DENSTONE COLLEGE

SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM

APPLICANTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025 ENTRY

DENSTONACITY
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Dear Prospective Lower Sixth Former,

We are delighted that you are considering joining our Sixth Form in September 2025.

It is perfectly normal for pupils in the Fifth Form to be unsure which courses they want to study, and this document has been produced to help you in your considerations. Your subject choices form the foundation of your further studies at university and beyond, so do not make them lightly!

Your Sixth Form years are potentially the most enjoyable, challenging and rewarding years of your school life, with many academic, recreational, social and cultural opportunities opening up for you over the course of these two years. Here at Denstone, you will have the opportunity to make the most of these valuable years; learning new skills, make new friends and enjoying new experiences that will pave the way for life beyond Denstone, be this in higher education, an apprenticeship or in the world of work. To make a success of these years, however, you will need to ensure you study subjects that are right for you.

Our students have the choice of 25 different courses for Sixth Form study next year, including both A-Levels and vocational qualifications. This document contains further details on all of these. With over 10,000 different combinations of these subjects possible it can be tricky meeting the wishes of every student and we would encourage you to submit your subject choices, using the form found in this booklet, as soon as these decisions have been made and your place at Denstone is confirmed. If you wish to begin your Sixth Form life studying four subjects then you are able to do so, although some flexibility over the fourth subject may be required.

Please do get in touch with our admissions team should you have further questions on any of the information contained in the following pages.

Enjoy looking through this information – I hope you find it useful.

Best wishes,

Mr T J Bell
Deputy Head Academic

Reading this document is intended to provide a flavour of life in our busy Sixth Form and to help you decide upon a suitable combination of Sixth Form courses to study. There is a lot of information to consider so think carefully about it and discuss things fully with parents/guardians and teachers who know you well before making any decisions.

1. How do I gain entry into the Denstone College Sixth Form

The step up from studying a wide range of GCSE subjects to a narrower, more specialised range of A levels can be a challenge, and it is only responsible of us to ensure you have the ability to succeed in meeting this challenge. There is no overall qualification threshold for entry into our Sixth Form but you will be required to achieve a minimum entry requirement for the specific courses you wish to study next year. This will typically be a GCSE grade 6 or above in subjects you wish to study at A level, with new subjects offered having their own entry requirements based on the nature of the subject. A full list of the entry requirements for each Sixth Form course on offer is included in this booklet.

Whilst students are no longer routinely entered for AS levels, satisfactory performance in the Lower Sixth is a prerequisite for continuing study into the Upper Sixth.

Where a student's final GCSE grades fall below those required to study their preferred Sixth Form courses it may still be possible to join the Lower Sixth, subject to an appropriate set of subjects being agreed. This is likely to include at least one of our vocational courses; CTEC ICT and BTEC Sport. (National Extended Certificate or National Diploma). Under such circumstances entry will initially be for one year, during which time academic progress and effort will be carefully monitored. Entry into the Sixth Form is ultimately always at the discretion of the Head and subject to a suitable and realistic combination of subjects being available and agreed.

2. Subjects available at Denstone College

We are planning to offer the following list of Sixth Form courses, some of which you will not have studied before. In actual fact it is possible to commence some courses without having studied them at GCSE although, of course, it would always help if you did! The subjects on offer are:

Art
Biology
Business
Chemistry
Computer Science
Design Technology
Drama and Theatre Studies
Economics
English Language
English Literature
French
Further Maths
Geography
History
ICT (Cambridge Technical)
Maths
Music
Physical Education
Physics
Politics
Psychology
RS (Philosophy Ethics Theology)
Spanish
Sport (BTEC – National Extended Certificate)
Sport (BTEC – National Diploma)

3. Why A Levels?

Having completed your GCSEs by the end of this year, you will find yourself presented with a choice from a wide range of courses at different schools/colleges. The most common qualification in the UK is still the GCE A Level, but you also face the choice of vocational courses, International Baccalaureate (IB), the Pre-U and others. At Denstone we deliberately concentrate on teaching A Levels in most subjects, with our two vocational subjects (Cambridge Technical ICT and BTEC Sport) also available for interested students. A Levels are still the most widely known and accepted qualifications, combining flexibility with depth of study; we feel they remain the most appropriate qualifications for Denstone students in preparation for higher education and/or the world of work.

4. The Structure of A Levels

All A Level specifications focus on linear assessment for candidates at the end of the two year course, with some also including Non Examination Assessment (NEA). As such students aren't routinely be entered for AS level exams at the end of their lower sixth year, although such a route is still possible where necessary in a few subjects. Academic progress will be assessed during the two years of study through our own internal examinations and related assessments. Please read the relevant subject pages for further information on assessment arrangements in specific subject areas.

5. Selecting subjects in the Sixth Form

A levels are not just higher education entrance examinations; they are intellectual disciplines in their own right, and therefore you should select these subjects carefully. There are increasing amounts of 'self-propelled' learning to carry out. This is because post-16 qualifications require it, and because it is good preparation for higher education. Your work will be monitored and you will have regular opportunities to discuss academic progress with your tutor. Organisation and time-management skills are needed in abundance, and you will be given help to develop the right working habits. Commonly asked questions when selecting a course are:

Do I meet the course entry requirements?
See each individual subject statement and/or discuss with teachers. Students are required to achieve at least a grade 6 at GCSE in the subjects they intend to study at A level, with a 7 or above at GCSE/IGCSE seen as particularly important for some subjects, notably Maths and sciences.

Do I have an aptitude for each of the subjects I hope to select?
Which subjects/courses are likely to suit your own skills and abilities? What are you good at? It is important to select subjects in which you have a realistic hope of gaining a good grade at the end of the two years. It is increasingly the case that lower A level grades in any subject are of limited use in the outside world generally, and certainly when competing for good university places. Choosing subjects that you are good at is therefore an important factor in academic success in the sixth form and beyond.

Do I have an interest in the subjects I hope to select?
Nearly five hours' teaching time per subject plus much more private study time will be your minimum commitment. Pick subjects you are going to enjoy doing! Try to avoid choosing subjects simply because you feel they will 'look good' on future UCAS or work-related applications. Studying a subject that you don't enjoy or you're not interested in will soon become an uphill struggle at this level and may well ultimately lead to a disappointing final grade.

Does the combination of subjects I hope to choose appear sensible?
What subjects do you need in order to pursue a particular career or profession? Is this a good opportunity to broaden the range of what you study? Seek advice from your current school and carry out suitable online research if your likely university or careers plans have an impact on subject combinations. Mr Lightfoot, our Head of Physics and Careers, can also be contacted by incoming Sixth Form students for further discussion and guidance regarding suitable subject combinations.

Should I opt for one of the vocational (non-A Level) courses on offer at Denstone?
Sixth Formers can study the Cambridge Technical IT qualification and/or one of the BTEC Sport courses we offer alongside other A level subjects. These courses are vocational and assessed through the collection of evidence over the course of two years, rather than by terminal exam alone (although these courses also include a significant element of examined assessment). They are designed to appeal to more practical learners and carry equivalent UCAS points as A level qualifications in these subjects. For September 2024 we are again offering students the opportunity to study the BTEC National Diploma in Sport, which is equivalent to two A Level subjects, or the existing National Extended Certificate in Sport, equivalent to one A Level. Please also be aware that, at the time of writing, there is some uncertainty of the long term future of our CTEC ICT course, although we believe that this will be available to students for 2024 to 2026 completion (to be confirmed).

For further information on all our vocational options please refer to the subject entries in this booklet and speak to the relevant Heads of Department.

6. Three or Four subjects?

It is possible for students to study up to four subject courses in the Sixth Form here at Denstone, alongside engagement in a number of other academic and co-curricular activities and qualifications, such as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). The vast majority of students will however eventually settle on three subjects to pursue and complete, allowing them to focus their energies on achieving the best grades possible in these courses. With university and apprenticeship offers generally requiring three subjects to be studied this approach is a sensible one for nearly all students.

7. Academic life in the Senior School

A normal working week is composed of a combination of taught lessons across the subjects you have selected (usually three or four subjects) alongside some private study lessons. You will have a combination of taught and private study periods. In addition to private study time during the working week there are no timetabled Sixth Form lessons on Saturday mornings, although a number of departments will use this time for additional subject clinics or revision sessions, especially as public exams approach.

The Sixth Form is very much viewed as being a "half-way house" between school and university in that more emphasis is placed on the individual student to maximise his or her potential through the development of self-discipline in terms of the planning, organisation and carrying out of the week's academic work. You will therefore be encouraged, to a greater extent than previously, to be more individually responsible for your own work.

8. Moving on to Higher Education

Alongside academic studies, one way in which Sixth Form students will really benefit from being at Denstone over the next two years is the help and advice you will get towards getting into a good university. The university application process begins during the Michaelmas term in the Lower Sixth year, raising awareness and holding discussions with students and parents as appropriate, with applications themselves finalised and sent away in Michaelmas of the Upper Sixth year.

The majority of Sixth Formers proceed into some form of higher education, with most moving on to degree courses. Gaining entrance into higher education institutions is a time-consuming and demanding process. Denstone College carries out a number of schemes and initiatives that are designed to help you in this. Mrs Watson (Head of Higher Education), Dr Baker (Oxford and Cambridge Admissions), Heads of House and individual tutors all help in this process.

Most universities make offers of a place on the basis of three full A level grades or equivalent, whilst others – typically the newer universities – often make offers of a place on the basis of the total UCAS points achieved. The current UCAS tariff system is listed in the following table:

Points	GCE A2	GCE AS	BTEC / CTEC (our Sport & ICT courses)	Extended Project
56	A*		D*	
48	A		D	
40	B			
32	C		M	
28				A*
24	D			A
20		A		B
16	E	B	P	C
12		C		D
10		D		
6		E		E

The tariff for the BTEC National Diploma in Sport reflects its equivalence to two A Levels, with a D*D* grade gaining 112 points, D*D gaining 104 points, DD worth 96 points, DM worth 80 points and an MM gaining 64 points. MP and PP grades are worth 48 and 32 points respectively.

9. External examinations

The Lower Sixth year is a crucial one. All Lower Sixth Formers will internal assessments in their chosen subjects during the summer term and more formal subject exams in Week 2 of the Michaelmas term of their Upper Sixth year. These examinations will be an important stepping-stone towards full A levels and will act as a useful indicator of academic progress, as well as contributing evidence towards UCAS predicted grades.

All final A level examinations take place in the Summer term of the Upper Sixth year, following the timetable produced each year by the relevant examination boards.

10. Extending the curriculum

Widening pupils' horizons beyond the scope of the classroom is an important dimension of Sixth Form life, as is the promotion of independent learning skills. In the Sixth Form we offer the chance to gain the equivalent of an additional qualification by participating in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Elements of the EPQ are delivered within the College's activities programme alongside timetabled lessons and all Lower Sixth students will be offered the opportunity to participate in elements of the course, although the majority of the work is carried out independently by the students involved. Please see the subject entry in this booklet for further information. Students also participate in the College's tutorial program which covers a wide range of issues, skills and themes relevant to Sixth Form life and preparation for life beyond Denstone. All pupils at Denstone are also encouraged to participate in our Denstone Diploma, an enrichment and extension programme comprising a range of departmentally-based challenges, activities and competitions.

11. The Sixth Form L.I.F.E. Programme

At Denstone College we recognise that the world of work is changing. More and more people have varied, changing careers. And we are seeing the rapid insurgence of computer technology into industrial functioning at many levels. The young of today need to be adaptable and they need to develop the skills that make them human. Our L.I.F.E. programme (Leadership, Innovation, Future-Ready, Enterprise) consists of weekly timetabled sessions for all Lower Sixth students that aim to develop their awareness of, and relevant skills in, a number of areas, including; work place behaviours, use of social media, digital and communication skills, negotiation, entrepreneurship and community participation. Its aim is to help prepare our pupils for life beyond Denstone College and the changing world by providing a curriculum experience that offers more than just a focus on their defined subject choices.

12. Next steps

Having carefully considered your subject choices, please submit your preferences using the 'Lower Sixth Option Blocks' form you can find at the end of this booklet. Some of our most popular Sixth Form subjects will fill up before September and so you are strongly advised to return this form to our admissions team as soon as possible to ensure that you can study your preferred combination of subjects. It is sometimes the case that we are unable to offer specific combinations of courses, typically due to very high or very low student numbers opting for certain subjects. Any issues regarding your selected subjects will be communicated once these have been submitted.

Academic Pathways through the Sixth Form

4 A Levels *Possibly suitable for the highest ability Sixth Formers and/or those preparing to apply for university courses with specific four subject requirements in the Lower Sixth. May be combined with an EPQ as appropriate.*	**3 A Levels and an EPQ** *Suitable for able Sixth Formers who wish to concentrate on three chosen subjects whilst retaining some breadth in their studies. The EPQ will add important study skills as well as offering additional UCAS points, relevant to some university applications.*
3 A Levels / Vocational subjects only *Suitable for students who will require time to meet the demands of three subjects in the Sixth Form, allowing them to concentrate on gaining the highest grades possible without the danger of 'spreading themselves too thin'. The success of this route will hinge on good use of private study time and careful choice of subjects for the Sixth Form.*	**1 A Level and 2 Vocational Subjects** *Possibly suitable for pupils who fail to meet some subject requirements at GCSE as well as others who prefer the variety of experience and assessment offered by the BTEC Sport and Cambridge Technical ICT courses. See information contained in this booklet for more guidance. This pathway may not be suitable for students wishing to apply for certain courses in higher education, and advice should be sought on this point where appropriate.*

Advice should be sought from relevant academic staff, including tutors, subject staff and the Head of UCAS to help reach a decision about the most appropriate pathway for an individual pupil.

Minimum course requirements: Sixth Form entry, September 2024

Subject	Entry requirements
Art	Grade 6 or better in GCSE Art required.
Biology	Grade 6 or better required in GCSE Biology required (or a grade 77 in Combined Science)
Business	Grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE English Language and GCSE/IGCSE Maths
Chemistry	Grade 7 or better preferred in GCSE Chemistry (or a grade 77 in Combined Science)
Computer Science	Grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE Computing (if taken) and a grade 6 or better required in GCSE/IGCSE Maths
Design & Technology (DT)	A grade 6 or better required in GCSE DT
Drama (Theatre Studies)	A grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE Drama
Economics	A grade 6 or better preferred in both GCSE/IGCSE Maths and GCSE English Language
English Language	A grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE English Language
English Literature	A grade 6 or better required in GCSE English Literature
French	A grade 6 or better required in GCSE French
Further Mathematics	A grade 8 or better preferred in GCSE/IGCSE Maths
Geography	A grade 6 or better required in GCSE Geography
History	A grade 6 or better required in GCSE History
Information Technology (CTEC)	No minimum entry requirements
Mathematics	A grade 6 or better required for IGCSE/GCSE Maths (grade 7 or better strongly preferred)
Music	A grade 6 or better required for GCSE Music alongside grade 6 or better in an instrument or voice
Physical Education	A grade 7 or better required for GCSE PE alongside grade 6 or better in science/combined science GCSEs
Physics	Grade 7 or better preferred in GCSE Physics (or a grade 77 in Combined Science)
Politics	A grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE English Language
Psychology	A grade 6 or better preferred in both GCSE/IGCSE Maths and GCSE English Language
Religious Studies (Philosophy Ethics Theology)	A grade 6 or better required in GCSE RS (if taken) and GCSE English Language
Spanish	A grade 6 or better required in GCSE Spanish
Sport (BTEC)	No minimum entry requirements

Please refer to the individual subject entries for further details regarding course requirements. Students who wish to study a subject without the above requirements are encouraged to discuss their choice further with the relevant Head of Department in the first instance.

ART

AQA

Why study Art?

Being creative is the next big thing. Every good company realises that creativity and good design are important factors in generating new business. So your creativity isn't just a way of satisfying your artistic soul... it can open the door to exciting career opportunities as well.

This popular A Level is a practical course that allows you to be as creative as you want to be. There are five areas that you can select from within the Fine Art endorsement: Fine Art, Textiles, Photography, 3D Design and Graphics and also one broad course; Unendorsed Art, Craft and Design.

You will also get to mix with students from all the different specialist areas and that's always a great experience at Denstone.

Where will it take me?

Many students go on to take higher education in art and design, then aim to join the world of advertising as graphic designers, illustrators, typographers or become interior designers, costume or textile designers, fashion designers, photographers and architects to name just a few. The creative industries are now worth more than £84bn to the UK economy. This incredible figure is proof, if proof was needed, that the UK's creative output is going from strength to strength and should be championed and supported throughout its bright future.

What does the course involve?

Art A Level consists of two coursework units and an externally set task. These involve a preparatory project, a dissertation project and a practical project (combined), all designed to give you an understanding of the assessment objectives. You will be encouraged to work in various forms and scale; sketchbooks will form part of this through samples, sketches, photographs, annotations and artist research for each project.

You will also get the opportunity to experience a gallery visit to London or workshop and the possibility of an overseas visit too. Last year we hosted international fine artist Ian Murphy for a two day workshop and recently the A Level artists went on a trip to Oxford.

The coursework component is worth 60% of overall grade. This will continue until February of Upper Sixth where your will receive the Component 2 – externally set assignment (worth 40%).

What are the entry requirements?

We recommend that students have gained grades 7, 8 or 9 at GCSE Art, although a grade 6 is acceptable. A strong portfolio of work demonstrating a broad range of skills, experimentation of materials and ideas is essential. If you are require further information about the course but have not studied Art at GCSE, please speak to Mrs MacKay

Biology

AQA

Why study Biology?

Biology is arguably the most talked about science in the 21st century. From Dolly the Sheep and the latest genetic advances to the spread of new diseases and GM crops, there is no doubt that Biology touches all of our lives. The hot topic for 2024 is the rise of personalised medicine where gene editing is being used to treat life-limiting diseases such as sickle-cell anaemia and some cancers. Study A Level Biology and you'll find out how scientists can edit genetic material to save lives.

Biology A level is essential for applications to a large number of university courses, including most Medical courses as well as Physiotherapy, Veterinary Science and Dentistry. However, A Level Biology is fascinating in its own right and is an excellent supporting subject for any course.

What does the course involve?

We are currently following the AQA Biology course and it is designed to lead you gently into the rigours of A Level Biology. The specification covers the key areas of the subject, arranged in eight sections, taking each topic to the level of university entrance. Use the QR code to find out more.

Experimental technique forms the foundation of any science-based course and Biology is no different. The practical work will be assessed through mandatory experiments as specified by the exam board as well as being assessed in the written papers. We also run a Field Trip in order to develop practical skills outside the classroom.

In the Lower Sixth, you will study:

1. Biological Molecules
2. Cells
3. Organisms exchange substances with their environment
4. Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms

In the Upper Sixth, you will study:

1. Energy transfers in and between organisms
2. Organisms respond to changes in the internal and external environment
3. Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
4. The control of gene expression

What are the course requirements?

A grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology (or a grade 77 at GCSE Combined Science) is required to start this course. Competent mathematical ability will also be important, with 10% of the final exam marks based on mathematical skills. Enthusiasm, good organisation, determination and a passion for the subject are also of enormous importance.

Business

AQA

What makes a successful business? How do you find a really good business idea? How ethical and environmentally friendly is big business? How are business people meeting the challenges of globalisation and competition? Why are there relatively few women in top management? What difference is modern technology making to working patterns? Can Apple maintain its phenomenal success? With Business you can find the answers to these and many other questions.

Business helps you to gain an understanding of business activity from small enterprises to multinational organisations. Our course covers a wide range of topics, such as human resource management, finance, production and marketing and integrates them in the context of the organisation's external environment. We will ensure your understanding of business is built on real world examples by the use of practical case studies. There is a strong element of numerical work in developing your understanding of the quantitative methods which businesses use to research and measure future objectives and actual performance.

Why study Business as an A level?

If you are interested in the world of business and you would like to understand, examine and practice the skills and attributes of successful entrepreneurs then business studies is a good subject for you to consider. Business A Level is well regarded as a means of preparing for a wide range of university courses and particularly those which have business or management content. It is also a useful preparation on leaving education. You are likely to end up working in some form of business, be it HSBC, a school, hospital, library or your own family business. The more you understand about the workings of a business, the part you play within it and why certain decisions are made, the better equipped you are to succeed in your chosen career. You may even consider starting your own business or wish to follow a career in finance, accounting, marketing, management and other business related areas. Whatever your career plans, business will suit you if you are looking for a stimulating and challenging course that has a real relevance to everyday life.

What does the course involve?

The revised AQA specification (for first teaching 2025) on offer involves three units of study (entirely assessed by examination at the end of the two-year course). Students of this course will study business in a variety of contexts (e.g. large/small, UK focused/global, service/manufacturing). The topics studied lend themselves to studying and engaging with the business world.

Assessments

Each exam paper is equally weighted and 2 hours in length. Students are assessment using a variety of assessment styles including data response and case studies**.**

- A-level Business Paper 1- Focused on Unit 3.1 of the specification (What is Business, Managing Marketing & Finance)
- A-level Business Paper 2- Focused on Unit 3.2 of the specification (Managing Operations & People). Unit 3.1 will underpin the context.
- A-level Business Paper 3- Focused on Unit 3.3 of the specification (Business & Society, The External Environment and Business Strategy. Unit 3.1 and 3.2 will underpin the context.

Requirements to study Business

You are not expected to be an expert in business when you start the subject, although a genuine interest in current events in the business world is important. Grade 6 or better in both English Language and Maths will help you cope with the numerical and written elements of the course. It is not necessary for you to have previously studied Business.

Chemistry

OCR Chemistry A H432

Chemistry is the study of matter and how it interacts; for example, how atoms form chemical bonds to each other or how complex molecules such as drugs are produced. It is a key route to many careers such as Medicine, Veterinary Science, Pharmacy and Dentistry. Other popular career paths that need chemistry are the environmental sciences, biochemistry, forensic science, analytical sciences, nursing, chemical engineering and of course chemistry itself.

How is the course structured?

Content is split into 6 teaching modules:

Module 1 - **Development of practical skills in chemistry.** This module involves practical investigations that get progressively more challenging.

Module 2 - **Foundations in Chemistry**. This module builds on knowledge from GCSE covering topics such as atoms, compounds, molecules and equations. It introduces more complex mathematical problems and develops a more comprehensive model of bonding.

Module 3- **Periodic Table and Energy**. This module examines the periodic table and periodicity and the uses of elements in society. Reaction rates and enthalpy changes are concepts that are developed with the use of more complex mathematical techniques.

Module 4 - **Core Organic Chemistry**. The basic principles of organic chemistry are introduced looking at functional groups such as alkanes, alkenes, alcohols and haloalkanes. How to prepare organic molecules using synthetic techniques is studied alongside the identification and analysis of molecules using techniques such as Mass Spectroscopy and Infra-Red Spectroscopy.

Module 5 - **Physical Chemistry and Transition Elements.** This module includes advanced study of rates of reaction and equilibrium form a quantitative perspective. pH and buffers, enthalpy, entropy, redox reactions and electrode potentials and transition elements.

Module 6 - **Organic chemistry and analysis.** More complex organic reactions and further functional groups are introduced. Complex synthetic techniques using aromatic, carbonyl and nitrogen-containing compounds are studied. Further analytical chemistry is developed looking at techniques such as NMR spectroscopy and Chromatography.

Final assessment comes at the end of the course in the form of three written examinations.
Paper 1: Periodic table, elements and physical chemistry (01) (100 marks) (2 hrs 15 mins, 37% of total marks)
Paper 2: Synthesis and analytical techniques (02) 100 marks (2 hrs 15 mins, 37% of total marks)
Paper 3: Unified chemistry (03) 70 marks (1 hr 30 mins, 26% of total marks)
Practical endorsement in chemistry (04) non-exam assessment – reported separately

What are the requirements to study Chemistry?
A grade 7 at GCSE in Chemistry or Combined Science is recommended to succeed at A level along with a good level of mathematical skill (the requirement for mathematical application makes up 20% of the course).

Computer Science

OCR

Why study Computer Science?

Computer Science is about much more than computers; advances in Computing have transformed the way we live and work; algorithms underpin the technology we use every day such as GPS, social media, apps and the devices in our home. Computer Science is a creative subject that helps you to develop the skills to solve problems, design systems and understand the power and limitations of humans and machines.

Computer programming has become a sought-after skill across many industries, a Computer Science A Level provides learners with a range of transferable skills which would be of use in a wide range of related degree subjects including Computer Science, Software Engineering, Robotics, Cyber Security or games development. Computer Science is also particularly important for careers in engineering, physics, and other related industries where the ability to understand data and program effectively is highly valued by employers.

What does the course involve?

During this course you will develop new skills creating websites and learning to program in addition to learning about how computers work.

Topics covered include: CPUs, memory, and other hardware; networks, encryption, cyber security and web technologies; binary and hexadecimal number systems; legal, moral, cultural and ethical issues; and elements of computational thinking and problem solving.

How is the course assessed?

Assessment is by two 2 hour 30 minute exams (80% of final grade) and a practical project (20% final grade) where students follow a systematic approach to design and create a program to solve a practical problem of their own choice.

What are the requirements to study Computer Science?

Students are not expected to have studied Computer Science at GCSE or have any prior experience of programming, although a basic exposure to this would certainly be beneficial. A willingness to read around your subject, an interest in technology and an aptitude for problem solving would be advantageous. With this in mind, a grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics is required. Computer Science sits very well alongside A Level Mathematics (and Further Mathematics) as well as other sciences, or as part of a balanced sciences/arts curriculum.

Drama and Theatre

AQA

Why Study Drama and Theatre?

Drama and Theatre is an exciting and dynamic course particularly suited to those students who have enjoyed GCSE Drama, or who have a genuine interest in theatre and performance. You will study how drama is produced, what plays mean and how theatre is created by a production team, to convey that meaning to an audience. You will become actors, designers, technicians and directors. In addition, the course will engage you in a range of styles and you will explore the contributions made by key practitioners who have influenced modern theatre.

30% of the course is based on the practical aspects of drama, but our approach to the study of the plays for the written paper is also practical and kinaesthetic. Drama is a fun addition to your day and as a part of the course, opportunities exist to attend live productions and engage in multiple workshop activities.

Alongside the study of the course, Drama and Theatre A Level also develops skills that all employers want. It teaches evaluation, interpretation and analysis. It builds presentation skills, confidence and communication. It teaches you to work in a team and it encourages you to think in alternative ways. It provides you with problem solving abilities and empathy. It aids literacy skills and helps with wider reading, and through the various texts and periods studied, an understanding of politics and society is also heightened.

What is the course structure?

COMPONENT 1 - DRAMA AND THEATRE (WRITTEN) involves the study of two set plays and the analysis and evaluation of live theatre makers. It is assessed through a 3 hour open book written exam and contributes 40% of the final A level mark.

COMPONENT 2: CREATING ORIGINAL DRAMA (PRACTICAL AND WRITTEN) focuses on the process of creating devised drama, with the performance of a devised piece influenced by the work and methodologies of one prescribed practitioner. It is assessed through a working notebook (40 marks) as well as the devised performance itself (20 marks). This component contributes 30% of the final A level mark and is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

COMPONENT 3 – MAKING THEATRE (PRACTICAL AND WRITTEN) involves students undertaking a practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts, each taken from a different play. The final extract is performed as a final assessed piece (40 marks). Students must also produce a reflective report, analysing and evaluating the theatrical interpretation of all three extracts 20 marks). This component contributes 30% of the final A level mark and is marked by AQA.

What are the entry requirements?

It is a distinct advantage for potential A level students to have gained at least a grade 6 studying Drama at GCSE level. More importantly however potential students should have an interest in the theatre and a willingness to perform in front of an audience.

Design & Technology: Product Design

AQA

Many Denstonians move onto degrees and careers in product design, industrial design, architecture, engineering, interior design, automotive design and other related courses. We hope to give all our pupils an insight into the different areas of design. The subject may be pursued at exam level because of a pupil's interest and enjoyment of the subject or in many cases because they have a desire to enter the world of design or an associated career. Design and Technology is an inspiring, rigorous and practical subject. Using creativity and imagination, pupils design and make products that solve real and relevant problems within a variety of contexts considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. Pupils acquire a broad range of subject knowledge and draw on other subjects such as Mathematics, Science, ICT and Art. They learn to become resourceful, innovative and capable.

What would I be doing?

- Being creative
- Looking at products, past and present, and forming opinions on them
- Understanding why materials and styles have been chosen in a school and an industrial setting
- Working out how things have been made and why particular techniques have been used
- Designing and making your own project in order to solve a problem for a client
- Using maths to solve design and manufacturing problems
- Sketching and designing using a range of techniques
- Using CAD to communicate and enhance design work.

What is the structure of the course?

Paper 1 **Technical Principles**	30%	2h 30 120 marks Mixture of short and extended questions	Maths Questions in a D&T context will make up 15% of the total examination marks
Paper 2 **Designing & Making Principles**	20%	1h 30 80 marks Mixture of short and extended questions Section A – Product Analysis Questions (30 marks) Section B – Commercial Manufacture (50 marks)	
Non Examination Assessment (NEA)	50%	45 hours (100 marks) Single substantial design and make task, written or electronic portfolio (45-50 pages) Split into 5 sections: A Identification & investigating design possibilities (20 marks) B Producing a design brief and specification (10 marks) C Development of design proposals (25 marks) D Development of design prototypes (25 marks) E Analysis & Evaluation (20 marks)	

What are the course requirements?

Pupils will normally have achieved at least a grade 6 in GCSE Design & Technology (grade 7 or above recommended). Students will need to be self-motivated and prepared to carry out research and design work outside of school. The course is demanding on pupils' time and will require commitment. They are expected to spend a proportion of their study periods on project work and to attend additional sessions when appropriate.

Economics

AQA

Why study Economics as an A level?

Economics shapes our lives. We are all affected, either directly or indirectly, by issues such as rising prices, unemployment, global poverty and the performance of particular industries. Economics looks at these wider macroeconomic problems. It also examines microeconomic topics: How are prices set? What determines how much a firm will produce? What shapes the demand for a product? Why are football players paid more than nurses? Why are some countries more developed than others? Why has the volume of international trade grown so rapidly in recent decades? Many students go on to take the subject at degree level, and it is a highly prized degree amongst employers. It also provides a useful grounding for students thinking of taking related degrees in business and management at university.

What does the course involve?

The AQA specification on offer involves 3 units of study (entirely assessed by examination at the end of the two year course).

Paper 1: Markets and Market Failure

This Unit introduces candidates to basic **microeconomic** models and issues, such as price determination, efficiency, wages and trade unions, competition and monopolies, environmental economics, the housing market and the causes of market failure.

Paper 2: The National and International Economy

This unit introduces candidates to basic **macroeconomic** models and looks at how the economy's performance is measured and how it actually works. Other issues studied include; international trade and globalisation, exchange rates, global development and poverty, unemployment and inflation, and government macroeconomic policies.

Paper 3: Economic principles and issues

This unit involves a synoptic exam (based on microeconomic and macroeconomic content) testing the main skills required by economists, including assessment of evidence, evaluation, application of economic principles to different contexts and quantitative skills.

What skills are involved?

To be an effective economics student you need to develop a wide range of relevant skills. Economists have to be good communicators with an ability to critically evaluate competing arguments. The subject lends itself to students who are genuinely inquisitive about current affairs and want to find out more about the world in which we live. Economics also involves a lot of data, however, and strong numerical and data-handling skills are commonly used to look at evidence and a variety of economic indicators. As such it is a sixth form subject that suits academic 'all-rounders' who have a good eye for details and a genuine interest in the issues being tackled.

What are the requirements to study Economics?

Successful economics students will possess a solid foundation of written and numerical skills alongside a genuine curiosity and interest in the world around them. Achieving a minimum grade 6 in both GCSE English Language and Maths is necessary to access the course. It is not necessary to have studied a related subject (e.g. Business) at GCSE level. Indeed, the chance to start an entirely new subject that builds on skills developed in other GCSE subjects is for many students the appeal of the course.

English Language

Edexcel

English Language at A Level takes the best parts of the English Language GCSE course, such as the creative and persuasive writing, and mixes it with a wide-ranging exploration of how language is developed, used and employed for effect. It is a close study of language development, language change and language in context. It is modern and exciting and draws texts from a wide variety of sources.

Employers say that one of the most valuable things they look for in the people who work for them is good communication skills and this means writing and presentation as well as talking.

(successatschool.org)

What's the point of English Language?

Language and communication have never been more important. With Twitter as the main media outlet for politicians, and new words, like Brexit, being coined every year, it is important to understand how the English language has evolved and how it is used in a wide variety of modes.

One of the key indicators of students' success in school, on tests, and indeed, in life, is their vocabulary.

(Marzano & Pickering, 2005)

What will the course involve?

It will teach you to look afresh at the world around you, from the way your 6-year-old sibling talks, to the language of political rhetoric and teen slang. You will explore how childhood language develops in the early years as well as how individuals use language differently in different situations. There is a fascinating historical perspective on how language has altered over time, which is particularly relevant to modern issues such as women's rights. In addition, a research project will allow you to follow your own interests and develop personal specialisms. Most of the course is examined at the end of two years, but there will also be a coursework element worth 20% of the final mark. This is an opportunity to show your creativity as you will produce a range of pieces for different audiences and purposes. You will also be involved in lively discussions and debates in class and will have the opportunity to bring in real world examples to enhance your learning.

"The study of English Language at A-Level is rewarding and exciting. Learning about language acquisition, language change and language in society has opened my eyes to the way language is used for purpose. It's also helped me to refine my own language use."

An A-Level Language Student

Where can English Language take you?

As a core subject, like mathematics, English Language A Level is widely respected and students at Denstone who took Language are now employed in a wide range of exciting fields: fashion journalism, forensic science, radio and the Home Office.

Requirements to study

We would expect potential A Level students to have gained at least a grade 6 in English Language at GCSE, and to have an interest in things like media and language.

English Literature

Edexcel

English Literature at A Level continues developing the skills and interests you have gained in studying English Literature at GCSE. Recognised as one of the four core 'facilitating subjects' by Russell Group universities, the study of Literature opens doors to a wide variety of further courses and jobs. Like your GCSE course, A Level English Literature will teach you how to read closely, think critically and write convincingly.

What's the point of English Literature?

It makes you better in so many ways. Not only will your communication skills improve, but also so will your analytical abilities, your understanding of human culture, growing your critical awareness and ability to structure sound arguments.

Studying English Literature helps to sharpen your analytical skills. If you can take a text and find the themes, and connect it with other texts, theories and historical events, you are showing that you can handle complex ideas, search for patterns and interpret information in a wider context.

"I love the study of Literature. I thought it was all going to be reading and writing essays but it's so much more; philosophical debate, discussion, research and heated arguments helped me to grow academically. What I learned about writing has helped success in all other subjects."

An ex-A-Level Literature student.

What will the course involve?

Reading is an integral aspect of the course but it's structured and accessible. You may not have a poetry collection on your bedside table at home, but a willingness to explore a range of texts will help.

Throughout the two years, you will study an exciting range of poetry, prose and drama. Most of the course is examined at the end of two years but, in the Upper Sixth, there will also be a coursework element worth 20% of the final mark, which will reinforce university skills of research and editing. You will learn how to analyse a text like a professional literary critic and how to express your insights convincingly. You will think about language, structure, the context in which a text was written and the context in which you read it, and how texts compare with other works. You will be involved in lively discussions and debates in class and will have the opportunity to argue the case for your own personal interpretations in your essays.

Psychologists at the New School for Social Research in New York, have proved that reading literary fiction enhances the ability to detect and understand other people's emotions, a crucial skill in navigating complex social relationships in the workplace.

There is a particular focus on the historical, political and cultural contexts of Literature, which will be of interest to students of History, Politics, Philosophy, Drama and Psychology who will enjoy making links between different disciplines. You will also have the opportunity to attend the Lower Sixth Seminar Series (unique to the English Department), which will range far beyond the specification and give you a fun foretaste of university-style learning.

Where can English Literature take you?

English Literature A Level is widely respected and students at Denstone who took Literature have gone on to study a wide range of courses at some of the best universities in Britain: Law, and History, at Cambridge; Anthropology at Exeter; as well as Psychology, Spanish, and Medicine. It will also help you in the workplace as it builds interpersonal skills, which are vital to business relationships.

Requirements to study

We would expect potential A Level students to have gained at least a grade 6 in English Literature at GCSE.

French

AQA

Why study French?

The French A level course develops lifelong skills which are particularly sought after by universities and employers. Top universities recognise the academically challenging nature of the course and are more likely to offer places to students with a French A level qualification. Recently, the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) named French as one of the most desired language for UK business. Studying French makes you a better communicator, gives you a greater cultural awareness as well as a better understanding of current affairs, both at home in and the French-speaking world. Beyond the fascinating content and experiences offered by the course, an A Level qualification in French enables you to stand favourably in competitive fields such as law, politics, engineering and banking, as well as opens doors to unsuspected opportunities worldwide. Did you know that, besides English, French is the only language spoken on all continents?

What course content is involved?

Aspects of French-speaking society including: the changing nature of family, the "cyber" society, the place of voluntary work, Positive features of a diverse society, Life for the marginalised, How criminals are treated.

Artistic culture in the French-speaking world including: A culture proud of its heritage, Contemporary francophone music, Cinema: the 7th Art form.

Aspects of political life in the French-speaking world including: Teenagers, the right to vote and political commitment, Demonstrations, strikes – who holds the power? Politics and immigration.

Grammar: A-level students will study the grammar of the language to understand how the French is constructed and ensure accurate application of its structures.

Literature and film: Students study one book (*currently Un Sac de Billes)* and one film (*currently La Haine*) from the French-speaking world.

Independent research project: This component gives an opportunity for students to select an aspect of study that interests them related to the countries or communities where French is spoken.

How is the course assessed?

There are three final units of assessment. These are:

Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Translation (Exam, 2 hours 30 minutes - 50% of A-level)

Paper 2: Written assessment of study of book and film from optional content (Exam, 2 hours - 20% of A level)

Paper 3: Speaking test (20 minutes, 30% of A level)

We offer the possibility to sit an AS exam for students who wish to start their A level studies with 4 subjects with the view to dropping one in the second year.

What are the course requirements?

All candidates will be expected to have gained at least a grade 6 at GCSE (grade 7 or better recommended) in order to have a realistic chance of success in this qualification.

Further Mathematics

Edexcel

The A Level Further Maths course is highly demanding but very rewarding. You are likely to have 2, 3 or sometimes 4 Maths lessons every day and if you are excited by this then Further Maths could be for you. Further Maths is the only A Level qualification whose pre-requisite is that you study another A Level, that being Maths. The course is designed to stretch and challenge mathematics students and prepare them for university courses in mathematics and related quantitative and scientific subjects. If you are considering a Mathematics or Engineering based degree you may find that some universities will require that you have studied A Level Further Maths.

What is the structure of the course?

Core Pure Mathematics 1 & 2
These modules are algebra based, covering more abstract concepts that do not always have direct real life application. Topics include Complex Numbers, Matrices, Polar Coordinates, Hyperbolic Functions, Differential Equations and Further Calculus.

Further Statistics
In the Statistics module, you learn techniques that will enable you to use data to predict events or describe human behaviour. This module also teaches you how to test the reliability of a set of data.

Further Mechanics
This module builds on Mechanics covered in mathematics where you apply algebraic techniques to model real life physical situations.

How is the course assessed?

The course is fully examined, with all exams 1 hour 30 minutes in duration and taking place at the end of the Upper Sixth:
25%: **Core Pure 1**
25%: **Core Pure 2**
25%: Option 1 (**Further Statistics 1**)
25%: Option 2 (**Further Mechanics 1**)

What are the entry requirements?

A level Further Mathematics is only suitable for high-achieving mathematicians who gain a grade 8 or 9 at GCSE and who have a genuine interest in maths. The course can only be studied by students who are also studying the separate A Level mathematics course.

Geography

Edexcel

Why study Geography?

The subject is an excellent complement to both arts and science subjects, forming a natural bridge between the two. Current pupils enjoy the scope of the material they cover in geography, the insights it can provide into understanding the world around us and the contemporary nature of the issues it tackles. The skills you acquire and use make you of real interest to a wide variety of both universities and employers. With the current concern about environmental issues, geographers are very much in demand.

Geographers have one of the highest levels of immediate post-graduate employment of any degree.

What does the course involve?

Paper 1 Dynamic Landscapes and Physical Systems. Topics covered will include: Tectonic Hazards, Coastal Landscapes, Water Insecurity and Energy Security. 30% of A level.

Paper 2 Dynamic Places and Human Systems. Topics covered will include: Globalisation, Regeneration, Superpowers and Health, Human Rights & Interventions. 30% of A level.

Paper 3 Geographical Issues. Use of synoptic knowledge drawn from across the course to respond to questions based on a resource booklet. 20% of A level.

Independent Investigation Students undertake fieldwork linked to any aspect of the specification. It is designed to deepen knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic and develop research, analytical and statistical skills relevant to Higher Education and/or the workplace. 20% of A level.

Additional information

Whilst most instruction is in the classroom, we undertake fieldtrips of varied length and purpose. There is a cost to parents/guardians of approximately £250 associated with these visits. Mrs Stanley, Mr Green and Mrs Young welcome requests for further information and guidance around the Edexcel website and specification.

Requirements to study Geography

Achieving a grade 6 in GCSE Geography is a minimum requirement, and a genuine interest in the subject is also vital. We welcome interest from those who are not currently studying the subject; there have been several successful 'new' geographers in recent years.

History

OCR

Why study History?

History is not the story of strangers, aliens from another realm; it is the story of **us** had we been born a little earlier. The study of History fires the imagination: can we imagine being a Roman, an African American hearing Martin Luther King speak, an RAF pilot in the Battle of Britain, perhaps even a Nazi? Everything that we have has been inherited from the past; we 'stand on the shoulders of giants'. Our societies were not invented on the spur of the moment; they have evolved over the course of the life span of the human species. Everything from the laws we abide by to the cars that we drive were developed by our ancestors. To understand History, then, is to understand what it is to be human.

History is also one of the most respected academic subjects among universities. For example, Cambridge University recommends History as one of the top A Level choices, while the Russell Group class it as a facilitating subject, providing the ideal preparation for a range of university courses. The study of History equips you with the ability to research, write, analyse and interpret complex information as well as solve problems, formulate opinions and debate with confidence. It also combines well with both science and arts subjects and allows you to keep your university and career options open. It is therefore no surprise that History graduates can be found at the top of a wide range of professions, including making up a proportionally huge 10% of all directors of top businesses. Whether you see your future in the past or whether you see the past in your future, try it for yourself and see!

What does the course involve?

Our selection of topics from those offered by OCR is designed to give you both breadth and depth in your historical studies, enabling you to study a variety of different countries and time periods.

England 1485–1558, the Early Tudors: learn about the beginnings of the most dramatic dynasty in history which shaped the foundations of the British nation as we know it (assessed by exam, 25% of final A level).

The Cold War in Asia 1945-1993: discover the struggle between Communism and capitalism in China, Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia and the impact of the USA's actions in Asia (assessed by exam, 15% of final A level).

Civil Rights in the USA 1865-1992: see the struggle of African Americans, Native Americans, Women and Workers to achieve equality in America, the supposed 'Land of the Free' (assessed by exam, 40% of final A level).

Coursework unit: a chance for you to research and produce an essay on a topic of particular interest to you (assessed by non-exam assessment, 20% of final A level).

What are the entry requirements?

We require that students have gained at least a grade 6 in the subject at GCSE (a grade 7 or above is recommended) in order to stand a good chance of success at A Level. You will also need to be prepared to debate your ideas and construct strong arguments both verbally and in writing. If you have not studied History at GCSE, but are considering A Level History, please come and speak to Miss McDowell- it can still be an option for you!

Information Technology

OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical (CTEC) Introductory Diploma

Why study Cambridge Technical IT?

The Cambridge Technical suite of vocational courses has been developed by OCR in collaboration with Cambridge University. This qualification offers students a vocational alternative to A Levels that will help to prepare them for the world of work or to continue their studies in Higher Education. Grade levels are Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction* with the highest level gaining the same 56 UCAS points as an A* at A level. This course consists of 50% exam and 50% coursework (non-examination assessment).

What is the structure of the course?

Paper 1 Fundamentals of ICT	25%	1h 30min Exam 80 marks
Paper 2 Global Information	25%	1h 30min Exam 80 marks
Coursework	50%	Learners will follow the Emerging Digital Technology Practitioner pathway and complete the following or similar units: • Virtual and augmented reality (60hr) • Mobile technology (60hr) • Social Media & Digital Marketing (60hr)

Studying the full Introductory Diploma over the two year course provides students with the opportunity to gain UCAS points equivalent to one full A level. The course can be studied alongside two or three other A level or BTEC subjects.

Why choose this course?

This course is an exciting opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Information Technology. Pupils will learn how a computer works and develop relevant skills, opening up opportunities to work in the rapidly expanding IT industry.

It also provides an excellent opportunity for those who prefer to study IT in a context that allows them to learn and be assessed in ways that are practical and relevant to the IT sector. This qualification is designed to give learners a range of specialist knowledge and transferable skills in the context of applied IT, providing them with the opportunity to enter an apprenticeship, move directly into employment, or progress to a related higher education course.

What are the requirements to study IT?

There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification or any specific prior learning requirements, although a good level of literacy and numeracy is expected alongside an interest in, and motivation to learn about, the content areas covered by the course.

Mathematics

Edexcel

Why should I choose A Level Mathematics?

As University places become more competitive, A Level Mathematics is increasingly becoming an excellent choice. There is no better way to demonstrate an ability to think logically than possessing a good Maths A Level grade.

A Level Mathematics is a qualification that is well-respected by both employers and higher education. It supports the study of other A Levels and is excellent preparation for a wide range of university courses. Studying Mathematics not only increases knowledge and awareness of mathematical techniques and their processes, but also develops key employability skills such as problem-solving, communication and resilience. Some knowledge of Maths is useful in any job, but it is especially key in sectors such as Technology, Engineering, Architecture, Finance and Statistics.

What does the course involve:

To achieve an A Level in Maths you need to successfully complete three Exams at the end of the Upper Sixth Form. These are:

Pure Mathematics 1
Pure Mathematics 2
Statistics & Mechanics

Each paper is 2 hours long and covers topics from both years of the course.

Pure Mathematics

Two thirds of the course consists of topics that require strong algebraic, number and geometry skills. Calculus, both Differentiation and Integration, is a central area of this section of the course. Other Pure topics include Trigonometry, Exponentials and Logarithms, Proof, Coordinate Geometry and Vectors.

Statistics

In this section of the course you will be reaching conclusions from data and calculating the likelihood of an event occurring. Topics include Statistical Sampling, Probability and Statistical hypothesis testing.

Mechanics

Mechanics involves the modelling of the world around us, the motion of objects and the forces acting on them. You will study topics including Kinematics, Forces and Newton's Laws, and Moments.

Course Requirements

We believe pupils who are aiming for at least a grade 7 at IGCSE/GCSE are able to experience success in A Level Mathematics, with a minimum requirement of grade 6 at GCSE required to be accepted onto the course. However, this is only part of the requirement; in order to be successful you will need to be motivated, organised and willing to persevere with difficult problems; but most important of all you must quite simply enjoy learning Mathematics.

Music

Eduqas

Do you...

- Enjoy performing individually and in a group, either by playing an instrument or singing?
- Like exploring and creating new music?
- Enjoy listening to music from a broad range of styles?
- Wonder about how and why music has developed in the way it has?
- Have an interest in exploring Music through ICT?

If the answer is yes, then the A level Music course is for you! It is great fun and extremely rewarding; where else can you play music and gain coursework credit for it, create and record your own music, and listen to such a diverse range of musical styles in lessons?

What does the course involve?

The course involves musicological analysis, free and stylistic composition, and performance on the student's principal instrument. The course is based around three Areas of Study:

1. The Western Classical Tradition
2. A choice of one from: Rock and Pop, Musical Theatre, or Jazz
3. A choice of one from: Into the Twentieth Century, or Into the Twenty-first Century.

There are different pathways to follow depending on individual strengths, which allows a degree of flexibility in the Programme of Study for this course. Assessment consists of:

Performing *(25% OR 35%):* Option A (35%): A recital of 10 to 12 minutes, consisting of a minimum of three pieces, one of which must be a solo. One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of an Area of Study, and another piece must reflect a different Area of Study.

Option B (25%): A recital of 6 to 8 minutes, consisting of a minimum of two pieces, either as a soloist or in an ensemble, or a combination. One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of an Area of Study.

Composing *(25% or 35%):* Option A (25%): Two compositions, one of which must be in response to a brief, and reflect the musical techniques and conventions associated with the Western Classical Tradition. The second composition is a free composition.

Option B: (35%) Three compositions, one of which must be in response to a brief, and reflect the musical techniques and conventions associated with the Western Classical Tradition. The second composition must reflect the musical characteristics of one different area of study, while the third composition is a free composition.

Appraising *(40%):* This is an examination based on the three Areas of Study. It will include analysis of Set Works, extended responses on context, questions on unprepared extracts of music, and comparison questions.

Requirements to study music:

To study A level Music, students need to have a high proficiency (working at grade 6 standard or higher) on any one instrument or voice. A minimum of a 6 in GCSE Music is recommended, although we have plenty of successful candidates at A Level who have not sat a GCSE in the subject. We would therefore always recommend a further discussion with the Director of Music to assess individual suitability for the course.

Physical Education

OCR

Why study A Level PE?

This course will prepare learners for the further study of PE or sports science courses as well as other related subject areas such as psychology, sociology and biology. Learners will also develop the transferable skills that are in demand by further education, Higher Education and employers in all sectors of industry. The course will create confident, independent thinkers and effective decision makers who can operate effectively as individuals or as part of a team – all skills that will enable them to stand out and effectively promote themselves as they progress through life.

How is the course structured?

The OCR A-Level course is split into 5 components:

Physiological factors affecting performance
This component will assess applied anatomy and physiology, exercise physiology, and biomechanics (written paper: 2 hours, 30% of total A Level, 90 marks)
Psychological factors affecting performance
This component will assess skill acquisition and sports psychology (written paper: 1 hour, 20% of total A Level, 60 marks)
Socio-cultural issues in physical activity and sport
This component will assess sport and society alongside contemporary issues in physical activity and sport (written paper: 1 hour, 20% of total A Level, 60 marks)
Practical Performances
This component will assess either; core and advanced skills in performing one activity or core and advanced skills in coaching one activity (Non-exam assessment, 15% of total A Level, 30 marks, weighted up to 45 marks)
Evaluating and Analysing Performance for Improvement
This component draws upon the knowledge, understanding and skills a learner has learnt throughout the course and enables them to analyse and evaluate a peer's performance in one activity (Non-exam assessment, 15% of total A Level, 30 marks, weighted up to 45 marks)

Who should choose the A Level PE course?

The A Level course represents an excellent opportunity for students interested in sport and physical education to pursue this subject area to a higher standard, gaining widely applicable knowledge and skills in the process. Universities will welcome applications for sport-related degree courses from students who have completed this course, as well as courses in other related subject areas such as psychology, sociology and biology. Please seek advice from any of the academic PE staff if you would like to find out more about this course and whether it is for you.

A Level PE will appeal to those students who have enjoyed GCSE PE, and have reached a high level of performance or coaching in at least one sport, and who have the ability to analyse and evaluate sports performance.

The grade requirement to access the A Level course is a grade 6 in GCSE PE, with a grade 7 recommended due to the academic demands of the course. If BTEC Sport has been studied at Level 2, a grade of Distinction or higher would be required. If GCSE PE or BTEC Sport Level 2 have not been previously studied, Science GCSE grades of 6 are required.

Physics

AQA

You will already be familiar with many of the topics that are studied in A level Physics, including forces, waves, radioactivity, electricity and magnetism. At A-level, you'll look at these areas in more detail and find out how they are interconnected. You will also learn how to apply maths to real-world problems and explore new areas such as particle physics, cosmology and medical physics.

Perhaps more importantly, you will develop skills that can be transferred to just about any other area of work, from setting up a business to saving the planet. Even if you don't go on to become a physicist, learning to think like one will help you get to the root of any problem and draw connections that aren't obvious to others. Physics won't give you all the answers, but it will teach you how to ask the right questions.

Although only a lucky few get the chance to become an astronaut, studying physics can help you land a job in space. You could become a cosmologist and investigate the evolution of the universe, a planet-hunter who searches for habitable planets around other stars or an astrophysicist who searches for dark matter and black holes. If you prefer something more hands-on, there are also lots of UK jobs in space engineering.

Architects and civil engineers design all sorts of buildings, from schools to skyscrapers, as well as other vital structures like bridges, dams and tunnels. A-level physics could be your first step towards a career in building a better world. Whether you want to be a surgeon or a clinical scientist, understanding physics is important if you want to work in modern medicine. Physics has revolutionised the diagnosis and treatment of illness. Surgery is now routinely carried out using lasers; cancer is treated using radiation, and new ways of using physics to see inside our bodies are being developed every year.

Course outline

The full A Level course is assessed by three written examinations taken by all candidates at the end of the Upper Sixth:

Paper 1 – Particles and Radiation, Periodic Motion, Mechanics and Materials, Waves, Electricity and Measurements and their Errors.
Paper 2 - Nuclear Physics, Thermal Physics, Fields and their Consequences.
Paper 3 - Practical Skills and Data Analysis (based on key experiments performed throughout the course), plus one option topic (likely to be Astrophysics).

Entry requirements

As with all A Level subjects, Physics at this level is a lot more demanding than GCSE. It is very helpful if students have at least a grade 7 in GCSE Physics or Additional Science before starting the course, alongside a grade 7 or better in GCSE Maths. Above all we want students who are keen to be fully involved in lessons and are driven by a strong desire to improve and achieve their full potential.

Students often ask whether they need to also study A level Mathematics. It is definitely helpful and the vast majority of physics students nationally would study both. Maths would be required to study physics or engineering beyond the sixth form, with Further Maths being a distinct advantage at top universities.

Politics

Edexcel

Why study Politics?
Politics is about people and power. It exists wherever people are and it often makes for interesting study, intriguing observation and explosive viewing. An A Level in Politics will give you the tools to make more sense of the decision making process, and hopefully understand the motives of the people who make them. The study of Politics both in the UK and the USA is vibrant, dynamic, controversial and always interesting.

Politics combines well with other A level subjects such as Economics, History, Geography, English and Modern Languages. Politics can be studied at degree level in many different combinations, including courses in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE - Oxford), Social and Political Studies (HSPS – Cambridge), Political Economy (LSE). As a subject it demands high levels of analytical skill and is therefore potentially attractive to employers.

What content does the course cover?
The course offers a foundation in political concepts and systems, closely related to current affairs. Beginning from scratch, the course provides a comprehensive grounding in the UK constitution and political system, and in a broad range of political philosophy. Students will learn how to analyse and interpret political events, and to evaluate them both in discussions and in written work. The full A Level consists of three units all assessed at the end of the upper sixth, each worth a third towards the A level qualification.

Module	Title	Content overview
Unit 1	UK Politics	1. Political participation – democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behavior and the media 2. Core political ideas – conservatism, liberalism and socialism
Unit 2	UK Government	1. UK Government – the constitution, parliament, Prime Minister and executive, relationships between the branches 2. Non-Core Political ideas - feminism
Unit 3	Comparative politics	USA – the US constitution and federalism, congress, the presidency, the supreme court, democracy and civil rights. Comparative UK US politics.

What does the course involve?
The study of politics is interesting and rewarding, and there will be discussion and debate on every topic, however it is also a requirement that students undertake note-taking and comprehension activities as well. The subject is well resourced with a wide range of materials. Students are encouraged to take an active part in their learning and from the outset will have a weekly news quiz to keep abreast of current affairs. The best students in politics are those who can use their routine research to provide up to date examples to illustrate their work.

There will be regular assessment of students' work with examination practice questions. Students need to be prepared to work hard in order to succeed in this demanding but rewarding subject.

Entry requirements
Strong reading and writing skills are essential, and the ability to demonstrate critical thinking is a distinct advantage. Students should, above all, have some interest in current affairs. A willingness to watch quality news programmes and read newspapers is essential. Achieving at least a grade 6 in GCSE English Language and History (if taken at GCSE) will provide a solid foundation for the course.

Psychology

OCR

Why Study Psychology?

Have you ever wondered what makes people tick or behave the way they do? If so, Psychology could be a great A Level for you to study! Psychology is all about the scientific study of the mind and human behaviour, from the formation of memories through to the functioning of the central and peripheral nervous system, neurotransmitters and hormones. Psychology is demanding yet rewarding. It will demand your attention for 15 important studies representing five key areas of Investigation in Psychology. It will also require you to become familiar with four techniques of collecting data, so you get the opportunity to carry out your self-report, observation, experiment and correlation. The rewards include insights into many aspects of human behaviour – including your own!

What does the course involve?

The OCR specification on offer involves 3 units of study (entirely assessed by examination at the end of the two year course).

Core Studies have been chosen to demonstrate the strengths and limitations of psychology as well as consider both a classic and contemporary study on the same area. The aim for the Key Studies will be to look at a little background material for each and then to look at both the classical study and the contemporary study. Lesson time will also be used to develop study skills – in other words putting the studies to use in the ways you'll need for the exam. Here our subject matter should give us a unique advantage: Psychology helps us to understand how we learn, and we will be applying this understanding to our own work.

A Level focuses on five core areas of Psychology; Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Physiological Psychology, Social Psychology and the Psychology of Individual Differences. Alongside this is the practical component where students plan, carry out and evaluate their own investigations. In the Applied Psychology unit, you will learn about applications of Psychology, in three key areas, Mental Health issues, Child Psychology and Criminal Psychology and how theory is applied in real life situations as well as covering approaches, perspectives, methods, issues and debates that run through Psychology.

What skills are involved?

Psychologists have to be good communicators with an ability to critically evaluate competing arguments. Psychology also involves looking at statistics and strong numerical and data-handling skills are commonly used to look at research. 10% of the marks awarded for this A level are from Mathematical content. As such it is a subject that suits academic 'all-rounders' who have a good eye for details and enjoy being able to critically analyse a piece of research.

How is the course assessed?

There are three units of assessment within the A level course:

Research Methods (01) *written paper (2 hours)*	**33.33%** of the total marks
Psychological themes through core studies (02) *written paper (2 hours)*	**33.33%** of total marks
Applied psychology (03) *written paper (2 hours)*	**33.33%** of total marks

Requirements to study Psychology

In order to study Psychology at A Level you should have a grade 6 or above in English and Mathematics, although interest, enthusiasm, organisation and determination are the key characteristics of a successful Psychology student.

Religious Studies: Philosophy, Ethics and Theology

OCR

Why study A level RS?

This course will stretch your mind, give you the opportunity to examine the ideas of the greatest thinkers in the history of western civilisation and provide you with a qualification which is highly respected in further education and employment. The course involves addressing some of the most significant questions human beings ask – what we can know, who we are and how we should behave. Philosophy enables you to learn to think for yourself, find meaning and build understanding from robust foundations. It is therefore complimentary to most, if not all, other subjects, not least Ethics and Theology, key components of this A Level. You will develop skills of reasoning and critical analysis, enabling you to bring rigor to your examination, formulation and defence of arguments. Perhaps most importantly, the subject provides you with a rich bed of philosophical wisdom, the tools to think deeply and the space to come to 'know yourself' – the beginning of all wisdom according to Aristotle.

What does the course involve?

Philosophy is studied as a topic in itself and philosophical examination is applied to all components of the course. The religion of Christianity is identified for particular study in its theological principles and developments, and in its interface with philosophy and ethics. Secular beliefs and a number of challenges to religion are also studied and critically examined.

This is a two-year linear course, with three terminal written examinations based on the three components outlined below:

Component 1: Philosophy of Religion – one examination (2 hours), worth 33.3% of A Level
Content studied in this component includes: ancient philosophical influences, arguments about the existence or non-existence of God and the meaningfulness of religious language.

Component 2: Religion and Ethics – one examination (2 hours), worth 33.3% of A Level
Content studied in this component includes: ethical language and thought, debates surrounding the nature and significance of conscience, sexual and business ethics.

Component 3: Theology - Developments in Christian thought – one examination (2 hours), worth 33.3% of A Level
Content studied in this component includes: death and the afterlife, knowledge of God's existence, Christian moral principles and gender and society.

Requirements to study Philosophy, Ethics and Theology

Philosophy has been defined as the love of wisdom and the search for truth. If you enjoy understanding the philosophical direction of others, challenging accepted knowledge, debating and arguing ideas and arriving at reasoned conclusions then this subject is for you!

Students need to have the tenacity to think about demanding topics, and the motivation to read widely around the subject. Good essay writing skills are needed; there should be some evidence of this in previous qualifications.

A GCSE qualification in Religious Studies is not a requirement for A Level study. Students interested in choosing this course should have gained at least a grade 6 in GCSE RS (if taken); alternatively, gaining at least a grade 6 in a supporting subject, such as English or History will be required.

Spanish

AQA

Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the world. Studying Spanish will allow you to develop and build on the skills acquired at GCSE. You will gain a much deeper insight into Hispanic culture and society and gain a sound base for further study of the language at university. Spanish has emerged as the most important language for the UK in an analysis made by the British Council. Considered one of the easiest languages to learn, it will enhance employment prospects as well as facilitate foreign travel. With an ever-increasing presence in the global market, emerging economies in the Americas mean that the chance of work and business opportunities for those with Spanish knowledge are increasing.

Is A Level Spanish for me?

If you can answer "yes" to at least five of the following questions, Spanish could be for you…
Have I enjoyed studying Spanish at GCSE?
Do I like watching Spanish films and series in Netflix?
Am I really interested in Spanish culture and way of life?
Am I interested in reading Spanish newspapers and magazines?
Am I interested in current affairs? Do I follow Spanish celebrities or sports personalities on social media?
Could I happily listen to Spanish news reports or topical discussion without having it set for prep?
Do I know what is meant by prepositions, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns?
Do I know what the difference is between the past, present and future tenses in Spanish?

What course content is involved?

Aspects of Hispanic Society including: Modern and Traditional Values, Cyberspace, Equal rights.
Artistic culture in the Hispanic world including: The influence of the idols, Spanish regional identity, Cultural Heritage.
Multiculturalism in Hispanic Society including: Immigration, Racism and Integration.
Aspects of political life in the Hispanic World including: Today's youth, tomorrow's citizens, Monarchies and Dictatorships, Popular movements.
Grammar: A-level students will study the grammatical system and structure of the language. The end exam will test their use of accurate grammar and structures appropriate to the tasks set, drawing from the list on the specification.
Literature and Film: Students study one book and one film from the Hispanic speaking world. We study *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca, and Guillermo Del Toro's film *El laberinto del fauno*
Individual Research Topic: Students conduct individual research on a subject of personal interest, relating to the country or countries where the language of study is spoken.

How is the course assessed?

There are three final units of assessment. These are:

Paper 1: Listening, Reading & Translation into English and Spanish (Exam, 2 hours 30 minutes - 50 % of A-level)
Paper 2: Written assessment of study of book and film (Exam, 2 hours - 20% of A-level)
Paper 3: Speaking test: Card discussion and IRP presentation (20 minutes, 30% of A-level)

There may be the possibility of entering the AS exam at the end of lower sixth. Such entries will be at the discretion of the Head of Department.

What are the course requirements?

All candidates will be expected to have gained at least a grade 6 at GCSE (grade 7 or better recommended) in order to have a realistic chance of success in this qualification.

BTEC Sport

There are two options for Sixth Form study available from the PE department.

OPTION 1: Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport (course code: 601/7218/6) (**1 A Level equivalent**).

OPTION 2: Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Sport (course code: 603/0460/1) (**2 A Level equivalent**).

Why study BTEC Sport?
The course offers a fully accepted qualification for entry to university and is highly desirable for courses in Sport Science, Physiotherapy, Sport Journalism, Physical Education teaching, Sports Coaching and the Leisure and Recreation industry as a whole. Alternatively, candidates can use the UCAS points awarded to gain entry onto entirely unrelated courses should they wish to study a different subject at degree level.

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport (1 A Level equivalent).

How is the course structured?
This course is the equivalent of one A Level and provides the following amounts of UCAS points:
Distinction* = 56 points, Distinction = 48 points, Merit = 32 points, Pass = 16 points.

Learners will be prepared for exams or complete assignments in the following 4 modules:

- Anatomy and Physiology (exam, externally assessed)
- Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and Well-Being (exam, externally assessed)
- Professional Development in the Sports Industry (coursework: internally assessed)
- Sports Psychology (coursework: internally assessed)

How is the course assessed?
The course is 50% externally assessed and 50% internally assessed. The external assessment includes two exams at the end of the lower sixth year, which is worth 50% of the overall grade.

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Sport (2 A Level equivalent).

How is the course structured?
This course is the equivalent of two A Levels and provides the following amount of UCAS points:
D*D*= 112 points, D*D= 104 points, DD= 96 points, DM= 80 points, MM= 64 points, MP= 48 points, PP= 32 points.

Learners will be prepared for exams or complete coursework assignments in the following 9 modules:

- Unit 1: Anatomy and Physiology (exam: externally assessed).
- Unit 2: Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and Wellbeing (exam: externally assessed).
- Unit 22: Investigating Business in the Sport and Active Leisure Industry (exam: externally assessed).
- Unit 3: Professional Development in the Sports Industry (coursework: internally assessed).
- Unit 4: Sports Leadership (coursework: internally assessed).
- Unit 5: Application of Fitness Testing (coursework: internally assessed).
- Unit 6: Sports Psychology (coursework: internally assessed).
- Unit 17: Sports Injury Management (coursework: internally assessed).
- Unit 23: Skill Acquisition in Sport (coursework: internally assessed).

How is the course assessed?
The course is a combination of external and internal assessment. The external assessment includes three exams, two taking place in lower sixth, and the final one taking place in the January of upper sixth.

Who should choose the BTEC Sport courses?
The BTEC course represents an excellent opportunity for students interested in sport and physical education to pursue this subject area to a higher standard, gaining widely applicable knowledge and skills in the process. Universities will welcome applications for sport-related degree courses from students who have completed this course, although it may be less relevant for some other degree disciplines. Please seek advice from Mrs Graham (Head of Physical Education) if you would like to find out more about this course and whether it is for you. In recent years', BTEC students have gone on to study at a range of universities such as Loughborough, Cardiff, Durham and Newcastle.

BTEC Sport will appeal to those students who have enjoyed GCSE PE, possibly reached a high level of performance in a range of physical activities, or who have the ability and the desire to acquire a detailed appreciation of the background to such activities. There are no specific GCSE grade requirements for entry into either BTEC option.

Extended Project Qualification

AQA

What is the EPQ?

The EPQ provides a chance for you to undertake your own independent project on a topic of your choice: perhaps an extension of one of your A Level subjects or perhaps something related to your university ambitions. The finished project can be a written research report (c.5000 words) or an 'artefact' which is accompanied by a short research report (c.1500 words). This could be a model, an experiment, a performance, a piece of art, a community project, a movie, or even an event. The choice and freedom is yours!

You receive marks for the way your project is managed, the research you carry out, as well as your product. The EPQ is a stand-alone qualification that offers UCAS points equal to an AS qualification, up to grade A* (28 UCAS points).

Why should I do an EPQ?

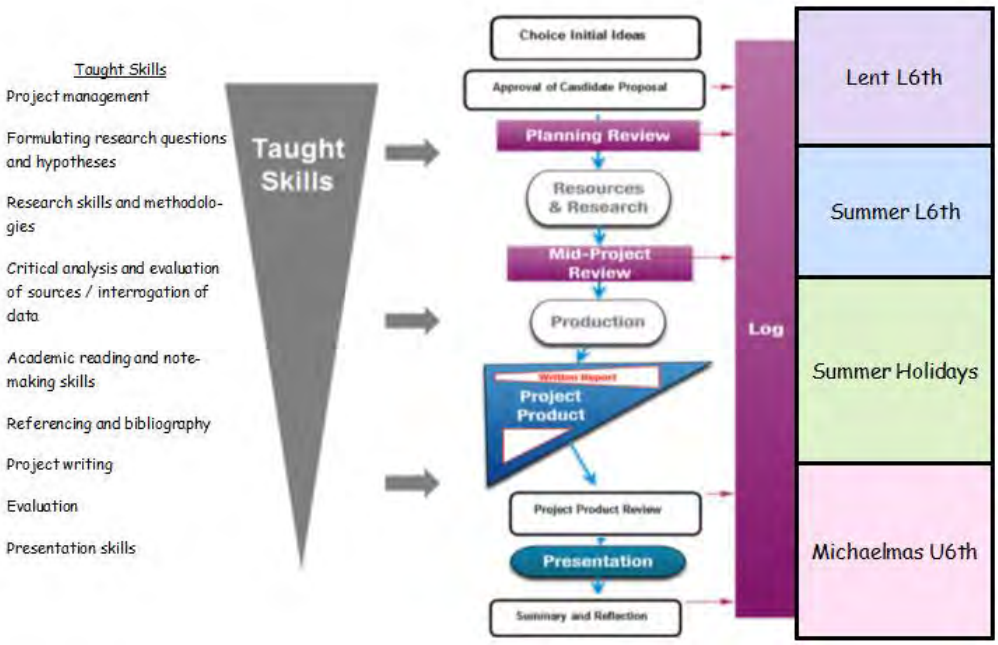
Participating in the EPQ qualification presents a great opportunity to really study something that interests you, that you can choose yourself and that isn't specified by an exam board syllabus. The EPQ looks great on your UCAS personal statement and will distinguish you from other pupils competing for university places. It also develops key skills of project management, research, problem solving, analysis, presentation and evaluation. These are skills which will really help when you get to university and into the world of work beyond. Finally, the independent nature of the EPQ makes it a really effective bridge between A level and university study.

When does the EPQ take place?

Students opting into the EPQ begin the course in January of the Lower Sixth. Two periods of lessons per week are timetabled with EPQ supervisors to develop study skills and make progress with individual research and write-ups, with final projects submitted before the end of the Michaelmas term in the Upper Sixth.

Who should undertake the project?

The EPQ is accessible to all. There are no formal entry requirements. It can be a valuable qualification to do alongside three or four A Levels. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact Mr Green (Head of EPQ).



Helpful Subject Choices for Popular University Courses

Course	Subjects worth considering
Accountancy	Business, Maths
Architecture	Maths, DT (Art Portfolio)
Biology	Biology, Chemistry or Maths or Physics
Business Management	Business, Maths, Economics
Chemistry	Chemistry, Maths, Physics
Computing	Computer Science, Maths, Physics
Dentistry	Chemistry, Maths, Biology, Physics
Drama	English, Drama
Economics	Maths, Further Maths, Economics
Engineering (Chemical)	Chemistry, Maths, Physics
Engineering	Maths, Physics, Further Maths
English	English, History, Philosophy and Ethics
Geography	Geography
Geology	Chemistry, Geography, Maths, Physics
History	English, History, Philosophy and Ethics
Languages	French, Spanish
Law	English, History, Philosophy and Ethics
Materials Science	Maths, Physics, Chemistry
Mathematics	Maths, Further Maths
Medicine	Chemistry, Biology or Maths or Physics
Music	Music
Pharmacy	Chemistry, Biology or Maths or Physics
Physics	Further Maths, Maths, Physics
Physiotherapy	Biology, Chemistry
Politics	History, Philosophy and Ethics, Politics
Vet Science	Chemistry, Biology or Maths or Physics

LOWER SIXTH OPTION BLOCKS for September 2025 entry

BLOCK A (6.1)	BLOCK B (6.2)	BLOCK C (6.3)	BLOCK D (6.4)
Business	**Art**	**Chemistry**	**Biology**
Chemistry	**Biology**	**Design & Technology**	**Business**
Computer Science	**Business**	**English Language**	**Further Maths**
English Literature	**Drama**	**Geography**	**Maths**
French	**Geography**	**History**	**Music**
Maths	**ICT (CTEC)**	**Maths**	**Physical Education** *(A-Level)*
Psychology	**Physics**	**Psychology**	**Politics**
~~**Economics**~~ **(FULL)**	**Religious Studies**	**EPQ**	**BTEC Sport (1)** *(Extended Certificate – **one** A Level equivalent)*
EPQ	**Spanish**		**EPQ**
	BTEC Sport (2) *(National Diploma – **two** A Level equivalent)*		
	EPQ		

A maximum of one subject can be studied from each block (column).
Students opting for BTEC Sport (2) **must** also select BTEC Sport (1)
The Extended Project (EPQ) will also be available to all students from the start of the Lent term.
Most students will enter three A-Levels or equivalent in Summer 2027 although a suitable fourth subject can be selected for study in the Lower Sixth if this is available.
Any subjects/groups with a strikethrough are now full and a waiting list is in operation, with no guarantee of available places in Sept.

NAME: **CURRENT SCHOOL:**

My preferred subjects to study at Denstone are as follows…..

From Block A:

From Block B:

From Block C:

From Block D: