and future employment within a broad range of academic, professional and technical fields.

Mathematical Studies aims to prepare students for the mathematical demands of higher education and work where there is a distinct mathematical or statistical element, but where the mathematical demands do not stretch to a requirement for A-level mathematics.

This qualification aims to enable students to:

- Study a mathematics curriculum that is integrated with other areas of their study leading to the application of mathematics in these areas
- Develop mathematical modeling, evaluating and reasoning skills
- Solve problems some of which will not be well defined and may not have a unique solution
- Solve substantial and real life problems encountered by adults
- Develop skills in the communication, selection, use and interpretation of their mathematics



Once complete, students will be awarded with a Level 3 Certificate in Mathematical Studies

Diploma in International Volunteering

This qualification is vocationally based and offers students the opportunity to plan and take part in an international volunteering placement abroad. During their study they will demonstrate an achievement of practical skills, understanding and knowledge relevant to applying for funding and completing an international volunteering placement. The achievement of the qualification demonstrates the development of skills which will support students in succeeding in Higher Education and gain employment opportunities.

The purpose and aim of this course is to enable learners to develop the underpinning knowledge and skills required to:

This course requires all students to undertake an international volunteering placement. In July 2024, our current Year 13 pupils spent 2 weeks in Peru working on the Taricaya Ecological Reserve in the Amazon Rainforest.

As such, there is a cost attached to this qualification which will cover all travel, transport, excursions and food.

Upon completion of the placement, students will achieve 16 UCAS points.

- Understand the cultural, social, political and religious impact of volunteering
- Understand the implications and responsibilities of local laws, and the rights of children in the country of placement
- Identify relationship issues due to workplace culture, language, workload and cultural norms

Sports Leadership

Students undertaking a qualification in Sports Leadership will learn and demonstrate important life skills such as effective communication and organisation whilst learning to lead basic physical activities to younger people, their peers, older generations and within the community. The courses involve both guided & peer-to-peer learning and supervised leadership to ensure that learners have all the skills they need to lead basic physical activities for other people.

This qualification would be most suitable for students who:

- Regularly take part in any sport either inside or outside of school
- Are proactive, passionate and enjoy working with and leading others
- Aim to develop their organisational, planning and communication skills
- Want to become more employable through increased skills and improved CVs
- Enjoy peer to peer learning and development

Once complete, students will be awarded with a Level 3 qualification in Sports Leadership

All units in the Level 3 course are mandatory and include a combination of research, written and practical work:

- Unit 1 - Developing leadership skills
- Unit 2 - Lead safe sport sessions
- Unit 3 - How to plan inclusive sport sessions
- Unit 4 - Plan, lead and evaluate a progressive series of inclusive sports sessions
- Unit 5 - Plan lead and evaluate a sports event
- Unit 6 - Demonstrate leading inclusive sport sessions to a range of participant groups.

Sixth Form Subject Options

Choosing your Sixth Form subjects is an important decision and should not be made in haste, or alone. Remember to talk to your parents, subject teachers and other senior staff who know you well. They will be more than happy to help you.

1. Academic, vocational or a combination?

Do you wish to study A-levels, a vocational qualification or a combination?

2. Which subjects do you enjoy?

The importance of this should not be underestimated. You will be studying these subjects for two years, so make sure you are interested in them.

3. Which subjects are you good at?

Think about your strengths. Performing well and achieving good grades will undoubtedly help you in the future.

4. Which subjects do you need?

Having a rough idea about what you want to do in the future is important, try to pick subjects which are relevant to your career plans. If you are not sure, opt for a varied combination.

Art

Biology

Business

Chemistry

Computer Science

Design, Engineering and Technology

Drama and Theatre

Economics

English Literature

Geography

History

Mathematics

Further Mathematics

Media Studies

Modern Languages

Photography

Physical Education

Physics

Politics

Psychology

Religious Studies

Sociology

The Vocational Pathway

Business Extended Certificate

Criminology

Music BTEC

Sport BTEC

Courses will run subject to demand.



Art

2025-2027 Specification: AQA Art and Design (Fine Art) 7202
Head of Department: Miss Keli Jiggins

 Watch 'An Introduction to Art A-level'

Who should study this course?

Anyone who has a proven ability in the subject and a love of art will be well-suited to this popular A-level. As a 'non content specific' subject it is compatible with virtually every area of learning and its encouragement of the imagination, intuition and individual self-inquiry gives it unlimited value for life.

Entry requirements

Candidates should have achieved a grade 6 or higher at GCSE in art and a grade 4 or higher for English language.

What will I be studying?

The art department runs a reformed linear course. This means that in the first year, teaching will follow a 'carousel' approach of specific areas such as drawing, painting, print-making, photography, conceptual art and ceramics/3D sculpture. This multimedia course will provide the best all-round training for a career in art and design. Pupils will develop a deep understanding of their chosen specialism and the ability to critically evaluate their own work and that of others. Pupils are then able to tailor their final year of the course to fit their individual needs, choices and aspirations in order to follow their route through to Higher Education.

Visits to see art in the flesh are absolutely vital and connections between this activity and the outcomes of it in the pupil's own work is expected and is assessed. The higher grades are not achieved without this requirement being adequately met. Pupils are therefore expected to independently conduct research on field trips and in their own time by visiting galleries and exhibitions.

Residential trips in the UK and abroad also provide invaluable opportunities to broaden pupils' knowledge and experiences of art, craft and design from various cultural and contextual perspectives.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment throughout the course is split between coursework and externally set assignments. Internal assessment takes place in Year 12 although successful work can be subsequently submitted as coursework. The coursework element commences in the Spring Term of Year 12 and is worth 60% of the final A-level mark. The external examination is completed between February and May and is worth 40%.


What next?

An A-level in art with a good portfolio opens the door to further studies in architecture, fine art, teaching, fashion, textiles, ceramics, commercial art, photography, theatre design, film and video. For talented artists, the opportunities are enormous. With the exception of science-based subjects, this subject is acceptable for many unrelated university courses. This makes art a useful second or third subject for most routes into higher education.



Biology

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel Biology A (Salters-Nuffield 9BN0)
Head of Department: Dr Liz Chare

 Watch 'An Introduction to Biology A-level'

Who should study this course?

Biology is a good choice for pupils with an interest and curiosity about the diversity and origins of the world around them. It is a popular course in the Sixth Form as many areas of the subject complement daily life.

The pace of biological research and the potential impact of recent discoveries show that biology will play an increasingly important role in modern society, wealth creation and improved quality of life. Saving threatened species, feeding people, GM organisms, curing diseases... the future offers many challenges to a biologist. New knowledge in areas such as genetics, molecular biology, biodiversity and ecology can all have significant effects on human society and the environment.

Entry requirements

We would expect candidates to have gained at least a grade 7,7 in combined science or a 7 in biology in triple science.

What will I be studying?

Teaching will focus on our interactions with the natural environment and develop an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the ways biological organisms function.

How will I be assessed?

Pupils should expect to be assessed entirely via written examinations involving a mixture of short, long and multiple-choice answer questions. The written examination papers are as follows:

- Paper 1 (2 hours): The Natural Environment and Species Survival
- Paper 2 (2 hours): Energy, Exercise and Co-ordination
- Paper 3 (2 hours): General and Practical Applications in Biology

Core practical skills will be developed throughout the year but also assessed in the terminal written papers. Fieldwork plays an important part in the A-level specification, and it is compulsory for Year 13 pupils to complete a residential field course. This usually takes place on the Isle of Wight, at a cost of approximately £270.

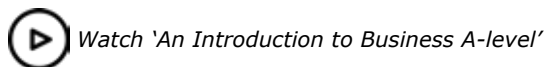
What next?

Those wishing to pursue a career in the field of biological sciences should also consider chemistry. In this case, mathematics, physics or geography are very useful third subjects. Biology however, also sits very comfortably alongside the arts and is therefore a useful general subject to study in the Sixth Form. It provides evidence of sound skills in analysis, reasoning and descriptive writing to universities and employers.



Business

2025-2027 Specification: AQA A-level Business (2023 Specification)
Head of Department: Mrs Teuta Hill



Who should study this course?

The AQA specification takes a holistic approach to the subject, demonstrating the interrelated nature of business using models, theories and techniques to support analysis of contemporary business issues and situations to provide a dynamic specification. The content is designed to engage students through topics and issues that are relevant in today's society – contemporary developments such as digital technology and business ethics; and globalisation is covered throughout the topics.

Entry requirements

Level 7 average grade with minimum of grade 6s in both mathematics and English.

What will I be studying?

Subject content includes:

- What is business?
- Managers, leadership and decision making
- Decision making to improve marketing performance
- Decision making to improve operational performance
- Decision making to improve financial performance
- Decision making to improve human resource performance
- Analysing the strategic position of a business
- Choosing strategic direction
- Strategic methods: how to pursue strategies
- Managing strategic change

How will I be assessed?

Pupils will be assessed via three 2-hour exams. The question papers use a variety of assessment styles including multiple choice, short answer, data response, essay and case studies so that students feel more confident and engage with the questions. Real life case studies will be used wherever possible to make it easier for students to relate to and apply their knowledge and skills developed throughout the course

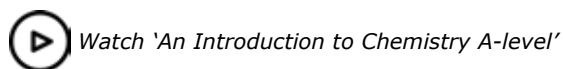
What next?

Students 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.



Chemistry

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel GCE Chemistry (9CH0)
Head of Department: Dr Ashok Khare



Who should study this course?

Pupils who have a logical and critical approach to problem solving, and a genuine interest and enjoyment of chemistry should seriously consider this course. A good understanding of basic mathematical principles is also important.

Entry requirements

Candidates should have achieved a grade 7 or higher at GCSE in chemistry or similar combined science and mathematics.

What will I be studying?

The level of work has been tailored to follow on from the GCSE chemistry specification and will develop candidates' knowledge and understanding to provide a pathway to further studies. The course integrates theory and relevant practical work. The subject content will include four core areas of chemistry: (i) Physical Chemistry, (ii) Inorganic Chemistry, (iii) Organic Chemistry and (iv) Practical Skills in Chemistry.

The following key topics will be studied in depth with academic rigour: atomic structure and periodic table, bonding and structure, redox, amount of substance, modern analytical techniques, acids and bases, rates of reaction, chemical equilibrium, enthalpy changes, entropy changes, electrode potential and electrochemical cells, group 1, 2 and group 7 elements, transition metals, studies of organic compounds, polymers and practical skills.



How will I be assessed?

The course follows a two-year linear programme, and it will be externally assessed by three written examination papers at the end of the second year. The total examination time is six hours.

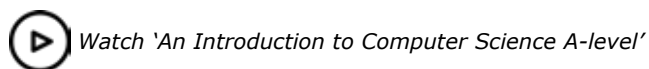
Pupils are also expected to carry out the 12 core practical experiments which will be internally assessed by teachers using common practical assessment criteria issued by the exam board. The outcome of practical assessment will appear on each pupil's certificates as a separately reported result. The overall qualification grade will be awarded based on the outcome of the written examinations only. The examinations will cover the theoretical content of the entire specification, as well as testing practical techniques and data analysis.

What next?

There is an international shortage of, and therefore huge demand for, chemists. Relevant courses available at university include pure chemistry, chemical engineering, biochemistry, metallurgy, and pharmacy. Many other courses, including dentistry, medicine, veterinary science and engineering, demand chemistry as an essential A-level. Chemistry is also welcomed in the areas of banking, finance and management as successful candidates have demonstrated excellent academic ability in a very tough subject. As such, studying this A Level keeps open a magnitude of opportunities for future studies and careers.

Computer Science

2025-2027 Specification: AQA 7517
Head of Department: Mr Pete Redrup



Who should study this course?

Computer science is an ideal subject for pupils who seek an in-depth understanding of how the technologies and services that impact and enable almost every aspect of modern life work. Computer science provides a thorough understanding of the fundamentals of computer systems, including the architecture of computer systems and their hardware, how data is represented and transmitted across the world via interconnected networks as well as how to design and develop software to control systems and develop new applications and services. The course consists of both practical programming and theory components. Students typically learn Python to program, although there is flexibility to use different programming languages if they have prior experience and expertise in them (e.g. Java, C#). Students will be expected to devote time outside lessons to practising and honing their programming skills for at least one study period per week.

Entry requirements

Pupils are not required to have studied GCSE computer science, although this would be an obvious advantage. For those who have studied GCSE computer science, pupils should have achieved at least a grade 7. For those who have not, we would look for a grade 7 in mathematics and science subjects (particularly physics and chemistry). Prior programming experience is not required, however those with no former experience will be expected to complete some online courses during the summer prior to starting the course.

What will I be studying?

Computer science focuses on solving problems by creating algorithms and routines. The major focus of the course is to learn to analyse problems through logical thinking. Topics will include:

- Fundamentals of Programming
- Fundamentals of Data Structures
- Fundamentals of Algorithms
- Theory of Computation
- Fundamentals of Data Representation
- Fundamentals of Computer Systems, Organisation and Architecture
- Consequences of Uses of Computing
- Fundamentals of Communication and Networking
- Big Data
- Fundamentals of Databases
- Fundamentals of Functional Programming
- Systematic Approach to Problem-Solving

How will I be assessed?

Pupils will be tested, using a mixture of theoretical and practical tasks, on their knowledge and understanding of the fundamental elements of computer science and programming. There are two examinations; paper one using pre-release material and testing programming skills in a computer-based exam, whilst paper two is a more traditional written paper covering theory. In addition there is a project worth 20% of the marks.

What next?

Computer science is held in high regard by universities, employers and the government. Those with computing skills are in high demand. The programming and design skills that you will acquire as part of the computer science A-level are applicable in subject-specific areas including software engineering, web design, animation, game development, data analysis and cyber security. Project management skills can be used in a vast range of careers.

Design, Technology and Engineering

2025-2027 Specification: AQA Product Design 7552
Head of Department: Mr Liam Fuller



Who should study this course?

Creative and practical Sixth Form pupils who have been successful in Design and Technology at GCSE (ideally attaining grade 6 or above) are encouraged to continue the subject at A-level. However, good foundations in art as well as in mathematics and science are also welcome foundations for A Level study.

What will I be studying?

The A-level course is assessed through the AQA Product Design A2 specification which builds upon the foundations of the GCSE course in more depth but also goes onto emphasise the two key factors of creativity and sustainability.

The course challenges pupils to produce a number of design and make outcomes, either freely designed or in response to an externally set problem or theme. We encourage pupils to take on 'real world' problems with real clients and user groups. The course structure takes in specialist short 'mock' design and make projects in engineering, architecture and product design, to ensure pupils have a broad outlook and developed skills before choosing to focus upon their chosen area for their chosen design and make project.

The department has extensive links and contacts within the fields of product design, engineering and architecture and our network of contacts and supporters allows us to provide additional resources and opportunities to learn for A-level pupils.

Pupils continue to develop their knowledge of related materials and processes whilst gaining understanding of the processes and work of professional designers.

How will I be assessed?

Paper 1: 30% A-level

A two-hour written examination, assessing core technical principles, designing and making principles. The paper will be a mixture of short answer questions, multiple choice and extended responses.

Paper 2: 20% A-level

A two-hour written examination, assessing specialist knowledge, technical and designing principles. Split into two sections, with short answer questions and extended responses on product analysis and commercial manufacture.

Practical Assessment: 50% A-level

A substantial design and create task, taking approximately 45 hours in total. This will assess the application of technical, designing and manufacturing principles. Pupils will submit a digital design portfolio and photographic evidence of prototypes constructed in design, development and the final prototype.

What next?

The A-level qualification can lead to further studies in design, engineering, architecture or many creative or technical fields or, in combination with other subjects, can keep open a wide range of options for further study and careers. The experiences gained and the proven ability in both project based problem solving and theoretical studies is often beneficial and gives a degree of variety to job and UCAS applications.

Drama and Theatre

2025-2027 Specification: Eduqas Drama & Theatre
Head of Department: Mrs Emma Farrell



Who should study this course?

If you enjoy working as a team and creatively collaborating then this course is perfect for you. It requires a willingness to try new things, explore different artists and push the boundaries of your own performance skills. You will be a keen performer and enjoy interpreting roles and performing for live audiences. The written element of the course links beautifully with English and media and there are explicit links to history, politics, music and psychology. The course suits pupils who enjoy studying literature, performing and creating engaging theatre. Drama and theatre demands a wide range of skills including essay writing, research, analysis, teamwork, acting skills, enthusiasm and commitment to the subject, as pupils will often be required to rehearse beyond timetabled lesson time. This course would suit pupils with a grade 6 and above in Drama and English.



What will I be studying?

Pupils will gain a knowledge and understanding of theatre practice through their study of set texts and live productions. Candidates will research and develop performance or production skills appropriate to the creation and realisation of theatre. They will develop their performance skills using influences from a range of traditional and contemporary practitioners. Candidates will demonstrate a more advanced level of skills alongside an ability to think independently, make judgements and refine their work in the light of research. They will also demonstrate the ability to analyse the ways in which different performance and production elements are brought together to create quality theatre.

How will I be assessed?

Component 1:

- Theatre Workshop (20% internal assessment)
- Reinterpretation of an extract from a text
- Performance of an ePerformance in a style influenced by a key practitioner
- Creative log – written coursework

Component 2:

- Text in Action (40% externally assessed)
- Devised performance based on a stimulus in the style of a key practitioner

- Performance of a scripted extract in a chosen theatrical style
- Process and evaluation log – written coursework

Component 3:

- Text in Performance – Written exam
- Section A - Set text, open book, pre-1956
- Section B - Set text, open book, post-1956
- Section C - Closed book, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

What next?

Some pupils have progressed into some of the most prestigious acting schools in the UK. However, this is also an opportunity to develop a wide range of desirable skills and push themselves beyond their comfort zone in such a way that it proves to universities or future employers that they are accomplished public performers with very good analytical, collaborative, time management and creative skills. As such it keeps many doors open for the future.

Economics

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel Economics A 9ECO
Head of Department: Mr Stuart Read



Who should study this course?

Studying economics will help to answer questions such as: "Why does Mo Salah earn more than the combined salaries of 500 nurses?"; "Why are houses becoming more expensive?" and "Should the government tax smokers?" Therefore, this A-level is an excellent subject for pupils with good analytical skills who like solving real-world problems. This, combined with a strong work ethic, will make this demanding A-level accessible, interesting and fulfilling. Pupils are encouraged to take a lively interest in current affairs as discussed in newspapers, on radio or television. This is essential as the course demands an ability to interpret current trends and changes in the economy.

Grade 6 in maths and English language or a humanities subject is required to study economics. It should be noted that 25% of the A-level marks available require mathematical understanding.

What will I be studying?

You may have never studied economics before, and yet when you open a newspaper what do you read? A report from an economics correspondent. Turn on the news on TV and there is yet another discussion on the state of the economy. Talk to a friend and the conversation will often focus on the price of the latest gadget. Economics affects our daily lives. Continually we are being made aware of local, national and international economic issues. Furthermore, we are constantly faced with economic problems and decisions of our own.

Key topics will include:

- How prices are determined
- Economic growth and climate change
- Unemployment and inflation
- UK government spending
- The pros and cons of monopolies
- Trade and globalisation
- How poor countries can grow and develop
- Public finance
- Poverty and inequality

How will I be assessed?

The course will be assessed via three two hour examinations which demand well-structured extended writing. Paper 1 (Markets and Market Behaviour) and Paper 2 (The National and Global Economy) are both worth 35% of the full qualification. Paper 3 (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics) is worth 30% of the qualification.

What next?


Economics will give you some very useful mental tools and skills that will be helpful in many other aspects of life. Some of these skills are 'overarching,' such as the development of logical thought processes, whilst others are more specific such as the ability to read and interpret economic arguments.

Economics is an excellent subject to study either for accessing related degrees at university or for keeping options open. It is a highly respected qualification and often leads pupils on to jobs in business, government or finance related industries.



English Literature

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel 9ET0
Head of Department: Mrs Jessica Brooks

 Watch 'An Introduction to English Literature A-level'

Who should study this course?

Pupils who are independent readers and have a passion for exploring a wide range of literature will enjoy this course. There are numerous personal characteristics required to be successful in the study of English Literature, but our ideal scholars are enthusiastic, creative, empathetic and critical readers. Pupils are often encouraged to be: collaborative in their planning and thinking about texts; challenging of their own perceptions; open to new interpretations and concepts. Such an approach leads students of English Literature being accomplished in expressing their ideas verbally and, of course, in writing.

Drama (30% of total qualification):

Pupils will study a Shakespearean play (*King Lear* / *Othello*) AND a pre- or post-1900 play (*Dr Faustus* / *The Importance of Being Earnest*).

Prose (20% of total qualification):

Pupils will study two texts in a comparative study in one of the following areas:

Childhood: *Hard Times* AND *Atonement*

Colonisation and its Aftermath: *Heart of Darkness* AND *Passage to India*

Science and Society: *Frankenstein* AND *Never Let Me Go*

Women and Society: *Wuthering Heights* AND *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Poetry (30% of total qualification):

Pupils will compare their study of a post-2000 poetry anthology to an 'Unseen' poem AND a studied poet or specific poetic movement (eg Christina Rossetti or Victorian Poetry - TS Eliot or Modernism).

Coursework (20% of total qualification):

Pupils will complete a comparative essay of 2500-3000 words examining two texts.

What will I be studying?

Please note the above lists are not exhaustive and are examples of text choices that may be taught.

How will I be assessed?

Pupils are assessed via a combination of coursework and examinations. Examinations will include extended essays in response to questions on set texts. The weighting of each section is outlined above.

What next?

The range of texts on offer in this specification will suit pupils who aspire to read English at university, yet the variety will also engage pupils interested in pursuing subjects such as history, politics, sociology, psychology or drama. As a highly regarded A Level, this qualification will be useful regardless of the nature of your future study plans.

Geography

2025-2027 Specification: Cambridge International A-level Geography 9696
Head of Department: Mr Jack Cooper

 Watch 'An Introduction to Geography A-level'

Who should study this course?

Whether you wish to study geography at university or you are just looking for a versatile subject to keep your options open, this subject will help you develop as a rounded individual. Teachers aim to share their enthusiasm for the subject with pupils through lessons that investigate traditional and topical areas of the curriculum. Developing educated opinions on many of the social, political and environmental challenges that face the world today will help to develop confidence in life beyond school. This, combined with the wide range of analytical, statistical and graphical skills that will be acquired, makes geographers attractive to universities and employers alike.

Entry requirements

You should have achieved at least a grade 6 at GCSE in order to take this subject, or grade 7 in another humanities subject or English if geography was not studied.

What will I be studying?

- Hydrology and Fluvial Geomorphology
- Atmosphere and Weather
- Rocks and Weathering
- Population, Migration and Settlement Dynamics
- Coastal and Tropical Environments
- Environmental Management
- Global Interdependence

The course also involves fieldwork. This will involve two independent field days spread across Year 12 and 13 which will support the study of the topics covered. Each trip costs no more than £100, depending on the location. All Sixth Form geography pupils have access to publications, online journals and university level texts and resources. These provide course relevant examples, exam tips and advice.

How will I be assessed?

There are four examinations, two lasting one hour and 30 minutes and the final two are combined lasting around three hours. Topics are split into Human and Physical Geography exams. There is a mixture of data response, structured and essay questions. All papers have equal weighting.

What next?

In the last few years, several A-level geography candidates have gone on to study the subject or different variations at university. Geography offers a wide range of skills, all of which are valued by employers in a large number of professions. The Guardian and the Higher Education Careers Services Unit rank geography as one of the most employable subjects around. Russell Group universities recognise A-level geography as one of the key 'facilitating' subjects for entry to degree level study.



History

2025-2027 Specification: AQA History 7042
Head of Department: Mr Joseph Player



Who should study this course?

History is an utterly fascinating, complex, colourful and essential subject. It is not only for those with a passionate interest in the past, but also for anyone who desires to understand the bricks that built the modern world. We have chosen modules that explore some of the most captivating, controversial and topical moments of the past. Students will go on a riveting journey through epic events such as the Russian Revolution, the Second World War, the fall of the British Empire and the Fall of Jerusalem, and study extraordinary characters such as Josef Stalin, Richard the Lionheart, Winston Churchill, and many more. A-level History is also for those who wish to develop vitally important skills such as grappling with sources, forming arguments, critical thinking, and carrying out research. This broad range of skills will help students across a wide variety of different courses and careers in the future.

Entry requirements

Grade 6 or above at GCSE history.

What will I be studying?

There are three components to A-level History:

- The British Empire, 1857-1964
- Russia Revolution and Dictatorship, 1917-1953
- Causes of the Crusades, 1095-1192 (NEA Coursework module)

A common myth held by pupils is that history is 'too hard'. We disagree, and our results support this. Independent reading and study is required, but this is the case in all A-level subjects. We find that the more pupils find out, the more interesting the subject becomes.

How will I be assessed?

Students will complete 2 exams, each worth 80 marks. This will involve a mixture of essay-style questions and source analysis. Students will also complete a 4,500-word coursework essay before the exam period.

What next?

One of the great appeals of studying A-level History is that it is a widely accepted and respected qualification that can be a gateway to a broad range of degrees and careers. Many students who complete A-level History go on to study law, politics, journalism, economics, international relations, and business, as well as conservation, education and academia.



Mathematics

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel Mathematics 9MA0
Head of Department: Mr Adie Davis



Who should study this course?

Studying mathematics to A-level opens up a wealth of education and career opportunities for the future. Pupils like its challenge, clarity and the fact that you know when you are right; it is entirely possible to get 100% in mathematics exams. The solution of a problem brings excitement and satisfaction. Mathematics is about patterns and structures, and logical analysis, deduction and calculation within these patterns and structures. When patterns are found, often in widely different areas of science and technology, mathematics can be used to explain and control natural happenings and situations.

Entry requirements

Students wishing to study mathematics should be on course to achieve a strong* grade 7 or better at GCSE, perhaps accompanied by a high grade in the Level 2 Certificate in further mathematics (or similar).

What will I be studying?

There are two main branches to the Sixth Form study of this subject: pure and applied mathematics. Pure mathematics is a continuation of the subject that was taken at GCSE where the principles of algebra, geometry and trigonometry are developed to a higher level and calculus is introduced. Applied mathematics consists of mechanics and statistics. In mechanics, an attempt is made to apply the principles of pure mathematics to real life (mechanical) systems. In statistics, the emphasis is on exploring data, probability and hypothesis testing.

How will I be assessed?

The mathematics department follows Edexcel course specifications. In the first and second year, both pure and applied mathematics is taught. At the end of the first year, the students will be internally assessed.

At the end of Year 13, the students sit three two-hour papers. Two of the papers are core-based (accounting for 66% of the content) and the remaining paper covers the applied part of the course. Each paper is worth 100 marks. Calculators are allowed in all of the examinations.

What next?

Those who qualify in mathematics are in the fortunate position of having a wide range of career choices. A-level mathematics qualifications enhance the ability to use logical thought, formulate a problem, solve problems in a decisive way, and construct coherent arguments. It is for this reason that mathematicians are increasingly in demand. Looking further ahead, a mathematics degree often enables students to turn their hand to a variety of careers including finance, statistics, engineering, computing, teaching or accountancy.

**We may wish to see (1)GCSE papers of all pupils securing a grade 7 to ensure they are capable of accessing the material covered at A-level.*



Further Mathematics

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel Mathematics 9FM0
Head of Department: Mr Adie Davis

 Watch 'An Introduction to Mathematics A-level'

Who should study this course?

This is a demanding course for those with a passion for mathematics. It is only suitable for the most able pupils who would be expected to gain a grade 8 or 9 at GCSE. A student's current teacher will be best placed to advise on their suitability for this course but we are hoping to attract further mathematicians who have shown considerable promise in Year 11.

What will I be studying?

The course specification provides some choice in the modules to be covered and no decision is required until pupils enter the second year. For example, those wishing to pursue a financial career may opt towards modules in statistics whereas future engineers may prefer to select mechanics.

How will I be assessed?

The assessment procedure for further mathematics follows a similar pattern to the A-level mathematics course; an internal examination will take place in Year 12 and then, in Year 13, there are four 90 minute papers choosing between pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics.


What next?

Further mathematics is regarded as a benchmark of high academic ability by university admissions tutors. This course lends itself particularly well to supporting an application to study either a degree in mathematics or a course with a significant level of mathematical content.



Media Studies

2025-2027 Specification: Cambridge International A-level Media Studies 9607
Head of Department: Mr Marcus Milburn

 Watch 'An Introduction to Media Studies A-level'

Who should study this course?

Anyone who has an interest in how the media operates will find this course rewarding. The combination of theoretical, analytical and practical work allows pupils a certain degree of flexibility to choose topics of interest to them and discover areas of expertise. Those who enjoy working as part of a team will relish the opportunity to collaborate with others in creative coursework tasks.

Entry requirements

It would be beneficial for any prospective media studies candidate to have gained at least grade 5 at English language at GCSE. This will aid engagement with the exam material. It would also be beneficial for a candidate to have a good grade in a subject with practical elements (Art, DET etc) as the course contains project-based assessment.

What will I be studying?

The A-level specifications in media studies offer breadth and depth of study with conceptually organised content. Although they focus on critical debates and selected theories introduced at GCSE, there is no requirement for pupils to have previously studied the subject before embarking on the course. It is important to note that the A-level course requires detailed academic writing, which is a useful skill to develop for higher education.

The course is broken up into four units, each of which is worth 25% of the overall A-level grade. Two of the units are practical media portfolios, called 'Foundation Portfolio' and 'Advanced Portfolio' respectively, where film openings and music videos will be produced. The third unit is entitled 'Media Texts and Contexts' where pupils will learn how to de-construct moving images and explore how media products are used by institutions to construct different representations and how media audiences interpret these products. The final unit is called 'Critical Perspectives' where learners will engage in critical debates around topics such as contemporary media regulation, post-modernism and media ecology.

How will I be assessed?

Over the course of two years, pupils will complete two coursework portfolios and, in Year 13, will sit two two-hour exams assessing the content studied in lessons. All coursework tasks and examinations are weighted equally, each contributing 25% towards the final grade.

What next?

Universities offer numerous media-related courses. Courses cover specific topic areas such as film studies, whilst other courses will cover a broader spectrum. There are many practical courses where pupils can learn specific media skills. This provides an ideal route into the media and film industries. The growing development of digital media also means that the majority of companies will have connections to some form of media.



Modern Foreign Languages

2025-2027 Specification: AQA A-level French 7652; AQA A-level Spanish 7692
Head of Department: Mrs Justine Parrott



Who should study this course?

The acquisition of a language is not only an intrinsically rewarding experience, but also makes an excellent combination with other disciplines - particularly sciences, humanities, ICT and business. In order to study a modern foreign language in the Sixth Form, a pupil must have achieved at least grade 7 at GCSE and the recommendation of his or her teacher, who must be convinced that he or she will respond positively to the demands of this challenging course.

What will I be studying?

French and Spanish follow relatively similar course structures. Pupils will explore the following topics:

- Social issues in the target country
- Political and artistic culture
- Grammar
- Literary texts
- Films

How will I be assessed?

The AQA specification includes three assessments, as follows:

Paper 1: A written examination (2 hours 30 minutes) worth 50% of the A-level, consisting of four sections:

- Listening: Pupils will listen and respond to spoken passages from a range of contexts. They will have individual control of the recording
- Reading: Pupils will read and respond to a variety of texts from authentic sources. All questions will be answered in the target language with verbal or non verbal responses
- Translation of a passage of 100 words into English
- Translation of a passage of 100 words into French/Spanish

Paper 2: A written examination (2 hours) worth 30% of the A-level, comprising two 300 word essays giving a critical and analytical response to a French/Spanish set text and a set film.

Paper 3: Speaking examination (21-23 minutes) worth 20% of the A-level. Pupils will discuss a theme based on a stimulus card (5-6 minutes) then give a 2 minute presentation based on individual project research followed by 10 minutes of discussion. Assessments will be conducted and recorded by the subject teacher then marked externally by an AQA examiner.

What next?

An advanced qualification in a modern foreign language is more highly valued and respected than ever by both employers and further education establishments. Language A-levels demonstrate to universities and potential employers excellent academic ability in its own right, allowing access to a broad range of university courses as well as future career opportunities. Further to this, we strongly recommend a homestay visit to the target country during the course to improve listening and speaking skills.



Photography

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel Photography 9PYO
Head of Department: Miss Keli Jiggins



Who should study this course?

Although no previous experience of photography is required, those who have enthusiasm, creativity and the discipline to master the technical aspects of the subject will be well-suited to this course. Other subjects that combine well are art, media studies and DET. As the coursework includes a certain amount of written analysis and two essays, a strong performance in English GCSE is beneficial.

The study of photography develops a considered viewpoint when looking at the world around us. As such, it is a subject that continually documents the aesthetic characteristics of life such as nature, the environment and the people within it. It is as imaginative as it is rewarding.

What will I be studying?

Students will be introduced to the technical aspects of photography, including the process of manual control, the importance of the perfect exposure, shutter speed, lens focal length and aperture. Creativity is encouraged through the use of the student's own imagination. By exploring different techniques and ideas, students are encouraged to experiment in multiple genres. Students will be introduced to the area of digital manipulation using Photoshop. This encompasses post-production, cropping, evaluation and ultimately the printing of their own images. Students will also learn about composition and the manipulation of light within a studio environment.

Pupils are expected to conduct research and take photographs on school trips and in their own time by visiting galleries and exhibitions. They are actively encouraged to keep a record of photographic imagery that inspires them through the study of famous photographers and their work. It is important that students take cues from historical techniques and as such the development of ideas, ability and the resultant creative imagery in the student's portfolio is expected to show this understanding. Higher marks in this A-level are not achieved without this requirement being met.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment throughout the course is split between coursework and externally set assignments. The coursework element spans over Year 12 and Year 13, where students build on a portfolio of work ideas as well as a written study into their topic. The coursework is worth 60% of the final A-level mark.

The external examination is completed between February and May and is worth 40%. This is a practical exam spanning over three days, but there is no written exam as part of the course.


What next?

An A-level in photography with an accomplished portfolio will open the door to further studies in architecture, journalism, fashion, advertising, graphic design, film and television. For talented photographers, the opportunities are enormous. Once completed, you will have a substantial portfolio of work to take to interviews for an Art Foundation course, a photography-based degree course or employment. It will also open doors to many vocational careers.



Physical Education

2025-2027 Specification: AQA A-level Physical Education 7582
Head of Department: Mrs Katie Neill

 Watch 'An Introduction to Physical Education A-level'

Who should study this course?

Do you enjoy performing, coaching, officiating or watching sport? Equally, are you intrigued by the opportunities that a career in sport could offer? If so, then an A-level in PE is a good place to start.

Entry requirements?

Pupils looking to take A-level PE should have obtained a minimum of a grade 7 in their GCSE PE course, and a 6 in science (specifically biology) with suitability largely based upon the GCSE theory exam score rather than practical ability. Those wishing to study the subject must be prepared to engage in a great degree of theoretical work.

What will I be studying?

This course will allow pupils who enjoy sport to develop their knowledge and understanding of the various complexities involved in improving sport performance. Pupils will learn about concepts relating to anatomy, exercise physiology, skill acquisition, psychology and sociology in sport. The course content has a 70:30 split between theory and practical work, which is reflected in the assessments detailed below.

Whilst there is a challenging practical element to the course, the testing academic content requires the pupil to complete a significant amount of independent research and study.

How will I be assessed?

Students will be assessed in the following topics:

- Factors affecting participation in sport (examination)
- Factors affecting performance in sport (examination)
- Practical and written analysis and performance (non-examination assessment)

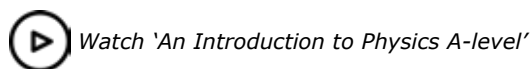
What next?

A strong performance in A-level physical education will allow the pupil to credibly apply for a wide range of sport-related courses at leading institutions such as Exeter, Birmingham, Loughborough, Bath and Leeds. People taking these courses often move on to physiotherapy, teaching, coaching, analysis, management, marketing or personal training.



Physics

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel A-level Physics 9PHO
Head of Department: Mr Peter Jasper



Who should study this course?

The A-level physics qualification builds on the knowledge, understanding and process skills that pupils will have developed in GCSE science.

Entry requirements

Candidates should have achieved at least a GCSE grade 7-7 in combined science or grade 7 in GCSE physics. In addition, candidates should also have gained at least GCSE grade 7 in mathematics and GCSE grade 6 in English language. A-level physics pupils will need to be able to communicate effectively, to research and to think critically about problems.

What will I be studying?

Physics A-level is a linear A-level where all exams are sat at the end of Year 13. Over the two years, pupils will study:

- Mechanics
- Further Mechanics
- Circular Motion
- Particles and Nuclear Phenomenon
- Electrical Circuits
- Gravitational and Electrical Field
- Magnetic Fields
- Materials and their Properties
- Space
- Thermodynamics
- Waves and their Properties



How will I be assessed?

The A-level will be assessed through three exams taken at the end of Year 13.

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 minute examination worth 30% of the qualification, covering Mechanics, Electrical Circuits, Further Mechanics, Electric and Magnetic Fields, Nuclear and Particle Physics.

Paper 2: 1 hour 45 minute examination worth 30% of the qualification, covering Materials, Waves and the Particle Nature of Light, Thermodynamics, Space, Nuclear Radiation, Gravitational Fields and Oscillations.

Paper 3: 2 hour 30 minute synoptic examination worth 40% of the qualification; covering any of the above topics and also assessing the conceptual and theoretical understanding of experimental methods.

There is no coursework component, but pupils are required to show their analytical skill through exam questions. A practical skills grade is awarded alongside the A-level grade, which is assessed throughout the two years by completing a minimum of 12 identified practical activities.

What next?

Physics is recognised as an impressive entry qualification for all higher education courses and employment. It is a course that demonstrates strong academic ability and understanding, looked upon favourably by employers and admissions tutors in the vast majority of academic disciplines. The subject is particularly suitable for careers in science, engineering, computing, medicine and biotechnology.

Politics

2025-2027 Specification: Edexcel A-level Politics 9PL0
Head of Department: Mr Joseph Player



Who should study this course?

There has possibly never been a more exciting or urgent time to study Politics. In a rapidly changing and divided world, with big issues such as Trump, Putin's wars, the rise of China, Brexit fallout, the future of the monarchy, not to mention epic inequality and environmental threat, it is fascinating and important to properly understand how political systems work and where power lies. This course is for anyone interested in current affairs, lively debate, and grappling with the big ideas. It particularly compliments other A-levels such as history, economics and business.

Entry requirements?

Grade 5 or above in GCSE English or History. Prior knowledge of politics is not necessary.

What will I be studying?

Students will cover three topics of the two-year course:

- UK Politics and Government – covering how the British political system really works, the mechanisms of Parliament, and the relationship with the crown and the devolved states
- Political Ideology – grappling with the big ideas and beliefs that fuel political progress, including conservatism, socialism and feminism
- USA Government – understanding where the power really lies in the United States system, the relationships between the different branches including President, Supreme Court, and Congress as well as at federal and state level

How will I be assessed?

Students will sit three exams, one for each of the topics covered. All papers are similar length and are weighted equally.

Where next?

A-level politics can prepare you for a wide range of exciting subjects at university and future careers, not just in the political field at local and national level, but also in law, the civil service, journalism, business, the charity sector, international relations and many more.



Psychology

2025-2027 Specification: AQA Psychology 7182
Head of Department: Mr Sam Shaw



Who should study this course?

Psychology is defined as 'the scientific study of mind and behaviour' and so would suit students who are interested in looking at why humans act and think the way they do. The topics covered are instantly applicable to everyday situations, giving pupils an insight into their own thinking and behaviour, as well as having wider reaching applications. This real-world application gives students of psychology an advantage in many domains.

Entry requirements?

Students should have achieved at least grade 6 in English and science (biology) and 5 in mathematics at GCSE. There is no requirement to have studied GCSE psychology or a minimum grade for those who have.

What will I be studying?

Year 12 topics give students a broad insight into how Psychology works:

- **Social Influence:** How we are influenced and motivated by the world around us, including conformity, social change and obedience.
- **Attachment:** Looking at the development of children and the factors which affect and explain the formation of inter-personal attachments.
- **Memory:** Studying cognitive processes which explain the storage and retrieval of memories, including explanations of forgetting.
- **Psychopathology:** Studying how we define abnormality, specific disorders and different approaches to explaining and treating them.
- **Approaches:** How different schools of thought in psychology try to explain behaviour from a certain viewpoint and with a certain set of techniques.
- **Research Methods:** Understanding how to use a scientific and objective approach to gather data and study psychological phenomena. This includes mathematical skills and statistics, with pupils carrying out their own research at the end of Year 12.

In Year 13 we look at additional research methods, biopsychology and options in psychology. These include studying schizophrenia, relationships and aggression in more detail and with a focus on theory and research. Year 13 also look at some of the key debates in psychology and how these are present across the field

How will I be assessed?


The course is assessed by examination only. There are three examination papers each lasting two hours taken at the end of Year 13. Question styles range from multiple choice through to short answer and essay questions.

What next?

Psychology is probably the most versatile A-level and degree course. The most traditional route is into clinical psychology - helping those with mental health issues. Psychology is also important in medical and legal professions. Other related professions include working in sports, business and social work. A psychology degree provides an in-depth knowledge of research skills and scrutiny as well as the opportunity to specialise in a range of fields including the increasingly popular occupational and business psychology. When applying to universities via UCAS, psychology is classed as a science and so is a versatile choice when deciding subject combinations.

Religious Studies

2025-2027 Specification: OCR Religious Studies H573
Head of Department: Miss Nicola Jones

 Watch 'An Introduction to Religious Studies A-level'

Who should study this course?

Do you enjoy discussing political, cultural, social and legal issues that affect society? Do you relish debate and enquiry into the 'big' important questions in life? Would you like to be able to think better and win all your arguments? If so, this is probably the right subject for you.

Entry requirements?

Your study of GCSE philosophy and ethics or religious studies, will give you an idea of the types of topic we study, although it is not a requirement that you have a previous qualification. If religious studies has been studied previously, we expect a minimum grade 6, alongside a strong performance in English language or literature.

What will I be studying?

During the religious studies A-level you will consider demanding, thought provoking questions from the fields of religion, philosophy and ethics, for example: 'Is it possible to talk to God?' and 'Is an act good so long as it makes people happy?' Discussion, debate and enquiry into topics, most of which have been taught for millennia but still have vital importance and relevance in today's society, is to be expected during lessons. Whilst religious studies is a traditionally academic, essay-based subject, there are many opportunities to learn in an interactive, varied way such as film nights (with discussion), A Level conferences, external speakers and trips.

The subject will require you to think, reason and appreciate the breadth of opinion within each debate, whilst considering and developing your own. You will need to be intellectually agile and prepared for your assumptions to be challenged. There is no room for fence-sitting and your opinion should be well-informed by the end of the course. Both analysis (your ability to understand and explain) and evaluation (your ability to judge the effectiveness and credibility) of various arguments will be a central feature of the course; you should enjoy the challenge of interpreting and assessing beliefs and viewpoints that may not be your own. Overall, the subject can make your brain ache and your voice hoarse from critical discussion – but it's fun, interesting, and develops excellent academic skills.

How will I be assessed?

At the end of Year 13, you will sit three two-hour examinations. Within each paper, you must answer three questions from a choice of four. Each question is worth 40 marks. There is no coursework for this A-level.

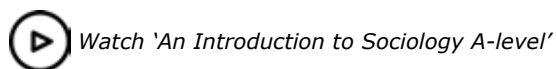
What next?

Philosophers and ethicists are in high demand because of their exceptional mental acuity, reasoning skills and ability to sustain a prolonged argument supported by logical inference and evidence. Areas where philosophy graduates are particularly successful include legal professions, medicine, psychology and psychiatry, counselling, politics, business management, journalism, economics, artificial intelligence and international relations.



Sociology

2025-2027 Specification: AQA Sociology
Head of Department: Mr Sam Shaw



Who should study this course?

Anyone interested in working with people in areas such as health, the criminal justice system, within education, communications or the media will find A-level Sociology relevant. It provides an insight into the workings of UK today society and illustrates how society has evolved in these unprecedented times of rapid social change. Students should ideally have at least a grade 6 in English language or literature.

What will I be studying?

A large component of AQA sociology A-level takes in criminology. In this, students will study sociological explanations for why crime occurs, who commits it and whether punishment is effective. A-level sociology also looks at how British society has evolved as part of the wider global community and how this can impact on areas, such as family, beliefs, our education system as well as global criminal activity.

- **Component 1:** Education with Theory and Research Methods looks at whether the British education system is fair and equal. It considers the historical changes which have led the UK to be considered one of the best education systems in the world, while posing the question: 'is it the best system for everyone?' Theory and Research Methods consider how sociological data is collected and presented.
- **Component 2:** Combines two topic areas. Families and Households considers how society has changed and how rapid social change, in recent decades, has caused increased family diversity. It also looks at Beliefs in Society. This is about why we believe and what impact this has on society. The UK today is a multi-cultural, multi-faith, society. However, a large portion of people choose not to believe at all. This topic also looks at the existence of cults and why people are attracted to these extreme belief systems.
- **Component 3:** Crime and Deviance, with Theory and Methods. This is an in-depth look at why crime occurs and the sociological theory surrounding it. It considers why people join gangs; why men commit more crime than women and why punishment isn't always an effective means of controlling crime. Students will also consider the basis of key sociological theories in this component.

How will I be assessed?

This A-level will culminate in three two-hour long written exams at the end of the two years of study. All three exams are equally weighted.

What next?

Many students may not have studied sociology prior to A-level, however, it is a very good degree course to follow and is taught at the top universities throughout the country. Many students may prefer to focus on an element of sociology, such as criminology, for degree. It also works well with any degrees in humanities and social sciences.



The Vocational Pathway

In addition to the A-level subjects outlined above, Shiplake Sixth Formers may select from a choice of vocational courses. Learners will be assessed through a variety of methods with the marks awarded through a combination of internally set assignments and external examinations. The courses are highly accessible, with a high proportion of Shiplake pupils attaining the top grade bands in recent years. Vocational courses develop skills which transfer positively to numerous other domains which young adults will soon encounter as they progress to higher education or employment.

The vocational courses offered at Shiplake work well in conjunction with many A-level subjects to provide a diverse Sixth Form programme. However, some pupils may want to take on the full vocational experience by selecting multiple courses to fill their timetables. Pupils wishing to follow a vocational pathway may select qualifications from subject choices of business, music, sport and criminology. They will embark on a programme which will equip them with the necessary practical and academic skills which will allow them to progress on to a wide range of universities, apprenticeships or full time employment.

What makes vocational courses different?

A-level Qualifications	Vocational Qualifications
Predominantly examination-based assessments (some subjects have coursework components)	Predominantly internally assessed (Please see the pages dedicated to the specific courses for more information)
Teaching approach is focused on passing exams within the chosen subject	Teaching approach is technically applied to the subject being studied
Assessment at the end of two years (some subjects have coursework components)	Continuously assessed (exams take place during January and June series)
Vocational courses that do have an examined element allow students the opportunity to re-sit external assessments, if required	Pupils can re-sit external assessments if required

It is worth considering that a strong performance in vocational courses can earn considerable UCAS points which are in line with those achieved from A-level subjects and can be used to gain access to competitive university courses.



Business CTEC

2025-2027 Specification: OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in Business 05835 (2016 Suite)
Head of Department: Mrs Teuta Hill

 Watch 'An Introduction to Business'

Who should study this course?

In the fast-paced and ever changing world of today, a knowledge of business is vital. Not only will business acumen assist leavers going into industry, but an in-depth understanding of the world of business can be inspirational, and encourage pupils to pursue avenues of entrepreneurial interest. This course will equip pupils with relevant business knowledge and give them an understanding of how business affects their everyday life.

How will I be assessed?

Two of the units are externally assessed via a traditional written exam and the other three units are assessed internally via coursework, which is moderated by OCR. The nature of the course helps pupils manage their own time and meet deadlines, which is an important life skill for university and beyond. Presentations, interviews and business reports are all frequent forms of assessment.

What next?

This course will give pupils a solid foundation for a university degree studying such areas as business, management or marketing. With the benefit of gaining valuable insights into the business world, pupils will be well placed to compete in the employment market or start up their own business. The practical, hands-on approach offered in this course makes it an ideal springboard into entrepreneurship.



What will I be studying?

Students will study the following five units during the course:

- The business environment
- Working in business
- Customers and communication
- Marketing and market research
- Principles of project management



Criminology

2025-2027 Specification: WJEC Level 3 Applied Diploma
Head of Department: Mr Sam Shaw



Who should study this course?

Students who enjoy crime documentaries and have a keen interest in current events, the law and enjoy discussing contemporary issues involving various elements of criminality, will find this subject fascinating. Those looking towards careers in the criminal justice system or within social work, health care and even education, will also find this a very useful qualification to have.

Entry requirements

Candidates should have achieved a grade 5 or higher at GCSE in English language and a keen interest in crime-based documentary material.

What will I be studying?

The WJEC Level 3 criminology qualification engages student by hinging many topic areas on key criminal cases.

The first unit on the Changing Awareness of Crime requires students to analyse key criminals, such as the notorious Kray Twins.

In Unit Two, Criminological Theories, students are challenged to understand what has motivated some of the worst murder cases in UK and international history.

In Unit Three, students move on to analyse how crime investigation has evolved with the development of forensic techniques. Students will consider some high profile crimes, such as the White House Farm murders and look at how evidence eventually led to a conviction.

Finally, in Unit Four, Crime and Punishment, students analyse systems of punishment and how effective these are. This unit offers considerable opportunity for debate and exploration.

How will I be assessed?

In each year there is one internal controlled assessment and one external exam (two of each in total). Each of these assessments make up 25% of the total mark and all must be passed in order to gain a final grade.

What next?

This course will allow entry on to degree courses in the areas of criminology, psychology, sociology and law (as well as many others - results are equivalent to A Levels).

There are routes directly into the probation service, courts and tribunals service, and the national offender management service.

An understanding of criminology is relevant to many job roles within the criminal justice sector, social and probation work and sociology and psychology.



Music BTEC

2025-2027 Specification: Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Music Performance

Head of Department: Mrs Amy Haynes

 Watch 'An Introduction to Music'

Who should study this course?

This highly practical course would suit candidates who have achieved a standard of performance of Grade 5 or above in their chosen instrument or voice, and who are self-motivated, well organised and able to keep to deadlines. There is a strong emphasis on independent learning and responsibility for individual and group rehearsals. Candidates who are interested in this course must be receiving instrumental or vocal tuition. Pupils will have full access to the well-equipped Music Department including our practice rooms, Mac suites and recording studio.

All Sixth Form musicians will be expected to play a leading role in the musical life of the College and to support as many ensembles as possible. There may also be opportunities to lead co-curricular activities.

Entry requirements

In order to thrive in music it is highly desirable that candidates are proficient, practical musicians and/or singers.

What will I be studying?

Pupils taking this qualification will study three mandatory units:

- Unit 1: Practical Music Theory and Harmony
- Unit 2: Professional Practice in the Music Industry
- Unit 3: Ensemble Music Performance

Pupils choose one optional unit. These have been designed to support progression to more specialist music courses in higher education and to link with relevant occupational areas, such as

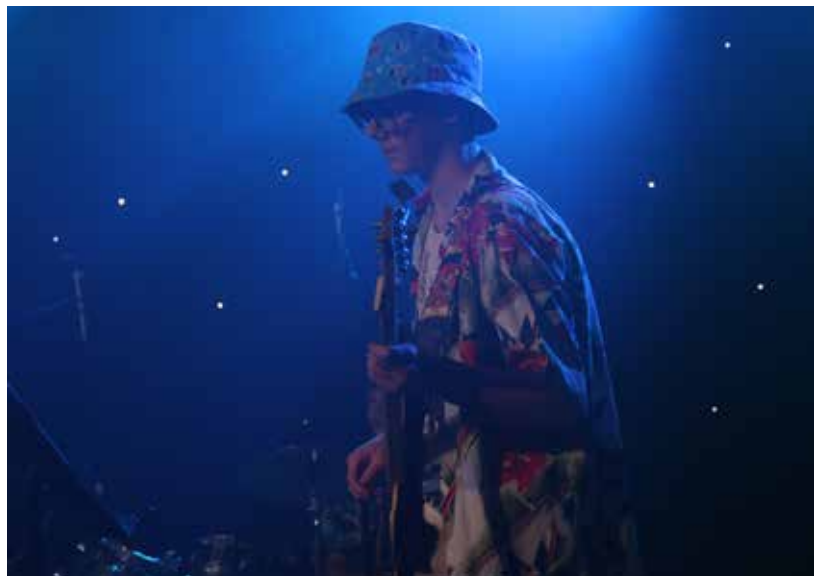
- Composing music
- Improvising music
- Solo performance

How will I be assessed?

Most of the units covered are both practical and theoretical (written) in nature. The majority of assessments take place internally. Teachers will be able to give feedback on work completed but an independent work ethic is required for both the practical and written elements of the course. However, some units will be assessed externally via an examination.

What next?


The qualification carries UCAS points and is recognised by higher education providers. For learners who wish to study an aspect of music in higher education, opportunities include performing arts, music industry management and music business and arts management.



Sport BTEC

2025-2027 Specification: Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport (601/7218/6)

Head of Department: Mrs Katie Neill

 Watch 'An Introduction to Sport'

Who should study this course?

This is a course for learners who enjoy sport and are keen to investigate how the human mind and body excel in the sporting environment. For those pupils with at least 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, the course provides an opportunity for practical, hands-on learning. We would suggest that a grade 5 or higher in science (particularly biology) would be extremely beneficial in maximising the outcome at the end of this course.

BTEC qualifications are designed for students wanting to specialise in the wider contexts of coaching skills, techniques, tactics, anatomy and physiology. They are ideal for the workplace due to the combination of transferable theoretical and practical skills.

This qualification also enables students to develop other skills such as critical thinking, communication, leadership and motivating others. It is not imperative for pupils to have studied GCSE physical education, although those wishing to study the course must be prepared to engage in a substantial amount of theoretical work.

What will I be studying?

Year 12

- Unit 1 Anatomy and Physiology
- Unit 3 Professional Development in the Sports Industry
- Unit 5 Application of Fitness Testing **Foundation Diploma Only**

Year 13

- Unit 2 Fitness Training and Programming Health Sport and Wellbeing
- Unit 7 Practical Sports Performance
- Unit 4 Sports Leadership **Foundation Diploma Only**
- Unit 6 Sports Psychology **Foundation Diploma Only**

How will I be assessed?

We offer both the extended certificate which is the equivalent to one A-level and the foundation diploma which is equivalent to 1 and a half A-levels. The sport BTEC is exam-free so suits all learning styles and the assessments include hands-on practical experience based on real life scenarios.

What next?

A strong performance in this course will earn a substantial amount of UCAS points. This will allow the pupil to credibly apply for a wide range of sports courses at a number of reputable universities. People taking this course may choose to work in teaching, coaching, sports analysis, sports management, sports marketing or personal training.



Post-Shiplake Advice

Head of Department: Mrs Louise Rapple Moore

 Watch 'An Introduction to Careers'

Introduction

Most of our sixth formers go on to some form of higher education and finding a way through the plethora of institutions and courses can be a daunting task. Others will take gap years, take up apprenticeships or head straight into their working careers. We provide our Year 12 and 13 pupils with the support and resources they require to make well-informed decisions for their next steps.

Support and Advice

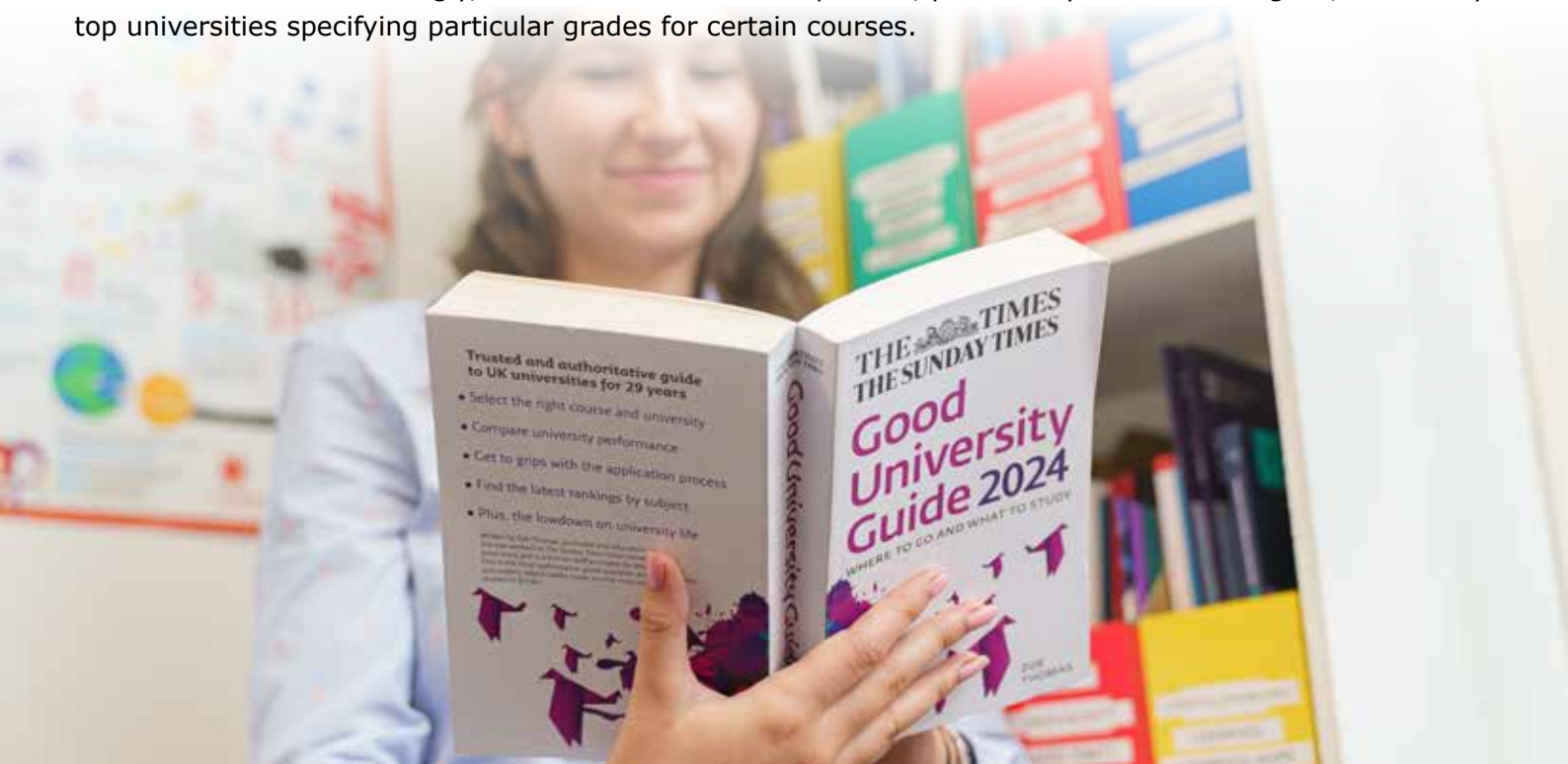
All members of the sixth form have a weekly careers period factored into their timetables. Our Head of Careers works alongside pupils to identify suitable and desirable careers and to find paths that allow them to reach their goals. Pupils have access to a wide range of careers and higher education resources in the Careers Department.

During Year 12, the College runs a Futures Programme, to get pupils thinking about what they might like to do after Shiplake with speakers and presentations. During this programme, there are presentations from speakers in all different industries and career areas, from the Armed Forces to Environmental Sciences, from American universities to Oxbridge applications and from retail and event management careers to apprenticeships. We may also visit a university for a tour, or attend a careers fair

In Year 13 the careers periods focus on applying to universities or for apprenticeships and jobs, with the careers department and individual tutors supporting and guiding pupils through their applications.

Will my Sixth Form options affect my university application?

Pupils with a particular profession or course in mind should undertake thorough research courses to make sure they choose the right subjects in the Sixth Form. Pupils are always welcome to ask Mrs Rapple Moore for advice on suitable subjects before making a final decision on which courses to take. Some universities specify that particular A-level subjects are essential to access different degree courses and have strict entrance criteria. Increasingly, GCSE results are also important, particularly Maths and English, with many top universities specifying particular grades for certain courses.





SHIPLAKE COLLEGE
HENLEY-ON-THAMES