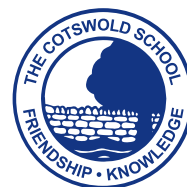


Sixth Form Course Guide

2026-28



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Welcome to the **Sixth Form**

I am delighted to introduce the courses we offer at The Cotswold School Sixth Form, nationally recognised as an outstanding place to learn.

You may already be a student at the school or joining us from another school for your post-16 studies. Whichever courses you choose, we're looking forward to supporting you on your journey through our Sixth Form, to a bright future.



Mr Phil White

Deputy Headteacher, Head of Sixth Form
The Cotswold School

Sixth Form **success**

What makes us outstanding?

- We have a broad, engaging and challenging curriculum, with excellent quality of teaching
- Our students work hard and are well supported both academically and pastorally
- We provide excellent resources in our spacious and modern Sixth Form Centre
- The ethos and atmosphere are friendly, enthusiastic and focused
- We offer fantastic extra-curricular opportunities, from clubs to trips to competitions

What to consider as you select your courses

- What subjects are you most **interested** in?
- What do you most **enjoy** learning about?
- What are your **strengths**?
- What subjects will help open doors for your potential future **career**?

Next steps

Our Sixth Form staff are happy to guide and support you in making your selections. Course details, as well as links to subject content and assessment specifications, are on our website. Check the timeline for applications on the next page and get in touch if you have any questions or need more information.

Contact us

E: sixthform@thecotswoldschool.co.uk | T: 01451 812946

Timeline for **applications**

13 November	Sixth Form Open Evening. Arrive by 6.00pm in the School Hall. This will be followed by visits to department areas.
17- 21 November	For Year 11 students at The Cotswold School: Taster lessons in selected subjects (including Economics, Media Studies, Psychology and Sociology); individual conversations about post-16 options with a senior teacher.
24 November	Applications open on our website for all students.
15 December	Deadline for completion of subject preferences form .
30 January	Option blocks published , showing which combinations of choices are available.
13 February	Deadline for completion of options form . Students' choices must fit with the published option blocks.
February – March	Individual conversations with a senior teacher for students applying to join us from other schools .
23 & 24 June	Two Induction days – we welcome all prospective Year 12 students in readiness for September.
20 August	GCSE results day and enrolment into The Cotswold School Sixth Form.
September	Welcome to the Sixth Form – the next stage in your education journey starts here!

Applications

[cotswold.gloucs.sch.uk/application-process](https://www.cotswold.gloucs.sch.uk/application-process)

Choose your curriculum

We offer a range of AS/A Levels and Level 3 vocational subjects

To study at Level 3 (AS/A Level or equivalent vocational courses) you must achieve a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 4 or above, including either GCSE English Language or GCSE English Literature. You will also have a positive, self-motivated approach to learning.

Each of our Sixth Form courses has additional entry requirements, which you will see on the individual course pages. You may wish to discuss these with us, as we understand that individual circumstances may need to be considered.

AS/A Levels suit students who attain mostly grades 6 to 9 at GCSE

Good A Level grades can lead on to a wide range of university degree courses, higher level apprenticeships and jobs. All our A Level courses involve examinations at the end of Year 13; most also have AS Level examinations in Year 12; and some have coursework components.

Read about our A Level subjects on pages 8 to 19.

Level 3 vocational courses suit students who attain mostly grades 4 to 9 at GCSE

All Level 3 vocational courses combine coursework assignments and modular examinations, which are taken at intervals during the two years.

We offer four vocational subjects: Applied Science; Business; Health and Social Care; Sport. Each of these courses are equivalent to one A Level. However, Sport can be chosen as a one or two A Level equivalent. It may be possible to study more than one vocational course. Good grades in Level 3 vocational courses can lead to a wide range of university degree courses, higher level apprenticeships and jobs.

Find out more about vocational courses on pages 21 to 24.

Enhance your learning

You can supplement your curriculum subjects – and build wider skills – by choosing one or more of these options:

- **Core Mathematics (Level 3):** If you are taking subjects that need quantitative reasoning skills (such as Business, Economics, Geography, Psychology, Biology, Chemistry or Physics) and are not studying A Level Mathematics, we strongly encourage you to take this one-year course. The qualification attracts UCAS points. Entry requirement: Grade 5 at GCSE Mathematics.
- **Extended Project Qualification (Level 3):** Plan, research and produce a project of your own choice, under the guidance of a project supervisor. This is excellent preparation for degree courses, which require independent investigations or dissertations. The EPQ is worth up to 28 UCAS points.
- **Critical Thinking:** This is ideal for people who are applying for competitive university courses and those who wish to expand their thinking power. We focus on analysing the credibility of evidence, critiquing arguments and developing debating skills. This course will be internally assessed.
- **Explore Medicine & Veterinary Medicine:** A course for students considering applying for a degree in Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine.
- **Explore Oxbridge:** A course for students considering applying for a degree at Oxford or Cambridge University.
- **The Duke of Edinburgh's Award:** A well-known scheme, in which you complete activities in four sections: Skills, Volunteering, Physical and Expedition. The awards are available at three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Sixth form students undertake the Gold award.
- **Photography:** Learn how to take and edit photographs, to create your own high-quality portfolio.
- **Finance:** Gain knowledge and skills in both personal and entrepreneurial finance.

Additionally, there are many extra-curricular and leadership opportunities, including: **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)** - designed by universities; **Subject Ambassador roles** - mentor younger students, lead clubs, and create displays, magazines & competitions; **Societies** - including Debating Society, History & Politics Society, Literary Society, Current Affairs Society, Science Journal Club; **Sports Clubs; musical ensembles.**

AS and A Level courses

Art & Design *Fine Art*

A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE Fine Art.

Assessment

An externally set assignment (40%) and personal investigation into an artist's work (60%)

Teacher assessment and moderation by an examiner

Overview

Art is a vibrant and popular subject in our Sixth Form, where students thrive in an environment that encourages creativity, independent learning and individuality. You will be taught by specialists who are passionate about art, in tutorial-style lessons held in spacious art studios. You'll have the opportunity to develop your skills in a range of areas according to your interests, which could include drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, 3-D or film.

During a series of skills workshops, we encourage you to develop your own ideas and personal responses based upon artists, ideas, concepts and experimentation.

We combine continuous informal verbal and written feedback from teachers with occasions to offer group critiques (sharing of work and feedback/discussion with peers).

Careers and study progression

Students go on to study Art and other creative subjects at prestigious universities and art colleges. The expanding creative sector provides £84 billion a year to the UK economy and there are many related careers, including in fashion, architecture, games design, special effects, graphic design, teaching and the arts and leisure industries.

Art & Design Textiles

A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE D&T (Textiles) *or* grade 6 in GCSE Art.

Assessment

An externally set assignment (40%) and personal investigation into an artist's work (60%)

Teacher assessment and moderation by an examiner

Overview

This is a demanding and enjoyable course, during which you will develop your particular interest and produce a portfolio of work to support applications for your next steps. You can focus on one particular area – such as fashion design; wallpaper; interior design or digital textiles – or a combination or specialism of your choice.

We encourage you to develop your skills in observing and recording experiences; undertaking research; and gathering, selecting and organising visual information. You will study the work of other artists to further your skills and develop ideas.

As you build your portfolio, you'll encounter a range of textile techniques under the disciplines of constructed, dyed, printed, fine art, and fashion textiles. Workshops will include felting, machine and hand embroidery, appliqué, screen printing, dyeing, batik and transfer printing.

Careers and study progression

Students can progress to art-related degree courses and Foundation Art and Design courses. Your A Level qualification could lead to many careers in design industries, including in surface textile design, fashion management, costume design, textile and fashion buying, marketing and merchandising, and journalism.

Biology

AS and A Level

Exam board

OCR

Entry criteria

Grade 6-6 in GCSE Combined Science *or* grade 6 in GCSE Biology.

Grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics is also required

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13) plus a practical endorsement for Biology

Overview

From the fascinating molecular dynamics of the cell to the impact we humans have upon our ecosystems, this is a challenging and fascinating course. Biology students have enthusiasm and curiosity for our amazing living world and a willingness to work well with others. You will also need diligence, commitment, sound organisation and time management skills. It's a fun and engaging course, accommodating a variety of teaching and learning styles, such as modelling, student-led lessons, practicals and lectures. Our students will communicate ideas and present, at times, to the rest of the class. A significant component of the course is mathematical.

Among many skills and topics, you'll develop an appreciation of how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society. Modules include biodiversity, diseases, genetics, ecosystems, biotechnology and sustainability.

Careers and study progression

Biology complements so many subjects, including Geography, Chemistry, Art and Psychology and is key to many careers, including in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, sports science, geology, and the environment. At its broadest level, Biology is a subject that will hone your valuable research and investigative skills.

Business

AS and A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE Business Studies *or* grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics *and* English.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13) including essay, data response and short answer questions.

Overview

Business is front-page news. The way companies operate is under greater scrutiny than ever before, while television programmes like The Apprentice and Dragon's Den have raised the profile of business to all.

During your studies on this course you will engage with, explore and understand business behaviour whilst developing a critical understanding of what business is and what it does. You'll learn about the importance of managers and leaders and how decision-making can impact a range of business functions, from marketing to financial performance. How are people and operations managed to improve performance? What are different strategic direction methods and how do you manage strategic change?

As well as essay writing, there are multiple choice and data analysis tasks throughout the course, to prepare you for the format of the examinations.

Careers and study progression

A Level Business develops students' key skills and understanding, an asset in future employment. It combines well with many post-16 subjects. Many Business degree courses offer various interesting subject combinations, or you can take up valuable apprenticeships in business, management, accounting, finance, and marketing.

Chemistry

AS and A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grades 6-6 in GCSE Combined Science *or* grade 6 in GCSE Chemistry.

Grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics is also required

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13) plus a practical endorsement for Chemistry

Overview

Across your Chemistry studies, we cover three key areas: Physical, Inorganic and Organic Chemistry. You will be examined in each of these areas both at AS Level and at A Level.

Physical Chemistry explores the major driving forces for chemical reactions and link this to relevant real-world applications, for example the role of the oceans in dissolving substances and maintaining pH to support life on this planet.

Inorganic Chemistry investigates properties of elements and compounds and considers how transition metals benefit society, such as through industrial processes.

Organic Chemistry examines how carbon forms the building blocks for molecules of life on Earth; organic synthesis; and how more complex molecules, such as pharmaceuticals, can be made.

Careers and study progression

Chemists work in almost any field you can think of, including pharmaceuticals; food technology; manufacturing; petrochemicals; journalism and publishing; criminal forensics; teaching and research in academia or industry. The possibilities are huge: and we need scientists more than ever, as our world and environment undergo rapid change.

Computer Science

AS and A Level

Exam board

OCR

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics *and* grade 6 in GCSE Computer Science.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Two written examination papers and a coursework project (Year 13)

Overview

Advances in computing are transforming the way we work and this course – which is flexible, accessible and rigorous – ensures that students are learning about these developments. You will be working towards a qualification that focuses on the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to progress to higher education or thrive in the workplace.

Computer Science in the Sixth Form is rich in both practical and theoretical learning. You will study programming, exchanging data, software development and algorithms, requiring considerable commitment, organisation and time management. We introduce you to programming environments

and you will develop programs to enhance your understanding of topics such as conditionals, arrays, writing to/reading from files, recursion, variables, iteration and data types. Your programming project, which is a 60-hour coursework element in Year 13, will require you to analyse, design, develop and evaluate a solution.

Careers and study progression

Degrees and apprenticeships in computer science, software engineering, artificial intelligence and robotics lead to exciting careers in wide-ranging areas, from architecture and engineering to systems analysis, stock broking, banking, gaming, design, app development and media.

Design and Technology Product Design

A Level

Exam board

Eduqas

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE Design and Technology *or* evidence of strong interest *and* ability shown through a portfolio of work.

Assessment

1 x 3-hour examination (50%) and 1 x Design and Make project (50%)

Overview

Design, creativity, innovation and problem-solving abilities: these are skills that every employee requires in our fast paced, ever-changing world, and these are skills that are intertwined inextricably with this subject.

Design and Technology – Product Design challenges you to apply your thinking to solve real-world problems for actual clients.

Using state-of-the-art CAD/CAM technology, such as our suite of new 3D printers, students studying Design and Technology – Product Design are at the cutting edge of design and engineering focused learning.

You'll make the very best of our excellent facilities and well-resourced department, with links to local and national industry contacts.

Careers and study progression

The skills developed while studying this course can be applied to any future career, including in sectors such as architecture, construction and design. It links directly to courses such as Design Engineering at Imperial College London or Industrial Design at Loughborough University, or Engineering courses at Oxford, Cambridge and other prestigious universities.

Drama and Theatre

AS and A Level

Exam board

Eduqas

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE Drama *or* grade 6 in GCSE English *and* proven participation in performing arts activities.

Assessment

AS Level: Performance workshop and written examination paper (Year 12)

A Level: Theatre Workshop; text-based performance; written examination paper (Year 13)

Overview

What goes into making an effective piece of theatre? We explore texts and their creators, developing your ability to write confidently about how to stage texts and communicate with an audience. Many of your lessons will be workshops, exploring different texts, contexts and practitioners; and historical, social and cultural elements, too.

The syllabus contains four assessed pieces of practical work, including scripted performances, devised performances and 'reimagined text' (devising a piece from an extract); and balancing creative and practical talents with a strong academic foundation.

The course requires good teamwork skills and excellent

time management. When possible, we will see live theatre and access a range of productions. There are opportunities to be assessed in technical and design elements such as lighting, set design or costume design.

Careers and study progression

Many former students have gone to prestigious universities and drama schools, studying the arts, sciences, languages and humanities. Drama and Theatre is a gateway to a range of courses and career sectors, developing skills in creativity, group work and presentation.

Economics

AS and A Level

Exam board

Pearson

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE English *and* grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13)

Overview

Given the potential implications for the national economy following Brexit and the pandemic, an A Level in Economics has never been so relevant.

You will gain an informed and balanced view of micro- and macro-economics, moving from the individual to the global picture. We'll examine how firms behave; how and why governments intervene and act as they do; how a country measures its economic success; and the changing face of international economics. You will develop your analysis, research and quantitative skills and learn to translate complex economic theory into digestible forms.

The four core themes cover: an introduction to markets – how they work, why they fail and what government interventions look like; performance and policies with an emphasis on the UK economy; business behaviour and the labour market; and a global perspective, covering emerging nations' economies and inequalities and the role of the state in the macroeconomy.

Careers and study progression

Careers in government, banking, accountancy, law, tax, international relations, diplomatic service, journalism, and many more are all options. Economics is not a pre-requisite for many degrees, yet the skills are invaluable for students moving into any of these fields.

English Language

AS and A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE English Language.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (100%) (Year 12)

A Level: Two written examination papers (80%) and a non-examined assessment (20%) (Year 13)

Overview

Are you interested in exploring the meanings and representations of a variety of written and spoken language? Do you enjoy analysing how and why we use the English language the way we do? In this course you will study the English language as a medium of communication; follow lines of critical theory; debate influencing social views and work independently to interrogate aspects of language in use. You will engage critically and creatively with a diverse range of forms, audiences and purposes across both written and spoken texts. Language theory topics include language diversity (gender, region, age

and occupation), language change over time, and child language acquisition and development.

Careers and study progression

The skills of communication and interrogative analysis are excellent for many future careers including: journalism, publishing, marketing and teaching. However the course would benefit any study which requires levels of critical thinking, extended essay writing and genre reading – opening a range of occupational opportunities.

English Literature

A Level

Exam board

AQA (Specification B)

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE English Literature *and* Grade 6 in GCSE English Language.

Assessment

Two written examination papers (80%) and a non-examined assessment (coursework) (20%)

Overview

If you enjoy reading, discussing and writing, both formally and creatively, then A Level English Literature is the course for you. It's an exciting approach to literary study through the lens of genre and theory, grouping texts within shared literary contexts so you can become an autonomous, critical reader. Those who excel at this subject are characterised by a love of reading and a readiness to explore the ways writers use language to fire our imaginations.

We explore the theme of tragedy across three texts: one by Shakespeare; another drama text; and either prose or poetry (such as *Othello*, *Death of a Salesman* and the work of

Keats). We also use texts to consider the theme of political and social protest, such as *Songs of Innocence and Experience* by William Blake; *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood; and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. The coursework element comprises two 1500-word essays.

Careers and study progression

Combining well with many other subjects and highly regarded by universities, English Literature is an important qualification in many professions and careers, including journalism, media, publishing, accountancy, business, law, teaching, public relations, events management and arts administration.

Geography

AS and A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE Geography *and* grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics *and* grade 5 in GCSE English.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Two written examination papers (80%) and fieldwork investigation (20%) (Year 13)

Overview

Geography is the study of the world around us, the issues within it and the interaction between people and the physical landscape: Human Geography and Physical Geography.

We look at water and carbon cycles; coastal systems; hazards; global systems and governance; changing places; and population and the environment. Fieldwork (including independently planned fieldwork for A Level) is an essential element, providing you with the opportunity to see your environment in action, enrich learning and enhance understanding of the units covered in class. It also enables students to develop lateral

thinking and problem-solving skills as a team, abilities that are much desired by universities and in the workplace.

Traditionally, we visit Chesil Beach; study 'place creation' in Bourton-on-the-Water and offer a residential trip to Wales.

Careers and study progression

Geography students have some of the highest rates of graduate employment. Geography combines well with sciences, as well as with Sociology and Psychology. There are careers in sectors as diverse as catastrophe planning and crisis management; HR and financial services; environmental law; sustainability; environmental planning; waste management; and weather forecasting.

History

AS and A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE History. If you have not studied GCSE History, a grade 6 in GCSE English *plus* evidence of a strong interest in History is required.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Two written examination papers (80%) and a coursework essay (20%) (Year 13)

Overview

History will exercise your analytical skills, challenge you to think and research widely, ask questions and evaluate the quality of information that you discover.

We study the reigns of the Tudor monarchs, 1485-1603. This includes Henry VII's consolidation of power; Henry VIII's establishment of the Royal Supremacy and the huge impact that religious changes had on society; the problems of royal authority and succession; and the reign of Elizabeth I. You will also examine Russia during the crucial years of 1917-53, assessing the dramatic impact of communist rule in the country following the 1917 revolution; Lenin and the Russian Civil War; and

the dramatic and devastating repercussions of life under Stalin, including the cultural and social history of this period.

Your Year 13 coursework – a 4,500-word essay – will be inspired by the period 1871-1991 in Germany, exercising your skills of historical investigation. Our biennial trip to Berlin complements this well.

Careers and study progression

A Level History is highly regarded by a wide range of employers and universities. Its application suits many careers, including journalism, law, politics, education, the Civil Service or museum curation, heritage management and marketing, archive management, archaeology, or research.

Mathematics

AS and A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 7 in GCSE Mathematics.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13)

Overview

A Level Mathematics reveals the richness and depth of a subject universally valued for its utility.

Mathematics at this level is also a beautiful and creative subject, which provides intense satisfaction to those who study it.

Building on our work at GCSE, we develop further skills in Algebra and Number before working on Calculus: the study of continuity and change. Much of the material introduced in the Statistics and Mechanics sections of the course supports understanding in the sciences.

We emphasise the value of problem solving and proof, working with rigour as new ideas are introduced.

We also make explicit the connections between mathematical concepts, highlighting the important structure underpinning what we do.

Careers and study progression

We have a proud record of students studying Pure Mathematics at university. A Mathematics degree also complements many other subjects, such as in the Sciences and Social Sciences, and also Music, Literature, and Philosophy. Mathematicians pursue careers in fields as varied as research, medicine, engineering, finance, pathology and construction.

Further Mathematics

AS and A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 8 in GCSE Mathematics. To study A Level Further Mathematics, students must also be studying A Level Mathematics alongside two other subjects.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13)

Overview

Taught in tandem with the A Level Mathematics course, Further Mathematics advances and abstracts many familiar concepts, as well as introducing new ideas and techniques.

Key areas of study include Complex Numbers, Vectors and Matrices, Polar Coordinates, and Series. Further Mathematics is an approachable subject for those who have proven success at GCSE and a resilient attitude to their learning. Regular and personalised support is available, so that material can be discussed and consolidated.

A subject enormously valued by universities and employers, Further Mathematics helps students enhance their skills in problem solving and develop

an appreciation for mathematical beauty.

Careers and study progression

What you learn will be useful for any mathematically rich degree or STEM subject, and also proves that you have the capacity for deep thinking and independent study. Some Russell Group universities may require Further Mathematics, while others adjust their grade requirements favourably to those students who have studied it. Students of Further Mathematics have gone on to read Pure Mathematics, or other courses including Literature, Computing, Languages, Physics, and Music.

Media Studies

A Level

Exam board

Eduqas

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in either GCSE English Language or GCSE English Literature.

Assessment

A Level: Two written examination papers (70%) and non-examined assessment (coursework) (30%) (Year 13)

Overview

In Media Studies, we develop skills in reflection, analysis and debate through the study of a wide range of rich and stimulating media sources. We analyse how we communicate meanings in a variety of forms, such as film, advertising, magazines and radio; and debate key questions related to the social, cultural, political and economic role of the media. We consider newspaper and television output alongside emerging and evolving media, including vlogs and video games; and explore media produced by or for minority groups, non-mainstream and non-English language products.

There are exciting opportunities to develop media production skills in different forms, so that students

become creators of meaning themselves. The coursework comprises an individual cross media production in which students plan, film and edit a music video as well as a functioning website and 500-word statement of aims.

All work will be produced on a new suite of Apple desktop computers, to an industry standard.

Careers and study progression

This course develops communication and technology skills needed to succeed in the modern workplace, including in the media industry. Potential jobs include presenter, advertising media buyer, copywriter, media researcher, broadcast journalist, PR consultant, web content manager and political adviser.

Music

AS and A Level

Exam board

Eduqas

Entry criteria

Grade 7 in GCSE Music. Students must also have or be working towards grade 5 on at least one instrument (could include voice).

Assessment

AS Level: A mix of performance and composition (60%) plus an appraisal paper (40%) (Year 12)

A Level: A mix of performance and composition (60%) plus an appraisal paper (40%) (Year 13)

Overview

Performance, composition and appraisal incorporate your own musical preferences with specified areas of study.

You will perform pieces to an examiner at grade 6 or above, of 6-12 minutes long. There are opportunities in class and concerts for practising and receiving feedback on these. In composition you may write for any instruments and voices. One of your compositions will reflect the techniques and conventions of Western classical music; and one is your free choice of style. We will help you learn the composition techniques for your chosen styles.

We look at set works in detail, using similar pieces for context

and comparison; we analyse scores and provide extended writing and listening responses.

You'll study the development of the symphony, including work by Haydn and Mendelssohn; the history of popular music, from Rock and Pop to Funk and Soul.

Careers and study progression

Music combines well with many courses, such as Physics, Mathematics, English and Languages. Careers are varied, from performers and teachers to songwriters, psychologists, event managers, journalists and music publishers. Industries aligned to music include digital marketing, PR, technology, law, therapy and merchandising.

Modern Foreign Languages

French

German

Spanish

A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grade 7 in GCSE French, German or Spanish (for the respective A Levels).

Assessment

Speaking examination (30%); listening, reading and writing examination (50%); and written examination paper (20%)

Overview

These are three separate A Levels – French, German and Spanish – but the courses for each language follow a similar structure.

Studying any of the modern foreign languages that you enjoy builds upon the skills you develop during your GCSE course. You will strive to develop confident, effective communication skills and a thorough understanding of the culture of countries and communities where French, German or Spanish are spoken.

One exciting aspect is exploring the language through films and accessible texts. Your understanding of a key film and text will be explored in your Year 13 examination paper. We help develop your conversational language in French, Spanish or German; as well as join in with formal discussion and debate. Grammar plays an important role, as you learn to work with increasing accuracy and to decode and

translate passages. Students will need to learn vocabulary and produce written work on a regular basis; and should also be prepared to work independently, including undertaking extra listening practice at home.

Traditionally, students travel to France, Germany or Spain to complete a work experience placement – a wonderful opportunity not only to enhance your language and cultural knowledge, but also to develop your confidence and independence.

Careers and study progression

Language A Levels are ideal for students who are curious about life and culture in other countries and the skills you learn are valued internationally. You can progress to prestigious universities, either studying a single language or combined with other languages, the arts, social sciences, History and Business.

Physics

AS and A Level

Exam board

OCR

Entry criteria

Grades 6-6 in GCSE Combined Science *or* grade 6 in GCSE Physics. Grade 7 in GCSE Mathematics is also required.

Students taking A Level Physics are strongly recommended to take AS/A Level Mathematics.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13) plus a practical endorsement for Physics

Overview

Physics is about analysing the world around us, using mathematics to describe the way things happen. From this, predictions can be made and tested.

When studying A Level Physics, you'll need to work systematically from the outset. You will encounter a variety of lesson styles: class discussion, independent learning, research, note-taking and practical work all have a role to play. Many concepts will be taught through experiments and practical activities.

Physics gives a language and framework to describe the natural world and can be used to make accurate and powerful estimations

of complex questions: you'll start applying the principles to things you notice around you. In Year 12 we study modules in Foundations of Physics; Forces and Motion; and Electrons, Waves and Photons. In Year 13 we cover modules in Newtonian World and Astrophysics; and Particle and Medical Physics.

Careers and study progression

Physics is one of the most requested subjects for university entry. A degree can lead to research roles across the sciences. It is also useful for careers in business, finance, IT and engineering; and in the prediction of climate change; design of computer games; and from architecture to Alzheimer's research.

Psychology

AS and A Level

Exam board

AQA

Entry criteria

Grades 6-6 in GCSE Combined Science (or grade 6-6 in two single sciences) *and* grade 6 in GCSE English *and* grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13)

Overview

Psychology is a science concerned with understanding the experience and behaviour of humans, and what makes people 'tick'.

Psychologists develop scientific theories, which they then test by formulating hypotheses and carrying out carefully designed research studies. Our course provides a broad introduction to a range of psychological theories, which help explain human behaviour in society, and are especially designed to develop your skills of analysis and evaluation.

We'll cover topics including developmental psychology and the effects of attachment and deprivation in childhood; social psychology and the role of conformity and obedience in

explaining different behaviours and individual differences and the possible ways of defining and treating abnormality. In the second year, we'll look at the causes of and treatments for schizophrenia; relationships; and addiction. Psychology combines well with Biology, Maths, English and Humanities subjects. Good mathematical ability and essay writing skills will support you in this subject.

Careers and study progression

Popular at degree level, graduates can go on to specialise in fields of Psychology, such as clinical, counselling, educational, forensic, sport and exercise. Psychology is also relevant to many other careers, including marketing and advertising; police and probation services; media; teaching and research.

Religious Studies

AS and A Level

Exam board

Eduqas

Entry criteria

Grade 6 in GCSE Religious Studies. If you have not studied GCSE Religious Studies, a grade 6 in GCSE English and evidence of strong interest in Religious Studies is required.

Assessment

AS Level: Three written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13)

Overview

This is a demanding course, nurturing critical and evaluative thinking in order that you can analyse and assess different theories and concepts; and explore the study of religion, philosophy and ethical theory. We encourage you to reflect on and grow your own values, opinions and attitudes.

You will gain a thorough understanding of diverse philosophical and ethical viewpoints and build an appreciation of religious thought; develop your understanding of different modes of argument and the strengths/weaknesses of each.

We consider the development of Buddhism and challenges facing religion, such as new

atheism and the problem of evil; concepts such as free will and determinism; and ethical theories such as natural law. We also cover the ethical topics seeking to define 'what is good'?

The key areas that form the basis for examination at both AS and A Level are the study of Buddhism; philosophy of religion; and ethical theory.

Careers and study progression

The skills you will grow – including analysis, evaluation, debate and essay writing – will be helpful in many careers. Religious Studies enables students to gain critical skills sought by higher education and employers – particularly in law, politics, education, social work, medicine, administration and the media.

Sociology

AS and A Level

Exam board

Eduqas

Entry criteria

Grade 5 in GCSE English *and* grade 4 in Mathematics.

Assessment

AS Level: Two written examination papers (Year 12)

A Level: Three written examination papers (Year 13)

Overview

Sociology considers the development, structure and functioning of society. Its subject matter is diverse, ranging from crime to education; from the family to the state; from the divisions of race and class to the shared beliefs of a common culture.

If you're considering studying Sociology, you'll have an interest in politics, society and culture as a whole – locally, nationally and globally. You'll be inquisitive and question why things happen; have an open mind; and the ability to debate, criticise and share your point of view and opinions. Studying Sociology helps the development of critical analysis and evaluation skills. These increase confidence in discussions and debates and

develop your writing and literacy skills. What you may also realise is, 'things are not always as they seem'!

We'll study a range of topics, which form the basis for your examination papers, such as the role of education in society; research methods; and crime and deviance.

Careers and study progression

You can join degree courses in Sociology, Criminology, Social Policy, Gender Studies, Social Anthropology or any social work field. The subject can lead to jobs in people-oriented sectors, such as policing; nursing and midwifery; teaching; counselling; social work; civil service; youth or community work; or in research or lecturing.

Level 3

vocational courses

Applied Science

Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ) - Cambridge Advanced National

Exam board

OCR

Entry criteria

Grades 5 and 4 in GCSE Combined Science (or at least one grade 5 and one grade 4 from GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics)

Overview

With a strong vocational and academic focus, Applied Science provides a solid foundation in biology, chemistry, and physics. This qualification is ideal for students interested in pursuing a career or further study in scientific or health-related fields. Through a combination of theoretical learning and hands-on laboratory investigations, you'll develop essential industry skills in research, planning, and practical experimentation, preparing you for progression to undergraduate study or employment in science-based sectors.

Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ)

This qualification is equivalent to one A Level.

Three units assessed by internal coursework

- Investigating Science
- Forensic Biology
- Environmental Studies *or* Medical Physics

Two units assessed by external examination

- Fundamentals of Science
- Science in Society

Assessment

A mixture of examinations and internally assessed (moderated) coursework assignments.

Grades are awarded at Distinction*, Distinction, Merit or Pass, equivalent to A Level grades A* to E, and carry the same UCAS entry points.

Careers and study progression

The rapidly evolving field of science offers a wealth of exciting study, career, and apprenticeship opportunities. This course is ideal for students with a keen interest in understanding how science is applied in real-world contexts. Many learners progress to university or enter careers such as laboratory research, biomedical science, environmental science, forensic analysis, or pharmaceutical development.

Business

Level 3 BTEC National

Exam board

Pearson

Entry criteria

At least one of these three requirements must be met:

- Grade 5 in GCSE Business
- Grade 5 in GCSE English Language
- Grade 5 in GCSE English Literature

If a student has taken GCSE Business, they are expected to have achieved at least grade 4 in this qualification.

Overview

BTEC Nationals are vocational qualifications that provide specialist, work-related learning. Developed by over 5,000 universities, employers and professional bodies with employability at the heart, you can develop the skills and confidence you will need to step into your future.

We offer the Extended Certificate in Business (equivalent to one A Level) where you will study a range of units, including:

- Exploring Business
- Marketing
- Personal and Business Finance
- Recruitment and Selection

This course is designed to be taken as part of a programme of study that includes other appropriate Level 3 vocational qualifications or A Levels. It's a great option if you are interested in learning about the business sector alongside other fields of study.

Assessment

A mixture of examinations and internally assessed (moderated) coursework assignments.

Grades are awarded at Distinction*, Distinction, Merit or Pass, equivalent to A Level grades A* to E, and carry the same UCAS entry points.

Careers and further study progression

BTEC Nationals in Business offer excellent progression routes to higher education, apprenticeships or employment, providing a strong introduction to the business sector and giving learners a solid platform of knowledge and skills. Many Business degree courses offer various interesting subject combinations, or you can take up valuable apprenticeships in business, management, accounting, finance and marketing.

Health and Social Care

Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ) - Cambridge Advanced National

Exam board
OCR

Entry criteria
No additional requirements.

Overview

With a strong vocational focus, Health and Social Care is ideal for those interested in a career or further study within the health and social care sector. Practical work and work experience will enhance your learning and help you develop valuable real-world skills.

Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ)

This qualification is equivalent to one A Level.

Four units assessed by internal coursework

- Nutrition
- Person-centred approach to care
- Supporting people with mental health conditions
- Supporting people in relation to sexual health, pregnancy and postnatal health

Two units assessed by external examination

- Principles of health and social care
- Anatomy & physiology

Assessment

A mixture of examinations and internally assessed (moderated) coursework assignments.

Grades are awarded at Distinction*, Distinction, Merit or Pass, equivalent to A Level grades A* to E, and carry the same UCAS entry points.

Careers and study progression

The fast-growing health and social care sector offers a great choice of fulfilling study, career and apprenticeship opportunities. Successful candidates have an interest in the welfare of people and issues related to health. Many students go on to become teachers, social workers, nurses, midwives, occupational therapists and carers.

We strongly recommend that students taking AAQ in Health & Social Care also take the AAQ in Applied Science, as they work well together and will strengthen applications for degree courses or apprenticeships in Nursing, other Allied Health professions, and many other health/social care disciplines.

Sport

Level 3

BTEC National

Exam board

Pearson

Entry criteria

At least one of these four requirements must be met:

- Merit in Level 2 BTEC Sport
- Grade 5 in GCSE P.E.
- Grade 5 in GCSE English Language
- Grade 5 in GCSE English Literature

If a student has taken GCSE P.E., they are expected to have achieved at least grade 4 in this qualification.

If a student has taken Level 2 BTEC Sport, they are expected to have achieved at least Level 2 Pass in this qualification.

Overview

These are two-year courses of study for learners committed to developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of the sports sector. You'll achieve the blend of technical and academic skills to become the individuals that employers and universities are seeking.

Extended Certificate (equivalent to one A Level)

All students complete mandatory units through a mixture of examinations, case studies, investigations, research projects, action plans and work experience.

These include:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Fitness training and programming for health
- Sport and wellbeing
- Professional development in the sports industry

Diploma (equivalent to two A Levels)

In addition to the units above, the Diploma assesses your skills in:

- Sports leadership
- Sports psychology
- Sports injury management and rehabilitation
- An investigation into business in sport and leisure
- The study of skills acquisition

Assessment

A mixture of examinations and internally assessed (moderated) coursework assignments.

Grades are awarded at Distinction*, Distinction, Merit or Pass, equivalent to A Level grades A* to E, and carry the same UCAS entry points.

Careers and study progression

There is a clear route into sports sectors, with opportunities to study degree courses in Sport, Physical Education or Coaching Science, to name a few. You could take roles such as a physical activity leader or fitness/leisure assistant and develop plenty of transferable skills, such as communication, teamwork and leadership.

Destinations

Where did our
2025 Sixth Form
leavers go next?

Destinations

Aston University

Medicine, Economics

Apprenticeships

Caterpillar

Bath Spa University

Creative Computing (Gaming) (Professional Placement Year), Business and Management and Media Communications, Sports Media Production

University of Bath

Biomedical Sciences with professional placement, Social Sciences with professional placement, International Development with Economics

Bournemouth University

Multimedia Sports Journalism (2026), Computer Animation & Visual Effects, Sport and Exercise Science (2026)

University of Birmingham

History and Politics, English Literature

University of Bristol

Modern Languages, Music, Comparative Literatures and Cultures and Spanish (2 students), Finance (2026), Psychology, Business and Management with Innovation (2026), Film and Television, History and Spanish, History

University of the West of England - Bristol

Audio and Music Technology, Product Design Technology, Product Design (2026), Business and Events Management (2026), Business and Management, Film Studies

BIMM University

Songwriting & Music Production (2026)

City St George's, University of London

Mechanical and Design Engineering with Foundation

University of Cambridge

Engineering, Modern and Medieval Languages, History

Cardiff University

Nursing (Child), Criminology and Sociology, Computer Science, Mathematics, Law

University of Chester

Biomedical Science

Champneys College of Health & Beauty

Durham University

Natural Sciences (2026), General Engineering, Theology and Religion

University of Essex

Acting and Fight Performance

University of Exeter

Business and Management (2026), Geography (2026), Medicine, Classical Studies and English

Falmouth University

Sustainable Product Design with Professional Placement

University of Gloucestershire

Forensic Psychology

Health Sciences University

Chiropractic (with Foundation Year)

Harper Adams University

Applied Animal Science (+ Foundation Year) (with placement) (2026)

King's College London, University of London

Philosophy and Modern Languages with a Year Abroad

Kingston University

Graphic Design

University of Kent

Film (2026), Economics (2026)

Lancaster University

Theatre and English Literature, Film Media and Cultural Studies

University of Leeds

Arabic and Chinese, International History and Politics, Sport and Exercise Sciences (2026), Geography (2026)

Leeds Beckett University

Sport and Exercise Science

University of Liverpool

Diagnostic Radiography, Ancient History, Business Economics with a Year in Industry, Architecture

Liverpool John Moores University

Pharmaceutical and Cosmetic Science

Loughborough University

Aeronautical Engineering (with placement year), Management (with placement year), Sport Management (with placement year)

University of Lincoln

Philosophy, Biomedical Science with Science Foundation Year, Games Computing

University of Manchester

International Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response, Children's Nursing, Fashion Marketing (2026), Geography

Manchester Metropolitan University

Accounting and Finance (2026), Business Management with Law (2026), Fashion (2026)

Murcia University (Spain)

Dentistry

Newcastle University

Business Management, Marine Biology

Northumbria University

Interior Design (2026)

University of Nottingham

Veterinary Medicine and Surgery including a Preliminary Year

Nottingham Trent University

Geography, Textile Design (2026)

Oxford Brookes University

Business and Management, Economics

Royal Veterinary College

Veterinary Medicine with Intercolated BSc Year

Royal Holloway, University of London

Drama with Acting

University College London

History (with a Year Abroad)

University of Reading

Speech and Language Therapy (2026)

University of Sheffield

Law and Criminology, Economics (2026), Architecture, Psychology, Medicine

University of Southampton

Electrical and Electronic Engineering with Industrial Studies

University of Surrey

Law with Foundation Year

University of Warwick

Modern Languages, History and Politics

University of Westminster

History

University of Worcester

Law

University of York

Mathematics (2 students), English/History of Art (Equal), Marketing with a year in industry

Gap Year & Employment

Travel, employment (HR, acting, retail) and voluntary work www.cotswold.gloucs.sch.uk/sixthform

Further **resources**

Speak to your tutors, subject leaders and our Sixth Form staff and students, to find out what makes learning with us an outstanding experience.

cotswold.gloucs.sch.uk/sixthform

Check our website for curriculum and exam specifications; consult our Sixth Form A-Z Handbook.

Unifrog

Make the best choices and strongest applications to university, apprenticeships and further education.

UCAS

Create your personalised 'hub' so you have your plans and ideas all in one place.

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