



SIXTH

Subject Options  
Guide

FORM



# Welcome to Victoria College Sixth Form

The Sixth Form at Victoria College will provide you with outstanding opportunities to develop your talents to the full. This is an exciting time and this is where you start to build a successful future.

The academic excellence, camaraderie and our traditions give students a strong sense of belonging that lasts long after they have moved out into the world as Old Victorians.

This booklet aims to give you an overview of the current subjects available for you to study at Victoria College at A level.

**Victoria College Sixth Form offers something unique**

## Contents

3. Art
4. Biology
5. Business
6. Chemistry
7. Classical Civilisation
8. Computer Science
9. Drama and Theatre Studies
10. Economics
11. English Language and Literature
12. English Literature
13. Geography
14. History
15. Languages: French and Spanish
17. Mathematics and Further Maths
18. Media Studies
19. Music
20. Philosophy
22. Physical Education
23. Physics
25. Politics
27. Product Design
28. Psychology



# Art

## Examination board: OCR

### The course

This is an exciting course that enables each individual student to explore and develop artistic skills in a number of areas. They will work on several different themes with a wide range of materials and techniques including drawing, painting, mixed media and some photography - on a variety of scales. As the course progresses, students will be given more freedom to explore their own ideas and make pieces that are more personal to them.

There are two major projects - Coursework and Controlled Assignment (exam). The coursework project also contains a written element where students will research an artist(s) of their choice, relating to their own work or artistic style, and produce a personal investigation of between 1000 - 3000 words.

Our A level students have access to individual workspaces in the Art and Design Centre we share with JCG. Most materials are provided by the Art Department, but students should be prepared to purchase additional items.

### Requirements

Art GCSE at Grade 6 or above and an interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

### Where can it take you?

Our students have pursued a wide range of art-based courses which have eventually shaped their careers. The course will provide students with the creative and technical knowledge needed to enter areas such as:

Fine Art - painting, sculpture and printmaking

Architecture

Illustration

Graphics

Product design

Theatre design

Fashion and textile design

Photography and media production

Most students choose an art foundation course to experience a variety of disciplines before embarking on a degree that focuses on a specific area.

# Biology

Examination board: Cambridge International A level Biology

## The course

This is a consistently popular A level that builds on your GCSE knowledge of Biology and extends your practical skills.

The following topics are studied:

Cell structure Biological molecules Enzymes Cell membranes and transport The mitotic cell cycle Nucleic acids and protein synthesis Transport in plants Transport in mammals Gas exchange and smoking Infectious disease	Immunity Energy and respiration Photosynthesis Homeostasis Control and coordination Inherited change Selection and evolution Biodiversity, classification and conservation Genetic technology
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Students develop and practise many life-long transferable skills including describing, interpreting, explaining, learning facts, the ability to draw together a range of ideas and make sense of them, as well as problem solving skills.

## Assessment is by examination:

Paper 1:	Multiple Choice. Questions from the first 11 topics (AS Level) (1hr) 15.5%
Paper 2:	AS Level Structured Questions (1hr 15mins) 23%
Paper 3:	Advanced Practical Skills. Based on the AS Level syllabus (2hrs) 11.5%
Paper 4:	A Level Structured Questions (2hrs) 38.5%
Paper 5:	Planning, Analysis and Evaluation (1hr 15mins) 11.5%

## Requirements

Biology GCSE Grade 6 or above, and preferably a Grade 6 in GCSE Chemistry and Maths.

## Where can it take you?

To a degree in every subject related to Biology but it is especially important for medicine, veterinary science, biological sciences, ecology, genetics, marine biology, environmental courses. It is also a gateway to other non-science related courses such as law, accountancy, economics, IT and geography.

# Business

Examination board: AQA

## The course

Business Studies covers the theory behind the major issues that companies are faced with every day. It is about analysis and problem solving in the real world. You will gain an awareness of how the business environment provides opportunities and imposes constraints on organisations. Specific topics include marketing, human resource management, accounting, business and social ethics.

## Highlights

- Cross curricular links with many other subjects like Media, DT, English and Maths
- Huge relevance to the real world
- New and interesting to many
- Gives you a good sound base to be able to start your own business

## Requirements

GCSE Grade 6 in English and Maths or science. An interest in a business career will be viewed favourably. Common sense and an ability to write concisely are useful skills to carry into this subject.

## Where can it take you?

An A level in Business Studies provides a good grounding for many higher education courses and degrees.

The skills obtained in this course will be welcomed by any employer and provides a sound base to start thinking about your own business. Countless careers are opened up to you including finance, marketing, personnel, accounting, law and entrepreneurship.

# Chemistry

Examination board: CIE International (9701)

## The course

On the International A level Chemistry course you will continue your journey into the atomic world, learning what drives chemical reactions and why they occur in the first place. This is a challenging, but rewarding and enjoyable, subject and we move on from GCSE to apply the knowledge and there is a strong emphasis on practical work, which takes place in our well-equipped laboratories.

The course is assessed with five examinations at the end of Year 13:

### Area % of A Level

Multiple choice: 15.5%

Structured questions: 23%

Advanced practical skills: 11.5%

Structured questions: 38.5%

Planning, analysis and evaluation: 11.5%

## Requirements

A minimum of a high Grade 6 GCSE in Chemistry although a Grade 7 or above is more of a proven indicator of success at this level. The nature of the subject means a competency in mathematics is needed, ideally with a Grade 6 at GCSE.

A sense of perseverance, commitment and an eagerness to put in the hours outside of lessons is needed, as is a willingness to really extend your knowledge.

## Where can it take you?

As well as being a highly enjoyable subject to study, Chemistry is a requirement for degrees relating to Medicine and Veterinary Science, as well as other courses related to these areas.

The numeracy skills also make a Chemistry A level highly desirable and useful in areas such as accountancy, architecture and engineering. In fact, the analytical nature of the course makes it highly valued in many areas, with the course opening doors to most top degrees and disciplines. Employers also highly value the skills acquired during the course.

# Classical Civilisation

Examination board: OCR

## The course

This broad and varied course includes the study of some of the world's greatest works of literature, including the epics of Homer and Virgil, the love poetry of Ovid and Sappho and tragedies by Sophocles and Euripides. In addition to this, students will examine the architecture of Greek theatre and artistic representations of Greek drama, as well as engaging with the philosophy of Plato and Seneca.

### **Component 1: The World of the Hero (40%)**

Study of literature in translation: Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid.

### **Component 2: Culture and the Arts – Greek Theatre (30%)**

Study of visual and material culture, combined with the study of literature in translation.

### **Component 3: Beliefs and Ideas – Love and Relationships (30%)**

Study of classical thought, combined with the study of literature in translation.

## Requirements

Grade 6 in English Literature

## Why Study Classical Civilisation?

From ideas about empire and democracy to the Olympic games, and from the design of the White House to our expectations of tragedy and comedy, the legacies of ancient Greece and Rome continue to shape our daily lives. Classical Civilisation offers a broad, rich and rewarding study of the literature, material culture and thought of the classical world, which will enable students to acquire an understanding of their social, historical and cultural contexts. Because of its breadth, this subject should appeal to students interested in literature, history, philosophy, art, drama and - more generally - in learning about different cultures

## Where can it take you?

Aside from a degree in some kind of Classics Studies (Classics, Ancient History, Classical Civilisation), the course supports the study of Literature, Philosophy, Drama, Art, History and Politics. It is truly interdisciplinary, so will help students develop the skills of analysis, evaluation and communication needed across the arts, humanities and beyond.

# Computer Science

Examination board: OCR

## The course

The world is increasingly dominated by digital technology and this means the opportunities in the IT sector are unprecedented. This A level course opens a door into one of the most thriving sectors of the economy. It aims to demystify computers and programming so that you will learn the principles of how a digital processor works. More importantly, it will help you excel in logic and creative problem-solving, the innovating skills that employers now value so highly.

In the programming module, you will learn about the common facilities of procedural languages, as well as how they are structured and how to write, test and run maintainable programs. The aim is to equip you with the knowledge, skills and understanding required to be able to apply the techniques to any programming language.

## Requirements

Some previous experience in Computer Science or ICT is recommended but not essential. You will need at least a Grade 6 in both Maths and English and an understanding of at least one programming language would be extremely beneficial.

## Where can it take you?

Computer Science is recognised by the Russell Group of Universities as a well-respected A level subject, so it is widely accepted as a qualification that demonstrates the application of rigorous logical thought in a disciplined environment. It could be a stepping stone onto a range of degree courses.

The more obvious routes are to engineering and computer science, but philosophy and symbolic logic are other subjects that have been taken by students who have completed this A level.

# Drama and Theatre Studies

Examination board: AQA

## The course

Theatre Studies is a unique subject which can relate well to almost any other area of study or career path. There is an emphasis on personal expression and creativity but the focus on written work confirms Theatre Studies as a highly respected academic subject. There will be opportunities for you to take part in a performance either as an actor or director, or as a designer of lighting, sound, set, costume or puppetry. You will visit local and touring live productions and theatrical screenings and will hopefully have the opportunity to travel to London to see professional theatre productions.

The assessment is divided into three components:

- Drama and theatre: A three-hour written paper on two set plays and on the work of live theatre makers.
- Creating original drama: Practical assessment of a devised piece of theatre and linked to the work of a prescribed theatre practitioner by way of a written portfolio. You will be assessed as a performer, director or designer.
- Making theatre: Practical explorations of three extracts from three different scripted plays.

Extract three is to be linked to the work of a theatrical practitioner. You will be assessed as a performer, director or designer. Reflective report analysing and evaluating theatrical interpretation of all three extracts.

## Requirements

You will need to attain a good set of academic grades at GCSE, particularly in English. You do not need to have completed a GCSE course in Drama but you should have performed in a play as an actor or worked backstage. You will be required to put in a lot of extra time for rehearsal and your time management skills will be put to the test. The two most important attributes you can bring to the course are your enthusiasm and teamwork skills.

## Where can it take you?

The Drama and Theatre Studies course does not aim to prepare you vocationally for a career in theatre, although the skills you learn on this course would be of tremendous use in such a role. The course has far reaching benefits and is especially useful for people who may wish to pursue a career in law, media, advertising, design, public relations, music, or in fact any field that involves communication - which is most of them. This course is highly respected by Russell Group universities and is highly recommended as a fourth A level for courses such as law and medicine where communication skills and creative thinking are crucial.

# Economics

Examination board: AQA

## The course

Economics is only offered at Sixth Form level and is therefore completely fresh and new to you. You will learn theories to explain the workings of any organisation, be it a business or a country.

This includes looking at supply and demand, monopolies, inequalities in income and distribution of wealth, inflation and unemployment. We apply these theories to look at the environment, housing and the economics of sport and leisure.

In the second year we study the labour market including union influences, international trade, exchange rates and developing economies.

If you are interested in the workings of the world you live in then this is an ideal course for you. We may have classes with students from JCG and De La Salle and lively debate is positively encouraged.

## Requirements

Minimum of a Grade 6 in English and Maths or science. Preferably a Grade 8 in an essay-based subject such as English or History. An interest in current affairs is essential.

## Where can it take you?

Universities have a high regard for this subject. Employers see an insight into Economics as a valuable asset. It opens up a wide range of career opportunities, including industry, finance, management, politics, journalism and law.

# English Language and Literature

Examination board: Edexcel

## The course

If you enjoy both English Literature and English Language at GCSE then you might not want to give one of them up. English Language and Literature, or English Combined as it's also known, allows you to continue with your own writing, study Literature and explore how language is used in a range of nonfiction texts, including e-communication.

You will develop skills as an independent thinker and be encouraged to explore your own opinions and ideas. You will have the freedom to decide where your interest lies and to tailor your writing to reflect this.

This A level is the study of English in use in the world around us. You will have the opportunity to read a wide range of texts and explore the impact of language, structure and form not just in fiction but also spoken, written and multimodal texts.

You will investigate a range of 'real-life' texts, such as blogs, text messages and emails, and your study of fiction will give you the chance to read the work of highly respected authors, poets and playwrights, both modern and from the literary canon.

Creative writing is assessed in Year 13. You will be encouraged to pursue your interests and given freedom to choose the types of text you want to write.

## Requirements

A minimum Grade 6 in English Literature and a Grade 6 in English Language at GCSE, but each student will be considered on their individual merits.

## Where can it take you?

English Language and Literature is well respected by all academic institutions and forms an excellent basis for careers in the media, politics, business and legal professions.

It is also a subject that reaches out into other subject areas, offering stimulating points of intersection with; Art, History, Modern Languages, Media Studies, Music, Psychology and Philosophy.

# English Literature

Examination board: Edexcel

## The course

English Literature is a subject fuelled by ideas, inspiration and imagination. It is also a subject that nurtures writing and communication skills that will be valuable for the rest of your life. If you can communicate, the world is yours.

You will be encouraged to read a wide range of diverse texts; Shakespeare alongside the lyrics of gangster rap or classical poetry alongside pop art.

You will be challenged to assess the value of radically different writing, to explore ideas for yourself and tackle the big questions that have preoccupied the great writers of our literary heritage for centuries.

## Requirements

An English Literature Grade 6 or above but we will assess each student on his merits.

## Where will it take you?

English Literature is well respected by all academic institutions and forms an excellent basis for careers in business, politics, the media and legal professions. It is also a subject that crosses over into other areas, offering stimulating points of intersection with art, history, media studies, drama, philosophy, music and psychology.

# Geography

Examination board: Edexcel

## The course

Studying Geography at Victoria College is an excellent opportunity to learn about the physical and human environment in an exciting and varied manner.

Geography A level students must undertake four days of fieldwork as part of their course and our trip is completed in conjunction with the Geography Department at JCG. The trip takes place in Devon and we stay at the FSC centre at Slapton Ley, where we can see practical examples of the topics and themes covered. (Please note there is an additional charge for this field trip.)

We follow the Edexcel course, which develops some of the themes studied at GCSE, as well as introducing new aspects of the subject.

Year 12: Tectonics, Coasts, Globalisation and Diverse Places

Year 13: Water and Carbon Cycles, Superpowers, Migration, Identity and Sovereignty  
Students carry out an independent investigation, which is worth 20% of the A level and will be internally assessed.

## Requirements

Ideally GCSE Geography at Grade 6 but each student is considered on their merits.

## Where can it take you?

Geography is regarded as a facilitating subject by Russell Group universities and other prestigious universities. It can be counted as a science or arts subject so can benefit all prospective university entrants. Geography students learn to make reasoned judgments, analyse material and develop many transferable skills so this A level is highly regarded as an academic qualification by employers.

# History

Examination board: Edexcel

## The course

History A level will provide you with a clear understanding of some of the key historical developments in the 20th Century and some of the key political issues that the world is facing today. It will help build up your essential skills of analysis and evaluation and develop your awareness of the complexity of human affairs.

You should develop the ability to reach independent judgments based on the analysis of historical evidence and learn to argue a case convincingly both orally and on paper. Lessons will involve group discussions, debates and presentations.

This A level course covers four of the most fascinating periods in history:

- Germany from 1918-1989
- Italy from 1911-1946
- Warfare from 1790-1918
- The causes of the First World War

This is a piece of coursework that is a personal investigation. The course includes a detailed consideration of historical sources as well as analysis of causes of events and of change.

## Requirements

A History GCSE Grade 6 is desirable, but students can take this A level even if they have not studied it at GCSE. They will need to demonstrate excellent written analytical skills.

## Where can it take you?

History is an especially well-respected subject. It has links to most other subjects, providing their context.

It gives an excellent grounding for those wishing to study law, politics at university or careers where communication skills are important.

# Languages: French and Spanish

Examination board: AQA

## The course

Taking the A level won't just teach you about the language but will give you a broader understanding of the people and places you most want to visit.

The languages follow on naturally from GCSE. We use the same board (AQA) and the same specifications. Languages are very much a practical subject at this level and you will quickly get used to practising all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in much smaller classes. As with GCSE you will be examined in all these skills at the end of your course.

You will learn a lot more about the country and the people of the language you are studying. The course includes the study of authentic materials taken from the press, television, radio, DVDs and the internet.

In Year 12 you will study social issues and trends, artistic culture, music and cinema, from French speaking countries. You will study one film in depth. In Year 13 you will study technological and social change, a film and literary text. You will also research a topic of your own choice for discussion in the speaking examination.

You will be strongly encouraged to visit the country of the language you are studying. There may be the opportunity to do an exchange or work experience, or to take part in a Sixth Form study visit to a city in France or Spain. You will work more closely with the Foreign Language Assistants who will be an integral part of your lessons and you will spend an extra lesson each week in a group with two or three others working with them.

## Requirements

Ideally a language GCSE at Grade 7 but each student is considered on their merits. If you have enjoyed and been successful in your GCSE course you will be most welcome in our Sixth Form.

## Where can it take you?

Studying languages will give you excellent and varied career opportunities, together with life-long skills that will be stimulating, thought provoking, mind broadening, enjoyable, sociable, diverse and wide ranging. In today's world a language is a highly marketable qualification.

Communication skills, knowledge of languages, an understanding of foreign cultures, flexibility of mind, analytical ability and research skills are much in demand in a great many fields. Modern Language students tend to be mature, flexible and able to cope with the unfamiliar.

Studying a language does not narrowly confine you to any one area of future study or employment. Your options could include journalism, the media and arts, banking, accountancy, management, administration, marketing, the civil service, teaching, professional language work. Very often, language students go on to combine their language with another subject such as law, business studies or engineering.

# Mathematics & Further Maths

Examination board: OCR

## The course

Maths is one of the most challenging A level courses at Victoria College. It requires commitment but its rewards are knowledge, satisfaction and precise thinking. The course provides students with a wide range of activities and challenges. Mathematics and Further Mathematics not only develop topics covered in GCSE such as algebra, statistics and geometry, but also extend into new areas such as calculus, mechanics, discrete mathematics and numerical methods.

The mechanics content will allow physics students to successfully apply mathematical skills to physical problems.

Mathematics is one of very few subjects that offer the ability to complete two A level qualifications. The Further Mathematics course also offers a degree of flexibility, and content can be tailored to suit individual students.

## Requirements

A good general standard of Mathematics and, in particular, good algebraic skills are required. Even the best students find parts of the course challenging and you should have achieved Grade 7 at GCSE to begin the course, and Grade 8 to begin Further Mathematics.

## Where can it take you?

Mathematics is required by a range of students, from those intending to read it at university to those needing particular skills to support other subjects (particularly science) or their chosen careers. The course provides a good understanding of statistics, which is essential for anyone wishing take psychology or sociology.

# Media Studies

Examination board: OCR

## The course

To make a film, write an article or design an effective website, you need to understand how much skill is involved, both in handling the information and understanding how people could be influenced by it. Media A level achieves this. It is a blend of imaginative creativity, academic theory and IT skills.

The course allows students to select their path of study, choosing which media to specialise in and which case studies to research. Mostly, it is just interesting and allows you to gain an academic perspective on your own knowledge and use of the media.

There are two modules in each year: one creative coursework production and one theoretical exam. The practical productions provide an opportunity to learn relevant, modern media production skills and to put your imagination and understanding of the media into practice. Options include print, film, audio or web-based projects. Students learn how to work in each medium and then pick one to continue as their main coursework piece.

The theoretical exam is based on understanding through text analysis how the media communicates messages and values and how the media business sector operates, particularly the film industry.

## Requirements

Students with creative, technical and academic ability are all equally suited. A contemporary interest in the media is essential. Media is no 'soft option' and many students remark that, whilst enjoyable, it requires more effort than their other subjects.

## Where can it take you?

Every career requires some interaction and knowledge of the media. The portfolio of work that the student builds over the course will help every university application and job interview. There are obviously many media degrees and career opportunities.

# Music

Examination board: OCR

## The course

Music is not just about playing an instrument; it is about affirming a lifelong passion for music, offering opportunities to explore skills which are transferable and relevant to many walks of life: teamwork, analytical and creative. Our growing department provides many new opportunities for young musicians to develop a wide ranging skill set. A level musicians play an important leading role in the both the Music Department and the school community.

There are three components assessed as a written exam:

Unit 1: Performing 35%

- A programme (externally assessed) of at least 2 contrasting pieces lasting a minimum of minutes using one or more of the following: Solo piece on one or more instrument/s or voice,
- Ensemble performance

Unit 2: Composing 25%

- Two separate pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 4m 30s
- Score and recording are externally assessed

Unit 3: Listening and Appraising 40%

- Study and analysis of prescribed works including Haydn, (AoS 1), Blues and Popular Song (AoS 2), Baroque Sacred Music (AoS 4) and Romantic Music (AoS 5)
- Evaluating works aurally

## Requirements

Music GCSE Grade 6 or above with a 6 in the Listening and Appraising written paper. ABRSM Grade 5 (minimum) standard on chosen instrument / voice. Familiarity with music theory and notation up to ABRSM Grade 5 standard. Regular tuition on your main instrument.

## Where can it take you?

Music is valued by universities and employers because it is recognised that musicians are motivated and committed with an excellent work ethic. As well as the obvious career as a performer, musicians go into many sectors including medicine, the legal profession, accountancy, teaching and acting. For example, the airport at Dubai is run by an English musician. Top universities like music as an A level subject, even if you intend to study a different discipline.

# Philosophy

Examination board: AQA (7172)

## The course

Put the question 'What is Philosophy?' to 100 Philosophers and you will probably get 100 different answers, but some common themes will also probably emerge. So, Philosophy is: thinking fundamentally about the nature of reality; refusing to accept anything without examining it; the pursuit of wisdom; arguing from the obvious to the surprising; a collection of questions that are of deep interest and for which there is (often) no experimental way of finding an answer; being logical and precise; seeing how ideas hang together; taking a closer look at things everyone ordinarily takes for granted; being interested in the quest for knowledge and truth through the application of reason. It is a subject that really comes alive when you start to try and think about these things for yourself.

As Bertrand Russell puts it: *'If the study of philosophy has any value at all...it must be only indirectly, through its effects upon the lives of those who study it.'*

## **A Level PHILOSOPHY is made up of four compulsory topics:**

### **Paper 1**

- Epistemology: This is probably closest to what people think of as 'pure' philosophy – questions about perception, what we know and how we know it.
- Moral Philosophy: This is about questions of right and wrong, how we should live, the foundations for different ways of being ethical, and the links between theory and practice (relating particularly to four key topics: stealing, telling lies, eating animals, and violence in computer games).

### **Paper 2**

- Metaphysics of God: This is applying philosophical method to a particularly interesting area of discussion and debate.
- Metaphysics of Mind: Questions about consciousness, personal identity, artificial intelligence, free-will, and advances in neuro-science, make this one of the most contested and important areas of study in science, psychology and philosophy.

There are two three-hour exams. On each subject area you have to answer five questions for 3, 5, 5, 12 and 25 marks respectively, ranging from the shorter questions showing your knowledge and understanding of core concepts and methods of philosophy (60%) to the longer essay questions that show your ability to analyse and evaluate (40%).

## Requirements

Religious Studies GCSE (Long or Short Course) is not a necessity although some topics in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics are relevant and, if you do have it, a Grade 6 or above would be helpful and a good indicator of your potential to do well. Just as useful will be an enquiring mind, a love of clear thinking, a philosophical disposition, and some proficiency in English so that you can thrive in discussion and debate and tackle with confidence the longer answers in the written exam.

## Where can it take you?

Type 'Philosophy' into the UCAS website and you will find 1,155 different single and joint honours courses that involve Philosophy at British universities.

It is hard to think of an area where it would not have some relevance - from English to Economics, History, Art, International Relations, Law, Maths, Physics, Psychology, Theology, Politics, Sociology - and the same is true at A Level too: it would be a good companion to either the Humanities or the Sciences. If you are looking for a subject that is well respected, traditional, theoretical, analytic, and which goes well with other subjects then Philosophy may well be for you. The emphasis it places on reasoning, the clear and concise presentation of ideas, constructive discussion and critical thinking is recognised as desirable by almost every type of employer in both the public and private sectors.

# Physical Education

Examination board: AQA

## The Course

The Physical Education course is designed to develop a candidate's knowledge, skills and understanding of the factors that influence the quality of sports performance.

Candidates will be challenged to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of physiological, psychological and socio-cultural factors to a variety of sporting situations at elite and grass-root levels.

We have a wide range of sport choices for practical coursework and access to visiting Sports Science lecturers. You will have the opportunity to perform or analyse sporting techniques, including comparing yourself with an elite performer in order to develop your own physical and mental performance.

## Requirements

Ideally a Grade 6 in GCSE PE, with 60% in the theory exam, or Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology.

A healthy interest in a wide range of sporting activities is advisable, with a genuine passion for understanding what factors affect sports. The A level is assessed predominantly through written exams and written coursework so proficient English is required.

Candidates who do not have a GCSE in sport will be considered.

## Where can it take you?

A level Physical Education will open up many avenues both in terms of career prospects and higher education. Specific career paths could be physiotherapy, sports rehabilitation, psychology, teaching, sports coaching, sport related media, sports recreation or Sports Science to professional teams.

This A level supports degree applications for a wide range of studies. Past pupils have gone on to study law, medicine, accountancy as well as sports-related degrees.

# Physics

Examination board: AQA

## The course

Physics has been called ‘the unbelievable in pursuit of the unimaginable’. It is a physicist’s job to do the imagining. Can you get more special than that? Physics encompasses the study of everything in the universe, from the largest galaxies to the smallest subatomic particles. Moreover, it’s the basis of many other sciences, including chemistry, oceanography, seismology and astronomy.

The AQA course we follow has plenty of up-to-date science, like Dark Energy or the purpose of the new Large Hadron Collider, but also retains the traditional elements needed to take the subject further. We use two textbooks, the AQA designated course book and a reference text to enable you to get a second point of view.

You will be expected to read around the subject from popular science books and keep up to-date with developments using science blogs and traditional magazines like the New Scientist.

### First year

Particles and quantum mechanics, electricity, materials and waves.

### Second year

Fields, mechanics, thermal-nuclear, and a unit chosen from five options (Cosmology, Medical Physics, Applied Physics, Electronics and Major Turning Points in Physics) by teacher and group in consultation.

Topics covered include: The strong Nuclear Force holding nuclei together, Antiparticles Quarks and Leptons, Quantum Phenomena, Resistivity, Electromotive Force, Vector motion, Motion of projectiles, Properties of materials, Wave behaviour, Superposition of waves, Diffraction and interference patterns, Simple Harmonic Motion, Vibrations and Resonance, Gravity, Electric Fields, Magnetic Fields.

## Requirements

A passion to know how everything works and why everything happens. We recommend students have a Grade 7 at GCSE for both Physics and Maths.

## Where can it take you?

A level Physics is valued by universities and employers in any field because it shows that a candidate is numerate, can think analytically and is not afraid of intellectual challenge.

There are career opportunities in physics but also other areas such as architecture, engineering and computing.

Physicists are sought after by finance and law firms for their ability to think outside the box.

# Politics

## Examination board: Edexcel A level Government and Politics

### The course

Ever watched the news and wondered what exactly it is that governments do? What goes on in the Houses of Parliament? And who is Black Rod? Well, this course will help you to understand the political discourse that is so commonplace in our world today. Make sense of Brexit, the United Nations, the love for Greta Thunberg and why it was that Boris Johnson won the 2019 election.

The course is split into three parts as below:

#### **Paper 1: UK Politics**

- democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems and voting behaviour and the media
- three core political ideas of liberalism, conservatism and socialism

#### **Paper 2: UK Government**

- the Constitution, Parliament, Prime Minister and Executive and relationships between the branches including the Supreme Court
- one non-core political idea: nationalism

#### **Paper 3: Comparative Politics**

- The state and globalisation
- Global governance: political and judicial
- Global governance: economic and environmental
- Power and developments
- Regionalism and the European Union
- Comparative theories

#### **Assessment is by examination**

There are three exam papers, all taken at the end of the two year course. Each is worth 33% and last two hours. There are a mix of short and long answer questions.

### Requirements

An interest in current affairs and politics is vital to be successful on this course. You will be a keen reader of news and may hold political views yourself. You may be taking other subjects that are of an essay nature, although this is not essential. You will also need good literacy skills, as responses will mainly be in the form of essays, although these will not always be long. Finally, you should be interested in debate, as much of the lesson will involve oracy and discussion.

## Where can it take you?

Studying Politics can help you in a number of ways. It is of interest in its own right and will help you gain a better understanding of the world around you. Many students combine their study of Politics with subjects such as History, Geography or Economics, as these social science subjects compliment each other well. Students may go on to study Politics at undergraduate level, combine it with other subjects or as part of a Politics, Philosophy and Economics course. Careers include pretty much anything where you need strong communication skills and a good understanding of current affairs and often Politics students go on to work in the Civil Service, Media, local or national government and for political parties.

# Product Design

Examination board: OCR

## The course

Product Design develops your capacity to think creatively and, as a critical thinker, you are able to adapt technical knowledge and understanding in different design situations.

Throughout the course you will learn critical thinking and problem solving skills within a creative environment, enabling you to develop and make prototypes/products that solve real-world problems and consider your own and others' needs, wants, aspirations and values.

Product Design is focused towards consumer products and applications, their analysis in respect of materials, components, marketability, and the selection and uses in industrial and situations.

**Year 12:** You will learn to identify market needs and opportunities for new products, initiate and develop design solutions and make and test prototypes and products.

**Year 13:** You will learn to understand and apply processes of iterative designing and put them into practice.

Assessment is by:

- Design Principles (Knowledge and Understanding): Exam of one hour 30 minutes worth 26.7%
- Problem Solving and Critical Evaluation: Exam of one hour 45 minutes worth 23.3%
- Iterative Design Project: 65 hours worth 50%

## What do I need?

A GCSE Grade 6 in Design and Technology. You will need to be open to taking design risks, be intellectually curious, show innovation and enterprise and work collaboratively to develop and refine ideas.

## Where can it take you?

With a focus on iterative design, this course will equip you with valuable critical thinking skills needed for higher education and industry where you can expect to make a contribution to 21st Century creative, engineering and manufacturing businesses.

# Psychology

Examination board: OCR

## The course

Psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour and the mind. It offers a unique educational experience that develops a distinctive and broad set of skills. It is located in scientific method and allows scope for extensive evaluation from a range of perspectives.

Students will learn to interpret and critically assess scientific data, and to research and critically evaluate a range of sources. Psychology is a popular combination with subjects such as Science, Humanities, English and Business Studies or Economics.

There are three components:

**Research Methods** (two hour written exam worth 30% of the total marks). Students conduct their own practical work involving four key techniques: self-report, observation, correlation and experimentation as well as understanding how descriptive and inferential statistics can be used to analyse the data collected. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own research as they develop vital investigative skills and an appreciation of the principles of empirical scientific enquiry.

**Psychological themes** (two hour written exam worth 35% of the total marks). An introduction to key themes. The selection of 10 classic and 10 contemporary studies enables students to appreciate how psychological knowledge and understanding develop over time.

**Applied psychology** (two hour written exam worth 35% of the total marks). A compulsory section on issues in mental health and then two further applied options; Criminal Psychology and Sport and Exercise Psychology. Students will consider the background, key research and application of six topics within each of these two options.

### **Criminal Psychology**

What makes a criminal (Biological)

Collection and processing of forensic

Evidence (Biological)

Collection of evidence (Cognitive)

Psychology and the courtroom (cognitive) Crime prevention (Social)

Effect of imprisonment (Social)

## **Sport and Exercise Psychology**

Arousal and anxiety (Biological)

Audience effects (Social)

Exercise and mental health (Biological)

Motivation (Cognitive)

Personality (Cognitive)

Performing with others (Social)

## **What do I need?**

A good understanding of statistics and a good foundation in both Maths, English and science (particularly to understand data collection and analysis).

## **Where can it take you?**

For many careers some knowledge of Psychology is essential, including teaching, personnel work, law, clinical health, prison and Police service roles.

This is essential for a degree to become an Applied Psychologist and to support the additional professional training and further study afterwards.



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