AMPLEFORTH COLLEGE

Sixth Form Options 2023-24

Welcome to Sixth Form

Life in the Sixth Form should be the pinnacle of your school career. Here for the first time you have the chance to study subjects that really interest you in depth, and with a degree of specialisation, and at a level of independence that is refreshing. This booklet aims to give you all the information and guidance you need for you to make your choices for your Sixth Form studies at Ampleforth.

In the Sixth Form we have a strong emphasis on independent learning, which we call ITLC (Independent Learning, Thinking and Coping). If you have any specific learning needs, you will find first-class help in our Learning Hub. Academically you will be invited to broaden and deepen your learning through our Enrichment Programme. Beyond that there is an enormous range of co-curricular offerings to stretch and inspire you culturally, in sports and in a myriad of other activities. Finally, you will get all the support you need for your next steps after Ampleforth, for university or other forms of Higher Education and for your future in work - support that will come through our Careers programme, Careers department and the advice and guidance of your academic tutor.

Independent Thinking, Learning and Coping

Ampleforth's educational approach is centred on Independent Thinking, Learning and Coping (ITLC). This enhances the skills of students to listen attentively, to talk under pressure, to think on their feet, and to be able to deploy arguments and facts fluently and relevantly. Employers tell us they value these skills and that they seek to employ self-motivated, resilient problem-solvers with flexible, entrepreneurial skills who can communicate well, work effectively in teams, and have a values-driven approach. The sixth form will help students to further acquire these skills, to prepare them for the life they will lead at Ampleforth and beyond.

With ITLC, all our classrooms will become microcosms of the whole, each a vibrant learning community that is supportive and builds confidence. Rigorous learning of concepts and key facts will remain a fundamental requirement; having established this base, the role of the teacher is to challenge, to promote and moderate debate, thereby increasing the intellectual confidence and resilience of students. This approach to education is stimulating and enjoyable; it raises attainment levels and encourages life-long learning, not something to be dispensed with at graduation.

Curriculum

A levels and/or BTECs are at the core of Sixth Form studies. The great majority of students finish school with three subjects, and most university offers are based on the grades that are obtained in these. For some students it is right to stick with four subjects throughout the Sixth Form. This is of course an excellent way of being stretched academically, and it will always impress universities. However, we advise against this if it might compromise grades. Even for the most academic students it is better to get A*AA at A level than AAAB.

Students can start with three or four subjects. While the majority of students will end up taking only three subjects (A levels or BTECs), it is sometimes valuable to start with four if there is doubt about which are the preferred three. If you do start with four you will be required to stay with these until at least the first Exeat at the end of September. We recommend that you keep them until half-term, so as so to be sure you have a proper understanding of what they entail.

Whether the student chooses three or four subjects, these can be all A levels, all BTECs, or a combination of A levels and BTECs.

For students starting with four subjects, the following pathways are possible:

- Drop one subject in the first term, or at any time in Year 12.
- Keep four subjects for the whole of Year 12, then drop one: this will enable us to record this in your UCAS reference, showing your interest in and commitment to a subject beyond your core three.
- Continue all four subjects through the whole of Sixth Form.

Students will have twelve lessons a fortnight in each of their main subjects. In addition in Year 12 they will have:

- Christian Living (once a week): this is the equivalent of PSHE taught in all schools, and consists of a mixture of lectures and discussions on important life issues
- Core Christian Theology (once a week): this is a course in basic religious literacy which students in all Catholic schools are required to take.
- Careers lectures (once a fortnight)

BTEC Level 3 National

With a track record built over 30 years of learner success, BTEC Nationals are widely recognised by industry and higher education as the signature vocational qualification at Level 3. Well over 100,000 BTEC students apply to UK universities every year and their BTEC Nationals are accepted by over 150 UK universities, including Russell Group universities, either on their own or in combination with A Levels. We nevertheless advise checking university admissions websites if you have any particular institution or course in mind.

BTECs are distinctive in the following ways:
• They are assessed by purely internal assessment (coursework) or by a mixture of internal and external assessment (exams).
• They are more vocational in subject content.
• They are more practical in learning style: 'learning by doing'.
• They involve a degree of employer engagement.
They gain UCAS tariff points in exactly the same way as A levels, as follows:
• Distinction * 56 points (same as A level grade A*)
• Distinction 48 points (same as A level grade A)
• Merit 32 points (same as A level grade C)
• Pass 16 points (same as A level grade E)

Today's BTEC Nationals are demanding, as you would expect of the most respected applied learning qualification in the UK. You will have to choose and complete a range of units, be organised, take some assessments that we will set and mark and keep a portfolio of your assignments. But you can feel proud to achieve a BTEC because, whatever your plans in life – whether you decide to study further, go on to work or an Apprenticeship, or set up your own business – your BTEC National will be your passport to success in the next stage of your life.

English as an Additional Language

Timetabled lessons in Year 12 are compulsory for students who do not have a sufficient level of proficiency in English. For non-native English speakers this is determined by either:

- Their grade in IGCSE First Language English/ GCSE English; or
- The Cambridge English Placement Test, taken by all new entrants.

Lessons will be timetabled according to need. They are necessary for two reasons :

- To get the student to the level of proficiency needed to get the most out of their A levels or BTECs.
- For them to obtain a qualification to enable them to attend an English-speaking university, and for visa applications or job applications. We prepare students for the internationally recognised IELTS exam, which tests students in speaking, reading, writing and grammar.

EAL lessons are chargeable as extras and are added to the end-of-term bill.

Native language A levels

For students whose native language is not English, and who are thinking of applying to a UK university, we recommend that they sit an A level in their language at the same time as their other subjects. To prepare for them, we offer a programme of weekly lessons off-timetable in both Y13 and Y12 in our curricular languages, French, German and Spanish, and private tuition can be arranged for Chinese. Opportunities to complete exam papers and guidance on exam technique is also offered in other languages like for instance Polish, Russian or Dutch.

Frequently asked questions

Why are options chosen so early?

Some of our options are very popular, and so to ensure that our timetable and staffing meets the requirements of our students we need as much time as possible to make this work.

What if my GCSE results are better or worse than expected? Can I change my mind?

Yes. Your Sixth Form choices will already be informed by your teachers' knowledge of your abilities, so you will have been given honest advice which should mean that you are not tempted to make last minute changes. However, there are sometimes good reasons for changing your mind. We ask that you or your parents get in touch with us (your Housemaster or Housemistress and the Head of Year 12) before the start of the Autumn term, although we can accommodate changes requested on the first day. After that we ask you to stay with your choices for the first week so that lessons and timetables can get settled. Thereafter changes can only be made in consultation with the Head of Year 12. By half-term it is very hard to make a change as you will have six weeks' work to catch up on.

Is this a genuinely free choice?

Yes, although there are some parameters which may limit options, such as the school timetable and staffing. This will become clear when we draw up Option Blocks in the middle of the Lent Term. We try to accommodate everyone's preferences, but there may be one or two unusual combinations which will not be possible.

Also you may have to study specific subjects if you aspire to certain degree courses. For example, if you wish to study Computer Science at Cambridge you need to study Further Mathematics. That might impact on your possible options, and therefore it is really important that your tutors are aware of your aspirations when you are choosing your options.

How to choose subjects?

The selection of subjects for the Sixth Form is the first significant career decision most students make. The decisions are exciting as well as important. If you have a clear ambition to be a doctor, farmer, architect or engineer, your choices are fairly well defined. However, you may have no clear idea of your preferred future and the process of choosing will be more complicated.

You will need to think hard about the subjects you have enjoyed and in which you have prospered. You should also find out more about the A level subjects which are only available in the Sixth Form - Ancient History, Business, Economics, and Politics – as well as the BTEC courses. You will need to find out as much as possible about each subject you are considering,and pick a combination that will not close too many doors into higher education.

The process of choice has already begun if you have taken Careers Guidance tests. These may go some way to helping you make sense of the range of choices, but advice should always be sought – teachers and Heads of Department, your Tutor, Heads of Year, the Careers Department, Housemistress/xmaster and of course your parents.

Note that by February subject choices will be put into Options Blocks, in which you will be able to choose only one subject per block. The nature of timetabling for 26 subjects means that we cannot guarantee that every subject combination is possible. However we work very hard to avoid clashes and are happy to discuss options once the blocks have been created.

General guidelines

Our strong advice is that you choose:
What you enjoy - but remember, the Sixth Form curriculum might be very different to GCSE and don't forget that you may not have the same teachers.

What you are good at - for this, don't just think about your current track record at GCSE, but also more broadly your abilities, aptitudes and skills.

What will take you in the direction you want to go in - but you should only be swayed by this if you have a clear idea of your future. If you are not sure, the best guide is to be led by the first two factors.

Except in specialist areas which require particular A levels, experience has shown that achieving high grades is far more important in gaining admission to UK universities than the actual subjects taken. Choosing what you think you will enjoy and be good at is the best way to maximise these grades.

This is true also of the Russell Group, representing 20 of the best universities in the UK. A decade ago they published a document entitled 'Informed Choices' in which they categorised a number of traditional academic subjects as 'Facilitating Subjects'. In fact the university landscape has changed enormously since 2011, and in 2019 the Russell Group dropped this term completely.

As a general rule you should avoid choosing four subjects which have four very different skill sets, as mastering all these different skills is much more difficult. Subjects which have similar skills sets complement each other and allow the student to reinforce those particular skills – for example a student choosing two essay-subjects will have more chance to develop the skill of essay writing than someone who takes only one essay-subject. So, a good starting point is to choose two or three subjects which have similar skill sets and build your other choices around them.

Subjects

Level 3 BTEC National: Countryside Management

Provider - Pearson

Working in the countryside management sector is often overlooked as a career, however, it has a wide range of progression and job opportunities. The game and wildlife industry employs approximately 73,000 people in the UK, with approximately 31,000 people employed in other aspects of the countryside industry. The number of people working in this sector is expected to grow each year and employment opportunities can be found in both urban and rural areas. This qualification develops the knowledge, understanding and skills that provide an excellent basis for employment or for further education in this sector.

Skills learned

Collaborative teamwork skills. Presentation skills. Initiative and self-confidence in working alone. Self-confidence from dealing with 'clients' and external stakeholders. Numeracy. Literacy. Knowledge of sustainability. How to assess different options for their positive impact and cost-effectiveness. Proficiency in the use of Microsoft 365 packages; using Word and Excel for assignments and PowerPoint for presentations. We also use Microsoft Teams for online lessons and collaborative meetings as part of assignments.

Entry requirements to the course

There is no formal prerequisite for entry, but suitable candidates should be both reasonably numerate and literate. It is assumed that candidates have had no prior exposure to the subject.

Assessment

All units, except unit 1 are continuously internal assessed via a series of assignments from day one. Unit 1 will be assessed by an externally set task at the end of middle 6All assessment for the Pearson BTEC qualifications in this specification is criterion referenced, based on the achievement of specified learning outcomes. Each unit within the qualification has specified assessment and grading criteria which are to be used for grading purposes. A summative unit grade can be awarded at pass, merit or distinction.

The BTEC Subsidiary Diploma course (1 A level equivalent)

There are six units, which cover the following aspects of countryside management:

1. Undertaking an investigative project in the land-based sector
2. Undertaking estate skills
3. Understanding countryside tourism and recreation
4. Undertaking upland habitat management
5. Understanding working dogs
6. Business management in the land-based sector (work experience to take place in the school holidays)

Learners will be able to add three optional units to the mandatory content, from areas such as: woodland management, developing a land-based enterprise, controlling countryside pests and predators, gamekeeping, controlling firearm safety in the land-based sectors, tree felling and chainsaw safety and working dogs.

Career and University opportunities

Around 95% of UK universities accept BTEC qualifications towards meeting their entry requirements, but this is most likely to be the case where there is a good fit between the BTEC and the degree to be studied and the learning and assessment styles. The Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, will accept our BTEC alongside other Sixth Form qualifications, towards meeting the entry requirements for all of their undergraduate degree courses. Harper Adams University will likewise accept the qualification for entry onto the majority of their courses. The employability skills gained through the qualification also mean that students will be in a good position should they choose to progress onto higher/degree apprenticeship courses or straight into employment.

Level 3 BTEC National: Enterpise & Entrepreneurship

Provider - Pearson

With changing trends in employment many people are now choosing to become self-employed and start up their own enterprise. According to the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), at the start of 2014 small firms accounted for 99.3% of all private sector businesses in the UK. Of these, 62% were sole proprietorships. Many of these enterprises are started by young people, either as an alternative to higher education or as an enterprise that can be run alongside higher education or a job. There are many well-known examples of young entrepreneurs and there is nothing to stop you from joining their ranks.

Skills learned

Collaborative teamwork skills. Presentation skills. Initiative in working alone. Self-confidence from dealing with 'clients' and external stakeholders. Numeracy. Literacy. Knowledge of sustainability. How to assess different options for positive impact and cost-effectiveness. Proficiency in the use of the Microsoft 365 packages; Word and Excel for assignments and PowerPoint for presentations. We also use Microsoft Teams for online lessons and collaborative meetings as part of assignments. Business insight. Social and economic awareness.

Entry requirements to the course

There is no formal prerequisite for entry, but suitable candidates should be both reasonably numerate and literate. It is assumed that candidates have had no prior exposure to the subject.

Assessment

There are three main forms of assessment that you need to be aware of: external, internal and synoptic. Most units in the sector are internally assessed and subject to external standards verification. Synoptic assessment requires learners to demonstrate that they can identify and use effectively, in an integrated way, an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories and knowledge from across the whole sector as relevant to a key task. The styles of external assessment used for qualifications are:

- Examinations – all learners take the same assessment at the same time, normally with a written outcome
- Set tasks – learners take the assessment during a defined window and demonstrate understanding through completion of a vocational task
- Some external assessments include a period of preparation using set information. External assessments are available twice a year

The BTEC Subsidiary Diploma course (1 A level equivalent)

1. Enterprise and entrepreneurs
2. Developing a marketing campaign
3. Personal and business finance
4. Enterprise and intrapreneurship in practice

Career and University opportunities

Around 95% of UK universities accept BTEC qualifications towards meeting their entry requirements, but this is most likely to be the case where there is a good fit between the BTEC and the degree to be studied and the learning and assessment styles. This means that a range of universities will welcome the qualification for entry onto Business Management or Business Entrepreneurship degree courses. The employability skills gained through the qualification also mean that students will be in a good position should they choose to progress onto higher/degree apprenticeship courses or straight into employment.

Level 3 BTEC National: Hospitality

Provider - Pearson

Over the past few years employment in the hospitality industry has increased faster than for the economy overall, but significant skills gaps remain, particularly in the following areas: customer service, interpersonal skills, supervisory skills, finance and employability skills. This qualification seeks to address these areas by encouraging the acquisition and development of these competencies before employment in the hospitality industry. It is designed for people who are considering progressing on to higher education or entering the hospitality industry with the potential to start management training.

Skills learned

Collaborative teamwork skills. Presentation skills. Initiative and self-confidence in working alone. Self-confidence from dealing with 'clients' and external stakeholders. Numeracy. Literacy. Knowledge of sustainability. How to assess different options for their positive impact and cost-effectiveness. Proficiency in the use of the Microsoft 365 packages; using Word and Excel for assignments and PowerPoint for presentations. We also use Microsoft Teams for online lessons and collaborative meetings as part of assignments. Culinary and nutritional skills. Event Management skills. Customer satisfaction appreciation.

Entry requirements to the course

There is no formal prerequisite for entry, but suitable candidates should be both reasonably numerate and literate. It is assumed that candidates have had no prior exposure to the subject.

Assessment

Continuous internal assessment from day one. All assessment for the Pearson BTEC qualifications in this specification is criterion referenced, based on the achievement of specified learning outcomes. Each unit within the qualification has specified assessment and grading criteria which are to be used for grading purposes. A summative unit grade can be awarded at pass, merit or distinction.

The BTEC Subsidiary Diploma course (1 A level equivalent)

1. The hospitality industry
2. Providing customer service in hospitality and principles of supervising customer service performance in hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism
3. European food
4. Asian food
5. Events organisation in hospitality
6. Planning and managing a hospitality event

Career and University opportunities

Around 95% of UK universities accept BTEC qualifications towards meeting their entry requirements, but this is most likely to be the case where there is a good fit between the BTEC and the degree subject to be studied and the learning and assessment styles. This means that a range of universities will welcome the qualification for entry onto Hospitality or Event Management degree courses. A number of the Hospitality schools in Switzerland will also accept this qualification. The employability skills gained through the qualification also mean that students will be in a good position should they choose to progress onto higher/degree apprenticeship courses or straight into employment.

Ancient History

Provider - OCR
Ancient History is richly rewarding because it explores the powerful civilizations of Greece and Rome, which underpin western culture. The course combines particularly well with politics. There is also overlap with drama, theology (especially philosophy), art and English. It makes an excellent complement to history.

Outline

There are two modules: Greek history and Roman history. In Greek history students study the fifth century BC, the golden age of Athens, birthplace of democracy. Topics covered include the politics, drama, architecture and philosophy which flourished in this era. Students study the wars between Greece and Persia and between Athens and Sparta. Roman history covers the fall of the Roman republic, including the assassination of Julius Caesar, and the beginning of the empire, finishing with the notorious figure of Nero. Political intrigue and social and military history are prominent themes.

A distinguishing feature of this course is the study of primary sources. You will read the works of ancient historians and other writers (all in English). You will study inscriptions, coins and buildings, and understand the limitations of working with primary sources.

Entry requirements to the course

There is no minimum entrance requirement for this course apart from an open mind and willingness to learn. All materials are studied in English. Reading and essay writing will be the most important skills required.

Assessment

Two 2.5-hour papers. All exams are taken at the end of Year 13. There is no coursework.

Career and University opportunities

Like Modern History, Ancient History is a highly valued academic discipline, esteemed in universities and in the workplace because it proves your ability to master a wealth of detail and construct an argument. Because many schools do not offer Ancient History, it does not often appear prominently among lists of required A level subjects. Nevertheless, it is particularly welcome in an application to read classics or history (there is no reason not to take both History and Ancient History A levels), and is valued by the most prestigious universities to support an application to read any humanities subject. It opens doors to a broad variety of careers.

Art

Provider - AQA
To study Art is to use and develop all aspects of yourself - your creativity, your imagination, your investigative and analytical skills, your physical, practical and technical skills, your aesthetic understanding and judgement. Students learn to work and to think independently, to refine and communicate their own ideas, to become an expert and to manage time well. Above all, they learn that their own personal voice and interests are valuable, leading to the best outcomes.

Outline

Art A level at Ampleforth is an exciting and challenging course. Year 12 students start the year with the transition skills-based course, teaching a greater understanding of the language of art, alongside a series of collaborative and open-ended workshops, designed to develop their ability to explore ideas and media creatively.

In addition, students attend a weekly critical studies seminar in which they are introduced to a wide range of ideas and weekly Art History lessons. In the Lent term of Year 12 students begin Component 1, the Personal Investigation which is completed in Year 13. From February in Year 13 they complete their externally set task.

Students work in one or more of the following areas: drawing and painting; mixed-media, including collage and assemblage; sculpture; ceramics; installation; printmaking (relief, intaglio, screen processes and lithography); moving image and photography.

Drawing is an integral part of the course and students do regular life drawing classes, as well as exploring the use of drawing for different purposes.

Knowledge and understanding of both contemporary and historical art is an integral part of the course and students explore a wide range of sources.

Entry requirements to the course

Art GCSE preferred.

Assessment

• Component 1: Personal Investigation. 60% of A level
It includes a written element of no less than 1,000 and no more than 3,000 words which supports the practical work. This component is a self-directed study based on a personal issue, interest or theme. Students are expected to work independently, demonstrating increasing confidence in their ability to explore and handle ideas, materials, techniques and processes.
• Component 2: Externally Set Task. 40% of A level.
In response to one of a choice of broad starting points, students produce a project of developmental studies culminating in a 15 hour 'exam' to produce a final outcome or series of outcomes.

Career and University opportunities

There are many Art related degrees: Fine Art, Illustration, Graphic Design, Film, Photography, Fashion, Interior Design, Interior Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Set Design, Puppetry, Textiles, Animation, Games Design, Typography, Jewellery etc. Art is a well-respected A level and universities know that A level Art students are independent, reflective learners.

Biology

Provider - Edexcel

The course follows a context-led approach so that all the Biology studied is within particular contexts that run through each topic. For example, the course begins with the context of heart disease and this is used as a framework for teaching heart structure and function, blood clotting and basic biochemistry. This gives students a greater appreciation of how Biology affects the real world, whilst still providing thorough and rigorous training.

An A level Biologist will have an informed opinion of biological/health issues in the news and be able to make informed judgements as to the quality of the science behind the headlines. Our students have a sound background in mathematics and science, including statistical analysis of data, and can think critically about data, analysing and interpreting complex data sets.

Outline

- Topic 1: Heart and circulation, biochemistry, atherosclerosis and heart disease
- Topic 2: cell membranes, transport in and out of cells, DNA/protein synthesis, enzyme action, genetics and bioethics
- Topic 3: cell structure, cell division, stem cells, genes and environment
- Topic 4: biodiversity, evolution, plant cell structure, transport in plants, drug testing and the role of zoos in conservation
- Topic 5: photosynthesis, ecosystems, global warming, climate change and evolution
- Topic 6: protein synthesis, forensic science ,immune response and disease (HIV /Tuberculosis)
- Topic 7: muscle structure and function, respiration, control of breathing and heart rate and thermoregulation
- Topic 8: neuroscience (including the brain) and genetic modification
- Students will attend a compulsory three day field trip in Year 13

Entry requirements to the course

It doesn't matter whether you have studied Biology or Double Award Science at IGCSE level, but you need to have grade 7 (or 77) in order to cope with the demands of the A level course. It is essential to have at least a 6 grade (ideally higher) in IGCSE Mathematics.

Assessment

Three two-hour exam papers. One paper is fully synoptic, testing all topics studied (including a pre-release article). All papers include 10% mathematics marks and test understanding of practical work. Assessment by teachers of students' practical skills is ongoing as part of the Practical Endorsement at A level. This is separate to the A level grade and will be reported as a 'Pass' on A level certificates.

Career and University opportunities

Many students go on to study Biological Sciences at University (and must consider studying A level Chemistry as well if this is their chosen route).

Though not a prerequisite for studying Medicine or Veterinary Science everywhere – most students who do so study Biology.

Business

Provider - AQA

The study of A level Business allows an individual to develop a critical understanding of firms, the customers they serve and how they operate. Students will learn to consider the internal workings and management of organisations and, in particular, the process of decision making in a dynamic environment. They will also learn to appreciate economic, environmental, ethical, governmental, legal, social and technological issues associated with business activity.

In keeping with the Benedictine character of the school, we encourage students to favour ethical approaches to business which promote corporate social responsibility, as opposed to the unfettered pursuit of short-term profit.

Outline

Students investigate a variety of businesses using the content listed below:

- What is Business?
- Managers, leadership and decision making
- Decision making to improve marketing performance, operational performance, financial performance and human resource performance
- Analysing the strategic position of a business
- Choosing strategic direction
- Strategic methods
- Managing strategic change

Entry requirements to the course

There is no formal pre-requisite for entry on to the course, but suitable candidates should be both numerate and literate. A minimum grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics and a grade 4 in English Language are recommended. It is assumed that candidates have had no prior exposure to the subject.

Assessment

At the end of the course students are examined in a variety of ways including short answer multiple choice style questions, data response, extended essays and case studies. There are three 2-hour exams.

Career and University opportunities

Business is widely regarded by university Admission Tutors as being a rigorous subject that develops the application of number, communication, IT skills, independent learning, team working and problem-solving skills. It provides, therefore, a sound foundation for the higher study of most academic courses. Of course it has particular relevance for anyone wishing to study Business Management or related courses at university or to pursue a career in business.

Chemistry

Provider - AQA

Chemistry is the study of materials: how they are made, their properties, their uses and their interaction. The aim of the course is to develop students' understanding of major chemical concepts and their ability to apply them to different examples and situations.

An A level Chemist will improve their ability to raise questions, investigate them and develop explanations based on firm scientific evidence. Our students will be equipped with the skills to engage in debate and discussion on ethical and moral scientific issues.

There is also a strong emphasis of mathematical skills and the ability to analyse and evaluate data from a variety of different practical experiments.

Outline

The course is divided into three main areas:

Physical Chemistry - This involves the study of atomic structure, amount of substance, bonding, energetics, kinetics, chemical equilibria and Le Chatelier's principle, oxidation, reduction and redox equations, Thermodynamics, Rate equations, Equilibrium constant Kc for homogeneous systems, Electrode potentials and electrochemical cells and acids and bases

Inorganic Chemistry - This involves the study of Periodicity, Group 2, Group 7, Properties of Period 3 elements and their oxides, Transition metals and reactions of ions in aqueous solution

Organic Chemistry - This involves the study of alkanes, halogenoalkanes, alkenes, alcohols, organic analysis, optical isomerism, aldehydes and ketones, carboxylic acids and derivatives, Aromatic chemistry, amines, polymers, amino acids, proteins and DNA, organic synthesis, Nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy and chromatography

Entry requirements to the course

Chemistry or Double Award Science at IGCSE level is an equally appropriate route for studying A level Chemistry but you need to have grade 7 (or 77) in order to cope with the demands of the A level course. It is essential to have a 7 grade in IGCSE Mathematics, but it is an advantage if the grade achieved is higher based on the increased mathematical demand in the A level papers since the reforms in 2016.

Assessment

Three 2-hour exam papers. Assessment by teachers of students' practical skills is ongoing as part of the Practical Endorsement (CPAC) at A level. This is separate to the A level grade and will be reported as a 'Pass' on A level certificates.

Career and University opportunities

Many students go on to study Chemistry, Engineering, Medicine or Veterinary Science at University. Chemistry is a subject which demonstrates an ability to think logically and apply knowledge and so is a particularly advantageous subject to possess when making a UCAS application.

Computer Science

Provider - AQA

Computer Science and computing systems are engrained in almost every facet of our lives. Its reach and importance in industries such as medicine, engineering, manufacturing, education and the environment to name but a few, open up endless career paths and opportunities. A level Computer Science gives students not only the knowledge required for further study and a career directly in the field, but also the logic and problem-solving skills to meet the needs of a modern society and to make the positive impact on the world befitting an Amplefordian.

Outline

The course is divided into three units:

- Unit 1 covers the programming concepts required to solve complex problems through code. This includes data structures, common algorithms and abstractions of programming
- Unit 2 covers the theory of Computer Science including data representation, hardware and software, computer system architecture and how computing systems communicate over networks. Object oriented programming, functional programming and database development are also covered in this unit
- Students will also undertake a programming project creating a working solution to a problem of their choice in a programming language and environment of their choice

Entry requirements to the course

It is not required to have previously studied Computer Science at GCSE level. It is however essential to have a B/6 grade in GCSE or IGCSE Mathematics.

Assessment

Paper 1 - 2 ½ hour exam taken at a computer working with a pre-seen program provided by the exam board. This is worth 40% of the student's overall mark.

Paper 2 - 2 ½ hour written exam based on the Unit 2 theory topics. This is worth 40% of the student's overall mark.

Non-examined assessment. The independent programming project is worth 20% of the overall mark.

Career and University opportunities

At the core of A level Computer Science is the teaching of problem solving, making our candidates ideally suited to a wide range of further study.

The careers available in Computer Science are wide and varied from development, solutions architecture and user interface design to cyber security and data sciences. There is a significant skills shortage in Computer Science and it is identified as an area of great strategic importance, making the opportunities for a career in the subject exciting and readily available to candidates with the right qualifications.

Christian Theology

Provider - OCR Religious Studies

Theology is the systematic and rational study of religious truth. The Christian Theology Department aims for academic excellence, demanding disciplined study, critical reflection and analysis of perceptions, opinions, values and beliefs. We aim to ensure that students are philosophically, religiously, morally and socially aware and have developed the ability to listen to other peoples' points of view, even if they conflict with their own. We aim to foster free thinking, open debate and a genuine love of learning. An open mind is essential.

Outline

There are three units in the A level course:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Ethics
- Developments in Christian Thought

Learners will study:

- Ancient Philosophical Influences
- Arguments for and against the existence God
- The Nature of the Soul, Mind and Body
- Issues in Religious Language
- Normative Ethical theories – application to contemporary issues
- Person of Jesus Christ
- Death and the Afterlife
- Religious Pluralism and Theology

With reference to philosophers and theologians such as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, St Augustine, Wittgenstein, Hume, Descartes, Kant, Ayer and Freud, the most fundamental questions of human belief are addressed.

Entry requirements to the course

A GCSE 6 grade in Religious Studies is desirable, though it is recognised that a number of Sixth Form entrants have not had the opportunity of studying Religious Studies at GCSE, therefore GCSE Religious Studies is not a pre-requisite.

Assessment

Three 2-hour exams.

Career and University opportunities

Each year a significant number of students apply to read Theology and/or Philosophy at university. As an analytical subject that fosters critical thinking. Theology is an excellent preparation for reading any of the humanities or social sciences. Popular degree courses for Christian Theology students are: Theology, Philosophy, Law, History, English Literature, PPE, Politics and Anthropology. It is also an excellent way to demonstrate breadth of academic interest when applying for scientific degrees. Former students have commented on how useful they have found their knowledge of ethical enquiry when studying both Medicine and Economics.

Design & Technology

Provider - AQA

Design & Technology (D&T) is concerned with meeting human needs through design, manufacturing and appropriate use of technologies. Students focus on 'design for good' by investigating and developing solutions to real world problems. They will develop a critical understanding of how and why products are made. This includes an in-depth understanding of materials, their sources and environmental impact.

Outline

The course covers theoretical and project-based elements. The theoretical teaching covers the following topics:

- Materials, performance characteristics, enhancement, finishes and applications (timber, metal, polymer, composites, smart and modern materials)
- Manufacturing processes in modern industrial and commercial practice
- Digital design and manufacture
- Product design and development, inclusive design and intellectual property
- Design for manufacturing, maintenance, repair and disposal
- Enterprise and marketing in the development of products

The project element of the course can be both challenging and rewarding. The decision about what problem to solve or opportunity to explore is made by each student based on their own interests and aspirations. They take complete ownership and work with real stakeholders and manufacturers to develop a commercially viable prototype. The design process includes problem finding, primary and secondary research, sketching concepts, modelling, practical trials before making a final product for testing and evaluation. The project develops analytical and creative approaches, project management and planning techniques and problem solving skills; these are highly valued by universities and employers alike, in all fields.

Entry requirements to the course

A GCSE grade 6 in D&T is desirable, though it is recognised that many Sixth Form entrants have not had the opportunity of studying this subject.

Assessment

Paper 1 (2 hours 30 minutes): Technical principles (25%)

Paper 2 (1 hour 30 minutes): Designing and Making principles (25%)

Non-exam assessment (NEA): Designing and Making project (50%)

Career and University opportunities

D&T covers skills and knowledge that link to many other fields. Subjects that complement D&T are Physics, Computer Science and Mathematics for students considering various Engineering routes, Business for those considering Product or Industrial Design and Art for those looking at Architecture.

Drama & Theatre

Provider - AQA

The A level Drama and Theatre course requires students to take a highly practical and academic exploration of theatre. Students learn through experience, seeing theatre and making theatre for themselves. Students are introduced to a wide-range of theatrical styles and contexts as they explore plays practically, devise and work on performances. The course enhances students' collaborative skills, analytical thinking, and creativity. Students grow in confidence and maturity as they successfully realise their own ideas. They learn to evaluate objectively and develop a deep appreciation for the influences that cultural and social contexts can have on decision making. Students of A level Drama and Theatre emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills fully preparing them for their next steps.

Outline

A level Drama and Theatre offers students the opportunity to create, perform and respond to drama and theatre, develop the creativity and independence to become effective theatre makers, explore the relationship between theory and practice in a range of theatrical styles and historical, social and cultural contexts. Students learn how relevant research, independent thought and analysis of live theatre production can inform decision making in their practical work, and experience the ways in which theatre makers collaborate to create theatre.

Component 1 – Drama and theatre
- Practical exploration of two set texts
- Analysis of Live/Digital Theatre

Component 2 – Creating original drama
- Group devised piece

Component 3 – Making Theatre
- Performance of 3 scripted extracts

Entry requirements to the course

Students do not need IGCSE Drama to study this subject.

Assessment

One 3-hour written paper

Three scripted pieces and a reflective report

One devised piece and a working notebook

Career and University opportunities

A level Drama and Theatre is an obvious first step to a career in the Theatre, whether as a performer, designer, director or critic. For those wishing to apply for degrees in complementary subjects, it demonstrates a wider interest in dramatic literature. Universities will also be aware that students will have developed their skills of analysis and the ability to write precisely. A level Drama and Theatre students have gone on to study Law, English, History, Politics, Classics, Marketing, Public Relations, Teacher-training, and Film at University.

Economics

Provider - EdExcel

The study of Economics looks at how societies and individuals organise themselves to secure and improve their wellbeing. It looks at the issues which affect decisions in everyday life such as those of an individual when choosing a career path or whether or not to buy a house. It also studies the behaviour of firms and the collective decisions that governments make, such as the level of taxes and spending on key public services. In short, studying A level Economics will give you a much better insight into the key decisions which shape all of our lives and enable you to have an informed view on them. It will also help you to participate positively in society as citizens, producers and consumers.

Outline

Students undertake three papers based upon the following themes:

Theme 1 – Introduction to markets and market failure

Theme 2 – The UK economy

Theme 3 – Business behaviour and labour markets

Theme 4 – A global perspective

Assessment is in the form of multiple choice style questions, data response and extended essay writing.

Entry requirements to the course

There is no formal prerequisite for entry on to the course, but suitable candidates should be both numerate and literate. A minimum grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics and English Language are recommended. It is assumed that candidates have had no prior exposure to the subject. Whilst the level of Mathematics in A level Economics is not especially high, it is worth remembering that some selective universities will require applicants for Economics to be offering A level Mathematics.

Assessment

At the end of the course students are examined in a variety of ways, including; multiple choice style questions, data response and extended essays. There are three 2-hour exams.

Career and University opportunities

Economics is widely regarded by university Admission Tutors as being a rigorous subject that develops the application of number, communication, IT skills, independent learning, team working and problem- solving skills. It provides, therefore, a sound foundation for the higher study of most academic courses. In terms of careers, Economics provides a strong basis for a career in banking or finance.

English Literature

Provider - AQA

Reading, thinking and writing about great literature enables us to consider the wide variety of human experience as it is communicated by authors, and begin to engage with those experiences in an inquisitive, formal and disciplined manner. Students who study English Literature become better readers, writers and thinkers as a consequence of their studies, prepared to enter a variety of academic institutions and professional environments with the capacity to make the intelligent and thoughtful decisions that proceed from sound critical judgements.

Outline

The course comprises two taught components and one component of independent study:

Year 1: Aspects of Tragedy.

- Set texts: Shakespeare, Othello; Miller, Death of a Salesman; Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles

Year 2: Elements of Crime Writing.

- Set texts: Shakespeare, Hamlet; Coleridge, Rime of the Ancient Mariner; Atkinson, When Will There Be Good News?

Independent Reading: Two essays are completed in response to a poet and a prose writer of the student's own choosing in consultation with department staff. The writing and drafting are undertaken across the two years.

Entry requirements to the course

A commitment to reading and a willingness to exercise the mind and imagination with energy, creativity and independence. A minimum of grade B/6 in GCSE/IGCSE English Language and GCSE/IGCSE English Literature.

Assessment

Aspects of Tragedy: 2 hour 30 min exam (40%)

Elements of Crime Writing: 3 hour exam (40%)

Independent Reading: Internal assessment with external moderation (20%)

Career and University opportunities

Students proceed to a variety of university and professional destinations after completing their English studies. English Literature students possess many of the highly developed reading, writing and thinking skills that are required for successful careers in research, journalism, the arts, education, law, politics and marketing. Studying English provides excellent training in the research and argumentation skills that are highly valued by university arts, humanities, and social sciences departments, while enhancing the empathetic communication skills of those aspiring to the study of medicine, the life sciences or social work.

Geography

Provider - Pearson

Geography is a relevant, dynamic and academically rigorous subject that helps you to make sense of the world around you. The course enables students to explore and evaluate contemporary geographical questions and issues such as the consequences of globalisation, responses to hazards, water insecurity and climate change. The course content, framed around enquiry questions, gives students the opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of physical and human geography, the complexity of people and environment questions and issues and to become critical, reflective and independent learners.

Students will engage critically with real world issues and places, apply their own geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to make sense of the world around them, and to help prepare them to succeed in their chosen pathway. They will become responsible, knowledgeable and skilful citizens, developing a wide range of transferable skills.

Entry requirements to the course

A GCSE grade 6 or above in Geography is recommended. A foundation of knowledge at GCSE level is usual, but students who have not studied Geography are not necessarily barred from A level entry. In such cases, early discussion and expression of interest with the Head of Department is advised.

Assessment

Paper 1: Dynamic landscapes, Physical Systems and Sustainability (2 hours 15 minutes, 30%)

Paper 2: Dynamic Places, Human Systems and Geopolitics (2 hours 15 minutes, 30%)

Paper 3: Synoptic Investigation of a geographical issue within a place-based context (2 hours and 15 minutes, 20%)

Paper 4: Independent Investigation (Non-Examined Assessment, 20%)

Career and University opportunities

A truly multidisciplinary subject, Geography acts as an excellent bridge between the arts and the sciences, adding strength to any combination of subjects. Geography graduates experience some of the lowest levels of graduate unemployment and are prized by industry. Employers value the strategic skills and breadth of knowledge that geographers bring to the workplace. Geographers are found working in every sector of the economy including finance, local businesses, not-for-profit organisations, significant research or as key decision makers in local and national government, highlighting the range of possibilities for geographers.

Greek

Provider - OCR

Greek A level offers the chance to read texts of unparalleled importance in western culture and to further your skills in this remarkable classical language. Perhaps the most cogent reason for choosing Greek is the quality of the literature. The chosen authors are of paramount importance in western literature and are worth reading even if you are not studying Greek.

Outline

Literature and language are equally weighted in the qualification as a whole.

Reading Plato gives an opportunity to philosophy, and is ideal preparation for a philosophy degree. Alternatively, you may read a historical author. For verse, you may read extracts of Homer or a Greek tragedy, in either case a dramatic retelling of mythology. You will study these texts in detail, analysing the authors' style and exploring the social and cultural themes within the texts. In the examination, you will be required to translate a short extract from these prepared texts, answer comprehension questions and write one essay.

To prepare for the language papers, you will further your understanding of the Greek language, learning new grammar and reading a wide range of authors. You will be taught to translate a passage of English into Greek, which is an exciting exercise, though this is an option in the examination.

Entry requirements to the course

The minimum entrance requirement for the course is Level 6 at Greek GCSE (or equivalent).

Assessment

Two 2-hour literature papers and two language papers (1¼ and 1¾ hours). All exams are taken at the end of U6.

Career and University opportunities

Universities regard Greek A level very highly for its intellectual rigour. It is expected in applications to read Classics; it is particularly advantageous for degrees in languages and literature, history, archaeology, philosophy, theology and law. Because Greek hones problem-solving and logical thinking, and because it trains you in the art of writing, it is also in high demand in a variety of careers, especially where writing and analysing detail is required. Greek also gives evidence of your ability to learn a highly structured language in a different alphabet.

History

Provider - OCR

History enables students to study some of the most dramatic and significant people and events that have shaped our past and our present. It enables students to understand, for example, why countries have developed into democracies or dictatorships, why some countries became expansionist, why wars and revolutions break out and why societies are as they are.

History is also very useful. It is a facilitating subject highly regarded by universities. This is because of its rigour and the skills it develops such as research, analysis, evaluation, communication and argument that are vital in all degree subjects.

History also enables students to study human nature, by studying real people in real situations, both people in power and ordinary people. We look at why they acted as they did, and with what consequences.

Outline

We study:

- The Stuarts 1603-1660: James I, Charles I, the English Civil War, the execution of the king, Oliver Cromwell
- France 1789-1870: The French Revolution, Napoleon, the end of the French monarchy, the Franco-Prussian War and end of the Second Empire. How France experienced five revolutions in 80 years
- Germany 1789-1919: The failure of the liberals to unify Germany, Bismarck and unification, Kaiser Wilhelm II and the origins of the First World War. How Germany took a 'wrong turn' away from liberalism, with such serious consequences
- Coursework: An essay on a topic of your own choice. Departmental strengths include Tudors and Stuarts, the American Revolution and Nazi Germany (Title include: Did Hitler always plan the Holocaust? Was Hitler a weak dictator?)

Entry requirements to the course

One of History's virtues is that it is a very accessible subject in which students of all abilities can succeed. Candidates have GCSE grades ranging from 9-4 and it is not uncommon for students who have not taken GCSE to do A level.

Assessment

There are three exams and one Coursework essay.

Career and University opportunities

Because of its rigor and the skills that it develops, History supports every career and higher education choice, ranging from law to economics to science and medicine. It strengthens those whose strengths lie in the humanities and adds complementary skills to those whose strengths lie more in science or languages. It is particularly suited to anyone considering a career in business, banking, journalism or law.

Latin

Provider - OCR
Latin is an ideal A level for students who enjoy the written word. You will build on your language skills, develop an appreciation of literary style and deepen your understanding of our cultural heritage through studying the literature of ancient Rome. The opportunity to read such influential authors as Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Livy is immensely rewarding. Latin provides an excellent foundation for further study in languages, philosophy, history and classics.

Outline

For literature you will read the works of two Roman authors, one in prose and one in verse. You will study these texts in detail, analyzing the authors' style and exploring the social and cultural themes within the texts. Themes include political intrigue, social satire, love, war and passion. A significant amount of history, philosophy and mythology is covered. In the examination, you will be required to translate a short extract from these prepared texts, answer comprehension questions and write one essay.

To prepare for the language papers, you will further your understanding of the Latin language, learning new grammar and reading a wide range of authors. The most important language skill is to translate from Latin into English. You will be taught how to translate from English into Latin, which is an exciting exercise, though this is an option in the examination.

Entry requirements to the course

The minimum entrance requirement for the course is Level 6 at Latin GCSE (or equivalent).

Assessment

Two 2 hour literature papers and two language papers (1¼ and 1¾ hours). All exams are taken at the end of Year 13.

Career and University opportunities

Universities regard Latin A level very highly for its intellectual rigour. It is expected in applications to read Classics; it is particularly advantageous for degrees in languages and literature, history, archaeology, philosophy, theology and law. Because Latin hones problem-solving and logical thinking, and because it trains you in the art of writing, it is also in high demand in a variety of careers, especially where writing and analysing detail is required.

Modern Foreign Languages - French, German, Spanish

French Provider - AQA
German Provider - AQA
Spanish Provider - AQA
The study of a foreign language at this level is highly rewarding, both linguistically and intellectually. It fosters a range of transferable skills including communication, critical thinking, research skills and creativity, which are valuable to the individual and society (the transferable skills which linguists develop are highly sought after by employers). The approach is a focus on how the societies where these languages are spoken have been shaped, both socially and culturally, and how they continue to change.

Outline

In the first year of the course artistic and social aspects of the countries where these languages are spoken are studied. In the second year further aspects of the social background are covered with more focus on matters associated with multiculturalism and aspects of political life. Students must study one text and one film or two texts. Students will also be required to complete an individual research project on a topic of their interest to discuss in the Speaking test.

Entry requirements to the course

A grade B/6 or higher in the relevant language at GCSE is normally required.

Assessment

Paper 1: Listening, reading and writing 2 hours and 30 minutes

Paper 2: Writing 2 hours

Paper 3: Speaking 21–23 minutes (including 5 minutes preparation time)

Career and University opportunities

A good level of proficiency in languages offered at Ampleforth will also qualify candidates for ab initio courses in other languages, e.g. European or Oriental, at university. Furthermore, an A level language qualification will provide continuity between school and university for those students who will wish, or be encouraged, to study languages as part of a scientific or other vocational degree course. In the longer term this will lead to enhanced employment prospects.

Languages can combine with most subjects, and indeed in recent years a number of our students have chosen degree courses incorporating their A level language alongside another subject such as History or Business and Management.

Mathematics

Provider - OCR
The Mathematics course provides students with a coherent course of study to develop mathematical understanding. Students are encouraged to think, act and communicate mathematically, providing them with the skills to analyse situations in Mathematics and elsewhere. There's increased focus on problem solving, mathematical argument, reasoning and modelling.

Outline

Mathematics consists of:

- Pure (67%): Proof; Algebra and functions; Coordinate geometry in the x-y plane; Sequences and series; Trigonometry; Exponentials and logarithms; Differentiation; Integration; Numerical methods; Vectors
- Mechanics (17%): Quantities and units in mechanics; Kinematics; Forces and Newton's laws; Moments
- Statistics (17%): Statistical sampling; Data presentation and interpretation; Probability; Statistical distributions; Statistical hypothesis testing

Entry requirements to the course

Mathematics: grade 7 (I)GCSE required.

Assessment

Mathematics: Three two hour exams.

Career and University opportunities

Mathematics is required for degrees in Mathematics, Engineering, Computer Science, and some sciences and Economics at competitive higher education institutions. It also supports transition to higher education or employment in any of the many disciplines that make use of quantitative analysis, including business, accounting and finance.

Careers directly involving mathematics include: actuary, accountant, data analyst, investment analyst, research scientist, secondary school teacher, software engineer, sound engineer and statistician.

Further Mathematics

Provider - OCR (MEI Syllabus B)
A level Further Mathematics is an exciting and demanding course for students who have a love for the subject. It must be studied alongside mathematics, but counts for all purposes as a completely separate second A level. It is excellent preparation, and is indeed a requirement or recommended subject in many contexts, in order to go on to study a degree in Mathematics or other subjects with a high level of mathematical content at top universities. Further Mathematics is both broader and deeper than A Level Mathematics. As well as building on the algebra and calculus introduced in A Level Mathematics, the A Level Further Mathematics pure core content introduces complex numbers and matrices; fundamental mathematical ideas with wide applications in mathematics, engineering, physical sciences and computing.

Outline

Further Mathematics consists of:

- Pure Mathematics (50%): Matrices and transformations, Complex Numbers, Roots of polynomials, 3D Vectors, Series and induction, Polar coordinates, Maclaurin series, Hyperbolic functions, First and second order differential equations
- Statistics (25%): Probability, Discrete random variables, Chi-squared tests, Bivariate data, Continuous random variables, Normal distribution, Confidence intervals and hypothesis testing, Non-parametric tests
- Mechanics (25%): Work, energy and power, Impulse and moments, Circular motion, Dimensional analysis, Centre of mass, Motion under a variable force, Hooke's law, Oblique impact

Entry requirements to the course

Further Mathematics: grade 8 (I)GCSE and studying Mathematics A level required.

Assessment

Four 90-minute examinations - two in pure mathematics, one in statistics and one in mechanics.

Career and University opportunities

It is worth noting that Further Mathematics has formed part of the combination of all of our successful Oxbridge natural scientists in recent years (those who have specialised in mathematics, computing, engineering, physics or chemistry). A popular combination for our most academic natural scientists is Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics.

Music

Provider - Pearson
A level Music is an ideal course for students who play an instrument/sing to a high standard and have GCSE Music or ABRSM Grade 5 Theory. The course caters for a wide range of interests through study of a variety of works, from Bach to Debussy and Danny Elfman to Kate Bush.

During the A level course students will improve their musical skills and develop a deeper understanding of the power of music through study of various musical styles and techniques. It equips students with a holistic understanding of music that serves them well in future progression.

Music students also develop a variety of transferable skills including; analysis, creative thinking, effective communication and collaboration skills, time management, pattern recognition, logical processing (through engagement with abstract ideas) and perseverance.

Music has links to many subjects and has attracted theologians, scientists, historians, artists, politicians, philosophers, medics and lawyers! There is significant research into music's association with mathematics and language development. Many interested in a singing career combine music with a foreign language.

Outline

You will develop and refine your musical skills through:
- Performing – you will perform in concerts, have high quality individual instrumental tuition and participate in school ensembles
- Composing – you will be taught to compose in a variety of styles (film music, orchestral, songs)
- Harmony – you will learn to harmonise Bach chorales
- Listening – you will analyse 18 pieces of music from the 6 Areas of Study:
    Instrumental Music
    Vocal Music
    Film Music
    Pop Music and Jazz
    Fusions
    New Directions The specific works studied can be found in the specification.

Entry requirements to the course

A minimum of Grade 6 at GCSE or a pass in ABRSM Grade 5 theory. ABRSM Grade 5 on at least one instrument.

Assessment

You will complete a recital (30%), a composition (20%) and two Bach chorales (10%) as coursework. There will be a single two hour listening exam (40%).

Career and University opportunities

Universities offer music courses focusing on performance, composition, music technology, education, musicology, the music business and media. A level music has prepared candidates for Cambridge, The Royal Academy of Music and Russell Group universities. For students wishing to study another subject at university, A level Music is well respected because of its level of demand and numerous transferable skills.

Physical Education

Provider - OCR
Have you ever wondered why some people can run faster than others? How your personality affects your performance? How you could become an elite sports performer? Why athletes take performance enhancing drugs? How technology can help improve your performance? Studying A level Physical Education will give you a fantastic insight into the amazing world of sports performance. Not only will you have the chance to perform or coach a sport through the non-exam assessment component, you will also develop a wide-ranging knowledge of the how and why of physical activity and sport

Outline

Paper 1 – Physiological factors affecting performance (90 marks, 30% of A level)

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Exercise physiology
- Biomechanics

Paper 2 – Psychological factors affecting performance (60 marks, 20% of A level)

- Skill acquisition
- Sports psychology

Paper 3 – Socio-cultural issues in physical activity and sport (60 marks, 20% of A level)

- Sport and society
- Contemporary issues in physical activity and sport

Coursework – Performance in physical education (60 marks, 30% of A level)

- Performance or coaching of an activity taken from the approved list
- The evaluation and analysis of performance for improvement (EAPI)

Entry requirements to the course

It is highly recommended (although not compulsory) that students have a GCSE in PE. It would also be useful to have at least grade B/6 in the Sciences due to the scientific content of the course. As 30% of the course is practical coursework, it is important to have strong skills and knowledge in one of the sports taken from the approved list. Alternatively, it is possible to be assessed in coaching one of the activities on the approved list.

Assessment

Paper 1 – 2 hours, Paper 2 – 1 hour and Paper 3 – 1 hour.

Career and University opportunities

A level Physical Education is rapidly becoming an essential pre-requisite for specialist study in Physical Education, Sport Studies and Sports Science in Higher Education whilst providing a suitable qualification for other areas of study. The specification provides an excellent foundation for candidates intending to pursue careers in Sports Psychology, Physiotherapy, Biomechanics, Occupational Therapy, Sports Management, Human Sciences, Sports Coaching and educational courses such as teaching.

Physics

Provider - AQA
Physics is a study of the Universe; everything from the smallest scales of quantum physics to the very extremes of cosmology. Physics is subject that calls on theory and experiment to describe and explain what we observe.

An A level Physicist will draw on many skills sets to question ideas and develop explanations and solutions to problems. This ranges from interpreting and communicating experimental observations to making use of mathematics as a tool to explain theoretical concepts. A level Physicists will develop excellent problem-solving skills.

Outline

The course is split into various modules:

- Measurements and their errors: Practical and analytical skills that underpin much of the course
- Particles and radiation: particle interactions, classifications and conservation laws. Quantum physics, electron transitions, photoelectric effect and wave-particle duality
- Waves: wave properties, interference and superposition, stationary waves and optics
- Mechanics and materials: classical mechanics, parabolic motion, energy and material properties
- Electricity: circuit electricity and Kirchoff's laws, potential dividers, resistivity and superconductors
- Further mechanics and thermal physics: circular motion, simple harmonic motion and thermodynamics
- Fields and their consequences: A study of electric, magnetic and gravitational fields
- Nuclear physics: Radioactivity, energy and mass equivalence, nuclear fission and nuclear fusion
- Turning Points in Physics: special relativity, measuring the speed of light, electron microscopy and particle accelerators

Entry requirements to the course

Physics or Double Award Science at IGCSE level is an equally appropriate route for studying A level Physics but you need at least grade 7 (or 77) in order to cope with the demands of the A level course. It is essential to have a 7 grade in IGCSE Mathematics and studying A level Mathematics is strongly recommended.

Assessment

Three two-hour exam papers. Assessment by teachers of students' practical skills is ongoing as part of the Practical Endorsement (CPAC) at A level. This is separate to the A level grade and will be reported as a 'Pass' on A level certificates.

Career and University opportunities

Physics would be an essential A level for anybody wanting to study any of the Physical sciences or any variety of Engineering. Physics is a demanding A level that demonstrates that you are able to draw on a wide range of analytical and mathematical skills that are applicable to a variety of careers outside of science including finance and economics.

Politics

Provider - AQA
Politics is about how people in societies make decisions, and the power relations between them. It is about how individuals organise themselves in the context of others. In the department, we put the voice of the student at the centre of our learning: our priorities are discussion and debate; the free exchange of views; and the greatest possible understanding of and sensitivity to the world around us.

We want students who, in Aristotle's terms, can entertain a thought without accepting it. Our growth in wisdom lesson-by-lesson is underpinned by the notion that good ideas will overcome bad, and, through our learning and dialogue, we will be renewed as people.

'Listen!' – that great imperative of St Benedict – is key to our study of Politics, as we are attentive to the diverse views of others. Through the study of government, we are mindful of our privileges and responsibility, as citizens, to positively impact public debate and policy.

Respect is at the heart of this too, as we must genuinely strive to love one another, and foster mutual respect for those of different views. Each person has different insights to bring, and we show hospitality by giving and receiving willingly of our diverse perspectives.

Finally, we study those who have shown integrity – or have lacked in that regard – and hope to use our learning honestly to make the world a better place. Not dispensing with faith at the first sight of a thorny political issue must be a core aspiration of any student of government and politics.

Outline

There are three components to study:

- Government and Politics of the UK. Including the following topics: UK Constitution; Parliament; Prime Minister; Judiciary; Political Parties; Pressure Groups; Democracy and Participation; Elections.
- Government and Politics of the USA (with comparisons to the UK). Including the following topics: USA Constitution; Congress; President; Judiciary; Elections; Civil Rights; Political Parties; Pressure Groups.
- Political Ideas. Including the following topics: liberalism; socialism; conservatism; feminism.

Entry requirements to the course

All students welcome.

Assessment

Three two-hour examinations.

Career and University opportunities

Lots of students go on to study degrees in Politics or a related subject, such as International Relations. All social science and humanities degrees are supported by this A Level. A number of recent Ampleforth leavers have gone on to study PPE, including at Oxbridge.

Psychology

Provider - AQA

Psychology can be defined as the scientific study of human behaviour and experience. This stimulating subject combines fascinating content with a rigorous and scientific approach to investigation. It has recently experienced a huge growth in popularity, both as a choice for A Level and as an undergraduate subject. The course aims to develop both an academic understanding of the subject and an appreciation of its impact on people's daily lives. It provides a broad introduction to the scope and nature of psychology as a science and encourages pupils to explore how science works by looking at practical investigations that are applicable to real life.

A Level Psychology develops your ability to formulate an argument by presenting and evaluating research evidence critically. Accurate and concise writing is important in answering short structure questions and longer essay style questions. There is a compulsory mathematics element. This fascinating subject combines very well with other science subjects and with other written subjects as the final examinations draw heavily on essay writing skills. The course gives pupils a better understanding of how human behaviour from infancy to adulthood can influence the society in which they live. Pupils gain knowledge in areas such as: how memory works; what happens when young children have their attachment to a mother figure disrupted; how our behaviour changes with our social situation. The course also explores current areas of research such as biopsychology where we look at language; how disorders function in the brain and how they are measured by PET and MRI scans.

Outline

Compulsory content: Social influence, Memory, Attachment, Psychopathology, Approaches in Psychology, Biopsychology, Research methods, Issues and debates in Psychology. Optional: Option 1-Relationships, Gender, Cognition and development; Option 2- Schizophrenia, Eating behaviour, Stress; Option 3-Aggression, Forensic Psychology, Addiction

Entry requirements to the course

A grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics, English Language, and Biology or 5-5 in Double-Award Science. No prior exposure to Psychology is required.

Assessment

There are three written examinations each one being 2 hours in length: 1: Introductory topics in Psychology; 2: Psychology in context; 3: Issues/options in Psychology. There is no coursework, but an important element of the course is practical: the designing and carrying out of research, reporting findings and analysing data.

Career and University opportunities

Psychology is now the third most popular A level choice in the country. A very challenging and stimulating subject, Psychology A level is a highly respected qualification and is accepted for a wide variety of further education courses. The transferable skills developed in the study of Psychology mean that graduates can enter a wide range of professions, including accountancy, banking, finance, IT, law, management, marketing, PR and research, for example.

Psychology complements any career that involves people, as well as more specific careers such as those in clinical Psychology, forensic Psychology and educational Psychology.

Learning Support in the Sixth Form

The Learning Hub supports students to ensure that they learn effectively and deliver their best performance in examinations. The Learning Hub staff recognise that Sixth Form students may face additional pressures and difficulties to their peers lower down the school. Typically, the Learning Hub will support students who have a diagnosed special educational need or disability. In addition to this, we often support students who require help to organise their time effectively, those who need help with revision technique, and those who need help to manage stress or anxiety during examination times.

We can offer help in several different forms:

- A quiet, supervised work space.
- Specific teaching of skills such as handwriting, typing, note-taking and proof reading.
- Advice on essay planning and writing structure.
- Assistance with executive functioning skills.
- Revision and exam technique workshops.
- 1:1 coaching and mentoring.
- Emotional support and a listening ear.

Examination access arrangements granted at GCSE do not automatically carry on into the Sixth Form; occasionally new assessment reports must be obtained, and permission sought through the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). Exam access arrangements can only be obtained if teachers can supply evidence of a candidate's need and prove that the access arrangement is part of the student's normal way of working.

Access arrangements include extra time, supervised rest breaks, word-processing and the use of a reader and / or a scribe. In all cases the aim is to allow candidates with a range of specific learning difficulties to express their knowledge fully, but without giving them an unfair advantage over other candidates.

Whilst it is uncommon for students in Year 12 and 13 to be referred for exam access assessment, students who think that they may have an undiagnosed learning difficulty, or whose teachers think that this may be the case, may approach the Hub for an initial assessment. If the need is deemed to be of sufficient gravity, a report from an Educational Psychologist known to the College may be advised (the cost of the report will need to be paid by the parents).

For further information on any of the above, please contact the Learning Hub by phone 01439 766862 or by email Katy.Cameron@ampleforth.org.uk.

Academic Enrichment

The academic enrichment programme for Sixth Form provides a variety of opportunities designed to encourage all students to pursue their academic interests beyond the classroom. It forms a cornerstone of the development of independent learning skills that are essential as students progress to their next stage at university or in the workplace, by promoting intellectual curiosity and self-directed learning.

Department clubs and societies

Many academic departments run their own subject-specific enrichment clubs, most of which are not restricted to students who are studying a related subject. Examples include the current affairs society, the Newman Group (for Christian Theology), poetry appreciation and the senior mathematics club.

External Competitions and MOOCs

Students are strongly encouraged to enter national competitions. Entries in the last year included the Linguistics, Chemistry and Biology Olympiads, the Maths Challenge, the Sheffield University Philosophy Essay Competition, the New College of the Humanities Essay Competition. Students have also undertaken MOOCs (massive open online courses, run by prestigious universities around the world), for example the Edinburgh University course 'Introduction to Philosophy'.

External speakers

Regular lectures and talks by external speakers form an integral part of the sixth form experience – whether this be trips to local universities (recent examples include attending a sample Chemistry demonstration at York University and a lecture by Lord Sainsbury on how nations create wealth), or guest speakers visiting the school. In recent months, many of these opportunities have moved online by necessity, but they have still proved inspiring occasions.

Regular updates

All students receive a fortnightly update informing them about the latest external enrichment opportunities, featuring competitions, lectures, online courses, book recommendations and video links. Students who take up such opportunities often find these form a strong foundation for their UCAS personal statement where, particularly for applications to the most competitive universities, active and independent involvement in subject-related enrichment is invaluable.

Tutor guidance

Every student has regular one-to-one meetings with their tutor, which provides a chance to ensure that students are making the most of the enrichment opportunities available in a way that will help them achieve their individual academic goals.

EPQ (Extended Project Qualification)

The AQA Extended Project Qualification is an exciting opportunity for students to produce a single piece of work of their own choosing, showing evidence of planning, preparation, research and independent working. The EPQ offers unrivalled opportunities for academic extension as well as providing evidence of a student's readiness for university. It is also highly enjoyable.

An EPQ can take several forms:

- An extended essay
- An artefact, model or construction
- A CD/video/DVD of performances or activities
- An audiotape/multimedia presentation
- A journal of activities or events

A project which consists solely of written work will be approximately 5,000 words. Projects where the majority of the evidence is provided in other formats must include a report or record of work of at least 1,000 words.

Students must choose an accredited Supervisor from among our staff. He or she will guide the student throughout the project, although they are not allowed to contribute directly to its content. The only restriction on choosing an EPQ topic is that the student will need to find an accredited Supervisor with some relevant expertise.

EPQs also carry UCAS points, and are worth half of an A level (more than AS levels which are only worth 40%). All Sixth Form students, but most especially those aspiring to apply to the more competitive universities, should give serious consideration to undertaking an EPQ.

Oxbridge

Ampleforth has a long track record in preparing students for successful applications at universities of the highest calibre, including Oxford and Cambridge. In recent times, a number of students have progressed to study at these two universities. As the deadline for Oxbridge applications is mid-October of Year 13, Year 12 is an essential period for preparation and guidance. The preparation programme is run by the Head of Academic Enrichment, Head of Year 12 and Head of Year 13 in collaboration with relevant Heads of Department. All academic scholars are automatically part of the Oxbridge programme and other interested students may join. The programme follows a clear timeline:

Year 12:
- November – potential candidates identified, expectations made clear
- January onwards – preparatory courses for pre-interview assessments begin, students work on portfolio of enrichment opportunities and wider reading
- April – drafting of UCAS personal statements begins

Year 13
- September/October – finishing touches to applications, more intensive preparation for admissions tests
- November – admissions tests, and mock interview practice for those invited to interview
- December – interviews
- January – offers received

Careers Department

Careers guidance and education widens students' horizons and raises aspirations. It provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make successful transitions to the next stage of their life.

Students in Year 12 take part in a planned programme of lectures and events to support them at this time of decision-making, covering topics such as how to choose the right course/university, entrepreneurship, degree apprenticeships, how to use online careers research tools, employability skills and networking. They also receive information in the monthly careers news updates.

In March every year the Careers Department organises a Higher Education and Careers Conference for Year 12 students and their parents. There are seminars and a fair hosted by up to 50 education and training providers including university delegates representing universities such as Oxford, Durham, Leeds, Edinburgh, Oxford Brookes, IE, MIT, Royal Agricultural University as well as degree apprenticeships, school leaver programmes and gap organisations.

In addition to the UCAS website www.ucas.com, students have access to Unifrog, an online destinations platform which provides information about careers, UK, European and international university courses, apprenticeships, CV writing, subjects and skills. Parents can also use it by going to www.unifrog.org and entering ampleforthcollegeparents in the form code box.

Students are encouraged to seek work experience, job shadowing, part-time work and volunteering placements in the school holidays to build up their CV for future employment.

They are welcome to either call in to the Careers Department which is located in the Library or make an appointment for a personal guidance interview with the Head of Careers, Mrs Toone who is a qualified careers adviser.

At the end of the summer term, students take part in a careers and skills week during which they are given the opportunity to find out more about CV writing, attending interviews and the employment sectors that interest them by joining panels of professionals representing a range of employment sectors.

Particular Career Pathways

Architecture

Architecture demands a high level of commitment. It takes a minimum of seven years of study to qualify as an architect: a five year degree programme recognised by the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architects Registration Board, followed by a minimum of two years professional experience.

The nature of architecture courses at university varies widely. 'Pure' Architecture courses tend to focus on the construction of buildings and the built environment; these courses have much in common with Engineering and require applicants to study similar subjects at A level, principally Mathematics and Physics, though Design & Technology is often welcomed also. Other courses, including Architectural Studies courses, focus more on the aesthetics of the built environment and taking A level Art tends to give applicants a strong advantage. Most courses, of whatever type, require Mathematics. It is strongly recommended that students interested in studying this discipline at university should consult the relevant websites to ascertain their requirements.

Accountancy, Business and Finance

A level Mathematics is a preferred subject for the majority of Finance and Management degree courses and is a major advantage for the better Business courses. Employers have highlighted a shortage of applicants with a variety of skills such as language ability and high level IT skills, so a Language or Computing A level may also be an advantage when entering the job market.

This is an increasingly popular career choice, and not all entrants to this sector have a subject-related degree. A good degree in a relevant subject, such as Economics, Finance, Business or Management, is preferred by the bigger accountancy practices. Most accountancy degrees provide an exemption from the initial stages of the professional exams. Some firms – most famously the KPMG-Durham University Accountancy BSc – have started sponsoring candidates through university degrees. KPMG says such schemes could come to account for the majority of its trainee intake.

Engineering

Engineers are involved in research and development, design and production. They work on the machinery, products and systems used in everyday life - from aircraft to hospital scanners, manufacturing production, computers, drilling rigs, nuclear energy and telecommunications.

There are various branches of engineering, including:

- Aerospace, automotive and marine engineering
- Chemical and materials engineering
- Electrical, electronics, telecommunications and power engineering
- Production and manufacturing engineering
- Mechanical and civil engineering
- Oil, gas, nuclear and renewable energy engineering

Potential Engineering applicants are strongly advised to take both Mathematics and Physics at A level alongside Design and Technology or other relevant subjects such as Further Maths or an additional Science. It is important to check course details carefully as requirements can vary enormously. Intending Engineers should discuss their applications with Mr Townend or Mr Anglim and consider the possibility of attending one of the residential Smallpeice Trust or Headstart courses aimed at budding Engineers

Law

No specific A level subjects are required to study Law at university as applicants are equally welcomed whether their academic background is in the Arts, Sciences or Social Sciences. This is one reason why degree courses in Law are amongst the most oversubscribed courses in British universities with, in some cases, 20 or more applicants for every place. There is some anecdotal evidence that when selecting between highly qualified applicants, Admissions Tutors prefer those who offer more intellectually demanding subjects such as Mathematics or Latin, but the most important factor is always the grade that you are likely to get.

At the most selective universities the standard offer is AAA or A*AA at A level for applicants who have done well in the LNAT test (see below). However, Law is a field into which many of the new universities (e.g. Manchester Metropolitan University and Oxford Brookes University) have ventured with the introduction of some innovative routes of study, for example the integrated courses offered by Northumbria University which combine the undergraduate stage of legal education with the requirements of either the Bar Professional Training Course or full qualification as a solicitor. Although these courses are still competitive, offers at such universities are lower, typically in the range of ABB-BBB.

LNAT test: LNAT is a thinking skills test specifically designed to overcome the effects of extra teaching or cramming. There is no requirement to have any previous knowledge of the law. The test is aken between September and May in the year of application. Approximately 150 centres nationwide are licensed to administer LNAT, the nearest to Ampleforth being in York. For 2020 entry all applicants to study Law at Bristol, Durham, Glasgow, King's College London, LSE, Nottingham, Oxford, SOAS and University College London were required to take the test.

Post-graduate Law courses: Nearly half of those who ultimately pursue a career in Law choose to study an entirely different subject at university. In such cases a one year (or two year part-time) postgraduate Law conversion course, leading to the Common Professional Examination (CPE) or the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL), currently provides the best route into a legal career. Over the next few years, however, this will change to students needing to undertake a set amount of qualifying work experience and pass stages 1 and 2 of the Qualifying Solicitors Exam (SQE). Most institutions offering Law conversion courses would expect applicants to have achieved a 2:1 or higher in their undergraduate degree.

Medicine, Dentistry and Veterninary Science

University Medical course requirements vary, so it is essential to consult individual university handbooks for particular requirements. In general you should not consider this route unless you have a good number of high GCSE grades. The general rule is that A level Chemistry is required. However, most medical schools also require Biology. There is some flexibility with regard to the third A level. Having a non-science third A level can demonstrate breadth of character and academic ability. A handful of universities offer a course for Arts students wanting to convert to the study of Medicine – ask Mr Anderson for more detail.

Students will have to sit an admissions test, depending on where they are applying.

- UCAT (University Clinical Admissions Test), required by most universities. This is taken between July and September prior to submitting a UCAS application. There are 150 registered centres around the UK
- BMAT (Bio-Medical Admissions Test), required by eight universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. BMAT is specifically designed to overcome the effects of extra teaching or cramming and so enable the best candidates to be identified

Work experience is a must for candidates for Medicine or Veterinary Science. Optimally, this will be a regular voluntary placement in a health care or related field; ideally also in more than one setting, with the student able to reflect on this in their personal statement.