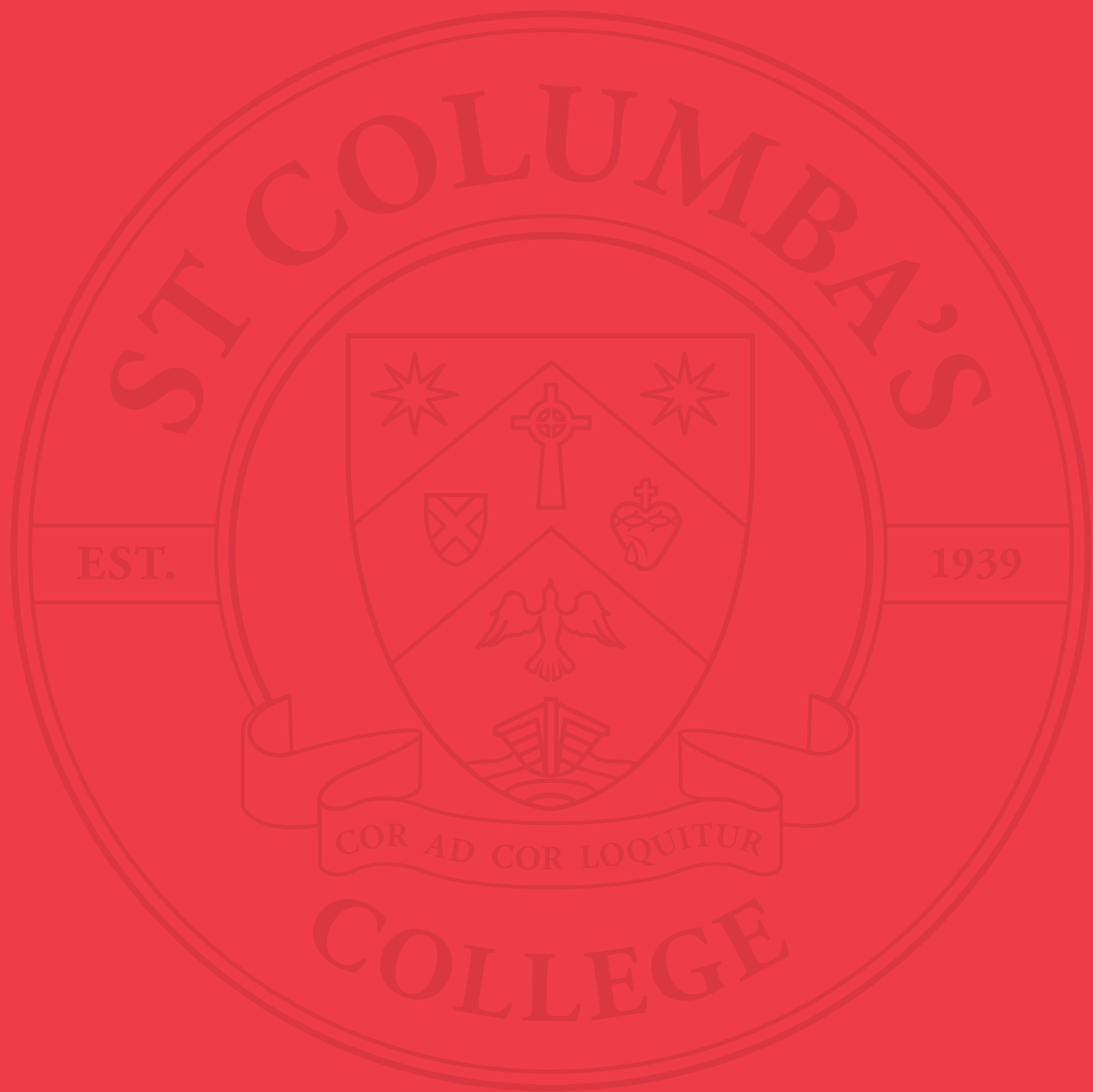


*Where young
people are*
**known,
valued &
treasured**



Sixth Form Prospectus

2025-2026



The impact St Columba's and the staff have had on my daughter has been life changing. I thank you all.





Welcome to the Sixth Form

We like to think of our Sixth Form as a College within a College.

Students at St Columba's College are asked to think seriously about their next steps in life, the importance of academic rigour, of their performance in their subjects, whether a University or Apprenticeship pathway would be more suitable. We challenge our students to work hard and achieve well, to create a portfolio of work that sets them on a higher plane to their competitors for undergraduate degrees and in the workplace. Our students get fantastic results and go on to do extraordinary things.

However, what also sets them apart is the development of their character, the leadership they show and the legacy they leave behind. Students in the Sixth Form willingly give up their time to lead across the College, from the Prep School to the Senior School, within academic departments, as Pastoral and Academic Mentors, through Drama, Music and Sport. The impact made by our students' within the College and outside our school gates is profound. The students' commitment to service and charity is significant. Our students are challenged in the wider holistic sense of the word, but also supported. Availability is central to the teaching of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and is particularly manifest at Sixth Form. Classes are small, and staff tailor their teaching to students' individual needs, making themselves available outside the classroom as well.

What is it that makes St Columba's College Sixth Form distinctive? By listening to the students, and their parents, we endeavour to create a personalised educational experience which is as enriching as it is demanding, which maintains structure but also offers flexibility. It has a modern feel, but also maintains a continuity of tradition and all of that is important to us, resulting in an educational environment that allows each student to thrive.

David Waters

Head of Sixth Form, Teacher of History and Politics



Sixth Form Admissions Journey

Entry requirements

A minimum of Grade 6 is required in subjects chosen to study at A Level, with exceptions for certain subjects. Please refer to the subject pages for further details. Students are expected to start with 4 A Levels. A grade 5 in English and Maths are also required. A Grade Point Average of 5 across subjects studied at GCSE is needed for A Level Study.

Students who are looking to do AAQs (Technicals) will need a GPA of 4.5. With at least a 4 in Maths and English and ideally a grade 5 in their chosen subject.

Internal applicants

At St Columba's College we believe strongly in the journey continuing through to 18 so therefore we do not ask for a formal application to be completed. We will instead write to families at the October half-term with an offer of a conditional place, dependent on them achieving the required grades for their chosen courses in the Sixth Form.

External applicants

All external candidates must complete the Sixth Form application form and provide reference and a copy of their latest school report. The deadline for applications is **Friday 5th December 2025**.

Scholarships

Academic, Music, Drama and Sport Scholarships are offered to internal and external applicants for Sixth Form. Those students currently receiving a Scholarship will be reviewed and notified if this continues through to Sixth Form.

Academic Scholarships are given in recognition of excellent academic performance and are at the discretion of the Headmaster.

Music Scholarships are dependent on the applicant's audition and satisfying the current academic entry requirement into the Sixth Form.

Sports Scholarships are awarded to students in recognition of sporting excellence, talent and future potential. Students must have attained the current academic entry requirement into the Sixth Form.

Induction week

All students are invited to attend a Sixth Form induction on **Thursday 25th June 2026** where they will experience orientation, meet Heads of Department, and get a head start on their Careers Programme.

External applicants are also invited to an additional induction day on **Wednesday 24th June 2026**. Further details will follow.

Admissions

Candidates successful at the application stage will be invited to attend an interview with the Head of Sixth Form.

For more information or to arrange a private tour of our Sixth Form, please contact our Admissions Team on admissions@stcolumbascollege.org or 01727 892040.

Sixth Form Staff



David Waters

**Head of Sixth Form
Teacher of History**

I joined St Columba's College as Head of Sixth Form in 2020 as we moved towards a co-educational setting.

I studied History at Liverpool University before taking a PGCE in History at Cambridge University.

I taught for 16 years at St George's Harpenden, rising to Assistant Headteacher in charge of Teaching & Learning and Curriculum. My subject specialism is History, and my experiences as a Senior Leader, examiner and consultant have given me insight into a range of educational settings as well as a deep understanding of the challenges that A Level students face.

In the Sixth Form at St Columba's, we see ourselves as a College within a College. We provide strong pastoral support and give the students a range of leadership opportunities they can grow into. I look forward to helping to nurture and develop the students' academic potential and provide them with an enriching and fulfilling time with us, as they contribute to the wider Sixth Form and College life.



Rachel Hambly

**Deputy Head of Sixth Form
Teacher of Latin**

I have been a Latin teacher at St Columba's since 2020, starting my career here as a Sixth Form tutor for McClancy House, before being appointed to Deputy Head of Sixth Form.

I obtained my Undergraduate degree in Classics at the University of Cambridge, staying there for a PGCE (in Latin and Classics) and a Master's in Education. I am also an examiner for OCR and teach at a Latin Summer School over the school holidays. I deploy my academic background to assist with Stretch and Challenge within the Sixth Form and with preparation for applications to prestigious universities.

As Deputy Head of Sixth Form, I primarily oversee the induction process for new 16+ students and look after their well-being as they transition into the Columban education system. The Sixth Form is an extremely vibrant place to work in and it is a true honour to support our students as they prepare for the next exciting steps in their lives.



Sally Griffiths Plunkett

**Head of Careers and Higher
Education Teacher of English**

My role at St Columba's College is to provide careers advice to students, support with applications and lead the school's careers curriculum.

Having taught at primary, secondary and university level, I have a well-rounded understanding of education and I am completing a level 6 diploma in Career Guidance and Development.

I read English Literature at Cardiff University and spent my third year at the University of California, Berkeley. The Arts and Humanities Research Council then funded my Masters' in the Teaching and Practice of Creative Writing back at Cardiff.

Before teaching, I pursued a career in publishing at Macmillan, The Economist and then The Guardian. I went on to work as a people team consultant so I understand recruitment and employment in the corporate world.

I am enjoying making our renowned programme event better, as well as enlightening students about potential future careers. I am available for one – to – one advice through the year.



Maria Adair

**Stretch and Challenge Coordinator
Teacher of Religious Studies**

I took my undergraduate degree at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge, and have worked at St Columba's College for 21 years. As Stretch and Challenge coordinator for Key Stage 5, my role involves working with Scholars to ensure they are doing their best; helping to prepare those applying for competitive courses, (especially the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge) and generally ensuring that students are challenged and have enough support to succeed.

I like to encourage students to read as widely as they can, to develop critical thinking skills and also to lead sessions to challenge pupils lower down the school.

I am also a Joseph House Sixth Form tutor, and consequently I am involved in the exciting process of university applications; from reference writing to helping with Personal Statements.

Our Sixth Form is a fantastic place to be and it is a privilege to be working alongside students who are learning to think more independently and, in doing so, become role models to younger students.



Juliet Foxwell

Sixth Form & Music Coordinator

As Sixth Form Coordinator, my role involves supervising the students in their private study and carrying out administrative tasks, but also, and perhaps more importantly, gives the Sixth Form students a team member who is based in their study room full-time, to whom they can turn with any question.

I have a wealth of experience in the retail industry, both working for large corporations and running my own business and hope to help the students in their transition to self-sufficiency as they proceed through their studies. I am here to support students new to the school, or new to Sixth Form life, adjust to the freedoms and pressures of their curriculum, also helping students who struggle to focus in the less structured private study time to reach their full potential.

My role here is one of reassurance and support, both emotionally and organisationally, at this key stage in their learning journeys. It is a true honour to support our students as they prepare for the next exciting steps in their lives.



Lucy Cronin

Director of Studies

As a teacher of Religious Studies and Philosophy I have worked at St Columba's College for 18 years and was formerly Head of RE and then Assistant Headteacher in charge of Teaching and Learning. I completed my degree in Theology and Religious Studies at Cambridge University.

I maintain a keen interest in the fields of theology, world religion, philosophy and social ethics. Throughout my years at St Columba's College, I have greatly enjoyed teaching A Level and seeing students grow in their ability to think critically and to challenge injustice but also to develop their spiritual life. I feel excited to be part of this strong community where gospel values, such as humility, solidarity, justice and integrity are able to be lived out.

As Director of Studies, my role is to help guide students during the process of choosing subjects and to put together the option blocks following the initial choices. I have oversight both of the timetable and of assessment and reporting; in this context I am always happy to talk through any issues relating to revision, wider reading or independent learning to help everyone maximise their potential and improve their grades.

2025 Leavers' Destinations

University of Bath	Maths
University of Bath	Politics with Economics
University of Birmingham	Sports and Exercise Science
University of Birmingham	Philosophy
University of Birmingham	Sports and Exercise Science
University of Birmingham	English
University of Bristol	Economics & Management
University of Bristol	Maths
Durham University	Philosophy
Edinburgh University	Sports Management
Exeter University	Maths
King's College, University of London	History
King's College, University of London	Social Sciences
Leeds University	Politics
Leeds University	Financial Maths
Leeds University	Economics & Finance
Leeds University	Economics & Politics
Leeds University	Politics
University of Leicester	Psychology
University of Leicester	Economics & Foundation
Liverpool University	Mechanical Engineering
Liverpool University	Dentistry
Liverpool University	International Management
Liverpool University	Communication
Loughborough University	Design
Loughborough University	Human Biology
Manchester University	Biology
University of Swansea	Medical Sciences
Newcastle University	Biomedical Sciences
Newcastle University	Sport and Exercise
Newcastle University	Architecture
Nottingham University	Maths with Economics
Nottingham University	Engineering & Physical Sciences with Foundation
Nottingham University	Economics
Nottingham University	Computer Science
Nottingham University	Criminology
Nottingham University	Medicine
Nottingham University	Sports and Exercise Science
Nottingham University	Maths

Nottingham Trent University	Product Design
Nottingham Trent University	Computer Science (with foundation)
Nottingham Trent University	Sports and Exercise Science (with Foundation)
Oxford Brookes University	Sports Coaching
Queen Mary University of London	Economics
Queen's Belfast	Mechanical Engineering
Reading University	Agricultural Business
Reading University	Real Estate
Reading University	Real Estate
Reading University	Economics
Royal Holloway University of London	Music
Royal Holloway University of London	Law
Savannah College, Alabama	Animation & Athletics Scholarship
Sheffield University	Economics & Politics
Sheffield University	Computer Science
Sheffield University	English & Philosophy
Sheffield University	Economics
Simpson College, Iowa	Music and Mathematics & Sports Scholarship (Gymnastics)
University of Southampton	History & Modern Language
University of Southampton	Criminology
University of Southampton	Aerospace Engineering
University of Southampton	Aeronautics with a Foundation
University of Southampton	Astrophysics
University of St Andrews	Geography
University of Sussex	Psychology
University College London	Maths with Economics
University College London	Biochemistry
University of East Anglia	Psychology
University of East Anglia	International Relations
University of Nebraska Lincoln	Politics
Warwick University	Politics
Warwick University	History
Warwick University	Politics
Warwick University	Philosophy
Warwick University	Maths
University of York	Criminology



42%
A* - A

72%
A* - B

Outstanding Examination Results

Our college is very proud of its A Level results in the Summer of 2025 and achieved the best A* – A Level percentage since 2014, 42% percent of entries were graded at A* – A and 72% A* – B.

The success of our young people was made possible by their hard work and dedication to their studies, combined with the support of our committed staff in the form of excellent teaching, highly tailored support, and timely intervention where required. A more detailed breakdown can be found on the college website under 'Exam Results'.

A growing number of students have also gained acceptance onto highly competitive degree apprenticeship courses, for which the College has developed a bespoke programme to support them along the way.

These outstanding results, combined with the expert support our students receive when making their choices about Higher Education meant that 73% of students gained a place at a Russell Group University, 78% gained a place at a "Top 10" (Bath, Loughborough) or Russell Group University.

A Level Subjects





Individual exploration and development of your personal skills and creative directions is a special aspect of this subject.

Harry Art Student

Art

Why choose Art?

- Study some self-elective areas of Art and Design in greater depth.
- Develop expertise in a particular medium or range of media.
- Discuss personal ideas in a creative and supportive atmosphere.
- Develop a personal portfolio of sketchbooks and pieces for interview at Undergraduate level and beyond.
- Develop confidence in your own ideas and to express them in a variety of different ways.

What will you learn?

Art at A Level builds on the work you have met at GCSE:

- Intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive capabilities.
- Investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement.
- Independence of mind in developing, refining and communicating your own ideas, your own intentions and your personal outcomes.
- An experience of working with a broad range of media.
- An understanding of the interrelationships between art, craft and design processes and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate.
- Knowledge and experience of real-world contexts and, where appropriate, links to the creative industries.
- Knowledge and understanding of art, craft, design and media and technologies in contemporary and past societies and cultures.
- An awareness of different roles, functions, audiences and consumers of art, craft and design.

Student view

Unique to studying Art at A Level, you build up a very personal and continually evolving body of practical work, guided and supported by your teachers. Individual exploration and development of your personal skills and creative directions are special aspects of this subject.

Harry Art Student

Entry requirement

Grade 6 or above in Art and Design at GCSE. You should have a strong portfolio of personal work and have developed a confident level of skill in a variety of drawing and painting techniques.

GCSE Art Examination Board

Eduquas A650QS





Many skills are gained which I can apply to any career. I'm glad I chose Biology because it has just been so interesting.

Max Biology Student

Biology

Why choose Biology?

A Level Biology is an excellent choice for a university degree in medicine, veterinary, dentistry, biological sciences, biochemistry, molecular biology or forensic science. Biology can also complement sports science, psychology, sociology and many more. It can open up a range of career opportunities including biological research, medical, environmental, forensics, sports and science communication. The transferable skills, such as problem solving, are also highly valued by university admissions tutors and employers for non-science courses and careers such as law and accounting.

What will you learn?

Biology at A Level builds on the work you have covered at GCSE. It allows exploration of fascinating topics from the molecular level to ecosystems fostering a deeper understanding of the natural world. Emphasis throughout the course is on increasing depth of knowledge, developing competence and confidence in practical techniques and problem-solving skills. You will learn to apply your knowledge, investigate and solve problems in a range of contexts. In addition to covering the core concepts of biology, you will also consider the impact of biological research and how it links to everyday life. The course covers how society makes decisions about scientific issues, and how science contributes to the success of the economy and society are also important components.

Student view

Biology at A Level requires hard work and determination, but the information learned is amazing. The practicals are carried out on your own with many different to those experienced at KS3 and GCSE. Many skills are gained which I can apply to any career. I'm glad I chose Biology because it has just been so interesting.

Max Biology Student

Entry requirement

A GCSE Grade 7 or above in either separate sciences or combined and Grade 7 in Maths.

Examination Board

OCR A H420





Studying business has given me a greater insight into the world of finance which has helped me find the courses I wish to study next.

Francesca Business Student

Business

Why choose Business?

Business is about real working practices and environments that students will come across in their working lives. We have worked in business environments and bring to the classroom a rich thread of anecdotes to bring theory to life. We have a passion for our subject and encourage curiosity. Wider reading is an integral part of making sense of business theories and we lend a large stock of Business and Management books to students. This is supported by watching a range of appropriate documentaries and films.

We encourage teams to participate in the Tycoon Enterprise Competition by the Peter Jones foundation.

Students are encouraged to explore business activity near where they live; to visit exhibitions and seek work experience to widen their horizons and provide real business examples for essays. We also hold regular homework support sessions and revision clinics throughout the year.

What will you learn?

We follow the AQA specification which, based upon independent research of a selection of top Russell Group Universities, was viewed as being the preferred choice for institutions due to its academic rigour and subject content. The focus is upon both long-term strategic and medium-term tactical decision making and the impact of external factors on business.

Students of this course study Business in a variety of contexts such as the interrelated nature of business activities and how they affect competitiveness, the influences on functional decisions and plans including ethical and environmental issues and use of non-quantitative and quantitative data in decision making (including the interpretation of index numbers and calculations such as ratios and percentages).

The two years studying Business are enjoyable and rewarding and provide a good foundation for any management role in the future.

Student view

Business gives you the knowledge on accountancy, HR, Operations and Marketing. Studying Business has given me a greater insight into the world of finance which has helped me find the courses I wish to study next, as well as what career path to choose. It is a great essay subject that has helped my essays improve across all my subjects by making me think more creatively and in-depth. I would highly recommend this subject for anyone who wishes to get into the finance industry.

Francesca Business Student

Entry requirement

Grade 7 or above in Business GCSE desirable. Students wishing to study Business must have a grade 6 or above at GCSE Maths and a GCSE essay-based subject such as English or Humanities at grade 7.

GCE Advanced Business Examination Board

AQA 7132



While it is a rigorous course, requiring critical thinking, planning, evaluation, and application, it is highly rewarding!

Ifaz and Ahmad Chemistry Students

Chemistry

Why choose Chemistry?

Chemistry offers many career opportunities, both within the numerous scientific disciplines and as the basis for a more general career in business and the financial world. As a qualification, Chemistry is highly valued as a sound basis for employment. Demand for chemists is high, and opportunities for Chemistry graduates have been increasing. Chemistry graduates are increasingly sought after to work in oil, chemical, engineering and manufacturing companies, including the fine chemical industries of pharmaceuticals, food, optics and the new technologies. Alternatively, you could follow a degree course in the Biological Sciences, Dentistry, Medicine or Veterinary Science.

What will you learn?

The main reason to study A Level Chemistry should be that you are interested and enjoy learning about Chemistry, both the theoretical and the practical aspects of the subject. The course encourages the appreciation of the connections between concepts and the underlying patterns that are fundamental to the knowledge and understanding of Chemistry. You will continue to build on what you have covered at GCSE and the links between the development of the subject and its application, and be able to recognise the value of Chemistry to society as a whole and how it may be used to benefit society now and in the future. The qualification integrates theory and relevant practical work, which are developed at different levels throughout the course. You will need to be able to problem solve, think critically and communicate effectively about chemical ideas. You will develop skills in laboratory procedures and practical techniques and will be encouraged to be both creative and analytical.

Student view

It is very hard not to like Chemistry since it is so intricately entwined with Science as a whole. It follows on from GCSE so well and figuring out why everything we learned exists is satisfying as well as intriguing. We also find out what isn't true from GCSE! When asked about our subjects, we feel the proudest when we reply with Chemistry because we know how essential to life and the world this knowledge is. The pride partially comes from the knowledge that it gives us a very open future too! Moreover, we appreciate the mathematical and logical approach, which certain questions require. There are many patterns, trends and reactions in Chemistry, and we find it is better to know why they exist than to mindlessly learn them. As a result, it will give you less to remember overall and help you to develop enjoyment and satisfaction for the subject. The A Level itself is also highly regarded by university admission tutors due to the skills that are established and honed. While it is a rigorous course, requiring critical thinking, planning, evaluation, and application, we should acknowledge that it is highly rewarding!

Ifaz and Ahmad Chemistry Students

Entry requirement

Grade 7 or above in either separate sciences or combined and Grade 7 in Maths.

Students wishing to study Chemistry at A Level are also advised to study A Level Mathematics as part of their studies.

GCE Chemistry Examination Board

OCR A (H432)



Computer Science



Computer Science is such a useful subject these days. It is a strongly taught subject with a great teaching team and enjoyable, hands-on, practical lessons.

Harry Computer Science student

Why choose Computer Science?

From phones and laptops, to gaming consoles and even fridges, the world around us relies on computers and technology to function. The study of Computer Science helps students to understand these technologies, and will give them the skills and knowledge to further the technological society in which we now live in.

Computer Science is fundamentally about problem solving and teaches skills which are transferrable across and beyond the subject itself. This is a practical as well as a theoretical subject, with plenty of opportunities to engage in both. A Level Computer Science is a gateway to many varied careers and university courses; popular areas of study and work include artificial intelligence, cyber-security, graphics, forensic computing, data mining, robotics and development.

What will you learn?

You will learn about how computers, networks and the internet function. You will also examine fundamental concepts of computing which are the foundations of the technology we take for granted today. In addition to this, you study the moral and ethical issues that Developers and Computer Scientists are now having to consider, as technologies such as self-driving cars and facial recognition become more widespread. You will build on your programming skills using the Python language, learning all the important features of the language and how to develop programs to solve problems. As well as Python, you will get the chance to work with other programming languages such as Haskell. You will also learn how to create and query a database using Structured Query Language (SQL). These technologies are at the forefront in the commercial world, giving you a very strong basis for later employment.

At the end of the course, you will sit two exams. One is a practical assessment of your programming skill, taken on a PC, while the other is sat in the hall and tests your theory knowledge. You will also be required to complete a Non-Exam Assessment; this is a free choice programming project or investigation, and you may use any programming language you choose. The department keeps a reference library of books and tutorials for other languages that you are free to borrow from, either to further your own knowledge or prepare for your NEA.

Student View

People are saying every job will be replaced by computers, but you will always need someone to make and maintain those computers. In this changing world, there is so much uncertainty of what is useful and what jobs there will be in the future, so it is clear that Computer Science is the way to go.

Harry Computer Science student

Entry requirement

Grade 6 in both GCSE Computer Science and GCSE Maths.

Students that have an interest in Computer Science, but did not take the GCSE, are welcome to apply based on their other results. A strong performance in STEM subjects would be expected. See Mr Staniforth to discuss if Computer Science would be an appropriate course. Non-GCSE entrants would need to have some understanding of the Python programming language prior to September (direction can be given if needed).

GCE Computer Science Examination Board

AQA 7517

Drama & Theatre



This subject offers you a broad range of opportunities. Drama and Theatre is a practical 'hands-on' subject with a strong academic profile.

Why choose Drama & Theatre?

A-Level Drama and Theatre is a course which fosters your creativity and encourages you to express yourself through performing, directing, designing and writing. Our approach to learning here is highly practical, allowing you to immerse yourself not only in the roles which you will play, but also engage with, and appreciate, the texts that you will study on a deeper level.

Skills such as collaboration, communication, accountability, problem-solving and critical thinking are highly valued throughout the course and by many, if not all, professions. Furthermore, because classes are always made up of a diverse range of students, from quiet creative minds, confident performers, keen designers to strong directors, there is a genuine opportunity for personal growth. Not only does the course open doors to higher education and careers in the performing arts, including acting, directing, playwriting, stage management, theatre design and theatre education, it also equips students with a huge range of skills applicable to a wider range of professions, making it a compelling choice for those passionate about theatre and seeking a well-rounded education.



What will you learn?

- How to apply the principles and devices of an exciting range of theatre practitioners/ companies from Stanislavski and Brecht to the contemporary Frantic Assembly, Alecky Blythe and Punchdrunk.
- How to devise theatre in the style of a chosen theatre practitioner/company and develop your ideas into a full production to be performed to an audience.
- How to select a suitable play-text, and approach rehearsing and staging a script for an audience.
- How to workshop play-texts to develop a deep appreciation for the context and themes within them.
- How to evaluate and analyse your own performances and the work of established theatre makers.
- Through watching live performances in theatres, you will learn to evaluate and analyse the work of Professional Actors, Designers and Directors.

Entry requirement

Grade 6 or higher in Drama, English Literature or Language. Please see Mrs Meadows if you would like more information on this new course.

Exam Board and Syllabus

AQA 601/8494/2



Learning this subject is a gateway to many jobs, particularly in the financial sector, and more generally to understand what is going on in the world.

Andrew Economics Student

Economics

Why choose Economics?

Every one of us is an economic agent – we earn income, we spend or save, our households pay taxes and we all benefit from state provision, be it street lighting, defence or healthcare. How do we know we are making good decisions?

Studying Economics provides the tools with which to determine answers to these questions. We have a passion for our subject and encourage curiosity. You are introduced to methods of individual study and research that will be vital to your progress and success at university and in work.

We encourage teams to participate in Enterprise Challenges and enter the BASE competition. Additional provision is made for anyone who intends to study Economics at university. We encourage you to attend RES lectures and events. We also hold regular homework support sessions and revision clinics throughout the year.

Economics is a highly regarded academic field of study which can provide the underpinning knowledge, awareness and skills to progress to a wide range of further studies and professions.

What will you learn?

You will take the linear two-year A Level Economics course which provides a strong foundation in both microeconomics and macroeconomics. In the first year, we investigate how markets work and consider the effectiveness of a range of market failure solutions as well as studying key macroeconomic objectives and international trade. In the second year, we look at competitive market structures and the labour market together with the study of macroeconomic management and the role of the state from a global perspective.

Student view

The Economics teachers at SCC are dedicated to ensuring that everyone understands the topics. Learning this subject is a gateway to many jobs, particularly in the financial sector, and more generally to understand what is going on in the world around you and how government decisions can affect you.

Andrew Economics Student

Entry requirement

Grade 7 or higher in Business or Economics GCSE desirable. Students wishing to study Economics must have a grade 7 or above at GCSE Maths and a GCSE essay-based subject such as English or Humanities at grade 7.

GCE Economics Examination Board

PEARSON EDEXCEL 9ECO

English Literature



A Level fosters independence in an intellectual working environment which treats students more like adults.

Ruby English Literature Student

Why choose English Literature?

A Level English Literature allows you to explore and respond to a variety of seminal texts from different genres, cultures and times. Building on the work you have done at GCSE, you will explore the writers' ideas and attitudes, reader responses over time, the historical context and the form, structure and language of the writing in seminar type lessons. You will develop your critical and analytical skills through interpreting texts and enjoy lively debates and discussions around the important philosophical and existential questions of life. English Literature is highly regarded by universities because of the transferable skills that you will develop in its study, such as the ability to research, to analyse critically, to craft an argument and to communicate persuasively and clearly, in both your speaking and writing. Although expressive arts subjects are obvious complementary disciplines, those considering STEM subjects may also wish to benefit from the diverse skill set that A Level English offers.

What will you learn?

English Literature at A Level builds on the three main genres of English that you enjoyed at GCSE: prose, poetry and drama. During the course, you will study either a Shakespeare comedy or tragedy and one other drama. You will also analyse two prose texts, linked by a theme: for example, Crime and Detection or Childhood. A selection of modern, post-2000 poetry is explored, as well as the course preparing you for an unseen poetry element. This is complemented by the study of a specific poet or movement: for example, the Romantics or Keats. Finally, there is a coursework element, worth 20% of the final grade, in which you will have the opportunity to research and examine any two texts of your choice, developing your own areas of interest and your independent learning skills.

Student view

Studying English Literature at A Level is an enriching and valuable experience allowing students to delve into a wide range of literary genres, including novels, poetry and plays, that they have never even considered before. The texts chosen to study at A Level are much more interesting, sophisticated, and engaging than those at GCSE, encouraging students to think critically and analyse them in depth.

Through close reading and interpretation, we develop the ability to dissect complex themes, motifs and literary devices, a skill that also impacts positively on other subjects and also real-life situations. Furthermore, communication skills are improved as we learn to articulate our thoughts effectively, both in written assignments and in class discussions where we develop the ability to present coherent arguments, support ideas with evidence and engage in meaningful debate.

One of the most interesting aspects of the subject is that English Literature is often intertwined with the historical and cultural context of the time it was produced, allowing an insight into different societies, perspectives, and historical events and broadening our understanding of the world. There is a big jump from GCSE to A Level, where the study of the text is only the beginning, and it is the wider reading that informs us and improves our responses. A Level fosters independence in an intellectual working environment which treats students more like adults.

Ruby English Literature Student

Entry requirement

Grade 6 or higher in both English Literature and Language.

GCE English Literature Examination Board

PEARSON EDEXCEL (9ET0)



Interlingual fluency is an extremely attractive accolade to hold nowadays; so why not begin this language journey with A-Level French?

James A Level French Student

French

Why choose French?

An A Level in French is an enjoyable challenge in itself, but the skills you learn will combine perfectly with practically any other subjects, and make you much more marketable to a future university or employer. Your status as an A Level linguist defines you as somebody who is willing to work at developing a new skill, somebody who is open to new people and cultures, and somebody who is adept at communicating. As well as mastering the skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing French, you will also access authentic French describing a huge variety of different topics and contexts and become a truly global citizen. Although many people speak French, it takes a degree of passion and commitment to reach A Level standard, and the rewards for taking this challenge are many, whatever your chosen destination in the future.

What will you learn?

As well as discovering and investigating relevant and exciting topics – from criminality to the cyber society, diversity to politics and the arts – you will use real-time news, radio and film to master the language, and be supported to explore books, films and plays. Everything we do is aimed at helping you to feel more confident, and the vast breadth of topics you cover will develop skills such as inquiry, problem-solving and analysis which will help in your other subject choices and serve you well at university or in the workplace. Good linguists are in-demand for their skills, and your two years studying French at A Level will not only be enjoyable but will also provide you with an impressive and very sought-after portfolio of skills.

Student view

When first starting A-Level French, it was challenging: it is a big step up from GCSE but with the genuine support of the MFL Department, it didn't take long to adjust. French A Level is fascinating and fun; it blurs the disciplines of English, Politics and Media Studies (to name a few) altogether while honing in on the complexity and beauty of the French language herself. Interlingual fluency is an extremely attractive accolade to hold nowadays; so why not begin this language journey with A Level French?

James A Level French Student

Entry requirement

Grade 7 or above in the Higher-Level GCSE is desirable.

Examination Board

GCE FRENCH – AQA 765

Further Maths



Working through a long, difficult problem to arrive at a correct solution which can never be disproven is one of the greatest feelings one can have.

James U6 Maths student

Why choose Further Mathematics?

It is a challenging qualification, which both extends and deepens your knowledge and understanding beyond the standard A Level Mathematics. Students who do it often say it is their favourite subject. If you are planning to take a degree such as Engineering, Sciences, Computing, Finance/Economics, or perhaps Mathematics itself, you will benefit enormously from taking Further Mathematics. This qualification is highly regarded and are warmly welcomed by universities. Students who take Further Mathematics are really demonstrating a strong commitment to their studies, as well as learning Mathematics that is very useful for any mathematically rich degree.

What will you learn?

As well as learning new areas of Pure Mathematics you will study further applications of Mathematics in mechanics, statistics and decision mathematics. Core Pure Mathematics makes up two thirds of the course. This includes introducing new topics such as matrices and complex numbers that are vital in many STEM degrees. You will also study decision Mathematics and one of Further Mechanics or Further Statistics. Decision Mathematics uses the techniques of discrete mathematics to solve real life problems in many areas.

In all modules you will further develop the important technique of mathematical modelling, where a complicated real-world problem is turned into a simpler one that can be analysed and solved using mathematical methods. Our department has a specialist team of A Level Further Maths teachers. We regularly have extra tutorials that are run by staff and we run challenge groups that not only take part in the Senior Mathematical Challenges but also cover STEP and MAT problems and preparation. Your two years studying Mathematics and Further Mathematics will be an enjoyable, rewarding, stimulating and empowering experience.

Student view

Further Mathematics is one of the most satisfying subjects that a person can study - working through a long, difficult problem to arrive at a correct solution which can never be disproven is one of the greatest feelings one can have. The real beauty of Mathematics is its very nature of being the language of the universe, everything can, essentially, be explained, described, predicted and derived with Mathematics; it forms the basis for all of the hard sciences and, thus, is hugely important to humanity as a whole.

James U6 Maths student

Entry requirement

Grade 8 or 9 at GCSE Mathematics.

GCE Further Mathematics Examination Board

PEARSON EDEXCEL 9FM0





Geography is fantastic to study at A-level with strong connections to other subjects, while itself being a good mix between writing, research, and analytical work.

Sam Geography student

Geography

Why choose Geography?

Geography is a broad-based subject which provides lots of opportunities for future progression and is very highly valued by universities as an A Level choice. At A Level you will discover the complex interaction of processes that shape our world, how human intervention affects the environment, and how people adapt and mitigate the effects of processes on their environment. This is complex and dynamic and varies from place to place depending on people's resources, technology and culture. Geography is an obvious choice for careers in sustainability and green issues, urban regeneration, energy supply, retail location, managing the effects of hazards and climate change.

For careers in the world of business, an understanding of global economics forms an important part of Geography. If you are thinking of a career in law, human rights, international relations or welfare, then Geography gives you the opportunity to consider relevant issues such as; How do we measure development? What are the consequences of migration on societies? Most importantly, Geography combines well with both the arts and science subjects and allows students to keep their options open for those that do not yet know what kind of career they might want to pursue.

What will you learn?

Geography at A Level builds on the work you have studied at GCSE. The course is split into four papers: Core Physical Geography, Core Human Geography, Advanced Physical Geography and Advanced Human Geography. In Core Physical Geography you will develop your understanding of: Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology; Atmosphere and weather; and Rocks and weathering. In Core Human Geography you will look at the roles of technology and innovation in development of food production and the concepts of carrying capacity within the Population unit; understand the patterns and obstacles of migration and the impact this can have on a population in the Migration unit.

Student view

Geography is a very useful and enjoyable subject that not only enables a greater understanding of the world but also opens doors to many future paths for studying and careers. The subject consists of an equal split between human and physical units which allows for synoptic studying of the subject. We look at a variety of exciting case studies from around the world, incorporating current affairs into our work. Overall, Geography is fantastic to study at A-level with strong connections to other subjects, while itself being a good mix between writing, research, and analytical work.

Sam Geography student

Entry requirement

Grade 7 or above at GCSE desirable.

GCE Geography Examination Board

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL A LEVEL 9696

History



It has been particularly interesting to see how political ideologies and individuals have shaped our world today. The subject has challenged my preconceptions and broadened my horizons.

Dan History Student

Why choose History?

History is an extremely useful subject to take at A Level. It sharpens critical thinking and the ability to make informed, rational judgements and promotes lateral and innovative thought as well as a comprehension of the world around us. History combines well with a wide variety of subjects: the skills are transferable to subjects such as English, Sociology, Geography, Politics and Languages. It has also been very successfully studied with sciences and technology where essay writing skills are required. A Level History is highly regarded by both universities and employers alike and is seen as a beneficial subject to have studied for careers in Law and Journalism because it enhances powers of evaluation and communication.

What will you learn?

The aim of the A Level course is to give students the opportunity to discover the subject for themselves. Through studying new periods of History in greater depth and breadth, a genuine understanding of the complexity of the past and its links with the present will be gained. The course develops your work at GCSE and provides an insight into the power of political ideas in the industrial age and how they have impacted on the lives of individuals. In the Lower Sixth the main theme is the development and trajectory of Communism in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1991 and in China between 1949 and 1976. In the Upper Sixth students complete a 3- 4000- word coursework study as well as looking at the development of the British Political system between 1780 and 1928.

Student view

It is fascinating to compare and contrast the development of Communism in the Soviet Union and China as well as the impact of the Industrial Revolution on British Politics. It has been particularly interesting to see how political ideologies and individuals have shaped our world today. The subject has challenged my preconceptions and broadened my horizons.

Dan History Student

Entry requirement

Ideally students should have a Grade 7 or above in GCSE History.

GCE Advanced History Examination Board

PEARSON EDEXCEL (9HI0)



I now have a much deeper understanding of the way every language works, as well as a unique insight into the thoughts of this ancient civilisation.

Gus Latin student

Latin

Why choose Latin?

Latin A Level is very highly respected by universities and employers, and with good reason. Successful Latin students have to have powerful skills of grammatical analysis. But they also need to have a strong awareness of narrative structures and politico-historical contexts. Added to this, they should have a good grounding in Philosophy and be intelligent critics of art. And really that is just the start.

What will you learn?

We read the literature written by the Romans – this includes the wonderful mythology of Virgil and Ovid, the dazzling rhetoric of Cicero, the fascinating history of Tacitus. Smaller class sizes and more lesson time allows us to discuss in depth the philosophical and psychological issues raised by Ovid's investigations into heroes and heroines, for example. The language skills that you have built up during GCSE go up several gears.

The level of linguistic awareness, and the sophistication of the grammatical dialogues we have, is very high indeed. And the skill is transferable, it is not just Latin structures you end up understanding, but the structure of all languages, indeed the structure of Language itself. It is the number one skill of them all, there is no more important skill you can have. This is set against the background of the expansion and workings of a proper landmark in human history – The Roman Empire. And so, the talk turns to archaeology, inscriptions, numismatics (coins), funerary beliefs, engineering, warfare, battle strategy, and conquest. We even had a lesson this year on ancient shipwrecks and sunken cargoes. So, the question is not so much 'What will you learn?' It's probably easier to list the things you won't learn.

Student view

To me, the study of the Classical World is the most exciting and intriguing prospect possible. The discussions we have had in the Latin Room have been some of the most fascinating and enjoyable of my life, and my grammatical skills have developed to a level I did not think possible. I now have a much deeper understanding of the way every language works, as well as a unique insight into the thoughts of this ancient civilisation.

Gus Latin student

Entry requirement

Grade 7 or above in the Higher-Level GCSE Latin paper.

GCE Advanced Latin Examination Board

OCR LATIN H443



Maths helps us think analytically and have better reasoning abilities. Analytical thinking gives us the ability to think critically about the world around us.

Caitlin Maths student

Mathematics

Why choose Mathematics?

Having a proven track record in mathematical learning is increasingly in demand. Employers seek people who have successfully demonstrated their understanding of complex concepts. Technological innovation is underpinned by mathematical theory in the same way that the discipline supports and develops understanding across the sciences and business. Importantly, the skills learned during your time studying A Level Mathematics – those of reasoning, logic, problem-solving and analysis – will stand you in good stead, whatever your ultimate destination.

What will you learn?

Mathematics at A Level builds on the work you have met at GCSE. All students will study Pure Mathematics, in which you will extend your knowledge of topics such as algebra, trigonometry, and calculus. Pure Mathematics makes up two thirds of the course. You will also study the following important applied branches of Mathematics. In Mechanics you will learn how to describe mathematically the motion of objects and how they respond to forces acting on them, from cars in the street to satellites revolving around a planet. You will learn the important technique of mathematical modelling, where a complicated physical problem is turned into a simpler one that can be analysed and solved using mathematical methods. In statistics you will learn more about how to analyse numerical data in order to arrive at conclusions about it. You will study further the important topic of probability, on which advanced statistical ideas are based.

The department has a committed team of A Level teachers. We regularly have extra tutorials that are run by staff and mentoring by current students is also available. Your two years studying Mathematics will be an enjoyable, rewarding, stimulating and empowering experience.

Student view

Mathematics is truly an amazing subject which challenges and intrigues me all the time. The great thing about Maths is understanding a concept, particularly a difficult one. When I understand something in Maths, I feel a sense of satisfaction that I have mastered the problem. However, when I find it difficult, I'm determined to understand it and grasp it. Maths helps us think analytically and have better reasoning abilities. Analytical thinking gives us the ability to think critically about the world around us. Reasoning is our ability to think logically. Analytical and reasoning skills are important because they help us solve problems and look for solutions.

Caitlin Maths student

Entry requirement

Grade 7 and above in the Higher-Level Maths GCSE paper.

GCE Mathematics Examination Board

PEARSON EDEXCEL 9MA0



Music

Why choose Music?

Music is seen as a respected academic discipline by university admissions tutors. Studying Music is essential if you want to go on to study a related course at university, but A Level Music also develops and demonstrates a number of transferrable skills such as self discipline, tenacity, creativity, self-confidence and critical thinking. There are pure musical careers such as being a performing artist or composer but alternatives within the music industry include roles in Performing Arts Management, Theatre, Sound Production and Recording, Teaching, Acoustics and Music Therapy.

What will you learn?

Music at A Level continues to build on the skills learnt in previous years through to GCSE or instrumental and theory music examinations. 60% of the course concentrates on the practical side of music making through a Performance Recital and Composition (coursework) Portfolio.

You will learn to compose music to a higher level, producing work which is even more creative and sophisticated. The best two compositions are chosen for final assessment towards the end of the course, one of which must be composed according to a brief released in September of the Upper Sixth year. You will continue to work on your performance skills throughout the course, curating a final assessed Recital towards the end of the Upper Sixth year.

Analytical and appraisal skills are developed throughout the course leading to the final examination worth 40% of the final grade. You will study a variety of music from many composers including Berlioz, Hermann, Kate Bush, and Saariaho. There are six areas of study ranging from the Baroque to present day.



I like how it's broad and doesn't specialise as either a performance or analysis course and that the components are weighted similarly.

Will Music Student

Your study of A Level Music will be supplemented by your lessons on instrument or voice and you will be given opportunities to showcase your work regularly through Concerts and Recitals. There are numerous opportunities for you to advance your musical studies by getting involved in the extra-curricular life of the Music Department, in ensembles such as: College Choir, Jazz Band, Senior Orchestra, Senior Bell Choir, Wind Ensemble. I have also enjoyed going to concerts to watch and listen to the music we learn about.

Student view

I like how it's broad and doesn't specialise as either a performance or analysis course and that the components are weighted similarly (although this means you need to be quite well rounded!). I also enjoy the essay writing portion particularly in the A Level year where context is slightly more important. Similarly, the essay titles themselves are straightforward and clear.

Will Music Student

Entry requirement

Music GCSE achieving Level 6 or above; or ABRSM/ Trinity Grade 5 Theory ABRSM/Trinity Grade 6 on an instrument or voice You should be ready to perform pieces at ABRSM/ Trinity Grade 7 or above by the end of the U6th year of the course.

To assist you with the performance aspect of the course, you will be given a bursary of £210 per term for instrumental or voice lessons.

GCE Music Examination Board

EDEXCEL

Philosophy & Ethics



This subject enables you to have a complete enjoyment of the topics you study. You are inspired by your teachers to bring out the best in yourself.

Chloe Philosophy & Ethics Student

Why choose Philosophy & Ethics?

This subject is for anyone with a good critical mind, who enjoys exploring ideas and thrives in an environment where they are challenged to consider philosophical and ethical issues both new and old. This is a rigorous and academic subject which is rooted in the most traditional universities where it is highly regarded. It is for anyone who is interested in questioning the very presuppositions that society is built on and it can be studied by people of a religious background and people of no faith at all.

The ability to critically assess information from a wide variety of sources and to form a reasoned judgement are skills highly regarded by all careers in the workplace today. In the past, students who have studied this at A Level have gone on to study subjects such as Philosophy, Law, Business and Languages (amongst other things). Furthermore, they have gained places at universities such as Cambridge, Durham, Nottingham and many more.

What will you learn?

You will study three different elements throughout the course. Philosophy starts with the ideas of Plato and Aristotle (the foundation of modern thought) and then explores the challenges facing people in the world today including the problem of suffering. Ethics begins with thinkers such as Bentham and Mill and uses knowledge of philosophers to analyse areas such as euthanasia and business ethics. Theology examines issues as diverse as Secularism, Feminism and Marxism. You will learn to discuss ideas, critically examining your own presuppositions and those of others.

Students are supported closely both inside and outside of the classroom where there will be a mixture of group work, independent learning and one-to-one tutorials empowering students to fulfil their potential. You will learn how to write effective essays considering ideas from alternative viewpoints, forming a reasoned judgment and coming to a logical conclusion. Skills developed in this subject will really help you to become an effective thinker in whatever discipline you choose to pursue.

Student view

Here are some comments from a wide range of students:

- “It’s completely different from GCSE R.E. as it is more interesting and more ethically challenging”
- “Lessons are much more interactive”
- “Teachers are inspiring as they know what they are talking about in depth”
- “This subject enables you to have a complete enjoyment of the topics you study. You are inspired by your teachers to bring out the best in yourself”

Entry requirement

Grade 6 in GCSE Religious Studies

GCE - Religious Studies Examination Board

H573

Physical Education Sports Science

Why choose Physical Education?

Studying A Level Physical Education will give you a fantastic insight into the amazing world of sports performance. The emphasis throughout the course is on the development of your knowledge, competence and confidence in a wide variety of skills that will enable you to confidently move forward in life. You will learn how Physical Education affects and contributes to society and also how to apply your knowledge from this course to any number of different practical situations or career choices.

Not only will you have the chance to perform or coach a sport through the non-exam assessment component, you will also develop a wide-ranging insight into the how and why of Physical activity and sport. You can perform, and then through the academic study improve your performance or coaching through application of the theory.

Physical Education is studied through a range of different contexts and the impact it has on both our and others' everyday lives. You will learn the reasons why we do things and why some people out-perform others, both mentally and physically. You will also delve into the ethical considerations behind the use of drugs and also the influence that modern technology is having in and on physical activity and sport.

What will you learn?

Physical Education at A Level builds on the work you have met at GCSE in PE and GCSE Biology. This is an interesting and challenging learning experience, linking key sporting ideas with practical performance and gaining insight into the relationships they have with each other. You will develop transferable skills including: decision making, psychological understanding of people, independent thinking, problem solving and analytical skills as well as thinking and acting under pressure.

- Joints movement and muscle functions and types of contraction
- Analysis of movement
- Cardiovascular system at rest and during exercise of differing intensities

- Respiratory system at rest and during exercise of differing intensities
- Diet and nutrition
- Ergogenic aids
- Acute and chronic injuries Injury prevention
- Rehabilitation of injury
- Biomechanical principles
- Linear and Angular motion
- Fluid mechanics
- Routes to sporting excellence
- Projectile motion
- Classification of skills
- Principles and theories of learning movement skills
- Information processing
- Individual, group and team dynamics in sports performance
- Attribution, confidence and self-efficacy in sports performance
- Leadership in sport
- Emergence and evolution of modern sport
- Sport in the 21st century
- Ethics and deviance in sport
- Commercialisation and the media
- Modern technology in sport

Student view

I chose A Level PE because I loved learning about the subject at GCSE and I had plans to further my education in sport at university. What I liked most about A Level PE was how it gave me the opportunity to learn about multiple disciplines all within the focus of sport. I gained a deep understanding of history, psychology and the anatomy and their relation to sport.

Cara PE Student

Entry requirement

Grade 6 or higher in the theory sections of the GCSE PE paper. For non-GCSE PE students a Grade 6 or higher in Biology and English is required.

GCE PE - OCR Examination Board

H555



*Physics is very closely related to Maths –
it teaches you how the world works.*

Lucy Physics Student

Physics

Why choose Physics?

Physics is the most fundamental science that attempts to explain natural phenomena using experimental tools and evidence. Physicists think deeply and analytically to answer questions about our universe: What is light? What are the most fundamental particles? Why is the Big Bang a theory?

Your study of Physics starts with addressing how to plan valid experiments and analyse the data they produce. You will learn about percentage uncertainties and percentage differences as means to critically evaluate scientific experiments. The PAGs (Practical Activity Groups) are an essential component that you must complete successfully as you go through the course. You will be required to demonstrate meticulousness and attention to fine detail as well as the ability to communicate effectively through written prose and mathematical clarity. As such, Physics A Level will prepare you well for on-going study at university or industry.

What will you learn?

Physics at A Level builds on the work you have met at GCSE. The course is organised in six modules:

Module 1 Development of practical skills in Physics: skills of planning, implementing, analysis and evaluation

Module 2 Foundations of Physics: physical quantities and units; scalars and vectors; measurements

Module 3 Forces and motion: motion; forces in action; work, energy and power; materials; Newton's laws of motion and momentum

Module 4 Electrons, waves and photons: charge and current; energy, power and resistance; electrical circuits; waves; quantum physics

Module 5 Newtonian world and astrophysics: thermal Physics; circular motion; oscillations; gravitational fields; astrophysics

Module 6 Particles and medical Physics: capacitors; electric fields; electromagnetism; nuclear and particle physics; medical imaging. There is a practical component which is endorsed at the end of two years of study

Student view

Here are some comments from a previous cohort

- PAGS practicals are always really interesting
- The course is much more in depth than GCSE and helps to make Maths A Level easier
- We have some great specialist teachers
- Topics are much more interesting than GCSE, such the focus on astrophysics
- Physics is challenging but really rewarding

Entry requirement

Grade 7 or above in either GCSE separate sciences or combined and Grade 7 in Maths.

GCE Advanced Physics Examination Board

OCR-A PHYSICS (H556)



I recommend taking this subject if you want to have a detailed understanding of the truly complex society which we live in.

Antonia Politics Student

Politics

Why choose Politics?

Studying this subject will give you the framework to understand the world of Politics as it is. We discuss domestic and global events as they arise, as Politics benefits from being one of the most contemporary focused A Levels available. Credit is given in assessments for using modern case studies. We debate, analyse and evaluate a range of political ideas and frameworks, with lessons being conversational and interactive in their approach. If you are a student who wants to understand the current state of politics, this A Level will give you a strong grasp whilst honing your critical thinking skills.

What will you learn?

There are three main strands to the Politics course. UK government and politics looks at all the major political institutions, parties, electoral systems, trends in voting and political participation. We also look at the US political system and seek to compare this to the UK, to find commonalities, differences as well as make judgements on their relative effectiveness. Finally, we look at the big political ideologies of conservatism, socialism and liberalism as well as having a detailed look at the various versions of nationalism.

Student view

Politics is a unique and well-developed subject within the school that helps us to make sense of the political and chaotic world we live in. It is probably one of the most exciting and interesting subjects right now to study. I recommend taking this subject if you want to have a detailed understanding of the truly complex society in which we live.

Antonia Politics Student

Entry requirement

Grade 7 in History and Geography GCSE
Grade 6 in English Language GCSE

GCE Politics Examination Board

EDEXCEL







Product Design

In Product Design we apply what we learnt in GCSE Maths, Science, and Technology to make real products and understand how design affects our world.

Owen Product Design Student

Why choose Product Design?

Step into the world of creativity, curiosity, and cutting-edge design. A Level Product Design is where imagination meets innovation—where students don't just learn about the world, they shape it.

If you love solving real-world problems, experimenting with materials, and bringing bold ideas to life, this is the course for you. Product Design empowers students to design and manufacture products in exciting, modern ways—combining traditional craftsmanship with the latest technologies.

This course is hands-on, dynamic, and deeply creative. Students develop practical skills across a wide range of materials and processes, while also gaining the confidence and knowledge to thrive in the fast-paced world of design, engineering, and beyond.

You'll also build essential life skills—like teamwork, communication, and critical thinking—that are valued in every career path.

What will you learn?

- **Design Thinking in Action:** Learn how to approach problems creatively and iteratively—designing, testing, refining, and improving your ideas.
- **Prototyping & Making:** Use a wide range of materials and techniques to create high-quality, functional prototypes that solve real-world challenges.
- **Cultural & Environmental Awareness:** Explore how design is influenced by historical, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors.
- **Industry Insight:** Discover how products are developed commercially and explore exciting careers in design, architecture, engineering, and more.
- **Independent Design Project (NEA):** Take full creative control as you identify a problem, research, design, and prototype your own innovative solution.

This course is a launchpad into:

- Architecture
- Product & Industrial Design
- Engineering
- Interior & Graphic Design
- Sustainable Innovation
- Creative Entrepreneurship

It's also a strong foundation for university study and apprenticeships in design-related fields.

Entry requirement

Grade 6 or higher in the Design Technology GCSE. Students that have not studied Design Technology at GCSE and are considering Product Design, please discuss this with Mr. McGinnity.

Exam Board & Syllabus

PRODUCT DESIGN – AQA 7552-1

Psychology

Why choose Psychology?

If you want to know what drives humans to act in a certain way, Psychology answers this from a variety of angles. Psychology presents a balanced A Level of social science, biology and research methods to give students a complete overview of the drivers of human behaviour and how they are studied. Lessons are discussion based, as we look at landmark psychological studies and what they have shown us, whilst maintaining a critical perspective on what is deduced from them.

What will you learn?

You will start the course learning about the six different approaches to Psychology, the impact human biology has on behaviour and how psychological studies are carried out.

Once you are comfortable with the different approaches you will then learn to apply this knowledge to the areas of Social Influence, Memory, Attachment and Psychopathology.

In the second year, you will apply your psychological knowledge further to the areas of Relationships, Schizophrenia and Forensic Psychology. Throughout the two-year course, you will learn all about the different Research Methods in Psychology over two lessons per week and will learn about how these apply to the different areas of the specification.



Psychology provides useful insights into why people think, feel, and act the way they do and is relevant and applicable to everyday life.

Zach Psychology Student

Student view

I started studying Psychology this year. Studying Psychology at A Level is a thoroughly enjoyable and enriching experience.

Understanding human behaviour and the complexities of the mind has always fascinated me. The classes are always stimulating and encourage critical thinking and conversations about the topics studied. This has helped deepen my analytical skills and develop evidence-based reasoning, skills I'm excited to develop further throughout my studies as well as use in life generally.

Zach Psychology Student

Entry requirement

Grade 6 combined or single GCSE Science

Grade 6 English Language

Grade 6 Maths

GCE Psychology Examination Board

AQA

- Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology (2 hours)
- Paper 2: Psychology in Context (2 hours)
- Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology (2 hours)



It allows you to view society from other perspectives and learn about different cultures. The lessons are always really fun.

Daniel Sociology Student

Sociology

Why choose Sociology?

Sociology is the study of Societies and, unlike other disciplines, it looks at how people live, behave and work together in groups. It asks questions about the world that we live in and tries to explain why it is the way it is.

Why do some groups do better in EDUCATION than others? Who benefits from POLITICS? Why do some people commit more CRIME than others? What influence does RELIGION have on our lives? Do we live in a POSTMODERN world?

Sociology tries to shine a spotlight on the world in which we live, and challenge preconceived assumptions and stereotypes. It is an exciting and engaging subject to take at A Level.

What will you learn?

It does not matter that you have not taken sociology at GCSE, because only at A Level do you really start to use a theoretical approach to the subject.

In Year 12, we focus on how Identity is shaped through Socialisation and Culture, then looking more closely at families and households as well as the role Religion plays in contemporary society. The study of the Research Process and its investigation into evidence of inequality in social class, gender, age and ethnicity is explored.

Year 13 looks at the societal impact of Crime and Deviance, focussing on patterns of crime and why individuals commit crime. We then look at the evidence of Social Inequality in society today and how theories explain this.

Student view

I enjoy studying Sociology at A Level because it is really interesting and different to other subjects that are offered but also ties into many other A Level options such as History and Politics. It allows you to view society from other perspectives and learn about different cultures. The lessons are always really fun and thought-provoking as there are often conversations or debates about what we are studying. Personally, I especially like the families and relationships topic, because I learned about all the different types of families within the UK.

Daniel Sociology Student

Entry requirement

Grade 6 in a similar subject such as History, Geography or Religious Studies at GCSE is required.

GCE Sociology Examination Board

EDUQAS A200QS

Spanish

Why choose Spanish?

Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. Your status as an A Level linguist defines you as somebody who is willing to work at developing a new skill, somebody who is open to new people and cultures, and somebody who is adept at communicating.

As well as mastering the skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing Spanish, you will also access authentic Spanish describing a huge variety of different topics and contexts and become a truly global citizen. You will be able to understand and discuss topics in fluent Spanish, and will also be encouraged to spend as much time in a Spanish-speaking country as you can. Although many people speak Spanish, it takes a degree of passion and commitment to reach A Level standard, and the rewards for taking this challenge are many.

What will you learn?

The course contains relevant and exciting topics such as immigration, cyberspace and cultural heritage. As well as exploring these at a native level, using websites and radio to support you, there will also be the chance to discover plays, books and films from the Spanish-speaking world. During two enjoyable years, as well as learning the language – an enjoyable academic challenge in itself – you will develop many transferrable skills which complement your other chosen subjects.



With nearly 480 million Spanish speakers worldwide, knowledge of the language will only become more necessary in an increasing globalised world.

Alex Spanish Student

Student view

Spanish in Sixth Form has been intense but incredibly fun. It has been amazing to see how my skills in the language have developed over the past two years whilst learning more about Spanish and Latin American culture. I'd recommend this A Level to everyone because not only are the teachers absolutely fantastic and you will learn lots, but also with nearly 480 million Spanish speakers worldwide having knowledge of the language will only become more and more necessary in an increasing globalised world.

Alex Spanish Student

Entry requirement

Grade 7 in GCSE Spanish.

GCE Spanish Examination Board

AQA 7692



Stretch and Challenge

Our Sixth Form Stretch and Challenge programme is fluid, inclusive, recognising the fact that students grow and develop at many different stages and paces. Our aim is to provide a challenging and stimulating learning environment for all, offering opportunities for students to continue to thrive and nourishing a lifelong love of learning. This may take the form of Leadership Courses when students first join the Sixth Form or entry into the Lower Sixth Competitive Application Programme, laying the foundations for successful university applications.

Working alongside the extensive careers programme we recognise and respond to the fact that certain universities and courses have different admissions criteria. For those considering Medicine, Veterinary Science, Oxford and Cambridge (alongside other universities) we work with departments to offer ongoing support preparing students for admissions tests, allocating them mentors and a providing a rigorous programme of interview preparation. We work with a wide group of schools and professionals ensuring that every student who is called for interview is thoroughly prepared by the College. Our bespoke Stretch and Challenge programme is pragmatic, aspirational and open to all.

Alternative Academic Qualifications at St Columba's

St Columba's offers qualifications where students will gain vocational skills and experience. Whether they are heading to university, starting an apprenticeship, or stepping straight into the workforce, these qualifications help more Columbans than ever to achieve their career ambitions.

What are these qualifications?

Level 3 Vocational Courses, or Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) as they are becoming known, are equivalent to A Levels and can be studied alongside, or instead of, traditional academic A Levels.

AAQs are unique because they focus on practical, hands-on learning and utilising applied knowledge - they combine coursework and examinations with real-world experience. Each course is developed in collaboration with industry experts, ensuring that students acquire the skills employers are looking for.

We already offer Business and Sport with plans to widen the offer for subsequent cohorts into a variety of sectors.

Vocational Courses







We will coordinate over 100 hours of Work Experience



Over 95% of UK universities accept AAQs



Can I study alongside A Levels - What might a Vocational Programme of Study look like?

Pure Vocational

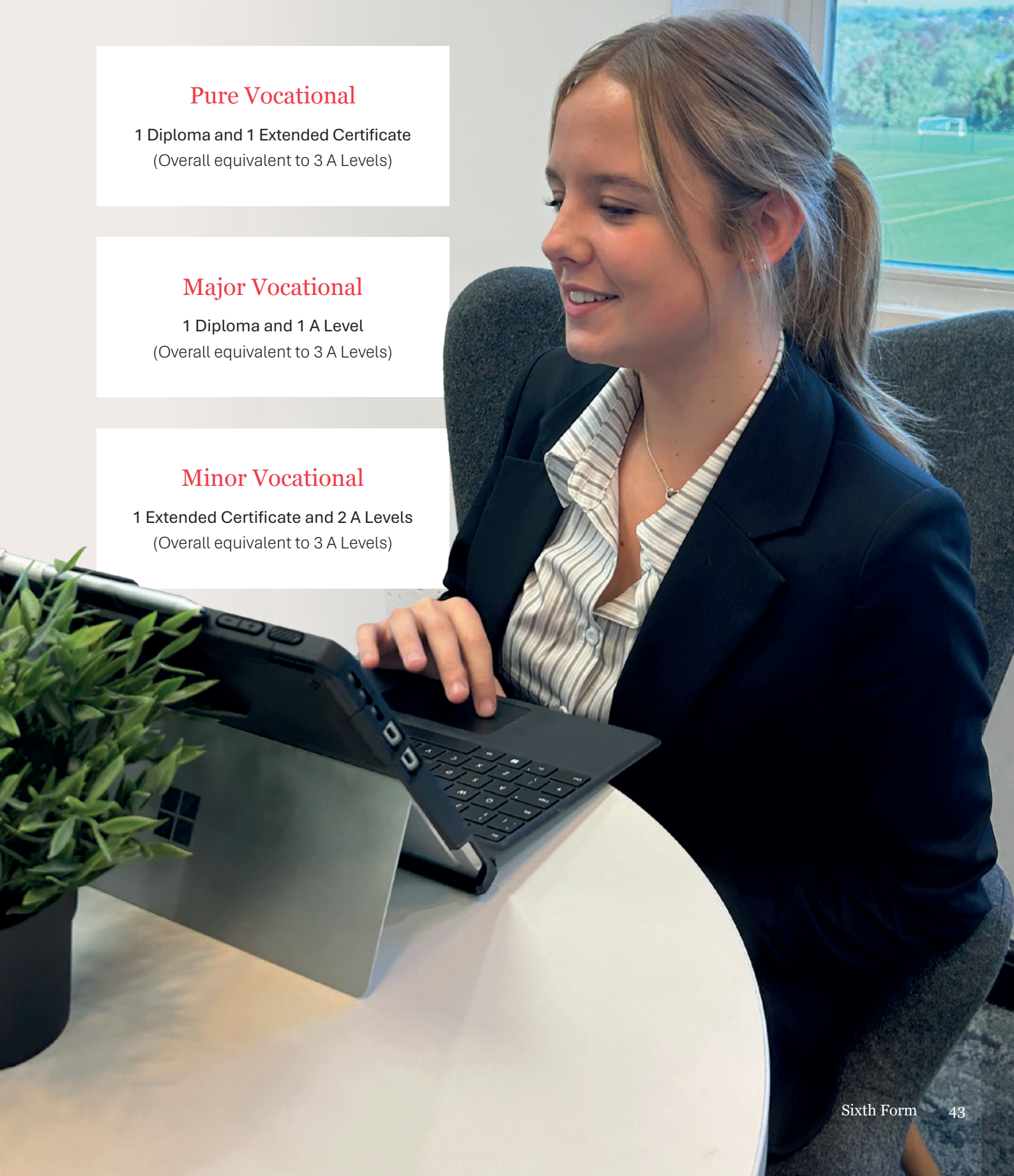
1 Diploma and 1 Extended Certificate
(Overall equivalent to 3 A Levels)

Major Vocational

1 Diploma and 1 A Level
(Overall equivalent to 3 A Levels)

Minor Vocational

1 Extended Certificate and 2 A Levels
(Overall equivalent to 3 A Levels)





OCR Cambridge Technical in Business (CTec)

Extended Certificate (equivalent to one A Level)

Course Overview

The OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical in Business qualification helps students to achieve their potential and progress to the next stage of their lives, whether that is higher education, an apprenticeship or employment.

OCR have designed refreshing and exciting content that is up to date, engaging, fit for purpose and suitable for the needs of students. To do this, they have consulted with universities, employers and industry specialists to make sure students will gain the right combination of knowledge, understanding and skills required for the 21st century.

The centre assessed units include practical and wider project-based assessment opportunities, as well as OCR visiting moderators providing feedback and support.

This qualification complements a Key Stage 5 study programme alongside one other specific vocational qualification or two A Levels.

- **Working in Business (e)**

This unit gives students an understanding of the type of critical skills needed when working in business, such as organisation, prioritisation and effective communication. The unit allows them to learn how to use different business documents and about organisational protocols that most businesses would expect employees to follow.

- **Customers and Communication (i)**

This component will allow learners to appreciate how vital customers are to the success of a business. It gives them an understanding of how important it is for businesses to know their customers and what influences customer behaviour. In this unit, they understand how to communicate with customers.

- **Accounting Concepts (i)**

This unit gives learners an introduction to the foundations of business accounting. The unit allows them to gain essential skills in, and knowledge of, the purposes of accounting and the accounting procedures used to produce final accounts. They consider the reasons for keeping accurate financial records and the importance of updating cash books and preparing bank reconciliation statements.

- **Marketing and Market Research (i)**

This unit has a particular emphasis on the role of market research and how it contributes to marketing decision-making, and the actions a business may take. Market research is the process by which organisations obtain the information they require..

(e) = Externally assessed through exam; (i) = Internally assessed through coursework

Course Summary

The course will be split into the following five components:

- **The Business Environment (e)**

This will give learners an understanding of the wider external contexts in which businesses operate and of internal business functions and their interdependencies. The unit will allow them to appreciate how legal, financial and resource constraints can affect business behaviour and the influence that different stakeholders can have and how businesses must respond.

Entry Requirements

Grade Point Average of 4.5 with a minimum of grade 4 in GCSE Maths and 4 in GCSE English at least, alongside an interview.

OCR Cambridge Technical in Sport and Physical Activity (CTec)

Diploma - Sports Coaching Pathway (equivalent to two A Levels)

Course Overview

OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical in Sport and Physical Activity qualification helps students to achieve their potential and progress to the next stage of their lives, whether that's higher education, an apprenticeship or employment. They have designed refreshing and exciting content that's up to date, engaging, fit for purpose and suitable for the needs of students.

A wide range of centre assessed units with practical and wider project-based assessment opportunities, as well as examined units on the body systems and the long and short term impacts of sport and physical activity; how sport is organised and the purpose of sports development; health and safety requirements in sport and physical activity; the purpose of, and how to conduct research in sport and physical activity; and how businesses in sport are organised and what success looks like to them.

This qualification complements a Key Stage 5 study programme alongside one other specific vocational qualification or A Level.

Course Summary

The course will be split into the following twelve components:

- **Body Systems and the Effects of Physical Activity (e)**
In this unit learners will gain an understanding of the structures and functions of the key body systems, how these support and impact performance in sport and physical activity and the effects that physical activity, training and lifestyle can have on them.
- **Sports Coaching and Activity Leadership (i)**
This unit gives learners an understanding behind the theory of what makes good sports coaches and activity leaders and methods that can be employed to improve the performance of participants. Learners explore the roles and responsibilities of coaches and leaders and how these differ from each other and others involved in delivering and teaching sport and physical activity. The main part of the unit is related to learners developing the skills and understanding necessary to effectively plan and deliver a series of sports or activity sessions. It allows them to reflect on learners' own practice and using this feedback to improve learners' performance as a sports coach or activity leader.
- **Sports Organisation and Development (e)**
In this unit, learners will gain an understanding of the organisations involved in sport in the UK, their roles and responsibilities and how they work together. Learners also gain an understanding of sports development, including the organisations involved, who sports development is targeted at and why, how sports development is carried out and how the success of sports development initiatives can be measured.
- **Working Safely in Sport, Exercise, Health and Leisure (e)**
Throughout the unit, learners gain an understanding of key safety requirements to be able to ensure learners' own, and learners' clients' safety. Topics include: understanding key health and safety legislations, knowing how to administer emergency first aid, understanding roles, responsibilities and reporting duties in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and finally, knowledge of key health and safety documents, including how to carry out risk assessments.
- **Performance Analysis in Sport and Exercise (i)**
This unit gives learners the skills and knowledge required to carry out performance profiling and analysis and deliver feedback to the performers in a manner that is suitable for them.



- **Organisation of Sports Events (i)**

This unit is designed for learners to develop skills in planning, promoting and delivering a sports event; with a focus primarily on learners' individual roles as well as working as part of a team and reflecting on learners' input and future personal development. This unit enables learners to establish transferrable skills which can be used within sport and active leisure as well as within the fitness industry. It also enhances skills such as team work, organisation and safeguarding awareness.

- **Physical Activity for Specific Groups (i)**

This unit will allow learners to develop a knowledge and understanding of the different groups of individuals who would benefit physiologically, psychologically and sociologically from participating in physical activity and why these particular groups are targeted by initiatives. This knowledge and understanding will then support learners in planning suitable physical activity sessions for the groups identified and the considerations that need to be taken into account for each of them.

- **Sports injuries and Rehabilitation (i)**

This unit will teach learners how to recognise and treat common sports injuries both immediately and through long-term rehabilitation programmes, the possible psychological impacts of sports injuries and how to minimise the risk of sports injuries occurring in the first instance.

- **Practical Skills in Sport and Physical Activity (i)**

This unit gives learners the opportunity to participate in a number of different sports and outdoor and adventurous activities which allows learners to experience first-hand situations that participants learners may later be coaching or leading will come across. In this unit learners will learn how to apply skills, tactics, techniques and knowledge in individual sports, team sports and outdoor and adventurous activities which will allow learners to participate effectively, safely and enjoyably.

- **Health and Fitness Testing for Specific Groups (i)**

In this unit learners study a range of fitness tests, what they test and their advantages and disadvantages. Learners study how to complete client consultations which will give learners the background knowledge learners need about a client to be able to plan and deliver appropriate fitness tests. Students will learn how to interpret the data acquired from fitness tests and how best to feed this back to the client so that they can go on to make informed decisions about their health and fitness training.

- **Sport and Exercise Psychology (i)**

In this unit students study different motivations that people have for participating in sport and exercise and how performance can be managed through an understanding of attribution theory, stress and group dynamics. Students also study the impacts that participation in sport and exercise can have on a person's mental health and wellbeing, whether an elite performer or a member of the general public.

(e) = Externally assessed through exam;

(i) = Internally assessed through coursework

Entry Requirements

Grade Point Average of 4.5 with a minimum of 4 in GCSE Maths and 4 in English at least, alongside an interview. Studying for GCSE PE is not a prerequisite for this course. Candidates should have an interest in exercise and the wider sports industry.

“

The EPQ made me much more confident when I started my degree as I knew how to approach my studies and how to present work. I was able to talk about my project on my UCAS application form to make me stand out.

Robert EPQ student

Extended Project Qualification

Why choose the EPQ?

If there's an area of study you really love – whether it is engineering, languages, sport or art-based – an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) gives you the chance to develop your skills and knowledge AND impress universities at the same time.

The benefits of doing an EPQ include:

- Enhancing your UCAS application and potentially helping you meet the conditions of a university place offer, as it is worth extra points.
- The opportunity to produce a piece of work that is truly individual and says something about you as a person, whether it is a written research report, event or creative artefact (like a computer game or artwork).
- Demonstrating to universities that you are enthusiastic about the subject you are applying to study.
- Proving to future employers that you are a self-motivated character with useful skills in your chosen field.
- Allows you to investigate a topic you are interested in but not offered at A Level.

What will you learn?

Students are required, with appropriate supervision, to:

- Choose an area of interest
- Draft a title and aims of the project for formal approval by the centre
- 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.
- Alongside this, students are taught the skills necessary to carry out the project such as referencing, using a library, time management, research skills, report methodology and effective presentation.

Entry requirement

Each student is considered on their individual strengths and needs.

GCE AS EPQ (Level 3) Examination Board

AQA

Careers & Higher Education

Resources, Advice and Guidance

The importance that we attach to Careers guidance at St Columba's College is illustrated by the dedicated premises in Iona House that is used to provide students with individually tailored information, advice and guidance.

The department operates an 'open door' policy and Ms Griffiths Plunkett, the Head of Careers and Higher Education, is available on a walk in basis, in addition to organised individual interviews. University, Apprenticeship and careers guidance has also been significantly enhanced through the use of programmes such as Unifrog.

Careers Education

Lower Sixth - Michaelmas term

- Individual subject advice on A Level and AAQ as appropriate
- Tutor Periods: Have outside speakers, assemblies on various career areas and careers lessons
- Virtual work experience
- Information on appropriate conferences, taster days and master classes

Lower Sixth - Lent term

- Careers advice on 18+ career pathways
- 'Introduction to Higher Education and Apprenticeships Evening' for Lower Sixth students and their parents
- March Enrichment Day is focused on post 18+ pathway choices
- Students attend the UCAS Exhibition
- Inspiration Day (a series of career talks)

Lower Sixth - Trinity term

- Students are encouraged to attend university open days and taster courses as appropriate
- Preparation for UCAS applications and personal statements preparation begin
- Lower Sixth complete a professional work experience placement
- Summer ECCA Day is focused on a range of 18+ applications and UCAS registration

Upper Sixth - Michaelmas term

- October Enrichment Day is focused on 18+ application processes and interview preparation
- UCAS applications are completed
- Apprenticeship application support starts

Upper Sixth - Lent term

- Ongoing support for students applying for apprenticeships and other programmes

Upper Sixth - Trinity term

- Students reply to their university offers and apply for student financial support
- Ms Griffiths Plunkett is available from Sixth Form results day to support Upper Sixth leavers as required



St Columba's Connects

stcolumbasconnects.org

St Columba's Connects is a global community of Alumni, friends and supporters of St Columba's College. It exists to provide lifelong friendships and support to all our Alumni.

Simply by having attended St Columba's College you are, and always will be, a Columban.

When you leave us at the end of Upper Sixth you will be invited to join St Columba's Connects as a member of your Class.

We have successful Alumni working in every field imaginable: we know, because they come back and tell us, passing on their experience and sharing their passions through our Inspiration Day and Business Directory.

They inspire and support our young people in many ways: as career and education role models, mentors, work experience providers, governors, donors and fundraisers.

We organise events and social occasions year-round, including networking and building relationships through class reunions, formal dinners and sporting events, to name just a few.



Beyond the curriculum

Trips, exchanges and outdoor adventure

Trips are an essential ingredient in Sixth Form life and the opportunities are wide-ranging. Recent trips have included: USA (History), South Korea (Politics), Iceland (Geography) and Brussels (Politics). We also visited Porto for a football and sports tour.

For 30 years our Sixth Formers have visited St Francis Secondary School in Malole, Zambia for Project Respond. They undertake educational and building projects at the school and visit other community projects before enjoying a well-earned safari holiday. For many, this is the experience of a lifetime.

We have close links to Brothers of the Sacred Heart schools around the world, offering reciprocal exchange programmes with high schools in the US, which have created life-long friendships.

St Columba's is one of the best performing schools in Hertfordshire for The Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Gold Award. This helps students discover new interests and develop essential practical skills for life and work. It is a widely recognised mark of achievement that is highly respected by employers and universities. Prior participation in the DofE scheme is not essential, although a good base fitness is required.

The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is a vibrant part of our extracurricular offering, taking place every Friday night with many opportunities for leadership development and adventure.

Other leadership opportunities include a Leadership Foundations Course and the Model United Nations (MUN). We also encourage our students to develop their leadership skills with roles including prefects, subject ambassadors, house leaders, buddies and Student Voice committee members.

Service and Charity are at the heart of what makes St Columba's such a special place. Through our links with the St Albans Volunteer Centre we are always developing new partnerships within the local community. Lower Sixth students can volunteer one afternoon a week at Watling View, a local Special Educational Needs School, assisting pupils with a range of educational and physical disabilities.

We also work closely with **CAFOD** (the Catholic Association for Overseas Development) and have raised tens of thousands of pounds through student-led fundraising projects such as the annual Inter-House bake off and cake sale. Our Sixth Formers can join our Young Leaders' Programme, working with other Sixth Formers for Social Justice.

Our Sixth Formers' **community outreach projects** include running appeals for food banks in Borehamwood and St Albans, and fundraising for the Open Door homeless shelter in St Albans.



Sport

St Columba's has a long-established tradition of representative senior sport, competing at national and regional level. All Sixth Form students are encouraged to participate in our wide-ranging sports programme. As well as our main team sports of basketball, netball, rugby, football, athletics and cricket, we also offer cross-country, fencing, fitness, tennis and swimming.

Music

Our Music Department offers a wide range of musical ensembles, both choral and instrumental, catering for all abilities and tastes. Our policy is to be as inclusive as possible, while at the same time stretching students' abilities with challenging and exciting repertoire.

There is an extensive concert and performance programme throughout the year, including the production of a musical every other year.

Groups that students may wish to join include the Senior Choir, Barbershop, Senior Orchestra and Jazz Band. Sixth Formers also lead the famous 'House Shout' performance at our Eisteddfod and perform their own Christmas song for the school.





Founders
at
St Columba's



We're not here to
fit the mould.
We're here to
shape the future.



St Columba's College, King Harry Lane
St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 4AW

Phone: 01727 892040

Email: admissions@stcolumbascollege.org

www.stcolumbascollege.org



THE
GOOD
SCHOOLS
GUIDE