



BISHOP CHALLONER SIXTH FORM

# Choosing A Levels

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*A quick guide*

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# What are A Levels?

Advanced level qualifications (known as A levels) are subject-based qualifications that can lead to university, further study, training, or work. You normally study three A levels over two years. They're usually assessed by a series of examinations.

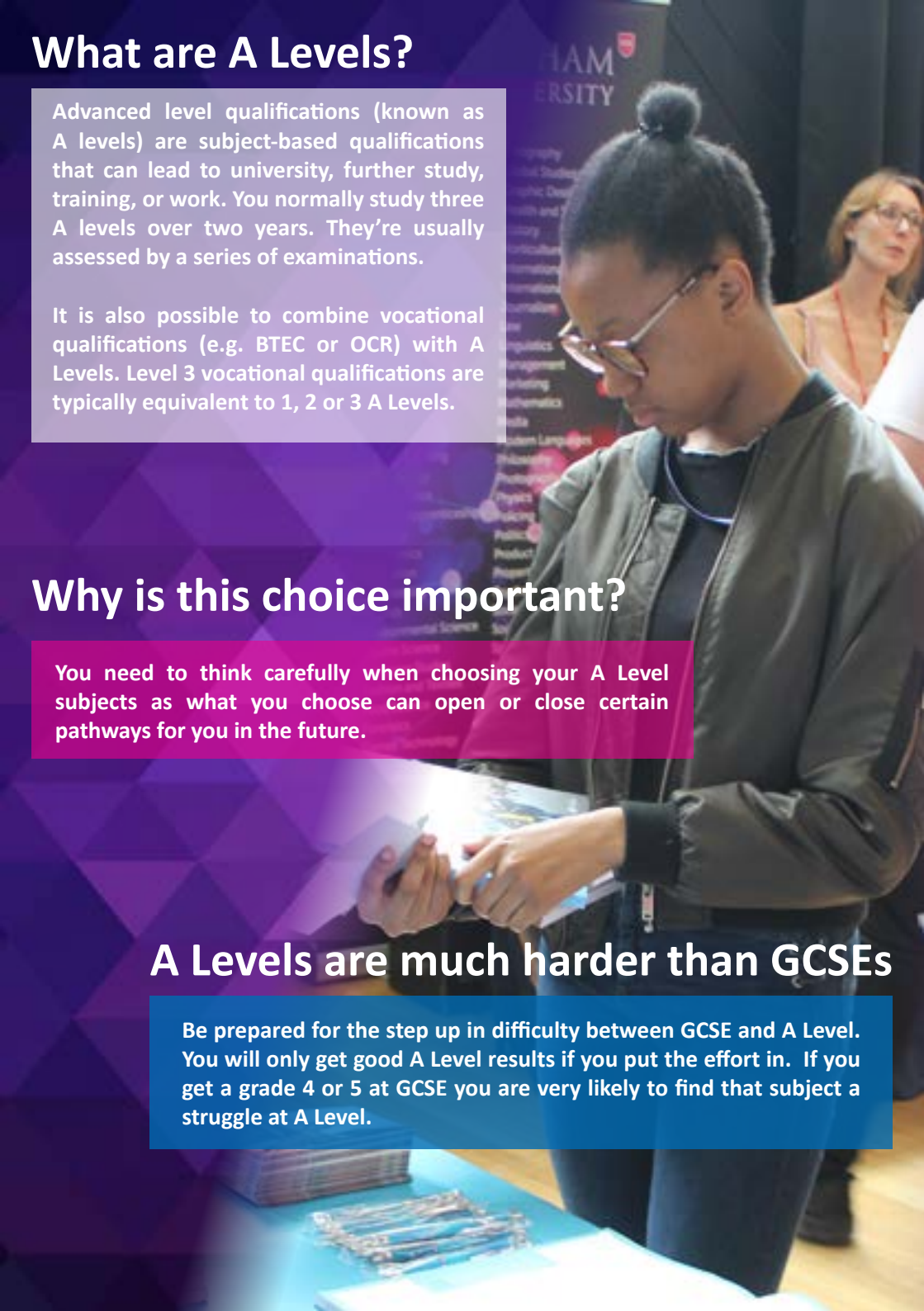
It is also possible to combine vocational qualifications (e.g. BTEC or OCR) with A Levels. Level 3 vocational qualifications are typically equivalent to 1, 2 or 3 A Levels.

## Why is this choice important?

You need to think carefully when choosing your A Level subjects as what you choose can open or close certain pathways for you in the future.

## A Levels are much harder than GCSEs

Be prepared for the step up in difficulty between GCSE and A Level. You will only get good A Level results if you put the effort in. If you get a grade 4 or 5 at GCSE you are very likely to find that subject a struggle at A Level.



# Therefore, choose subjects that:

1. You enjoy
2. You are good at
3. You are interested in
4. Will help you in your future and match your career plans

If you are unsure what you want to do as a career, make sure you keep your options open – speak to Miss McGowan (Careers Adviser) if you need help.

## Think ahead

Certain university or apprenticeship courses will require certain subjects. The UCAS website ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)) can tell you which A Levels to take to get into specific university courses. The National Apprenticeship Website ([www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)) can give you an idea of the requirements for different apprenticeships.

Be aware that some degree courses will also require specific GCSE grades in certain subjects.

To understand which subjects open up different degrees, visit the Informed Choices website ([www.informedchoices.ac.uk](http://www.informedchoices.ac.uk)).

## Pick the right combination

There is no single subject that will stop you getting into university. However, a combination of some subjects could. Some universities have combinations of subjects  
For example taking:

- More than one arts/creative course
- Business and economics
- IT and computing

# Popular Degree Courses and Requirements:

Degree Subject	Essential	Useful
<b>Accountancy</b>	Usually none although 1 or 2 Universities require Maths.	Maths, Business Studies and Economics.
<b>Architecture</b>	Some courses require an arts/ science mix. Some may require Art.	Art, Maths, Design Technology and Physics. Portfolio of artwork may be required.
<b>Biology</b>	Biology, Chemistry.	Maths or Physics.
<b>Business Studies</b>	None.	Maths, Business Studies and Economics.
<b>Chemistry</b>	Chemistry and occasionally Maths. Most courses require Chemistry and would like Maths plus 1 other science.	Maths, Further Maths, Physics, Biology.
<b>Dentistry</b>	Chemistry and Biology for most courses, some require Maths or Physics as well.	Maths, Physics, Further Maths.
<b>Economics</b>	Usually Maths.	Economics.
<b>Engineering (General)</b>	Maths and Physics.	Further Maths, Design Technology.
<b>English</b>	English Literature or combined English Language and Literature (some courses will accept English Language).	History, Religious Studies, a foreign language.
<b>Geography</b>	Most degrees require Geography.	Some Geography BSc (science) degrees prefer 1 from Biology, Chemistry, Maths or Physics.
<b>History</b>	Most degrees require History.	Economics, English Literature, Philosophy, Politics, Sociology, Theology/ Religious Studies, a language.
<b>Law</b>	Usually none although a few Universities require English.	History, other facilitating subjects. Generally no essential subjects but 1 choice should involve essay/ report writing.
<b>Maths</b>	Maths and sometimes Further Maths.	Further Maths, Physics.
<b>Media Studies</b>	A few courses ask for English or Media Studies.	English, Media Studies, Sociology, Psychology.

Degree Subject	Essential	Useful
<b>Medicine</b>	If you do Chemistry, Biology and 1 from Maths or Physics you keep all the medical schools open to you. If you do Chemistry and Biology you keep the vast majority open. If you do Chemistry and 1 from Maths or Physics you limit your choices much more.	Further Maths or a contrasting (non-science) subjects.
<b>Nursing and Midwifery</b>	Usually Biology or another Science. Health and Social Care is also looked on favourably.	Biology, Sociology, Psychology, Chemistry.
<b>Pharmacy</b>	Chemistry and 1 from Biology, Maths and Physics keeps the vast majority of courses open to you. Some courses like to see Chemistry, Biology and Maths. Doing Chemistry and Biology keeps most courses open.	Maths, Physics.
<b>Physiotherapy</b>	Most courses will consider you with just Biology however some require a second science from Chemistry, Maths or Physics.	Chemistry, Maths, Physics, Psychology.
<b>Psychology</b>	A few courses ask for 1 from Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Physics.	Biology, Maths, Psychology, Sociology.
<b>Sports Science/ PE</b>	Many courses want to see 1 from Biology, Chemistry, Maths or Physics. Some courses treat PE as a science equivalent.	PE, Psychology.
<b>Teacher Training (Primary and/or Secondary)</b>	At least 1 from Art, Biology, Chemistry, Design and Technology, Drama (Theatre Studies), English, French, Geography, German, History, ICT, Italian, Maths, Music, Physics, PE, Religious Studies	Another of the subjects listed to the left.
<b>Veterinary Science</b>	Chemistry and Biology plus 1 from Maths or Physics so that you have all the Universities open to you.	Further Maths.



# Entry Requirements

Entry to A Level courses varies depending on the institution. At Bishop Challoner Sixth Form you will require 5 subjects at grade 4 or above, as well as a 6 in the subject you want to study (7 for maths or sciences). Certain subjects will have individual requirements so make sure you check thoroughly on websites/prospectuses.

## Don't panic!

Although you are choosing your A Levels now, or may have already applied for colleges/Sixth Forms most places will let you swap your choices if you change your mind. Your choice may change on results day.

## Still not sure?

See Miss McGowan (Careers Advisor) in school on Tuesdays and Thursdays (in the careers room, off the sixth form study centre) or e-mail her on: [e.mcgowan@bishopchalloner.bham.sch.uk](mailto:e.mcgowan@bishopchalloner.bham.sch.uk)

# Notes

# *Aspire to be more*

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