

THE SPIRES

— COLLEGE —

Sixth Form

Sixth Form Courses

2026/2027

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APPLICATION TIMELINE

When?	What happens?	More information
13 November 2025	Sixth Form Open Evening	<p>A chance to find out more about the opportunities on offer at The Spires College Sixth Form.</p> <p>Explore courses that you might be interested in and get expert advice about the right Study Programme for you.</p>
3 December 2025 9-11am	Open Morning for External Candidates	<p>This is an opportunity for external candidates to find out what is on offer at The Spires College Sixth Form.</p>
November and December 2025	Year 11 Careers Meetings Course Taster Sessions	<p>Advice and guidance sessions for students from The Spires College continue.</p> <p>Opportunities to find out more about courses and qualifications you might be interested in.</p>
13 February 2026	Applications Deadline	<p>Your completed Application Form must be completed online and submitted by this date.</p>
January – March 2026	Sixth Form Applicants' Meetings	<p>Applicants are invited to meet with the Sixth Form Team. This is an opportunity for you to ask any remaining questions that you might have.</p> <p>Your personal Study Programme will be discussed and agreed.</p>
May and June 2026	GCSE Examinations	
July 2026	Sixth Form Induction	<p>All applicants are expected to attend Induction.</p> <p>This is a great opportunity for you to meet with your tutor and your course teachers.</p>
20 August 2026	GCSE Results Day	<p>The Sixth Form Team will be available for advice, guidance, and support.</p>
2 September 2026	Start of Term	Welcome to the Sixth Form!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the entry requirements for The Spires College Sixth Form?

Your Study Programme will be personal to you and, so, it is difficult to specify general entry requirements. Whatever the courses you choose, the most important requirements are as follows:

- ▲ an enthusiastic and positive approach to your studies
- ▲ a commitment to being part of The Spires College community and meeting the high expectations we have of our students
- ▲ excellent attendance and punctuality

Each pathway has its own entry requirements and many of the courses within each pathway have further, specific entry requirements. You will need to meet both the pathway and course specific entry requirements. It is important that you check the course details carefully. If you haven't got a Grade 4 in GCSE English or Maths when you join the Sixth Form, you will be required to continue your studies in these subjects and resit these qualifications.

How many courses should I choose?

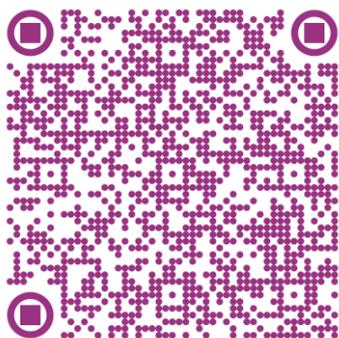
Your Study Programme in the Sixth Form is about much more than just the courses you choose. Your Programme is personal to you and will be made up of examination courses, tutorial, the opportunity to develop important skills for learning and life and a variety of other activities. We aim to provide you with a Programme which meets your individual needs and will provide you with the qualifications, skills, and experiences to enable you to progress to Higher Education, employment, or further training, as well as developing your personal interests. The Sixth Form Team will advise you carefully about the right number and types of courses for you. As a guide, most students choose three Level 3 courses.

Can you guarantee that all the courses that I choose will be available?

The courses in this brochure are our 'offer'. Whilst we would love to run all the courses, sometimes we are not able to. Decisions about whether to run courses will depend on the number of students who opt for them. If we are not able to run a particular course for any reason, we will let you know in good time and advise you on choosing a different course.

How do I apply to The Spires College Sixth Form?

Simply complete the application form online using the appropriate QR code below. The deadline for receipt of applications is **13 February 2026**. See the Application Timeline for more information.



External Application Form



Internal Application Form

Will I have to come for an interview?

We meet with all applicants. This isn't really an interview; it's an opportunity to discuss your Study Programme and make sure that your Study Programme is exactly right for you. It's really important that you attend this meeting. Parents and carers are welcome to come too.

What will happen at my Applicant's Meeting? Do I need to bring anything with me?

If you're not already a student at The Spires College, you will need to bring a recent school report with you. Your letter will tell you exactly what you need to bring. Applicants' Meetings will be held throughout January and February. Your meeting will be with a member of the Sixth Form Team. Your meeting is an opportunity for you to ask any questions that you might have and for us to advise you about the right courses and activities for your personalised Study Programme. At the end of your meeting, you will be given an 'offer' confirming your Study Programme and the grades you will need to get to be able to do those courses.

Where can I get advice about which courses to choose?

Several factors might influence your choice of Study Programme:

- ▲ you might have enjoyed or been good at a subject at GCSE
- ▲ you might need a particular subject for your chosen career path or university course

In addition to these factors, you should also bear the following in mind:

- ▲ some subjects are much harder at Level 3 than at GCSE
- ▲ research carefully which Level 3 subjects and qualifications you need for your future plans. Check with university admissions if you are unsure or visit the UCAS website
- ▲ do your homework about what particular subjects involve at Level 3. Speak to current students and attend Drop Ins and Taster Sessions so you can meet teachers and get honest and informed advice and guidance

Entry onto Level 3 courses is based on whether you have the right qualifications at GCSE to be able to cope with the demands of the subject at Level 3. Each course has a different entry requirement, so you need to check carefully. The decisions you make now will affect the university courses open to you and, in an increasingly competitive market for places, your choices really do matter.

Universities need to know that students are well prepared for the academic rigour required to study at degree level. Some universities will require you to have studied a particular subject at A Level and many prefer that students have included at least one 'facilitating' subject as part of their Study Programme:

English ▲ Mathematics ▲ Biology ▲ Chemistry ▲ Physics ▲ History ▲ Geography ▲ Languages

By choosing one or more of these subjects, you are keeping as many options open as possible.

We know that it can all seem a bit overwhelming but there is plenty of support available to help you to make the right choices. You can attend 'drop in' sessions and Taster Sessions. We will let you know when they are via your tutor. If you are not a student at The Spires College, or if you are and need advice when there are no 'drop ins', simply give us a call on 01803 408852 or email sixthform@thespirescollege.com. Someone will give you a call or arrange for you to come in for a chat.

Can I study part-time?

All our Level 3 programmes are full-time, two-year programmes. We do not offer part-time or one-year programmes in the Sixth Form.

What happens if I change my mind about what I want to study?

You just need to let the Sixth Form Team know what you would like to change to. If it is a major change, we may ask you to come in for another meeting.

What happens if I don't get my predicted grades?

The most important thing is that you are studying on the right courses at the right level. Our admissions process takes place the day after your GCSE results are available. Every student will have an admissions interview and, if you haven't got the grades that you need, we will work with you to look at the options available to you. This might mean changing course. The Sixth Form Team will also be available for advice on GCSE results day. Full details will be on the website.

YEAR 12 OPTION BLOCKS

Level 3 Academic Pathway				
A	B	C	D	E
BIOLOGY	FURTHER MATHEMATICS	CHEMISTRY	PHYSICS	MATHEMATICS
DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY PRODUCT DESIGN	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	PSYCHOLOGY	ENGLISH LITERATURE	ART AND DESIGN FINE ART
HISTORY	GEOGRAPHY	FRENCH	FILM STUDIES	POLITICS
	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, ETHICS AND PHILOSOPHY	SPANISH		
		ART AND DESIGN PHOTOGRAPHY		
Level 3 Applied Pathway				
A	B	C	D	E
HUMAN BIOLOGY	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	TRAVEL AND TOURISM	BUSINESS	CORE MATHEMATICS
DIGITAL MEDIA	PERFORMING ARTS		MUSIC	GCSE MATHEMATICS
			GCSE ENGLISH	

LEVEL 3 COURSE REQUIREMENTS AT A GLANCE

Art & Design (Fine Art) Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Art	Information Technology AAQ	Merit or above in Level 2 IT (if studied). Alternatively , 5 grade 5s or above.
Art & Design (Photography) Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Art or GCSE Photography	Mathematics Advanced Level	Grade 7 or above in GCSE Mathematics
Biology Advanced Level	Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology and Grade 6 or above in GCSE Chemistry or GCSE Physics	Further Mathematics Advanced Level	Grade 8 or above in GCSE Mathematics or Grade 7 in GCSE Mathematics and Grade 7 in Level 2 Further Mathematics
Business BTEC National	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Business Studies (if studied). Alternatively , 5 grade 5s or above.	Mathematical Studies (Core Mathematics) Level 3 Certificate	Grade 4 or above in GCSE Mathematics
Chemistry Advanced Level	Grade 6 or above in GCSE Chemistry and Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology or Physics	Music BTEC National	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Music or Merit or above in Level 2 BTEC Music
Design & Technology (Product Design) Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Design & Technology	Performing Arts BTEC National	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Drama or Merit or above in BTEC Level 2 Performing Arts
Digital Media Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate	Grade 4 or above in GCSE English Language or GCSE ICT, or GCSE Media Studies	Physical Education Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE PE and Grades 4 or above in GCSE Science
English Literature Advanced Level	Grades 5 or above in GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature	Physics Advanced Level	Grade 6 or above in GCSE Physics and Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology or GCSE Chemistry
Extended Project Qualification	No course specific entry requirements	Politics Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE History or Grade 5 or above in GCSE English
Film Studies Advanced Level	Grades 5 or above in GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature	Psychology Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Psychology (if studied). Alternatively , 5 grade 5s or above, including in English
French Advanced Level	Grade 6 or above in GCSE French	Religious Education, Ethics and Philosophy Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE English Language or GCSE English Literature
Geography Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Geography	Spanish Advanced Level	Grade 6 or above in GCSE Spanish
History Advanced Level	Grade 5 or above in GCSE History or Grade 6 or above in GCSE English	Travel and Tourism BTEC National	Merit or above in Level 2 Travel and Tourism (if studied). Alternatively , 5 grade 5s or above
Human Biology Cambridge Advanced Extended Certificate	Grade 5-4 or above in GCSE Combined Science and Grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics and English		

LEVEL 3 ACADEMIC

To succeed on our **Academic Pathway**, you will have at least **five GCSEs**, including English and Mathematics, at **Grade 5** or above.

Most of our Academic Pathway qualifications have **course specific entry requirements**, too, and you will need to meet these as well as the Academic Pathway entry requirements.

If you choose Academic Pathway courses, you are likely to be planning to progress onto further study at **university**.

We will advise you on the right number and choice of Academic Pathway courses for you, depending on both your GCSE results and your future plans.

ART & DESIGN (FINE ART) Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Art & Design

Exam Board Eduqas

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE Art

Overview

Advanced Level Art and Design (Fine Art) is a course which allows you to develop your artistic and creative skills in great depth. It is a challenging course which will require you to take risks, explore new ideas, make complex connections between practical skills and artistic concepts and analyse your own work as well as that of others.

What will I learn?

In Year 12 you will be introduced to a range of starting-points, techniques and concepts. For the first term, you will undertake a 'mini-Foundation', in which you will be challenged to take creative risks and push beyond your comfort zone through a series of diverse workshops. In the Spring term of Year 12, you will use your Foundation knowledge to begin your Personal Investigation, which will be developed and refined through to the end of the first term in Year 13. The Personal Investigation comprises your sketchbook and portfolio work through which you explore a chosen theme or idea. The Spring term of Year 13 will see you complete a shorter focused exam investigation, the externally set assignment (ESA).

▲ **Personal Investigation** (60% of A Level marks)

The A Level Personal Investigation is student led and gives you the opportunity to explore a topic or theme about which you are passionate. Your medium and the subject matter of your investigation are entirely your choice. The Personal Investigation portfolio results in one or more final outcomes, and it is supported by an in-depth analytical essay of 1000- 3000 words.

▲ **Externally Set Assignment** (40% of A Level marks)

For the Externally Set Assignment, you will be given a topic from which to develop your own sub theme, and using your chosen theme, you will produce a body of work in response over the course of 8-10 weeks. The project will commence in February of Year 13. You will produce your supporting work during lessons and at home before producing the final outcome independently in a 15-hour practical, under examination conditions.

How will I learn?

A Level Art and Design is a practical subject with lessons designed to maximise your understanding through active participation. You will create work based on investigation of contemporary and historical art sources and will document this journey through the use of a sketchbook. You will be encouraged to become active in understanding the development of art in real time by responding to news articles and events. You will learn by producing work using a variety of skills and processes such as printing, painting, drawing and use of digital media.

Where could it lead?

As one of the fastest growing industries globally, opportunities for employment in the creative arts are vast. You will develop the independent working skills and experience required to succeed both at university level and in employment in areas such as illustration, game design, graphic design, theatre design, fashion, museum curation, restoration/conservation, art therapy and architecture. For students seeking to take their studies in Art & Design further, the usual route after A Level is to take a one-year Foundation course, although some students progress straight onto degree courses. Students applying to art degrees will have intensive 1:1 support to build their interview portfolios.

ART & DESIGN (PHOTOGRAPHY) Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Art & Design

Exam Board Eduqas

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE Photography **or** GCSE Art with a portfolio of relevant photographic work. Access to a digital SLR camera is recommended but not essential

Overview

Advanced Level Photography is a fast-paced rigorous course of study, in which you will be required to reflect on your creative process and critically analyse the work of others as well as your own. You will develop your knowledge of visual communication and create imagery through a range of different traditional, experimental and digital media. You will have access to a large darkroom and fully equipped studio space as well as a sixth form dedicated, modern computer suite with the full Adobe editing suite.

What will I learn?

You will be introduced to a variety of experiences, exploring a range of photographic processes and techniques. Your work will develop through in-depth exploration of both practical and critical/contextual approaches. In the first term of Year 12, you will work through the history of photography, exploring traditional and non-traditional darkroom practices. You will also experiment with a range of different workshops to fully immerse yourself in the variety of photography available. In the spring of Year 12, you will use your broad knowledge and skills to establish a focus for your Personal Investigation, which you will sustain and develop through to Year 13, followed by the Externally Set Assignment in the Spring of Year 13.

▲ **Personal Investigation** (60% of A Level marks)

The A Level Personal Investigation is student led and gives you the opportunity to explore a topic or theme about which you are passionate. The techniques and the subject matter of your investigation are entirely your choice. The Personal Investigation portfolio results in a series of final outcomes, and it is supported by an in-depth analytical essay of 1000- 3000 words.

▲ **Externally Set Assignment** (40% of A Level marks)

For the Externally Set Assignment, you will be given a topic from which to develop your own sub theme, and using your chosen theme, you will produce a body of work in response over the course of 8-10 weeks. The project will commence in February of Year 13. You will produce your supporting work during lessons and at home before producing the final outcomes independently in a 15-hour practical, under examination conditions.

How will I learn?

You will be required to work both independently and collaboratively to create a Personal Investigation into a particular genre of photography and your own chosen theme. Initially, you will be introduced to a wide range of different genres and techniques before deciding upon the direction you would like to focus on and develop in greater depth. Support is given through workshops, regular teacher feedback, 1:1 discussion and group critiques. For every hour of "contact" time (face-to-face teaching), students are expected to work for the same duration of "non-contact" time (self-directed /independent study).

Where could it lead?

Photography is particularly valuable for careers in the arts, design, fashion, print and web-based journalism, merchandising, archaeology, forensics, conservation, pathology, advertising, marketing and many more. In a world where digital imagery, the internet and social media are integral vehicles in selling and promoting products, lifestyles and communicating visual messages, employers are always keen to employ people with a creative outlook and skills. This A Level is a well-respected and rigorously assessed course, valued highly by universities.

BIOLOGY Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Biology

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grades 6-6 or above in GCSE Combined Science **or** Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology **and** Grade 6 or above in GCSE Chemistry **or** GCSE Physics. Grade 6 or above in GCSE Mathematics is also required

Overview

- ▲ How can two metres of DNA be crammed into a nucleus with a diameter of one hundredth of a millimetre?
- ▲ What does the inside of an eyeball look like?
- ▲ How does the heart pump blood in a perfect one-way system?

These are just some of the many fascinating questions which form part of the study of Biology – life and living processes – and which make this subject one of the most popular at The Spires College.

Advanced Level Biology is a challenging, rewarding course that will help you to develop the knowledge and skills required for Higher Education and for a successful career.

What will I learn?

In the **first year** of the course, you will study the following:

- ▲ Biological molecules
- ▲ Cells
- ▲ How organisms exchange substances with their environment
- ▲ Genetic information, variation, and relationships between organisms

In the **second year**, you will learn about:

- ▲ Energy transfers in and between organisms
- ▲ How organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
- ▲ Genetics, populations, evolution, and ecosystems
- ▲ The control of gene expression

The eight topics are assessed via three written examinations at the end of the course. Each examination lasts two hours. Papers 1 and 2 consist of both short and long answer questions as well as comprehension questions. Paper 3 comprises structured questions, critical analysis, and an essay question.

Practical Skills Endorsement

This qualification will give you opportunities to use relevant apparatus and techniques to develop and demonstrate specific practical skills. To achieve a pass, you must demonstrate that you are competent in all the practical skills listed in the subject content requirements. You will demonstrate your practical competency by completing a series of core practicals throughout the course. This does not form part of your overall A Level grade.

How will I learn?

Your lessons will take many forms and will involve a range of interactive teaching and learning strategies. There may be lectures, seminars, discussion groups or practical work. You will be expected to read journals, engage in debate and to take an active part in your own learning.

Where could it lead?

Biology offers a wide range of career and Higher Education opportunities. It is a broad science which allows you to study a range of topics which are traditional yet relevant to today's research. Biology is going through a period of great expansion and interest.

CHEMISTRY Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Chemistry

Exam Board OCR Chemistry A

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grades 6-6 or above in GCSE Combined Science **or** Grade 6 or above in GCSE Chemistry **and** Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology or GCSE Physics. Grade 6 or above in GCSE Mathematics is also required

Overview

Advanced Level Chemistry is divided into two strands:

- ▲ The **academic strand** covers aspects of physical, inorganic, and organic chemistry, all three of which develop in complexity throughout the two-year course.
- ▲ The **practical strand** will involve a minimum of 12 assessed practical activities.

What will I learn?

- ▲ **Module 1** Development of practical skills in chemistry
- ▲ **Module 2** Foundations in chemistry
- ▲ **Module 3** Periodic table and energy
- ▲ **Module 4** Core organic chemistry
- ▲ **Module 5** Physical chemistry and transition elements
- ▲ **Module 6** Organic chemistry and analysis

▲ **Component 1 Periodic table, elements and physical chemistry:** this component is worth 100 marks and is split into two sections and assesses content from teaching modules 1, 2, 3 and 5. **Section A** contains multiple choice questions, worth 15 marks. **Section B** includes short answer question styles and extended response questions, worth 85 marks. Component 1 is 2 hours and 15 minutes and contributes 37% of the A Level marks.

▲ **Component 2 Synthesis and analytical techniques:** this component is worth 100 marks and is split into two sections and assesses content from teaching modules 1, 2, 4 and 6. **Section A** contains multiple choice questions, worth 15 marks. **Section B** includes short answer question styles and extended response questions, worth 85 marks. Component 2 is 2 hours and 15 minutes and contributes 37% of the A Level marks.

▲ **Component 3 Unified Chemistry:** this component is worth 70 marks and assesses content from across all teaching modules 1 to 6. Question styles include short answer and extended response questions. Component 3 is 1 hour and 30 minutes and contributes 26% of the A Level marks.

Practical Skills Endorsement

This qualification will give you opportunities to use relevant apparatus and techniques to develop and demonstrate specific practical skills. Advanced Level Chemistry requires many interesting and specialist practical techniques which demand a range of core skills and competencies. There is a minimum of 12 assessed practical activities, providing a certificate of practical competency which is particularly valued by universities, especially for those pursuing Chemistry at degree level.

How will I learn?

Lessons demand high levels of participation, and you will be encouraged to discuss and critique your work as a valuable tool to help your progress. Reading and re-writing of notes is essential, and homework is frequent. The course content is very diverse and, while demanding, it is an incredibly interesting and rewarding branch of scientific study.

Where could it lead?

A Level Chemistry is an essential or preferred qualification for a wide variety of science-related courses at university, but it is also viewed very favourably by the business and financial sector. It is commonplace for chemistry graduates to move into other areas of science. As a result, many doors are open to Chemistry graduates and career opportunities are very diverse. Chemistry is also a wise choice for students studying subjects mainly in the Arts or Humanities but who wish to maintain breadth and diversity in their studies. A Chemistry qualification shows that you have qualities important to many non-scientific careers, as well as scientific ones: that's why you'll find chemists in everything from food to finance!

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY (Product Design) Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Design & Technology (Product Design)

Exam Board Eduqas

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE Design & Technology

Overview

Product designers have a unique opportunity to identify and solve real problems. This course supports students to become informed, creative decision-makers in an increasingly technological world. Product design impacts our everyday lives and influences the way we interact with the environment and the people around us. Through a combination of practical making and critical thinking, students will explore how design can make a real difference - from improving user experiences to tackling global sustainability challenges.

What will I learn?

Students will gain a broad understanding of design and technology, developing both creative and technical skills. You'll learn how to research user needs, develop design concepts, and turn ideas into working prototypes using a range of materials, tools, and CAD software. The course combines theory, experimentation, and project work to help you become a confident designer.

▲ **Component 1 - Design and Technology in the 21st Century** - Learners will take a single 3-hour exam that will contribute to 50% of their final grade.

You will study how design has evolved and how it shapes the modern world. Topics include materials and manufacturing processes, digital design and production, ergonomics, sustainability, and the impact of technology on society. You'll also learn how major designers and design movements have influenced modern practice, and how products are developed from concept to market.

▲ **Component 2 - Design and make project (non-exam assessment)** - Learners will complete a coursework portfolio totalling approximately 80 hours of work that will contribute to 50% of their final grade.

This major project gives you the freedom to design a product based on a context or problem of your choice. You'll investigate real-world needs, develop specifications, explore materials and modelling techniques, and create high-quality prototypes. The project encourages creativity, independent thinking, and rigorous evaluation — mirroring the process followed by professional designers and engineers.

How will I learn?

Learning takes place through a mix of theory, practical workshops, and independent project time. The 9 lessons per fortnight are divided between the following:

- Theory sessions, covering topics such as design principles, research methods, manufacturing technologies, and environmental responsibility.
- Skills masterclasses, where students refine technical drawing, model-making, and digital design skills using industry-standard 3D software and equipment.
- Project workshops, allowing students to apply their learning directly to their Component 2 design and make project.

Teaching is **shared between two specialist teachers**: one is dedicated to delivering the theoretical content and the other is focused entirely on guiding students through their coursework projects. This structure ensures that learners benefit from expert support in both areas — deepening their understanding of design principles while receiving hands-on, personalised guidance throughout the design and make process.

Where could it lead?

This A Level is ideal for students interested in pursuing careers in **engineering, architecture, product and industrial design, interior design, construction, or design management**. It also supports progression to university courses in **Design & Technology, Engineering, Architecture, and Creative Arts**, providing a solid foundation in both creative and analytical skills valued across many industries.

ENGLISH LITERATURE Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in English Literature

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in **both** GCSE English Language **and** GCSE English Literature

Overview

Advanced Level English Literature involves students in the study of a range of literary texts from a variety of genres and contexts. You will develop new approaches to the ways in which texts are analysed, interpreted, and explored and will examine the ways in which authors' methods shape complex meanings and ideas. You will develop your ability to analyse the structure and language of a range of poetry, drama texts and prose as well as exploring the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they are set in order to make connections across literary genres. You will be assessed through two examinations at the end of the course. You will also complete a non-examined component that requires you to explore texts of your own choosing, both creatively and analytically.

What will I learn?

- ▲ **Paper 1 Love through the Ages:** you will study a Shakespeare play focusing on the ways in which the theme of love is explored through language and dramatic technique. You will also study one prose and one poetry text, one of which will have been written pre-1900 and one post-1900. The exam will ask you to relate a printed extract from your studied play to the play as a whole. You will learn to respond to unseen poetry and to compare prose and poetry texts. Both these skills will be tested in the exam.
- ▲ **Paper 2 Texts in Shared Contexts:** you will study three texts – one prose, one poetry and one drama - exploring aspects of literature connected through a period of time. The exam will test your ability to compare texts and to respond to unseen texts, as well as responding to an individual text in detail. There are two periods of time from which to choose:
 - ▲ **WW1 and its Aftermath** explores literature arising out of World War 1 but extends this period to allow reflection on the full impact of the war that reverberates up to the present day. It considers the impact on combatants, non-combatants, and subsequent generations as well as its social, political, personal, and literary legacies.
 - ▲ **Modern Times** takes the end of World War 2 as its historical starting point and explores both modern and contemporary literature's engagement with some of the social, political, personal, and literary issues which have helped to shape the latter half of the 20th century and the early decades of the 21st century.
- ▲ **Non-examined assessment Texts across Time:** you will undertake an independent, comparative, critical study of two texts. With teacher guidance, you will be encouraged to read widely and, in this component, can choose texts that you find particularly stimulating and engaging to focus on. You will receive regular support and feedback but will be expected to explore ideas and interpretations entirely of your own choosing in order to produce an essay of 2500 words together with a supporting bibliography.

How will I learn?

Lessons are designed to encourage active participation. Discussion and group or individual presentations are regular features, and you will often be expected to lead learning. Lessons will teach you to develop reading, writing, and thinking skills; beyond the classroom, learning is consolidated and supplemented by independent reading, research and engagement with relevant social and historical texts.

Where could it lead?

English Literature is valued both by universities and in the workplace. Literature students are highly competent in analysing texts, thinking creatively, and writing coherently, skills essential in many professions including law, journalism, education, public relations, management, media, and the arts.

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION

Qualification Level 3 Extended Project Qualification

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements This one-year course **must** form part of a Study Programme comprising at least three other two-year, Level 3 qualifications

Overview

The Extended Project will develop and extend from one or more of your study areas or from an area of personal interest or activity outside of your Study Programme. It will be based on a topic chosen by you and agreed by your supervisor.

The Extended Project Qualification offers opportunities for you to do the following:

- ▲ make a significant contribution to the choice and design of an extended project and take responsibility either for an individual task or for a defined task within a group project
- ▲ develop and improve your own learning and performance as a critical, reflective, and independent student
- ▲ develop and apply decision-making and problem-solving skills
- ▲ extend your planning, research, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and presentation skills
- ▲ develop and apply skills creatively, demonstrating initiative and enterprise
- ▲ use your learning experiences to support your aspirations for Higher Education
- ▲ transfer skills developed as part of your extended project to other areas of study

What will I learn?

You will be required, with appropriate supervision, to do the following:

- ▲ choose an area of interest
- ▲ draft a title and aims of the project for formal approval
- ▲ plan, research and carry out the project
- ▲ deliver a presentation to a non-specialist audience
- ▲ provide evidence of all stages of project development and production for assessment

To achieve these outcomes, you will be taught the following:

- ▲ research skills including the ability to search for and identify suitable sources of information in your chosen subject area
- ▲ any skills or techniques that will be required for the safe and effective execution of your project which are not part of your Study Programme, for example safe laboratory or workshop technique, professional codes of practice, ethical guidelines, or research methodology
- ▲ ICT skills that will enhance the production of your report and the development of your project
- ▲ project management skills including time, resource, and task management
- ▲ the format and structure of accepted academic forms of research report
- ▲ referencing, the evaluation of sources and the prevention of plagiarism
- ▲ presentation skills

How will I learn?

You will be taught the necessary skills to undertake your project, but this qualification demands extended autonomous work.

Where could it lead?

The Extended Project Qualification attracts UCAS points as a qualification in its own right. However, taken alongside other subjects, it is highly regarded by Higher Education institutions. Writing about your EPQ in your UCAS personal statement shows university admissions that you have the passion, skills, and determination to carry out research and it distinguishes you from other students. It also helps develop skills that employers value in the workplace.

FILM STUDIES Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Film Studies

Exam Board Eduqas

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in **both** GCSE English Language **and** GCSE English Literature

Overview

Film Studies is an extremely enjoyable and worthwhile subject to study. Not only will it change the way you watch films, but more importantly it will challenge you to think in new ways and question or change your perspective on a whole host of issues, for example, representation of race or gender. Studying film allows you to understand important issues and developments within history, society, and culture, using film as the medium with which to gain a greater insight into these areas. From silent cinema to contemporary Hollywood, the films on this course have fantastic critical reputations. They are films of depth and substance which have been purposefully chosen to offer rich and interesting analysis.

The study of film is highly regarded. Film Studies has been an academic discipline within universities for over 50 years and is regarded as an academic subject in its own right. Oxford and Cambridge are now offering Masters and PhD courses in Film Studies *and* Screen Arts. Russell Group universities accept Film Studies as an appropriate A Level qualification when prospective students apply to study a humanities or arts-related discipline.

What will I learn?

Advance Level Film Studies is assessed through three components:

- ▲ **Component 1 Varieties of Film and Filmmaking:** you will study classic Hollywood through Hitchcock's work, American blockbusters and independent cinema, and British films such as *Trainspotting* or *This is England*.
- ▲ **Component 2 Global Filmmaking Perspectives:** you will study the work of Guillermo del Toro, documentary and silent film, and experimental cinema through films such as *Memento*.
- ▲ **Component 3 Creative Production:** this unit assesses your ability to apply your knowledge of film in a creative task, either by filming and editing your own short film or writing a screenplay.

How will I learn?

There is so much more to Film Studies than simply watching films. When watching a film, we might regard it as relaxation or escapism. However, the in-depth study of film involves coming from a very different starting point. As well as gaining an appreciation of film as an art form in terms of its visual storytelling, studying film can enhance your understanding of the world in terms of competing values, attitudes, and beliefs. We will explore the 'language' used by filmmakers to create meaning for audiences as well as the contexts surrounding a film's production. The exams challenge students to analyse films in detail, writing academic essays that explore these topics.

Where could it lead?

Film is one of the most relevant subjects today. The development of deeper critical and creative thinking gained by studying films can enhance many different career paths and is a much sought-after transferable skill in both employment and further study. Employment in the screen industries has grown by over 20% since 2009. Career paths for students of Film may, of course, include practical avenues such as filmmaking, directing, producing and editing but a qualification in Film Studies also allows you to move into more theoretical pathways such as film criticism, journalism or education.

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in French

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 6 or above in GCSE French

Overview

A Level French builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills gained at GCSE level or equivalent. The course is a facilitating subject with a focus on language, culture, history, politics, film and literature.

What will I learn?

- ▲ Social issues and trends in French-speaking society
- ▲ Political and artistic culture
- ▲ Grammar
- ▲ Literary texts and films
- ▲ Individual Research Project (IRP)

The IRP allows you to identify and research a subject or question relating to a country where French is spoken. This not only hones your research skills but also offers you the opportunity to investigate in greater depth an aspect of Francophone culture or history which truly interests you.

Exams

Paper 1 assesses listening, reading and writing skills (50% of A Level marks)

Paper 2 assesses essay writing skills on the novel and film you have studied (20% of A Level marks)

Paper 3 assesses your speaking skills (30% of A Level marks)

How will I learn?

A range of teaching styles will be employed to enhance students' linguistic skills, alongside individual study, which is particularly important for the societal and cultural elements of the course. The course promotes and develops students' capacity for critical thinking on the basis of their knowledge and understanding of the language, culture and society of the country or countries where the language is spoken.

Students will be encouraged to develop control of the language system to convey meaning, using spoken and written skills, including an extended range of vocabulary, for both practical and intellectual purposes as increasingly confident, accurate and independent users of the language.

Where could it lead?

Studying an A Level in French opens the door to a wide range of exciting career paths and global opportunities. Language skills are highly valued in international business, diplomacy, journalism, tourism, and education. Whether you are aiming for a career in translation, law, marketing, or international relations, a language A Level enhances your CV and sets you apart.

Universities and employers seek candidates with excellent communication skills and cultural awareness. Students of A Level languages consistently demonstrate the necessary critical thinking skills and independence of thought to thrive at university and beyond.

Having a language at A Level also facilitates travel and work abroad, deepens your understanding of the world, and therefore fosters connections across cultures, all of which are essential skills in today's global economy and diverse professional environments.

GEOGRAPHY Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Geography

Exam Board Pearson Edexcel

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE Geography

Overview

Advanced Level Geography incorporates a wide range of contemporary global issues that are of great importance to modern society. The focus of the course is the interaction between people and the environment as well as the major global challenges that face the world's population.

What will I learn?

Advanced Level Geography comprises **four** areas of study:

▲ **Dynamic Landscapes**

- ▲ Tectonic Processes and Hazards
- ▲ Landscape Systems, Processes and Change

▲ **Dynamic Places**

- ▲ Globalisation
- ▲ Shaping Places

▲ **Physical Systems and Sustainability**

- ▲ The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity
- ▲ The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security

▲ **Human Systems and Geopolitics**

- ▲ Superpowers
- ▲ Global Development and Connections

Your learning will be assessed via three external examinations taken at the end of the course (80% of the total A Level marks) and an Independent Investigation worth 20% of the total A Level marks. The Independent Investigation takes the form of a written report of 3000-4000 words.

Fieldwork, research, and practical work are all part of the wider investigation process. They form an intrinsic part of each area of study and are central to your Independent Investigation. You will undertake a minimum of four days of fieldwork during the course, including a residential trip to The Lake District; this will inform your independent investigation task.

How will I learn?

A Level Geography demands an enquiring approach and an interest in the world around you. Wide background reading of quality newspapers and magazines is essential. Lessons will be a mixture of research, presentations, geographical field work skills, and investigations using the internet, texts, journals, and DVDs. You will learn to collect, present, and interpret data; to analyse information; to produce coherent, well-argued essays and reports; and to empathise and develop an understanding of values and opinions.

Where could it lead?

Geography is inherently multidisciplinary in a world that increasingly values people who have the skills needed to work across the physical and social sciences. The subject will enable you to have access to a wide range of possible career and Higher Education opportunities. You will learn and use a variety of transferable skills throughout the course. These skills are in great demand and are recognised by employers and universities as being of great value. The subject also has one of the best employment records with only 5.8% of Geography graduates still job-hunting six months after they graduated, against an average of 7.3%.

HISTORY Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in History

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE History **or** Grade 6 or above in GCSE English Language **or** Grade 6 or above in GCSE English Literature. It is not necessary to have studied History at GCSE

Overview

History is a well-respected subject which would suit both those students who wish to specialise in history as a career and those who wish to create a 'well balanced' academic profile.

What will I learn?

▲ *Component 1* **Making of a Superpower: USA 1865-1975**

From Lincoln to Nixon, from the Civil War to the Cold War, this unit covers the sweeping history of America from the bitter divisions of the mid-19th century to its position as a dominant world superpower in the 20th century. It looks at the issues that blighted Black Americans, from the Ku Klux Klan to the Civil Rights Movement. It looks at the Boom and Bust of the 1920s and prohibition, the Great Depression, and the New Deal in the 1930s. It is a sweeping story of possibly the most powerful and yet most divided nation on earth.

▲ *Component 2* **The Making of Modern Britain: 1951-2007**

This unit takes you from Churchill's return to government in 1951 through to the era of New Labour and the Blair/Brown years. The course touches on important economic and political developments in British history, such as relations with Europe and joining the EEC, the winter of discontent, Thatcher's government, the poll tax, and the miners' strikes. Social developments are also considered, including changes to youth culture in the 1950s, race relations, changes for women and the impact of the swinging sixties. There is also a focus on foreign affairs, including the Suez crisis, the troubles in Northern Ireland, the Cold War, and the Falklands conflict. This course provides students with a vital understanding of modern Britain and the issues that still impact us today.

▲ *Component 3* **Coursework**

This non-examined assessment covers different aspects of Witchcraft in the 16th and 17th centuries. You will be taught a series of lessons on this topic and will then be able to choose from a selection of essay titles. The coursework comprises an essay of between 3,500 - 4,500 words and you will be able to complete your own research. You will have the chance to assess the utility of primary sources and the views of historians to support your arguments.

How will I learn?

You will be given the opportunity; to acquire and effectively communicate knowledge and understanding of selected periods of history; to develop understanding of historical terms and concepts; to explore the significance of events, individuals, issues and societies in history; to understand the nature of historical evidence and the methods used by historians in analysis and evaluation; to develop your understanding of how the past has been interpreted and represented and develop your interest in, and enthusiasm for, history.

Where could it lead?

History deals in-depth with the ideas, dreams, and actions of the most fascinating creature on the planet: humans! By studying History, you will develop key skills in researching, analysing, and synthesising information from a range of sources and producing substantiated and reasoned conclusions. Advanced Level History is highly regarded by universities. Many prominent lawyers, politicians, and professionals in a wide variety of fields have enjoyed an academic historical training which has been beneficial to their careers. This course is ideal for both students who are considering specialising in History at degree level as well as those students following different paths who want to show a well-rounded education and well-developed skills in debate.

MATHEMATICS Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Mathematics

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 7 or above in GCSE Mathematics

Overview

Advanced Level Mathematics develops the mathematical concepts you will have learned at GCSE level whilst enriching your understanding of how mathematics can be applied to realistic situations. It emphasises how mathematical ideas are interconnected and how mathematics can be applied to model situations using algebra and other representations, to help make sense of data, to understand the physical world and to solve problems in a variety of contexts, including social sciences and business. Advanced Level Mathematics prepares students for further study and employment in a wide range of disciplines involving the use of mathematics as well as supporting your mathematical needs across a broad range of other subjects at this level. The A Level course is assessed through three equally-weighted written papers:

- ▲ **Paper 1:** Pure Mathematics
- ▲ **Paper 2:** Pure Mathematics and Mechanics
- ▲ **Paper 3:** Pure Mathematics and Statistics

All exam papers are calculator based, and you will need to obtain a scientific calculator that meets course requirements at the start of the course.

What will I learn?

Advanced Level Mathematics has three over-arching themes:

- ▲ Mathematical argument and proof
- ▲ Mathematical problem-solving
- ▲ Mathematical modeling

It is divided into three branches:

- ▲ **Pure Mathematics:** proof ▲ algebra and functions ▲ coordinate geometry ▲ sequences and series ▲ trigonometry ▲ exponentials and logarithms ▲ calculus ▲ numerical methods for solving equations ▲ vectors
- ▲ **Statistics:** statistical sampling ▲ data presentation and interpretation ▲ probability ▲ statistical distributions ▲ statistical hypothesis testing
- ▲ **Mechanics:** quantities and units ▲ kinematics ▲ forces ▲ Newton's laws ▲ moments

How will I learn?

During lessons, you will be encouraged to discuss and evaluate mathematical concepts, sometimes in small groups, sometimes as a whole class. Your studies will take an investigative approach to develop your reasoning and problem-solving skills. You will also be expected to take notes and practise key concepts in class. Some topics will be taught using graphical calculators and computers. Advanced Level Mathematics requires a lot of dedication: you will be required to practise the skills you have learned in class with extensive work at home and during your study periods in college. Help and support from your mathematics teachers will be available after college and during lunch times.

Where could it lead?

Mathematics is a versatile qualification, well-respected by employers and is regarded as a 'facilitating' subject for entry to Higher Education by the Russell Group of Universities. Careers for people with good mathematics skills and qualifications are not only well paid – recent research suggests that those who have a Maths A Level earn a 10% higher income on average – but they are also interesting and rewarding. Mathematics can lead to a variety of fulfilling careers from engineering, design and architecture to philosophy, geography and even careers in music and media.

FURTHER MATHEMATICS Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Further Mathematics

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements 5 GCSEs at grade 9-5 including English Language or Literature. Grade 8 or above in GCSE Mathematics, **or** Grade 7 in GCSE Mathematics **and** Grade 7 in Level 2 Further Mathematics. Students **must be studying A Level Mathematics**.

Overview

Particularly strong candidates can consider Further Mathematics A Level in addition to Mathematics A Level. As the name suggests, Further Mathematics takes the elements, skills, and competencies developed in A Level Mathematics even further, with students studying elements of Pure Mathematics, Statistics, Mechanics, and Discrete Mathematics not seen on the A Level course. Two thirds of the course content is Pure Mathematics, with Statistics, Mechanics or Discrete Mathematics making up the rest of the course. This course is designed for students who enjoy exploring the world of mathematics and have a real passion for the subject. It is particularly useful for anyone considering a career in Mathematics, engineering, electronics, economics or accountancy.

What will I learn?

Within the Pure Mathematics elements of Further Mathematics, students will study new 'stand alone' topics such as matrices, complex numbers, graphs, further algebra and proof by induction. Students will study two of Statistics, Mechanics, and Discrete Mathematics; this choice will be made based on the interests of the class. In Statistics, students will further their understanding of distributions, expectations, and confidence intervals, and in Mechanics, students will learn about momentum and circular motion, whilst Discrete Mathematics will further students' understanding of algorithms used in solving decision making problems.

How will I learn?

Through discussion, teacher-led exposition, individual study and group work, students will learn to analyse and solve problems. Further Mathematics will differ from normal Mathematics in that there will be more emphasis on problem solving; this is what universities are looking for in good mathematicians. Students studying Further Mathematics tend to benefit from smaller class sizes with a good teacher to pupil ratio. Moreover, whilst many colleges offer Further Mathematics on a reduced timetable, at The Spires College the Further Mathematics course is given as much lesson time per week as any other A Level. Students will be required to complete a substantial amount of independent study; however, Mathematics staff will also be available after school and during lunch to aid students in this.

Where could it lead?

Similar to the Mathematics A Level, Further Mathematics is regarded as a 'facilitating' subject for entry to higher education by the Russell Group of Universities. It is particularly useful for students aiming to move on to degree courses with large mathematical content, such as Engineering degrees, degrees in Science, and (obviously) degrees in Mathematics. Moreover, having A Level Further Mathematics on a university application is a way to stand out, regardless of degree course. Further Mathematics may also lead to careers in research, engineering, design and architecture, philosophy, geography, music and media.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Physical Education

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE PE **and** Grades 4-4 or above in GCSE Combined Science **or** Grade 4 or above in GCSE Biology

Overview

This practical and engaging course has been developed to allow learners to study Physical Education in an academic setting, enabling them to critically analyse and evaluate their physical performance and apply their experience of practical activity in developing their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

What will I learn?

Theory makes up 70% of your overall mark and is examined in seven different areas; applied anatomy and physiology, skill acquisition, sport and society, exercise physiology, biomechanical movement, sport psychology and the role of technology in sport.

The second part of the course is the non-examined assessment, and this makes up the other 30% of the course. This section allows you to explore one sport in detail as a performer or coach, chosen from a wide variety of sporting activities. Learners will also analyse and evaluate performance in that chosen activity as part of their NEA.

Throughout the two-year course you will do the following:

- ▲ develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity and sport and use this knowledge to improve performance
- ▲ understand how physiological and psychological states affect performance
- ▲ understand the key socio-cultural factors that influence people's involvement in physical activity and sport
- ▲ understand the role of technology in physical activity and sport
- ▲ refine your ability to perform effectively in physical activity and sport by developing skills and techniques and selecting and using tactics, strategies and/or compositional ideas
- ▲ develop your ability to analyse and evaluate to improve performance
- ▲ understand the contribution which physical activity makes to health and fitness
- ▲ improve as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with curious and enquiring minds

How will I learn?

The course is entirely theory and is studied solely in the classroom. You are required to play at least one sport regularly outside of college. You will be assessed in one sport by submitting video evidence of you performing, it is therefore essential that you are competing regularly in at least one sport to access the course.

Where could it lead?

This course will prepare you for the further study of PE or Sports Science courses at university, as well as other related subjects such as Psychology, Sociology and Biology. You will also develop the transferable skills that are in demand from employers in all sectors of industry. The career opportunities that this course can lead to include PE teaching, sports science, sports psychology, sports coaching, physiotherapy, and personal training.

PHYSICS Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Physics

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grades 6-6 or above in GCSE Combined Science **or** Grade 6 or above in GCSE Physics **and** Grade 6 or above in in GCSE Chemistry or GCSE Biology. You must also achieve Grade 6 or above in GCSE Mathematics and GCSE English

Overview

A Level Physics is a challenging and rewarding course that gives you the opportunity to explore the phenomena of the universe and to look at theories that explain what is observed. This subject combines practical skills with theoretical ideas to develop descriptions of the physical universe. You will explore how our understanding of the universe has changed over time, from being able to predict the motion of planets and stars, to understanding the quantum behaviour of the atom and light, leading to advances in modern computing. If you are interested in the limits of space, the beginning of time and everything in between this is the subject for you. Physics is more than a subject – it is a way of viewing the world we live in.

What will I learn?

▲ **Paper 1** Particles and quantum phenomena ▲ Waves ▲ Mechanics and materials ▲ Electricity

▲ **Paper 2** Thermal physics ▲ Fields and their consequences ▲ Nuclear physics

▲ **Paper 3** Practical skills ▲ Astrophysics

The whole of the A Level Physics course is examined at the end of the full course. There are three theory papers and a practical skills assessment. Your grade is determined by how well you do on the theory papers. Your result in the practical is noted as an endorsement alongside your A Level grade.

Practical Skills Endorsement

As with all three sciences at A Level, you will be given the opportunity to use relevant apparatus and techniques in order to develop and demonstrate specific practical skills. There are twelve experiments over the two years of the course, with each experiment focusing on different skills. To receive the practical skills endorsement, you must demonstrate competence in all the skills. These will also be assessed in Paper 3.

How will I learn?

A Level Physics is a mixture of highly conceptual thinking and very practical applications. You need to be able to think about abstract ideas and be able to apply those ideas. This will mean that learning will take many different forms encompassing a range of skills. There will be plenty of opportunities to develop your mathematical skills, as mathematics is the language of Physics. However, your science is only as good as your ability to communicate it and therefore the ability to write concisely and precisely is essential.

Where could it lead?

Physics is a highly respected A Level and demonstrates to an employer that you have analytical and problem-solving skills that you can apply to real life situations. There are many possible career paths that it could create for you, including engineering, medicine, forensic science, astronomy, cosmology, electronics, power generation, finance, law and many more. Physics encourages your brain to think beyond boundaries and is the most facilitating of all the subjects.

If you want to find out more, why not try the following:

- ▲ *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson
- ▲ *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics* by Carlo Rovelli
- ▲ *The Quantum Universe: Everything that can happen does happen* by Brian Cox and Jeff Forshaw
- ▲ www.physicsworld.com

POLITICS Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Politics

Exam Board Pearson Edexcel

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in History. Where History has not been studied a grade 5 in GCSE English Language **or** GCSE English Literature is required.

Overview

Lively, relevant, controversial... there are many ways to describe A Level Politics. You cannot escape the reach of Politics: covering news and current affairs from the UK and US, studying A Level Politics helps you understand how our country is run. The course also allows you to develop research, written communication and debating skills.

You will be assessed through three examinations at the end of the course and so strong essay writing skills are required.

What will I learn?

▲ Government and Politics of the UK

This unit explores the development of democracy, political parties and legislation in the UK. The unit also teaches electoral systems, parliamentary election, party ideology and analysis of voting behaviour.

▲ Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics

This unit allows students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of politics on a more global scale, beyond the context of the UK. Students will learn about political systems in the USA and draw comparisons with the UK.

▲ Political Ideas

A study of three core ideas which underpin modern parties and contemporary debates.

How will I learn?

Lessons are designed to encourage active participation and are similar in style to those you might find in university seminars. Discussion is essential to all lessons. You will be encouraged to think for yourself beyond the 'taught' content. Lessons will also encourage you to develop reading, writing and critical thinking skills.

Where could it lead?

It is highly regarded by employers in industries including politics, international organisations, the media, government and the civil service.

PSYCHOLOGY Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE Psychology (if studied). **Alternatively**, 5 grade 5s or above **including** in GCSE English Language.

Overview

Advanced Level Psychology involves you learning to develop an analytical and critical approach to the study of the human mind and behaviour, leading to a sound understanding of the multiple applications of Psychology in the wider society. You will consider biological make-up, learned experiences, cognitive (thought) processes and past experiences. You will learn to analyse theories by evaluating the studies that support them, and you will be taught the skills required to draw out the strengths, weaknesses and the psychological issues and debates with each. You will also learn how to examine and analyse the methodologies which underpin psychological theories, for example, questionnaires, laboratory experiments and case studies. The course is 100% examination based, with three examination papers to be taken at the end of the course.

What will I learn?

You will be assessed via three written examinations of two hours each, all taken at the end of the course. Each paper will include multiple-choice questions, short answer questions and extended writing. Learning is focused around three main assessment objectives which are emphasised and embedded throughout the taught duration of the course.

- ▲ **Paper 1 Introductory topics in Psychology:** you will study social influence, memory, attachment, clinical psychology and mental health.
- ▲ **Paper 2 Psychology in Context:** you will study the approaches in psychology, biopsychology, and research methods.
- ▲ **Paper 3 Issues and Options in Psychology:** you will study issues and debates in Psychology plus three additional topics: relationships ▲ schizophrenia ▲ forensics

How will I learn?

Through learning about human behaviour, you will develop strong communication, leadership, and team-working skills. Lessons are designed to promote higher-level and analytical thinking through a variety of learning methods, including data collection, debates, presentations, and essay writing. To be most successful, you will be expected to read around the topics covered in lessons, looking at additional research examples to broaden your evaluative viewpoint on psychological research and applications in society. In addition to your taught lessons, you will be expected to undertake a significant amount of independent study.

Where could it lead?

Advanced Level Psychology offers the opportunity for students to develop approaches to critical thinking and analysis of human behaviour through use of discussions, evaluative writing, research, applied statistics and data analysis. It is, therefore, considered an asset to all areas of Higher Education, including business, education, research, social work, medicine, and healthcare. Furthermore, students who wish to become psychologists could work in a range of roles such as teaching, counselling and therapy, sport, human resources, and the prison service.

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Religious Studies, Ethics and Philosophy

Exam Board Eduqas

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE English Language **OR** GCSE English Literature

Overview

This Religious Studies course blends religion, philosophy and ethics into one accessible and interesting course. The course will equip you with a deep understanding of religion – both how it works for believers and how to understand its place in the world. You will also tackle philosophical questions related to religion and ethical problems.

You will be assessed through three examinations at the end of the course. Each exam is made up of two questions out of a choice of five. This is an essay-based course and these skills will be developed throughout study.

What will I learn?

Paper 1: Study of a religion

- ▲ Religious figures and sacred texts
- ▲ Religious concepts and religious life
- ▲ Significant social and historical developments in religious thought
- ▲ Religious practices that shape religious identity

Paper 2: Philosophy of Religion

You will decide whether there are any convincing arguments for the existence of God and then look at the most problematic challenges to these arguments that theists face. You will then explore what religious experience is like on a philosophical level and whether religious language can be used meaningfully.

Paper 3: Religion and Ethics

You will study three normative ethical theories and the application of ethical theory to two personal, societal or global issues of importance. You will look at how ethical language has changed over time, including a study of meta-ethical theories and significant ideas in religious and moral thought such as free will, conscience or authority.

How will I learn?

Lessons are designed to encourage active participation and are similar in style to university seminars. Discussion is essential and wider reading is encouraged. You will develop the necessary analytical and evaluative writing skills for success in the exams.

Where could it lead?

Religious studies and philosophy are highly valued at both universities and in workplaces as it shows a deep, critical level of thought. It can be seen as the 'ultimate transferable work skill' because of the emphasis on reason and argumentation. A qualification in religious studies can, therefore, lead to a wide range of careers. Many who study this A Level go on to careers in law, medicine, journalism, politics, economics, business, teaching or media to name a few.

SPANISH Advanced Level

Qualification Level 3 Advanced GCE in Spanish

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 6 or above in GCSE Spanish

Overview

A Level Spanish builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills gained at GCSE level or equivalent. The course is a facilitating subject with a focus on language, culture, history, politics, film and literature.

What will I learn?

- ▲ Aspects of Hispanic society
- ▲ Artistic culture in the Hispanic world
- ▲ Multiculturalism in Hispanic society
- ▲ Grammar
- ▲ Literary texts and films
- ▲ Individual Research Project (IRP)

Exams

Paper 1 assesses listening, reading and writing skills (50% of A Level marks)

Paper 2 assesses essay writing skills on the novel and film you have studied (20% of A Level marks)

Paper 3 assesses your speaking skills (30% of A Level marks)

How will I learn?

A range of teaching styles will be employed to enhance students' linguistic skills, alongside individual study, which is particularly important for the societal and cultural elements of the course. The course promotes and develops students' capacity for critical thinking on the basis of their knowledge and understanding of the language, culture and society of the country or countries where the language is spoken.

Students will be encouraged to develop control of the language system to convey meaning, using spoken and written skills, including an extended range of vocabulary, for both practical and intellectual purposes as increasingly confident, accurate and independent users of the language.

Where could it lead?

Studying an A Level in Spanish opens the door to a wide range of exciting career paths and global opportunities. Language skills are highly valued in international business, diplomacy, journalism, tourism, and education. Whether you are aiming for a career in translation, law, marketing, or international relations, a language A Level enhances your CV and sets you apart.

Universities and employers seek candidates with excellent communication skills and cultural awareness. Students of A Level languages consistently demonstrate the necessary critical thinking skills and independence of thought to thrive at university and beyond.

Having a language at A Level also facilitates travel and work abroad, deepens your understanding of the world, and therefore fosters connections across cultures, all of which are essential skills in today's global economy and diverse professional environments.

LEVEL 3 APPLIED

To succeed on our **Applied Pathway**, you will have at least **five GCSEs**, including English and Maths, at **Grade 4** or above.

Many of our Applied Pathway qualifications have **course specific entry requirements**, too, and you will need to meet these as well as the Applied Pathway entry requirements.

Following this pathway will allow you to progress to **further study** in your chosen subjects or lead you directly into an **apprenticeship** or **employment**.

We will advise you on the right number and choice of Applied Pathway courses for you, depending on both your GCSE results and your future plans.

BUSINESS BTEC National

Qualification BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Business

Exam Board Pearson Edexcel

Course Specific Entry Requirements If you study GCSE Business Studies, you must achieve a Grade 5 or above.

Alternatively, 5 grade 5s or above. It is not necessary to have studied Business at Level 2

Overview

The BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Business is designed to sit alongside other Level 3 courses, either academic or applied, as part of your Study Programme. It is aimed at those students who have an interest in business and learning more about the business sector. It provides opportunities to investigate real life scenarios and contexts, enabling you to tailor the course to your individual areas of interest. As with other BTEC courses, you will be required to study a number of mandatory units in addition to an optional unit which is selected based on students' areas of interest.

What will I learn?

The BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Business is comprised of four units. Three are mandatory units, two of which are assessed externally, and the final unit allows for a degree of student choice.

The **mandatory** units are as follows:

- ▲ Exploring Business
- ▲ Developing a Marketing Campaign
- ▲ Personal and Business Finance

Possible **optional** units are varied and include the following:

- ▲ Recruitment and Selection
- ▲ Investigating Customer Service
- ▲ Market Research
- ▲ The English Legal System
- ▲ Work Experience in Business

How will I learn?

Lessons will reflect the varied style and nature of the assessment of the BTEC course. You will be required to apply what you have learned in the classroom to a range of business contexts. Investigation into the business world will be a key element of this course, with students exploring approaches used by different firms to achieve their aims. You will need to take an active role in your learning, involving yourself in discussion and debate as well as presenting your ideas to the class on occasions. A keen interest in the world around you and, specifically, the business world, is essential.

Where could it lead?

The course content has been developed in collaboration with both universities and leading organisations in order to ensure progression both for those students wishing to enter Higher Education and for those who want to move directly into employment in the business sector. Business and business-related courses at Higher Education are diverse and highly sought after. This course will equip you with the independence of learning and resilience required for degree courses at university. Equally, the course modules are recognisable to employers, who were consulted in the development stage to ensure the programme of study provides high calibre employees of the future.

DIGITAL MEDIA (CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS) Extended Certificate

Qualification Level 3 Extended Certificate in Digital Media

Exam Board OCR

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 4 or above in GCSE English Language, or GCSE ICT, or GCSE Media Studies.

Overview

The Cambridge Technicals Digital Media Extended Certificate is an exciting and dynamic course, designed to equip you with the essential skills and knowledge needed in the fast-evolving world of digital media. The course covers a variety of media formats, including audio-visual, web-based content, and digital graphics, and encourages you to explore practical, creative, and technical aspects of digital media production. You will develop a sound understanding of how the media industry works and how digital technologies have shaped modern communication.

What will I learn?

The course will give you an in-depth understanding of various aspects of digital media, including both theory and practice. Some of the key areas of study include digital media products, creative media production, media representation, and digital publishing.

Unit 1: Media Products and Audiences (30% of Extended Certificate)

In this unit, you will investigate how media products are created and consumed by audiences. You will explore how digital media works across different platforms and examine audience demographics and engagement.

Unit 2: Digital Media Skills (30% of Extended Certificate)

This unit focuses on developing your ability to complete a series of practical assignments, each demonstrating your ability to plan, produce, and evaluate digital content.

Unit 3: Personal Media Project (40% of Extended Certificate)

This unit is your opportunity to explore a media topic of personal interest and create a detailed media product to showcase your skills.

How will I learn?

Throughout the course, you will work both independently and collaboratively to complete tasks, assignments, and projects. The course will include practical workshops, project-based **learning, collaborative work, and regular feedback.**

Where could it lead?

The Digital Media Extended Certificate opens doors to a wide range of career opportunities within the creative industries. You could pursue roles in areas such as film and TV production, web design and development, graphic design, animation and game design, and social media management.

Digital media skills are in high demand in an increasingly online world, with opportunities in both freelance and full-time roles. The qualification is recognised by universities and employers alike, making it an excellent stepping stone to further study in media, communications, film, or design.

HUMAN BIOLOGY Cambridge Advanced National Certificate

Qualification Cambridge Advanced National Extended Certificate

Exam Board OCR

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5-4 or above in GCSE Combined Science **and** Grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics **and** Grade 5 in GCSE English.

Overview

▲ Can you diagnose a disease from blood test results, and understand what's happening inside the body at a cellular level?

▲ How do medical imaging techniques like MRI and ultrasound help us see inside the human body, and how are they used to detect illness?

These are a few of the many compelling questions you will explore in **Human Biology**. The OCR Cambridge Advanced National in Human Biology is a vocationally rooted, yet academically rigorous course which gives you both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, making it ideal preparation for careers in healthcare or further study in life sciences.

What will I learn?

We will complete 6 units

Mandatory Units:

- ▲ Fundamentals of human biology
- ▲ Health and disease
- ▲ Genetics
- ▲ Biomedical techniques

Optional Units: A choice of 2 from below:

- ▲ Nutrition and metabolism
- ▲ Human Reproduction
- ▲ The brain
- ▲ Drug development

Assessment & Structure

This Extended Certificate is assessed by both externally-assessed exam papers and teacher-assessed tasks (non-examined assessment).

- The exams test your underpinning knowledge, application skills, and ability to analyse data in human biology contexts.
- The teacher-assessed tasks will require you to complete practical investigations, data analysis, and reporting to demonstrate applied understanding.

How will I learn?

Your lessons will use a variety of methods to develop both scientific understanding and practical competence.

You will engage in the following:

- Laboratory practicals: using microscopes, biochemical techniques and dissections
- Data collection and statistical analysis
- Case studies and real-life human health contexts
- Presentations, research work and group debates

You will be expected to take an active role in your learning — exploring topics beyond the core, engaging critically with research, questioning assumptions, and linking theory to real human biology.

Where could it lead?

Human Biology offers many pathways into higher education and careers in health and science. Typical destinations include the following:

- Biomedical Science, Physiology, Biochemistry
- Nursing, Midwifery, Paramedic Science, Occupational Therapy
- Public Health, Nutrition, Dietetics
- Research Roles in Genetics, Physiology, Pharmacology
- Technical Roles in Labs, Hospitals, Diagnostics

Qualification BTEC National Extended Certificate in Information Technology (AAQ)

Exam Board Pearson Edexcel

Course Specific Entry Requirements If you study Information Technology at Level 2, you must achieve a Merit or above. **Alternatively**, 5 grade 5s or above. However, it is not necessary to have studied Information Technology at Level 2

Overview

We live in a digital world. Understanding how the technology that runs our world works will give you the advantage in whichever job sector you decide to work. The new BTEC Level 3 Information Technology (AAQ) is an extremely versatile subject to choose and provides a progression route to many Higher Education courses. This new and exciting course has been developed in collaboration with employers, representatives from Higher Education and relevant professional bodies to ensure the content is current and relevant and to ensure that you are well equipped when you leave the course and continue onto your next pathway.

What will I learn?

The course comprises of four mandatory units, two of which are externally assessed. The four units are completed over two years (two per academic year):

▲ **Information Technology Systems** (*externally assessed examination*)

Information technology systems, including the relationship between the hardware and software and the issues related to IT systems.

▲ **Cyber Security and Incident Management** (*externally assessed examination*)

Types of cyber security attacks, the vulnerabilities in networked systems and how to plan and respond to attacks

▲ **Website Development** (*internally assessed unit*)

The development tools, techniques and processes used in website development and how to test usability, functionality and fitness for purpose.

▲ **Relational Database Development** (*internally assessed Unit*)

Structure of data, data design and database management systems (DBMS)

How will I learn?

You will be expected to contribute your opinions and work collaboratively with your peers. An interest in technology is required and an enthusiasm to learn about how the digital world works is essential. You will enjoy a hands-on approach to learning where you can put into practise the knowledge you are learning. A mixture of theory and practical lessons will make for a rich and stimulating learning environment. You will leave with a clear understanding of the importance of, and methods used, to create an ICT solution that meet the needs of a variety of clients.

Where could it lead?

The course would provide progression for those students aspiring to degrees in Business Studies, Computer Science and Information Systems. However, careers in IT are diverse and the course forms a solid grounding for both further study and a range of careers. The skills and knowledge you will develop whilst following the IT course will enhance your application into any sector of employment. Higher Education welcomes IT as a qualification and can enhance a range of other subjects. IT based higher education courses are also extremely varied – with many additional options beyond Computer Science and Information Systems. Apprenticeships in IT career areas are another option, with this qualification showing potential employers that you have a broad range of skills.

MATHEMATICAL STUDIES (CORE MATHS) Level 3 Certificate

Qualification Level 3 Certificate in Mathematical Studies

Exam Board AQA

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 4 or above in GCSE Mathematics. This one-year course **must** form part of a Study Programme comprising at least three other two-year, Level 3 qualifications. You will need a scientific calculator throughout the course.

Overview

Level 3 Certificate in Mathematical Studies (Core Maths) is a one year course for students who have passed GCSE Mathematics at Grade 4 or above but are not taking Advanced Level Mathematics. The aim is for you to retain, deepen and extend your mathematical understanding through solving meaningful and relevant problems, building upon your understanding at GCSE level. It is anticipated that this course will be particularly beneficial to you if you require a good level of mathematical skill for concurrent and future courses. The course sets out to use a problem solving approach to teach applied areas such as data handling (relevant to Geography, Psychology, Business and Sciences), decision maths (relevant to many business related subjects and computing), personal finance (including calculating income tax and National Insurance), and critically analysing statistics and graphs often used in the media. This course will give you confidence with numerical techniques required at degree level or in future employment.

What will I learn?

Approximately 75% of the course is based on elements of the new GCSE course, with emphasis on real life application. New mathematical content that you will learn includes the following:

- ▲ Modelling
- ▲ Financial problem solving
- ▲ Critical maths
- ▲ Statistics

The course is assessed through two written papers at the end of the year. **Paper 1** assesses compulsory content including Financial Mathematics and Data Analysis, whilst **Paper 2** will focus on critical analysis, probability, and statistics.

How will I learn?

Core Maths builds on GCSE Maths with sharper focus on problem solving skills by considering and tackling mathematics in meaningful contexts. These meaningful contexts may take the form of projects that run over a series of lessons and will be driven, as much as possible, by the interests of the students themselves. The mathematical content required for examination will therefore often be taught within the context of the projects. There will be opportunities to develop your IT skills using spreadsheets and Excel.

Where could it lead?

This is a problem solving course and hence will form the bedrock of many careers and different types of employment (many of which might not yet exist!) as a supporting subject. The course will also prepare you for the mathematical demands of many degree courses, such as Geography and Psychology, for which the mathematical understanding required is high, but not as substantial as in Advanced Level Mathematics.

Many universities will lower their course entry requirements for students who have achieved a grade A or B in Core Maths.

MUSIC BTEC National

Qualification BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Music

Exam Board Pearson Edexcel

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE Music **or** Merit or above in Level 2 BTEC Music **or** Grade 4 standard in any instrument

Overview

This course is designed to give you the practical skills and knowledge you will need to succeed in the challenging and competitive world of Music. The programme covers a broad basis of study for the music sector with a focus on performance, personal instrumental technique development, music theory and professional practice. This BTEC Level 3 will be of particular interest to students who play a musical instrument and are interested in furthering their performance skills. In addition, there will be an opportunity to study composing in a variety of genres.

What will I learn?

There are four units:

- ▲ **Practical Music Theory and Harmony:** explore music theory through a range of practical and theoretical tasks to improve your musicianship.
- ▲ **Ensemble Music Performance:** you will develop your group performance skills and improve your own instrumental technique through rehearsals, workshops, recording and live performance.
- ▲ **Professional Practice in the Music Industry:** you will learn the key skills required to work in the UK's most successful industry. Learners will have the opportunity to plan, organise and lead on performances and recording sessions.
- ▲ **Optional solo or composition unit:** you will be given the freedom to choose your creative pathway and work on an individual project that is suited towards your musical strengths.

How will I learn?

You will work independently and collaboratively on musical performances and research into the industry. You will be given the opportunity to perform as a soloist and a member of the group and are expected to rehearse your chosen instrument regularly. You will have access to the Mac suite where you will compose using Sibelius and Logic music software.

Where could it lead?

The BTEC Music qualification could lead you to a range of careers in the ever-growing music Industry and develop transferable and higher order skills that are valued by Higher Education and employers.

PERFORMING ARTS BTEC National

Qualification BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate

Exam Board Pearson Edexcel

Course Specific Entry Requirements Grade 5 or above in GCSE Drama **or** Merit or above in Level 2 Performing Arts **or** a wide experience of performing in public.

Overview

BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Performing Arts qualification provides students with the opportunity to develop and enhance their knowledge and understanding of Drama and Movement through a range of units that provide a vocational setting to the work. The Extended Certificate is worth the equivalent of one A Level. All lessons are delivered by subject specialists and will prepare students for a possible future in the Performing Arts industry. The choice of qualification allows students to select a Performing Arts pathway that reflects their intention beyond the Sixth Form.

What will I learn?

In this course you will study **four** units, all related to an aspect of Theatre:

- ▲ Investigating Practitioners' Work
- ▲ Developing Skills and Techniques for Live Performance
- ▲ Group Performance Workshop
- ▲ Acting Styles

How will I learn?

All units have a predominantly practical and vocational focus. Each term will culminate in a public performance of the work created, with the additional opportunity to be part of the whole College show. Chances to develop as a performer are abundant! Performing Arts students are also given the opportunity to help co-ordinate and run Drama Clubs for younger students. This is an excellent opportunity which provides great experience for any students thinking about a career in education.

Where could it lead?

A qualification in Performing Arts opens many doors. Whether you are planning to progress to Higher Education, an apprenticeship or employment, with Performing Arts now one of the fastest growing industries in the United Kingdom, there has never been a better time to study the arts.

Qualification BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate

Exam Board Pearson Edexcel

Course Specific Entry Requirements If you study Travel and Tourism at Level 2, you must achieve a Merit or above. **Alternatively**, 5 grade 5s or above. It is not necessary to have studied Travel and Tourism at Level 2

Overview

Despite political uncertainties at home and around the world, nothing seems to stop us from planning and taking holidays. What is changing, however, is how and where we choose to take those holidays, giving rise to exciting times in this already fast changing sector. The BTEC Level 3 National in Travel and Tourism will help you to acquire the skills and knowledge you will need to get your travel and tourism career off to the best possible start. With many jobs locally linked to the travel and tourism industry, what better subject is there to choose which will help lead you into your future career?

What will I learn?

The BTEC National Extended Certificate in Travel and Tourism comprises of **four** units of work completed over two years:

▲ **The World of Travel and Tourism** (*externally assessed examination*)

You will explore the key components and scale of the travel and tourism industry, developing the skills needed to examine, interpret, and analyse a variety of statistics that measure the importance of tourism to the UK. You will also gain an understanding of how travel and tourism organisations work together to benefit both themselves and their customers.

▲ **Global Destinations** (*externally assessment of work carried out under supervision*)

You will investigate and analyse information regarding the features and appeal of global destinations, travel planning, and the factors and trends affecting the changing popularity of global destinations.

▲ **Principles of Marketing in Travel and Tourism** (*internally assessed coursework*)

You will learn about the importance of meeting customer expectations and communicating with customers effectively, as well as investigating the different stages that an organisation or tourist destination goes through when marketing their products or services.

▲ **Visitor Attractions** (*internally assessed coursework*)

You will develop analytical skills while investigating the nature and role of both built and natural visitor attractions, their commercial success, appeal, response to diverse visitor needs and the importance of delivering a memorable visitor experience.

How will I learn?

You will be expected to work both independently as well as collaboratively with your peers. Lessons will involve a mixture of theory as well as practical activities, such as problem solving and role play. In addition, there will be opportunities to learn outside the classroom through site visits and travel experiences.

Where could it lead?

Travel and tourism jobs cover a wide spectrum but generally include any job within the holiday market, whether that be helping customers to plan for a holiday, source a great place to stay, help to keep holiday-makers safe and comfortable during their holiday, or even helping travel companies to source great accommodation, like hotels and villas, and secure exclusive prices.