

Caritas Christi Urget Nos

St. Joseph's Catholic Academy Sixth Form

Course information 2026–2027


STUDENT

Your future begins today

St. Joseph's Sixth Form is an opportunity for a new beginning, a new start, a chance to reinvent and become the best version of yourself. Whether you are currently in year 11 at St. Joseph's or are currently studying in a different school, all are very welcome to become a part of our sixth form family.

St. Joseph's is a non-selective school: all our welcome to study here who meet the entry requirements for their chosen subjects. For all we are a Catholic community, you do not need to be a Catholic yourself. We are highly inclusive and all faiths are welcome here.



Courses at St. Joseph's Sixth Form

We have a vast range of A Levels as well as vocational qualifications in BTEC and AAQ. Each course has its own entry requirements and it is important that you look at these when considering your options. If you are achieving grade 7+ in your GCSE's then you should be doing all A Levels. If you are achieving grades 5 and 6 you should be looking at a combination of vocational qualifications and A Levels.

All applicants, both internal and external, will be invited for a 1:1 interview to discuss what pathway is best for them. Courses are placed in option blocks, therefore some courses will not be able to run together; option blocks are based upon the online applications. The option blocks for the previous year are on the school website in the sixth form curriculum section.

Choosing the right course and subject

There are two types of qualification you can take: traditional A Level or Vocational (this includes BTEC, AAQ). You can take all of one type or you can mix and match between the two options. We also run a VTCT course in hair and beauty; this would count as all of your options (please see the subject information.

Traditional A-Levels

A Levels are a two year linear course. This means all examinations occur at the end of year 13. A Levels are rigorous and challenging in the quantity of knowledge and depth of understanding. They are recognised qualifications for all universities and are impressive on a CV for all career trajectories. Some subjects may have a coursework element but these subjects are in the minority.

Vocational qualifications BTEC / AAQ

For students who prefer a more practical and 'hands on' approach for learning, they will find the BTEC and AAQ routes more suited to them. BTECs and AAQs follow a chunked learning pathway. Students will study a focused unit and then will be assessed either through examination or as a coursework piece. Over the two years students will generally have two exams and two coursework units. Some will include a practical assessment as part of the course. In this way, students do not need to retain knowledge of units for the full two years.

How to choose a subject

Choosing your courses is a big decision. As part of this process you must consider:

- Your future pathway. Are you required to take certain subjects or will certain subjects make you a more attractive candidate?
- What are you good at and what do you enjoy. Sixth Form learning is more intense and deeper than at GCSE; if you do not like your subject then you will make your journey more difficult.
- Consider the combination of subjects. Are all essay writing subjects as this will be challenging when it comes to exam time. Is the combination restricting what you can do next? Consider the combination of coursework elements too.

Entry requirements

Applied Science	4/4 in Science
Art	5 in Art
Biology	7 in Biology / combined science (6 may be considered)
Business BTEC	4 in English, 4 in Maths or Merit Level 2 in Business
Chemistry	7 in Chemistry / combined science (6 may be considered)
Computer Science	6 in Maths
Criminology BTEC	4 in English, 4 in Maths
English Language	5 in English Language
English Literature	6 in English Literature
MFL	6 in a Higher Paper
Geography	5 in Geography
Health and Social Care	4 in English
History	5 in History or 5 in English if History not taken
BTEC IT	4 in English, 4 in Maths
Law	5 in English
Politics	5 in English
Maths	7 in Maths
Maths (further)	8 in Maths
Music	5 in Music and working at Grade 5
Philosophy and Ethics	5 in Religious Education
Photography	4 in Photography or Art
Physics	7 in Physics / combined science (6 may be considered)
Product Design	5 in Design Technology
Psychology	5 in English and 5 in Maths
Sociology	5 in English
Sport BTEC	Merit Level 2 in BTEC Sport
Hair and Beauty VTCT	4 in English and Maths



Applied Science – Exam board Pearson

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Applied Science?
Students should have a curiosity about the natural world, have a passion to go on to study in healthcare, engineering or environmental science. You should have good teamwork skills, be safe and accurate with handling equipment and be comfortable with calculations, graphs and interpreting data. Students should enjoy doing experiments, collecting data and solving real-world problems.

How will I be assessed?
You will be externally assessed in units 1, 2 and 3. These are written exams with structured questions which focus on scientific theory, application and problem solving. You will also have two internally assessed units which include lab reports, written assignments, presentations and practical tasks. For these assessments the focus is practical skills including research, analysis and communication. The assessments will take place at set points during both years 12 and 13.

What careers can this subject lead me to?
There are many career trajectories from Applied Science. Previous students have gone one to study radiography, midwifery, paramedical science, ecology and forensics. Careers such as an environmental scientist, research assistant or biotechnologist are also examples of pathways.

What will I study?

Unit 1: Principles and Applications of Biology
- Cell structure and function
- Biological molecules
- Genetics and health
- Practical biology skills

Unit 2: Principles and Applications of Chemistry
- Atomic structure and bonding
- Chemical reactions and calculations
- Organic chemistry
- Analytical techniques

Unit 3: Principles and Applications of Physics
- Energy and forces
- Electricity and magnetism
- Waves and radiation
- Practical physics investigations

Unit 4: Practical Scientific Procedures and Techniques
- Laboratory skills
- Safe working practices
- Data collection and analysis
- Scientific reporting

Unit 5: Science Investigation Skills
- Planning and conducting investigations
- Evaluating results
- Drawing conclusions



Art – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Fine Art?
If you're considering Fine Art, you should be: Curious and creative, with a passion for visual expression. You should have an interest in the world around you – people, places, objects, emotions and being willing to explore art and artists. You should be self-motivated, independent work and personal development are key alongside being open to experiment with materials, techniques and ideas. There is no need to be a master already - just bring enthusiasm and a willingness to grow!

What will I study?
The AQA Fine Art A Level includes two main components:
Component 1: Personal Investigation

- A practical project based on a theme of your choice.
- Includes a written element (1,000–3,000 words) exploring your ideas, influences, and techniques.
- You'll develop your own style through drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed media, or digital work.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment

- A choice of themes set by AQA.
- You'll create a final piece in a 15-hour controlled period.
- Preparation time allows for research, experimentation, and development.

How will I be assessed?
Assessments are based on developing your ideas through sustained investigations over the course of the two years. You will need to evidence your journey in exploring materials and different techniques alongside recording your observations and insight. Your work will be personal and meaningful to you; your artwork will tell your story.

- Component 1 (Personal Investigation) – 60% of A Level
- Component 2 (Externally Set Assignment) – 40% of A Level
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All work is internally marked and externally moderated.

What careers can this subject lead me to?
Fine Art can open doors to a wide range of creative careers. It can lead to more obvious routes such as being an artist, illustrator, graphic designer or animator. It is a subject popular with students who go on to study architecture at university and fashion design. This subject would also be helpful if you went on to being a curator or art gallery manager. It is also a strong foundation for creative degrees and apprenticeships in art, design, and media.



Biology – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Biology?
Students should have an interest in how organisms function, evolve and interact with their environment. You should be curious, have a passion for science and enjoy scientific inquiry. You will likely have an interest in pursuing a healthcare profession. An interest in the natural world is also positive as you will be exploring topics such as ecology and conservation as part of the course.

How will I be assessed?
The final exams are all at the end of year 13. You will have three externally assessed examinations, which are all two hours in length. The 12 practicals will be taken throughout the two years at set points.

What careers can this subject lead me to?
There are a wide range of career pathways which students take after studying biology. You can consider a career withing science and research, such as a marine biologist, a biomedical scientist or a pharmacologist. You may decide to follow into a career in health care or medicine, for example a GP, midwife or veterinarian. The majority of

What will I study?
During year 12, you will study biological molecules such as enzymes, carbohydrates and DNA. We will look at cell structures and the immune system. Additionally, we will study how organisms exchange substances with their environment such as gas exchange, the circulatory system and digestion. Finally, you will explore genetics, DNA and evolution.

Once in year 13, you will study energy transfers in and between organisms, such as ecosystems, photosynthesis and respiration. You will be taught how organisms Respond to Changes in Their Internal and External Environments. Next, you will return to genetics, looking at inheritance and populations. You end the course by learning about controlling gene expression, such as gene mutations, regulations and genetic engineering.

Over the two years we will also complete 12 compulsory practical experiments such as microscopy, genetic crosses and it will also include fieldwork in ecology.



Business Studies – BTEC Level 3 Extended

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Business Studies?
To succeed in this course, it's helpful to be curious about how businesses work and interested in areas like marketing, finance, or entrepreneurship. Enjoying problem-solving, decision-making, and understanding current events in a business context is key. You should also be interested in customer behaviour, market trends, and teamwork, while building leadership skills. Strong communication and numerical skills are essential for tasks like report writing, presentations, and budgeting.

How will I be assessed?
Students are assessed through a mix of internal and external evaluations, simulating real-world business scenarios. Units 1 and 8 are internally assessed via coursework such as research projects, reports, case studies, and presentations. Unit 2 involves an externally assessed, timed task based on a pre-released case study, requiring students to plan and justify a marketing campaign. Unit 3 is assessed through a written exam with both short and extended responses, focusing on financial concepts and their business applications.

What careers can this subject lead me to?
TThis course leads to careers in business, finance, and marketing. Possible roles include Business Administrator, Finance Officer, Marketing Assistant, Social Media Executive, and Sales Executive.

What will I study? (units / paper topics)
In the Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Business, students study a range of units that provide a broad understanding of how businesses operate.

In Unit 1: Exploring Business, students learn about different types of businesses (private, public, and not-for-profit) along with their structures, objectives, and the influence of stakeholders. They explore how external factors like political, economic, social, and technological environments impact businesses, and examine market structures, supply and demand, innovation, and enterprise.
Unit 2: Developing a Marketing Campaign introduces the role and purpose of marketing, the factors influencing marketing activity, and the components of the marketing mix. Students also learn how to plan and develop effective marketing campaigns.
In Unit 3: Personal and Business Finance, focuses on both personal and business financial management, including budgeting, saving, borrowing, sources of finance, cash flow, break-even analysis, and interpreting financial documents and ratios.
Finally, Unit 8: Recruitment and Selection Process covers planning and and carrying out recruitment. Job roles, descriptions, person specifications, recruitment methods, and application and selection processes, plus legal and ethical responsibilities.



Chemistry – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Chemistry?
You should enjoy exploring how the world works at a molecular level, solving problems, and applying concepts in experiments. Key skills include analytical thinking, attention to detail, and strong maths, especially algebra. Curiosity about real-world chemical applications, like medicine and the environment, is also important.

How will I be assessed?
You will sit three written exams at the end of Year 13. Paper 1 – Inorganic and some Physical Chemistry. 2 hours, 105 marks, 35%. This includes practical-based questions and long answers Paper 2 – Organic and some Physical Chemistry 2 hours, 105 marks, 35% This includes spectroscopy, mechanisms, and synthesis. Paper 3 – Practical skills + any content 2 hours, 90 marks, 30% This includes data analysis, synoptic questions, and extended response. Questions can be on any topic and any practical skills. Practical Endorsement Assessed separately (pass/fail) and involves completing 12 required practical's and keeping a lab book.

What careers can this subject lead me to?
supports careers in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Pharmacy, Chemical Engineering, and more. It also builds transferable skills valued in non-scientific fields like Finance, Law, Media, Education, and the Civil Service.
It demonstrates analytical thinking, numeracy, resilience, and logic—qualities respected by both universities and employers.

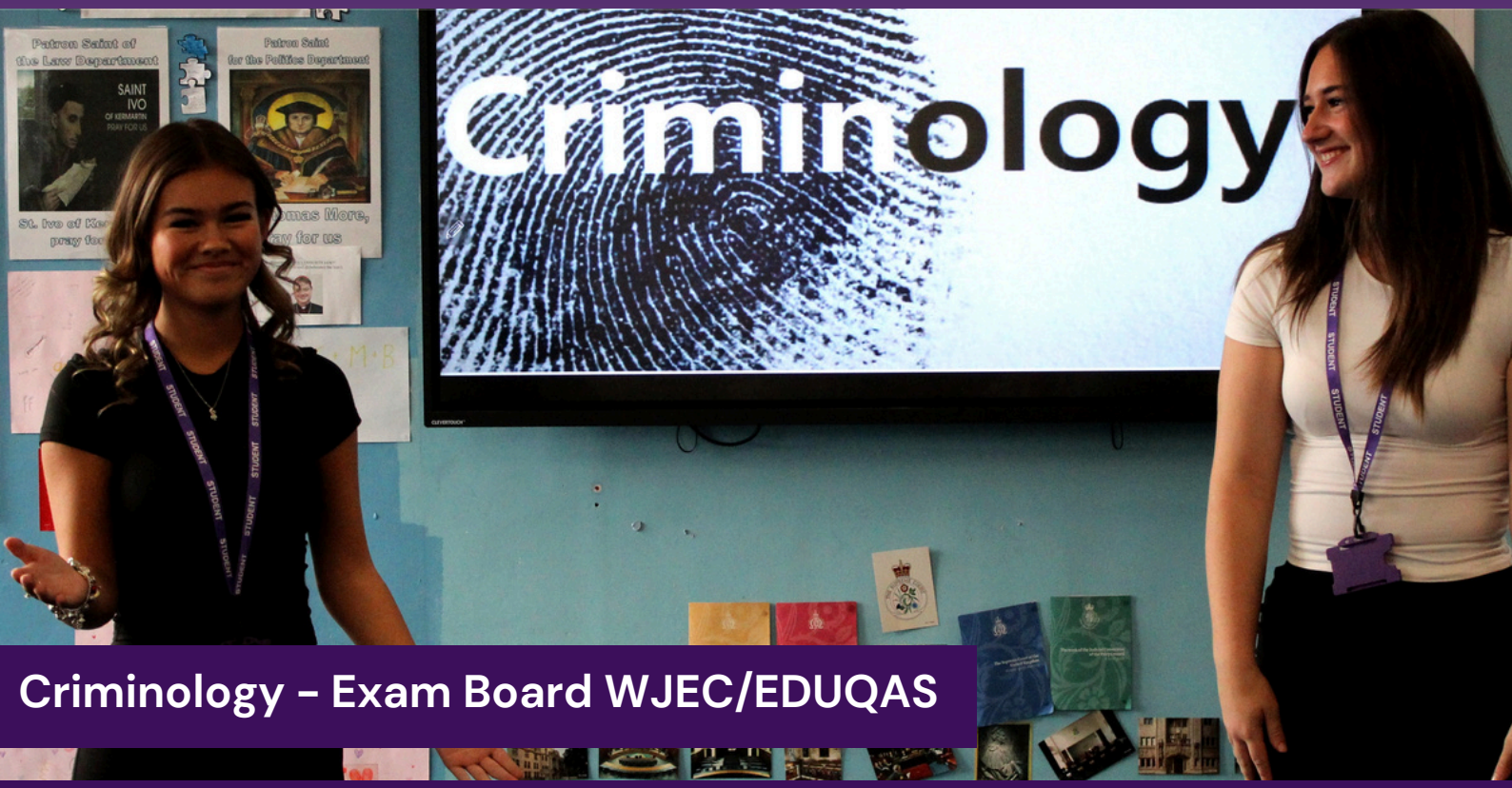
What will I study?
There are three main branches of chemistry:

Physical chemistry looks at the principles that explain why substances behave the way they do, including atomic structure, bonding, energetics, rates of reaction and chemical equilibria. At A level, you'll also study advanced ideas such as thermodynamics, electrochemistry and acids and bases.

Inorganic chemistry focuses on the trends and properties of elements across the periodic table. You'll investigate the behaviour of different groups, such as the alkaline earth metals and halogens, and at A level you'll extend this to transition metals and reactions in solution.

Organic chemistry explores the chemistry of carbon compounds that underpin living systems and modern materials. You'll study families of molecules such as alkanes, alkenes, alcohols and carboxylic acids, and progress to more complex topics including polymers, proteins, DNA, synthesis pathways and analytical techniques such as NMR and chromatography.

Practical skills are developed throughout the course, preparing you to design and carry out experiments, analyse data, and apply chemistry to real-world problems.



Criminology – Exam Board WJEC/EDUQAS

Criminology (from Latin crīmen, "accusation"; and Greek -λογία, -logia) is the scientific study of criminal behaviour, on individual, social and natural levels, and how it can be managed, controlled and prevented. This course will enable students to use theories of criminality to analyse criminal situations and make recommendations for policy. Students also develop the knowledge and skills to research policy in practice, assess campaigns for changes in awareness and examine information to review verdicts in criminal cases. Study Criminology, learn about life!

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Criminology?
An interest in crime and its impact on the community and the country overall is a starting point for this course. All you will need in Criminology is a keen and active mind with the ability to develop your independent thinking skills.

What careers can this subject lead me to?
Criminology is a Level 3 Diploma which is fully accepted by all universities in the country for UCAS points towards higher education entry in any subject. Indeed, the UCAS points it attracts are the same as for an A Level. It gives a great foundation for students to work towards a career in any field as the skills learned are fully transferable across a wide range of careers.

What will I study? (units / paper topics)
Year 12
Unit 1: Changing Awareness of Crime
You will learn about different crimes and issues around them and ultimately plan campaigns for change relating to crime.
Unit 2: Criminological Theories
You will apply your learning from Unit 1 on understanding the public perceptions of crime and campaigns for change with criminological theories to examine how both are used to set policy around crime.
Year 13
Unit 3: Crime Scene to Courtroom
You will learn what happens in the criminal justice system after a crime has been committed, from the police investigation through to the court case to be able to review the justice of verdicts in criminal cases.
Unit 4: Crime and Punishment
You will evaluate the effectiveness of th**e process** of social control in delivering the policy learned about in Year 12 into practice.

How will I be assessed?
Units 1 and 3 are assessed through an 8 hour, internally assessed, controlled assessment piece which incorporates a number of different tasks. Units 2 and 4 are 90 minute exams.



English Language – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study English Language?
If you have a curiosity about language - both spoken and written – then A Level English Language could be the subject for you. The course covers a broad range of topics, from how factors such as age, gender, social class and ethnicity can affect our linguistic identity, to how children acquire spoken and written language.

The subject is very much rooted in the real world, since we use English in every area of our lives, without always thinking about the influence our vocabulary, tone of voice or even accent may have on our audience. Studying this A Level will allow you to explore this in detail.

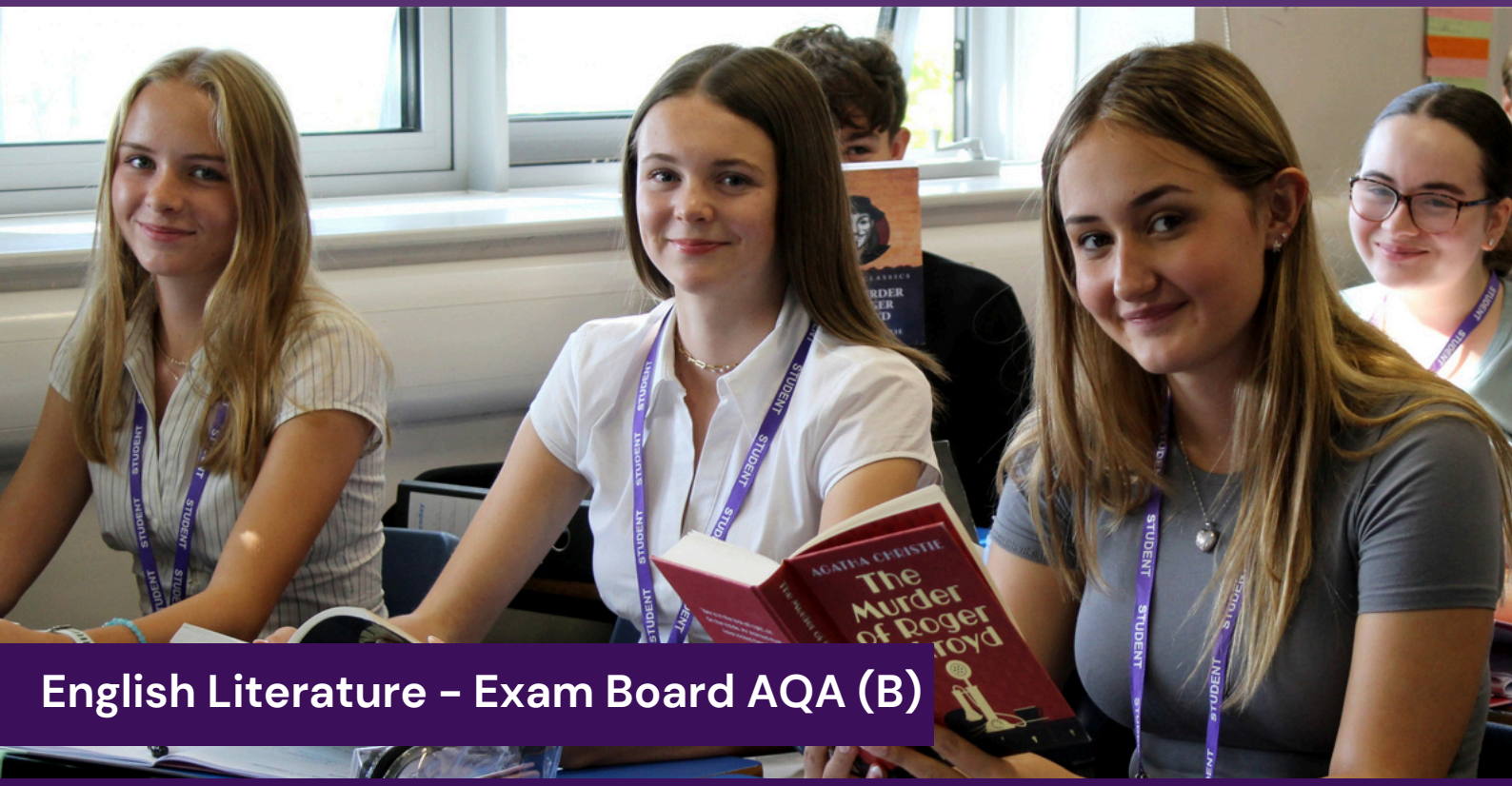
What will I study?
You will study AQA English Language, which is split into three components. The first two – Language, the Individual and Society and Language Diversity and Change - are assessed through separate examination papers at the end of the second year of the course. The third component, Language in Action, requires students to produce two independent pieces of work: an investigation into an aspect of language and a piece of original writing based on a style model. Both the data for the investigation and the style model are selected by the student.

How will I be assessed?
Both formative and summative assessments will be employed to ensure that both you and your teachers can keep track of your progress. Essays or exam-style questions will be set at regular intervals throughout the course for internal assessment against exam board criteria, some of which will be in timed conditions. Further assessments may involve wider reading, presentations or short answer responses.

Final assessments are as follows:

- Paper 1: Language, the Individual and Society - 2 hours 45 minutes (40% of grade)
- Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change – 2 hours 45 minutes (40% of grade)
- Non-Examination Assessment: Language in Action (20% of grade)

What careers can this subject lead me to?
As well as undergraduate study of English Language, the skills you develop during the course will be useful for many other higher education courses. You'll develop excellent communication, research, problem-solving, analytical and critical thinking skills, as well as becoming a much more competent and confident writer. These are skills which are highly valued in a wide range of careers such as publishing, teaching, copywriting, journalism, as well as in corporate environment.



English Literature – Exam Board AQA (B)

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study English Literature?
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First and foremost, you should have a love of reading. Whilst much of the required reading will be completed in class, it is essential that you commit to reading (and rereading) the texts in your own time, as well as undertaking wider reading in the two genres on which the course focuses. You will also be expected to develop independence when selecting a poetry and a prose text for your two NEA (Non-examination Assessment) pieces. As well as this, building your confidence in expressing and supporting your opinions orally as well as in writing is a key element of the course, as is appreciating the significance of different contexts, generic features and the writers' choice of methods.

What will I study?
You will study AQA English Literature Specification B, which is split into three components. The first two - Aspects of Tragedy and Elements of Crime Writing - are assessed through separate examination papers at the end of the second year of the course. The third component, Theory and independence, requires students to choose appropriate prose and poetry texts to which they will apply one of a range of literary theories. The course will be taught by two teachers from the English Department.

How will I be assessed?
Both formative and summative assessments will be employed to ensure that both you and your teachers can keep track of your progress. Essays or exam-style questions will be set at regular intervals throughout the course for internal assessment against exam board criteria, some of which will be in timed conditions. Further assessments may involve wider reading, presentations or short answer responses.

Final assessments are as follows:

- Paper 1: Language, the Individual and Society - 2 hours 45 minutes (40% of grade)
- Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change – 2 hours 45 minutes (40% of grade)
- Non-Examination Assessment: Language in Action (20% of grade)

What careers can this subject lead me to?
As well as undergraduate study of English Language, the skills you develop during the course will be useful for many other higher education courses. You'll develop excellent communication, research, problem-solving, analytical and critical thinking skills, as well as becoming a much more competent and confident writer. These are skills which are highly valued in a wide range of careers such as publishing, teaching, copywriting, journalism, as well as in corporate environment.



French – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study French?

A curiosity about languages and enjoyment in communicating with different cultures are key. You should be interested in French-speaking countries, their history, literature, cinema, music, and current affairs, and enjoy travel, reading, and discussing ideas in texts and films.
Essential skills include organisation (keeping notes and resources in order), motivation (independent study and engaging with French media), analytical ability (interpreting and writing about texts and films), and time management for effective study and exam preparation.

What will I study?

Year 12:

- The evolution of French society: family, technology, charity work
- Artistic culture in the French-speaking world: heritage, music, cinema
- Film study: La Haine

Year 13:

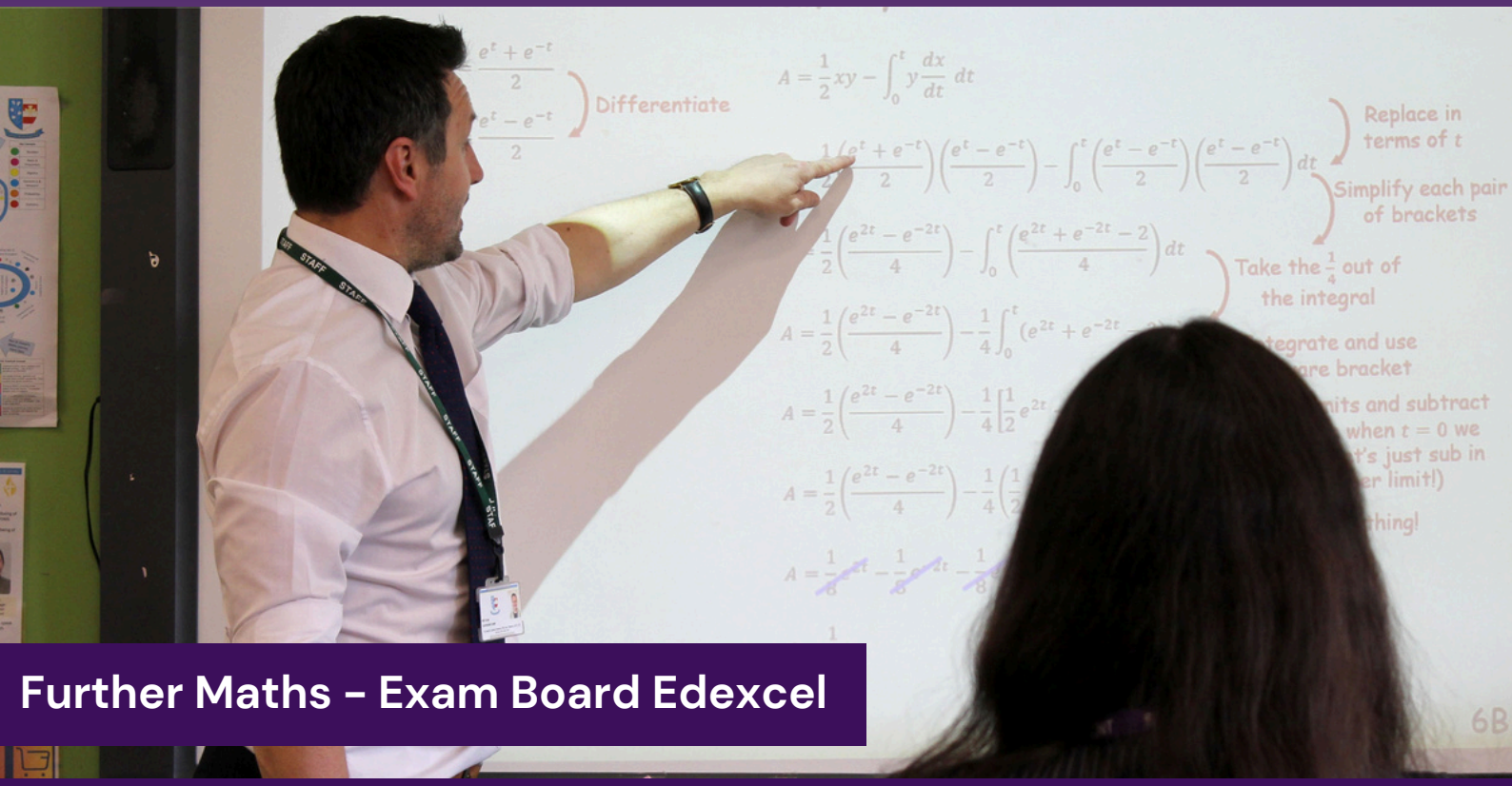
- Multicultural France: immigration, justice
- Political life: youth engagement, strikes, and protests
- Book study: Un Sac de Billes

How will I be assessed?

- Paper 1: Listening, Reading & Writing – 50%
  - Comprehension, translation (both directions), Year 12 & 13 topics
- Paper 2: Writing – 20%
  - Two essays on La Haine and Un Sac de Billes
- Paper 3: Speaking – 30%
  - Discussion of a photocard and an Individual Research Project (IRP)

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Language skills can lead directly into a career in translating, interpreting or teaching. Languages are also in demand in areas such as hospitality, law, publishing and business services. Modern languages degrees typically involve spending a year abroad and this can be an opportunity to find work in a field that interests you and gain relevant experience.



Further Maths – Exam Board Edexcel

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Further Maths?

If you're considering Further Maths, you should have a deep curiosity for mathematical theory and a real enthusiasm for tackling complex problems. It's ideal for students who not only enjoy standard A Level Maths but crave a deeper challenge—think abstract algebra, matrices, complex numbers, and advanced calculus. Strong analytical thinking, precision, and perseverance are key, as the subject demands a high level of independence and intellectual rigour. If you love exploring how mathematical ideas connect and evolve, Further Maths will stretch your skills and reward your passion for the subject.

What will I study?

If you take A Level Further Mathematics, you'll dive into advanced topics that build on and go beyond the standard A Level Maths course. The core content includes Further Pure Mathematics, where you'll study complex numbers, matrices, proof, and advanced calculus. You will then study further mechanics and further statistics, building on the foundations of A-level mathematics. This course is designed to stretch your mathematical thinking and prepare you for university-level study in maths-heavy subjects like engineering, physics, or computer science.

How will I be assessed?

A Level Further Mathematics with Edexcel is assessed through four written exam papers, each lasting 1 hour 30 minutes. The structure is designed to test both core and optional content:

- Paper 1 & Paper 2: Core Pure Mathematics
- Paper 3 & Paper 4: Further Statistics & Further Mechanics

What careers can this subject lead me to?

A Level Further Mathematics is a powerful launchpad into some of the most intellectually demanding and rewarding careers. It's highly valued for university degrees in mathematics, engineering, physics, computer science, economics, and actuarial science. The advanced problem-solving and abstract thinking skills you develop can lead to careers in data science, artificial intelligence, financial analysis, software development, and scientific research. Even if you choose not to go to university, Further Maths strengthens applications for competitive apprenticeships in fields like cybersecurity, accountancy, and technology. It's a qualification that signals excellence and opens doors across STEM and beyond.



Geography – Exam Board Edexcel

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Geography?

A-level Geography is a broad, dynamic subject that suits students curious about the world and how places, environments, and societies connect and change. It explores current affairs like climate change, migration, conflict, economic shifts, and globalisation, combining both physical geography (rivers, coasts, climate) and human geography (cities, development, globalisation).

If you like asking "why?" and "what if?", making links between subjects such as science, economics, politics, and history, and enjoy both essay writing and data work, A-level Geography is an excellent choice.

What will I study?

Paper 1 – Physical Geography
Topic 1 – Tectonic processes and hazards
Topic 2B: Coastal Landscapes and Change
Topic 5: The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity
Topic 6: The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security

Paper 2 – Human Geography – Dynamic Places
Topic 3: Globalisation
Topic 4A: Regenerating Places
Topic 7: Superpowers
Topic 8B: Migration, Identity and Sovereignty

How will I be assessed?

You will have three externally marked examinations at the end of year 13. You will also have a non-exam assessment which is an independent investigation which includes fieldwork.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

There are many Geography and Geography-related degree courses available, especially in areas of environmental and earth sciences, together with demographic and development studies. Geography A-Level is highly regarded for the breadth of skills acquired and is considered for entry to both science and arts-based degrees. Many Geography graduates enter related professions, for example: meteorology, environmental management, hydrology, surveying, transport, urban and town planning, tourism industries, conservation work and disaster management.



Hair and Beauty – Exam Board VTCT

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Hair & Beauty?

The courses covers all aspects of Hairdressing and Beauty therapy. It is a great course if you enjoy art and design as it enables you to build on your creative skills. Having a flair for the subjects and displaying good dexterity is a bonus. You do not need to have taken this course at GCSE level to take it at Level 3.

What will I study?

In hairdressing, you will learn the creative art of cutting women's hair, the artistic skill of colouring, imaginative dexterity of styling and dressing hair, and how to provide effective consultation support for colleagues. To develop your skills further you will also be given the opportunity to choose from the following practical units; the creative skill of hairdressing design or bridal hairstyling, the intricate work of making a hair piece or adding hair extensions, the technical colour correction unit, creating movement and curls through the perming techniques and how to develop your human resource management skills.

In beauty, you will learn how to give face and body electrotherapy and body massage. To further enhance your practical skills you will have the opportunity to choose from the following practical units; providing massage using pre-blended aromatherapy oils, electrical epilation, individual permanent lashes, intimate waxing, spray tan and how to apply self-tan products, and nail enhancements.

How will I be assessed?

You will do written end of unit assessments at set periods throughout the two year programme. You will also be assessed on the development of your practical skills in order to prepare you for working within the industry whatever that role may be.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Students who want to continue Hair and beauty as a career can go onto employment in: leisure centres, hotels, spa, cruise ships or airlines. they may go on to work in a hairdressers or be self-employed. Some students have went on to work within media, TV, stage or theatre.



EPQ – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study EPQ?

The EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) lets students lead their own independent project, researching a topic of their choice not covered in other studies. It can stem from something studied in class or a completely personal interest - anything that inspires you.

Through the EPQ, you will:

- Become a critical, reflective, and independent learner
- Develop decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Improve planning, research, analysis, evaluation, and presentation
- Use technology confidently
- Show creativity, initiative, and enterprise

What will I study?

You will receive 30 taught hours of skills. These will include: how to keep an academic journal, how to evaluate the quality of sources and how to collect primary data. You will also visit Newcastle University Library where you will receive workshops on how to reference accurately, how to use the online library in addition to having a tour of the library facilities. EPQ students will receive a Newcastle University Library Card so they can use the resources in their own time.

How will I be assessed?

Students produce a 5,000 word report and give a formal presentation to a senior members of the school.

Please note, the EPQ is an enrichment. It is worth half an A Level. This subject would be taken in addition to the three subject courses.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Many universities will give a lower grade offer for students who have completed an EPQ irrespective of the course applied for or what their EPQ was based upon.



Health and Social Care – Exam Board Pearson

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Health & Social Care?

This qualification is ideal for students passionate about helping others and interested in careers in health, wellbeing, and social care. You should be enthusiastic, motivated, and keen to learn. Key skills developed include:

- Communication and listening
- Organisation and critical thinking
- Empathy, compassion, and understanding
- Problem-solving and managing challenges
- Time management
- Research skills

What will I study?

You'll complete three mandatory units:

- Human Lifespan and Development – Growth, development, influencing factors, interventions, and care professionals.
- Human Biology and Health – Body systems, physiological function, and effects of common disorders.
- Health and Social Care Practice – Core principles, values, legislation, and social determinants of health.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment includes two external exams, one internal coursework unit (set by Pearson, marked by school), and one synoptic assessment where you apply skills and knowledge across all areas.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Many students progress to university degrees such as:

- BSc Nursing
- BSc Social Work
- BSc Paramedic Science / Occupational Therapy
- BA (Hons) Primary Education with QTS
- BSc (Hons) Health, Wellbeing and Care in Society
- Graduates often pursue careers in nursing, midwifery, teaching, social work, psychology, and childhood studies.



History – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study History?

If you're fascinated by human stories, societies, and how the past shapes the present, A-level History is for you. It's not just about dates and events — it's about understanding change, power, culture, and the forces that shape our world. You'll develop skills in analysis, interpretation, and critical thinking while exploring complex human experiences.

What will I study?

- Component 1: The Tudors, 1485–1603 (Breadth Study) – Explore England's transformation under monarchs from Henry VII to Elizabeth I, examining monarchy, religion, government, and society.
- Exam: 2 hrs 30 mins – 80 marks (40%)
- Component 2: Revolution and Dictatorship, Russia 1917–1953 (Depth Study) – Study the rise and impact of communism under Lenin and Stalin, focusing on ideology, dictatorship, and social change.
- Exam: 2 hrs 30 mins – 80 marks (40%)
- NEA (Coursework) – A 3,500-word independent study on a topic of your choice covering around 100 years (not overlapping with exam topics).
- Worth 20%

How will I be assessed?

You will complete two exams, each worth 40% of your final grade, testing your knowledge and analytical skills. Additionally, you'll complete a 3500-word piece of coursework worth 20%. This will allow you to delve deeper into the History, on a topic of your choice, demonstrating your research and critical thinking abilities.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Beyond the classroom, A Level History opens doors to a wide range of university courses and career paths. Whether you aspire to study history at university, pursue a career in law, journalism, or politics, or simply want to develop skills that are highly valued in today's job market, A Level History is the perfect foundation for your future success.



IT AAQ – Exam Board Pearson

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study IT?

If you are planning to study IT, it is helpful to have a strong interest in technology, problem-solving, and how digital systems work. You should enjoy using computers, exploring software, and thinking logically to solve technical challenges. Skills like basic computer literacy, clear communication, and time management are important, as the course often involves both theory and practical coursework. While not essential, having some experience with word processing, spreadsheets, and creative tools like web design software can give you a head start. Most importantly, a curious mindset and willingness to learn will help you thrive in A-Level IT.

What will I study?

Component 1 - Information Technology Systems

Component 2 - Cyber Security and Incident Management

Component 3 - Website Development

Component 4 - Relational Database Development

How will I be assessed?

Component 1 - Written exam – 120 minutes – 33% of overall mark

Component 2 - Written exam – 135 minutes – 33% of overall mark

Component 3 - Coursework – 17% of overall mark

Component 4 - Coursework – 17% of overall mark

What careers can this subject lead me to?

An A-Level in IT can open the door to a wide range of exciting and well-paid careers in the digital and tech industries. It provides a strong foundation for roles such as IT support technician, web developer, software engineer, network administrator, or cybersecurity analyst. It can also lead to careers in data analysis, digital marketing, UX/UI design, and project management within tech-focused companies. Many students go on to study information systems, computing or related subjects at university, which can further lead to advanced roles like AI specialist, cloud architect, or IT consultant. The skills you gain are highly transferable and in demand across almost every industry.



Law – Exam Board EDUQAS

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Law?

Law is everywhere, shaping our country and daily lives. A-level Law suits students with a curious, analytical mind who want to understand how laws are made and applied.

Recognised by the Russell Group for its rigour, it develops independent thinking, critical analysis, and reasoning skills valuable for study, careers, and life.

Many students progress to careers as solicitors, barristers, paralegals, or police officers.

Study Law — learn about life!

What will I study?

- Component 1 – The English Legal System: How laws are made, how courts work, and what happens in cases like bail or suing. Includes a visit to Newcastle Crown Court.
- Components 2 & 3 – Criminal, Tort, and Human Rights Law: Core areas of most Law degrees. You'll analyse cases, solve problems, and apply legal principles.

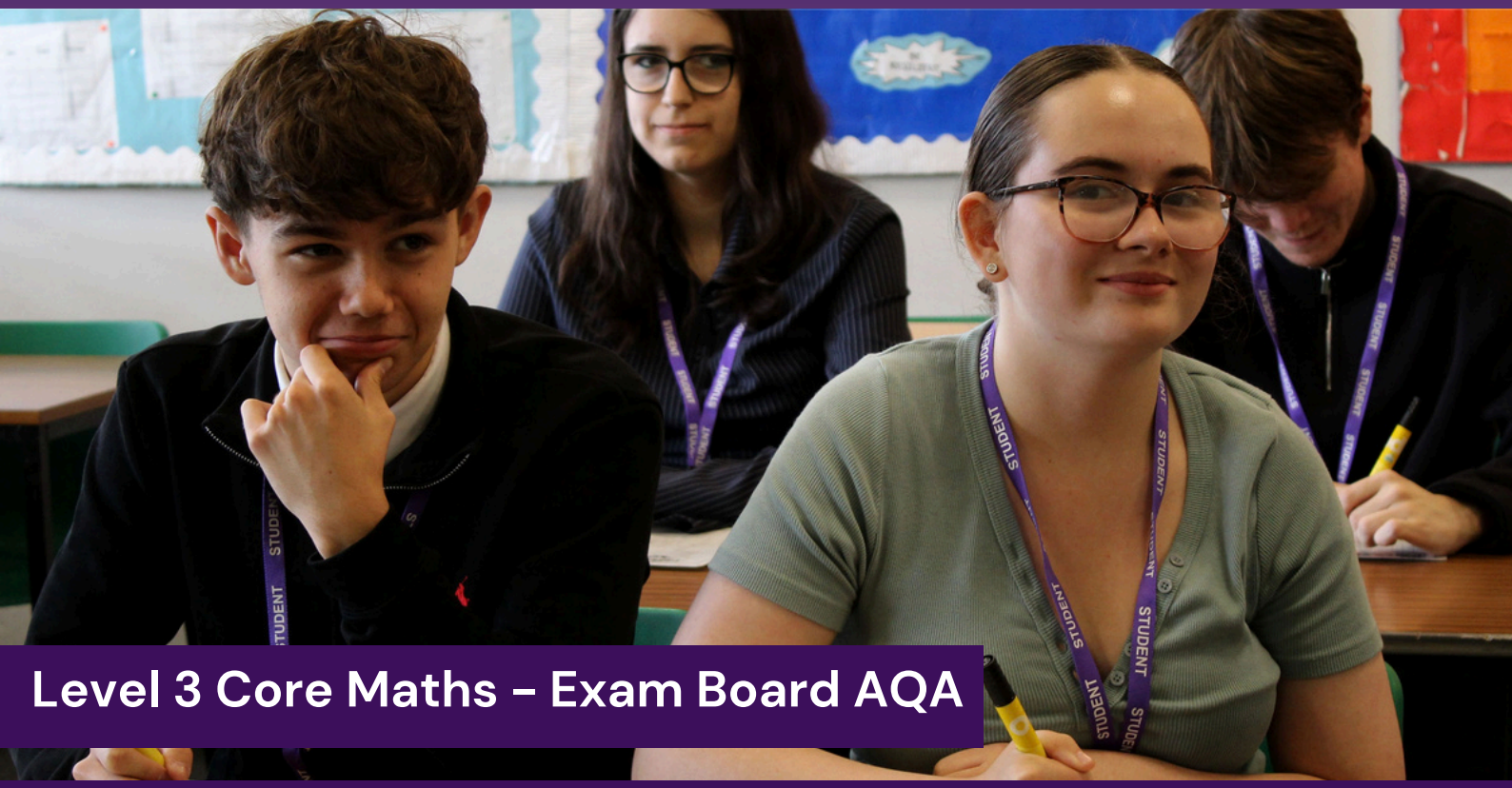
Component 2: 2h 15m – scenario-based exam
Component 3: 2h 15m – essay-based exam

How will I be assessed?

Component 1 is a 90 minute exam with a number of different shorter answer question types. Components 2 and 3 are each 135 minute exams. The Component 2 exam is where students are faced with scenarios and put themselves in the position of a lawyer to advise their client in the scenario. The Component 3 exam is essay based where students show their skills of analysis and evaluation around the law in the three topics studied.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Law is an A Level which is fully accepted by all universities in the country for points towards higher education entry in any subject. It gives a great foundation for students to work towards a career in one of the many areas of law, alongside the obvious careers such as a solicitor, a barrister, a legal executive or a police officer. Furthermore, the skills learned are fully transferable across a wide range of careers, not just in the law itself. The department also has a number of excellent links with local legal firms and universities, especially Clifford Chance, one of the world's biggest law firms.



Level 3 Core Maths – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Level 3 Maths?

As core maths is based on a lot of real-life situations, skills that are useful to have are: problem solving skills, a critical eye, data analysis and interpretation skills as well as basic numeracy, such as percentages. You do not have to be a maths genius to study core maths as it is designed for students who are not taking A-Level Maths but still want to keep their maths skills sharp and relevant. It is practical, not abstract! Students who take Geography or Business tend to get a grade higher if they also take core maths than those who do not.

What will I study?

Paper 1: Analysis of data, maths for personal finance, estimation, critical analysis of given data and models.

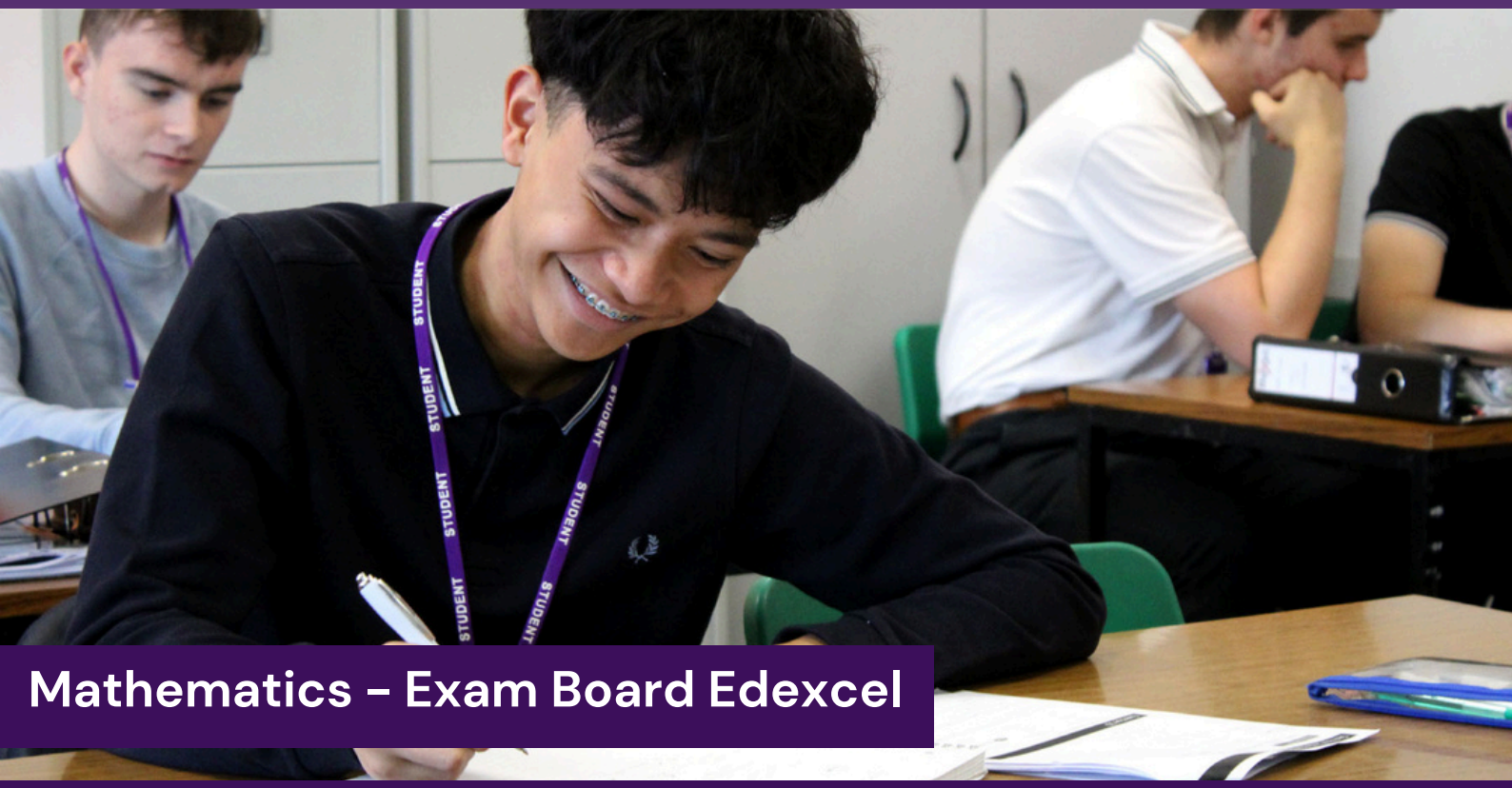
Paper 2 topics: the normal distribution, probabilities and estimation, correlation and regression.

How will I be assessed?

There will be two papers, both 60 marks and 90 minutes long, assessed in the summer exam series. Students are examined in the year they take this option. Some students take this subject in year 12 whilst others don't start until year 13. Please note, level 3 Core Maths is an enrichment. It is worth half an A Level. This subject would be taken in addition to the three subject courses.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Core maths is an excellent platform for careers in business and finance, health and social care, education and teaching and public services.



Mathematics – Exam Board Edexcel

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Mathematics?

If you're planning to study Mathematics at A Level, a genuine interest in solving problems and exploring patterns is essential. You should enjoy working with numbers, thinking logically, and tackling abstract concepts. Key skills include critical thinking, resilience, and the ability to construct clear, rigorous arguments using precise mathematical language. You'll also need to be comfortable applying mathematical models to real-world scenarios and interpreting results thoughtfully. A curious mind and a willingness to persevere through challenging problems will serve you well—Maths isn't just about getting the right answer, it's about understanding why it works.

What will I study?

Studying A Level Mathematics (Edexcel) covers pure maths, mechanics, and statistics. You'll explore algebra, trigonometry, calculus, and functions for logical reasoning, learn about forces, motion, and energy in mechanics, and use data and probability to make predictions in statistics. Over two years, exams test your problem-solving and analytical skills across these areas.

How will I be assessed?

At the end of the course you will sit 3 exam papers. Two papers on Pure Mathematics and a combined Statistics/Mechanics paper.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

A Level Mathematics opens doors to a wide range of exciting and high-demand careers. It's a key stepping stone for fields like engineering, data science, finance, economics, and computer science. You could become an actuary, architect, software developer, investment analyst, or even a meteorologist. The analytical thinking and problem-solving skills you develop are also highly valued in business, law, and public policy. Whether you're heading to university or considering an apprenticeship, Maths gives you a versatile foundation that employers respect and rely on.



Music – Exam Board Edexcel

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Music?

Students choosing A Level Music should enjoy performing or developing their skills on an instrument or voice, ideally working towards grade 6 or 7 standard by the end of the course. They should have an interest in how music is structured and composed and a working knowledge of musical theory up to GCSE level. This includes harmony, melody, rhythm and texture. Creativity and imagination are important qualities for composition, and students should be open to studying a wide range of genres from Classical to Jazz, Popular and Film music. Commitment to regular practice, independent study and strong listening skills are also essential.

What will I study?

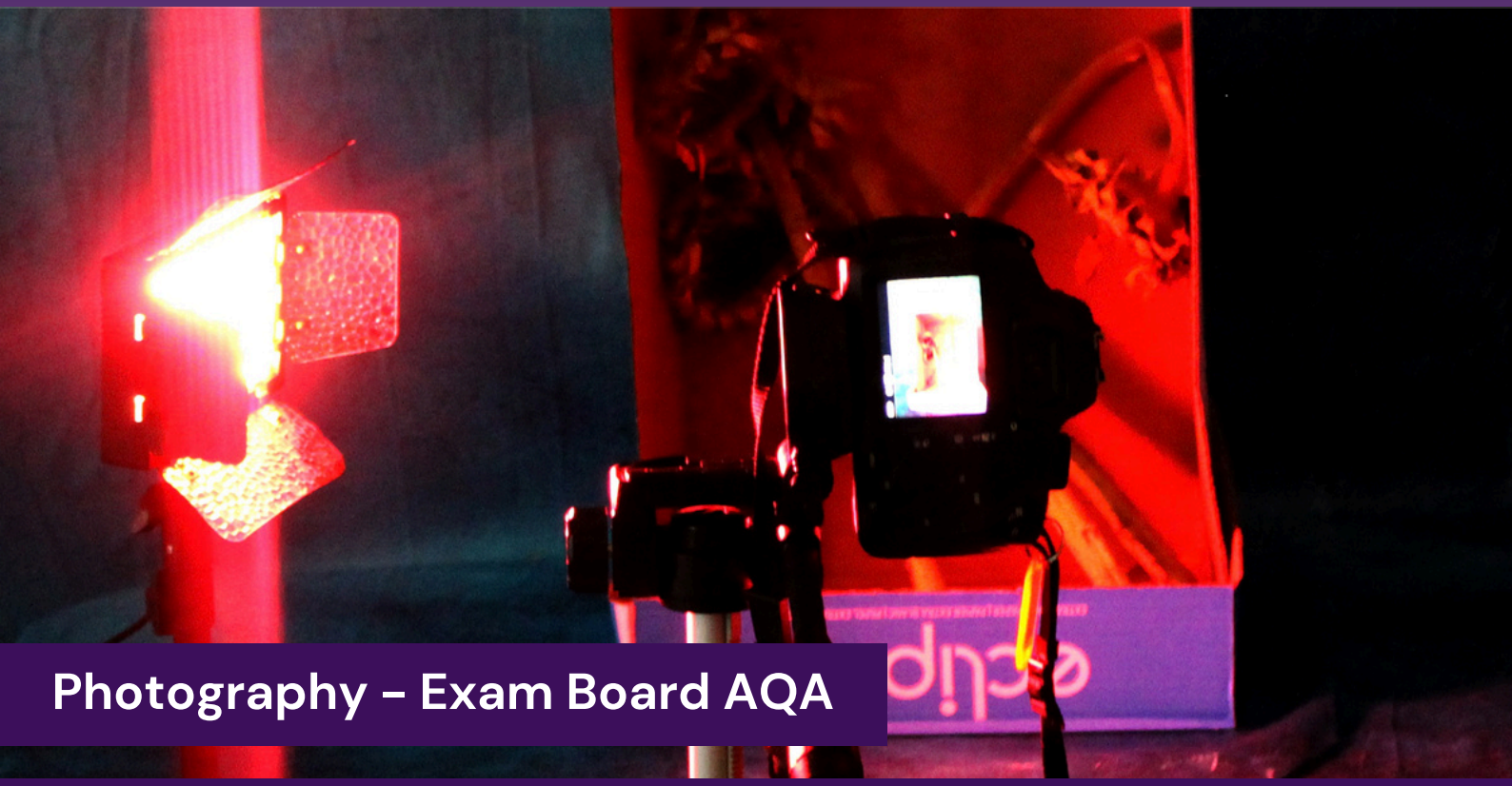
The course is divided into three main components. In performance, students prepare and record a recital on their chosen instrument or voice, with a minimum of eight minutes of music. In composition, students produce two pieces. One is in response to a set brief, which may involve techniques such as four-part harmony, and one is free composition that allows for individual creativity. The appraising component focuses on the analysis of set works and unfamiliar music, studied across six Areas of Study: Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Music for Film, Popular Music and Jazz, Fusions, and New Directions.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment is through a combination of coursework and examination. The performance recital is worth 30% of the qualification and is externally assessed. Composition is also worth 30%, with two pieces submitted together to a minimum combined length of six minutes. The final 40% is assessed through a two-hour written paper which includes listening questions, analysis, and extended essays on both set works and unfamiliar music.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

A Level Music provides a strong foundation for a wide range of careers in the arts and beyond. It can lead directly to roles in performance, composition, conducting or music production, and is a valuable qualification for those wishing to train as teachers, music therapists or community musicians. Many students also progress into related fields such as sound engineering, broadcasting, arts management and event production. The skills developed in analysis, creativity, communication and independent study are highly transferable and respected in a variety of professional pathways.



Photography – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Photography?

To thrive in A Level Photography, you should have: A keen interest in visual arts and storytelling through images. Curiosity about how photography can express ideas, emotions, and perspectives.Basic technical skills or a willingness to learn about cameras, lighting, and editing software.Creativity, patience, and attention to detail with an open mind to explore different styles, techniques, and cultural influences.
No prior photography experience is required—just enthusiasm and a desire to experiment and learn.

What will I study?

The course is split into two main components:
Component 1: Personal Investigation (60%)
A practical project based on a theme of your choice. This Includes a written element (1,000–3,000 words) exploring your creative process, influences, and outcomes.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)
A practical response to a theme set by AQA . this includes a preparatory period followed by a 15-hour timed final piece.You will explore: Digital and traditional photography techniques; composition, lighting, and editing; historical and contemporary photographers; how to develop and present a personal portfolio.

How will I be assessed?

You will be marked on your ability to develop ideas, experiment, refine techniques, and present final outcomes. Both components are internally assessed and externally moderated by AQA.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Photography can lead to a wide range of creative careers, including:

- Photographer – fashion, editorial, commercial, documentary, or fine art
- Graphic designer / visual content creator
- Film and media production
- Advertising and marketing
- Art direction or set design
- Journalism and photojournalism
- Curation or arts education

It also provides an excellent foundation for further study in creative arts, media, or design at university or art school.



Product Design – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Product Design?

A passion for Design and curiosity about how things work are key. Designers are creative problem-solvers who use analytical thinking and logical reasoning to develop innovative ideas. Strong practical skills are vital for building prototypes, testing, and improving products. Creativity and innovation drive success, while communication and teamwork are essential, as designers often collaborate and present ideas to others.

What will I study?

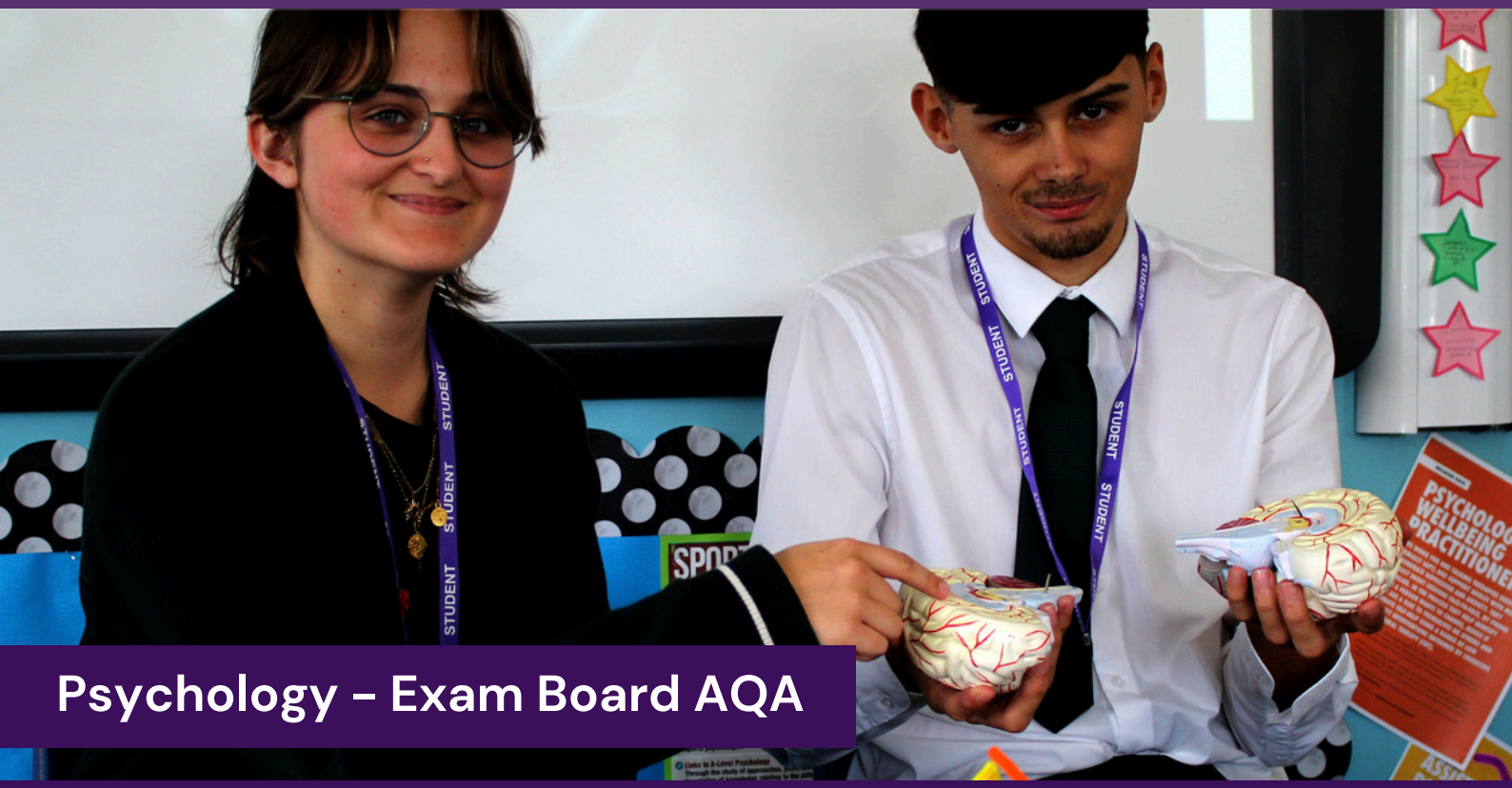
This is a creative and thought-provoking qualification that gives you the practical skills, theoretical knowledge and confidence to succeed in a number of careers. Especially those in the creative industries. You will learn to investigate historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic influences in design and technology, whilst enjoying opportunities to put your learning into practice by producing a product of your choice. You will gain a real understanding of what it means to be a designer, alongside the knowledge and skills sought out by higher education and employers. The course is split into 3 areas which cover Technical Principles, Designing and Making Principles and an NEA Portfolio relating to a project of your choice.

How will I be assessed?

Paper 1 – Technical Principles. 2 hours and 30 minutes written exam - 120 marks
30% of A-level. A mixture of short answer and extended response questions.
Paper 2 – Designing and Making Principles. 1 hour and 30 minutes written exam - 80 marks, 20% of A-level. A mixture of short answer and extended response questions.
Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) – Practical application of technical principles, designing and making principles. This is a substantial design and make project. 100 marks - 50% of A-level. It can be a written or digital design portfolio and photographic evidence of a manufactured final product.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

An A-Level in Product Design can lead to careers in a wide range of creative, technological, and engineering fields. The skills you learn such as problem-solving, Computer-Aided Design (CAD), material knowledge, and prototyping are highly transferable and valued by employers. Many of these career paths are accessible through apprenticeships, further vocational training, or a university degree.



Psychology – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Psychology?

Psychology is a scientific discipline concerned with the systematic study of behaviour and mental processes. You should have a genuine curiosity about how individuals think, feel, and behave in various contexts, including developmental, cognitive, biological, and social domains. Also, Psychology is grounded in empirical research. Students should be interested in how psychological theories are tested through observation, experimentation, and data analysis. Finally, a willingness to consider ethical implications of research and reflect on broader questions about human nature and individual differences.

Students of psychology must also be competent in handling quantitative data, including basic statistical analysis, is essential for the Research Methods component of the course.

What will I study?

Paper 1 - Social Psychology, Attachment, Approaches, Psychopathology
Paper 2 – Approaches, Psychopathology and research methods
Paper 3 – Issues, debates and approaches, Schizophrenia, Relationships and Addiction

How will I be assessed?

You will sit three external examinations at the end of year 13. Each paper will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions. Each paper is also 2 hours long.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Psychology is a highly versatile academic discipline that can lead to a wide range of career opportunities. Students who pursue psychology often enter professional pathways directly related to the subject, such as clinical, educational, forensic, or occupational psychology. These roles typically require further study and accreditation, and involve applying psychological principles to support mental health, learning, rehabilitation, and workplace wellbeing. Psychology also provides a strong foundation for careers in counselling, social work, teaching, and public health, where understanding human behaviour is essential.

In addition to these conventional routes, psychology equips students with transferable skills that are valued across many sectors not traditionally associated with the subject. Graduates frequently pursue careers in law, marketing, journalism, user experience design, business consultancy, and data analysis.



Physics – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Physics?

Physics explores everything from subatomic particles to the vastness of space. If you're curious about how forces shape the world or what lies beyond the stars, this subject will inspire you. It's for those who love asking big questions and exploring the laws that govern reality.

You'll carry out experiments, analyse data, and test theories—developing precision, patience, and analytical skills essential for science. Maths is central, using algebra, trigonometry, and calculus to explain motion, energy, and electricity. If you enjoy solving puzzles and tackling challenges, Physics is both rewarding and intellectually stimulating.

What will I study?

You will study the following core topics: Measurements and their errors, particles and radiation, waves, mechanics and materials, electricity, further mechanics and thermal physics, fields and their consequences, nuclear physics .
You will also choose one optional topic from: Astrophysics, Medical physics and Turning points in physics.

How will I be assessed?

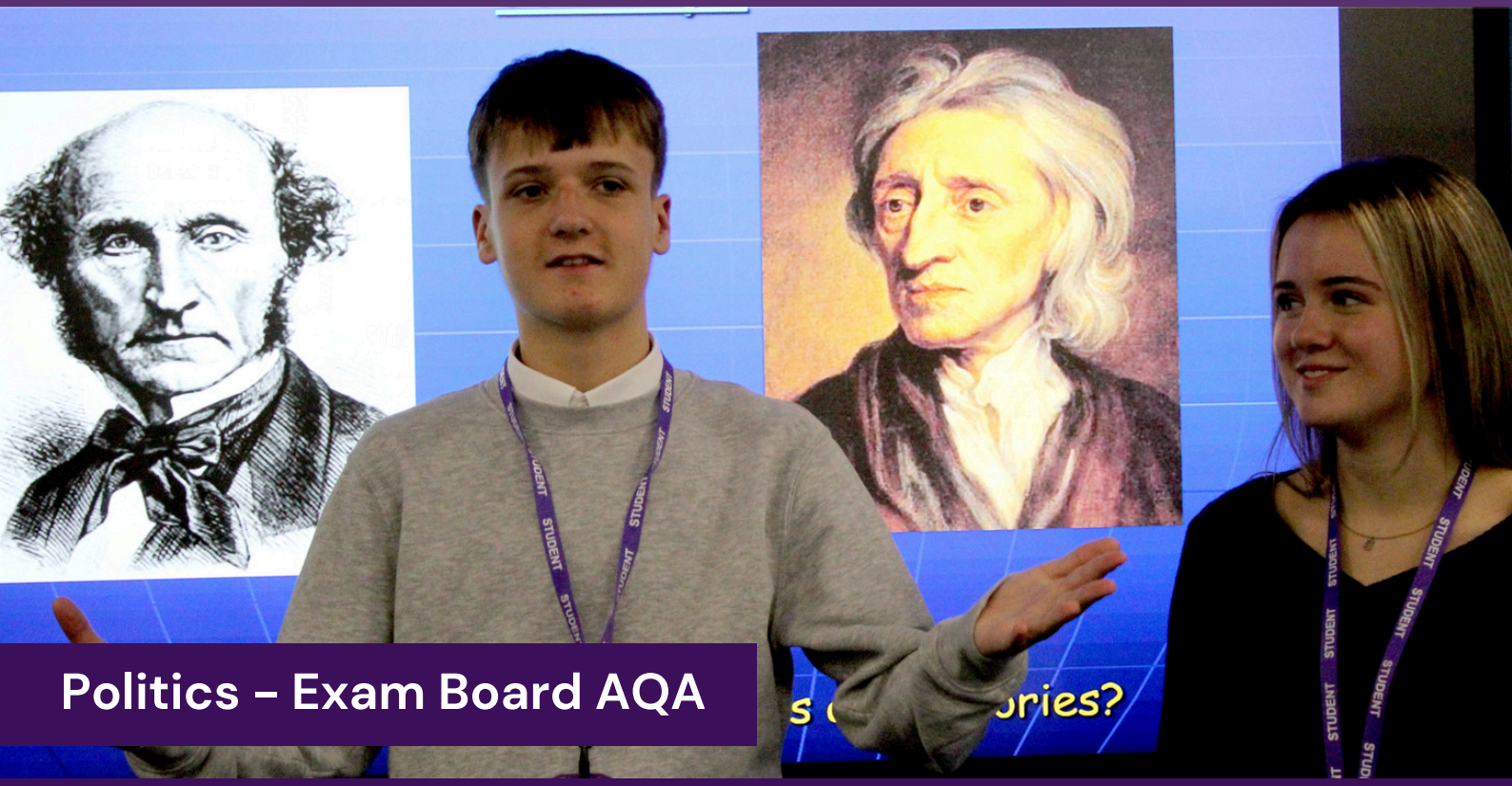
Assessment is through three written exams at the end of the course:

Additionally, you must complete 12 required practicals, which are assessed for a practical endorsement (pass/fail) separate from the final grade.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Engineering (civil, mechanical, electrical, aerospace, etc.)
Physics Research and Academia
Medicine and Medical Physics
Computer Science and Software Development
Architecture and Design
Renewable Energy and Environmental Science
Finance, Data Analysis, and Actuarial Science
Teaching and Education

Physics is a highly respected subject that opens doors to a wide range of STEM and non-STEM careers due to its emphasis on analytical thinking and problem-solving.



Politics – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Politics?

Many say they "don't do politics," yet everyone has opinions on how the country is run — from major issues like Brexit to everyday concerns. Politics is always relevant, shaping our society and future. A Level Politics suits anyone interested in how the country and local areas are governed. It develops independent thinking and analytical skills valuable for university, employment, or further study — even if you don't plan to pursue politics beyond A level.

What will I study?

Paper 1 covers the Government and Politics of the UK and is studied in Year 12. This topic covers most areas of how the government in this country is organised, how it works and what it does.

Paper 2 covers the Government and Politics of the USA and is studied in Year 13. This topic covers most areas of the government in the USA is organised, how it works and what it does. It also gives the opportunity for comparison between the UK and the USA systems.

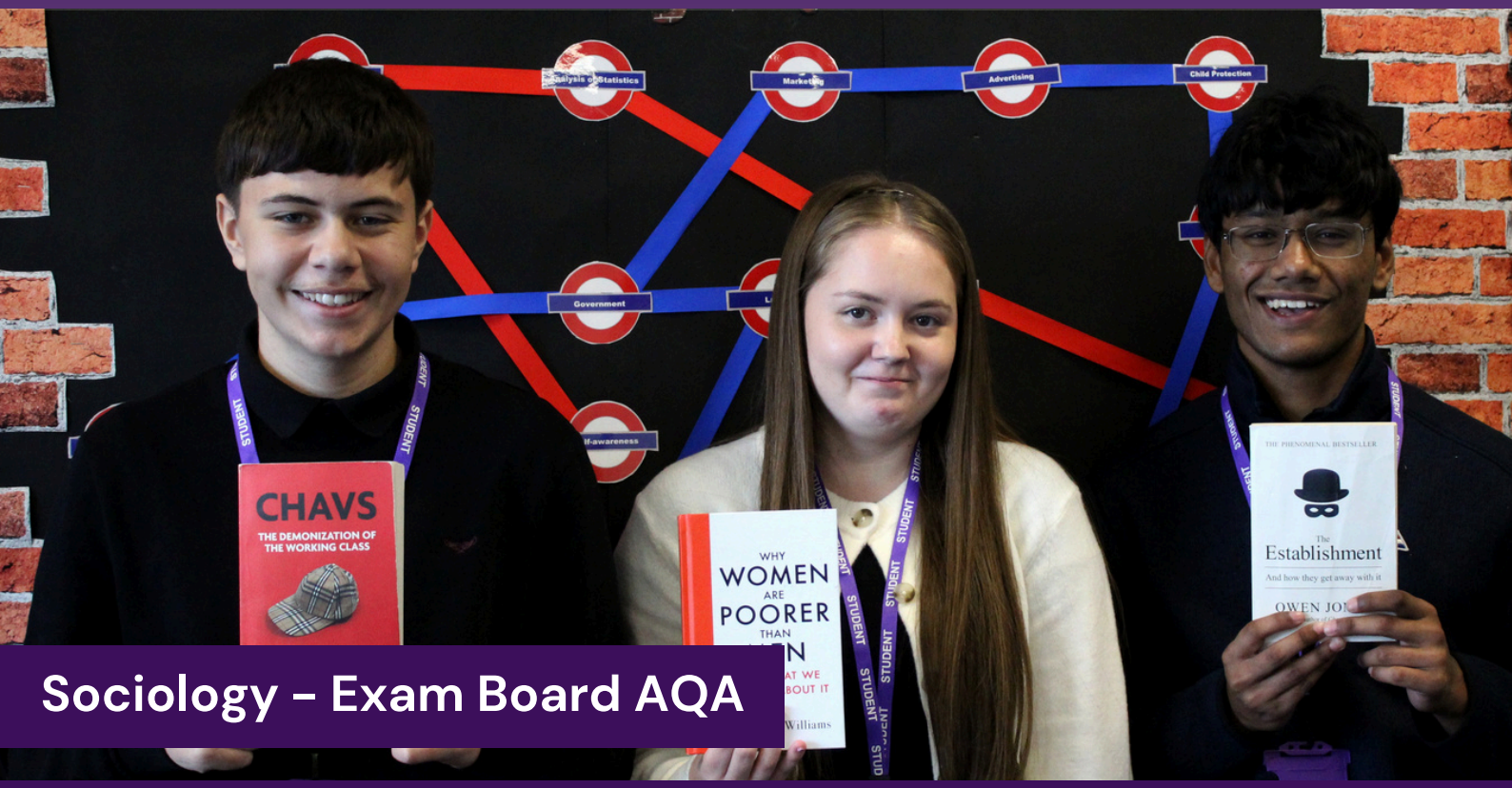
Paper 3 covers Political Ideas and is studied in Year 12. This topic covers many political ideas and beliefs and allows students to study the development of these beliefs as well as looking at the key people within them.

How will I be assessed?

Each paper is a 2 hour long exam with 3 shorter answer questions, an essay based on an extract and an essay to discuss a political issue from the course.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Politics is an A Level which is fully accepted by all universities in the country for points towards higher education entry in any subject. It gives a great foundation for students to work towards a career in any field as the skills learned are fully transferable across a wide range of careers. We are very proud that a number of alumni have gone on to further study of the subject and we have even had one of them speak at the despatch box in the House of Commons!



Sociology – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Sociology?

Sociology is the study of society, human behaviour, and the structures shaping our lives. It helps you make sense of your experiences and see the world in new ways, encouraging you to question what you once took for granted.

If you often ask "why?" or are curious about issues like inequality, discrimination, crime, or education, this subject is for you. Staying informed about current events is important, as Sociology links theory to real life.

Whether you're interested in politics, media, or simply understanding society, Sociology helps you think critically, challenge assumptions, and explore how the world works.

What will I study?

In Year 12 you will study the following topics:

- Education
- Family & Households
- Research Methods
- In Year 13 you will study the following topics:
- Crime & Deviance
- Media
- Sociological Theory

How will I be assessed?

At the end of year 13, you will sit three external examinations. Each exam is 2 hours long and they are equally weighted.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

A-Level Sociology can lead to a wide range of opportunities. It's a subject that helps you understand people, society, and the systems that shape our everyday lives—making it relevant to almost any occupation. Studying sociology develops valuable skills such as critical thinking, essay writing, research, and data analysis. These are especially useful in fields like social work, education, law, criminology, journalism, marketing and more. It also provides a strong foundation for university courses in Sociology, Psychology, Criminology, Politics, and related subjects. Because it involves studying people, interpreting data, and understanding social trends, sociology is highly transferable and respected in many professions. Whether you're interested in working with communities, influencing change, or simply understanding the world better, A-Level Sociology equips you with the tools to do so.



Spanish – Exam Board AQA

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Spanish?

Studying A-level Spanish is a rewarding and enriching experience. Relevant interests would include: a curiosity about how languages work and enjoyment in communicating with people from different backgrounds. An interest in Spanish-speaking countries, their history, literature, cinema, music, and current affairs. Enjoyment of travel or learning about global issues and perspectives.Appreciation for reading texts and expressing ideas clearly in writing. Interest in discussing and analysing themes, characters, and ideas in literature and film.

What will I study?

Year 12 Topics - Aspects of Hispanic Society:

- Modern and traditional values
- Cyberspace
- Equal rights

Artistic Culture in the Hispanic World:

- Modern-day idols
- Hispanic regional identity
- Cultural heritage
- Study of a Spanish/Hispanic film or director

Year 13 Topics - Multiculturalism in Hispanic Society:

- Immigration
- Racism
- Integration

Aspects of Political Life in the Hispanic World:

- Monarchies, republics, and dictatorships
- Popular movements

Study of a Spanish/Hispanic book

How will I be assessed?

You will have three separate examinations at the end of year 13. One is an externally assessed listening, reading and writing examination which is worth 50% of your overall grade. A. The second is a writing paper based on set texts and is worth 20% of your final grade. The last examination is a speaking exam, worth 30% of your final grade.This will be with one of your Spanish teachers however it will be audio-taped and sent to the exam board for moderation.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Language skills can lead directly into a career in translating, interpreting or teaching. Languages are also in demand in areas such as hospitality, law, publishing and business services. Modern languages degrees typically involve spending a year abroad and this can be an opportunity to find work in a field that interests you and gain relevant experience.



Sports Studies BTEC – Exam Board Pearson/Edexcel

What interests and skills should I have if I am going to study Sports Studies?

To succeed in BTEC Sport, students should have a strong interest in physical activity, fitness, and sports performance.A willingness to engage in both practical and theoretical work. Skills in teamwork, communication, and leadership. Also, a curiosity about how the human body functions in sport, how performance is improved, and how the sport industry operates

What will I study?

You will complete four units in total:

1. Anatomy and Physiology. Here you will learn about the structure and function of body systems, such as muscular, cardiovascular, respiratory. You will also gain knowledge on energy systems and their role in exercise performance.

2. Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and Well-being. Here you will designing training programmes for specific types of sportspeople. You will learn about fitness components and lifestyle analysis. finally you will also consider the importance of nutrition, health screening and programming for clients.

3. Professional Development in the Sports Industry. Here you will explore different careers in sport, such as coaching, therapy, officiating, management. You will conduct a skills audit, CV writing, and interview preparation. You will also produce a plan for career progression in sport.

4. Sports Leadership. You will learn types of leadership and roles. You will plan and deliver sports sessions to other students followed by a careful reflection on leadership performance.

How will I be assessed?

The assessments are staggered so that two are completed in year 12 and two in year 13. Units 1 is a traditional externally assessed examination. Unit two is a controlled assessment, similar to course work, however it is set and marked by Pearson. The final two units are both coursework tasks and are both marked by your teacher. The unit 4 coursework also involves and element of practical work.

What careers can this subject lead me to?

Studying BTEC Sport can lead to careers or further education in areas such as:
- Sports Coaching
- Personal Training & Fitness Instruction
- Physiotherapy (with further qualifications)
- PE Teaching (with university progression)
- Sports Psychology
- Sports Therapy & Rehabilitation
- Exercise Science / Sport Science
- Leisure Centre Management
- Nutrition & Health Promotion
- Strength and Conditioning Coach

It is also excellent preparation for degrees in Sport and Exercise Science, Sports Coaching, Sports Management, or Physiotherapy.



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