

Sixth Form Courses



Durham School

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Durham School U6th Leavers 2019

Sixth Form decision making timetable for September entry 2019

October 2019

Sixth Form Open Evening – Prospective Parents
Introduction to Sixth Form for present
Yr11 parents and pupils

January 2020

Year 11 Parents' Evening

February 2020

Provisional A level subject choices submitted
(using form enclosed with this booklet)

February 2020

Mock GCSE exams

May/June 2020

GCSE examinations

August 2020

GCSE results

August 30th 2020

Final A level choices confirmed

September 2020

Induction Day – all Year 12 students

June 2021

A level Mock examinations

June 2021

3 days of UCAS induction

September 2021

University applications

June 2022

A level examinations

August 2022

A level results

Leavers Destinations – 2019

DESTINATION	SUBJECT	DESTINATION	SUBJECT
University of Exeter	Business	Leeds Beckett University	Sports & Exercise Therapy
University of Leeds	Psychology	University of Nottingham	Chemistry
Royal Agricultural University	Rural Land Management	University of Liverpool	English Literature & Classical Studies
Leeds Beckett University	Real Estate & Property Management	Lancaster University	Psychology
Leeds Beckett University	Graphic Design	Liverpool John Moores University	Criminology
University of Aberdeen	Medicine	University of Exeter	Biological Sciences
Northumbria University	Psychology (Fdn)	Lancaster University	International Management (Industry)
Queen Mary University of London	Human Geography	Newcastle University	International Business Management
University of Glasgow	Medicine	Hull York Medical School	Medicine (deferred entry)
York St John University	Psychology with Counselling	Nottingham University	Engineering/Physical Sciences (Fdn)
University of Liverpool	Business Studies & French	Liverpool John Moores University	Business Management
University of Aberdeen	Pharmacology	Leeds College of Music	
University of Nottingham	Architecture	University of Bristol	Economics
University of Lincoln	Architecture	The Royal College of Music	
Leeds Beckett University	Construction Management	Professional rugby contract	Yorkshire Carnegie
University of Leeds	Physics	York St John University	Early Childhood Studies
Cardiff University	Economics/French	University of Leeds	Law
Newcastle University	Joint Honours Psychology & Sports & Exercise Science	University of Kepler in Linz, Austria	Chemistry
University of Edinburgh	Biological Sciences	Royal Agricultural University	International Business Management (Food & Agribusiness)
Newcastle University	Chemical Engineering	UCL	Engineering
Northumbria University	Fine Art (Fdn)	Northumbria University	Law (Fdn)
Northumbria University	Social Sciences (Fdn)	University of Nottingham	French & Philosophy
University of Lincoln	Sports Business Management	University of Liverpool	Psychology
UCL	Engineering	University of Bath	Education with Psychology
Northumbria University	Business (Fdn)	UCL	Economics
York St John	Primary Education	Royal Holloway University of London	Accounting & Finance
Leeds Beckett University	Events Management		
University of Cambridge	Law		
University of York	Mathematics		
Queen Mary University of London	Law		
Newcastle University	Biology		
Newcastle University	History		
City University of London	Civil Engineering (Fdn)		
Surrey University	Biochemistry		
Queen Mary University of London	Economics		
UCL	Engineering (Biomedical)		
University of Cambridge	Economics		
Brunel University, London	Product Design		
Tbilisi State University, Georgia	International Relations		
University of Southampton	Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence		
Newcastle University	Cell & Molecular Biology		

A2 Exam Results 2019-17

	2019			2018			2017		
	%A*-A	%A*-B	%Pass	%A*-A	%A*-B	%Pass	%A*-A	%A*-B	%Pass
Art & Design [Fine Art]	57	100	100	37.5	100	100	100	100	100
Ancient History	33.3	66.7	100						
Biology	29.4	60	100	25	80	95	45	91	100
Business Studies	20	40	80	22.2	55.6	100	7	53	100
Chemistry	38	75	100	39.1	82.6	100	47	87	100
Chinese	25	75	100	20	100	100			
Classical Civilisation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	83	100
Drama & Theatre Studies	100	100	100	50	75	100	25	25	100
Design & Technology	33	50	100	0	50	100	0	38	100
Economics	42	67	100	18.2	72.7	100	44	78	100
English Language & Literature	0	0	100	0	75	100	25	50	100
English Literature	50	87.5	100	40	100	100	80	80	100
French	14.3	57	100	50	87.5	100	60	60	100
Further Mathematics	55	65	100	50	66.7	100	67	67	100
Geography	20	50	100	20	70	100	33	50	100
German	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	100	33	100	100
History	56	87	100	16.7	100	100	64	100	100
Latin	n/a	n/a	n/a	100	100	100	100	100	100
Information & Communication Technology	0	50	75	20	40	90	25	63	100
Mathematics	42	75	100	54.5	77.3	100	38	81	100
Music	75	100	100	100	100	100	33	33	100
Physical Education	0	37.5	87.5	22.2	55.6	100	25	75	100
Physics	35	76	100	30	60	100	36	64	100
Politics	20	60	100	14.3	28.6	100	67	67	100
Psychology	19.2	35	96	25	55.6	100	30	70	100
Religious Studies [Ethics]	0	0	66.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	33	67	100
Spanish	50	50	100	50	100	100	0	0	100
Average %	33.5%	61.5%	97.3%	33.3%	71.1%	99.1%	36.1%	67.8%	100%

Entry Requirements

A minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade 6 for A level. Students must also have a minimum of grade 4 in both mathematics and English.

Ideally at least a grade 6 is required in those subjects that the student is studying at A level.

In many subjects a grade 7 is strongly recommended.

International students must have an IELTS score of 5.5 to enter into the Sixth Form. It is our aim that by the time our international students graduate from our Sixth Form they will be at IELTS 7; the standard required by universities for overseas students to study in the UK.

To progress from Year 12 to Year 13 students must satisfy the School's attendance requirements as stipulated in our School's Sixth Form policy, as well as achieving satisfactory results in the end of Year 12 mock exams.

Preparing you for University Life

This booklet is designed intended to give help and guidance to Year 11 pupils about the courses on offer in the Sixth Form at Durham School.

Introduction

At Durham School we are very proud of our Sixth Form. It is the final stage before our students become Old Dunelmians and leave our school community to go and make their own contributions to the world that we live in.

Our students are encouraged to be independent learners and think for themselves, vital skills if they are to make the best use of the freedom offered by life at university and beyond. This is even more vital if you consider that, in many cases, we are preparing our students for jobs that we do not even know exist yet.

As a traditional academic Sixth Form we offer traditional academic A levels. With those A levels the vast majority, if not all, of our students move on to higher education. Whilst academic success is our core-purpose, within our co-educational, day and boarding community our students receive a multitude of opportunities to practise our school motto "Confidence for life". We are justifiably proud of the huge range of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities on offer.

Selecting your subjects

Some subjects at university will require you to study certain subjects at A level. For example medicine requires you to have studied chemistry. However, many university courses will simply be asking for 3 A levels with no stipulation on subjects studied at A Level. Staff are available to discuss A level choices at any time during the sixth form choices decision making timetable. Motivation is obviously important too. It is much easier to study a subject that you enjoy.

Private Study periods

Private study periods are included within the timetable with an element of supervised private study in Year 12 as the students adjust to sixth form expectations and work habits.

Academic tutoring and mentoring

We are data-rich with our information on our sixth form students as we track their progress through their sixth form careers. The CEM Centre ALIS test is used to help us set Year 12 benchmark grades. Progression tests are set on a half-termly basis. These results form part of an extensive mentoring programme that takes place on an individual basis with the student, their tutor, the sixth form staff and their housemasters and housemistresses. Included as part of this process are electronic-markbooks and feedback within 48 hours on set work.

A Level Curriculum

September 2017 was the first year where all A levels are now reformed.

Reformed A levels

These subjects have become two year, or linear, A Levels. This means that students will complete all of their unit exams at the end of the U6 year. All content will be assessed at A Level standard and there will be no opportunity to re- take units. It is important to note that, for subjects with a coursework component, there may be some coursework deadlines in the Year 12.

Students who are starting A Level courses in 2019 have a number of options available to them;

Option 1: 4 A Levels

This offers the possibility of studying four A level subjects. It is likely that only the students making outstanding progress in the Year 12 will continue with all four subjects.

Option 2: 3 A Levels + Extended Project Qualification

This option allows a student to study three A levels, but with the added advantage of taking the EPQ in Year 12. The EPQ is worth 50% of the UCAS points of an A level and is a valuable addition to a student's academic portfolio. Further details on the EPQ can be found on page 31.

Option 3: 3 A Levels + extra-curricular commitments

This option is primarily for students who have heavy extra-curricular commitments (e.g. sport, music, drama). Here, a student can opt to study just three A levels, thus releasing them from academic teaching in one of the option columns. In the 'free' option column, the student would be allocated to private study periods; this would enable them to stay on top of their academic work commitments while still allowing them to participate fully in their extra-curricular activities.

Option 4: Business BTEC + an A level

BTEC in business is offered across two option columns and is worth the grade equivalent of two A levels for university applications. There is less of an emphasis on performing under examination conditions in the BTEC, as it is a 75% non-examination qualification.

Art and Design (Fine Art)

Introduction

The course is designed to promote awareness and understanding of all aspects of art and design. It aims to develop a wide range of skills, including competence in observational drawing as well as expertise in an extensive range of media and techniques. It also develops knowledge and understanding of the history of art and design in our own and other cultures.

Course Content

The course consists of two components, a Personal Investigation and an Externally Set Assignment.

The Personal Investigation requires students to conduct a practical investigation into an idea, issue, concept or theme supported by written material of between 1000 and 3000 words. It should demonstrate a coherent and in-depth response and reflect the student's ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning from an initial starting point to a final realization.

The Externally Set Assignment requires students to respond to a question paper issued by the examination board on 1st February of the final year. Students produce a response to one of eight questions. Preparatory work is developed over the course of several months and the final outcome is created during 15 hours of supervised time after Easter.

Assessment: Examination Board: AQA

Fine Art A Level
Unit 1 7202/C
Unit 2: 7202/X

Preparation for university and beyond

The course provides access both to foundation courses and to a wide range of degree courses in related subject areas. Some universities accept students directly onto a degree course in art and design while others require them to have undertaken a foundation course at a college of higher education. Degree courses which students have chosen include fine art, graphics, sculpture, teacher training, web design, multi-media design, fashion design, 3D design etc.

Course Entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Mr M Baldwin

Business

Introduction

Business is an exciting, forward-thinking A level. We aim to develop an understanding of business issues and to foster thinking, analysis and evaluative skills. We welcome visiting speakers from industry, go on field trips and enter a variety of competitions including the BASE Business Challenge and IFS Student Investor. A keen and lively interest in business affairs contributes greatly to success in the academic study of business.

Course Content

The business studies course is built around the four functional areas of business: marketing, finance, operations management and managing people. Students develop their skills and knowledge across all topic areas.

Assessment: Examination Board: Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Business (9BS0)

Paper 1 (33%) BUSS1 - Marketing, people and global businesses	(2 hours)
Paper 2 (33%) BUSS2 - Business activities, decisions and strategy	(2 hours)
Paper 3 (33%) BUSS3 - Investigating business in a competitive environment	(2 hours)

Preparation for university and beyond

The course will be of direct value to sixth formers considering a degree or a career in business, management, or accounting and finance. To this end, students intending to enter careers such as engineering and other science based areas will find that business provides a good insight into the way their future organisations operate. Business combines well with other subjects and because there is little direct overlap, it is possible to take it with economics.

Course Entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements. An ability to interpret data and financial figures is useful throughout the course.

Head of Department: Mr A Graham

BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Business

Introduction

BTECs in business are alternative academic qualifications to A levels. The qualification can be studied post-16, the same as A levels, but they are more flexible and have a more vocational content (more focus on developing skills and knowledge specifically for the workplace). The BTEC in business course can be equivalent to two A levels and is respected and accepted by the vast majority of universities. Instead of being graded in the traditional sense, BTECs have grading criteria of pass, merit, distinction and distinction*, with distinction* being the highest achievement.

Course Content

The National Diploma in Business BTEC course allows learners to study elements of traditional business theory such as marketing and finance, whilst also introducing modern themes such as event management and pitching business ideas.

Assessment: Examination Board: Pearson (720 GLH) 601/7157/1

- Unit 1 – Exploring Business (internally set and marked assignment, 90 GLH)
- Unit 2 – Developing a Marketing Campaign (externally set and marked assignment, 90 GLH)
- Unit 3 – Personal and Business Finance (exam, 120 GLH)
- Unit 4 – Managing an Event (internally set and marked assignment, 90 GLH)
- Unit 5 – International Business (internally set and marked assignment, 90 GLH)
- Unit 6 – Principles of Management (externally set and marked assignment, 120 GLH))
- Unit 7 – Optional unit (internally set and marked assignment, 60 GLH)
- Unit 8 – Optional unit (internally set and marked assignment, 60 GLH)

Preparation for university and beyond

The assessment tasks on the BTEC Business course may take several forms; written projects, presentations, practical activities, there is scope for a wide variety of assessment methods to be used which will stand learners in good stead for the future. They provide progression to the workplace either directly or via study at a higher level. Over 100,000 BTEC students apply to UK universities every year and their BTEC Nationals are accepted by over 150 UK universities and higher education institutes for relevant degree programmes either on their own or in combination with A Levels.

Course Entry and qualifications

There are no specific course requirements, although it is recommended by Pearson that students have achieved at least 5 GCSEs (preferably including maths and english) to a good grade.

Head of Department: Mr A Graham

Biology

Introduction

Biology is a dynamic subject and recent advances in medicine, food technology and environmental issues have been reliant upon scientists with a sound grasp of biology. The course is primarily aimed at candidates who are likely to apply for a degree course with a biological emphasis.

Course Content

There are 8 topics that are to be covered throughout the two year linear course. Topics 1-4 will cover the first year of the course (biological molecules, cells, exchanging substances and genetic information). Topics 5-8 cover the second year of the course (energy transfer, homeostasis, inheritance and gene expression). There is also a significant practical component throughout the course.

Assessment: Examination Board: AQA Biology 7402

Unit 1 (35%)	Topics 1-4, including any relevant practical skills	(2hours)
Unit 2 (35%)	Topics 5-8, including any relevant practical skills	(2hours)
Unit 3 (30%)	Topics 1-8, including relevant practical skills	(2hours)

There is also a separate practical skills endorsement. This is assessed by teachers and will be based on direct observations of students' competency in a range of skills that are not assessable in written exams.

Preparation for university and beyond

A-level biology offers a broad spectrum of topics and experimental skills and as such is an appropriate stepping stone for university courses. Completing the course in biology would demonstrate that candidates have a variety of practical and intellectual skills. These can be applied to scenarios or tasks that the candidate may be set in their chosen profession, whether it be accountancy or zoology.

Course Entry and qualifications:

Grade 7 biology, or 77 dual award science is the GCSE recommendation. It should be worth noting that 10% of the awarded marks are for Level 2 maths (GCSE), so a pass in maths is also beneficial.

Head of Department: Mr M Burke

Classical Civilisation

Introduction

Classical civilisation is a fascinating subject in its own right but, in addition, a knowledge and understanding of the classical world will enable you to understand better our own culture and civilisation which owes so much to Greece and Rome. This course is open to all students, requires no previous study of classical subjects and offers pupils a chance to make a fresh start on a new and exciting specification. We aim to give an insight into the glorious civilisations of Greece and Rome, exploring important aspects of life through history, archaeology, art, architecture and literature. It encourages candidates to develop a range of analytical, interpretative and communication skills that can be applied to a wide variety of subjects.

Course Content

The emphasis is on a wide variety of learning experiences.

The Three-Unit A Level

The A Level is made up of three units, one of which is compulsory. One module of three is chosen on the topic of Culture and the Arts, while one module of three is chosen on the topic of Belief and Ideas. All three units are externally assessed in June.

Likely units of study are:

H408/11: The world of the hero* – a study of books of either Homer's Iliad or Odyssey plus Virgil's Aeneid.

H408/22: Imperial image – how the emperor was portrayed in literature, art and culture.

H408/33 Politics of the Late Republic – a study of one of the most tumultuous periods of Roman history, primarily through the lens of Cicero's speeches and letters.

(* compulsory unit)

Assessment: Examination Board: OCR specification H408

H408/11	2hr20 exam	100 marks	40% of A Level
H408/22	1hr45 exam	75 marks	30% of A Level
H408/33	1hr45 exam	75 marks	30% of A Level

Preparation for university and beyond

As an academic A Level, classical civilisation gives excellent preparation for many courses at university due to the strong investigative skills, critical interpretation, source analysis and information assimilation that students develop throughout the course. Apart from students of classics and archaeology, those of English, politics, law, history and many others will find an A level in classical civilisation a great support for their studies. Graduates in classics enjoy success in a huge variety of careers including public relations, marketing, the civil service, law, journalism and the diplomatic service.

Course Entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Mr C J Hope

Chemistry

Introduction

Chemistry is the study of the substances that help to make our life more comfortable. Materials developed by chemists can be seen in the clothes we wear, the fuels that we burn in our homes and cars, fertilisers used in the production of our food and in the medicines we take. Chemists need also to study how and why substances react together and how they can change the properties of compounds so as to produce those characteristics that will be beneficial to humans.

Course Content

The course develops those skills learnt at GCSE and develops the student's interest and enjoyment of chemistry. It aims to produce an appreciation of the interlinking patterns that exist amongst the chemical elements so that predictions can be made. The course is challenging, but is also lots of fun, and it is expected that students carry out extra reading in their study time.

Assessment: Examination Board: OCR

- Unit 1 Practical Chemistry
- Unit 2 Foundations in Chemistry
- Unit 3 Periodic table and Energy
- Unit 4 Core Organic
- Unit 5 Physical Chemistry and Transition Elements
- Unit 6 Organic Chemistry and Analysis

All modules are examined at the end of the course in three 1.5 hour exams. The assessment will be in the form of long and short answer questions, multiple choice and synoptic questions.

Preparation for university and beyond

Chemistry A Level is a well-respected qualification, highly regarded by universities and employers alike. Other subjects which complement chemistry at Advanced level are biology, physics and mathematics, however, an increasing number of students following arts or humanities subjects choose to continue with chemistry to broaden their studies. A qualification in chemistry may lead to the following careers:-

Engineering	Nursing	Management Consultancy
Chemistry	Pharmacology	Accountancy
Biochemistry	Environmental Science	Veterinary Science
Dentistry	Food and Drug Industries	Medicine
Law	Sports Science	Forensic Science

Course Entry and qualifications

Grade 7 in chemistry and GCSE Mathematics or 77 in Double Award Science are strongly recommended to study chemistry at A Level.

Head of Department: Mrs T Moore

Computer Science

Introduction

Computers infuse every aspect of modern life and modern society simply could not function without computers. Computer Science at A level will give students a general grounding in Computing, including an understanding of computer systems, the principles of programming, and the solving of problems. The course is designed to develop an understanding of computer science as students can develop the capacity to think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically. Over the two years, students will develop a strong ability to analyse problems, deconstruct them, spot patterns and formulate solutions, all of which are skills that are extremely valuable for further study and employment.

Course Content

- The characteristics of contemporary processors, input, output and storage devices
- Software and software development
- Exchanging data
- Data types, data structures and algorithms
- Legal, moral, cultural and ethical issues
- Elements of computational thinking
- Problem solving and programming
- Algorithms to solve problems and standard algorithms

The learner will choose a computing problem to work through according to the guidance in the specification.

- Analysis of the problem
- Design of the solution
- Developing the solution
- Evaluation

Assessment – OCR Computer Science H446

Module 1 - 2 hours 30 minutes (40% of A level)

A written paper including short answer, longer answer and some higher tariff questions that will test the quality of extended responses.

Module 2 - 2 hours 30 minutes (40% of A level).

A written paper including short answer, longer answer and some higher tariff questions that will test the quality of extended responses.

Module 3 – 20% of A Level

The project will be internally assessed and externally moderated.

Preparation for University and beyond

If you are considering a career in Computing or Engineering, Computer Science is an excellent subject to consider. It complements a wide range of subjects at University and beyond.

Course Requirements

A grade 6 in GCSE Computer Science / ICT and a grade 7 in Mathematics is recommended in order to successfully pursue this course.

Head of Department: Mr A McMillan

Drama and Theatre

Introduction

Drama is one of the oldest and most profound of human activities, and its rich potential for developing further your confidence, expression and teamwork is obvious. Whilst you do not need to have taken GCSE drama to follow our Sixth Form course, you should have some performing or technical experience. You must also have an appetite for going to the theatre.

Course Content

A-Level Drama and Theatre

Component 1:

Drama and Theatre (written exam) 40% of A Level

We will undertake the study of two set plays and you will answer one question on each play.

Our programme of theatre visits prepares you for the second part of the written exam where you will answer a question on the work of theatre makers in a single live theatre production seen.

Component 2:

Creating Original Drama (practical) 30% of A Level

The creating and performing of an entirely devised piece which must be influenced by the work and methodologies of a prescribed practitioner or theatre company. You will also submit a working notebook on the devising process.

This component is marked by your teacher and moderated by the exam board.

Component 3:

Making theatre (practical) 30% of A Level

Practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts (Extract 1, 2 and 3) each taken from a different play. The methodology of a prescribed practitioner must be applied to Extract 3.

Extract 3 is to be performed as a final assessed piece (students may contribute as performer, designer or director.

A reflective report analysing and evaluating theatrical interpretation of all three extracts will also be submitted.

This component is marked by the exam board.

Preparation for university and beyond

The course is academically exacting, and its combination of a written exam, practical work and evaluation and analysis of both the interpretative and creative processes enables students to gain an entry qualification for university courses in a host of subjects.

Course Entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Mrs A Brownlee

Pre-U Art and Design (Design and Technology)

The Pre-U Art & Design is an exciting qualification for sixth form students who want to attend university. Developed by Cambridge International Examinations, it provides students with knowledge, skills and in depth understanding of the subject. The course is mostly practical in nature allowing students to develop their own areas of interest. Project work reduces exam stress too. The Pre-U has a grade scale that represents students across the full ability range. The most able can gain grades above A* at A Level, (see below). This qualification is fully recognised by universities.

Course Content

This course will follow a product design/environmental/architectural design syllabus.

Candidates should design and modify new and existing products. They should explore a wide range of materials and processes. Work produced should adhere to a design brief and demonstrate ability to research, develop, and test prototypes. Candidates should also demonstrate their understanding of environmental issues.

Architectural design studies can be presented as drawings, photographs and models.

The Pre U comprises of three components produced over the two year course.

Component 1: Portfolio

The portfolio is an exploratory investigation of a design theme or context decided by the school and produced in the Lower Sixth year. It should comprise of a substantial body of work supported by sketchbooks and journals. Work can include research, observation, exploration, analysis and evaluation of working practices, ideas and contexts of designers and creative practitioners.

Component 2: Critical and Contextual Study

This is a written study of between 3000-3500 words with relevant illustrations. The focus of the study should be an aspect of product or architectural/environmental design of interest to the student.

Component 3: Externally Set Task

Students respond to a starting point set by the examination board. They are required to develop project work which culminates in a fully resolved piece or body of work.

Assessment

Component 1 (30%) Portfolio

Component 2 (30%) Critical and Contextual Study

Component 3 (40%) Externally Set Task

Reporting and Grading

Cambridge Pre-U Grade	Pre-U UCAS Tariff	A Level Grade	Equivalent A Level UCAS Tariff
Distinction 1	56	n/a	n/a
Distinction 2	56	A*	(A*) 56
Distinction 3	52	A	(A) 48
Merit 1	44		
Merit 2	40	B	(B) 40
Merit 3	36	C	(C) 32
Pass 1	28		
Pass 2	24	D	(D) 24
Pass 3	20	E	(E) 16

Preparation for university and beyond

The course will provide access to degree courses in product design, industrial design, graphic design, web design, architecture, mechanical or design engineering.

Course entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry qualifications

Economics

Introduction

'The ideas of economists, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else.' J.M. Keynes.

Economics is a long established discipline whose relevance to the world of business, government, international relations and academia is widely acknowledged. Many students find that studying economics opens up new areas of interest in which they previously had little knowledge.

Course Content

The study of economics centres on the study of markets and firms, known as microeconomics, and the study of the way in which the economy at large works, macroeconomics. The former involves matters such as how prices are determined and the running of firms from the point of view of costs and revenue. Macroeconomics examines problems such as unemployment, inflation and balance of payments deficits.

Assessment: Examination Board: AQA Specification 7136

Unit 1 (33%) Markets and Market failure - data response/one essay question

Unit 2 (33%) The National and International Economy - data response/one essay question

Unit 3 (33%) Economic Principles and Issues - multiple choice/case study questions

Preparation for university and beyond

Economics graduates are eagerly sought by employers because of the analytical, problem solving skills and organisational expertise which a study of this discipline provides. The Bank of England, stock broking, the Civil Service, management consultancies and major national and international companies all employ economics graduates as professional economists and economic advisers.

Course Entry and qualifications

At least a grade 6 in mathematics and english at GCSE is strongly recommended

Head of Department: Mr A Graham

English Language & Literature

Introduction

This is a popular lively course for students who enjoyed both language and literature at GCSE. It requires the same analytical skills as literature but fewer texts are required.

Course Content

Students study literary texts; novels and poems in addition to transcripts of spoken language and representations of speech in texts. The course requires formal essays and also transactional pieces such as speech writing, scripting and letter writing.

Assessment: Examination Board: AQA 7706/7707

Unit 1 (40%) Telling stories. (3 hours)
Remembered Places - the representation of place.
Imagined Worlds - point of view and genre in prose
Poetic Voices - the forms and functions of poetic voice

Unit 2 (40%) Exploring Conflict (2 hours 30 minutes)
One piece of re-creative writing using set text (open book) and a critical commentary where students evaluate their own writing. One question from a choice of two on drama set text.

Unit 3 (20%) Non-exam assessment ; Making Connections
A piece on a chosen theme from prescribed texts. This is written in the form of a personal investigation that explores a specific technique or theme in both literary and non-literary discourse (2500-3000 words).

Preparation for A Level and beyond

This course offers an excellent grounding for the study of academic subjects at university for example history and law. It is also a good introduction to creative courses such as script writing, creative writing or media courses.

Course Entry and qualifications:

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Mrs F Swan

English Literature

Introduction

Studying English Literature allows students to evaluate their experiences and develop their opinions through a range of different texts. Both coursework and exam encourage the development of skills such as: analysing, comparing, evaluating, structuring and supporting an argument. The study of literature discusses the contexts of production of texts and the contexts of reception. This makes us think about our role as readers as well as the author's role in writing.

Course Content

The course requires students to read widely and to engage in discussions about the characters, themes and ideas presented in the texts. The texts required for the syllabus range across drama; including study of a Shakespeare play, modern and Victorian novels and poetry. We approach texts through individual reading and responses; class and group discussions; presentations; performances and visits where possible.

Assessment: Examination Board: CIE 9695

Paper 1 Drama and Poetry. 2 hours exam
50 marks

Candidates answer two questions: one from section A drama and one from section B

Paper 2 Prose and unseen. 2 hours exam
50 marks

Candidates answer two questions: one from section A on studied Prose and one from section B unseen

Paper 3
Shakespeare and Drama. 2 Hours exam
50 marks

Candidates answer two questions: one from section A Shakespeare and one from section B drama

Paper 4
Pre-and post - 1900 Poetry and Prose. 2 Hours
50 marks

Candidates answer two questions: one from section A Pre 1900 Poetry and Prose and one from Post 1900 Poetry and Prose

All papers are externally assessed and contribute 25% of the A level

Preparation for university and beyond

As the skills acquired are transferrable the study of literature can also aid the study of other academic subjects such as history, classics, art history and modern languages as well as possible degree courses in these subjects and psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, law and others. The course itself allows students to consider periods in history and consider different theoretical approaches to literature.

Course Entry and qualifications:

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements. A reading habit is also advisable.

Head of Department: Mrs F Swan

Geography

Introduction

The A level Geography course gives learners the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to become engaged global citizens. It combines well with both arts and science A levels. Contemporary and dynamic content allows students to understand and interact with issues which affect people and places from local to global scale.

Course content

The physical geography component covers Tectonic Hazards, Coastal Landscapes, Ecosystems, and Global Water and Energy supplies. The human geography component investigates Diverse Places, Global Connections and Superpowers. Fieldwork is carried out as an essential part of the course. The investigative geography component allows learners to undertake an independent investigation of their choice. This encourages learners to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic whilst developing a number of study skills relevant to Higher Education and the world of work.

There will be a residential fieldtrip over a weekend in the spring term of Year 12.

Assessment : Examination board Edexcel

There are 3 externally examined papers and one coursework component. Students complete all assessment in the May/June of Year 13

Paper 1 Physical Geography 30 % of the qualification
(2 hour 15 minute written paper)

Paper 2 Human Geography 30 % of total A level
(2 hour 15 minute written paper)

Paper 3 Synoptic decision making 20 % of total A level
(2 hour 15 minute written paper)

Coursework : Independent Investigation 20% of total A level
(non-examination assessment)

Preparation for university and beyond

Geography is a popular choice at university. Geography graduates are in a strong position when applying for jobs because careers in development, planning, environmental management, travel and tourism and many other areas incorporate geographical knowledge and skills. Many employers also recognise the wide range of transferable skills that geographers have, such as the ability to collect, process, present and analyse data, work in a team, interpret maps and satellite images and use geographical information systems (GIS).

Course Entry and qualifications:

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Dr Christine Scott Warburton

History

Introduction

The History department's aims are many and varied. History is a subject that is important to everyone and should be accessible to everyone. The department strives, therefore, to create a stimulating environment in which to engage students of all abilities. The increased challenges presented by A Level study provide students with the opportunity to develop the crucial skills of analysis and evaluation of historical evidence, and the effective communication of ideas through reasoned argument, as well as promoting academic rigour and critical thought as valuable ends in themselves. Furthermore, through the Historical Investigation (the coursework), the department seeks to encourage intellectual curiosity in students, and hopes to engender in them the confidence to become effective independent learners. Finally, it is hoped that students will continue to read and enjoy history throughout their lives.

Course Content

The main aim of the History Department is to inspire an interest in, and love of, the past. To that end, we offer an excitingly diverse curriculum at A Level, which includes medieval, early modern and modern topics. Through our studies of the political, social, economic and spiritual lives of people in a variety of chronological, national and supranational contexts, we seek to develop an understanding and appreciation of the value of the experiences of others.

We are following AQA 7042HD, which includes:

- A breadth study: Russia, 1855 – 1964
- A depth study: Religious Conflict and the Church in England, 1529-70
- Coursework: The Crusades, 1095-1204

Assessment: Examination Board: AQA

AQA's A Level History course is divided into three units. Two culminate in a final examination in the summer of the Upper 6th year: the breadth study (19th and 20th century Russia) and the depth study (the English Reformation). Each examination is 150 minutes long and is worth 40% of overall A Level grade. The coursework, which is worth 20% of the A level, comprises an essay of around 4000 words.

Preparation for university and beyond

The Russell Group of leading universities identifies History as a 'facilitating subject', in that it leaves open many options at university. It provides students not simply with knowledge and understanding of the past, but also with a range of skills that are applicable to a wide range of degree courses. The A level can lead to study of History at university, but it also acts as background for other arts subjects. It meshes well with, for example, Economics, English, Philosophy and Politics, while its skills are very helpful in law. There are specialist 'history' careers such as archive work or teaching, but it is also a springboard for international business, diplomatic and media careers.

Course Entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Mr S P Wright

Latin

Introduction

Building on the grammar and literature of Latin GCSE, the A Level is the time to study even more exciting and fascinating literature and engage more closely with the workings of the language. Whether it is Cicero successfully defending a client against a charge of breaching public peace, Virgil's account of the shield of Aeneas, Seneca discussing moral philosophy or Ovid composing letters from mythical heroines to their heroes, you will find something of interest and something to challenge.

Course Content

The A Level course: Grammar is consolidated in Year 12 and work on Prose Composition (writing in Latin) starts in earnest. Some of the Latin Prose set texts will be started too. Latin Verse and Latin Prose are primarily the modules studied in Year 13: each unit contains a mix of set text and context reading in English. Set text study develops the skill to write critical literary essays. Work continues on verse and prose unseen translation and the authors are known beforehand so students can get used to their style.

Assessment: Examination Board: OCR Specification H443

The **A Level** is made up of **four** units which are externally assessed in June.
Units of study are:

H443/01: Latin Unseen Translation – Latin unseen (one prose, one verse) translation into English.
1hr45 exam 100 marks 33% of A Level

H443/02: Latin Prose Composition – a passage of English to be translated into Latin.
1hr15 exam 50 marks 17% of A Level

H443/03: Latin Prose – Two prose set texts and additional context reading in English.
2hr exam 75 marks 25% of A Level

H443/04: Latin Verse – Two verse set texts and additional context reading in English.
2hr exam 75 marks 25% of A Level

Preparation for university and beyond

Students may continue their Latin and/or classical studies at university. This can be a literature degree, classical civilization, ancient history or archaeology. Classical subjects develop a tremendous variety of skills and graduates are recognized as well-trained in clear thinking, research skills, adaptability, independence and the ability to understand people and situations in the world at large. As such, they are eagerly sought by employers. Students of Latin enjoy success in a huge variety of careers from journalism to accountancy, from management to publishing.

Course Entry and qualifications:

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Mr C J Hope

Mathematics and Further Mathematics

Introduction

‘Mathematics is the language with which God has written the universe.’ Galileo Galilei

Mathematics is a fascinating academic discipline with innumerable links to the world around us. Indeed, it is said that if you go down deep enough into anything, you will find mathematics.

A-level Mathematics Course Content

Pupils take pure mathematics 1 & 2 covering: proof, algebra and functions, coordinate geometry, sequences and series, trigonometry, exponentials and logarithms, differentiation, integration and vectors. They also sit a combined statistics and mechanics paper. The statistics part covers: sampling, data presentation & interpretation, probability, distributions and hypothesis testing. In mechanics, topics include kinematics, forces and Newton’s Laws, and moments.

Further Mathematics

Pupils cover Further Pure 1 & 2; looking at proof, complex numbers, matrices, and more advanced calculus, vectors, polar coordinates, hyperbolic functions and differential equations. They can also go on to deepen their knowledge of pure mathematics, statistics or mechanics, in two further optional papers.

Those following the further mathematics pathway will complete the full A-level mathematics in Year 12, followed by the further mathematics A-level in Year 13.

Assessment: Examination Board: Edexcel

Mathematics

Pure Mathematics 1 (2 hours)
Pure Mathematics 2 (2 hours)
Statistics & Mechanics (2 hours)

Further Mathematics

Further Pure Mathematics 1 (1.5 hours)
Further Pure Mathematics 2 (1.5 hours)
Option 1: FP3, Further Statistics, Further Mechanics (1.5 hours)
Option 2: FP4, Further Statistics, Further Mechanics (1.5 hours)

Preparation for university and beyond

Mathematics is a highly regarded subject and is a prerequisite for many university courses.

Course Entry and qualifications:

A minimum of a grade 7 at GCSE is required to study mathematics at A level. A grade 8 at GCSE is recommended for further mathematics.

Head of Department Mr T N Middleton

Modern Languages: French, German, & Spanish

Introduction

An A Level in modern languages offers the opportunity to study for a respected academic qualification while developing a very practical skill, preparing sixth-formers well for future study and living abroad.

Course Content

The modern languages course covers a variety of current affairs topics alongside traditional grammar and translation; each course also offers the opportunity to study literature and/or film in the original language, while developing essential listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills.

Assessment: Examination Board: Edexcel Specification 9FR0/9GN0/9SP0

At the end of Year 13 the course will be assessed across several different skills:

Unit 1 (40%) Written Examination (2 hours) - Listening, Reading and Translation

Unit 2 (30%) Written Examination (2 hours and 40 minutes) - Written response to works (literary or film) and Translation

Unit 3 (30%) Speaking Examination

Preparation for university and beyond

Any modern language is a well-respected qualification regarded by universities and employers alike, and is actively preferred by Russell Group universities as a facilitating subject; ultimately, the ability to speak a language opens up the opportunity of work placements throughout the world. A language at A Level shows you have the ability to analyse language and thought as well as be an independent learner. Study of the subject at GCSE is essential preparation for A Level, and you should aim to have completed the higher tier reading and listening papers.

Course Entry and qualifications:

Grade 7 at GCSE is strongly recommended to study a language at A Level

Head of Department: Mrs K L Wilkinson

Music

Introduction

All candidates will enjoy and succeed at music A level if they can fulfil the following:

- Enjoy performing both as soloist and as part of an ensemble.
- Be prepared to practise regularly to improve instrumental or vocal technique.
- Have some experience of composition and show a willingness to improve compositional techniques.
- Enjoy listening to a very wide variety of musical styles, be prepared to analyse critically and to build up aural skills.

Course Content

The course develops further the skills acquired during GCSE: performing, composition and appraising (listening and analysis).

Assessment: Examination Board: Edexcel. Course code: 9MU0

Component 1 (30%): Performing (controlled assessment)

Component 2 (30%): Composing (controlled assessment)

Component 3 (40%): Appraising (Listening and analysis exam – 2 hours)

The complete specification can be found here: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/music-2016.html>

Preparation for university and beyond.

A Level music is amongst the most respected A Levels by universities as it tests a variety of challenging skills. It is acceptable as a subject for any degree application.

Course Entry and qualifications:

Normally, at least an 6 grade at GCSE music is a prerequisite, and it is important that potential candidates have reached approximately grade 5 standard on one instrument (or voice) by the end of the GCSE year. Grade 5 theory would be an additional, though not essential, benefit. The course is open to pop and rock musicians as well as those with a classical background, though the ability to read music from staff notation is essential.

Head of Department: Mr R A Muttitt

Photography

Introduction

Photography, including lens-based and light-based media, is offered as an endorsement of art and design and will appeal to pupils with a creative interest in image making using a wide range of traditional and digital techniques.

Course Content

The A level course consists of two components, a Personal Investigation and an Externally Set Assignment.

The Personal Investigation requires students to conduct a practical investigation into an idea, issue, concept or theme supported by written material of between 1000 and 3000 words. It should demonstrate a coherent and in-depth response and reflect the student's ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning from an initial starting point to a final realization.

The Externally Set Assignment requires students to respond to a question paper issued by the examination board on 1st February of the final year. Students produce a response to one of eight questions. Preparatory work is developed over the course of several months and the final outcome is created during 15 hours of supervised time after Easter.

Assessment: Examination Board AQA

A level

Unit 1 (60%) Portfolio of work

Unit 2 (40%) Externally Set Assignment

Preparation for university and beyond

The course will provide access to foundation and degree courses in photography, digital media, graphic design, film and media design, photo journalism etc.

Course Entry and qualifications:

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Mr M Baldwin

Physical Education

Introduction

This course suits any genuine sportsperson. It focuses on participation and performance in physical activity as part of a balanced, active and healthy lifestyle.

GCSE PE is a slight advantage, but not a necessity. Talented sportspeople who have not studied the subject at GCSE have been very successful on the course.

Course Content

The course is 70% academic and 30% practical.

Assessment: Examination Board: OCR Physical Education

- Component 1 Anatomy & Physiology, Exercise Physiology, Biomechanics
- Component 2 Skill Acquisition & Sports Psychology
- Component 3 Socio-Cultural & Contemporary Issues
- Component 4 Performance

Preparation for university and beyond

The subject is useful to any sports-related university course. It also covers many health-related issues that would be useful to anyone with a philosophy of pursuing an active and healthy lifestyle in to adult life.

Course Entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Mr P C Gerrard

Physics

Introduction

Physics “is a way to teach how something gets to be known, what is not known, to what extent things are known (for nothing is known absolutely), how to handle doubt and uncertainty, what the rules of evidence are, how to think about things so that judgments can be made, how to distinguish truth from fraud, and from show” – Richard Feynman, Nobel-Prize winning physicist.

Course Content

Mechanics and Materials
Waves, electricity and light.
Fields and particle physics.
Thermodynamics, nuclear physics, oscillations and astrophysics.
Practical skills and data analysis.

Assessment: Examination Board: Edexcel

Unit 1 (30%) Advanced Physics I
Unit 2 (30%) Advanced Physics II
Unit 3 (40%) General and practical principles in Physics
Practical Endorsement - internally assessed throughout year (pass/fail)

Preparation for university and beyond

Physics as a subject is highly respected by universities and employers alike. It is one of the few courses which will allow you access to specialist fields, such as engineering and medicine, and also allow you to keep your options open with relevance in other areas such as finance and politics.

Course Entry and qualifications

Grade 7 in physics GCSE or 77 in Double Award Science are strongly recommended to study physics at A Level

Head of Department: Mr A Smith

Politics

Introduction

Politics is an exciting and unique course that allows students to study UK and US Politics in the here and now whilst also giving them a historical and theoretical underpinning of our political institutions and ideas. The Chinese proverb “May you live in interesting times” has never been so apt for our current political climate, the snap 2017 General Election, Corbynism, Brexit and of course the Tweeter in Chief President Trump. These are but a few of the political events that have shaped the political world, the impact of these and many others will form the basis of our class case study material and as ever provoke a wealth of healthy discussion.

Course Content

Students will start with an in depth study of UK politics, analysing features such as voting behaviour, the workings of parliament and electoral systems. In addition, core political ideas such as conservatism and socialism will be scrutinised to give a thorough understanding of these much used and abused terms. In addition, students will take an in depth look at the development of Feminism as a political ideology, analysing its impact on political and societal thought over time.

In second year the focus will shift to the US where students will conduct a comparative study of the US political system through contemporary case studies and up to the minute political events. Put simply this means the class of 2019 will study the presidency, however what kind of presidency they study will depend upon how Trump behaves in office, and of course how long he remains there! Alongside this, students will study the other components of the US political system such as Congress and the Supreme Court.

Assessment: Examination Board: Edexcel

Paper 1 | 33% | UK Politics (9PL0/01) | 2 hours written examination

Paper 2 | 33% | UK Government (9PL0/02) | 2 hours written examination

Paper 3 | 33% | Comparative Politics (9PL0/3A) | 2 hours written examination

Preparation for university and beyond

Politics is the ideal preparation for students who want to develop skills in investigation, communication and persuasive analysis. The course content and the examination format focus on logical sequencing of substantiated argument. Skills that are highly valued by both universities and employers alike. Several former students have continued their studies of politics to undergraduate level, whereas others have specialised in another subject.

Course Entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements, an interest in politics the world and debate is very useful.

Head of Department: Mr S Macnair

Psychology

Introduction

Psychology is an exploration of the most complex machine on earth – the human mind. Literally defined, psychology is the “scientific study of the mind and behaviour” and during your A level course you will cover a varied and challenging syllabus, considering questions such as;

- *Where do mental illnesses come from and how do we treat them?*
- *What makes people aggressive?*
- *Are we a product of our genes or our environment?*
- *How does our memory work?*
- *What are the consequences of childhood neglect?*
- *What do Psychologists actually do?*

Course Content

There are three examined units in the psychology A level. In paper 1 students study social influence, memory, attachment and psychopathology. Paper 2 covers classic approaches in psychology, biopsychology and research methods. Paper 3 involves a consideration of issues and debates in psychology and three additional optional topics - relationships, schizophrenia and forensic psychology.

Teaching and learning involves a variety of methods, including lectures, small group activities, discussions, videos and independent learning tasks. As the A level is assessed entirely through external examinations, you will also spend time developing your exam skills and critical essay writing. You will, however, conduct your own psychological research to learn about how psychologists study human behaviour and to consolidate theory and learn about how psychologists study human behaviour.

Assessment: Examination Board: AQA Specification 7182

Unit 1 (33%)	Introductory Topics in Psychology	(2 hours)
Unit 2 (33%)	Psychology in Context	(2 hours)
Unit 3 (33%)	Issues and Options in Psychology	(2 hours)

Preparation for university and beyond

Psychology develops literacy and numeracy skills as well as critical and analytical thinking. Its status as a scientific discipline means that it is an A Level which serves as a good basis for a number of degree courses, especially those of a scientific nature. Beyond university, the diverse nature of psychology means that it is an attractive qualification for many career paths, including education, business and the medical field. At A Level, psychology combines well with both the traditional sciences as well as humanities subjects.

Course Entry and qualifications

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements

Head of Department: Ms S Watchman

Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics

Introduction

Philosophy and ethics are excellent vehicles for refining high level thinking skills in preparation for university and beyond. Issues related to the ethical themes studied at GCSE are explored in greater depth and augmented, but the GCSE qualification is not a prerequisite to studying this course.

Course Content

The OCR A Level course includes three papers, each worth one third of the A Level. Philosophy includes the study of ancient philosophical influences, arguments for and against the existence of God, the nature and influence of religious experience, and the challenge for religious belief of the problem of evil. Ethics includes the study of normative ethical theories, the application of ethical theory to contemporary issues (e.g. business ethics), the idea of conscience, and sexual ethics. Developments in religious thought includes the study of contemporary religious expression, religious diversity, religious identity, and the relationship between religion and society.

Assessment: Examination Board: OCR Specification H573

Unit 1 (33%)	Philosophy of religion	(2 hours)
Unit 2 (33%)	Religion and ethics	(2 hours)
Unit 3 (33%)	Developments in religious thought	(2 hours)

Preparation for university and beyond

An A Level pass in RPE is highly regarded by leading universities around the world. Top ranking universities offer degrees in theology/religious studies and philosophy. The high level thinking skills developed in philosophy are exceptionally valuable to students in any subject. Ethics, and the debating skills that this course develops, are important elements in many university courses, including medicine, law and business. Religious understanding is invaluable in the increasingly globalised world we live in.

Course Entry and qualifications:

Standard Sixth Form entry requirements.

Head of Department: Fr S A McMurtary

Learning Support

Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Where necessary and applicable, Durham School will seek to gain further support for students during key examinations.

Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates with special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries. All Access Arrangements must be assessed by a qualified Specialist Teacher or Educational Psychologist and approved by JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) and must be based on evidence of need and normal way of working.

Access Arrangements allow candidates to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment for example, candidates may be granted a reader, scribe or braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make Reasonable Adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A Reasonable Adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment. Request for Special Consideration must be made by Durham School as necessary.

Head of Department: Mrs J Wood

PSHE Education

Introduction

By definition, PSHE education covers a broad range of topics relating to the community locally, nationally and globally. We seek to educate our pupils so they can learn to appreciate a wider perspective within which they can develop the skills necessary to make wise and informed decisions as they grow towards independent living. Durham School is proud to be a member of the PSHE Association and this framework ensures we offer the skills based around self-awareness, responsibility, financial capabilities and how to become a more active citizen.

Course Content

The programme is delivered through a set scheme of work and lessons are creative, stimulating and encourage discussion and critical thinking. Topics within the year range from democracy, politics and voting, charity work, society, media and influences, United Nations and World Trade Organisations, peer feedback, teamwork, debate and presentation skills.

Preparation for university and beyond

We also offer slots to visiting speakers to come and talk about physical and emotional wellbeing, real-life stories and experiences, which are crucial in assisting young adults in understanding the new challenges ahead.

Head of Department: Mrs N J Thompson

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Introduction

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is an addition to the academic enrichment programme offered in the Sixth Form (i.e. it does not replace one of the student's A Level choices). It is designed to provide students with an opportunity to exercise their abilities beyond the A Level syllabus and help prepare them for university or their future career. Students have the freedom to select their own subject and, with supervision from appointed staff, will be responsible for researching the topic, producing their project, maintaining a production 'log' and, finally, presenting to a small audience.

The EPQ is equivalent to half an A level, so carries the added benefit of providing an additional qualification and UCAS points. In addition, even if a university does not include the EPQ as part of their offer, they will still look upon it favourably as they recognise that it helps develop the skills which are required at undergraduate level.

Course Content

Each student will be responsible for identifying, designing, planning and completing their individual project, before presenting to a small audience. Students will be assigned a staff supervisor who will oversee, guide and facilitate throughout the project. There is also a taught element of the EPQ, where students will participate in group sessions which are designed to develop specific skills which can be utilised at the various stages of the project.

Assessment: Examination Board AQA

Assessment is based purely on the evidence produced during the project. This will comprise;

- A completed production log and assessment record (completed by the project supervisor and EPQ coordinator)
- The project product – this could take a number of forms, including a dissertation, a research study, a performance or an artefact (such as a piece of artwork).
- A written report of 1000 – 6000 words (the exact length of the report will depend on the nature of the project)

Preparation for university and beyond

The EPQ allows a student to demonstrate their academic passion and interest in a certain area of study, as well as providing the opportunity to develop research and academic skills which are vital at undergraduate level. As such, it is viewed extremely favourably by many universities and often forms the basis for questions during admission interviews.

EPQ coordinator – Miss C O'Donnell

Academic Support

The Sixth Form Centre

The Sixth Form Centre, located in the Vallance building, is the ideal environment for students to work. Fully WiFi enabled and including a number of desktop computers, the SFC provides a spacious area away from the hustle and bustle of the school which is conducive to the requirements of sixth form study. It also contains key materials for students in the Sixth Form, such as university prospectuses and open day information, gap year opportunities and possible work experience placements. The office of the Director and Assistant Director of Sixth Form is located in this area; students can drop in at any time of the day to discuss any issues they have.

When students in Year 12 have private study periods they are required to go to the SFC for supervised study in the mornings, periods 1 to 5. This helps develop their study skills and ensures students remain on top of their academic commitments. At other times of the day all sixth form students are encouraged to use the SFC, and many do just that!

Yr11 Surgeries

Sixth Form support actually begins while pupils are in Year 11. Following the open evening, pupils and parents are encouraged to sign up to individual 'surgeries'; these provide an opportunity for pupils to speak with a key member of staff about A Level choices, allowing a discussion on which subjects are required for certain university courses, the nature of A Levels, which subjects are particularly suitable, thoughts on careers and any other questions relating to life as a sixth former. At this stage we begin the process of researching specific courses and, where appropriate, identifying helpful courses available to Year 11 pupils.

Academic Monitoring and One-to-One Tutorials

Academic monitoring is key to success at A Level. Students need to be aware of their current standard in each subject and what they need to do to improve.

To support the students in this at Durham School, subject staff will provide regular assessed work with detailed feedback in accordance with exam board criteria. Individual discussions are also offered, where teachers and students can discuss recent work and areas for improvement. Finally, whole group tutorials are largely replaced with regular one-to-one interviews, which allow tutors and students to discuss progress across all subjects. In this way, tutors become a key support structure as they have an overview of the students' performance in all subjects and can provide specific targets which recognise the needs of the individual student.

UCAS and University Choices

When students return to school following the summer exams they are introduced to the UCAS application procedure with a three day induction programme delivered by Mr Gerrard (Director of Sixth Form Studies) and Mr Hope (Assistant Director of Sixth Form Studies). In this, students will have the opportunity to research their university choices, work on personal statements, visit local university open days, hear talks from admissions officers and complete their UCAS forms. While this can be a very daunting experience for the students, support is provided every step of the way by Sixth Form staff whose expertise in the area will guide them through the process. Weekly UCAS workshop sessions are offered and helpful advice and provisions are posted on the Sixth Form Facebook page.

Oxbridge, Russell Group and Elite Course Applicants

All students who wish to apply for Oxford, Cambridge or medical courses (including dentistry and veterinary science) are required to submit an early application to UCAS and this is also strongly advised for students wishing to apply for very competitive courses at the top universities. Mr Hope (Head of Elite Applications) will provide specific support to students wishing to apply for these courses, including personal statement help, choosing the right college, completing additional submissions, finding work experience and all important mock interviews. There will also be the opportunity to speak to Oxbridge and Russell Group admissions officers at various events (both in year 11, lower sixth and upper sixth)

Academic Development

A levels are challenging, and students will soon realise that they are a significant progression from GCSEs. Subject staff will support and challenge students, providing individualised feedback, workshop sessions and exam focused assessment and differentiated learning opportunities, all of which will ensure students can realise their potential in each of their subjects.

However, there are a number of additional provisions which will significantly contribute to the academic development of students at Durham School.

Academic Enrichment

Durham School Lecture Series

Every year Durham School welcomes a number of guests who provide interesting and informative lectures and discussion groups on a variety of topics. Leading academics, prominent public figures, authors and successful business people have all contributed to this exciting and ever developing series which provides students with the opportunity to explore a range of thought provoking and relevant issues.

Academic Society

The Academic Society at Durham School is small group activity which allows students to develop their discussion, debating and presentation skills, all critical aspects which universities value. Controversial topics are proposed and students are asked to provide a presentation from the perspective of a certain subject. Following the presentations, students are given the chance to debate key ideas and offer arguments. All students, especially those aiming for competitive courses, are strongly encouraged to attend these excellent debates.

Politics Society

Aimed specifically at students studying government and politics at A level but open to all with an interest, the Politics Society aims to generate an interest in current affairs, political concepts and practical issues of government in the UK and abroad. Debates, visits, lectures and competitions are run throughout the year. The Politics Society is supervised by member of staff, but is run by elected student officers.

Heretics Society

The Heretics Society gives students the opportunity both to present and debate heretical subjects. In each session, one student will present a defence of a controversial viewpoint before opening the subject up to debate and, ultimately, defending the argument, often against fierce opposition. The Heretics Society is supervised by Mr Muttitt, Director of Scholars, but is run by the students.

Tristram Society

Aimed specifically at potential scientists, but open to all students with an interest in this discipline, the Tristram Society offers targeted sessions focused on the world of science. Lectures from leading academics, seminars and visits allow students the opportunity to explore various scientific fields from a real life, practical and hands on perspective which will develop their understanding of the subject far beyond the confines of the A Level syllabus. The Tristram Society is supervised by a member of staff, but is run by the students.

MedSoc

MedSoc is a newly formed group which aims to support and challenge students who are considering a career in the medical field; however it is open to anyone with a general interest in applied science. The group is organised by students and involves a variety of provisions, including lectures from academics, practical 'hands on' sessions at local universities, workshops with professionals relating to the various medical careers and tips on how to ensure a students application to study medicine at university is as competitive as possible.

Leadership

Monitor Selection

All students in Year 12 are invited to apply for monitor roles in Year 13. The initial stage of this is a written application, which is followed by a formal interview with two senior members of staff.

For many, this is the first time that they will have had to put themselves forward and to think about how to create the right impression in a competitive and selective environment.

All students receive feedback on their application and interview, whether or not they are successful in their application. The school views either outcome as a positive learning experience for the students as they mature into adulthood.

At the end of this process a Head of School, Deputy Heads of School, Heads of Houses and School Monitors are selected to be the student leaders for the following academic year.

In certain circumstances, some pupils who have not been appointed as school monitors will be given additional leadership roles based on their skills and personality. These pupils will be expected to provide a significant contribution to the school by leading other pupils in a variety of events, for example as Captain of Outdoor Education, Co-Ordinator of Environmental Projects, Bow Link Monitors.

Leadership Opportunities

All Sixth Form students accept that they are leaders and role models for the younger pupils in the school. Their achievements, behaviour and attitudes to staff, each other and their academic work are powerful, aspirational incentives for the younger pupils as they grow up in our community.

Sixth Form students also chair and run various School Councils, organise and co-ordinate charity work in the community, help our junior school (Bow) with various activities (such as their Sports Day), act as ambassadors for the school at external events and (very importantly) guide new and prospective pupils and parents on tours of the school site and the Houses.

Extra Curricular

Many other leadership opportunities exist in the Houses, in sport, in music, in drama, with the Durham Eye, in the CCF, school and house councils, Boarding and food committees, the Duke of Edinburgh award, World Challenge and adventure training.

Further information

For any further information on any matters concerning our Sixth Form please contact ;

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Mr Paul Gerrard ; p.gerrard@durhamschool.co.uk

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